



**Statement
by
H.E. Mr. Nugroho Wisnumurti
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia
to the United Nations and
Other International Organizations
Geneva**

**at
the General Debate of the First Committee of the
58th Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

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Mr. Chairman,

My delegation wishes to extend its congratulations to you on your unanimous election to preside over the deliberations of the First Committee. Our felicitations also go to the other members of the Bureau. Let me also express our appreciation to Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his lucid statement on various disarmament and international security issues.

Mr. Chairman,

We are meeting at a time of new challenges and new threats to global peace and security. While there has been some progress, it is somewhat of an unfortunate reality that the disarmament scene is in disarray. Considerable efforts will be needed in the multilateral fora to address the numerous issues on our agenda and to bring them to a successful conclusion.

My delegation is deeply concerned over the declining role and diminishing contributions of multilateralism to disarmament and international security. It is undeniable, however, that multilateralism is a guarantor of legitimacy and democracy in tackling the global problems confronting us. Without multilateral negotiations, it would not be possible to address today's security concerns because multilateral approaches offer the only legitimate and lasting solutions. There are no realistic alternatives. The problems posed by proliferation, nuclear terrorism, transfer of technology as well as safety of nuclear material and related facilities are inextricably inter-linked with global security. Consequently, they are not susceptible to selective and piece-meal approach and need to be addressed concurrently, equitably and comprehensively. To insulate nuclear disarmament from this equation indefinitely will certainly run counter to international legal obligations and political commitments. We should move this agenda item forward under multilateral auspices at a time when progress is long overdue.

Most importantly, efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament continue to be undermined by the persistence of narrowly conceived strategic doctrines and by unilateral coercive measures in pursuit of national security interests. We are also very much concerned over a new, untenable doctrine of pre-emption even against non-nuclear states and by an expanded scope for the use of nuclear weapons. Other worrisome trends have emerged such as the efforts to modernize existing arsenals and to create new types of nuclear weapons. Perhaps, one of the most frightening of all is the possibility that weapons of mass destruction may fall into the hands of non-state actors.

In the multilateral fora, there are no sign of movement. The UNDC concluded its 2003 session without concrete proposals to advance either nuclear disarmament or confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. In the meantime, the prolonged stalemate at the Conference on Disarmament (CD) continues to be a source of deep concern. For more than 7 years, the CD has been paralysed by its inability to agree on a programme of work. My delegation shares the sense of frustration and desparation among its members following the latest failure in making a breakthrough to end the stalemate. A number of concrete proposals have been initiated and tabled in the recent past as an attempt to overcome the impasse at the CD, including the proposal by the Five Ambassadors as amended. My delegation is of the view that the proposal indeed merits our serious consideration, since it offers sensible and positive suggestions for such a breakthrough. In this regard, it is necessary to encourage all members of the CD to show their genuine goodwill and flexibility, so that a compromise can be found and the Conference can get back to its business and start a substantive process which will be leading to the conduct of negotiations on issues of common and global concern in the next year's session.

Mr. Chairman,

The emergence of new and advanced technologies that are now appearing at rapid speed and diffusing in less controllable ways is further compounding the current international security environment. In an age of globalization, increased communications, porous borders and continuing growth of the networking to acquire certain technologies, such advances will facilitate the obtaining of wherewithal for these weapons, thereby lowering the threshold of nuclear proliferation.

Thus, the non-proliferation regime based on the NPT faces unprecedented challenges. How these challenges are dealt with will determine not only its future but also the international security environment. The legitimacy of any action concerning non-proliferation will suffer as long as the weapon states disregard their obligations and responsibilities which are yet to be translated into concrete action in carrying forward the disarmament process.

Since the the adoption of the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, we have seen a lack of progress in the implementation of the 13 practical steps which are widely regarded as a requisite blueprint and a realistic approach for nuclear disarmament. Regrettably, some among them have been abandoned or

superseded and many of these steps have been ignored. There has been little change in the positions of the nuclear weapon states on the critical issues. Consequently, there is a creeping sense of pessimism and the future looks bleak.

The Third Session of the NPT Preparatory Committee to be held in April 2004 will be of critical importance. Hence, we should engage in a serious and in-depth discussion not only of the 1995 Decision on Principles and Objectives for Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, but also the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. If indeed we are going to make substantive progress and look forward to a successful outcome of the 2005 Review Conference, we should first of all acknowledge the NPT's short-comings and strive to achieve a more equitable regime that would address the legitimate interests of the vast majority of states parties to the Treaty who have fulfilled their commitments. Thus, reducing incentives to acquire nuclear weapons, addressing the security concerns of all states, complying with legal and political commitments, establishing a mechanism to implement NPT's obligations and ensuring that non-proliferation and disarmament of nuclear weapons dovetail each other and move in a common direction, will restore the Treaty's credibility and effectiveness.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) remains an indispensable goal for maintaining the integrity of the NPT. In this regard, together with other NAM member countries, we stressed the significance of achieving universal adherence to the CTBT, including by all the Nuclear Weapons States, which, inter-alia, should contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, we also believe that if the objectives of the Treaty are to be fully realized, the continued commitment of all States signatories, especially the Nuclear Weapon States, to nuclear disarmament would be essential.

While we welcome the Moscow Treaty as an important contribution to international peace and security, we could not but recognize that it lacks most of the standard provisions of a bilateral nuclear arms control treaty or any reference to an exchange of data or any verification mechanism. In this connection, we call on the United States and the Russian Federation to continue taking further steps to improve the treaty so that it would adhere to the principles of irreversibility, transparency and verifiability which will have far-reaching ramifications for the future of genuine nuclear arms reductions and elimination.

Mr. Chairman,

Notwithstanding the setbacks in nuclear and related issues, we welcome the progress made with regard to chemical weapons. Efforts to bring the Chemical Weapons Convention closer to universal adherence have made some modest advance. While efforts to conclude a verification protocol of the Biological Weapons Convention have collapsed, an agreement was reached to hold a series of annual meetings between 2003 and 2005 to basically discuss ways and means at the national level to effectively implement the Convention. We do hope that these efforts will contribute to the success for the 2006 Review Conference.

Positive developments also continued in regional arms control and disarmament efforts in many parts of the globe. In this regard, it is our expectation that Central Asia will soon become the fifth nuclear-weapon-free zone, thus broadening such zones in the world. Significantly, it will be the first such zone north of the equator and also the first time that negotiations for establishing such a treaty were carried out under the auspices of the United Nations. As regards the Bangkok Treaty, some of the nuclear weapon states are yet to accede to its Protocol which is an essential prerequisite for the unfettered effectiveness of the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. Consultations are continuing between ASEAN and the nuclear-weapon-states concerned and its successful culmination will reinforce the status of the southern hemisphere and adjacent areas as nuclear-weapon-free zones.

In the field of conventional weapons, my delegation was also pleased to note the successful conclusion of the first biennial meeting mandated by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. It provided a new momentum, a more supportive global climate for the implementation of the Program of Action and also new information on key questions such as sources, supply routes and networks. These should be helpful in the collective efforts of the global community to prevent the illicit trade and transfer of these arms. Yet, international assistance to facilitate productive partnership for effective action needs to be strengthened to achieve this objective.

Finally, my delegation wishes to draw our attention to the General Assembly resolution 57/61 adopted without a vote on the convening of the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament, which calls on member states to reach a consensus on its objectives and agenda, including the possibility of establishing a preparatory committee. To our profound disappointment, however, consensus has eluded us. Needless to say, these efforts must continue; indeed, they must be intensified. Because the Fourth Special Session on Disarmament offers an opportunity to review, from a perspective more in tune with the current international situation, the

most critical aspects of the process of disarmament and to mobilize the international community and public opinion in favour of the elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, and of the control and reduction of conventional weapons. We have a comprehensive set of proposals submitted by the member states during our three substantive sessions this year. Bringing all these ideas, concepts and approaches will not be an easy task, but given flexibility and a spirit of compromise, we remain confident of success in coming to grips with them.

In conclusion, my delegation joins the many member states in our concerted efforts to bring about comprehensive reform of the United Nations, including the General Assembly. As one of its Main Committees, the First Committee should be accorded renewed attention regarding its role and functioning. We intend to participate constructively in these endeavors and thereby make our contribution to its increased efficiency and effectiveness.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.