

Special Representation of Brazil to the Conference on Disarmament

2019 High Level Segment

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*Check Against Delivery*

Mr. President,

Let me first congratulate you, Ambassador Aidan Liddle, on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and, through you, all distinguished representatives to this august body. [I would also like to thank the presence of the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Michael Moller, as well as of the High-Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu.]

-The First Special Session on Disarmament of the UN General Assembly established this Conference forty years ago. Weapons of mass destructions held by competing superpowers were recognized in that manner to be a central issue of concern for world peace and security.

-The Conference was construed as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, with a clear treaty-making function activated and guided by specific mandates, as agreed.

-Restrained membership under a strict rule of consensus was meant to provide a level of comfort to discuss and negotiate even on the most sensitive matters of security interest.

-Realistically, however, the Conference's point of reference and credibility has relied on key treaties directly arrived at by the major powers, such as those addressing antiballistic missiles, intermediary nuclear forces, open skies and strategic nuclear arms reduction.

-Upholding and extending the existing arms control treaties, verifying compliance with their core provisions and building up from their legal bottom line towards a world free of weapons of mass destruction is what provides a credible backdrop to multilateral disarmament.

Mr. President,

-Brazil welcomes the UN Secretary General's Disarmament Agenda as a notable effort to recognize, assess and respond to what we can all agree is a deteriorating international security environment.

-In support of Member States, he has articulated timely suggestions and action points dealing with three orders of threats: threats to the very survival of humanity posed by the prospect of a new WMD arms race; threats to the lives of humans as a consequence of conflict and conventional weapons; and threats posed by the evolution of technology applicable to weapons and warfare. Many are the scenarios in which ever more autonomous weapons systems increase risk and lethality, reduce human control over of life and death, disrupt relations of power and accountability and challenge the principles of humanity and the dictates of public conscience.

-But no number of disarmament agendas will protect us from resumed arms race at a higher level of risk if existing norms are put to rest, superseded by worrisome trends at the national, regional and international levels, with no

indication of what new agreements or regime could be established in their place.

-Last year`s UN First Committee was a sign of disarray. While the record number of resolutions and decisions (68) underscored a shared concern with the current strategic environment, growing differences in how to address it were evident in the record number of votes on resolutions (42) and separate paragraphs (53).

-Two resolutions on cybersecurity were adopted and will be implemented, reflecting a split vision among nuclear powers at odds with each other on how to curb the weaponization of cross-cutting and unstoppable technologies at the heart of the digital era.

-Of course, the international community is not keeping quiet, as tensions and conditions deteriorate. In this Chamber, we have seen an effort to brake 22 years of deadlock with sensible attempts at more viable approaches to resuming substantive work.

-Brazil was among those involved in moving forward decisions that would allow the CD once again to discuss the international security landscape, with flexibility and constructive nuance, but effectively.

-The creation in 2018 of five subsidiary bodies focusing on the core issues of the CD`s agenda was a breakthrough of sorts, to be continued this year under progressively more detailed and committed agreements, paving the way towards negotiating mandates as issues mature.

-Brazil is ready to shift gear on an FM(c)T. With a view to bridging positions, we have reaffirmed our 2010 proposal to the CD on a framework agreement

approach to fissile materials, underpinned by additional protocols dealing, respectively, with existing and future stocks.

-On another issue of critical importance, we have accepted to facilitate convergence on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, chairing the ongoing GGE created by resolution 72/250 of the General Assembly, as well as the subsidiary body on PAROS of 2018.

-Nuclear weapons remain the gravest existential threat to humanity. While arsenal numbers have greatly decreased, mostly due to reductions by the US and Russia, nuclear risk has not diminished at the same rate. On the contrary, newfound reliance on nuclear weapons in security doctrines, as well as modernization programs, are currently driving up the risk of nuclear war.

-Brazil agrees with the UN Secretary General that the notion shared by Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev in the Reykjavík summit of 1986, that a nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought, needs to be reaffirmed.

-Following in the footsteps of other binding instruments, such as the chemical and biological weapons conventions, and joined by the majority of UN members states, Brazil actively supported the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The new treaty is an unequivocal statement of the unacceptable humanitarian consequences of any nuclear weapon use or detonation. It is a legal expression of disarmament to save humanity. Negotiated in good faith and in an open-ended manner, we have no doubt TPNW complements and is consistent with the NPT, translating to the fullest its key Article 6 obligation.

Mr. President,

-As we witness the unravelling of disarmament, and approach the 2020 NPT RevCon under most unfavorable circumstances, a grand dialogue on disarmament seems to be in order.

-In the form of a high-level conference or another suitable arrangement, such dialogue would permit joint assessments of where we currently stand and provide renewed direction on a better place we might wish to be. It could break new ground for bridging perspectives, where possible, and for respectfully understanding and dealing with divergences. A search for commonalities across the disarmament spectrum might open the gate for new important steps to be taken.

-The disarmament machinery and toolbox can be mobilized to this end. The UNSG's Agenda provides a point of reference, outlining a range of action points which can be taken up by States insofar as they are useful.

-There is no need to have general acceptance of the TPNW in order to work together in further steps towards the goal of a nuclear weapons free world. Such steps comprise fully implementing the commitments from 2000 and 2010 RevCons, the entry into force of the CTBT, and restarting negotiations on international disarmament instruments.

-This Conference on Disarmament can rise to the occasion and play a vital role. While the immediate start of negotiations seems unlikely, much can be done to deepen common understanding on the main issues and to agree on general parameters for going back to the treaty drawing board. Brazil supports substantive work which builds upon last year's progress, independently of the form such work takes.

-Simply sticking with the knowledge of a deteriorating status quo does not seem a reasonable nor safe alternative.

I thank you Mr. President,