

Statement at the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders

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Peace and non-violence is the central message of all religious philosophies. International peace and security is at the core of the Charter of the United Nations - and disarmament is an integral part of that peace and security. An over armed peace is not a secure peace. Yet arms by themselves do not cause wars. Violence can take place without arms and we know there can be structural violence or institutionalized violence perpetrating injustice and oppression. The Charter also permits the right of self-defence and the use of force in the collective defence of international peace and security inevitably involving the tools of war. We cannot therefore envisage a world where all our swords are beaten into plowshares and all our spears into pruning hooks. But we can seek the abolition of all weapons of mass destruction and limit conventional arms to levels commensurate with legitimate national defence needs. I am glad therefore to note that the Declaration you have adopted includes the decision ATo join with the United Nations in the call for all nations states to work for the universal abolition of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction for the safety of life on this planet@. This statement from the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious Leaders will be a source of great encouragement to governments and civil society throughout the world.

For 55 years, since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we have lived in a nuclear armed world, under the shadow of weapons that can cause the horror of omnicide and the total annihilation of our planet. There has been a security dialogue at the United Nations in which disarmament has

played a central role, leading to a consensus around the achievement of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. The main focus has been on weapons of mass destruction precisely because they destroy people and property so horrendously and indiscriminately. Nuclear weapons and military doctrines that institutionalize deterrence through first use and mutual assured destruction have been of special concern. But the dialogue has also focused on chemical weapons and biological weapons that are morally repugnant and we have succeeded in banning the production, deployment and use of these odious weapons. The universalization of the Biological Weapons Convention and Chemical Weapons Convention and their effective implementation remains a challenge.

The spotlight has also been on the excessive accumulation and transfers of conventional weapons and systems and arms sales that divert economic resources needed for development. There has been significant success in restricting and actually banning the smallest of weapons - the antipersonnel landmine that continues to kill civilians long after a war is over. And we are now turning our attention to the excessive proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their illicit trafficking.

Our achievements in disarmament have been hard fought. Since the end of the cold war, major strides have been made in reducing nuclear weapons. From a peak of 70,000 and more nuclear weapons in the mid - 80s, there are still more than 30,000 today - the largest of which is the size of 15,000 explosions in Hiroshima. It is not enough to leave further reductions solely in the hands of nuclear weapon states. The weapons are poised, many on high alert, for launching. They are directed at all of us. As long as these weapons exist and are part of national defense plans, there is a real possibility that they can be used including by terrorists. We have seen that technology is all too fallible as are human beings. The century we are entering should witness the elimination of what the 20th century created, the weapon to end all wars. I believe that it can do that only when the AWe, the peoples@ decide to do so. Like chemical weapons and biological weapons, the end of all nuclear weapons should be writ into the normative framework of disarmament law among nations. We cannot disinvent weapons of mass destruction, but we can certainly delegitimize them. For that to happen, States must be persuaded and pressured to negotiate. Though the two major nuclear - weapon States are discussing options for negotiations, there are currently no formal negotiations on further reductions in their nuclear arsenals. The only multilateral forum for negotiating disarmament agreements - the Geneva based Conference on Disarmament - has not been able to fulfill its role.

There are ominous signs on the horizon. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the most widely adhered to disarmament Treaty in international law, is not yet universal. The important and much welcomed consensus agreements on further steps towards nuclear disarmament,

reached at the latest review of the Treaty in May this year, are already being called into question. Equivocation about unequivocal undertakings has begun. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), signed in 1996, has still not entered into force because significant countries have not ratified it. We pray that the current moratorium in nuclear testing will hold instead of causing further health and environmental hazards.

The proliferation of ballistic missiles and their technology and plans for missile defense have international strategic stability and cast a sense of gloom over prospects for further negotiations on reducing nuclear weapons down to even lower levels.

Military budgets are rising. Global military spending which had declined for a decade after the cold war rose in 1999 by 2.1% to an estimated \$ 780 billion. International arms sales are in the region of over \$ 30 billion. In contrast, eliminating illiteracy in the world will cost \$ 5 billion. Providing clean water for all will cost \$ 10 billion.

There is growing recognition of the problem of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons in exacerbating conflict and generating violence and crime. There are, however, no globally agreed norms and standards governing these weapons. Much hope is being invested in the United Nations Conference on Illicit Trade in these weapons that will take place in 2001. The nations will need your support for a successful outcome of this meeting.

Thanks to the unflagging efforts of civil society, united with Governmental political will, the implementation of the Mine Ban Convention and the Amended Mines Protocol of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons is reaping results. According to authoritative humanitarian sources, the number of casualties from these weapons has dropped in key countries, global use and production are on the decline and transfers have almost completely halted. Your continued commitment to this work is essential in order to achieve the total elimination of these indiscriminate and inhumane weapons.

Security cannot be achieved solely through the acquisition of arms. Let us be honest with ourselves. Arms are often produced or purchased less for the protection of people and more for prestige and profit. You can help to strip away the hypocrisy of the arms trade and demand grater transparency. We have seen the evolution of comprehensive concepts of human security and of sustainable human development involving non-military aspects, such as the environment and economic well being. They must be complemented by what I call sustainable disarmament. War is not an ineradicable part of the human condition. Achieving the security of our world at lower levels of weapons of war is thus a moral imperative. Your support, individually and collectively, to achieve this has never been more urgently needed.