



# BELARUS

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United Nations Security Council  
Open debate on "Conflict Prevention and Sustaining Peace"

New York, January 10, 2017

**Statement  
by the Permanent Representative  
of Belarus to the United Nations**

Before this meeting I had my qualms about taking part in the discussion. The consideration that tipped the scales of my reasoning was the Swedish ownership of this initiative.

I personally owe it to the courage and humanity of legendary Swedish diplomats – Raoul Wallenberg's and Dag Hammarskjöld's names come to mind first - to be more straightforward and less conventional than the setting of the Council open debate may invite.

Call me susceptible to panic or easily impressionable, but I choose to believe that the creeping **erosion** in the past couple of decades **of the rules- and principles-based environment of international engagement** has been steadily increasing **the risk of an all-out global nuclear annihilation conflict** between the world's major powers – be it by intent, mistake or tragic coincidence.

Barring a meaningful accord between the world's major nuclear powers on their **common primary responsibility for preventing the final global war and establishing the collective framework for peace**, all our attempts to find lasting solutions to smaller-scale conflicts will most likely prove to be futile.

The United Nations has been doing a lot of good on peace and security trying to **micromanage the system deregulated at the macro level**. But it can do better.

We have to admit that reckless stress testing of the degree of endurance of the world's sustainability has to stop. The world has to wake up to **a sobering realisation of the true degree of fragility of our environment – physical, social, cultural and political**.

This realisation will not come about by the majority vote of the General Assembly or of the Security Council. No amount or strength of collective good will could by itself substitute for the lack of leadership by leaders. Leaders have to lead.

A watershed in modern history may happen once the world's most militarily powerful nations publicly agree that **on global security for them there is no fork in the road**, that there is no alternative to world peace - world peace based on collective legal framework **jointly guarded** by them in good faith and to the best of their ability.

The world is anxiously waiting if the recently **reborn hope of better understanding between the world superpowers** can materialise.

Does this premise of the special responsibility of leaders make other members of the Council redundant? Not at all. Elected members of the Council do matter.

But the true measure of the value of a country's contribution to the work of the Council is hardly the number of statements, side events and votes cast.

The true measure of success of work of the Council is the ability of individual members – acting shy of attention and publicity, probably, unreported to the world – to create within the Council **the sense of greater moral urgency for the big powers to connect and empathise.**

**All** of us have perfected the art of imparting to our interlocutors what we know is right.

**Some** of us excel in public shaming of our opponents of their wrongdoings.

**Very few** of us can display the courage of stepping back, of giving the benefit of the doubt, of toning down our rhetoric for the sake of better understanding.

The world does not need in the Security Council another **political theatre.**

The world has not even much use of the Security Council as a public speaking place.

Yet the world badly needs the Security Council defined not so much by the turning wheels of its political machinery as by **sincere interaction of human beings** who make the most commendable effort of reaching out to a counterpart, of mastering the ability to talk **to** and **not at** each other.

At the risk of inviting the wrath of the President for breaching the sacred time limit for statements, I would like to end with a most precious prompt about the best instrument available to humans for ending and preventing wars and conflicts.

**“Forgiveness** breaks the chain of causality because he who 'forgives' you – **out of love** – takes upon himself the consequences of what you have done. **Forgiveness, therefore, always entails a sacrifice. The price you must pay for your own liberation** through another's sacrifice is that you in turn must be willing to liberate in the same way, irrespective of the consequences to yourself”.

These words of wisdom belong to the second UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld.