Statement by
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on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement

Thematic Debate: Disarmament Machinery

New York, 23 October 2008
Mr. Chairman,

It is my great privilege to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

NAM reaffirms the importance and the relevance of the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC) as the sole specialized, deliberative body within the UN multilateral disarmament machinery. We continue to fully support the work of the Commission, and express regret that it was unable to reach agreement on recommendations on its two agenda items during substantive sessions of its three-year cycle ending in April 2008 due to the lack of political will and inflexible positions of certain Nuclear Weapons States, despite our group’s constructive role and concrete proposals throughout the deliberations, especially in the Working Group on “Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons”.

With regard to the agenda for next substantive cycle, beginning in 2009, NAM wishes to put forward the following preliminary position:

1. The United Nations General Assembly has already established important guidelines that should be fully applied when deciding the 2009 UNDC agenda. Those guidelines are reflected in:


2. By Decision 52/492 the General Assembly decided, inter alia, that “(b) as of the 2000 substantive session, the substantive agenda of the Disarmament Commission should normally comprise of two agenda items per year from the whole range of disarmament issues, including one on nuclear disarmament....”.

On the basis of that Decision, which regulates the present structure and function of the UNDC, it is clear that for the 2009 UNDC agenda, one of the items has to be on nuclear disarmament. NAM will not support any agenda for the UNDC that is not consistent with the above-mentioned Decision.

3. In resolution 61/67, the General Assembly “directs the Disarmament Commission, at its 2009 substantive session, to prepare elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade and to submit them for consideration by the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session”.

4. Based on Decision 52/492 and Resolution 61/67, therefore, NAM is of the view that the agenda items for the next cycle of the UNDC should be:
a. "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons."

b. "Elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade". It is the understanding of NAM that the elements of a draft declaration for the fourth disarmament decade shall reflect different relevant issues in the field of disarmament, including the issue of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

5. NAM calls upon all UN Member States to display the necessary political will and flexibility, consistent with the relevant guidelines already adopted by the UN General Assembly, in order to achieve agreement as soon as possible on the 2009 UNDC agenda during the next cycle.

Mr. Chairman,

With regards to the Conference on Disarmament (CD), NAM reaffirms the importance of the Conference as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, and reiterates its call on the CD to agree on a balanced and comprehensive program of work by, inter alia, establishing an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament as soon as possible and as the highest priority. We emphasize the necessity to start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified framework of time, including a Nuclear Weapons Convention. We reaffirm the importance of the unanimous conclusion of the ICJ that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

NAM reiterates its support for the convening of the Fourth Special Session of the UN General Assembly devoted to Disarmament (SSOD-IV), and further reiterates its deep concern over the lack of consensus on the deliberations to consider the objectives and agenda of SSOD-IV. Appreciating the role of the Chair of the open-ended working group in 2007, selected from NAM, we recall the concrete proposals and the consistent and constructive efforts of the Movement to reach agreement among all UN Member States. We regret the lack of political will of a certain State in obstructing consensus. We reiterate the importance of satisfactorily concluding the work of the open-ended working group on SSOD-IV, at an early date, as mandated by the General Assembly with a view to reaching agreement on the objectives and agenda of SSOD-IV, including the possibility of establishing its preparatory committee.

Mr. Chairman,

NAM continues to regard the necessity of working towards the convening of the SSOD-IV and reaffirm its strong support towards that end, taking into account the constructive dialogues and active engagements that exists among Member States,
including key delegations, during the 2007 substantive sessions of the OEWG. Therefore, at this session we are tableing a draft decision under agenda item 89 (c) as contained in document L.22, to request the inclusion in the provisional agenda of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly the item entitled “Convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament”.

In this cluster, we will also table a draft resolution entitled “United Nations Regional Centers for Peace and Disarmament”, under agenda item 90(d), as contained in document L.24.

NAM underlines that the UN Regional Centers for Peace and Disarmament have been instrumental in promoting understanding and cooperation among States in their respective regions in the fields of peace, disarmament and development. The General Assembly continues its appeal to all Member States, as well as international governmental and non-governmental organizations, to make voluntary contributions to the Centers in order to strengthen, facilitate and implement their programs and activities.

In closing, the Non-Aligned Movement hopes that all delegations will be able to join us in supporting these draft resolutions that my delegation has just introduced.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

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