

**Statement of Ambassador Carlo Trezza, Chairman of the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters to the UNGA First Committee (New York, 22 October 2010)**

I thank the Chairman of the First Committee, Ambassador Koretec and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte for inviting me to make this presentation on the activities of the UN Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters. A report of the UN Secretary-General (A/65/228) was already circulated on August 5 of this year; delegations are therefore aware of the Board's activities this year. Allow me to spend a few words to illustrate the features of this unique consultative body, whose main task is to advise the Secretary-General on matters within the area of Disarmament and Non-proliferation. The Board was established in 1978 pursuant to paragraph 124 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, and received its current mandate pursuant to General Assembly decision 54/418 of 1 December 1999. The Secretary-General selects its members from all regions. I wish to stress the non-governmental nature of this body. Even members who hold official positions participate in their personal capacity. The Board is presently composed of fifteen members. They are eminent persons belonging to governments, the academic world and civil society. All of them have an accomplished experience and knowledge in the field of disarmament and international security. The Board adopts its agenda following a request from the Secretary-General for advice on specific disarmament issues. The Board then submits a report along with a set of operational recommendations.

The strong and proactive commitment of Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon to the issues of Disarmament and Non-proliferation has made the work of the group particularly challenging. This year the Board focused its deliberations on two main substantive items: conceptual issues leading to the 2010 NPT Review Conference and disarmament and non-proliferation education.

The first item, which was on the agenda of our February meeting in New York, had already been discussed during the 2009 session. The members strongly felt however that they should provide the Secretary General with a new set of recommendations prior to the Review Conference of May 2010. After thorough discussions, the Board recommended that Secretary-General continue to provide his strong support for the political momentum in the field of nuclear disarmament and non proliferation and to send positive messages prior to the Conference. During its July session in Geneva, in view of the remarkable outcome of the 2010 Review Conference, the Board took additional time to exchange views on the NPT and stressed the special responsibility of the Secretary-General in the follow up to the Review Conference ,especially in convening the High-level meeting, which took place on September 24<sup>th</sup>, and in organizing and giving legitimacy to the 2012 Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

The Board believes that the present knowledge and culture of disarmament and non proliferation issues is insufficient and attracts too little interest. This is why it suggested that the second item of its yearly deliberations should be Disarmament and Non-proliferation education. This suggestion was promptly accepted. Discussions were based on papers prepared by board members and presentations given by prominent experts. We agreed that the 2002 UN study on Disarmament education is still valid: the real challenge is its implementation by member states. As this unfortunately does not always happens, the Board recommended to the Secretary-General that he remind individual states to implement the study's provisions and that he consider making a major statement on this issue. Many members stressed the need for stronger , more focused efforts to train and educate not only government officials already active in this field, but also parliamentarians, educators, scientists, researchers and the military. It is my personal conviction that the

present stalemate in some multilateral disarmament bodies is due in part to a limited knowledge of these complicated subjects. Let me express my appreciation to those states which have been traditionally engaged with this issue, who have reported on their implementation and who have promoted, this year again, a Resolution on Disarmament Education in the First Committee of the General Assembly, which I hope will be adopted by consensus. The fact that disarmament education was mentioned among the consensual recommendations and conclusions of this year's NPT Review Conference is a confirmation of its relevance.

The Board, which also serves as the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), must supervise the Institute's research activities as well as its program and budget. All those who are involved in disarmament issues are aware of the remarkable work of UNIDIR. Not everyone, however, is aware of the fact that only 10% of its budget is financed by the UN whereas the rest is being provided by donor countries and other contributors. Missions in Geneva are the first beneficiaries of the Institute's activities but so are many others, in the public and private world. I make an appeal to the UN, to fund at least all core staff costs of UNIDIR, and to member States to support it through all means available.

The Secretary-General's commitment to disarmament affairs brought him to follow closely the activities of the Advisory Board. It was very rewarding for members to see our work acknowledged in Mr. Ban Ki moon's inaugural statement to the NPT Review Conference, to have the opportunity to regularly exchange views with him both formally and informally and to see our suggestions reflected in his statements and his actions. One of the characteristics of the Board is that it is a flexible instrument for consultation and advice. During one of our encounters with the SG this year we were asked to submit suggestions

in view of the forthcoming Washington Nuclear Security Summit. The Board was able to swiftly present substantial recommendations. It is in the same spirit of cooperation and flexibility that the group is now ready to undertake a thorough review of the issues raised during the high level meeting of September 24<sup>th</sup> and to make recommendations to the Secretary-General for further action in this regard.