



BRAZIL

Statement by H. E. Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota,
Permanent Representative

United Nations Disarmament Commission – UNDC

New York, 4 April 2016

(check against delivery)

Mr. Chair,

I congratulate you on your assumption as Chair of the Disarmament Commission, as well as the other members of the Bureau. Please be assured of the full support of my delegation.

Brazil aligns itself with the statement (to be) delivered by the Dominican Republic on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States - CELAC.

Mr. Chair,

In January we commemorated the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the first General Assembly Resolution, which affirmed the objective of the "elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction". Even then, the existence of such indiscriminate and utterly destructive weapons already sat ill with the principles enshrined in the UN Charter. It is regrettable that, seventy years later, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation still remain unresolved issues on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission.

Brazil is firmly committed to the objective of nuclear non-proliferation. In our view, the key to the sustainability of the non-proliferation regime lies in reducing the incentives to proliferate. Any approach that is focused exclusively on non-proliferation, detached from necessary progress in nuclear disarmament, is legally, politically and morally questionable, and therefore counterproductive.

The nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime faces growing strain, as demonstrated by the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference to adopt an outcome document. As States possessing nuclear weapons or part of nuclear alliances make clear their unwillingness to significantly alter their reliance on those weapons, the grand bargain that allowed the NPT to come into being becomes increasingly harder to sustain, thus threatening both the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation pillars of the Treaty.

I reiterate Brazil's conviction that nuclear weapons must be prohibited and completely eliminated in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner, according to clearly defined benchmarks and timelines.

In line with UNGA resolution 69/77, which recommended that the agenda of the UNDC provide for focused deliberations, Brazil believes that the Commission should concentrate its work on these three important aspects pertaining to nuclear disarmament: transparency, irreversibility and verification. Discussions on verification could build upon, *inter alia*, the principles agreed to in 1988 by this UNDC.

Moreover, we reiterate our support for the idea that, within this agenda item, the UNDC could debate principles and elements of a legally binding instrument on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, without prejudice to the ongoing debates within the open-ended working group to substantively address concrete effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms that will need to be concluded to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons, whose establishment by General Assembly Resolution 70/33 Brazil co-sponsored. It is our firm view that these negotiations should take place within the existing multilateral system, either at the Conference on Disarmament or, if this is not viable, under the umbrella of the

United Nations General Assembly, in bodies such as the OEWG. The High-Level Conference established by Resolution 68/32, which will take place no later than 2018, will also be an important element in this process.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons is a threat to mankind. Those weapons increase tensions in all regions of the world, foster suspicion and hinder cooperation between States. The limited reductions made thus far are, unfortunately, offset by the continued modernization and qualitative improvement of nuclear arsenals.

As the Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons emphasized, nuclear weapons have long-lasting, devastating, indiscriminate effects, affecting civilians foremost, which makes them incompatible with international law and international humanitarian law. Their elimination is a moral imperative as well as a legal obligation.

Mr. Chair,

Brazil participates, on a regular basis, in confidence-building mechanisms at the multilateral level, such as the UN Register of Conventional Arms and the UN Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures. We also submit regular reports under the Program of Action to combat and eradicate the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons and the International Tracing Instrument. Furthermore, Brazil has signed the Arms Trade Treaty, currently in the process of ratification.

Confidence-building measures at the regional level are also of relevance. Brazil and our neighbors in South America are strengthening confidence and enhancing transparency in defense policies, including information on military expenditures and conventional arms. While recognizing the important role of confidence-building measures, we are open to considering other aspects pertaining to the field of conventional weapons that could be dealt by the UNDC.

Brazil favors the consideration of a third agenda item (also provided for in Resolution 69/77), which could be devoted to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The inclusion of a third agenda item should not detract from efforts towards advancing the other two items, nor should it serve the purpose of creating artificial linkages between different issues. Each topic must be considered in its own merits.

Mr. Chair,

The multilateral disarmament machinery has played a crucial role in fostering dialogue and building confidence among States, thus contributing to the promotion of peace and security. Regarding specifically the UNDC, to name only a few important outcomes of past UNDC sessions, I would underscore the previously mentioned 1988 principles on verification, which constitutes a fundamental element of any disarmament treaty; the 1996 guidelines for international arms transfers; and the 1999 guidelines on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The latter has been of important political value to the development of NWFZs around the world, including with regards to the long overdue establishment of such a zone in the Middle East.

Unfortunately, the UNDC has failed to fulfill its mandate for the past seventeen years. We must take full advantage of the universal membership of this Commission and better explore the fact that it is not bound by a narrow thematic agenda. While no one denies the complexity of the current global security situation, we must not forget that this body was able to agree on recommendations to the General Assembly during other times of tension, such as the Cold War.

Brazil continues to view the lack of political will as the main obstacle to further progress in the UNDC. However, we are mindful that procedural aspects – particularly the setting of the agenda – need to be examined with special attention, in order to enable meaningful deliberations.

These concerns notwithstanding, we sincerely expect that the UNDC will be able to agree on substantive recommendations in the current triennial cycle. This would create a positive momentum in the UN disarmament machinery as a whole.

I thank you.