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Press Release
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GLOBAL COMMUNITY MUST DO MORE TO DEMONSTRATE
COMMITMENT TO NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT AND NON-
PROLIFERATION, SECRETARY-GENERAL TELLS PEOPLE OF
HIROSHIMA

Following is the message of Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the Peace Memorial Ceremony, on 6 August in Hiroshima, Japan:

Since the days when atomic bombs destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki and brought unbearable suffering to the citizens of both cities, it has been an ardent aspiration of humankind to see nuclear weapons completely abolished from the earth. Reflecting this grave concern, the United Nations, since its inception, has been tackling the issue of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as a matter of great priority.

Although some would say it is an achievement that no nuclear weapon has been used since 1945, tens of thousands of such weapons -- the exact number is unknown -- remain in arsenals around the world. The progress made after the end of the Cold War in reducing those arsenals must be accelerated and solidified. Moreover, other worrisome trends have emerged in recent years, such as the acquisition of nuclear weapons by non-nuclear States, and efforts to modernize existing arsenals and to create new types of nuclear weapons. The possibility that nuclear weapons or radiological bombs could fall into the hands of terrorists has also become a major concern.

The international community must do more to demonstrate the seriousness of its commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. You, the people of Hiroshima, who have such unique and intimate knowledge of the suffering caused by nuclear weapons, are among the concerned citizens and groups who have linked hands and hopes with others around the world in an effort to reduce the nuclear danger. Your advocacy is of immense help to the United Nations.

I would also like to take this opportunity to announce the recent opening in Hiroshima of the Asia-Pacific Office of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). Through its training activities for government officials and scholars in the region, UNITAR will be able to carry to others not only the universal message of hope that emanates from Hiroshima, but also the practical experiences in turning war, devastation and reconstruction into a positive force. Your support for this new office is yet another manifestation of an enduring commitment to the United Nations.

On this day of remembrance, let us all, governments and citizens alike, reaffirm our pledge to bring closer the day when people everywhere will be free to live their lives in peace, without fear of annihilation by the world's most horrible weapons. In that spirit of solidarity, please accept my best wishes for the success of this solemn and vital annual ceremony.

* This press release has been updated to reflect change in introductory paragraph. The Director of the United Nations Information Centre in Tokyo will not be delivering the message.

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