

## **Seminar “Towards a world without nuclear weapons: challenges and perspectives”**

### **Final remarks**

Ambassador Sérgio Moreira Lima, President of Alexandre de Gusmão Foundation,

Dear Ambassador Maria Luisa Escorel, Head of the Department of International Organizations,

Esteemed colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Our debates over the last two days were frank and open. By bringing together representatives of governments, academia and civil society, we have been able to address in an objective manner the challenges we face in achieving a world free of nuclear weapons and the perspectives and prospects open to us. The difficulties, as well as the possibilities in our path were considered in depth in our discussions.

This rich dialogue between persons with diverse points of view strengthened or firm belief that normative transformation is not only possible, but necessary. Future intergovernmental discussions on the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime will benefit from our exchange of ideas.

The discussions in the first Panel, on the interaction between ABACC and the IAEA with regard to current verification mechanisms focused on how Brazil and Argentina were able to reverse the logic of competition. Building on a longstanding basis of common interests, both countries improved bilateral relations and established a mutually beneficial relationship and made possible the convergence of views in South America and the Caribbean that made the Treaty of Tlatelolco a pioneer instrument to ensure the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the absence of nuclear weapons in our territories. Panelists also commented on how ABACC and the IAEA can work together to improve their respective activities in the light of existing verification mechanisms and on how their experience can be used in the best interests of the rest of the continent and other regions.

Prospects for the 2020 NPT Review Conference were debated in the second panel. Participants offered a wide range of ideas to ensure a successful outcome, including benchmarks for assessing progress in the achievement of the objectives of the NPT. Several pointed out that the Treaty has been

quite successful in containing proliferation, but still lags behind in what regards concrete progress on disarmament. Some panelists pointed out the importance of focusing on the areas where convergence between non-nuclear weapon states and nuclear weapon states is possible. Suggestions were made for nuclear weapon states to report on the measures taken to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their respective national security doctrines.

The impact of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on the current normative basis was examined in the third Panel under different perspectives. Participants debated, in this connection, whether the Ban Treaty can have a positive impact or instead be detrimental to the NPT. It was also recalled that once the Ban Treaty is ratified, each individual State will be able to adopt internal legislation that can have an influence on the behavior and practices of the nuclear weapon States. It was pointed out that at some point the international community will have to find a convergence between the existing normative basis and the new norms inscribed in the Ban Treaty.

The growing awareness of the dangers of the mere existence of nuclear weapons has been a recurrent theme in the background of our discussions. The heightening of tensions in Southeast Asia and the risk that nuclear weapons could be used either by design or accident was seen as a very dangerous possibility. The important role of academia and civil society organizations to help avert these dangers was stressed..

Human actions matter. Dedicated work and the applied wisdom of statesmen, diplomats, scientists and academics is crucial to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, an objective shared by nuclear and non-nuclear States alike. Humankind cannot live forever under the threat of its own annihilation and cannot be destined to live in a world of violence. I am confident that we will be able to overcome the current differences so that we can bring to the future generations a better world than the one we live in.

I would be remiss if I did not close these remarks by expressing the heartfelt thanks of all participants to the organizers of this Seminar and all those who cooperated for its success.

Thank you. Academia and civil society organizations  
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