



## In the spotlight

### Mr Péricles Gasparini Alves, Director of the UN Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

**Q:** *Regional nuclear non-proliferation regimes can be seen as complementary to the global regime established under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the global norm against nuclear test explosions stipulated in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).*

*What is the role of the Latin American and Caribbean region (LAC) in this respect?*

**A:** The region has played both a conceptual and normative role in this respect. Conceptually, the region has demonstrated that despite the fact that ‘the genie is out of the bottle’, namely, nuclear weapons do indeed exist, security strategies do not necessarily need to be based on the nuclear option as argued by the Mutually Assured Destruction doctrine developed in the 1950s and 60s. On the contrary, the region clearly adopted the political decision that diplomacy and, ultimately, non-nuclear armaments, should be sufficient for its defence and therefore, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation should be the main goal when it comes to nuclear issues. With respect to its normative role, the LAC region was innovative in designing an alternative choice to the nuclear option – a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (NWFZ) – thereby creating both a viable tool to enhance security, as well as a precedent to be followed.

**Q:** *Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones have come to be recognized by the international community as part of the process of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The 1967 Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco) established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area and has served as a model for subsequent NWFZ agreements. In October 2002, the Treaty entered*

*into force for all 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean when Cuba deposited its instrument of ratification.*

*How has the Tlatelolco Treaty contributed to national and regional security?*

**A:** It is clear today, as we look back, that the Treaty of Tlatelolco has contributed substantially to national and regional security in LAC. For instance, countries in the region that share basic security values have been able to use the Treaty as an instrument for opposing military use of nuclear energy. It has allowed for a certain unification of positions with regard to international security issues, including disarmament. The Treaty was the first disarmament agreement to establish an effective system of control under a permanent supervisory organ, the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), which is already an important achievement in itself. It also had an impact on the people in the region and on those from other regions, who saw LAC as a model region for future NWFZ agreements.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco has also contributed to regional security by establishing the notion of exclusion, whereby nuclear weapons would not find any justification within a given geographic zone. This is of particular importance due to the fact that, unlike the Antarctic Treaty, the Treaty of Tlatelolco encompasses a densely populated and sizeable territory.

Additional Protocol I to the Treaty stipulates that States which adhere to the Protocol, shall undertake to apply the statute of denuclearization in respect of war-like purposes in the territories for which, *de jure* or *de facto*, the Parties are internationally responsible and which lie within the limits of the

geographic zone established in the Treaty. Additional Protocol II states that the nuclear weapons States should not undertake to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the contracting parties of the Treaty. These undertakings have had significant implications for both regional and global security.

**Q:** *The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-LiREC), located in Lima, Peru, was established in 1987.*

*What are the Centre’s main goals and activities and how do they link to other activities in the region?*

**A:** The work of the Centre covers four basic areas: sub-regional and regional security matters; global security issues; the role of the United Nations in the region; and peace education. All of its programmes and projects in areas such as multilateral agreements related to weapons of mass destruction; confidence- and security-building measures; disarmament and development; and firearms (small arms and light weapons) are undertaken in association with some 50 other partners (governmental and non-governmental institutions) from within and outside the region. This is reflected in the recent report by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the activities of the Centre, where the Centre is described as a ‘catalyst, platform and/or a service provider for States in the region’.

**Q:** *The LAC region plays an important role in promoting the entry into force and universality of the CTBT. The Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) for the CTBTO Preparatory Commission has undertaken a number of activities to enhance understanding of the Treaty in the region and continues the timely build-up of the international monitoring system. So*



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far, 27 of 33 States in the LAC region, have signed the Treaty, while 20 have ratified it.

*How is UN-LiREC supporting the cause of CTBT within LAC?*

**A:** UN-LiREC is an integral part of the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA). It implements several activities entrusted to DDA by the General Assembly in the field of disarmament in the region. For example, UN-LiREC has developed two projects which promote signature, ratification and implementation of the CTBT. As part of the first project, the Centre conducted between 2001 and 2002 joint PTS and UN-LiREC missions to inform or testify at Foreign Relations Committee hearings in Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, and Uruguay, about Treaty obligations and benefits. Three of these countries have since ratified the Treaty.

As a second project, in 2004 UN-LiREC has organized consultation missions in the Bahamas and Antigua and Barbuda, where emphasis was placed on explaining Treaty obligations and benefits. Barbados, Belize and Dominica are some of the countries which will be visited by the Centre, the PTS and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in 2005.

Moreover, UN-LiREC supports the Preparatory Commission by assisting the PTS in organizing and

participating in regional events, whereby the Centre serves as a platform for discussion and development of issues related to the Treaty.

**Q:** *In the framework of the 59th session of the United Nations General Assembly, 42 Foreign Ministers adopted a statement in support of the CTBT, which was later joined by many more countries.*

*Are there other initiatives in the region to promote the CTBT?*

The fact that 82% of the countries in the region have made a political commitment towards the Treaty, clearly indicates the significant support for the CTBT. Furthermore, the forthcoming 2005 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the implementation of the proposal to convene an international Conference on Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones which is expected to take place in Mexico in 2005, provide opportunities for the LAC countries to support the broader goals of the CTBT, as reflected in its preamble – namely, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. These and other initiatives in New York, Mexico, Washington, Geneva and Vienna recognize the vital importance of multilateralism in achieving both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. Such cooperation is especially needed to achieve the goals of the CTBT and to ensure the full implementation of the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. ■

## UN-LiREC

*Mr Péricles Gasparini Alves is the Director of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-LiREC), which is located in Lima, Peru. The Centre was established in 1987 pursuant to General Assembly resolution 41/60 J of 3 December 1986 and functions under the auspices of the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs. It is mandated to provide, upon request, substantive support to the region's States for their implementation of initiatives and measures in the field of peace and disarmament, and for the promotion of economic and social development.*



UN-LIREC OFFICE BUILDING, LIMA, PERU

*Since its activities were revamped in December 1998, the Centre has supported the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean by: promoting sub-regional, regional and cross-regional disarmament and non-proliferation activities; serving as a platform for identifying synergies between security and development issues; and contributing to the establishment of a more secure environment for economic and social development in the region. ■*