

Ban to open UN conference with civil society groups next week in Mexico



3 September 2009 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will travel next week to Mexico City, where he will open the annual United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) conference with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which this year focuses on disarmament.

More than 1,000 representatives of NGOs from around the world are expected at the 62nd annual gathering, whose theme is “For Peace and Development: Disarm Now!”

During the three-day conference, which opens on 9 September, participants will discuss how they can contribute to disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and to reducing conventional arms while advancing peace and development.

In addition to opening the meeting, Mr. Ban plans to attend a number of side events, which will allow him to interact with members of civil society, including youth delegates, UN spokesperson Marie Okabe told reporters today.

While in Mexico, he will also meet with President Felipe Calderón to discuss issues of mutual interest ahead of the upcoming session of the UN General Assembly, including climate change, the eight globally agreed anti-poverty targets with a 2015 deadline known as the Millennium Development Goals (**MDGs**), and human rights.

Ms. Okabe added that the Secretary-General will hold additional meetings with the Foreign Secretary and Ministers of Health, Social Development, Environment and Education during his 8-9 September visit.

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