



**Statement by Ambassador Antonio Guerreiro,
Permanent Representative of Brazil to the Conference on Disarmament,
On behalf of the New Agenda Coalition,
at the General Debate of the NPT PrepCom
Geneva, 22 April 2013**

Mr. Chair,

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the six members of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC): Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and my own country, Brazil. At the outset, the NAC wishes to congratulate you on your assumption of the position of Chair of the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to assure you of the Coalition's full support and cooperation during your term.

Mr. Chair,

This year, we are marking the fifteenth anniversary of the NAC. It is, however, regrettable to see that 15 years later, the founding NAC Joint Ministerial Declaration remains unfulfilled. In 1998, NAC members asserted that the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons and the possibility of their use or threat of use by NWS posed a continuing threat to humanity. Accordingly, the NAC Ministers maintained that the world could no longer remain complacent at the reluctance of the NWS to take the fundamental and requisite step, namely to make a clear commitment to the swift, and total elimination of their nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons capabilities. To this end, they called on the NWS to immediately begin work on the practical steps necessary to bring about nuclear disarmament. This call remains as relevant today as when it was made fifteen years ago.

The NAC remains as committed to the NPT as ever and to the fulfilment of its objective of achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. In doing so, we recall the founding agreement of the Treaty and the grand bargain struck by all States Parties to the NPT, under which nuclear-weapon States committed themselves to nuclear disarmament, in return for which non-nuclear-weapon States undertook not to develop nuclear weapons. We also recall that in endorsing this agreement, all States Parties affirmed the inalienable right to pursue the peaceful application of nuclear energy. As a cross-regional group, the NAC has worked tirelessly since its inception in 1998 towards the fulfilment of the NPT's objectives.

While the nuclear non-proliferation objectives of the NPT have largely been successful in limiting the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, and the non-proliferation provisions and obligations of the Treaty have been strengthened over the years, it is clear that the nuclear disarmament commitments embodied in the NPT have yet to be realised. It is because of this reality that promoting and achieving nuclear disarmament remains the "raison d'être" of the NAC.

Mr. Chair,

There is only one guarantee for a safe and peaceful world and that is the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons irrespective of their type or location. No nuclear weapon is safe in any hands, whether state or non-state actor. As the UN Secretary General recently noted in Monterey: "There are no right hands for wrong weapons". As long as these weapons exist, the possibility of their use, whether by accident, miscalculation or

design, will remain. Similarly, history has shown that as long as some States continue to possess them, citing security reasons for doing so, others will aspire to acquire them.

The NAC strongly believes that there can be no justification for the continued retention or indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by any actor. The continuing existence of around 20,000 nuclear weapons defies logic, is unjustifiable, and is clearly incompatible with the integrity and sustainability of the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Mr. Chair,

The 2010 NPT Review Conference expressed "deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons" and reaffirmed "the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law." Furthermore, a significant number of States highlighted this concern at the 2012 NPT Preparatory Committee and at the 2012 General Assembly First Committee session.

In March this year, Norway hosted an International Conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons aimed at developing a greater awareness and understanding of the catastrophic consequences of their use. Mexico has offered to host a follow-up conference to continue this long overdue discussion. Given that it is abundantly clear that no State or group of States can mitigate the effects of a nuclear weapon detonation on civilian populations, it is our expectation that all NPT States Parties seize the opportunity to permanently rid our world from the threat posed by nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chair,

The Action Plan that emerged from the 2010 NPT Review Conference not only reaffirmed the unequivocal commitment of the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament in accordance with Article VI of the Treaty, but also recommitted the NWS to accelerate progress on the steps agreed in 1995 and 2000 to advance the implementation of Article VI. In our view, this progress regrettably remains lacking.

The Conference also called upon all States Parties to exert all efforts to promote universal adherence to the NPT, and not to undertake any actions that could negatively affect prospects for the universality of the Treaty. The NAC therefore invites South Sudan to adhere to the Treaty, and urges India, Israel and Pakistan to join the NPT as NNWS promptly and without conditions.

The 2010 Action Plan on nuclear disarmament, including the points contained in Action 5, must be fully implemented as a priority and we look forward, in this regard, to receiving reports on how States Parties are accelerating compliance with all provisions and obligations of the Treaty and the commitments made at Review Conferences.

Mr. Chair,

The NAC reaffirms its view that all aspects of the NPT should be fully implemented and strengthened, reflecting a balance between its three pillars. To achieve this, the current challenges facing the Treaty must be met with a common purpose and through concrete action, as the NPT's long-term success is dependent on the realisation of all its objectives. We can no longer afford a selective approach to the implementation of the NPT's provisions which undermines the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime and reinforces inequalities under the Treaty.

Mr. Chair,

The NAC believes that, pending the elimination of nuclear weapons, nuclear-weapon-free zones represent a valuable means to enhance global and regional peace and security, to strengthen nuclear non-proliferation efforts and to contribute towards the goal of nuclear disarmament. We are pleased that the majority of States are part of such zones and we underscore the importance of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones where they do not exist, especially in the Middle East.

The establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East would undoubtedly produce significant benefits not just for the region but also more broadly. The Resolution on the Middle East is an essential element of the outcome of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and of the basis on which the Treaty was indefinitely extended without a vote. This resolution holds an important place in the overall NPT architecture and remains valid until its full implementation.

We regret that the Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction was not convened in 2012 as agreed in the 2010 Action Plan. All efforts must be exerted towards the convening of the Conference without further delay. We commend the ongoing efforts of the Conference Facilitator, Under Secretary of State Jaakko Laajava. We acknowledge the seriousness with which States of the region have approached this endeavour. We support all efforts by the facilitator, the co-conveners and the wider international community to assist the States of the region in this important task and we stand ready to offer our support and assistance.

Mr. Chair,

Neither the pursuit nor the retention of nuclear weapons can ever guarantee a nation's peace and security, nor enhance regional or international security. The NAC strongly condemns the nuclear tests carried out by the DPRK in violation of its obligations under the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. We urge the DPRK to fulfill its commitments under the Six-Party Talks, including those in the September 2005 joint statement; to abandon all nuclear weapons programs; to return, without delay, to the NPT as a NNWS and to place all its nuclear facilities under IAEA verification, with a view to achieving the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner. We note with concern the current escalation of tension in the region. It is only through dialogue and negotiation that a solution can be found.

Mr. Chair,

All States Parties must seize the opportunity of this PrepCom to begin work in earnest on the construction of a comprehensive legally-binding framework of mutually reinforcing instruments for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. Such a framework should include clearly defined benchmarks, timelines, and be backed by a strong system of verification. Given the threat posed to all of humanity by these instruments of mass annihilation, it is time for us to act now, for tomorrow may be too late.

Please be assured that the NAC will continue to be constructive over the coming days and in the process leading up to the Review Conference in 2015 in our quest to strengthen the implementation of the NPT through accelerated actions. On behalf of the NAC allow me once again to reiterate our support to you and your team. We stand ready to fully and effectively engage with all States Parties to ensure this PrepCom's success.

I thank you.

