

Unofficial transcript
Secretary-General of the United Nations, His
Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon

This is a historic moment - a moment offering a fresh start towards a new future. I extend a warm welcome to President Obama. We salute his leadership.

This is the first Security Council summit on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. I have long advocated a stronger role for the Security Council. This was a major element of the five-point nuclear disarmament plan I announced in October last year.

The need for action is clear. Thousands of nuclear weapons remain on hair-trigger alert. More States have sought and acquired them. Nuclear tests have continued. And every day, we live with the threat that weapons of mass destruction could be stolen, sold or slip away. As long as such weapons exist, so does the risk of proliferation and catastrophic use, as does the threat of nuclear terrorism.

Now, some might dismiss the goal of nuclear disarmament as utopian. The cynics say, "Stop dreaming. Be realistic." They are wrong. Nuclear disarmament is the only sane path to a safer world. Nothing would work better towards eliminating the risk of use than eliminating the weapons themselves.

The Russian Federation and the United States are leading by example.

I urge the Security Council to make the most of this moment. This should not be a one-time event. We must sustain the momentum.

First, we need new ways to increase transparency and openness regarding the weapons programmes of the recognized nuclear-weapon States. I urge the Council to start consultations on this matter. The Secretariat is ready to serve as a repository.

Secondly, we must make the best use of the United Nations disarmament machinery. I hope, for example, that the Conference on Disarmament can advance the programme of work it adopted this year, including negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. For its part, the Council could promote universal membership in key treaties, work to improve

compliance, and assess the need for new agreements, including a nuclear weapons convention. It could also strongly reaffirm the need for early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Thirdly, disarmament and non-proliferation must proceed together. I encourage nuclear-weapon States here to consider additional measures to enhance security as a way of leading to total elimination. These could include, for example, ways to achieve the effective verification of the disarmament process. At the same time, we must ensure that the International Atomic Energy Agency has the resources and support it needs to implement its growing safeguards responsibilities.

For too long, a divided international community has lacked the will, vision and confidence to move ahead. Together, we have dreamed about a nuclear-free world. Now we must act to achieve it. That starts now.

I congratulate the Council on convening this summit. I welcome the adoption of today's resolution, and again salute the leadership of President Obama. I pledge my continued support and look forward to future meetings on these vital issues here in this Council and beyond, including the crucial 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This summit truly adds a new page to the history of this Council.

Let us now write a new chapter of peace, security and safety for all.