



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

315 Lexington Avenue ☞ New York ☞ N.Y. 10016 ☞ (212) 689-7215 ☞ FAX (212) 689-9073

**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA, AMBASSADOR RODRIGO MALMIERCA DÍAZ, AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 61<sup>ST</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. New York, Wednesday 4 October 2006.**

Madam Chairman:

First of all allow me to commend you for your election as Chairman of the First Committee, which I would like to extend to the rest of the members of the Bureau.

Cuba fully supports the statement made in this debate by the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The said statement shows the principled positions and priorities adopted on disarmament and security matters by the Heads of State and Government of the Movement in the Summit Conference, which was successfully held in Havana on last 11-16 September.

In the Havana Summit, the leaders of the 118 members of the NAM agreed upon promoting these positions and priorities at the relevant international forums. Cuba will actively work in the First Committee with the rest of the countries of the Movement to fulfill this mandate.

Madam Chairman:

The constant increase of military expenditures is indeed worrying, mainly considering the vertiginous growth of the superpower's military budget, and the increasingly overt hegemonism, unilateralism, interventionism – direct or covered up –, insecurity for the weakest countries as well as the attempt to validate the doctrine of preemptive use of force.

Just one country, the United States, spends in weapons the equivalent to what the rest of the world does, and the US companies produce 60% of all weapons sold in the world.

How much could be achieved if only a minimum part of the more than 1 trillion dollars that are currently devoted to military expenditures were used in the search for solutions to problems linked to underdevelopment and the reduction of the gap between the richest and the poorest countries.

With the resources that are currently devoted to armaments, the 852 million people currently suffering from hunger could be fed for a year or 38 million AIDS patients could be provided with medicines for 40 years. With just 10% of the current military expenditures, the Millennium Development Goals could be attained.

Cuba reiterates its proposal of devoting at least half of the current military expenditures to meet the needs of the economic and social development, through a fund managed by the United Nations.

Madam Chairman:

Despite the proclaimed end of the Cold War, there are currently around 33 000 nuclear weapons in the world, over 13 000 of them ready for immediate use. The nuclear weapons modernization programs have not stopped.

The only safe and effective way to avoid the proliferation of weapons of mass-destruction is their total elimination. The mere existence of nuclear weapons and doctrines which prescribe their possession and use put international peace and security at stakes.

That is why Cuba ratifies the NAM historic position that nuclear disarmament is and should continue to be the highest priority in the area of disarmament.

The Nuclear-Weapon States are legally bound to not only carry out, but also to conclude in good faith the negotiations aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament, under a strict and effective international verification system.

Cuba rejects the selective implementation of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The issues pertaining to nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy cannot continue to be disregarded, while privileging horizontal non-proliferation.

We will strongly support the respect for the States' inalienable rights to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, under the strict observance of the commitments made under the NPT.

In conventional weapons matters, we consider that this Committee should review in depth and take real steps to avoid that some countries continue developing and using increasingly more sophisticated and deadly weapons which cause the so-called "collateral damage", phrase behind which some try to hide the innocent victims.

Madam Chairman:

The situation of the multilateral disarmament and arms control machinery is increasingly more worrying. The Disarmament Conference is at a standstill. The First Committee adopts every year resolutions that most of the time are not honored or implemented, particularly those pertaining to nuclear disarmament. The 2005 UN World Summit could not even make a statement on the question of disarmament. The 2005 Review Conference of the NPT was a failure. The 2006 Review Conference on the Implementation of the UN Program of Action to combat the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons could not agree upon a final document.

In view of such realities, Cuba considers that it is urgent to hold a Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly on Disarmament. In that regard, we support the reactivation in the shortest term possible of the Open-Ended Working Group to prepare the abovementioned Fourth Session.

To attribute the lack of concrete results in disarmament matters to the inefficiency of working methods of the bodies that deal with disarmament issues, including the First Committee would be a simplistic and distorted vision of reality.

The main difficulties that the disarmament machinery faces do not lie in the higher or lower efficiency of its working methods, but in political reasons, particularly the lack of political will by some powerful States, especially the military superpower, to advance in relevant key issues for international peace and security, like the question of nuclear disarmament.

Cuba supports the improvement, as much as possible, of the working methods of the UN organs, including the First Committee, as long as this is not carried out at the expense of the right of all Member States to promote and uphold their legitimate interests, and the key role of the General Assembly within the Organization is not affected.

I would like to conclude, Madam Chairman, reiterating that the Cuban delegation will use its best efforts to attain relevant practical results in this session if the First Committee.

Thank you very much.