

COLOMBIA



COLOMBIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement by
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First Committee
GENERAL DEBATE

61st Session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York, 3 October 2006

Madam Chair,

Let me start by congratulating you as well as all the other members of the bureau on your election to preside over our work. Colombia acknowledges your country's commitment towards a general and complete disarmament and we are confident that with your professional and personal capabilities the First Committee will bring about its work during the current period of sessions in a successful manner. My delegation would also like to welcome the new Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, whom we wish success during his tenure at the top of such an important Department in the Organisation.

Colombia associates itself to the statement delivered yesterday by the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Madam Chair,

One year ago we were lamenting in this very place the worrisome disarmament trend in today's world. The lack of concrete recommendations on disarmament and non-proliferation in the document adopted by the Heads of State and Government in 2005 reflects the difficulties that multilateralism is facing in this field. Since then, almost nothing has changed in this tendency. On the contrary, backward steps such

as the failure of the NPT Review Conference in 2005 or the stalemate of the Conference of Disarmament in Geneva in past years are still a matter of deep concern for countries like mine, who would like to see the so called “disarmament machinery” working to the fullest extent of its capacity.

Particularly worrying was the result of the *Conference to review progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects*, held in New York last June and July. Being among the countries most affected by the scourge of the illicit trade of arms, Colombia deeply regrets that the Review Conference did not agree on a final document to reflect the concerns and initiatives of the States in their fight against this problem. The 2001 Programme of Action remains as the cornerstone of the efforts that need to be taken so as to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which every year causes so many victims the world over. We also reiterate our support for the principles contained in the Antigua Declaration subscribed by all Latin American and Caribbean countries last May.

The draft resolution entitled “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects”, which Colombia has presented in the recent years together with Japan and South Africa, will be introduced once again to the First Committee during this GA. We hope that the valuable support that delegations have attached to this important issue since its first introduction will continue by achieving its adoption through consensus once again.

Madam Chair,

In spite of the discouraging view that we have before us, Colombia wishes to reiterate its full confidence in multilateralism as an essential path for the strengthening of those efforts and to keep up the achievement of the UN goals on disarmament and non-proliferation. Thus, my delegation makes a renewed appeal for the restoration of the First Committee’s central role in the framework of the mandate given to the GA in the UN Charter.

In accordance with the need to achieve general and complete disarmament, which Colombia promotes as a State policy, my country has subscribed all international instruments on weapons of mass destruction. In that category, nuclear weapons still remain as the most destructive ones and for that reason nuclear disarmament is one of the top priorities in Colombia’s foreign policy. In that sense, Colombia welcomes the agreement reached last September by 5 countries in Central Asia through which a new Nuclear-weapon-free-zone has been created under the Treaty of Semipalatinsk.

As widely known, certain constitutional impediments arising from the prohibition to pay assessments of a retroactive nature have made it impossible for Colombia to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), whose spirit and contents we absolutely support. My country will continue undertaking every possible

effort towards overcoming the difficulties around this situation on which we will further elaborate at a later stage during the relevant thematic debate.

Madam Chair,

We are facing major challenges during this GA. We are confident that we will achieve concrete and positive results in the long list of items before us. My country will participate actively and concretely in all thematic debates to be held in the First Committee during this period of sessions.

Thank you, Madam Chair.