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From 'Ground Zero to Global Zero' - a World Free of Nuclear Weapons

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Following are UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's remarks at the Peace Memorial Ceremony in Hiroshima, Japan, 6 August:

Hiroshima no minasama konichiwa. Ohayo gozaimasu.

We are here, on hallowed ground, to see, to feel, to absorb and reflect.

I am honoured to be the first United Nations Secretary-General to take part in this Peace Memorial Ceremony on the sixty-fifth anniversary of this tragic day. And I am deeply moved.

When the atomic bombs fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I was 1 year old. Only later in life could I begin to understand the full dimension of all that happened here. As a young boy, I lived through the Korean War. One of my earliest memories is marching along a muddy road into the mountains, my village burning behind me. All those lives lost, families destroyed - so much sadness. Ever since, I have devoted my life to peace. It has brought me here today.

Watakushiwa sekai heiwa no tameni Hiroshima ni mairimashita.

We gather to pay our solemn respects to those who perished 65 years ago, and to the many more whose lives forever changed. Life is short, but memory is long.

For many of you, that day endures, as vivid as the white light that seared the sky, as dark as the black rains that followed. To you, I offer a message of hope. To all of you, I offer my message of peace. A more peaceful world can be ours. You are helping to make it happen. You, the survivors, who inspired us with your courage and fortitude. You, the next generations, the young generation, striving for a better day.

Together, you have made Hiroshima an epicentre of peace. Together, we are on a journey from ground zero to global zero - a world free of weapons of mass destruction. That is the only sane path to a safer world. For as long as nuclear weapons exist, we will live under a nuclear shadow.

And that is why I have made nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation a top priority for the United Nations - and put forward a five-point plan.

Our moment has come. Everywhere, we find new friends and allies. We see new leadership from the most powerful nations. We see new engagement in the United Nations Security Council. We see new energy from civil society. Russia and the United States have a new START [Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms] treaty. We made important progress at the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington last April, which we will build upon in Korea.

We must keep up the momentum. In September, I will convene a high-level meeting in support of the work of the Conference on Disarmament at the United Nations. We will push for negotiations towards nuclear disarmament. A Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. A Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty. Disarmament education in our schools - including translating the testimonies of the survivors in the world's major languages. We must teach an elemental

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truth: that status and prestige belong not to those who possess nuclear weapons, but to those who reject them.

Sixty-five years ago, the fires of hell descended upon this place. Today, one fire burns, here in this Peace Park. That is the Flame of Peace - a flame that will remain lit until nuclear weapons are no more. Together, let us work for that day - in our lifetime, in the lifetimes of the survivors. Together, let us put out the last fire of Hiroshima. Let us replace that flame with the light of hope. Let us realize our dream of a world free of nuclear weapons so that our children and all succeeding generations can live in freedom, security and peace.

Thank you. *Domo arigato gozaimasu.*

Ban Ki-moon

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