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THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

LE PRESIDENT DE L'ASSEMBLEE GENERALE

6 August 2009

**Statement of Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,
President of the 63rd Session of the General Assembly,
at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony**

Dear brothers and sisters,

I am honoured, and deeply moved, to be with you on this most solemn occasion, in which we remember one of the greatest atrocities the world has ever witnessed.

I am here today as President of the General Assembly of our United Nations, but also in my personal capacity.

As a Roman Catholic priest, and a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth, I want also, from the depth of my heart, to seek forgiveness from all my brothers and sisters in Japan for the fact that the captain of the fateful B-29 Enola Gay, Paul Tibbets, now deceased, was a member of my Church. I am consoled, to a certain degree, that Father George Zablecka, the catholic chaplain of the mission, recognized, after the event, that this was one of the worst imaginable betrayals of the teachings of Jesus. In the name of my church, I ask your forgiveness.

Sixty-four years later, the gruesome reality of atomic destruction has lost none of its power to inspire grief and terror -- and righteous anger.

We cannot, have not, and will not succeed in eliminating the danger of nuclear weapons being used again, unless and until we have eliminated nuclear weapons from the face of the earth and until we have placed the capacity for making those weapons under reliable and lasting international control. I understand that this is a tall order, full of technical and political complexities. Yet, if we are to keep faith with the victims and survivors of the first nuclear terror, we must resolve, here and now, to take convincing action to begin working toward the explicit goal of complete nuclear disarmament.

Taking into account that Japan is the only country in the world that has experienced the atrocity of nuclear bombardment, and that furthermore, Japan has given the world a magnificent example of forgiveness and reconciliation, I believe that Japan is the country with the most moral authority to convene the nuclear powers to this emblematic City of Peace, holy Hiroshima, and begin in earnest the process to lead our world back to sanity by starting the way to Zero Tolerance of nuclear weapons in the world.

Thank you.