



**Statement By Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs to the
United Nations Foundation**

"The UN at 70: Striving for a safer and more prosperous world"

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My sincerest thanks to the United Nations Foundation for arranging this event, and especially to Mr Peter Yeo, and Ms Jen Kim Field. The United Nations Foundation is an essential partner for the UN across a broad array of issues – critically, from my perspective, in peace and security.

I would also like to thank Ms Kate Shin for her generous hospitality in this beautiful building.

Ladies and gentlemen

I am delighted that you have chosen to honour the Secretary-General at your forthcoming Global Leadership Dinner. It comes at a doubly auspicious time – we celebrate seventy years of UN efforts to build a safer and more prosperous world at the same time that Member States have laid the foundations for future generations to enjoy such a world.

The post-2015 development agenda is almost finalised. The Addis Ababa Agenda provides a financing framework to implement the new agenda. This weekend, world leaders will adopt the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. It remains now for States to show the same vision in reaching a climate agreement in December in Paris.

In the words of the Secretary-General, the historic development agenda “will chart a new era of sustainable development in which poverty will be eradicated, prosperity shared and the core drivers of climate change tackled.”

Ladies and gentlemen

The UN turns seventy in a vastly different environment from the one in which it was created. As the Secretary-General said, it is a time of turmoil and of hope.

As an international community we face challenges that not only affect international peace and security, but our common development. As the 2030 Agenda makes clear: there cannot be peace and security without development, and there cannot be development without peace and security.

The challenges we face are unprecedented. A horrendous refugee crisis. Entrenched internecine conflicts. Non-state groups acting with impunity. Emerging challenges such as cyber security and enduring threats such as nuclear weapons.

The UN does not resile from these challenges. We will confront them in the same spirit we always have – by acting as a bridge between nations, a forum for mediation, and a bastion of hope. This is the approach exemplified by the Secretary-General.

Ladies and gentlemen

There are more than forty armed conflicts raging across the world. Hundreds of thousands have died. Millions have been forced to flee their homes. We cannot tackle problems such as terrorism and refugees unless we address the underlying conflicts that fuel them, and the weapons that exacerbate them.

For this reason, the UN enthusiastically supported the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty. The ATT can be a major check against the illicit arms trade that flows from diversion, theft and unauthorised transfers. The treaty holds importers and exporters to internationally agreed standards. It requires diligence in ensuring that arms will not be used, for example, to violate arms embargoes or fuel conflict.

The ATT's first Conference of States Parties was a resounding success. But the onus must now be on States Parties to work for the treaty's full implementation and to encourage their neighbours to join the treaty. Only when this treaty is completely and universally implemented can its full potential be realised. As the ATT's depository, the Secretary-General and the UN stand ready to help assist with this process however we can.

Ladies and gentlemen

In the civil war in Syria we are witnessing the destruction of a country. As the Secretary-General said, the combatants are defying all norms of humanity. The international solidarity demonstrated in seeking to remove all chemical weapons from Syria has been one solitary light in a very dark conflict.

The UN-OPCW Joint Mission for the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons programme, established in November 2013, was successful in removing or destroying all declared chemical weapons material from Syria. Unfortunately, we continue to hear allegations of chemical weapon and toxic chemical use in the conflict. This is deeply disturbing. The indiscriminate use of these inhumane weapons must be stopped.

It is why the Security Council adopted Resolution 2235, creating the independent Joint Investigative Mechanism. The new Mechanism has been given the mandate to verify, to the greatest extent possible, the perpetrators, organisers, sponsors or those otherwise involved in the use of chemical weapons.

Again, the UN stands ready to be of whatever assistance we can to the Joint Investigative Mechanism.

The adoption of Resolution 2235 sends the right message to all parties to the conflict in Syria. The Council must remain united on this issue and all States must lend their support.

As horrific as chemical weapons are, we cannot forget that over two hundred thousand Syrians have been killed by conventional weapons. There is no military

solution in Syria; the crisis can only be resolved through a political settlement. The Secretary-General, through his special envoy, continues to strive for such a solution.

Ladies and gentlemen

The sustainable development of our planet is an existential issue. There is another existential issue that also requires urgent attention – the threat posed by nuclear weapons.

In the decades since the end of the Cold War, the world has made remarkable progress in reducing the danger of nuclear war. We have seen extensive arsenal reductions, the shuttering of facilities and an international consensus that we must seek a world without nuclear weapons.

Unfortunately, that progress appears to have stalled. While the international community agrees on the destination, how to get there has become a matter of dispute. This division was on display in the failure of the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (or NPT) to agree on a consensus outcome.

We cannot let this division halt our progress. We need to act with urgency and the same solidarity that was on display in negotiating the Development Agenda. There are sixteen thousand nuclear weapons remaining and the only way to ensure they are never used again is through their elimination.

Ladies and gentlemen

As it has since 1945, the United Nations remains at the forefront in maintaining international peace and security. However, the UN is sum of its member states. As the legendary Korean King Sejong the Great said: “The people are the roots of a nation, and the roots should be strong so as to create a peaceful nation.” I would update this: States are the roots of the international community. These roots must be strong enough to create a peaceful world.

Thank you.