



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA,
AMBASSADOR RODRIGO MALMIERCA DIAZ, AT THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE. 63rd SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.
New York, 9 October 2008.**

Mr. Chairman,

Cuba congratulates you and wishes you great successes as Chairman of the First Committee. We are particularly pleased that our work is led by a representative of a Latin American sister nation. Our congratulations extend to the rest of the Bureau.

We fully support this Monday's statement by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

While we are making statements and pledging our commitment to peace and disarmament, reality outside of this room is quite different.

It is unjustifiable that **military expenditures**, far from decreasing, increase every year at an accelerated rate. Such expenditures already reach a record 1 339 billion dollars, 45% more than 10 years ago.

This is mainly a consequence of the dramatic growth of the US military budget. This country alone spends in weapons the equivalent of what the rest of the world spends, and 41 of its companies produce 63% of all the weapons sold in the world. At the same time, 34 Western European companies sell 29%. In other words, the most recent statistics show that United States and the countries of the European Union control 92% of the world armament market.

Instead of promoting **nuclear disarmament**, which is and must continue to be the top priority in the area of disarmament, buildup of arms and waste in new weapons and armament systems are promoted.

While resources are so squandered, it is clear that the modest Millennium Development Goals shall not be even met by 2015. They shall not be met because over 100 countries in the South do not have, nor will they have, 150 billion dollars necessary to achieve them.

With just 10% of the current military expenditure, the Millennium Development Goals could be achieved. With the resources that are devoted to armaments today, the 852 million hungry people of the world could be fed for a year, proper houses could be guaranteed to over 640 million children not having where to live, and 115 million children, who do not have the possibility to attend primary school, could do it.

Therefore, Cuba reiterates, once again, its proposal of devoting at least half of the current military expenditures to meet the needs of economic and social development, through an UN-managed fund.

Mr. Chairman,

Notwithstanding the proclaimed end of the cold war, there are still some 25 000 nuclear weapons in the world, 10 200 of them are ready for immediate use. The nuclear weapons modernization programs have not stopped.

The mere existence of nuclear weapons and the doctrines that sanction their possession and use, pose a grave danger on international peace and security.

Two sessions of the **Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference** have been held. It is important that concrete results are obtained in the said Conference and that the current disturbing lack of progress in the implementation of the 13 practical measures agreed upon in the year 2000 can be reversed.

Cuba rejects the selective application of the NPT. Issues relative to nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy cannot continue to be disregarded, while horizontal non-proliferation is favored. The inalienable right of the States to the **peaceful use of nuclear energy** must be fully respected.

Mr. Chairman,

Cuba regrets the impasse the **Conference on Disarmament** is in. Our country was ready to support an eventual consensus on the so called proposal 1840. Although the adoption of this proposal would have meant at least the possibility to finally have something similar to a program of work in the CD, we consider the same did not have the necessary support because it did not reflect the will of all the members of the Conference.

Cuba will continue giving the highest priority to nuclear disarmament, and it is on this basis that future consensus in the framework of the CD should be built. It would be unacceptable to give in to the sad "realpolitik" imposed by this unfortunate period we are living in concerning disarmament and arms control. The stubbornness and power of a few cannot make us all take the easiest path of making them comfortable according with their interests, while real priorities are put aside.

Cuba reaffirms its invariable commitment to the **Chemical Weapons Convention** and supports every action aimed at its universality. The Report on

the Second Review Conference on said Convention, held last April, reflects in a quite balanced way, the stands and concerns of the States Parties. That is why it constitutes an important tool for the future.

The complete destruction of chemical arsenals is, and will continue being, the most important task of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). As we get closer to these deadlines, it will also be important to pay close attention to the design of the future role of OPCW in the international arena. Cuba considers OPCW has a very important role to play in favor of the economic and technological progress of the States Parties, particularly those less developed.

The follow up mechanism implemented in the Sixth Review Conference on the **Biological Weapons Convention** is, beyond doubt, a useful tool for the exchange of national experiences and a consensus forum. However, Cuba considers the only way to really reinforce and perfect the Convention is through the negotiation and adoption of a legally binding Protocol resolving the gaps that instrument still has.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of Governmental Experts established under resolution 61/89 had its working sessions this year. The Group could not get to an agreement on whether a legally binding instrument establishing common international parameters for export import and conventional **arms transfer**, is feasible or not.

Besides, the Group emphasized in his Final Report that, due to the complexity of the topic, the same requires a balanced, open, transparent and step-by-step consideration within the UN on the basis of consensus. That is to say, it is clear that the question of conventional arms transfer neither has easy answer nor admits preconceived or simplistic recipes.

Mr. Chairman,

Following the recommendation of the First Committee, last year the General Assembly passed, for the first time in its history, a resolution on the **effects of the use of arms and ammunition containing depleted uranium**.

Many of the opinions sent by the Member States and the relevant International Organizations responding to said resolution confirm the importance of the topic and the need to deal with the legitimate concerns of the international community caused by the use of these arms and ammunitions. We are certain that in this occasion the resolution on this topic will be supported by the vast majority of the delegations.

Thank you very much.