



REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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PRESS RELEASE

**Statement
by Mr. Sergei Rachkov
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of the Republic of Belarus to the United Nations**

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**at the 2006 Substantive Session of the United Nations
Disarmament Commission**

10 April 2006, New York

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would like to congratulate you on election to the Chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its 2006 substantive session.

We are convinced that your diplomatic experience will help to make this session of the Commission fruitful and successful. You can rely upon active cooperation and support from our delegation.

Mr. Chairman,

The importance of the UNDC as a deliberative body reporting to the General Assembly is evident.

Belarus highly appreciates the agreement reached on the agenda of the UNDC and is of the view that UNDC should continue to discuss two agenda items from the whole range of disarmament issues, including one on nuclear disarmament. Substantive agenda items should be considered for three years during annual sessions of three weeks duration.

Current stalemate in various disarmament fora is not a direct consequence of the "ineffectiveness of methods of work" but rather result from the existing realities of the mordent security environment that have led to lack of political will to move forward on matters related to disarmament.

An honest look at the existing problems should not prevent us from the search for consensus solutions to the key issues on the disarmament agenda. Further deliberations in a free and transparent manner are necessary prerequisite for reaching a success in the future.

Mr. Chairman,

Being a strong supporter of the realistic approach, which assumes incremental pace of nuclear disarmament, we believe that such "incremental approach" should not become a formal shelter for inertness and particularly for the activities that are not in line with the goals of the NPT.

Having made more than 10 years ago its historical choice in favour of renunciation of military nuclear capabilities, Belarus believes that this decision serves the national security interests in a best way only on the assumption of unconditional implementation by all the State Parties of obligations under the NPT.

Insuring non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is of a vital importance. In this regard nothing should undermine the role of the IAEA as the Agency ensuring verification of States' compliance with their commitments under the NPT. Belarus strongly supports the initiatives aimed at strengthening of nuclear non-proliferation regime and attaches great importance to the introduction of safeguards system based on the Additional Protocols to the Safeguards Agreements.

On the same time we believe that further perfection and development of new types of nuclear weapons, as well as appearance of defensive doctrines rationalizing the use of nuclear weapons are not consistent with the principles of international law and in particular NPT.

Belarus is of the view that the final document of the Disarmament Commission on nuclear issues, which we are starting to work upon now, should strengthen certain elements of principle.

Our delegation attaches special significance to ensuring universality of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Voluntary decisions of some nuclear weapon states to refrain from conducting tests of nuclear explosive devices are definitely positive developments but they can not serve as an adequate alternative to a legally binding instrument.

Belarus is also convinced that it is necessary to provide legally binding assurances to Non-Nuclear States. We support efforts aimed at the elaboration of relevant norms of international law. At the same time, we welcome unilateral declarations made by nuclear states with respect to their policies of rejecting the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states.

One more crucial direction is banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The Conference on Disarmament should start without further delay negotiations on Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty as well as on issues of nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and preventing arms race in outer space.

Mr. Chairman,

The Disarmament Commission at its current session will be facing a responsible task to ensure a productive conduct of the three-year cycle of deliberations on the confidence building measures in the field of conventional arms.

We support the proposal to start our deliberations on the basis of Chairman's consolidated working paper as contained in the Report of the UNDC for 2003.

The Republic of Belarus has been pursuing responsible and consistent policies aimed at fulfilling its international obligations, including under the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty. Having eliminated, despite economic and financial hardships, nearly 10% of all heavy military equipment, destroyed under the Treaty provisions, Belarus made a significant contribution to the strengthening of regional and global trust and cooperation. Belarus was also the first OSCE member-state to have ratified the CFE Adaptation Agreement in 2000.

Belarus attaches a great importance to the development and elaboration of additional bilateral confidence-building measures on the basis of Vienna Document 1999 of the negotiations on the confidence – and security-building measures. Political arrangements on additional CBMs were reached with all neighboring countries.

The Republic of Belarus fully shares international community's humanitarian concerns related to the illegal Small Arms and Light Weapons as well as landmine problems.

In 2003 Belarus has deposited its Instrument of Accession to Ottawa Convention. The process of elimination of around four million anti-personnel mines has already started to be implemented. The most problematic ammunition from the environmental viewpoint, liquid explosives PFM-1, require cutting-edge technologies for their disposal. Cooperation with the NATO and the European Commission in accordance with the Ottawa Convention is aimed at maximally reducing the financial burden of the Belarusian budget. That is one of the examples of necessity and effectiveness of international cooperation and assistance in the field of disarmament.

We also stress the importance of active international cooperation in order to insure proper implementation of UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Belarus is convinced that a gradual movement from simple to more complex bilateral and multilateral measures and agreements will set up a solid basis for preventing armed conflicts and strengthening national and regional security which are, in turn, inalienable elements of modern architecture of comprehensive and indivisible system of international security.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, allow me to express my delegation's hope for a successful and productive session of the Disarmament Commission.