



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR RODRIGO MALMIERCA DIAZ, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA, AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISARMAMENT COMMISSION. New York, 7 April 2008

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to congratulate you, on behalf of my delegation, for your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission. We make our congratulations extensive to the Bureau members and to the respective chairmen of the Working Groups.

The Cuban delegation would like to express its full support of the statement made by the distinguished delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The statement clearly conveys the principled positions and priorities of the Movement in disarmament matters, which are duly contained in different documents adopted during its Summit Conferences and Ministerial Meetings.

The last years have been marked by an impasse in the multilateral disarmament agenda. The Disarmament Commission has not gone unharmed by these effects. It is worrying that no concrete results have been achieved since 2003.

Unfortunately, despite the proclaimed end of the Cold War several years ago, the world military expenditure, far from being reduced, continues to increase at an alarming rate. The world's main investor in arms alone, the United States of America, may be spending this year more than US\$ 700 billion to this purpose, 48% of the world total.

Increasing military spending is in itself a factor that raises distrust and legitimate international concern.

We can't afford to remain on the sidelines faced with this situation. It is counterproductive that the world military expenditure continues to exceed by far the funds devoted to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

These facts must be addressed with immediate actions. Cuba reiterates its proposal to create a UN-managed Fund, to which at least half of the current military spending would be devoted, in order to address the economic and social development of the countries in need. Such initiative, besides the evident benefit, could bear the added value of being a confidence-building measure.

Mr. Chairman,

The Disarmament Commission is entering the third year of the cycle of deliberations on two highly relevant issues. It is in our hands to take concrete steps toward general and complete disarmament. The work that the multilateral disarmament machinery shall carry out in the near future will largely depend on the outcomes of this session.

Nuclear weapons pose a serious threat on the entire human race. Thousands of them are ready to be used immediately. Far from making progress in the purpose of destroying them, the nuclear powers persist in their modernization.

The mere existence of nuclear weapons and the doctrines prescribing their possession and use constitute a grave threat for international peace and security. Cuba reaffirms NAM's historical position that nuclear disarmament is, and must continue to be the highest priority in the sphere of disarmament.

The nuclear-weapon States have the legal obligation to, not only pursue, but also bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

The relevance of nuclear disarmament cannot be ignored or downplayed. There are known intentions by some to promote a selective non-proliferation approach, wherein the problem does not lie in the very existence of nuclear weapons, but in the "good" or "bad" behavior of those who have them.

Cuba strongly rejects the selective implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The obligations undertaken on nuclear disarmament matters and the peaceful use of nuclear energy cannot continue to be pushed into the background within the framework of this Treaty.

We strongly support the respect for the inalienable right of States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, under strict observance of the commitments taken on under the NPT.

Likewise, we endorse the conclusion, as a priority matter, of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on the guarantees of the security for non-nuclear States.

We appreciate the efforts carried out by Mr. Jean-François Régis Zinzou of Benin, Chairman of Working Group 1 in charge of the item "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons". We think his efforts to advance that group's works and to try to combine the position of Member States to achieve the successful conclusion of the present cycle are particularly useful. The Cuban delegation is ready to continue to cooperate in this regard.

Moreover, we are seriously concerned at the lack of political will of some delegations, which are fortunately minority, to achieve concrete progress in Working Group 1. We hope that we will all show the necessary seriousness to advance towards the achievement of our goals, generating concrete recommendations to advance towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Cuban delegation is ready to consider different options for the outcome document of Group 1. We reaffirm that any outcome will have to be subject to substantive negotiations and have the Member State's consensus.

Mr. Chairman,

Regarding the item "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", we reiterate that Cuba support such measures as a way to strengthen international peace and security, as long as they fully respect the principles and purposes of the UN Charter.

Due to their very voluntary nature, confidence-building measures must not be imposed. Success of this process will depend on the achievement of a true consensus among the States. There are no single recipes. In order for the confidence-building measures to be really effective, they must answer to specific situations of the country or region in question.

Although there is much to be done, important progress has been made in the works of Group 2. We consider that the latest working document submitted by its Chairman constitutes an excellent basis for the success of our deliberations on this issue. We wish much success to the delegation of Brazil, especially to Mr. Carlos Luis Dantas, in the performance of his task as Chairman of the Group.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, allow me to reiterate to you the Cuban delegation's full support of your work.

Thank you very much