

Thank you, Mr. President, dear friend Ambassador Gamaledin,

The vagaries of the alphabetical order have placed upon your broad shoulders the task of being the first in the rotation of the six presidencies of the CD for the year of 2023. You will set the pace for our work for the remainder of the year. We count with your experience, wisdom and diplomatic ability - marks of the renowned Egyptian Foreign Service - to guide us in this daunting task. As two developing non-nuclear armed nations, Egypt and Brazil share a long common history of promoting the cause of disarmament, including as partners in the G-21 and in the New Agenda Coalition. Consequently, our dialogue and coordination flows with ease. We feel as if Brazil itself is conducting our deliberations - of course with the upside that we do not have to go through the burdens associated with it.

Ambassador Gameledin, Mr. President, count on us. We pledge our full support to your tenure at the helm of the Conference. We also take this opportunity to welcome the new colleagues to the CD, the distinguished representatives from Sri Lanka, Ecuador, the United States, the Republic of Korea and Morocco.

More than ever effective disarmament diplomacy is needed. The CD is mandated to act as a forum to debate international peace and security and, most importantly, to negotiate legally binding agreements, as we represent the single standing multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. As it is evident, the latter function has not been fulfilled in the last three decades. Persistent lack of consensus in substantive and procedural issues, and, critically, lack of trust among Member States have been plaguing the CD. But it is far from being a phenomenon limited to it. Our understandable sense of frustration should not lead to despondency. By no stretch of imagination, the CD alone enjoys the monopoly of finding difficulties in reaching consensus outcomes, as illustrated by the failure of the X NPT Review Conference for the second consecutive time. Despite the headwinds faced by multilateralism, under its new government, Brazil is committed to redouble its efforts to uphold it.

The continuation of conflicts do not contribute to set us on a positive course to increase the level of trust among States. Notwithstanding this, in 2022, we were able to achieve the functioning of five Subsidiary Bodies, thanks to the skilled, devoted and strenuous diplomatic work of our dear colleague Li Song – whose wisdom will be sorely missed in this plenary. Although most SBs did not reach consensus in terms

of results, the mere convening of them was a means to expose the main nuances in perception on the issues in our permanent agenda.

Our work last year testifies that, even under the most extreme circumstances, dedication, professionalism and persistence – and a good amount of good political will and trust in the art of diplomacy -, a modicum of progress is within reach. Nevertheless, the 2022 CD's skeleton report was approved only at the last minute and in the First Committee it was subject to voting with a sizable number of abstentions. It is hard to sugarcoat this dangerous situation derived from the excessive politicization of our discussions.

As all are painfully aware, since concluding the negotiations of the CTBT in the distant year of 1996, no new negotiations were carried out in the CD. We believe, nonetheless, that it is unfair to place the blame for the flaws of the UN disarmament machinery exclusively at the doorstep of this Conference. For this reason, Brazil has been advocating for an idea championed by Group of the Non-Aligned Movement for quite some time: the convening of a fourth special session of the UNGA dedicated to disarmament (SSOD-IV).

The convening of an SSOD-IV has been on the agenda of the General Assembly since 1994. It has been the subject of numerous resolutions and decisions. As you may all recall, in 2016, under the chairmanship of Ecuador, an OEWG adopted a final consensus report, which contained recommendations on shaping the mandate and modalities for convening SSOD-IV. That OEWG recommended, among other things, that SSOD-IV comprehensively assess the situation in the disarmament and international security field based on the principles and priorities set out in the First SSOD, held in the already distant year of 1978 at the height of the Cold War. Much has changed since then.

Our goal is for the disarmament machinery to retain its relevance and enhance its effectiveness. It must be fit for purpose, prepared to conduct its work should circumstances be right to enable serious disarmament and arms control negotiations. In this context, it would be helpful to contemplate the convening of a preparatory committee to the SSOD-IV, at the earliest convenience.

In any event, Mr. President, Brazil will continue to support the ideas and initiatives put forward by you, whom we encourage to proceed consultations with the members of the CD in order to arrive at a programme of work.

We wish a very successful, productive and effective year of work at the CD.