



PERMANENT REPRESENTATION
OF BRAZIL TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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**Statement by the Head of the Delegation of Brazil,
Ambassador Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares
Geneva, 12 February 2009**

Mr. President,

Since this is the first time I take the floor in the Conference on Disarmament during this year, allow me on the outset to congratulate you, Ambassador Le Hoai Trung, and Vietnam, for the excellent manner with which you conducted the work of the Conference as the first presidency of the 2009 Session and express our appreciation to you and your delegation for the consultations carried out since last year with a view to getting the Conference back to work.

Brazil comes to the 2009 session of the Conference on Disarmament in the same spirit that oriented its participation in the previous years. Nuclear disarmament remains the highest goal in international relations insofar nuclear weapons may thwart all the other aspirations including development. We come confident that progress can be achieved, not in a pangloss spirit but based in our sense of responsibility towards our fellow countrymen and all humankind. We know that all States here represented share this understanding. However the difficulties we face are not the same for each one of the States members. It is neither unjust nor superfluous to remind that a heavier responsibility falls upon those States that possess nuclear arsenals.

I would like to touch briefly on some topics that seem to pose here and there some interrogation. Perhaps the doubts raised stem from the very repetition of certain ideas. The term "mantra" should not be used ironically since its meaning, if I am not mistaken, is exactly one of propitiation.

The Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral negotiating body for nuclear disarmament. More than historical reasons related to the successive mechanisms or reasons of a formal if not legal nature proceeding from the text that established the CD, the uniqueness of this forum derives from political

realities, among them the acceptance by the nuclear weapon states to meet institutionally and permanently.

Since the objective is a world free of nuclear weapons all the different aspects and negotiations thereon cannot be detached and treated as separate matters in different bodies not necessarily with the same participants. Every substantive item in the agenda of the CD is essentially linked to that overall objective. It would not be useful and realistic to think of making progress on the basis of generous impulses or idealistic processes.

In other words, the obstacles we face are not of an institutional nature.

There has been mention of a principle of equal security among states. The existence of such a principle is doubtful. It certainly is not a synonym of the basic principle of International Law concerning equality of states. The goal of equal security was at the roots of the outdated system of balance of power or, more crudely, at the heart of the mutual assured destruction, one of the many sad features of the Cold War.

While making this comment I am not ignoring the realities of acute insecurity prevailing in many parts of the world. On the contrary, it is not only in conflict ridden areas, but indeed everywhere, that the right not to be aggressed or threatened must be assured. In fact, the sense of insecurity is a fertile soil not only for the reluctance to disarm but also for the ambition to acquire nuclear weapons. The malaise of insecurity can be remedied by means of weapons in the way that vitamins are supposed to strengthen ones resistance to disease. Taking further that image, nuclear weapons are like anabolic androgenic steroids which are outlawed in the world of sports.

The way out of this dilemma involving security and nuclear weapons is to face with determination the moral and political obligation to sit at the negotiating table.

Mr. President,

The aim of this opening and general speech is necessarily to assess the expected developments in this august body and in the framework of nuclear disarmament during the present year. It is not so much a question of foreseeing what will happen, rather of stating what Brazil thinks should be done as a member of the CD, co-responsible for its functioning, and as a country that inscribed in its political and juridical foundation, that is to say, in its Constitution, the interdiction to possess nuclear weapons.

It is likely that the barriers that have been preventing the effective functioning of the CD are about to be lifted. We must prepare therefore to engage in meaningful negotiations. The tone and context of recent informal exchange of views show this not to be a preposterous assertion.

The adoption of a program of work, in accordance with our rules of procedure is not a formality but a tool to allow every member to efficiently prepare its participation. Moreover, it corresponds to a political decision of the Conference, taken by consensus, establishing the order and the modalities by which it will take up the substantive agenda items. It has been according to this fashion that the CD reached important achievements, the last one being the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

After a regrettably long interval, the reasons for which not being now the moment to explore, the Conference should be ready to embark on the negotiation of a treaty on fissile material. The discussions thereon especially in informal context evidence the wealth of possibilities and the range of positions. We should nevertheless refrain from placing our preferences or intentions regarding this or that aspect of the possible instrument as conditions for accepting the negotiation. If such attitude prevails, we can be sure that no negotiation will ever take place. No one can imagine a treaty that in its final form corresponds exactly to the initial position of any individual party.

An FMCT could be the gateway leading to nuclear disarmament. One could argue that a treaty banning nuclear weapons would not depend on a measure controlling one ingredient. However it is difficult to deny that the major step of ridding the world of those weapons of mass destruction cannot be attempted if states shy of negotiating an FMCT.

For a country like Brazil, that has no nuclear weapons and will not possess such arsenal, nothing more sensible than ask for the prompt preparation and adoption of a legally binding instrument assuring non-nuclear weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. This is a preliminary measure, far away from the final ban on nuclear weapons but an indispensable, just and civilized decision that should be taken still in this first decade as a good omen for the XXI century.

Agreed measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space are undoubtedly in the interest of the very nations that are in a position of enterprising such dangerous, unfortunate adventure. For the world public opinion it is impossible to understand the supposed security impediments in the way of preventive actions regarding outer space.

These considerations show that for Brazil it is not only viable but also desirable to commence negotiations in more than one agenda item. However we refuse a position of all or nothing. In this sense, for example, we may welcome reductions in nuclear weapons arsenals but no one can expect that we celebrate such not so transparent unilateral measures especially in view of the persistence of technical improvements and alertness.

Mr. President,

It seemed appropriate to my delegation to address some of the main aspects concerning this Conference on Disarmament in the early phase of the 2009 Session. We should not forget that this is a crucial year in the process of preparation for the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference the positive outcome of which is one of our main concerns.

Last year Brazil, after an interval of eighteen years, re-established a separate Permanent Representation to the CD also in charge of other fora and initiatives dealing with arms control and international security. Some countries were simultaneously taking the opposite path. Is my country going against the trend of History? If it were so, too bad for all of us. We firmly believe that ours was the right decision in the right moment.

Thank you.