

**Intervention by Ambassador Juan Sandoval Mendiola,
Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico in the
General debate of the First Committee of the 73rd session of the
General Assembly of the United Nations**

New York, October 8th, 2018.

Mr. President,

Mexico congratulates you on your appointment as Chairman to lead this First Committee. You can count on the support of my delegation in all of your efforts. I also take this opportunity to congratulate the rest of the members of the Bureau.

This First Committee does not happen in a vacuum. The current international context is increasingly worrisome, characterized by a complicated juncture full of uncertainty, risks, and threats to security, in a way that we had not witnessed during the post-cold war era.

While we welcome the historic step to attain and sustain a world free of nuclear weapons through the adoption and opening for signature of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we observe with deep concern the multiplication of voices that promote increases to military expenditure, including nuclear arsenals; the inadmissible rhetoric about the threat of the use of force, in a framework of modernization of nuclear weapons. The banalization of the use of nuclear weapons is unacceptable, as it instills uncertainty, creates greater risks, and takes us away from peace, as well as being clearly contrary to the Charter of the United Nations.

The architecture of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, that consecrate the hope for development of humanity, are, unfortunately, under constant threat by the possibility of an intentional or accidental detonation of nuclear weapons, by the arms race, and the financial resources devoted to it, which contrast in an offensive way with those resources intended for development. Development and peace must be the only priorities for States, and they are intimately inter linked, just as disarmament and peace are mutually reinforcing processes.

Faced with this critical scenario, the work of the First Committee is as relevant and current as it was at the end of the Second World War. Mexico trusts and supports multilateralism as the only way to achieve sustaining peace, which translates into security and development for all nations and for all communities. The existence of nuclear-weapon free zones is the ideal environment to achieve these objectives and are the clearest expression of prevention and sustaining peace. Their existence and creation are completely relevant to this Committee.

Mr. President,

Due to their devastating power, their indiscriminate effect on innocent civilians, their humanitarian impact, and their harmful effects on the health, development and very existence of humanity, nuclear weapons cannot be considered as beneficial in the hands of some, and pernicious in the hands of others. This double standard is an incentive for proliferation and is contrary to the letter and spirit of the agreements that the international community has forged in the 73 years of existence of the United Nations.

We recall the ethical responsibility of the international community to act urgently and decisively, and adopt the necessary effective measures to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons, and prevent their catastrophic

humanitarian consequences. It is untenable to anchor the security of a few States in artifacts that ensure the destruction of humanity.

Therefore, Mexico actively promotes the signing and ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons to ensure its entry into force and subsequent universalization and implementation. Mexico urges more Member States to sign and ratify it, as a clear demonstration of commitment to their international obligations in the area of disarmament.

Mr. President:

A robust global governance in this area will only be complete until the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is universal and fully complied with, and until the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons enter into force and are universal. The limited progress in the fulfillment of the commitments and obligations on nuclear disarmament under the NPT is undermining the non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The health of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime depends on the fulfillment of the commitments and obligations stipulated in the Treaty regarding non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

In addition to the latent threat posed by the 15,000 nuclear warheads still in existence, we cannot ignore other recurrent threats from the use of chemical weapons, whose outrageous effect on innocent civilians we have witnessed in recent times, or biological ones.

In addition to the reluctance of some States to completely eliminate their mass destruction capabilities, it is also worrying that outer space is once again considered as a viable and legitimate scenario to deploy all kinds of weapon systems. Mexico reiterates that the exploration and use of outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, must be carried out exclusively for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all countries, regardless of their level of economic or scientific development.

Mr. President:

Small arms and light weapons create more victims than any other type of weapon; they are used in almost half of all violent deaths in the world, and continue to be the main tool in armed conflicts, feeding absurd spirals of violence, facilitating armed violence, and supporting the illegal acts of transnational organized crime and terrorism. Preventing and combating trafficking is an issue of priority, of national interest for Mexico; it is a matter of national security, of public security, and consequently of sustainable development and peace.

Mexico gives the highest priority to the Program of Action as a universal instrument which contributes to a comprehensive vision of the problem of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, by considering its causes and consequences for peace, security, and sustainable development. We welcome the adoption of the final document of the Review Conference on the Program of Action last June, and that it includes crucial elements to combat this scourge, such as ammunition.

My country also welcomes the efforts to promote the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and capacity building in different regions of the world. The national, regional, and international workshops organized by the United Nations for the effective implementation of the ATT are key elements to help all Member States to establish controls and safeguards against irresponsible transfers of weapons and to prevent their diversion into the hands of organized crime or terrorist groups.

It is necessary to find coherence in the implementation of the commitments of our States regarding the prevention and combating illicit trafficking. With a comprehensive and strategic approach, by implementing

the PoA, the ATT and the Firearms Protocol, we will be contributing to the progress of each and, in turn, of SDG 16.4.

Mr. President:

Although less tangible and visible, we must address the implications for international security of the advances in the field of information and telecommunications. Mexico strongly supports that the UN deliberates on this issue in a timely manner, and with a broad vision on artificial intelligence and rapid technological change, taking into account –in a balanced way– the concerns of security, development and exercise of freedoms and rights regarding these issues.

The report of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security represents a starting point for multilateral deliberations that allow us to consolidate a legitimate and peaceful use of cyberspace as a trigger for sustainable development, and that we are sure can be enriched by the cross-cutting nature of Agenda 2030.

Finally, Mexico welcomes the Disarmament Agenda proposed by the UN Secretary General. We call on the membership to consider it and value the actions contained in it. Let us remember that disarmament is not an end in itself, but a means or vehicle to achieve peace, to save humanity, to save lives and to save future generations, as the Secretary General proposes.

Thank you.