



**Remarks by Mr. Michael Møller
Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and
Personal Representative of the United Nations
Secretary-General to the Conference**

**International Conference “Building a Nuclear – Weapon - Free World”
28-29 August 2016, Astana, Kazakhstan**

Mr. President [Nursultan Nazerbayev],
Mr. Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of Kazakhstan [Kassym-Jomart Tokayev],
Minister of Foreign Affairs [Erlan Idrissoy],
Mr. Ware,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen:

Thank you for your invitation to this very important and timely conference “Building a Nuclear – Weapon – Free World”. I am grateful to the Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament for bringing much needed attention to this topic in this superb setting.

The Secretary-General regrets that he is unable to participate in person. He asked me to share the following message on his behalf. I quote:

“I am pleased to send this message to all participants at the conference on “Building a Nuclear-Free World”, marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the closing of the Semipalatinsk test site and the seventh International Day against Nuclear Tests. I thank the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan for hosting, once again demonstrating its commitment to the pursuit of a world free of nuclear weapons.

I saw this same resolve in the people living around Semipalatinsk when I visited six years ago. More than 450 nuclear tests there left deep scars, both physical and spiritual, on the people of Kazakhstan. I was moved by their plight and inspired by their enduring determination to turn this poisonous inheritance into a message of peace.

The decision to shutter Semipalatinsk twenty-five years ago was truly historic. So too was the decision to return the former Soviet nuclear weapons and join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. These twin outcomes set the stage for Kazakhstan to become a standard-bearer in the cause of nuclear disarmament.

In addition to helping establish the important commemoration we mark today, Kazakhstan has played a leading role in the creation of a Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. It spearheaded the Universal Declaration on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World at the General Assembly. President Nazarbayev has called nuclear disarmament a top global priority.

As divisions between States on how to achieve nuclear disarmament grow, countries like Kazakhstan must lead the way to common ground and inclusive dialogue. Such leadership is urgently needed to make our world truly secure.

We must give priority to achieving the long-overdue entry-into-force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Negotiated two decades ago, the absence of sufficient ratifications is a glaring example of the stalemate plaguing multilateral disarmament.

The achievement of a moratorium on nuclear testing – maintained by all but one State – is significant. But as I have said time and again, it can be no substitute for a legally-binding prohibition.

Political will is essential to replace the costly, divisive and dangerous rivalries that prevail in our world with a sense of global solidarity for our shared future.

On this Day, I call upon all States to summon the political will to advance progress toward realizing our vision of a world free of nuclear weapons”.

That was the end of the Secretary-General’s message.
Allow me now to add some personal reflections.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Kazakhstan has played a pioneering role with its engagement against nuclear arms. As an elected non-permanent member of the Security Council for 2017-2018 it is in a great position to further raise the profile of international discussions on non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

While I look with concern at the current deadlock in disarmament diplomacy, I continue to believe that the Conference on Disarmament, with the political will of Member States, can regain momentum. Although there is no consensus on starting negotiations on any of the CD’s core agenda items, there are areas of agreement that could provide a starting point for Member States to negotiate framework conventions or voluntary instruments, especially on some of the non-nuclear issues that need urgent attention. In addition, a review of the working methods and composition of the CD would provide an

opportunity to build on some of the best practices that have emerged. The lack of formal access of civil society to the Conference on Disarmament is an anachronism that has to change. Civil society has proven to be a catalyst for action on disarmament and arms control, including at the First Committee of the General Assembly and in most disarmament treaty bodies. The CD-Civil Society Fora that I organized in 2015 and in 2016 reiterated the value of closer interaction and I am grateful for the support received from Kazakhstan to these events.

The Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) in Geneva has been another positive signal of renewed determination by Member States to find a path to nuclear disarmament and civil society has been a key partner in drafting the report and recommendations to the General Assembly, adopted at the OEWG earlier this month. If there are signs among Member States to take forward the discussion on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and to push for negotiations of a Ban Treaty, it is thanks to the leadership demonstrated by a number of countries as well as to the continued engagement of civil society.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,
a “whole of society” approach has marked the negotiation of all major policy frameworks that were adopted last year, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Combined, they form a road map for humanity that invites us to look at security and development challenges in a more integrated manner. This roadmap has and should also guide the work of the disarmament community. Resources invested in socio-economic development are much more likely to enhance security at global and national levels than an accelerated arms race.

I feel much encouraged by the positive spirit of this Conference and thank Kazakhstan for keeping nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation high on the international agenda. International Geneva, where I am based, has greatly benefited from Kazakhstan’s initiatives. My predecessor, H.E. Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev who served with great distinction is helping to keep the flame alive and we all thank him for it.

I look forward to our continued collaboration towards our common goal of a disarmed and more peaceful planet.

Thank you very much.