

REMARKS BY MR. SERGIO DUARTE
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RECEPTION HOSTED BY
MIDDLE POWERS INITIATIVE (MPI) AND GLOBAL SECURITY INSTITUTE
(GSI)

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This reception was very generously intended to commemorate my appointment as the UN Secretariat's High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. It is of course a great honour to be recognized by my friends and colleagues in disarmament – some of whom I have known for many years. As I look to the difficult challenges ahead, it is reassuring indeed that I can count on your friendship, good counsel, and support.

Let me begin by reassuring you all that my office will continue the mandates of its predecessor, the Department for Disarmament Affairs. We are proud of its past accomplishments and the close cooperation that we have enjoyed in working with individuals and groups in civil society who share our goals. I know that the Secretary-General is personally determined to revitalize multilateral efforts in both disarmament and non-proliferation and this will inevitably require extensive cooperation with all non-governmental organizations that work in these fields.

Of course, many speeches are made in the United Nations, in many fields, formally recognizing the important roles of non-governmental groups in addressing very diverse global needs. Yet none of these can possibly convey the extent that disarmament efforts depend upon the efforts of civil society. While disarmament is a process that requires difficult decisions by governments, such governments are themselves dependent upon information and political support from the people.

So tonight, I would like to turn the tables – instead of being honoured myself, I would like to honour our hosts: the Global Security Institute and the Middle Powers Initiative.

Though they had separate origins, they have joined in common cause. Together, each in its own way, they are strengthening the three pillars of what one of my predecessors, Jayantha Dhanapala, used to call, “sustainable disarmament”. So what is necessary politically to sustain progress in disarmament? I believe the answer is found in three domains.

- The first is an educated public – people who are aware not just of the common threats posed by the world's deadliest weapons, but also the value of truly multilateral initiatives to alleviate and eliminate such threats.
- The second consists of enlightened legislators, who – as representatives of the people – bear much of the responsibility to ensure that national laws and policies are fully consistent with international obligations.
- The third includes governments who share a common understanding of how progress in disarmament and non-proliferation can strengthen the security of all nations.

An enlightened and empowered public – an informed and inspired legislature – and a mobilized collective effort among governments: this is what progress in disarmament requires.

And this is precisely what the Global Security Institute and the Middle Powers Institute are trying to achieve.

I believe that GSI and MPI represent some of the very best that non-governmental groups offer to the cause of disarmament. They offer a clear vision. They address practical details of implementation. They have a long history of working with the UN. They understand the vital need for the rule of law and multilateralism in disarmament. And they contribute directly to disarmament and non-proliferation education.

If we take the work of GSI and MPI – add to it the hard work of countless other individuals and non-governmental groups in civil society – and add to this the work of governments around the world that genuinely want to eliminate all of the world's weapons of mass destruction: here we will find a concrete strategy to achieve, at long last, the great and historic goals that we and all our predecessors have sought to accomplish in disarmament.

Whether we look at the individual citizen, the legislator, or the diplomat, nothing would better advance this process of sustainable disarmament more than the continued emergence of *Global Conscience* -- the title of Senator Douglas Roche's new book. I believe he is exactly right in observing that there is indeed evidence of an "awakening of concern about how we human beings treat one another and the planet". The wider and deeper that such a conscience develops throughout the world, the brighter will be the prospects for disarmament in our time.

I wish to thank both GSI and MPI for organizing this event today, and extend my very best wishes to all who toil in pursuit of the great goals of disarmament.