



Secretary-General

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DISARMAMENT MUST REMAIN AT TOP OF AGENDA, STRESSES SECRETARY-GENERAL

AS HE WARNS AGAINST COMPLACENCY, IN MESSAGE TO PUGWASH CONFERENCE

Following is the text of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's message to the fifty-seventh Pugwash Conference, in Bari, Italy, on 21 October:

I am pleased to convey my greetings to the fifty-seventh Pugwash Conference. I congratulate your departing President, Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, on his valuable contributions, and Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, former United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, who will soon assume the presidency.

Over the years, Pugwash conferences have promoted constructive dialogue on sensitive matters of international security. They have involved influential scientists and public leaders from throughout the world, even from countries that do not necessarily enjoy friendly relations with each other.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. It is thus fitting for you to reflect on Pugwash's contribution to the cause of world peace, and to the challenges ahead. It is also an opportunity for all of us to reflect on the importance of disarmament, dialogue and cooperation in creating a more secure world.

In 1946, the very first resolution of the United Nations General Assembly called for the elimination of all major weapons "adaptable to mass destruction". Since then, the United Nations, together with crucial civil society partners like Pugwash, has been working towards the objective of ridding our world of all weapons of mass destruction.

We have much in common. We share a global approach to promoting disarmament and non-proliferation issues. We pursue similar aims of dialogue, peace and security. Both our institutions have received the Nobel Peace Prize for efforts in these areas.

Yet, there is no room for complacency. Developments in science and technology are raising hopes that new innovations could contribute to improving the quality of life of people throughout the world. But, at the same time, developments in various fields of weaponry remind us of the potential devastation from the use of weapons of mass destruction, and the very real threat they pose to all of humanity. Many such weapons remain, amid persisting risks that they may be acquired by additional States or non-State actors. Disarmament must remain at the top of our agenda.

I hope that, at this gathering, you will be able to identify specific contributions that the international community and the United Nations can make towards advancing the goal of eliminating the world's most deadly and indiscriminate weapons. In that spirit, please accept my best wishes for a successful conference.

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