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THE OFFICE FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS

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HIROSHIMA JUNIOR INTERNATIONAL FORUM

Message from Izumi Nakamitsu
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

October 2019

I welcome the holding of the Hiroshima Junior International Forum, which brings together young leaders from all over the world to discuss the pivotal issue of nuclear disarmament. Hiroshima, of course, is a fitting site for such a meeting. The unimaginable devastation caused there and in Nagasaki nearly 75 years ago made it immediately and abundantly clear that, if humanity is to survive, the use of nuclear weapons should never be repeated. Indeed, the very first resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, adopted less than half a year after the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, dealt with the elimination of nuclear weapons.

History has moved on since then – the Cold War saw the ballooning of nuclear arsenals, especially in the Soviet Union and the United States. Since its end, the numbers of nuclear weapons have reduced dramatically, to roughly 14,000. But we cannot grow complacent: this is still 14,000 too many.

Today's international landscape is considerably more complex than the bipolar order of the Cold War. Taken together, an ongoing qualitative arms race, sharp disagreements regarding arms control treaties and a return to antagonistic rhetoric, have made the world a more dangerous place than even a few years ago. Nuclear disarmament is more urgent than ever.

Your commitment to this important issue and to advancing the cause of international peace gives me great hope. Leadership by your generation can be a powerful force in helping the world acknowledge uncomfortable truths and take decisive action for the common good. For an example, one need to look no further than the youth movement in response to the climate emergency, and the groundswell of support it

has generated, to see evidence of the impact young people can have on some of the most pressing issues of our time.

The Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear takes place next year. This will be an important moment to take stock of achievements in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and to strengthen the implementation of past agreements and commitments, as well as to reinvigorate the common cause of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Despite the best efforts of my generation, I fear that it will fall to your generation to take us over the finish line and accomplish our goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. I hope that, through your participation in the Hiroshima International Forum, you will begin to acquire the tools needed to make that goal a reality. I thank you for championing this cause, and I assure you of my personal support and that of the United Nations.