



**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA
AMBASSADOR JORGE VALERO**

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE
65TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

New York, October 5, 2010

Mr. President:

The United Nations Organization was created Sixty-five years ago under the conviction to serve as a forum for building peace and save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Given that the maintenance of international peace and security was one of its main purposes, the perception that the world public opinion or the ordinary citizen has on the performance of this institution is usually made primarily on the basis of its achievements and failures in conflict resolution.

The UN has continued to play an active role in the efforts for peace and security in the area of conflict resolution and the promotion of disarmament. Today, however, there are still present situations of tension and instability in regions of the planet that give rise to concern because of their unpredictable consequences for the peaceful coexistence among nations.

In the area of disarmament and nonproliferation in the past year and a half there have been positive developments that seem to indicate that we are in the path of reviving the multilateral disarmament diplomacy. The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela warmly welcomes these developments, confident that they are part of a sustainable process to provide action and far-reaching agreements, with the objective of strengthening peace and security.

In this context, our country encourages the United States and the Russian Federation to continue their efforts to reduce their nuclear arsenals, with the ultimate aim of achieving the total elimination of these weapons systems, a commitment that must also involve the other nuclear powers. We take note of the START agreement signed in April this year by the Presidents of the United States and Russia, hoping its early entry into force.

Venezuela considers that the efforts for disarmament and nonproliferation must be driven simultaneously. Even though our country expected more far-reaching agreements from the Review Conference of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), held from May 3- 28, 2010, its results, however, open a space for the consolidation of a trend towards dialogue, multilateral negotiation of disarmament agreements and measures that enable us to overcome the unilateralism and distrust that negatively affected the disarmament diplomacy for almost ten years.

As for the set of arrangements agreed at the NPT Review Conference, our country highlights in particular the convening of an international conference in 2012 to examine the question of establishing a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East, following-up on the decision taken in 1995 when it was decided, as part of the package of agreements, to renew indefinitely the international legal instrument.

Venezuela hopes that the International Conference of 2012 will be able to generate commitments among regional states, including Israel, to establish a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone, which will outlaw the manufacture and possession of such devices, in accordance with the NPT. We reiterate our call for the universalization of this international legal instrument whose goal is to encourage those countries that have not yet done so to adhere.

The Government of Venezuela vindicates the sovereign right of countries to develop their nuclear industry for peaceful purposes, in accordance with the provisions enshrined in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. In this regard, we are concerned about the maneuvers and pressure from the United States and other Western nations seeking to limit the right of the Islamic Republic of Iran to develop its nuclear industry for peaceful purposes and their aspirations for energy and technology independence.

Dangerously, political and military elites of the United States and Israel, violating the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, make threats about the possibility of using military force to compel Iran to abandon its nuclear program for peaceful purposes, affecting its national economic and social development program. The United Nations must intensify its diplomatic efforts to facilitate dialogue and negotiation between the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)- place of jurisdiction in the matter- and the Government of Iran, to overcome this impasse in the restoration of confidence.

The maintenance of doctrines of first use by the nuclear powers constitutes *per se* a threat to international peace and security. That is why Venezuela believes that the negotiation of a legally binding instrument on negative security assurances represents a measure of particular importance in the efforts for disarmament and nonproliferation. Having overcome the duels of the cold war, there is no political or moral justification for the security doctrines of the nuclear powers to continue building on the approach of first use.

Mr. President,

Venezuela supports the effective implementation of the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. Given the negative impact that this illegal activity has on the intensification of conflicts in regions of the planet, it is necessary to strengthen international cooperation, in order to address this problem. Our country attaches great importance to the assistance the international community can provide, as appropriate, in support of national policies of those States affected by illicit arms trafficking, consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In this context, Venezuela considers that the results of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of the PoA, held from June 14 to 18, reaffirmed the commitment of Member States to continue using the platform offered by the Program of Action to strengthen cooperative efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

It is noteworthy that Venezuela's National Assembly is expected to approve this year the Disarmament Act, as part of a state policy in

favor of combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

Mr. President:

My country hopes for the Conference on Disarmament to break the deadlock it's been in for more than fifteen years due to the opposing positions on substantive items on its agenda. We are convinced of the need for the Conference to deal soon with priority issues such as the negotiation of a treaty banning fissile material production, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the negative security assurances and nuclear disarmament. We need to contribute to the strengthening of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and nonproliferation. It is essential for the Conference on Disarmament, with the assistance of its Member States, to fulfill its mandate as a multilateral negotiating forum of measures and agreements in this field.

In another vein, we encourage the intensification of work in the heart of the Disarmament Commission, designed to foster understandings leading up to the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament.

Finally, Venezuela wishes to reiterate its commitment to international peace and security, and is convinced that respect for the rules and principles of international law enshrined in the UN Charter and other international legal instruments and the promotion of general disarmament -in accordance with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments- are guarantees for peaceful coexistence among nations.