

Conference on Disarmament

17 February 2022

Original: English

Note verbale dated 28 January 2022 from the Special Representation of Brazil to the Conference on Disarmament, transmitting the Statement by the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) in response to the Joint Statement on Preventing Nuclear War by Nuclear-Weapon States

The Special Representation of Brazil to the Conference on Disarmament presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and, in its capacity of coordinator of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) — Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand and South Africa, has the honour to request the issuance of the "Statement by the NAC in response to the Joint Statement on Preventing Nuclear War by the Nuclear-Weapon States (25.1.22)" as an official document of the 2022 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Special Representation of Brazil to the Conference on Disarmament avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament the assurances of its highest consideration



Annex

Statement by the New Agenda Coalition – Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand and South Africa (25 January 2022)

1. The New Agenda Coalition (NAC) takes note of the ‘Joint statement on preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races’ issued by China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America on 3 January 2022.
2. The NAC also takes note of the joint-statement’s emphasis on the continued pursuit of ‘bilateral and multilateral diplomatic approaches to avoid military confrontations, strengthen stability and predictability, increase mutual understanding and confidence, and prevent an arms race that would benefit none and endanger all.’
3. At a time when tension is heightened, the NAC sees the joint-statement as a necessary effort to stabilise strategic relations and we hope it signals the beginning of greater cooperation between the nuclear-weapon States in the fulfilment of their nuclear disarmament obligations. In particular, the joint affirmation that ‘a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought’ is an important signal, which must now be translated into concrete action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.
4. While diplomatic cooperation is needed and welcome, the NAC is concerned about recent policy statements by the nuclear-weapon States relating to the modernisation of their nuclear weapon programmes. These statements undermine their commitment to nuclear disarmament and increase the risk of the use of nuclear weapons and of a new arms race. Nuclear disarmament is not only an international legal obligation, it is a humanitarian and moral imperative.
5. The NAC is of the view that nuclear weapons and security policies grounded in nuclear deterrence cannot provide meaningful stability or predictability and potentially risks encouraging proliferation. The continued existence of nuclear weapons further aggravates tensions in the international security environment and represents a grave threat to humanity. Stabilisation efforts are not sufficient on their own without each of the nuclear weapon States taking tangible steps towards diminishing the salience of nuclear weapons in their strategic doctrines, leading to the elimination of their nuclear arsenals. Such intermediary steps could include the provision of legally binding negative security assurances.
6. The NAC supports measures aimed at reducing the risks of nuclear war. We believe that risk reduction efforts are interim solutions, and that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against their use or threat of use. Without a direct link to the ultimate goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world, strategic and nuclear risk reduction measures only contribute to the illusion that we can live with nuclear weapons indefinitely. While nuclear weapons continue to exist, they will always pose an unacceptable risk to humanity.
7. In this regard, the NAC recalls the expression of deep concern at the 2010 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, and its resolve to seek a safer world for all and to achieve the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. Grave concern at the danger to humanity posed by nuclear weapons should inform all deliberations, decisions and actions relating to nuclear disarmament.
8. The NAC stresses the unequivocal undertaking of the Nuclear-Weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States Parties are committed under Article VI of the NPT. The NAC rejects the notion that these obligations are conditional, as suggested in the statement of the nuclear-weapon States. The current global security environment reinforces the need for urgency and determination in their implementation.
9. The NAC advocates for the implementation of concrete, transparent, mutually reinforcing, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament measures. We also call for the

urgent fulfilment of obligations and commitments within the framework of the NPT, which remain valid until implemented.

10. Finally, the NAC is disappointed that, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Tenth NPT Review Conference, which was due to convene in New York in January 2022, was further postponed. However, the postponement now provides the nuclear-weapon States with an opportunity to publicly reiterate and make progress on the full implementation of their unequivocal undertaking. Such a reaffirmation, matched by actionable, specific measures, would bolster the NPT and its Review Process, and give additional effect to the efforts referred to by the nuclear-weapon States in their joint-statement.
