

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

--

MESSAGE TO PEACE MEMORIAL CEREMONY**Hiroshima, 6 August 2011**

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

Throughout the world, the arrival of the sixth of August offers a solemn occasion for remembrance, respect, reflection and re-commitment.

Today, we remember the great human tragedy that occurred in this beautiful city on that fateful day in 1945. We pay our respects to the memory of the tens of thousands of men, women and children who perished that day, and to the *hibakusha* who have survived to tell their stories to future generations so that such a catastrophe will never again occur.

Today, we also reflect on the world as it has been, the world as it is now, and the world as it can and should be -- a world free of nuclear weapons. And we re-commit ourselves to pursue this goal with all the reason, passion and imagination we can summon.

Last year, I had the honour to become the first United Nations Secretary-General to attend this Peace Memorial Ceremony. Like others who have journeyed to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I, too, will never forget that visit.

I left more convinced than ever of the importance of universal adherence to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, which include the duty to refrain from the threat or use of force, the obligation to settle disputes peacefully, and the need to pursue disarmament and the regulation of conventional armaments.

Nuclear disarmament is especially important because if we fail to achieve it, our other goals will also be in grave jeopardy. International peace and security is not a prerequisite for nuclear disarmament.

Quite the contrary, verified nuclear disarmament itself would make an immense contribution to international peace and security, and should be pursued today, not deferred because of the false notion that it should be undertaken only in a world fully at peace.

This is a cause that should unite all people, everywhere. This is a cause that reminds us of our common humanity and our responsibility to build a world that is more humane and peaceful than the imperfect one we share today.

I wish to convey my deepest respect for the efforts by the citizens and elected officials of Hiroshima and Nagasaki -- together with all the people of Japan -- in pursuing this cause for so many years. Today, I reaffirm my commitment to continue working with you in partnership until this great goal is finally achieved.