



**PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF BRAZIL TO THE CONFERENCE  
ON DISARMAMENT**

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**Statement by**

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The negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices is one of the most widely supported and long-standing objectives in the sphere of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Already in 1957, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 1148 which called for the cessation of such production.

The need to begin immediate negotiations on a multilateral, non-discriminatory treaty, internationally and effectively verifiable, banning fissile material production was part of the final package of decisions agreed by consensus at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference under the title "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament" and was one of the "Thirteen Practical Steps for the Systematic and Progressive Efforts to Achieve Nuclear Disarmament", adopted by the 2000 NPT Review Conference. It was even agreed that the negotiations should be concluded within five years on the basis of the so-called Shannon Report and the mandate contained therein, taking into consideration both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives.

The United Nations General Assembly, by its Resolution 64/29, adopted by consensus last January, once again urged the Conference on Disarmament to immediately commence negotiations on such a treaty.

A number of arguments have been raised to prevent the CD from heeding the repeated calls for the negotiations on fissile material. Let me dwell on some of them, for, in order to conduct serious multilateral work, it is necessary to explore different viewpoints, to openly and bona fide respond to arguments instead of simply repeating national positions.

One objection is based on the idea that the ultimate goal and first priority is nuclear disarmament. No one denies that. However, many years of discussions made clear that the way to reach that goal requires a gradual approach. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty resulted from that pragmatic understanding and it is rightly seen as a step in the direction of nuclear disarmament. Likewise, negotiations dealing with fissile material produced for nuclear weapons are seen as another important measure that would bring limitations on maintaining and building up nuclear arsenals.

It is also argued that the CD has in its agenda other issues that should equally be the object of negotiations. A legally binding instrument on negative security assurances, for instance, should be negotiated, for it certainly would reduce the reason to keep nuclear weapons pending their final prohibition. However, the existence of that and other items in our agenda cannot base the refusal to deal with fissile material being it an essential component of nuclear weapons.

In addition, national security needs are invoked to justify opposition to negotiations on fissile material. States that neither possess nuclear weapons nor are parties to military alliances nor enjoy assurances of nuclear weapons protection from the part of nuclear weapon States suffer from an acute asymmetry in terms of national security. It is true that specific geopolitical situations may raise strong security concerns, but these situations cannot justify the development of weapons of mass destruction as well as disregard for the principles and norms of International Law and oblivion to the conduct of civilized international relations.

The system that the world community has been striving to edify and strengthen in the last sixty five years aims at ensuring security for all countries and peace and a dignified life for all human beings. We should not be indifferent to problems faced by any individual country but this does not mean that we should encourage violence in the form of, for example, weapons of mass destruction. The principle of equal security for all points to a collective goal. An international system restricted to individual concerns is not sustainable.

It might be said that these are unrealistic considerations that ignore the immense and apparently irreducible inequality in international relations. The privilege of seating in this hemicycle is to deal with intractable matters.

The negotiation on fissile material must lead to a clear, general, irreversible and verifiable ban on the production of such material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. It must also regulate pre-existing fissile material destined to those same purposes. Obviously compliance to those regulations has to be subject to verification.

It is undeniable that rules on prohibition of production, complex as they may be, are less complicated than regulations on pre-existing material. Trying to solve these complexities by way of a negotiating mandate would preclude the very negotiation. Variations can be found around the previous mandates adopted by the CD but none will solve beforehand problems that only actual negotiations can settle.

No instrument of International Law is ever cost-free to any State. This would amount to say that there are issues which are above the concerns of most nations, and that those nations, in their childish insouciance, would readily and thoughtlessly accept any rules or limitations. Disarmament affairs are not the domain of those sole States that possess or intend to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Every government has the responsibility before its people to pursue international conditions best suitable to their well-being. War, threats, coercion are not among those conditions.

The elimination of nuclear weapons is an essential element for the reduction of the democracy deficit that persists in international relations. There are certainly other problems that impede a democratic international system, like human rights, the financial system, trade and others, that require great efforts from governments and civil society. If we look at the history of international relations in the last sixty-five years we realize how much has been accomplished in terms of treaty making in areas that seemed intractable. Many negotiations took long years but States persevered not listening to skeptical considerations.

Looking back at the results of those negotiations no State can feel that its initial objectives were thoroughly fulfilled, but on the same time it realizes that some progress at least was made in the direction of common good.

In the city of Rousseau it is not out of place to remind ourselves of the general aspirations of humanity.