



SLOVAKIA

---

**Address by**

**H. E. Mr. Eduard KUKAN**

**Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic  
at the Conference on Disarmament**

**Please, check against delivery!**

Geneva, March 17, 2005

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA

Chemin de l'Ancienne-Route • 1218 Grand-Saconnex • Tel: (022) 747 7400 • Fax: (022) 747 7434

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Secretary General of the Conference on Disarmament, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to address this important forum. The Conference on Disarmament has many times demonstrated its significance for international security, stability, peace, arms control and disarmament and has gained reputation by many of its important achievements.

A lot of things have happened in Slovakia, Mr. Chairman, since a Slovak Minister last time addressed this Conference back in 1997. Slovakia joined the European Union and other important international organizations. My country has got ready to take a bigger share of responsibility in multilateral affairs. Slovak troops take part in peacekeeping missions in relatively high numbers when measured against the size of Slovakia's army or economy. And, in autumn this year, Slovakia is hopefully going to be elected as member of the UN Security Council, to serve a two-year's term in that body which is the supreme guardian of peace and security in the world.

On the other hand, not much has seemingly happened in the Conference on Disarmament since 1997. At that time, the Conference had just completed the most fruitful period of its existence by successfully negotiating the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Since then, the Conference has not been able to launch negotiations on any subject.

It must be valued, however, that a lot of energy has been put over those years into efforts to set the CD back to substantive work. I would like to commend all these efforts and particularly those of the first two Presidents of this year's session – the Ambassadors of the Netherlands and New Zealand. I understand that they have done their best to achieve at least some progress before the disarmament community moves to New York for taking part at the NPT Review Conference in May.

Mr. Chairman,

I have come to address this august body today not pretending that Slovakia holds the key-stone to a generally acceptable programme of work. Nor do I pretend that we have discovered the magic formula that would kick-start the negotiations. It is you, delegations sitting in this room, who are best suited to find the proper recipe once all of you will have received green light from your capitals. On my part, let me put forward some general observations and concerns.

We believe that when a multilateral body adopts its agenda, it should be prepared to address - in one way or other - all items of interest of that agenda. A comprehensive and balanced approach to dealing with its own agenda would be the sign of elementary respect of the CD to its member states who invest considerable human resources and diplomatic and financial capacities to get the Conference going. On the

other hand, by its Rules of Procedure the CD is bound to arrive at decisions by consensus. Indeed, topics related to global peace and security, including non-proliferation and disarmament are far more serious and complex than to be decided by voting. We should not therefore put the blame for the actual lack of agreement on any single delegation or group of states; this is a collective work and responsibility. I urge you to step up your efforts to put the existing priorities into such a hierarchy and timeframe that would realistically reflect the most pressing actual threats to the global peace and security.

To be more specific, Mr. Chairman, I do see a number of major challenges that this important forum is facing these days. The first major challenge is related to the upcoming NPT Review Conference. The CD was not able to start, let alone to complete within the planned 5 year's time, negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty, in spite of the unambiguous political commitment taken to this end at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. This is an obvious failure and a hard blow to the credibility of this body. The deficit caused by this failure has to be addressed with utmost seriousness in the coming months.

The second major challenge comes with the changing global political and security environment. The United Nations have launched a process of reform in order to live up to this challenge. Can the CD stand idly by? The analysis contained in the Report of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change addresses security in many aspects: putting it into a wider context of issues such as development, institutional arrangement and collective security, including subjects directly relevant to the CD such as arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Let me put some ideas of the Report into the perspective of the CD.

Launching substantive work in the CD is not an end in itself. It is for the sake and benefit of noble goals of peace, global stability, security and prosperity of all. Prevention of the spread of weapons of mass destruction, including their clandestine proliferation, curbing the risk of their falling into hands of non-State actors and terrorist groups, addressing the question of disarmament: these are topical issues of our times. There is no doubt that the CD has an irreplaceable role in addressing these issues. However, the only viable way for the CD to effectively perform its tasks and to reinforce its relevance lies with the member states. It is the capitals that must take the challenges seriously and initiate action.

Notwithstanding the best intentions of all of us, continuing non-action could lead to the loss of CD's credibility. To whatever degree the CD may be important it is only an instrument for the pursuit of states' policies. As a result, it is the credibility of states and of existing achievements in the area of global security that are at stake. Since security is a key element of many other domains of human life and development, the stakes are much higher than those visible at first sight. I believe that this is the way that we, back in our capitals, should look at the CD's impasse.

I am convinced that it is indispensable to change the attitudes in the capitals. Instead of waiting for the *others* to make the opening move, it is essential that everybody should look at what *themselves* can

do at this juncture. It is crucial to reevaluate our stance towards arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Let me use the example of the three pillars of Non-proliferation Treaty. They should be in a balance to ensure that their overall purpose is accomplished. Nevertheless, it is hard to believe that disarmament and the right to peaceful use of science and modern technology, as stipulated in the NPT, BWC and CWC, can be properly pursued in a world full of proliferation risks. The EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction adopted in December 2003, provides an important tool for addressing the threat of proliferation. Slovakia, as member of the European Union, fully supports the Strategy as well as the practical measures envisaged therein.

Having said so, Mr. Chairman, a major breakthrough in the CD seems yet unlikely to happen soon. It would be hence advisable to make some perhaps small, but constructive steps towards meeting each other's expectations and rebuilding mutual confidence. There are many windows of opportunity in this regard. I would like to highlight two of them. The first one is related to the forthcoming NPT Review Conference. A lot depends on its results. Should the Review Conference fulfill its tasks successfully, a good basis would be set for converting its achievements into progress within the CD as well.

The second opportunity lies in the Resolution 1540 of the UN Security Council. Its implementation is crucial for the progress in the whole area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, including the work of the CD. CD member states should take the lead in fully implementing the resolution in an expeditious and effective manner. This would create an overall positive atmosphere and would set an example also for other states not members of the CD. It is of essential importance that the process of implementation does not lose momentum, as it will have a strong impact on the afore-said confidence-building efforts as well. This is a unique opportunity that will hardly occur again.

In this context, I would like to shortly recall the recent summit of the Presidents of the United States and the Russian Federation in Bratislava. The summit has demonstrated once again how important an asset confidence may be. Presidents Bush and Putin have come to common ground on some important issues connected also to security and non-proliferation. We believe that such positive examples will inspire all of us to follow suit. The Bratislava summit represents one of the blocks of confidence-building process that should be expanded both in quantitative and qualitative terms.

Let me conclude by expressing my strong desire that in cooperation with your capitals, you will find a way out of the impasse and I wish you every success in this endeavour. I hope that Slovakia as a member of this still important body will be privileged to join substantive negotiations on the most pressing issues very soon.

Thank you for your attention.