



**Statement by Amb. Socorro Rovirosa
Deputy Permanent Representative
of Mexico to the United Nations**

On behalf of the Rio Group

**General Debate of the 2009
Substantive Session
of the United Nations
Disarmament Commission**

**April 16, 2009
(check against delivery)**

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE RIO GROUP BY
AMBASSADOR SOCORRO ROVIROSA, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
MEXICO, AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 2009 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

New York, 16th April 2009

My delegation has the honor to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Rio Group: Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay and my country, Mexico.

At the outset, the Rio Group wishes to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the 2009 Substantive Session of the Disarmament Commission, as well as your efforts to reach an agreement on the agenda of the Commission. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We appreciate the participation of the Deputy Secretary-General Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, whose message reaffirms the strong commitment of the United Nations to the disarmament agenda.

The Rio Group welcomes the consensus reached on the substantive items on the agenda to be considered in the 2009-2011 cycle of the Commission. We believe that the agreed agenda reflects in a balanced and comprehensive way substantive priorities to be addressed in this area. Our group reiterates its willingness to work constructively to complete the complex tasks entrusted to the Commission. We hope that this session will achieve substantive progress that will enable us to develop specific recommendations on the agenda items that we have agreed.

Regarding the topic "Recommendations for achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament and non proliferation of nuclear weapons", the Group reiterates its firm position in favor of nuclear disarmament. We reiterate the concern about the serious threat to humanity represented by the existence of nuclear weapons and for the slow progress towards their total elimination.

The Rio Group welcomes some positive signals that have been witnessed recently in the international arena on disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. In this context, we hope that the recent Joint Statement by the Presidents of the two major nuclear powers will be translated into concrete actions to achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world and initiating negotiations for new and verifiable reductions in their nuclear arsenals, beginning by a new legally binding post-START Treaty this year, after the expiry of START I.

The members of the Rio Group formed part of the first nuclear-weapon-free-zone, established now for over 40 years by the Treaty of Tlatelolco. We are witness of the commitment and responsibility of the region in the application of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation measures. In this context, we reiterate the call to the nuclear-weapon States to take concrete steps to move forward urgent reduction and total elimination of their arsenals.

We welcome the entry into force of the Treaty of Central Asia on March 21, establishing a new nuclear weapon free zone in Central Asia. This legal instrument is a significant step to strengthen the denuclearization regime and achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Rio Group reaffirms the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its three pillars, the nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We are fully committed to its universality, and therefore urge States that have not done so to adhere to this Treaty as non-nuclear weapon States.

We also reaffirm the need to comply with the integrity of the NPT, the cornerstone of the disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, not interpret it or implement it on a selective basis. We must respect the inalienable right of States to research, production and the peaceful use of nuclear energy without discrimination, and the exchange of materials, equipment and scientific and technological information for such purposes, within the framework of international law and under with its obligations to the IAEA. At the same time, we urge the Nuclear Weapon States to fulfill their obligations for nuclear disarmament under Article VI of the Treaty. The Group considers imperative to comply the thirteen practical steps agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

The Group calls the Conference on Disarmament to establish as soon as possible an Ad Hoc Committee on Nuclear Disarmament, with the aim of initiating negotiations on a phased program for complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a time period, including a Convention on Nuclear Weapons.

Our group reiterates its call to the nuclear-weapon States for adopting all necessary measures for the conclusion, on a priority basis, of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States. Until such treaty exists, the nuclear-weapon States must respect existing commitments regarding security assurances. We also stress the relevance of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the illegality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. In this regard, we reaffirm the importance of the unanimous conclusion of the Court that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and conclude negotiations to achieve nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

The Rio Group expresses its concern over the possibility of an arms race in outer space. Hence, we urge the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiating a legally binding international agreement to prevent it. We also ask this forum to start negotiations on a non-discriminatory and multilateral treaty that includes an international verification regime, on the prohibition of fissile materials.

We reiterate our position on the complete cessation of nuclear testing. We stress the importance of maintaining a moratorium on all testing of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices until the Treaty entry into force. In this context, we hope that recent announcements by some nuclear powers on the ratification of the Treaty be followed by tangible steps.

Mr. Chairman

Regarding the topic "Elements of a draft Declaration of the 2010s as the Fourth Disarmament Decade", the Group considers that the Fourth Decade would have a significant positive role in mobilizing global efforts to give a response to the current and emerging challenges in the field of disarmament, arms control, proliferation and international security.

The Fourth Disarmament Decade would help that disarmament be placed back into the spotlight of the international agenda and to establish indicative targets for achieving the goal of faster general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

Mr. Chairman

Regarding the third agenda item on "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms", on this occasion the Group will limit itself to expressing brief preliminary commentaries. Also this important topic will be addressed on the next session of the Commission and we will have later opportunity to address it in a much broader and more detailed way, in order to include the topics of particular interest to the region.

Our region is one of the most advanced in the implementation of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

Confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms contribute to the improvement of international peace and security, since they are intended to promote understanding, transparency and cooperation among States. We therefore consider it necessary to strengthen, improve and extend the measures of confidence-building at all levels. It is worth recalling in this regard, the resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations 59/92, 60/82, 61/79 and 63/57, which supports our region and have been adopted by consensus. One of their objectives is strengthening the exchange of information on confidence-building in the field of conventional arms. The information voluntarily provided by the States is registered in an electronic database created for this purpose in the Office for Disarmament Affairs, which facilitates periodic consultation of advances in the design and implementation of measures for confidence building, acting as a tool for additional transparency in the UN.

Mr. Chairman

The Rio Group reaffirms its readiness to cooperate with you and the Bureau for the achievement of concrete results during this session. We call on all delegations to show political will and flexible positions that are necessary for reaching a good result.

Thank you very much