STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CHILE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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ON OCCASION OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE’S SEGMENT ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS

UNITED NATIONS

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 2008
Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau and to assure you of the full cooperation of the delegation of Chile.

Chile associates itself with the statements made by Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and by Brazil on behalf of MERCOSUR and reaffirms here that not only is nuclear disarmament the most important item on the agenda of the United Nations disarmament machinery but its attainment is also essential if we are to achieve security for all States at the lowest possible level of armaments.

For this reason, we are a party to all the relevant and related instruments, including of course the NPT, the CTBT, the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the IAEA Additional Safeguards Protocol and the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. We are also very active in the competent agencies, including OPANAL, the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and of course IAEA, whose Board of Governors has been chaired by Chile in the person of Ambassador Milenko Skoknic.

We have been following and are strongly supporting the ongoing NPT review process, which will conclude in 2010 with the Eighth Conference. We have been involved in this process both at the two sessions of the Preparatory Committee and at the Conferences which Middle Powers Initiative – a unique organization of global civil society - has held in Ottawa, Vienna and Dublin in order to exert global political pressure so that the 2010 Conference can succeed.

Mr. Chairman,

We are not interested so much in describing our national positions regarding disarmament (which, we believe, are sufficiently well known) as in expressing our hope that the political changes which have already occurred and which are in the offing will effectively create opportunities for rescuing the nuclear non-proliferation regime and relaunching nuclear disarmament. The importance of the two letters from Henry Kissinger, George Shultz, William Perry and Sam Nunn published by The Wall Street Journal lies essentially in the fact that the cream of the intelligentsia of one of the leading States in issues of peace and international security is reaffirming the political necessity of nuclear disarmament and advocating movement.

This movement must take place at both the bilateral and multilateral levels and the Eighth NPT Conference will therefore be a litmus test of the determination of the key
players to avoid a failure such as occurred in 2005. These key players must take over the entire political legacy built up at all the Review Conferences; this represents an *acquis* sustaining and also conditioning subsequent developments. To ignore it would be to adopt a blinkered approach, leading only to stalemate.

The relaunching of nuclear disarmament also requires the entry into force of the CTBT. We were glad to note that new political circumstances could allow a resumption of the process of ratification of this instrument by the United States and other key States. We congratulate Colombia on making the effort to ratify it, overcoming difficulties of a legal and constitutional nature with which we are familiar. Our Colombian brothers have demonstrated that political will can remove any obstacle and their action sets an example to all those whose ratification is essential for the entry into force of the CTBT. We acknowledge and welcome the moratorium on nuclear testing which several nuclear-weapon States have adopted and respected. However, a moratorium is basically a stop-gap measure, which does not provide the legal security and political trust that the CTBT is required to inject into international relations.

In addition, negotiations must begin – within or outside the Conference on Disarmament – on the FMCT. This is the natural step following the CTBT, which will clinch the commitment of the nuclear Powers to article VI of the NPT. It will also make effective the assertions of other nuclear-weapon States which have repeatedly given assurances in multilateral forums that the elimination of nuclear weapons is their top priority. Chile acknowledges that verification has its own political substance, which insufflates the essence of disarmament mechanisms. Nevertheless, as we have stated in Geneva, we can live with an instrument that does not include verification, since we are convinced that disarmament is an incremental, constant and ever-evolving mission.

Mr. Chairman,

Together with Malaysia, Nigeria, New Zealand, Sweden and Switzerland, Chile is submitting at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly a new version of its resolution on the de-alerting of nuclear weapons. This is the sequel to the successful exercise which we initiated in 2007 and which was understood and supported by a solid majority of the States Members of the United Nations, including States with military nuclear capability and members of important security groupings such as NATO. We continue to be convinced that effective abolition of the launch on warning principle would remove a likely cause of nuclear catastrophe resulting from errors, misunderstandings or even sabotage.

The process of launching and circulating this resolution was enthusiastically welcomed by civil society and I should like here to expressly recognize John Hallam of Nuclear Flashpoints, Steven Starr of Physicians for Global Survival, and the International Peace Institute, which last week organized a round-table, chaired by Ed Luck, on the operational status of nuclear weapons. Those who were unable to attend will have another opportunity the day after tomorrow, Friday, 17 October at 1.15 p.m. in Conference Room 6, when the sponsors of the draft resolution have organized another
side event to raise awareness of the danger and explain the basic reasons for our initiative. Converts and agnostics are cordially invited.

Mr. Chairman,

Chile is among those who believe that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin. We must advance on both fronts, always bearing in mind that the final goal is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Allow me to repeat once again, there are no good proliferators as opposed to bad proliferators. There are no good nukes versus bad nukes. All proliferation is bad and all nuclear weapons create an unacceptable risk to international security.

Any policy and any diplomatic effort that ignore this essential truth are destined to meet with mistrust and frustration on the part of the overwhelming majority of the non-nuclear-weapon Member States of this Organization.

Almost two decades after the end of the cold war, we find that international relations have their ups and downs and that the causes of tension and conflict seem to be endowed with a perverse ability to reinvent themselves. Nuclear weapons, like all weapons, were created with the potential for being used. It would be arrogant of us to affirm that human intelligence is able to avert all the risks generated by the mere existence of such contrivances. The only possible rational course of action is to work with determination and honesty for their elimination.

Thank you.