

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

--

**MESSAGE TO HIROSHIMA PEACE MEMORIAL CEREMONY**

Hiroshima, 6 August 2008

*Delivered by Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs*

The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony is much more than an annual ritual. It is an opportunity for the citizens of this city and people around the world to honour the memory of the first victims of atomic warfare, and to reflect upon what is needed to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. From sadness and grief can emerge new hope for progress in our common journey to a new age of peace and security. I see many grounds for such hope.

Global awareness of the need for progress in nuclear disarmament is stronger now than it has been in many years. This support is broad-based, spanning the entire world and a variety of groups. Educators, religious leaders, current and former government officials, non-governmental groups, journalists, mayors, legislators and countless individuals are not just advocating disarmament by words alone; they are actively working to achieve this goal.

I very much welcome the annual participation of school children at this ceremony. Their generation will soon take on their own responsibilities for remembering the past while continuing collective efforts towards a nuclear-weapon-free world.

I also wish to acknowledge the leadership of the distinguished mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, whose efforts through Mayors for Peace have gained recognition and respect throughout the world. Given the recent announcement by the UN Population Fund that the world's population is now predominantly urban, for the first time ever, mayors everywhere have a natural interest in ensuring that nuclear weapons are never used again. They understand that there is no more reliable way to achieve this than through the elimination of such weapons.

To the people of Hiroshima, from the youngest to the eldest, I wish to pay my deepest respects on this solemn occasion. I join you in commemorating the past and affirm my determination to work with you and all people to achieve a peaceful and secure world without nuclear weapons.