

II PrepCom to the 2020 NPT RevCon – General Debate

Intervention from Brazil

“Mr. Chairman,

Let me first congratulate you on assuming the chairmanship of this Preparatory Committee. Be assured of the full support of the Brazilian delegation to your endeavors. Brazil fully associates itself with the statement delivered by New Zealand, on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition.

This Preparatory Committee has a singular role to play in the current NPT Review Cycle. It has the responsibility to ensure continuity from the discussion held last year while also preparing the ground for the next PrepCom and the Review Conference itself. This delicate job is further complicated, alas, by the particular circumstances in which we meet. There have been glimmers of hope, particularly with the adoption and opening for signature of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; the completion of arsenal reductions under New START by the US and Russia; and the resumption of dialogue on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. However, we have also witnessed a general degradation of international security and of the relations between Nuclear Weapons States, accompanied by troubling signs of a renewed, and in our view profoundly misguided, reliance on nuclear weapons and related deterrence doctrines.

Mr. Chair,

The warnings against the modernization of nuclear weapons which my delegation, among many others, has been constantly issuing in the past few years, not only in the context of the NPT, but also in other fora, particularly the CTBT Article XIV Conferences, prove now prophetic. There is a widespread concern that a new arms race is already under way, and Nuclear Weapon States are openly developing new nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles as well as new missions for such weapons. Those developments directly contradict commitments agreed to under the NPT, call into question their sincerity in pursuing the implementation of Article VI and undermine the Treaty and its three pillars alike.

This new arms race seems to be based on the convergence of new technologies with the traditional concept of nuclear deterrence. This

is an unproven and potentially disastrous mix. The blurring of lines between conventional and nuclear, tactical and strategic, and kinetic and non-kinetic means of attack, particularly the use of cybertools, challenge conventional wisdom on nuclear weapons and introduce elements of uncertainty in a realm where there is no margin for error. The heightening in rhetoric accompanying this trend adds to our concerns, as political brinksmanship meets strategic recklessness.

Mr. Chair,

The treaty has been moderately successful in preventing proliferation, and there is only one case of withdrawal in the Treaty's history. Additionally, the international system has been able to deal with particular challenges which have arisen. In this sense, we are particularly worried with signs that there is a possibility of reneging the commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear dossier. The JCPOA was approved by the UN Security Council and its implementation has been consistently certified by the IAEA. Its unravelling would in our view directly affect the credibility of the multilateral system and instill doubts on its effectivity. We are also concerned that the possible accession of non-NPT countries in the NSG may happen with detriment to the integrity of the NPT-based regime, without agreed criteria and on a case-by-case basis. Such a haphazard attitude towards these crucial issues could bode ill for the non-proliferation regime moving forward, as it defies the fundamental notion of a rules-based system.

Mr. Chair,

It is against this backdrop that we must step up our efforts to protect and sustain the NPT, and the only way to do it is by fully complying with its obligations. Let me stress, in this vein, that Brazil and Argentina have jointly built a unique relationship of cooperation and mutual trust, underpinned by the work of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Material (ABACC). We must reiterate the commitments unanimously agreed to in 1995, 2000 and 2010, and stress the urgency of their implementation for the health of the regime. Those include the urgent entry into force of the CTBT, the negotiation of a treaty on fissile materials, diminishing the salience of nuclear weapons in military doctrines, further arsenal reductions, the unimpeded access to nuclear energy for peaceful uses and the establishment of a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all Other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East. The NPT

acquis is a fundamental part of the global peace and security architecture, it is our collective responsibility to reaffirm it and build upon it, towards a successful 2020 Review Conference and the realization of the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons. We cannot wait on signals from the outside to move ahead, rather, we must respond to current challenges with renewed energy and focus.

I thank you Mr. Chair.”

