

9 September 2009



# Secretary-General

SG/SM/12445  
PI/1904

---

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York  
**'THE WORLD IS OVER-ARMED AND PEACE IS UNDER-FUNDED' SAYS SECRETARY-GENERAL**

## **AS HE OPENS MEXICO CITY CONFERENCE**

Following is UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's opening address to the sixty-second Annual DPI/NGO Conference: "For Peace and Development: Disarm Now!" in Mexico City, 9 September:

*Muy buenas dias!*

It is my great honour to open this sixty-second Annual United Nations Conference for Non-Governmental Organizations.

I thank the Government of Mexico for hosting this very important meeting of today. I tremendously appreciate its long-standing support for the goals of the United Nations, including each of the themes of this conference: peace; development; and disarmament.

I would like to thank the Ministry and local government officials, without whose support this conference might not have been as successful today. It was here in this city where the Treaty of Tlatelolco was signed. It created the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a populated region.

Last year, I addressed a special meeting here in Mexico City to commemorate this historic event. Today, more than 110 countries are covered by nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Recently, the treaty for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia has come into effect. I applaud this and look forward to seeing progress in other regions, including the Middle East.

Let me also salute you, the representatives of many non-governmental organizations. You are the real heroes and driving force of this conference.

When I hear the term "international community" I think naturally not so much of a gathering of representatives of States. I turn, instead, to the first words of the United Nations Charter: "we the peoples of the United Nations." People are the ultimate sovereigns.

This Conference is intended to provide an opportunity for individuals and non-governmental groups from around the world to learn from each other and to teach us all about how we can achieve the great goals of peace, development and disarmament.

The world is over-armed and peace is under-funded. Military spending continues to raise everyday. Just one generation after the end of the cold war, it is now well above US \$1 trillion. More weapons are being produced. They are flooding markets around the world. They are destabilizing societies. They feed the flames of civil wars and terror. Here in Latin America, gun violence is the number one cause of civilian casualties.

The end of the cold war has led the world to expect a massive peace dividend. Yet, there are over 20,000 nuclear weapons around the world. Many of them are still on hair-trigger alert, threatening our own survival.

Coupled with ever-growing ballistic missile proliferation and increasing threats from terrorists, nuclear weapons constitute existential threats to humankind. We have negotiated a treaty to outlaw all nuclear tests -- the CTBT, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, has not entered into force. Even in the twenty-first century, we have witnessed nuclear tests.

We have worked tirelessly for a global ban on the production of fissile materials for use in nuclear explosives, yet obstacles continue to hinder negotiations. The Conference on Disarmament broke the gridlock on its programme of work for the first time in 12 years, yet it failed to advance because of procedural disagreements.

Many countries have agreed to ban anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions, yet some major players choose to remain outside of these commitments. An international Programme of Action has been agreed to stem the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, yet it too faces many challenges in achieving its goals. And we lack multilateral legal norms concerning missiles.

Despite these daunting challenges, there is hope on the horizon. Thanks in large measure to your unrelenting advocacy, we are facing a new moment of opportunity and I thank you, thank you for that. Disarmament is back on the global agenda.

The Presidents of the Russian Federation and the United States of America have joined in seeking to reduce their nuclear arsenals and delivery vehicles. I welcomed the 6 July joint understanding of these two world leaders and I expect they will have comprehensive talks before the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) expires in December.

This is in accordance with their obligations under Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. If they agree, this will be a very important contribution for next year's review conference of the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty). We should encourage them to make good on their commitment.

We should, however, recognize that this is just the beginning. Our final destination is a world free of nuclear weapons. This is not an unrealistic goal. But to get there, we must act.

I urge you, civil society and the NGO community, to continue speaking out to leaders across the board to stress that nuclear weapons are immoral and should not be accorded any military value.

Leaders must recognize that the doctrine of nuclear deterrence has proven wrong and even contagious -- spreading from country to country in the belief that it will provide a security guarantee and ultimate defence. We know that it does quite the opposite.

This is our moment to build upon this momentum. I was very much encouraged by such a strong commitment showed today by your active participation. Now is the time for concrete action.

I have come here to give you my full support, my full trust in your activities and in your advocacy work to continue your work in disarmament. I also want to expand the coalition of support for my five-point plan -- first introduced on 24 October, last year -- to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons based on key principles.

Here is what I am proposing.

First, disarmament must enhance security.

I have urged the Security Council to consider other ways to strengthen security in the disarmament process, and to protect non-nuclear-weapon states from nuclear weapons threats.

I urged non-NPT States to freeze their own weapon capabilities and make their own disarmament commitments. And I proposed, more important, to the [Security] Council that it convene a summit on nuclear disarmament.

I am pleased that the Security Council is going to convene a summit meeting on 24 September to be chaired by United States President Barack Obama to discuss nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

I look forward to attending that meeting and encouraging the Council to keep its focus on this issue on a sustained basis.

Second, disarmament must be reliably verified.

That is why I call for the NPT State Parties to pursue negotiations in good faith on nuclear disarmament, either through a new convention or through a series of mutually reinforcing instruments backed by a credible system of verification.

I support the proposal of the United Kingdom to discuss nuclear disarmament and confidence-building measures, including verification, among the recognized nuclear-weapon-States. The United Nations is willing to provide any assistance in that endeavour.

Third, disarmament must be rooted in legal obligations.

Universal membership in multilateral treaties is a key, as are regional nuclear-weapon-free zones and a new treaty on fissile materials.

President Obama's support for United States ratification of the CTBT Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is welcome — the treaty only needs a few more ratifications to come into force.

As former Chairman of the CTBTO (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization) Preparatory Commission, I encourage you to reach out to those countries that have not yet acceded to the CTBT and urge them to do so without further delay.

Fourth, disarmament must be visible to the public.

Countries with nuclear weapons should publish more information about what they are doing to fulfil their disarmament commitments.

While most of these countries have revealed some details about their weapons programmes, we still do not know precisely how many nuclear weapons exist worldwide. The United Nations Secretariat could serve as a repository for such data.

As a first step, I propose that the Security Council, through an appropriate mechanism, consider how to increase transparency and openness on nuclear weapons programmes of the recognized nuclear-weapon-States.

Fifth and finally, disarmament must anticipate emerging dangers from other weapons.

I am urging progress in eliminating other weapons of mass destruction and limiting missiles, space weapons and conventional arms — all of which are needed for a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Taken together, I call this my plan to stop the bomb. I am glad that there have been various initiatives echoing the substance of my proposals. I also urge you to help rally the world around these action areas. You can make it happen.

We have a number of important milestones ahead. This includes the International Day of Peace on 21 September, which is dedicated to our WMD campaign. WMD means Weapons of Mass Destruction, WMD stands for We Must Disarm.

In addition to the Security Council's summit on 24 September, the United Nations will host a special meeting to promote the [efforts towards the] entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty on the margins of the General Assembly this month.

In March of next year, the United States Government, President Obama is going to have a summit meeting again to discuss nuclear disarmament in Washington. And next May I said, the NPT State Parties will gather at the United Nations for the treaty's 2010 Review Conference. We must make a concrete and substantial progress in next year's NPT Review Conference. We should not repeat the failure of [the Review Conference in] 2005.

There can be no development without peace and no peace without development. Disarmament can provide the means for both. "We the peoples" have the legitimate right to challenge the leaders of the international community by asking these questions:

What are you doing to eliminate nuclear weapons?

How will you fund your fight against poverty?

How will we finance mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change and the protection of our environment?

These are global goods that every Government and every individual in the world should strive to achieve together in the spirit of renewed multilateralism.

There have been multiple crises in this world: food, fuel, flu pandemic and financial crisis. I have dubbed these as the 4 F's. They have focused minds, and have emphasized our interdependence.

No nation acting alone can solve these alone. No nation, however resourceful, however powerful, can solve these alone. We need to actively and jointly address all these crises. Never has the imperative of acting together been so self-evident. Disarmament can help lead the way to a renewed multilateralism and that is why I have made it a number one priority.

In closing, let me say that commitment is deeply personal. My homeland of the Republic of Korea suffered the ravages of conventional war. It witnessed the devastating consequences of atomic weapons to its neighbour, Japan. Even after having experienced such tragedies, we are still concerned with nuclear issues related to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Also, Iran should fully comply with relevant Security Council resolutions to prove the nature of its nuclear development programmes.

I recognize the Mayor of Hiroshima, who is here today, for his leadership in reminding the world of the devastating impact of such weapons.

In a larger sense, my passion and drive really starts with you. When I look out at you, I also see a kaleidoscope of images etched in the public consciousness over the years. Young people mobilizing for peace. Scientists stepping out of the laboratories and taking a stand. Those in the twilight of life rallying to build a safer world for their grandchildren.

Year in and year out, your work and dedication has helped transform public opinion and produce tangible change. You have helped set a model of what NGOs can do. You have shown the world the good that emerges from grassroots campaigns. You have demonstrated the strength of civil society. And in the process the movement with you at the heart has helped teach the world a profound truth: The mightiest force for change is the power of people. That is the spirit that infuses your movement. That is the passion that produces real change.

We have a golden opportunity to achieve a world free of nuclear arms. With your voice and with your strong support and participation, I know we will seize it. Thank you. I wish you a most successful conference.

*Muchas gracias y mucha suerte!*