

Dream of nuclear-weapon-free world can be realized, says Ban



Two brothers who survived the Nagasaki A-Bomb

7 August 2009 – Despite the continued presence of thousands of nuclear weapons in global arsenals, it is possible to achieve the goal of ridding the world of this deadly scourge, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told a gathering in the Japanese city of Nagasaki.

“A world without nuclear weapons may be distant, but it is no longer just a dream,” Mr. Ban said in a **message** to the Seventh General Conference of Mayors for Peace. “I look forward to continuing to work with governments and global citizens to realize this shared vision.”

Mr. Ban lauded the important work done by Mayors for Peace, which has helped to inform millions of people around the world about the catastrophic effects of the 1945 nuclear attacks. The initiative has also raised public awareness about the dangers that cities, in particular, would face if these destructive weapons were ever used again.

“I am grateful for your advocacy because I share your vision of a world free of nuclear weapons,” stated the Secretary-General. “While we remain far from this goal, that is no reason to despair.”

He recalled the five-point plan he launched last October containing “practical and realistic” steps the international community can take to make the vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world a reality.

The plan begins with a call for the parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to pursue negotiations on nuclear disarmament, either through a new convention or through a series of mutually reinforcing instruments backed by a credible system of verification.

More recently, on 13 June, the Secretary-General launched the “WMD-WeMustDisarm” multimedia campaign, kicking off a 100-day countdown to next

month's observance of the **International Day of Peace**, which this year focuses on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

In the lead-up to the International Day, observed annually on 21 September, Mr. Ban and others will raise awareness of the need to eliminate nuclear weapons by issuing a daily message, via Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, email and radio, urging the world to disarm.

In a **message** for the WMD campaign, the UN chief noted that despite the carnage wrought when atomic bombs rained down on Hiroshima and Nagasaki 64 years ago, thousands of nuclear weapons remain in global arsenals.

"We must disarm to save lives," he said. "We must disarm so that we can redirect precious resources to health, education and development."