

**Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus V. Makei at the high-level discussion on global security (Geneva, April 8, 2019)**

Director-General,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am extremely honored and indeed delighted to address this distinguished audience.

Let me start my observations with the following question – is there any single overriding factor that can account for and explain much of what is going on in global politics today?

I think, there is. It is the phenomenon which we know as “The Rise of the Rest”. It is the term coined by political commentator Fareed Zakaria in his famous book that appeared a decade ago.

The Rise of the Rest has been producing a tectonic shift of the kind that happens only once in centuries. Indeed, the previous tectonic shift occurred half a millennium ago and it was “The Rise of the West”.

The Rise of the West gave rise to modern politics as we know it today – with sovereign states, balance of power, international law and international organizations. Its key feature, however, was the concentration of power. In other words, politics was concentrated, that is, it has been played mainly by a handful of great powers, primarily in the Euro-Atlantic region.

But that system has been gradually and imperceptibly supplanted over the past couple of decades by another system, by what we call the Rise of the Rest. The key feature of the new system is the diffusion of power.

In other words, power is no longer the privilege owned by a few. Instead, it is being held and exercised by many – be they state or non-state actors. The picture is additionally compounded by the significant rise in global population, transnational threats, modern technology, and, most importantly, in demands for everything.

What happens somewhere in this system can have an instantaneous “diffusing effect” elsewhere. Think, for instance, of the religious caricatures that emerged in some Western magazines in recent years. We all well remember what happened afterwards.

So, it does not require one to be a genius to figure out that it is enormously difficult to manage this “diffused” system.

As a result, all our current problems, by and large, stem from our collective inability to adjust to the emerging environment.

The bad news is that great global adjustments of the type we need now usually come in the aftermath of severe catastrophes. It was so in 1648, it was so in 1919, and it was so in 1945.

The good news is that we can be smarter this time and make an adjustment without waiting for a new catastrophe to strike.

I do not think that anyone has a complete set of recipes for how to make the necessary adjustment in a quick, painless and effective manner.

Nevertheless, it is still vital that we all begin thinking collectively and begin doing something.

With this in mind, let me offer some humble suggestions for everyone's consideration.

First, for nearly two years, Belarus has been vigorously advancing the idea of a comprehensive global security dialogue. We see it essentially as a two-pronged process.

Initially, it would make a lot of sense to bring great powers together so that they would agree on some general principles for a new, more efficient, fair and workable, world order.

Next, all countries would sit together to flesh out practical working arrangements. We see the entire process as one that is driven by states. Yet, there certainly must be a room for a voice from non-state actors.

Belarus has repeatedly stated its readiness to be a convening place for the process.

Second, we need to seriously review the role of multilateral institutions.

Let us bear in mind that the first two generations of such institutions were produced by First and Second World Wars, respectively. These were intended for the concentrated system.

To what extent are these institutions capable of meeting the demands of the diffused world?

Why some states, especially great powers, shun them in favor of closed clubs?

When and how will the UN Security Council be reformed?

Why did the UN Human Rights Council become a tool of global politics rather than a place for genuine thematic discussion?

Do we need, perhaps, a new, Third Generation of multilateral institutions, which would provide more added value to all of us than their predecessors did?

What kind of institutions should these be?

These are all the questions that need to be answered if we want multilateral institutions to continue serving for the common good.

This kind of discussion could be part of the comprehensive security dialogue that Belarus advocates. Alternatively, the topic could constitute its own deliberative track.

Third, let me elaborate a bit more on the role of Geneva in this global adjustment. This beautiful city is home to numerous international organizations. It will take a couple of minutes even to recount them all.

What I am absolutely certain is that Geneva can play a crucial role in the global adjustment.

It can do so, because Geneva, by and large, represents a reflection of the ongoing global diffusion.

Indeed, it is here where a large number of important global issues are deliberated – from trade and economic integration to health, labor, refugees, migrants, human rights, disarmament, ICTs and many more.

It is here where all those multiple players – state and non-state actors band together – to discuss those issues.

It is these Geneva-based multilateral institutions that are supposed to contribute immensely with their valuable expertise to states' efforts at the realization of the current transformative agenda built around the Sustainable Development Goals.

And, it is here where the key global thematic partnerships must be forged with that end in mind.

Belarus was among those who, long before the 2030 Agenda was adopted, argued that its future thematic goals should be implemented through thematic global partnerships.

We firmly believe that partnerships are the best tools to manage the “diffused” global system because they take on board all positive actors like states, international organizations, civil society, private sector, academia and research.

I think that partnerships can be forged initially precisely in those, I would call them “technical areas”, present here in Geneva, which already accumulated considerable amount of co-operation among global positive actors.

For example, I see here a great promise for launching an important economic partnership.

In particular, I believe that the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe can facilitate closer cooperation and connectivity across the entire pan-Eurasian space, involving the European Union, the Eurasian Economic Union and other relevant integration processes. If successful, a new cooperative framework could later engage with other regional integration entities.

Ultimately, thematic partnerships should pave the way for an effort to establish a partnership on security issues.

This one is surely most difficult to set up, because states far too often think in terms of parochial national rather than collective interests.

Nevertheless, I firmly believe that as partnerships are successfully established and realized in non-security areas, the increasing logic of co-operation, interdependence, trust, and mutual confidence will make possible partnerships on global security issues as well.

Thank you for your kind attention.