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**MESSAGE TO RELIGIONS FOR PEACE MEETING
ON ARMS DOWN! GLOBAL YOUTH CAMPAIGN FOR SHARED SECURITY
New York, 4 October 2010**

Delivered by Mr. Sergio Duarte, United Nations High Representative for Disarmament

I am pleased to send my greeting to Religions for Peace. Your meeting takes place less than two weeks after the conclusion of the MDG Summit. Since the Millennium Development Goals were first articulated a decade ago, world military expenditure has risen by 50 per cent to more than 1.5 trillion dollars. This money could surely have been much better spent on poverty reduction, climate change mitigation and adaptation, food and nutrition security, women's and children's health, and other global development challenges.

I welcome the contribution that your "Arms Down! Global Youth Campaign for Shared Security" is making to raising awareness about the importance of reducing military spending and ridding the world of nuclear weapons. Increasing momentum on these issues has been among my key priorities. Disarmament and non-proliferation are essential not simply for international peace and security, but across the international agenda. They can foster confidence among nations and strengthen regional and international stability. They are integral to realizing the vision of the United Nations Charter.

This impressive petition from more than twenty million young people of faith from all regions is testament to a groundswell of civil society backing for these goals. Thank you for supporting the United Nations in our work to create a more tolerant, peaceful and prosperous world for all.