



**General Assembly | First Committee**

**General Debate**

**Statement by H. E. Ambassador Mauro Vieira**

**Permanent Representative**

New York, 3 October 2017

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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you and the other members of the bureau on your assumption of the works of the First Committee. My delegation reaffirms its full confidence in your leadership. Brazil associates itself with the statement made by Mexico on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition.

Mr. Chairman,

Nuclear weapons are the sole anthropogenic factor that can instantly destroy humanity and irreversibly change the earth. The very first GA Resolution sought the elimination of this kind of weapon. Then, as now, the existence of weapons of mass destruction with such catastrophic, disproportionate and indiscriminate effects was sitting ill with the principles of the UN Charter.

More than seventy years after the tragedies in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we still face considerable resistance from States possessing nuclear weapons to relinquish their possession and development and the possibility of resorting to them. The continued reliance on these weapons and the implementation of wide-ranging modernization programs by the major possessors belie their stated commitments and legal obligations regarding nuclear disarmament.

Nuclear weapons have long-lasting, devastating, indiscriminate effects, affecting women and children foremost, which makes them incompatible with international law, particularly international humanitarian law – and yet, they were the only weapon of mass destruction not explicitly prohibited under international law. Urgent action was needed to fill that gap. This is why Brazil was one of the proponents of the conference which culminated in the historical Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted last July. Brazil is honored to have been the first country to sign it last September.

In adopting the Treaty, States were motivated by their firm conviction that any use of nuclear weapons, for any reason, is incompatible with the dictates of public conscience and principles of international humanitarian law and would entail grave implications for the health of present and future generations.

The Treaty is consistent with and complementary to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which obliges all States Parties to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament. It strengthens the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, including the NPT and IAEA safeguards derived therefrom, the Treaties establishing Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

The Treaty opens a pathway for States possessing or hosting nuclear weapons to join in through a time-bound, verifiable and irreversible process of nuclear disarmament. It takes into account the complexities involved, including those related to verification. Rather than trying to spell out all the details of this process, it envisages arrangements to be agreed upon with the accession of States possessing nuclear weapons.

In the wake of over two decades of paralysis in multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, the new treaty represents a remarkable step forward. The Prohibition Treaty is now a fact and will have an impact on our work in the First Committee, hopefully tipping the scales in favor of more ambitious commitments on other aspects of disarmament, such as verification and fissile materials.

Mr. Chairman,

We reaffirm the role of the NPT in the non-proliferation and disarmament regime. It is incumbent on all treaty parties to engage constructively to reach a successful outcome for the current review cycle. A repetition of 2015 is unacceptable if the relevance and credibility of the treaty are to be maintained.

The present review cycle must be used to establish a concrete roadmap to nuclear disarmament, always recalling that the best way to achieve permanent disarmament is through multilateral irreversible, transparent and verifiable measures.

We must use the present review cycle to find possible ways to bridge the differences between nuclear-weapon States and its allies and non-nuclear-weapon States. In this regard, during the first session of Preparatory Committee to the 2020 Review Conference there were encouraging expressions of commitment to strengthening the NPT through enhanced transparency of the implementation of nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments under the NPT.

As a country unequivocally committed to the integrity of the NPT and to the credibility of the review mechanism, we cannot disguise our frustration with the failure, so far, to convene a Conference on the Establishment of a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East as provided for by the 2010 NPT Action Plan. This issue cannot be left in a limbo. Brazil believes that the successful convening of the Conference represents an essential part of the NPT and of the current review cycle.

As a party to the treaty on the establishment of the first denuclearized zone in a densely populated area of the planet, the Treaty of Tlatelolco – which celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year -, Brazil is ready to continue contributing to efforts leading to the establishment of nuclear-weapon free zones around the world. We also take pride in having developed, together with Argentina, a successful model of regional cooperation and confidence-building represented by the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Material (ABACC). We believe that the Agency could serve as a source of inspiration for our partners in the Middle East and elsewhere that strive for the establishment of zones free from nuclear weapons.

Lack of progress in nuclear disarmament endangers the hard-won successes in the non-proliferation front. The illusion of security provided by nuclear weapons must be exposed. Otherwise, more countries will feel tempted to develop them. It is unacceptable that nuclear arsenals continue to have such an important role in military strategies.

The recent nuclear and missile tests by North Korea constitute a serious threat to which none of us can be indifferent. Brazil vehemently condemned these acts, as they undermine the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime and hinder efforts for the entry into force of the CTBT. It is urgent to seek a peaceful resolution to a situation whose consequences are unimaginable.

Brazil had always stressed that there was no alternative to a diplomatic, negotiated solution to the issues related to Iran's nuclear program. The successful implementation of the "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action" is a vindication for diplomacy.

The entry into force of the CTBT is the only legally binding assurance against the recurrence of nuclear testing. The Treaty was negotiated and adopted not as a standalone instrument on non-

proliferation, but as part of a wider framework leading to nuclear disarmament. The continuing development of and modernization of nuclear weapons carried out through subcritical testing and computer simulations constitute violations of the letter and the spirit of the treaty and undermine the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime by promoting vertical proliferation.

Regarding a fissile material treaty, Brazil welcomes the beginning of discussions of the High-level expert preparatory group and highlights the importance of prohibition of both existing and future fissile material stocks for nuclear weapons, which should be put under international safeguards.

Mr. Chairman,

The weaponization of outer space is incompatible with the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. Brazil is committed to the enhancement of the multilateral legal framework concerning the preservation of a peaceful, safe and secure environment in outer space, and, since 2014, has been a coauthor of the Resolution "No first placement of weapons in outer space". We invite all States that share the objective of preserving a weapons-free outer space to support the resolution.

While political commitments and voluntary arrangements are welcome, they cannot be a substitute for legally binding multilateral norms. In this context, Brazil supports the initiative to establish a Group of Governmental Experts to consider and make recommendations on elements for an international instrument for the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS).

We would also like to reiterate our willingness to start negotiations on any of the agenda items of the Conference on Disarmament, under an agreed programme of work. The paralysis plaguing the CD is unacceptable and must be addressed with a sense of urgency. In this connection, we welcomed the recommendations adopted by the Open-Ended Working Group on a Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly on Disarmament (SSOD-IV), which would update and improve the existing UN disarmament machinery, and support the 2018 UN High-Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament, which will be an appropriate venue to follow through with measures towards the global common goal of disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

Brazil favors the strengthening of multilateral norms and principles applicable to the conduct of States in the field of information and telecommunications technologies in the context of international security. This, however, cannot take place at the expense of the free flow of information and the respect for human rights, particularly the right to privacy.

The recognition that international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations apply to State behavior in their use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) paves the way for a peaceful and stable and stable digital environment. In addition, the international community must examine the need to develop a specific legal framework.

Among other functions, such a framework will be important to introduce a list of proscribed behaviors which should include, inter alia, offensive first use; tampering with the supply chain, intentionally introducing vulnerabilities in systems or networks, and compromising the information security of other States.

Brazil encourages Member States to consider the adoption of a "no-first-use" norm with regards to offensive operations using ICTs. Such a norm will reduce the chances of a global ICT-related arms race, and reassure the international community that ICTs will not be used as tools of aggression. In addition, confidence-building measures and increased international assistance and cooperation are important to achieve an open, secure, peaceful and accessible ICT environment.

Mr. Chairman,

The Arms Trade Treaty universalization remains one of the greatest priorities for the international community. The accession of the major arms exporters is paramount to avoid the continuing detrimental effects of unregulated international arms trade to world peace and stability.

Brazil signed the ATT on the very first day it was opened for signature. We have in place a solid national export control system which complies, to a large extent, with ATT obligations. We are advancing the ratification process as well as the required adjustments to our legislation to make it fully compatible with the ATT.

Mr. Chairman,

The OPCW constitutes a byword for the continuous effort of the international community to promote a world free of weapons of mass destruction. We recognize the Organization's capacity to uphold its necessary neutrality while discharging its mandate in challenging environments.

In relation to the Syrian chemical dossier, while it is noteworthy that the declared chemical program has been dismantled to a great extent, we highlight the importance of continuous cooperation and dialogue among relevant actors to clarify the outstanding questions related to the Syrian initial declaration.

Sadly, disturbing reports of incidents involving the hostile use of chemicals in the Syrian conflict are not confined to the past. While unequivocally condemning the use of chemical weapons by anyone, under any circumstances, Brazil reiterates its full support to the work performed by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM).

Like many other delegations, Brazil is not satisfied with the outcome of the Eighth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention held last year. States parties could have achieved more substantive results, in particular with respect to the institutionalization of the Convention. We reiterate that the best path to strengthen the BWC is to take decisions that would gradually bring the Convention to the same institutional level of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The establishment of an Organization for the Prohibition of Biological Weapons and the resumption of negotiations on an effective and legally binding verification regime would provide the international community with more effective means to counter the threat of the use of biological weapons, both from State and non-State actors.

Mr. Chairman,

In dealing with the issues at stake in the Committee's agenda, Brazil will continue to strive for a balanced and non-discriminatory approach with legally-binding obligations applicable to all. This is the only road which can lead us to an international order that promotes peace, stability and well-being, a goal shared by all our countries.

I thank you.