

***Disarmament and Non-Proliferation in Latin America and the Caribbean:  
Opportunities and Challenges  
November 7-8, 2010  
Montevideo, Uruguay***

**Introductory Remarks**

This past November, an unusual and potentially ground-breaking disarmament event took place in Montevideo co-sponsored by the Foreign Ministry of Uruguay, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) in Berlin and Montevideo, and New York-based Global Action to Prevent War (GAPW).

This seminar brought together much of the current leadership of the global disarmament community – Ambassador Sergio Duarte, High Representative of the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs; Ambassador Roberto Garcia Moritan of Argentina, President of the Preparatory Committee on the Arms Trade Treaty; Ambassador Libran Cabactulan of the Philippines, President of the 8<sup>th</sup> NPT review; Ambassador Gioconda Ubeda, Secretary-General of OPANAL, and many more. A good number of regional Ambassadors and other diplomats were also present as was Amanda Cowl from the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in Lima and some of the most important disarmament-related NGOs from throughout Latin America. Ambassador Jose Luis Cancela of Uruguay, former chair of the General Assembly’s First Committee, served as co-host of the event and provided substantial leadership for many discussions.

Against a background characterized by a return of legitimate multilateralism in the field of disarmament – and particularly in the field of nuclear disarmament – the organizers wanted to seize recent opportunities provided by strong Latin American leadership on disarmament as well as the UN's 2010 high-visibility triad of major disarmament events (NPT, Biennial Meeting of States, Arms Trade Treaty). With representatives from Latin America and the Caribbean in key positions in the UN disarmament machinery, and states from the region actively promoting many facets of a broad disarmament agenda, the seminar aimed at:

- Following up on the Outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and the ‘Five Point Plan’ of the UN Secretary-General on nuclear disarmament and putting these findings and recommendations into context for Latin America and Caribbean policymakers.
- Broadening the discussion on disarmament beyond the high-profile focus on nuclear issues to include strategic linkages among the different disarmament dimensions, domains and obligations.
- Facilitating dialogue and ongoing communications between regional civil society leaders and government officials on the diverse disarmament and security-related issues that negatively impact local populations.
- Identifying priority areas for future engagement on disarmament matters, both in terms of regional initiatives and in terms of increasing the impact of regional governments and policymakers on disarmament priorities currently being discussed at the UN and in other multi-lateral settings.

The opening session of this seminar was held in MERCOSUR headquarters in Montevideo and featured presentations by Ms. Ana Olivera, the Mayor of Montevideo; Dr. Luis Almagro, the Foreign Minister of Uruguay; Ambassador Sergio Duarte of the UN Office of

Disarmament Affairs; Andreas Wille of FES Uruguay; and Dr. Robert Zuber of GAPW. The session attracted many distinguished guests from diplomatic missions and non-government organizations located in Montevideo and laid out the objectives that were pursued over the remainder of the two days. Subsequent sessions focused on ‘Main Outcomes and Future Challenges of the NPT Regime,’ ‘The Relationship Between Nuclear and Non-Nuclear States,’ ‘Limitations and Regulations Regarding the Manufacture and Transfer of Conventional Weapons,’ and ‘Other Weapons of Mass Destruction.’

**Please consult the full seminar program and list of participants at the end of this report.**

Among its other benefits to our understanding of regional disarmament priorities, the seminar was a tribute to the increasing priority that MERCOSUR countries are giving to security concerns; the importance of the region as a source of the highest levels of disarmament leadership; the appeal of Uruguay as a convening country for regional disarmament concerns; and the high regard with which disarmament experts in and out of government view the efforts of the Uruguay delegation at the United Nations.

Core findings of the seminar presentations, including major policy recommendations, are described in some detail below. Comments are not attributed, reflecting the consensus of the group to preserve a spirit of open-ended, frank discussion on critical matters of human security. However, Ambassador Duarte has made two of his presentations available through the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs website.

[http://www.un.org/disarmament/HomePage/HR/docs/2010/2010November08\\_Montevideo\\_5\\_point\\_plan.pdf](http://www.un.org/disarmament/HomePage/HR/docs/2010/2010November08_Montevideo_5_point_plan.pdf)

[http://www.un.org/disarmament/HomePage/HR/docs/2010/2010November09\\_Montevideo\\_others\\_WMD.pdf](http://www.un.org/disarmament/HomePage/HR/docs/2010/2010November09_Montevideo_others_WMD.pdf)

### **Core Findings and Recommendations**

- The seminar highlighted the substantial engagement of a variety of Latin American and Caribbean states in the general field of disarmament at a crucial moment for international disarmament processes. Against a background characterized by multiple levels of UN engagement, the strong role of OPANAL in facilitating a nuclear weapons free region, and an extraordinary group of regional leaders working in this field, it was evident that there is a strong potential for more concerted and coordinated regional initiatives to help define disarmament priorities. *Latin America has security interests that complement, but are also distinct from and go beyond, those of the larger powers and nuclear states, and this seminar was designed to explore ways to make those interests more transparent and influential.*
- While integrating a strong focus on the issue of nuclear disarmament – due in large measure to the seminar's starting point of the UN Secretary-General's Five Point Plan for nuclear disarmament and this year's crucial NPT review – the seminar addressed other complementary fields of disarmament as well as the diverse forums for governance and negotiations that have been developed to support movement towards general and complete disarmament, including ending the illicit traffic in small arms and regulating other arms transfers. The seminar re-emphasized the necessity for such a broad approach, constantly noting the mutually-reinforcing relationships between the different sub-fields. *As noted often during the seminar, the general objective of our common work – both states and civil society – is to strengthen general prospects for international peace and security, not merely to control or reduce individual weapons systems.*

- The Secretary-General's Five Point Plan is considered to be the most comprehensive vision for eliminating nuclear weapons ever put forth at the UN. While the vast majority of the sub-points in the SG's plan relate to nuclear disarmament, there is both within the plan itself and in GA First Committee deliberations a recognition of the collateral activities which must be addressed – both disarmament-related and within the broader arena of human security – if confidence among states is to grow and local incentives to violence are to be mitigated.. *Nuclear disarmament may be the priority, but there are abundant tasks for non-nuclear states – from ending illicit arms transfers and curbing small arms stockpiles to reducing poverty and adopting 'shared responsibility' on border controls – that contribute to a climate in which the larger powers can feel confident heeding calls to eliminate once and for all their reliance on nuclear weapons.* There seemed to be a general consensus that 'the more we take care of our own responsibilities, the more we have the right to ask of others.'
- With regard to the discussions on global governance processes in the disarmament field, *there was strong interest in strengthening existing multilateral forums for disarmament negotiations, especially the UN Conference on Disarmament (CD), while also affirming the need to confront and overcome the obvious weaknesses of these forums.* Alternate means of pursuing progress on some core aspects of the disarmament agenda – especially fissile materials -- which are currently housed in the CD, were discussed. Suggestions for coping with an unresponsive CD included new structures within the GA or the establishment new groups of 'friends' to push consistently for negotiated movement on fissile materials and other core disarmament agendas. Other suggestions focused on changing consensus provisions within the CD as well as expanding its non-inclusive membership.
- The NPT process has been successful to the extent that it has helped put disarmament issues back at the core of the global agenda. Moreover, the NPT process has successfully re-established durable relationships among its three pillars – non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. *There is still strong sentiment in some quarters, especially among the larger powers, that nuclear proliferation remains as the largest security concern for the global community. But for other states, failure to achieve sufficient progress on the disarmament side runs the risk of being used to justify failures on the proliferation side, with potentially grave consequences for all efforts to promote general and complete disarmament.*
- *With regard to nuclear weapons and the NPT process, some clear challenges remain that will require full engagement from Latin American policymakers, including the possibility that states will flaunt or even renounce their obligations under the NPT; the need to move forward on FMCT negotiations and find the proper forum for such negotiations; the need to continue influencing the US, Russia and other nuclear powers to continue to reduce arsenals; and renewed efforts to ensure fruitful efforts towards a WMD-free zone in the Middle East, including complementary progress on broader questions of Middle East peace.* With regard to the FMCT, the increasing 'civilian' uses of nuclear energy coupled with insufficient security of nuclear materials within some states make such a treaty indispensable. A key issue as noted has to do with the proper forum for negotiations. Should the FMCT remain within the jurisdiction of the deadlocked Conference on Disarmament Geneva, should it be moved to other inclusive multilateral institutions (such as the GA), or should negotiations be pursued through more potentially dynamic (but possibly less inclusive)

forums such as like-minded groups of states? These are issues requiring strong guidance from Latin American policymakers.

- *Another issue in the nuclear field with direct relevance for the region and its non-nuclear states is the need to move forward on obtaining 'negative security assurances' from the nuclear states. At this moment, there appears to be only one nuclear state that is opposed to offering such assurances, and regional officials can do much before the next NPT review in 2015 to help persuade the Security Council to take up this matter with the goal of getting all nuclear states to accept binding obligations not to use such weapons against non-nuclear states.*
- While there have been welcome developments regarding the willingness of regional states to form collaborative statements on disarmament concerns for the First Committee and other multilateral forums – especially through MERCOSUR and the Rio Group – more can be done to promote Nuclear Weapons Free Zones, push nuclear states to fulfill NPT commitments, and highlight other disarmament and security agendas of particular importance to the region. *While mindful of the important work done by OPANAL, states in the region must also take more leadership in defining their stake in the nuclear field and in promoting regional 'best practices' with other areas of the world – especially the Middle East – seeking to implement successful processes towards nuclear or even WMD-free zones.*
- Ambassador Moritan's recognized 'broad and accommodating' stewardship of the Arms Trade Treaty process is resulting in significant movement towards formal agreement of the core objectives of a treaty in 2012. There are still major issues to be resolved during the February 2011 ATT preparatory commission sessions, including the potential need for a stand-alone secretariat to monitor transfers and flag those that are most likely to be diverted to non-state actors or used by states to violate human rights. *It was noted that the ATT does not seek to limit states' rights to legitimate defense procurement, but it does seek to establish common standards for transfers and provide technical and other capacity support to states seeking greater control and transparency with regard to their transfers.* In moving towards a formal treaty, there is a need to integrate insights from regionally diverse civil society groups, government experts (especially as part of the GGE process), and even industry representatives.
- While Ambassador Macedo of Mexico (chair of last summer's Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms) was not able to join us in Uruguay, BMS-related topics important to many states in the region – including the control of illicit trafficking in small arms and the control and removal of stockpiles – were high on the agenda. *For many states in the region, criminality is the major security threat, even more than terrorism or nuclear disaster. And small arms are the weapons most likely to terrorize local populations and fuel criminal behavior.* Thus addressing these weapons – their trade, diversion and stockpiling – is a major area of policy interest within the region.
- Missiles were also on the seminar agenda. First Committee resolutions dealing with these delivery vehicles have largely not been dealt with substantively but have been remanded for attention during future First Committee sessions. Objections by states to movement on missiles are varied, but the most thoughtful of those have pointed out the limited and even discriminatory listing of missiles to be covered as well as the failure of resolutions to take into account rapid changes in technology that must be addressed by government and civil society experts. *A number of governments are*

*eager to ensure that we are negotiating all relevant missile categories and taking into account more than just 'last generation' missiles and the technology that underlies them.*

- Chemical and Biological weapons were also discussed, especially in the context of using 'best practices' from treaty processes to help guide development towards a nuclear weapons convention (see statement by Amb. Duarte referenced above). *It was noted that, while diplomats and NGOs tend to speak of 'biological and chemical' in the same breath, these WMDs require quite different levels of vigilance and transparency, especially given the potentially devastating impact of even small amounts of biological weapons.* Finally fulfilling obligations to destroy remaining stockpiles of chemical weapons was identified as constituting a potential major contribution to a WMD-free world.

### **Summary Recommendations for Government Officials and NGOs**

- States within the region should do more to counter the increasing disregard of reporting obligations to ODA in all areas of disarmament, reporting that is necessary to both chart progress and assess future needs. More specifically, there is a need for a standard reporting form and publicly accessible repository of information related to states compliance with all three pillars under the NPT. There is also a need for states to be more mindful of reporting obligations to the UN Voluntary Registry on Conventional Weapons and other existing databases.
- While it is important to pursue a WMD-free zone in the Middle East within the contours laid out at the last NPT review, the success of such a venture must be tied to significant progress on a broader Middle East peace to which many nations should contribute more of their diplomatic skills and resources, including best practices from their own experiences with NWFZs.
- States should contribute more regularly to collaborative statements in regional forums designed to highlight disarmament priorities and the broader security interests to which those priorities are linked. For regional states, there are core and compelling needs to pool resources to dry up illicit stockpiles of small arms and light weapons, eliminate diversion of these and other weapons to criminal interests, protect borders from illegal trafficking in such weapons, and reduce rates of poverty that fuel despair and violence.
- States in the region must be mindful of the diverse capacity needs related to all their disarmament obligations and should be willing to share capacity and 'best practices' on technical and diplomatic fronts as well as soliciting capacity assistance from others.
- States should explore more fruitful avenues of engagement with the growing roster of disarmament and security experts throughout the region, and should help ensure that a broad array of voices and skills from diverse cultural contexts are present during security policy discussions. NGOs, likewise, should explore ways to be more reliable partners of governments in fulfilling both their disarmament obligations and their legitimate security interests.

- States must ensure that the UN's disarmament machinery, and especially the Office of Disarmament Affairs, has sufficient capacity to manage the large and growing number of disarmament-related obligations – including conferences and events -- that it is now mandated to convene.
- Part of this UN capacity-building is ensuring that mechanisms such as the CD can ensure meaningful progress on disarmament negotiations. In this respect, states should examine the CD's consensus provisions – even on procedural matters – and make meaningful adjustments. States should also consider proposals for universal membership in the CD. Failure to revitalize the CD should result in renewed and urgent discussions about alternative mechanisms – perhaps within the GA – to ensure that FMCT and other negotiations can proceed with some reasonable prospects of progress.
- States and civil society organizations alike should ensure the full participation of women and other traditionally excluded groups in all disarmament and peace policies.

## **Conclusion**

Seminar organizers came away from these two days of meetings with a strong sense that similar regional gatherings – in Central Africa, Southeast Asia and other settings – would do much to help identify regional disarmament priorities, clarify relationships between nuclear and non-nuclear states, and create mechanisms for robust, collaborative response to disarmament issues raised in multilateral settings. While the levels of global leadership on disarmament might not be available elsewhere to the extent they now exist in Latin America, there are vast reservoirs of government and civil society expertise worldwide that very much need to find a voice at the highest levels of global disarmament policy. Among its other benefits, this seminar has shown the way towards broad regional engagements on critical, global disarmament issues.