



MISIÓN PERMANENTE DE CUBA ANTE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS
315 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016 (212) 689-7215, FAX (212) 689-9073

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR RODOLFO BENITEZ VERNON, REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA, AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE NINTH REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE TREATY OF THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. New York, 29 April 2015.

Madam Chair,

The Cuban delegation is particularly pleased to have you, honorable representative of the brotherly government and people of Algeria, as chair of this Conference. You have all our support.

We associate ourselves with the important statements by the Non-Aligned Movement and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

Madam Chair,

Humanity remains at serious risk of being annihilated, a risk posed by the existence of over 16.000 nuclear weapons, 4.000 of which are ready for immediate use. Making use of a minimum amount of these would have serious consequences for our planet. No country would be immune to the folly of a nuclear attack.

The Treaty of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) establishes clear legal obligations on nuclear disarmament. Unfortunately, Article VI of the treaty has remained unimplemented for over 40 years after its adoption.

Some States Parties hold on to the alleged power that derives from the possession of such weapons, despite the fact that history and scientific research conclude that the power of the atom as a weapon leads to genocide and annihilation of life on earth.

Why not build schools instead of nuclear submarines, or hospitals instead of “smart” bombs? Why not produce vaccines instead of nuclear warheads, or more food instead of bombers? Why not further research on AIDS and cancer instead of building missile shields?

Five years after its adoption and despite its limited and insufficient scope, the Action Plan agreed upon at the 2010 NPT Review Conference has not been implemented. The most critical situation lies in the 22 actions agreed on nuclear disarmament, the majority of which have been unfulfilled.

The most concerning issue is that this is not a temporary situation since neither the 13 practical steps toward nuclear disarmament agreed upon in 2000 nor the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East among others, have been implemented. We are obviously confronted with an unacceptable pattern of failure of compliance that repeats itself time and again.

It is neither just nor acceptable that a group of States Parties strictly fulfill our obligations with the NPT and others ignore them. The credibility of the Treaty is becoming ever more questionable and this may risk its future relevance. It is necessary to take action without further delay.

Madam Chair,

We want this Ninth Review Conference to be successful. However, we do not share some others' approach that the measure of success will be the adoption of a final document regardless of its content.

It is our responsibility as States Parties to adopt a plan of clearly defined practical actions by the end of this meeting with specific time frames to fulfill them, particularly those in the field of nuclear disarmament.

We propose to establish the 6 following objectives that would allow tangible progress toward the elimination of nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth:

- 1- Declare any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons as a violation of Humanitarian International Law and a crime against humanity, immoral and unacceptable under any circumstance whatsoever.
- 2- Immediately stop the ongoing nuclear weapons modernization programmes and development of new types of nuclear weapons.
- 3- Definitely abandon the concept of "nuclear deterrence" and any role of nuclear weapons in military doctrines and security policies.

4- Adopt an international instrument under which nuclear-weapon States provide unconditional and legally binding assurances that they will never use or threaten to use such weapons against non-nuclear States.

5- Establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East as soon as possible.

6- Start multilateral negotiations in 2015 for an International Convention on Nuclear Disarmament under which all nuclear weapons are prohibited and eliminated in a period not longer than 20 years. The Convention might be formally adopted at the United Nations High-Level International Conference on Nuclear Disarmament convened by the General Assembly for 2018.

Madam Chair,

At the 2nd CELAC Summit, held in Havana in January 2014, the Latin America and the Caribbean region was formally declared a Zone of Peace, which constitutes a historical landmark. Such declaration stressed the steadfast commitment of CELAC member countries to the promotion of nuclear disarmament as a priority goal.

We welcome the historical decision by the United Nations General Assembly to convene in 2013 for the first time a High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament, and designate 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

At this Conference, Cuba has presented a detailed national report on the strict observance of all the NPT provisions by our country. We shall contribute with concrete proposals hereto.

I would like to conclude by calling upon all States Parties not to waste the opportunity this Conference provides us with. Our commitment to future generations must be no other than ensuring a better world, a world forever free of nuclear weapons.

Thank you very much.