

9 August 2009

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

Dear brothers and sisters,

I have come to Japan to express my solidarity with the victims and survivors of two of the greatest atrocities ever perpetrated by human beings against other human beings -- the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

I have also come in my personal capacity, as a Roman Catholic priest and a follower of Jesus of Nazareth, to ask forgiveness from all my Japanese brothers and sisters for the direct complicity of some members of my church in the crime that occurred in this place 64 years ago. In the name of my church, I beg your forgiveness.

The only certain way to assure that nuclear weapons will never be used again is to eliminate them outright. But to accomplish this goal requires that we undertake several challenging tasks. The first and most urgent task is that we break the inertia of business-as-usual by calling things by their real names. The mere possession of nuclear weapons is symptomatic of a sort of criminal and suicidal insanity that only serves to make others want to have them also.

In today's Orwellian world, the threat of instant annihilation by nuclear attack is called "deterrence"; and mutual terror is called "stability." "Disarmament" usually means reduction but also modernization of nuclear forces, rather than their elimination. We need to put an end to this disingenuous and hypocritical pseudo-sophistication.

The second urgent task is that we declare, and take decisive action, toward the complete and final elimination of all nuclear weapons. To be credible, we need to set an ambitious, but realistic date certain for achieving this abolition.

I join the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and their many collaborators across the world in endorsing their call for achieving a nuclear-free world by 2020, a date that coincides with the 75th anniversary of the 1945 bombings. Japan and the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have the moral authority to demand this of the nuclear powers.

Finally, we will not sustain the necessary global effort unless it is founded on greater fairness, including new rules that apply equally to all nations, and reformed institutions that work transparently and equitably to advance the legitimate security interests of all peoples.