



World leaders, nuclear possessors must grasp chance to abolish all weapons of mass destruction

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Astana/Geneva – Great potential exists for the world to rid itself of nuclear arms and related threats, but this can happen only if world leaders and nuclear powers come to grips with reality: there will be either security for all or there will be no security at all, according to Green Cross International.



Dr. Alexander Likhotal, President of Green Cross International, said the persistent nuclear threat, embodied by the presence of over 20,000 nuclear weapons around the world, is being exacerbated by the increasing disproportions of conventional military build-ups.

"Today, the goal of a nuclear-weapons-free world has an even greater urgency. Nuclear deterrence is useless in responding to threats of the 21st century, such as the

proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery, international terrorism, ethnic and religious conflicts, climate change, extreme weather events, water scarcity, and other related major threats to global security," said Dr Likhotal, an international affairs expert, who will address the [2012 Astana-Semipalatinsk Forum: "From a nuclear test ban to a nuclear-weapons-free world"](#) in Kazakhstan being held during 27-30 August.

Dr Likhotal added: "Proposals of the Kazakhstan leadership on nuclear issues provide great cause for optimism for the entire world. For the first time since the mid-1980s, the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons has been rekindled as a practical policy goal."

"An important element of this policy goal is the recognition that what is needed is a new paradigm in

global security thinking, which is capable of taking the world beyond the Cold War-era logic centred on mutual deterrence and piecemeal disarmament, towards a new, cooperative system for effectively addressing 21st-century security threats."

Dr Paul Walker, Director of the Green Cross [Environmental Security and Sustainability Programme](#), said ridding the world of nuclear weapons cannot be achieved overnight, but intensifying efforts to reduce such arms to a level of minimum sufficiency could have other benefits, not just security-related.

"Moving more boldly and seriously towards a nuclear-free world can be a catalyst for transforming the strategic mentality of international powers, and showing that even the most intractable problems can be solved," said Dr Walker, who is also participating in the Astana forum.

"We need an across-the-board shift in political thinking. We must embrace new models of economic growth that are less resource intensive and enable sustainable development," added Dr Walker.

"Committing – and acting – to abolish nuclear weapons could send such a strategic signal, showing that the world's powers are concerned with radically addressing the challenges of our generation and developing partnerships for preserving, not destroying, the future. The initiative of Kazakhstan to establish a Central Asian Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone, a ratified Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and a 'nuclear weapons-free world' are all most welcome steps today."

Green Cross International (GCI), founded by Nobel Peace Prize laureate President Mikhail Gorbachev in 1993, is an independent non-profit and nongovernmental organization working to address the interconnected global challenges of security, poverty eradication and environmental degradation through a combination of advocacy and local projects. GCI is headquartered in Geneva and has a growing network of national organizations in over 30 countries.

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