



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

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**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR RODRIGO MALMIERCA DIAZ,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA, AT THE
GENERAL DEBATE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISARMAMENT
COMMISSION. New York, 10 April 2006**

Mr. Chairman:

First and foremost, allow me to commend you for your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, which I extend to the rest of the Bureau officers.

Likewise, I would like to give a warm welcome to Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, who has just assumed his position as Under-Secretary General for Disarmament Affairs. We wish him much success in his new responsibilities.

Mr. Chairman:

After two years in which the Commission could not play its important role, we are very satisfied that this body can begin today its regular works with two substantive issues of high relevance on its agenda. We have now the responsibility to produce concrete results.

While we are making statements in this room, out there in the real world most of the world's population is suffering the consequences of the vertiginous increase of military expenditures.

The world military expenditure exceeds US\$ 1 trillion and continues to grow. One single country, the United States, spends on arms the same as the rest of the world, and US corporations produce 60% of all arms sold worldwide.

How much could be done if only a minimum fraction of the current military expenditures were devoted to solve underdevelopment-related problems and to reduce the growing gap between the richest and poorest countries?

With the resources currently being devoted to arms, 852 million people who suffer from hunger in the world could be fed during a year, or the 38 million

HIV/AIDS patients could be supplied with retroviral pharmaceuticals during 40 years.

With just 10% of what is currently spent in weapons, the Millennium Development Goals could be achieved.

These are the realities that we should tackle with concrete actions. We cannot accept passively that more resources be spent on killing than on saving lives.

Cuba reiterates its proposal to devote at least half of the current military expenditures to meet the needs of economic and social development through a fund managed by the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman:

According to the most serious estimates, in spite of the proclaimed end of the Cold War, there are near 33 000 nuclear weapons in the world, over 13 000 of them ready to be employed immediately. The nuclear weapons modernization programs have not stopped.

The mere existence of nuclear weapons and the doctrines that prescribe their possession and use, represent a threat for international peace and security.

That is why Cuba reaffirms the historic position of the Non-Aligned Movement that nuclear disarmament is, and must continue to be the highest priority in the disarmament sphere.

Cuba opposes the intentions of some who are trying to ignore or minimize the relevance of nuclear disarmament and to impose a selective non-proliferation approach, 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.

The only real solution is to fully eliminate those weapons and ban their existence for good.

We reiterate that the nuclear-weapons States have a legal obligation not only to pursue in good faith, but also to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international verification.

We hope that in the Working Group on "Recommendations to achieve nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation" we can examine in a frank and open manner, the reasons that motivate, for example, the lack of progresses in the implementation of the 13 practical steps agreed upon in the 2000 NPT Review Conference. This will allow us to create the conditions to formulate, in 2008, practical recommendations to advance towards nuclear disarmament.

With regard to the item "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms", we consider that the most effective course of action would be to focus on the questions that are pending from the 2003 agreements, occasion in which the Commission was very close to adopt a document on this item.

If we act with realism and without exaggerated ambitions, taking full advantage of the progresses that we have made in considering this important issue, we do not rule out, even, the possibility of being ready to adopt a good document at the end of the Commission's session of 2007, without being necessary to devote a third year to this issue. Obviously, only practice will prove it possible or not.

We wish the brotherly delegation of Brazil much success in the Chairmanship of the Working Group II and we reiterate them Cuba's full support.

Mr. Chairman:

To attribute the lack of concrete results in disarmament matters to the inefficiency of the working methods is not only a simplistic and distorted vision of reality, but also an attempt to divert the attention away from the true obstacles that we face.

The main difficulties to advance lie, firstly, in the lack of true political will by some States, which have shown their rejection to multilateralism and disarmament, and instead, they privilege unilateral actions and selective non-proliferation.

This Commission, barely seven years ago, was subject to important changes in its working methods, adopted by decision 52/492 of the General Assembly. However, that could not avoid the fact that, for almost three years, due to the inflexible position of a minority group of States, the Commission could not achieve agreement even on its substantive agenda.

Our delegation is ready to review and discuss proposals to improve the working methods of the Commission, as long as it is not carried out at the expense of the discussion of the substantive agenda items.

We will support the proposals aimed at strengthening and not to weakening the role of the Commission and by extension the General Assembly, as the main body of the UN in the field of disarmament.

Thank you very much.