



United Nations Nations Unies
NGO Section
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
One United Nations Plaza, Room DC1-1480
New York, NY 10017, USA

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Dear Participants of the Global Article 9 Conference,
Distinguished Representatives of the NGOs,

In my capacity as Chief of the UN NGO DESA section, as well as someone who values peace, understanding and harmony among all peoples of the world, I feel greatly honored and privileged to send this message to the "Global Article 9 Campaign to Abolish War." I sincerely apologize that I am unable to attend in person, due to a family emergency.

At a time in history when the international community is faced with continuing and devastating military conflicts, this event reminds us of the urgency to mobilize advocates for peace who can raise world awareness about the need for policy makers to adopt more peaceful and problem solving approaches to international disputes and to reject war and conflict as viable options for effective international relations. We need leaders who will commit themselves to United Nations Charter principles in the resolution of disagreements between countries. Unilateralism should be renounced as counterproductive and unhelpful.

Peace Boat and other civil society organizations in Japan have consistently promoted a culture of peace, and are dedicated to overcoming barriers and bringing people together. This conference reflects the commitment of Japanese civil society stakeholders to the values of peace enshrined in the Japanese constitution and represents their commitment to maintaining Japan as a pacifist country as well as their determination to ensure that the Japanese policy makers remain sensitive to the need for abolishing weapons of massive destruction, including nuclear ones.

I would like to thank the steering committee of Peace Boat for its commitment to work hand in hand with the UN system to spread a culture of peace and dialogue in the world, and to promote an international system, in which priority is given to a more understanding, cooperation-based, and mutually beneficial relationship.

Over the first four decades of the 20th century, the international community went through the most disastrous, the most chaotic and bloody period of its history. Blinded by expansionist ambitions, some countries resorted to violent and aggressive means to establish their hegemony in the international arena. No matter what the price they had to pay or how many human lives had to be sacrificed in order to achieve this purpose, what mattered more for them, was to preserve and expand their strategic goals. This fierce competition for supremacy resulted in two devastating wars, which ravaged and decimated many regions of the world and became an immense negative stain on human history. Europe and Japan have experienced the most tragic results of these two wars, which included, among many other tragedies, the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This resulted in the death of more than 200,000 people and hundreds of thousands others seriously injured. These deadly bombings left painful memories not only in Japanese consciousness, but in humanity at large.

It was to prevent such a tragic disaster from happening again, that governments established the United Nations. By calling it the "United Nations," the founders meant to send a clear message of bringing together all the nations around the same purpose, namely the prevention of armed conflicts and promotion of peace, understanding and dialogue.

From their painful experience during the Second World War and in the wake of the creation of the United Nations, Japanese policy makers decided to promulgate a constitution to banish any involvement in foreign military conflicts. The drafters of the Japanese constitution, stipulated in Article 9 that: *"Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign*

right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized."

Thanks to this commitment to peace assumed by the new Japanese generation, Japan managed in a strikingly short period of time not only to change its economic situation, but to transform itself into the second largest economic power in the world. Moreover, thanks to the clear-sightedness of its policy makers and to its constantly positive balance of trade, Japan has become one of the world's major providers of international development assistance, as well as the world's second largest contributor to the United Nations' budget after the United States.

In the aftermath of WWII and the Cold War, there was a sizeable drop in military spending worldwide. Since the beginning of this decade, however we are witnessing an alarming increase in such spending, which represents a considerable threat to peace and the stability in the world. While the world's military spending amounted to 894 billions of US dollars in 2002, it reached 1,205 billions in 2006, which represent 2.5% of the world's GDP.

Since the beginning of the new millennium, the United Nations has continuously urged the international community to join their efforts, in order to help the developing and least developed countries cope with the challenges brought about by globalization, and to empower them to fight poverty that is affecting 2.8 billions people across the world. Through the Millennium Development Goals, launched by 189 head of states and governments during the Millennium Summit, the developed countries have renewed their commitments made during the 1992 Rio Summit to devote 0.7% of their GDP to international development assistance, with a view to helping the developing countries to achieve the MDGs, especially to half the number of people living below the poverty line or suffering from hunger. Yet halfway to the deadline of 2015, most of the developing countries, notably the African countries, are far from being in a position to achieve these goals.

In fact, studies have made clear that those countries cannot realize these goals, as long as the developed countries are not willing to help them to substantially upgrade their economy and to improve the living conditions of their people. Rather than making efforts to promote a new cooperation framework that benefits all stakeholders of the international economic system, the affluent countries have adopted narrowly self-interested strategies, which exacerbates the tension all across the world, and deepens the gap existing between rich and poor countries.

The advocates of peace and of a more cooperation-based international system, find it regrettable that many developed countries devote substantial financing to their military budgets, while they are reluctant to make a significant effort aimed at helping the developing and the least developed countries to lift themselves out of the economic hardship that has held them back for more than five decades.

If the developed countries are truly willing to build a better world and to diminish the risk that might arise in the international arena, the first measure should be to fulfill commitments for international development aid and debt alleviation, in order to help the developing countries in their endeavors toward the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Instead of buying more and more destructive armaments that increase tension and the risk of devastating conflicts, it is high time that developing countries for their part reconsider their military spending and work hand in hand with the developed countries toward the improvement of their economic system and the improvement of the living conditions of their people.

It is frustrating to see that the international community is devoting 1,200 billion US dollars in military spending that fuels conflicts and tensions, while they dedicate only 80 billions dollars to development assistance. The world would be safer, more peaceful and more stable, if the developed countries were willing to help the developing countries in their attempt to improve their economic situation and to build-up a less self-interested international system. Undoubtedly, in this setting, the international community would be in a better position of helping with the achievement of the MDGs, as well as contributing to the improvement of the economic situation of more than a third of the world's population that is living in deprivation and poverty.

While I hope that this conference has successful outcome, I wish to assure you that the United Nations strives to achieve a better world, and the implementation of Article 26 of their Charter related to the reduction of the military spending and the regulation of armament.

Hanifa Mezoui (Chief, UN NGO DESA Section)