



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA, AMBASSADOR RODRIGO MALMIERCA DIAZ, AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE. 62<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. New York, 10 October 2007.**

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Cuban delegation, I congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee, and I wish much success to you and the Bureau.

Cuba fully supports this Monday's statement by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

Our Committee is meeting for the first time after the changes made on the disarmament structures of the Secretariat.

The Department of Disarmament Affairs disappeared, and the new **Office for Disarmament Affairs** came to replace it. The post of **High-Representative for Disarmament Affairs** was created. I would like to take this opportunity to commend Mr. Sergio de Queiroz Duarte's tireless and excellent work since the very beginning of his tenure.

The UN Secretary-General, in presenting his restructuring proposals to the General Assembly, stressed his intention to make disarmament one of his high priorities.

Thus, we have reasons to believe that the recent changes will facilitate progress in the important issues under the First Committee's responsibility, and that the leading role of the UN in disarmament matters will be strengthened.

Mr. Chairman,

While we are here making statements and pledging our commitment to peace and disarmament, reality outside of this room is quite different. **Military expenditures**, far from decreasing, increase every year at an accelerated rate. Such expenditures already reach a record 1 204 billion dollars, 37% more than 10 years ago.

This is mainly a consequence of the dramatic growth of the US military budget. This country alone spends in weapons the equivalent of what the rest of the world spends, and produces 63% of all the weapons sold in the world.

The aforementioned facts take place in an international context increasingly marked by hegemony, unilateralism, interventionism – direct or covered up –, insecurity for the weakest countries and the attempt to make the **doctrine of preemptive use of force** prevail.

The gloomy reality is that the goal of general and complete disarmament is but a pipe dream. Instead of **nuclear disarmament**, which is and will continue to be the top priority in the area of disarmament, adopted by the United Nations almost 30 years ago, a buildup of arms and waste in new weapons and armament systems are promoted.

While resources are so squandered, some say hypocritically that there are no funds to tackle the very serious problems stemming from poverty and marginalization that the world is facing. That is a gross lie!

With just 10% of the current military expenditure, the Millennium Development Goals could be achieved. With the resources that are devoted to armaments today, the 852 million hungry people of the world could be fed for a year or the 40 million HIV/AIDS patients could receive a 40 years supply of medicines.

Cuba proposes to devote at least half of the current military expenditures to meet the needs of economic and social development, through a UN-managed fund.

The NAM countries will submit again to the Committee a draft-resolution on the **relation between disarmament and development**. We hope that the only country that voted against this resolution last year will reconsider its position.

Mr. Chairman,

Notwithstanding the proclaimed end of the cold war, there are still some 30 000 nuclear weapons in the world; and more than 12 000 of them are ready for immediate use. The nuclear weapons modernization program has not stopped.

The mere existence of nuclear weapons and the doctrines that sanction their possession and use, pose a grave danger on international peace and security.

Cuba rejects the attempt by some who try to ignore or minimize the relevance of nuclear disarmament to impose, instead, a selective approach of non-proliferation, by virtue of which the problem does not lie in the existence of nuclear weapons, but in the “good” or “bad” behavior of those who have them.

This year, the first session of the **Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference** was held. The meeting was at least a space to exchange views. In other times, perhaps that would not deserve any comments, but amidst the current impasse and backward steps in the area of disarmament, many believe that having had the opportunity to talk is, per se, a success. We want to take the opportunity to commend the active and positive role played by the non-governmental organizations in this and in other relevant meetings.

Cuba rejects the selective application of the **NPT**. Issues relative to nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy cannot continue to be disregarded, while horizontal non-proliferation is favored. The inalienable right of the States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy must be fully respected.

The lack of progress in the implementation of the 13 practical measures agreed upon in the year 2000 must be reviewed by this Committee without delay. Likewise, we ought to address the continued dilation of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on **security assurances** for non-nuclear States.

We must make an in-depth review and take practical steps to prevent some countries from continuing to develop and use increasingly sophisticated and deadly **conventional weapons**.

This Committee cannot continue to ignore questions that raise legitimate concerns in the international community such as the **use of arms and ammunitions containing depleted uranium**

Mr. Chairman,

As NAM has been long reiterating, it is pressing to convene the **Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly on Disarmament (SSOD IV)**.

The Open-Ended Working Group on SSOD IV convened this year. Unfortunately, it could not fulfill its mandate. The only country that voted against the resolution on the issue last year, made very clear its opposition to the convening of the SSOD IV, thus thwarting any possibility of consensus. The NAM countries will submit a new draft resolution on the issue in the next few days. Let us hope that the United States will not continue to oppose, on its own, the other 191 Member States' rightful interest.

I would like to conclude, Mr. Chairman, by reiterating the Cuban delegation's support and commitment to contribute to the fullest extent possible to a successful work of the Committee.

Thank you.