



**Opening remarks by Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze  
United Nations Under-Secretary-General  
Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva**

**UNIDIR 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Debate:**

**“Human Security Should be the Fundamental Basis for Multilateral Disarmament and  
Arms Control Negotiations”**

**Palais des Nations, Council Chamber  
Wednesday, 23 November 2005, at 13:15**

**Dr. Lewis  
Distinguished Panellists  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen  
Dear Colleagues:**

**It is a great pleasure for me to be with you and to welcome you to the Palais des Nations. The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research – UNIDIR – provides a welcome opportunity to pay tribute to the Institute and its ongoing efforts to assist the international community in disarmament thinking and decisions through its independent research. As we see here today – both in the selection of panellists and in the composition of the audience – UNIDIR brings together government and civil society representatives, including the research community, for an ongoing dialogue. Many of us who are engaged on the intergovernmental side of the disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control debates highly value the in-depth and astute – and often frank – analyses provided by the Institute under the very able leadership of Dr. Patricia Lewis, and we look forward to the continuation of this important work.**

**The topic of today’s debate is very timely – and it continues a fine UNIDIR tradition of combining anniversary celebrations with substantive discussion on issues related to disarmament as humanitarian action. I think this event illustrates well the dynamism that characterizes UNIDIR’s efforts. Rather than reflecting on past achievements, the opportunity is taken to look ahead and to take ongoing debates further in a creative manner. And as the proverb says, “speech is silver”, so it is very appropriate to mark a silver anniversary with a debate.**

**This year, of course, we also mark another milestone: the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter. Article 26 of that Charter calls for the “establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least**

diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources". So, the issue of disarmament is entrenched in our founding document, and it has been on the United Nations agenda since the establishment of the Organization.

At the 2005 World Summit in September – marking the start of the 60<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the United Nations – world leaders recognized that all individuals are entitled to freedom from fear and freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential. To this end, they committed themselves to discussing and defining the notion of human security in the General Assembly. This commitment to working towards a definition of what has – at times – been seen as a fluid concept could be an important step towards operationalizing it.

At the same time, Heads of State and Government did not reach agreement on even a single paragraph on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. This has – rightly – been seen as the biggest deficiency of the Outcome Document. By highlighting both human security and disarmament and non-proliferation, and by addressing how the two are interlinked and may be mutually reinforcing, the discussions this afternoon will add a valuable dimension to the ongoing international debates on these issues.

Disarmament and non-proliferation have the potential to benefit the individual on several levels. At the political level, disarmament would contribute to building greater confidence among States. In the military sphere, disarmament would contribute to strengthened strategic stability. Also, in the economic and social fields, disarmament could potentially liberate resources to be channelled towards development efforts. Through disarmament, progress in all these areas – political, military and economic – would, in turn, enhance the security of the individual.

I think that our exchanges – which no doubt will be lively and thought-provoking – will bring out some of the concerns of different countries that currently make further progress on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control difficult. I am sure that our very distinguished and experienced panellists – together with the invited audience – will ensure that. And while further advance may indeed be difficult, I hope that today's discussions will also serve to highlight that it is, in fact, not impossible – and perhaps, they will point towards common ground among the various positions that could be built on in multilateral deliberations – within and outside the United Nations.

I, therefore, welcome this anniversary event as a constructive contribution to the ongoing international efforts to promote the disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control agenda and to the thinking on new approaches to international security.

I join you – again – in congratulating UNIDIR on their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and wish you all a stimulating and rewarding debate.

Thank you.