



**Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters**  
**54th Session, Geneva**  
**7 July 2010**

Opening Remarks by Sergio Duarte  
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

Let me begin by welcoming you all to Geneva—the home of Voltaire and Rousseau, and fortunately for us, the summer venue for meetings of the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters.

I wish first of all to express my appreciation to my colleague and friend, Ambassador Carlo Trezza, for his many contributions as Chairman of the Advisory Board this year. I am pleased to welcome Mr. Sergey Koshelev, who is attending his first meeting of the Board—and Dr. Carolina Hernandez, who was also unable to attend the session last February.

This particular session of the Advisory Board is occurring at an especially auspicious moment. There are some welcome signs of a possible revival of the spirit of multilateral cooperation in the fields of disarmament and the regulation of armaments.

On 28 May, the 2010 NPT Review Conference adjourned after adopting by consensus a substantive Final Document, for the first time in a decade. That document, moreover, contained some elements that have significant potential for further development as the preparations for the 2015 Review Conference gradually begin to get underway.

With respect to nuclear disarmament, for example, there were two references to the Secretary-General's five-point disarmament proposal of October 2008, including mention of the merits of considering a nuclear weapons convention or an alternative legal framework. There were references to implications of nuclear weapons for international humanitarian law. The document noted that a majority of States Parties favoured the development of timelines for accomplishing nuclear disarmament goals. It also recognized the "legitimate interests" of non-nuclear-weapon states in obtaining legally binding and unequivocal negative security assurances and in constraining the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons.

The Final Document also made it clear that the States Parties are strongly supportive of the non-proliferation and peaceful use goals of the Treaty. At a time when export controls, safeguards, and various efforts against nuclear terrorism have been the subject of criticisms in various arenas, the Review Conference unambiguously reaffirmed their important contributions to the goals of the Treaty, and indeed to international peace and security. The States Parties made it quite clear, however, that the future success of this Treaty will depend upon compliance with all of its obligations relating to each of the Treaty's key pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful

uses. In short, all of these goals must be pursued together, not in any contrived sequence in which some are postponed indefinitely until others are fully achieved.

I was impressed that the States Parties recognized the need to pursue “the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons”—as opposed to declaring that international peace and security were an absolute prerequisite for the achievement of this goal. I believe the agreed approach accurately recognizes the contributions that progress in disarmament can make in strengthening peace and security—progress that the world must diligently pursue, rather than continually postpone in deference to other priorities.

It is also noteworthy that the Final Document created several new mandates for the Secretary-General. The States Parties invited him, along with the three co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East—namely the Russian Federation, UK and US—to convene a conference in 2012 on establishing a WMD-free zone in the Middle East, and to select a facilitator and host government for that event. In addition, they invited him to establish a publicly-accessible repository of information documenting progress in achieving nuclear disarmament. And they also invited him to convene a high-level meeting in September 2010 in support of the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

On 18 June, another event occurred at the United Nations that should open up new opportunities for multilateral cooperation—the 2010 Biennial Meeting of States to implement the 2001 Programme of Action against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which was able to adopt an outcome document by consensus. This text has the potential to be further elaborated over the next two years leading up to the next Review Conference in 2012, especially concerning border controls, assistance and cooperation, and marking and tracing.

So you, the members of this Advisory Board—after experiencing many years of setbacks and disappointments in the pursuit of multilateral progress in disarmament and arms regulation—can take up your deliberations in a diplomatic environment that is considerably improved, which I hope will inspire you all as you carry on your important work this session to develop recommendations for the Secretary-General.

In addition to your exchange of views on the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the other item on your agenda concerns follow-on actions relating to the 2002 United Nations Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education.

Without doubt, education serves to strengthen international peace and security by helping to inspire a new generation of leaders to advance the global disarmament agenda. The Advisory Board will be pleased with the treatment of this issue in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which not only underscored this issue, but also encouraged all States to implement the recommendations in the Secretary-General’s 2002 Study.

In its largest sense, the global disarmament agenda encompasses all the diverse goals of “general and complete disarmament under effective international control”—which is the “ultimate objective” of States in the disarmament process, as stated in the Final Document of the General Assembly’s first Special Session on Disarmament. It covers the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, a UN goal since January 1946, and the limitation and regulation of conventional armaments—also a UN goal dating back to the early post-war years.

While constructive State policies will be crucial in achieving these goals, such policies can hardly be expected to materialize if national leaders are not informed or enlightened about the necessity of multilateral cooperation in these fields. Nor can we expect such policies to come about without any understanding, support, or meaningful participation by civil society. Clearly, disarmament and non-proliferation education constitutes an indispensable investment in our common future—we must rely upon future generations both to achieve and to strengthen or consolidate progress across the board in disarmament. This is why the Secretary-General is looking forward to your recommendations on how he can help to do more to advance these aims.

With these brief remarks, and my personal respects and encouragement for all of your work, please accept my very best wishes for a productive session.