

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL****MESSAGE TO PEACE MEMORIAL CEREMONY  
(Delivered by Professor Ramesh Thakur  
Vice-Rector for Peace and Governance of  
the United Nations University)****Hiroshima, 6 August, 2002**

The terrorist attacks which took place in the United States on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September gave new meaning and new urgency to the worldwide challenge of disarmament -- particularly when it comes to weapons of mass destruction. Globally accepted norms and principles in the field of disarmament have become more important than ever, above all in the area of nuclear weapons, whose immense destructive power was visited on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

In the Millennium Declaration adopted at the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, the largest number of world leaders ever assembled resolved "*to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving this aim, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers.*" The goal of eliminating nuclear weapons along with other weapons of mass destruction was also reaffirmed by civil society at the Millennium Forum held a few months earlier.

The final text adopted by the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference -- also held at the United Nations in 2000 -- calls upon signatories, including the nuclear weapon states, to make "an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear arsenals." Participants agreed that the "total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons." Major efforts are needed, however, to consolidate and strengthen the non-proliferation regime and to make it truly universal.

"Not if but when." These words were recently used to describe the inevitability of nuclear terrorism in the years ahead. We, the peoples of the world, through our Governments and international organizations, must do all we can to turn back the tide of nuclear proliferation, and ensure that the terrible experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is never repeated. I know the people of Hiroshima will continue to play their part in this vital cause for all humanity.

Kofi A. Annan