



BRAZIL

63th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
First Committee - General Debate
Statement by Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti
Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations

06 October 2008

(check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

Please accept my congratulations, Ambassador Marco Antonio Suazo, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee.

We fully associate ourselves with the views expressed by the distinguished representative of Mexico, on behalf of the Rio Group, as well as by the distinguished representative of South Africa, on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition.

Let me express our appreciation for the work carried out by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Sergio Duarte, and his office.

Mr. Chairman,

The lack of progress on disarmament and non-proliferation in the multilateral area during the past three years is disappointing. A succession of setbacks well known to all of us sends a worrisome signal of insufficient commitment to multilateralism as the means to effectively tackle security concerns common to humankind.

Brazil acknowledges some positive movements, such as the reductions in non-strategic and strategic nuclear arsenals achieved over the last decade, and the recent P-5 Common Statement made at the II NPT PrepCom, last May, in which those countries reiterated their enduring commitment to the fulfillment of their obligation under Article VI of the NPT.

But much remains to be done. So long as the States that possess nuclear weapons continue to believe that these weapons constitute a critical element of their security strategy, the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons will remain elusive and distant.

Mr. Chairman,

The NPT is the essential bedrock in our global security regime. The three pillars of the Treaty – non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy – have been indispensable in attracting near universal membership. Indeed, without any one of those pillars there would not have been a NPT. Respect for the principles contained in the Treaty and the commitments agreed to by all States Parties in previous review conferences are essential elements for the NPT to last.

Brazil has a solid and long-standing record in the defense of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We helped to establish the first nuclear-weapon-free-zone in an inhabited region of the world, the Treaty of Tlatelolco, now ratified by all countries of the region. Along with our partners in the New Agenda Coalition, we consider the pursuit of nuclear disarmament as a fundamental tool in addressing the international community's deep concern about proliferation. Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes.

The NPT provides a framework of confidence and co-operation within which the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes can take place. Brazil believes there should be no unwarranted restrictions on the inalienable right of all Parties in this regard. Concerning the current discussions on the nuclear fuel cycle, it is imperative to steer clear from the creation of another kind of cartel that would exclude full participation of developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

We fully agree with the assessment that terrorism and the risks of further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are prominent contemporary threats to international peace and security. Of utmost concern is indeed the possibility that non-State actors might acquire and use such weapons. We must steadfastly work to prevent this scenario from happening, while acting strictly within the principles and norms of international law.

In this context, Brazil welcomes the recently adopted Joint Ministerial Statement on the CTBT. We call upon those States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the CTBT unconditionally and without delay and to observe a moratorium on nuclear tests pending the entry into force of the Treaty.

Nuclear Weapon Free Zones also play a key role in the efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. As a signal of our determination to continue working towards freeing the entire Southern Hemisphere of nuclear weapons, Brazil, together with New Zealand, will be once again submitting a draft resolution on this issue to the I Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

The illicit trade of small arms and light weapons is a matter of great concern to us, not only for its adverse effects at the international level but also for its impact on our national public security. In this context, the adoption of the Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons confirms the irreplaceable role of multilateralism in addressing global challenges through globally coordinated responses.

After the lack of results in the 2006 Review Conference, we welcome the fact that a substantive outcome was reached at the Third Biennial Meeting of States, held last July. The final document contains an interesting array of recommendations that should merit our full consideration with a view to enhancing the implementation of the Programme. At this session of the General Assembly, we favor the adoption of a resolution that recognizes the progress made and seeks to build upon the positive results achieved.

This past year, consultations were held on the possibility of a future arms trade treaty (ATT). We are committed to the goal of concluding an effective, balanced, non-discriminatory and legally binding multilateral instrument on the international trade in conventional arms. One of the core goals of an arms trade treaty must be to prevent conventional weapons from being diverted to illicit purposes, without prejudice to the right of States to produce, acquire and maintain such weapons for self-defense in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter. In order to achieve this result, the future international instrument must rely on objective criteria for the authorization of arms transfers

and also on practical measures aimed at preventing diversion. International cooperation and assistance in capacity building must be a major component of a future agreement.

We welcome the work of the Group of Governmental Experts regarding a future arms trade treaty and its recommendation that, in view of the complexity of the issue of conventional arms transfers, further consideration be given to this matter within the United Nations. We hope that the current session of the General Assembly will follow up on this recommendation and approve a resolution that will enable discussions to continue in a multilateral setting with the benefit of the participation of all member states.

Mr. Chairman,

We must recommit ourselves to working constructively together in good faith to overcome the deadlock that has impaired the disarmament machinery in the last decade. It is a matter of concern that yet again the UNDC has concluded its three-year cycle without a substantive outcome. This prolonged failure leads to mistrust and insecurity. A healthy institutional framework that is effective in promoting meaningful negotiations must be restored. This endeavor should merit our best collective efforts.