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MESSAGE TO HIROSHIMA PEACE MEMORIAL CEREMONY

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*Delivered by Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka
Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs*

More than six decades after the devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the unspeakable horror of nuclear weapons remains etched in our collective consciousness. As the citizens of Hiroshima gather in memory of those who perished on 6 August 1945, this ceremony—coinciding with the fiftieth anniversary of Japan's entry into the United Nations—reminds us of the great unfinished task ahead: a world free of nuclear dangers, and ultimately, of nuclear weapons.

This task has long been a guiding principle of the UN's work. Indeed, the very first resolution of the United Nations General Assembly in 1946 called for the elimination of "atomic weapons and of all other weapons adaptable to mass destruction".

That we remain far from this goal is no reason to despair. A world without nuclear weapons may be distant, but it is not a dream. The end of the Cold War made possible a measurable reduction in nuclear arsenals. That progress must now be accelerated and solidified. At the same time, the worrying possibility of dangerous nuclear material falling into the hands of non-State actors should energize efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation regime.

Today, we honour Hiroshima's dead. But we must also provide hope to the living. We can do so by re-dedicating ourselves to the struggle for a world in which our children, and their children, can lead lives free from the spectre of nuclear war, and nuclear terror. There can be no better tribute to the victims of Hiroshima, nor any greater service to humanity.

In that spirit, please accept my best wishes for the success of this year's observance.