NEW AGENDA EXPLANATION OF VOTE - BEFORE THE VOTE - L.23 REV.1

Mr. Chairman

I take the floor on behalf of the countries of the New Agenda Coalition ' Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden ' and refer to the draft resolution "Bilateral strategic nuclear arms reductions and the new strategic framework"

Mr. Chairman

The New Agenda Coalition joins the consensus on this resolution consistent with the view expressed in our draft resolution L.3 Rev.1 that the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions, is a positive step in the process of nuclear de-escalation between the U.S. and the Russian Federation. In that connection we will follow with interest the prospect that the US and the Russian Federation will continue to work closely to ensure the security of weapons of mass destruction and missile technologies, information, expertise and material.

Within this context however, we want to stress very clearly that reductions in deployment and in operational status cannot substitute for irreversible cuts in, and the total elimination of, nuclear weapons.

The Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference lays out a blueprint for a process leading to disarmament and the encouragement we gain from an improved relationship between the possessors of the two largest nuclear arsenals in the world, leads us to believe and expect that real and urgent progress in achieving those commitments can be made.