



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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REMARKS TO THE ADVISORY BOARD
ON DISARMAMENT MATTERS
New York, 20 February 2008

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Members of the Board,
Excellencies,

I am delighted to be with you. It has been exactly three decades since the General Assembly's Special Session on Disarmament set in motion the establishment of this Advisory Board. Since then, both your mandate and your membership have expanded. I am the fifth Secretary-General to benefit from your informed counsel on a range of important issues.

Today, I am here to thank you for this valuable input, and to voice hope that when you tackle the difficult issues on this year's agenda, you will formulate practical recommendations on how the United Nations can respond.

As you know, I am determined to revitalize our work in the field of disarmament, and to give this issue the priority it deserves.

I have great expectations for the Board's activities this year. I thank you, Professor Adam Rotfeld, for agreeing to serve as Chairman. Your expertise and years of distinguished work in the field of disarmament will contribute a most productive session.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my warm appreciation to Ambassador Ho-jin Lee for his leadership as Chairman of the Board during the past year.

Let me also welcome the new members of the Board – Ambassador Nobuyasu Abe, Dr. Dewi Anwar, Mr. Cheng Jingye, Dr. Kate Dewes, Dr. Mônica Herz, Mr. H.M.G.S. Palihakkara, Professor Olga Pellicer, and Ambassador Carlo Trezza. Each of you brings to the table a unique background and fresh perspective that are sure to enliven and enlighten your discussions.

The issues on your agenda have a direct bearing on international peace and security. You will consider emerging weapons technologies, specifically challenges relating to missiles

and unmanned aerial vehicles. You will also take up a proposal for nuclear disarmament as set out in the “Hoover Plan”, formulated by four veteran former U.S. Government officials. I am heartened that this plan offers practical action for a nuclear-weapon-free world -- a roadmap for how to get there. In addition, you will address energy security and the environment, exploring alternative, clean sources that can potentially stop the spread of weapons.

I especially look forward to hearing your recommendations on how the United Nations can best contribute to meeting these challenges. My only request of you is that you adopt specific, practical recommendations that can be realistically carried out with reasonable prospects of success. Words are important in the field of disarmament, but real progress requires results.

I would like to hear your suggestions on how the newly structured UN Office of Disarmament, led by the High Representative, can meet the expectations of Member States in our common endeavour for disarmament.

The world must cross the bridge between what is and what ought to be. I have every expectation that you will help us advance on this difficult journey from confrontation to cooperation.

Please accept my best wishes for a most productive session.
Thank you very much.