



BRAZIL

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR RONALDO MOTA SARDENBERG,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BRAZIL TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
HEAD OF THE BRAZILIAN DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE TO REVIEW PROGRESS MADE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION TO PREVENT, COMBAT AND
ERADICATE THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS
IN ALL ITS ASPECTS

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June 26, 2006

Mr. President,

I wish to express my delegation's congratulations on your election. We are certain that your wisdom and experience, as demonstrated during the preparatory consultations, will provide an effective and able guidance to the work of the Conference.

I fully associate myself with the statement delivered by His Excellency Mr. César Mayoral, on behalf of MERCOSUL and Associated States, which fully reflects Brazil's views of this Review Conference as well as our expectations with regard to its outcome.

My delegation regards the latest version of your non-paper as a very balanced and comprehensive compilation of views and proposals put forward by States during the preparatory process, including in both Biennial Meetings of States held in 2003 and 2005. In our view, this document constitutes a very good basis for our negotiations.

Mr. President,

Since 2001, Brazil has undertaken many efforts towards fully and effectively implementing the Programme of Action.

Brazilian legislation on Firearms was first enacted in 1934, and since then has been constantly reviewed and improved. It was recently enhanced by the entry into force, in December 2003, of the "Disarmament Statute", which sets out a new legal and regulatory framework for the control of small arms and light weapons and ammunition. The new legislation improves the National Arms Registration System (SINARM) and establishes more rigorous requirements for issuing gun-ownership licences, as well as much heavier penal sanctions for violators. Additionally, it determines that all small arms and light weapons or ammunition found or seized in illicit situations must be promptly destroyed, immediately upon completion of the judicial measures that may be needed for criminal investigation purposes.

In tandem with the adoption of this reinforced legislation, in 2004 the Brazilian Government launched a major nationwide initiative known as "Disarmament Campaign", in collaboration with Brazilian State Governments and organized civil society. This Campaign aims to promote a culture of peace, by raising public awareness of the dangers inherent to the possession of firearms as well as by stimulating their voluntary disposal by means a massive buy-back programme. The Campaign was concluded in October 2005, and resulted in the collection of more than 450 thousand firearms, far more than the 80 thousand originally expected.

I would also like to refer to our recent experience in tackling the issue of illicit circulation of ammunition. Since the entry into force of the new legislation on firearms, all ammunition, whether manufactured in Brazil or imported, must bear a bar code sign printed on the smallest packaging unit, so that the manufacturer, the purchaser, the ammunition type and its production/delivery lot may be identified.

In addition, according to regulations recently issued by the Ministry of Defence, all ammunition manufactured or imported for official use must have individual markings in each cartridge, allowing for the identification of the production lot and of the purchasing organization.

Both initiatives have been undertaken in close collaboration with Brazilian ammunition manufacturers, that have developed a cost-effective process for individual cartridge marking and record-keeping. Their adoption has greatly improved the ability of our police organizations to combat the illicit circulation of ammunition. Countries in our region consider this to be a problem that rivals that of the illicit trade in weapons itself. Hence our perception that the Programme of Action and the Instrument on Marking and Tracing must be complemented by immediate decisions related to the illicit trade in ammunition.

Taken as a whole, Mr. President, these initiatives have led to an unprecedented reduction of 8,2% in deaths caused by firearms in Brazil in 2004, as compared to the preceding year. The importance of this is highlighted by the fact that this figure had been constantly increasing since 1992, and especially by its significance in terms of spared lives – around 3.000 less people have died in Brazil from firearms.

Mr. President,

Our collective experience in implementing the Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels has clearly revealed some of its shortcomings. The ambitious goals of the Programme are still far from having been accomplished. They continue to require reinforced commitment and political will from the part of our governments and civil societies.

On the other hand, some of our unfulfilled expectations are a consequence both of the lack of clarity and specificity of some of the Programme's provisions, and of the fact that some vital areas have not been substantively dealt with in the document.

As a consequence of this, this Review Conference should not limit itself to renewing our commitment to the full implementation of the Programme of Action. It should rather be taken as an opportunity to address the Programme's shortcomings, by means of the adoption of substantive decisions aimed at strengthening and complementing its mechanisms.

Our view on how best to undertake these tasks fully coincide with those of MERCOSUL and Associated States, as expressed by the Head of the Argentine Delegation. More specific contributions by our countries will be presented during the negotiations on the final documents.

Finally, I would draw specific attention to the issue of transfer controls. Brazil has been actively supporting and participating in discussions aimed at the adoption of international controls on transfers of small arms and light weapons. We have presented substantive proposals on this issue to the Preparatory Committee. The Review Conference should call for the adoption of clear procedural and operational guidelines for the enforcement of national regulations on exports, imports and transit of small arms and light weapons; for the harmonization of such regulations in the regional and global levels, as well as for reinforced information-exchange and cooperation mechanisms, with a view to combating the diversion of transfers to the illicit market. Measures aimed at reinforcing transfer controls may also include the adoption of common criteria to be taken into account by States in authorizing transfers of small arms, light weapons and ammunition, provided that such criteria are objective, transparent and non-discriminatory.

Thank you.