

**Multilateral Fora as an Institutional Link  
Between Nuclear and Non-Nuclear Disarmament**

**Statement of Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky  
at the International Conference "Human Security  
and Global Governance : Non-nuclear Prerequisites for  
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1. The recent changes in the international political environment and the emphasis on human security and global governance make it necessary to have a new look at the traditional problem of disarmament - as a comprehensive one, in all its aspects. Analysis of the interdependence of the different elements of the disarmament process is an essential part of this approach.

2. Most of the discussions on the interrelationship between nuclear and non-nuclear weapons of mass destruction on the one hand, and conventional armaments on the other, are traditionally based on the consideration of the horizontal subject-matter links between the issues in question. However, there also exists a vertical, institutional dimension, another way to link the different disarmament-related issues through the machinery dealing with these issues.

3. Before addressing the current state of this machinery I would like to outline briefly the major types of disarmament and arms regulation fora and their specific features:

- first, a legal distinction should be drawn between bilateral

negotiations, multilateral fora and the so-called "grey zone" negotiations which usually include 3 to 5 participants;

- secondly, it is customary to differentiate between deliberative and negotiating fora. This is primarily a functional distinction, but in practice both elements can frequently be found within each of the fora;
- thirdly, multilateral fora exist on two levels, global (examples include the First Committee of the UN General Assembly, the UN Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament and various conferences where States Parties to existing disarmament Treaties review their operation) and regional (talks conducted by certain regional structures). As the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) plays a special role in this system. It also remains the main custodian of globalism in the mix of regional and global measures.

4. It should be noted that while bilateral negotiations usually concentrate on a specific, restricted problem, multilateral, and especially global talks, often address a cluster of issues. Since multilateral negotiations involve many actors, whose interaction is often highly complicated, the negotiating process requires more time and basically consists of the search for compromise among the conflicting national interests of the participants. The pace of the negotiations largely depends on what comes first, uncompromising national security concerns or readiness for compromise. The outcome of the negotiations depends primarily on the degree of

willingness to cooperate. Briefly, the search for a balance of interests and concerns affecting the security of States is the essence of all multilateral negotiations.

5. The existing disarmament machinery was set up in the 1970s, the landmark being the First Special Session of the UN General Assembly devoted to disarmament held in 1978. However, this machinery now works in a completely new environment:

- the nuclear arms race has been checked and in case of the USA and Russia, reversed;
- the global regime of arms regulations has been further strengthened. Suffice it to mention such elements as the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the prohibition of biological weapons, missile technology control, the conventional arms register;
- the two most recent global treaties negotiated in the CD - the Chemical Weapons Convention and the CTBT - proved the relevance and effectiveness of multilateralism in arms regulation and disarmament;
- a new multilateralism, characterized by the increasing interdependence of states, is emerging. This is due to a number of reasons, in particular:
- the emergence of new threats to international security; The risk of the spread of weapons of mass destruction entails the risk of their

acquisition, not only by unstable states but also by terrorist and criminal groups. Conventional arms in general, and <sup>small</sup> arms specifically, as well as antipersonnel landmines, have in past decades claimed more lives than any known weapon of mass destruction. I cannot fail to mention the post-disarmament problems, such as the storage of nuclear weapons, their transport and elimination, accident prevention, the brain-drain, nuclear smuggling, etc. Although they are generated by bilateral agreements, their security consequences are of a global scale;

- the growing influence of global economic factors on the decision-making process which sometimes prevail in the field of international security.
- for the first time in history, the major powers have accepted the idea of negotiating nuclear issues in the framework of multilateral fora. In the not-so-distant past, they preferred to strike bilateral or trilateral deals and only after a fait accompli, invited their allies and other countries, to join these agreements. Examples of this approach are a number of partial treaties on nuclear tests concluded during the Cold War period.

6. However, some elements of international disarmament activities have thus far escaped any significant transformations. Their most conservative part is the disarmament machinery itself. The only change in this area, albeit important, has been the expansion of the membership of the CD from 18 members in its predecessor forum to its current composition of 61

Member States . Yet its structure, methods of work and, what is most important, its patterns of behaviour remain the same.

7. The diagnosis of the current situation in the field of multilateral disarmament can be defined as a period of inward looking after the CTBT. This concerns a number of fora and, particularly, the CD. No doubt, the CTBT was a major achievement after which the CD has needed a “cooling - off” period and to reaffirm its real priorities. However, the current international situation will not allow a long pause. The world is in the process of radical transformation, as are many international structures, including the United Nations. The CD must realize its unique political role and stand square in the face of new historic challenges. Otherwise it runs the risk of losing credibility in the international community. It is regrettable that the current atmosphere in the CD has deteriorated to the level of its predecessors in the Cold War era. Once again we are witnessing the reemergence of the syndrome of an "all or nothing" approach. The only difference is that before, the dividing line was between East and West, and now it tends to run between North and South.

8. Basically there are two conflicting approaches to the work of the CD. One group of countries stressed that nuclear disarmament should remain the absolute priority of any future agenda. In their view, any major changes in the present agenda could be introduced only by another special session of the General Assembly. In the view of another group of delegations the agenda should be brought into line with the profound changes in the world in the last few years. These delegations were of the opinion that the Conference, as an autonomous body, was free to set new priorities and draw

up a new agenda. Delegations belonging to this school of thought indicated that their priority was to start negotiations in the Conference on a treaty to ban the production of fissile material, or cut-off. Many of them also called for the beginning of negotiations within the Conference for the banning of anti-personnel land mines

9. It is not easy to predict further developments in this field. However, I feel reasonably confident about the future of multilateral disarmament. There are several reasons for cautious optimism:

- although the problems that the CD is expected to address and find solutions to are quite serious, they are not unsolvable;
- a new global disarmament agenda is emerging, even though the issues are in no way related to an improbable global conflict. They have a very real and precise international dimension, whether it concerns weapons of mass destruction or conventional weapons.
- the CD is a body with the most inclusive international reach in the field of arms regulation and disarmament. It counts among its members all the militarily significant countries and therefore it provides the venue to engage all these countries in agreements and produce viable global treaties.

I fully share the words of the late Foreign Minister of Norway, Mr. J. Holsti, pronounced at the CD on 25 May 1993: "We need to stimulate a major return to multilateralism ... in the field of disarmament, in order to