

The Secretary-General

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Message to Opening of the 2017 session of the Conference on Disarmament Geneva, 24 January 2017

It is a pleasure to greeting the Conference on Disarmament.

Disarmament is an integral element of a peaceful and prosperous world. It is one of the pillars on which the United Nations was built.

As Secretary-General, I am firmly resolved to actively pursue the abolition of all weapons of mass destruction and the strict regulation of conventional weapons. I am committed to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

On taking the oath of office, I described a world of new and old conflicts woven in a complex, interconnected web. These conflicts have precipitated gross violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

Disarmament can play an important role in ending existing conflicts and preventing the outbreak of new strife. Disarmament and arms control processes provide the breathing space for confidence to be built, stability to be strengthened and trust to be established. This was true during the Cold War and it is true now.

The need for a breathing space is urgent. Global tensions are rising, sabres have been rattled and dangerous words spoken about the use of nuclear weapons.

The world looks to you, as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, to provide rationality and diplomatic solutions, to promote security through peaceful action, and to create the instruments we need to develop confidence, trust and international stability. You have a responsibility to all States and all peoples. Now is the time to live up to it.

I encourage you to work hard to find compromise and to make the most of your partners in civil society and academia. The United Nations will be your ally and assist however we can.

I wish you all the best for your forthcoming session.