I begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, upon your election to guide the work of this Committee. Your distinguished career equips you well for the tasks ahead -- a career that, in the disarmament area, features your prominent role in the historic 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as well as your chairmanship of the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters. I also congratulate the other members of the bureau and pledge the fullest support of the Department of Disarmament Affairs (DDA) in all your efforts to make this a productive session.

On 10 September 2001, the Secretary-General issued his annual Message on the eve of what was to be the International Day of Peace. He urged people everywhere to "try to imagine a world quite different from the one we know." He called on everybody to "picture those who wage war laying down their arms and talking out their differences." He stated that this "should be a day of global ceasefire and non-violence." And he closed with these words of hope: "let us seize the opportunity for peace to take hold, day by day, year by year, until every day is a day of peace."

The next morning, only an hour before the Secretary-General was planning to ring the Peace Bell, thousands of citizens from dozens of countries perished in acts of unmitigated brutality that defy description. The challenge now facing this Committee, as it convenes in the shadow of this dark and ominous cloud, is to confront these new and old threats to international peace and security. At this critical juncture -- when the peoples of the world stand together in repudiating
mass terrorism -- we must all work together to build upon this remarkable display of unity. This is a time for cooperation, for reaffirming the rule of law, for recognizing common threats, and for acknowledging the extent to which our common security depends upon justice, fundamental human rights, and equitable development for all societies. For this Committee, it is particularly a time for reinforcing the roads and bridges leading to the fulfilment of multilateral disarmament commitments, while exploring new paths to reach the same destinations. It is, in short, a time to resume the work of realizing the vision described in the Secretary-General's Message on the International Day of Peace.

Only history will decide how much of a defining moment 11 September will be. But history will certainly not absolve us for failing to learn the lessons of this unspeakable tragedy. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his address on 1 October to the General Assembly, stated "While the world was unable to prevent the 11 September attacks, there is much we can do to help prevent future terrorist acts carried out with weapons of mass destruction." For us in the disarmament community he set out several guidelines for future actions that I hope delegations will consider carefully.

Some specific initiatives that merit serious consideration include:

- First, the need to expand the membership of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, while strengthening controls over nuclear facilities and the storage and transportation of nuclear materials.
- Second, the need for new efforts to negotiate a convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism -- the recent terrorist attacks should add new urgency to these efforts.
- Third, the need for a global database -- based on publicly available material -- on acts, threatened acts, or suspected acts of terrorism involving weapons of mass destruction. The Department of Disarmament Affairs is in contact with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on many of these issues and is prepared, if so mandated, to establish such a database.

Mr. Chairman, the starting point for the work of this Committee must be the sobering realization that last month's tragedy could have been so much worse had nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons been used. The objective facts require that we be neither alarmist sowers of panic, nor complacent do-nothings. We do, however, have a duty to protect innocent citizens throughout the world by reinforcing the multilateral disarmament regime. Many of the deadliest super-weapons remain difficult to manufacture due to the unique characteristics of their weapons materials, improvements in methods of detecting the production or testing of such weapons, and technical problems in converting dangerous materials into effective, deliverable weapons. The world community must do all it can to raise these hurdles, while strengthening the fundamental norms against the possession or use of such weapons. The best way to accomplish this is through the active pursuit of a robust disarmament agenda. Of one thing we must be clear -- in the disarmament area there is no going back to business as usual.
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The agenda of this Committee has always been challenging, yet the tasks ahead are more critical than ever. Many of these challenges, however, existed well before the tragic events of 11 September. At the conclusion of its 37th session in Geneva last July, the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters concluded that "there currently exists a crisis of multilateral disarmament diplomacy."

The symptoms of that crisis -- while numerous earlier in the year -- are now self-apparent even to casual observers. We are witnessing a weakening of the basic infrastructure of disarmament -- one of the eight priority areas in the United Nations work programme. This state of affairs -- if allowed to continue -- will threaten the very sustainability of disarmament as a means of enhancing international peace and security.

Disarmament is facing difficult times. There is no doubt that its future rests heavily upon a strong level of understanding and support in civil society. Yet today we see signs of private foundations and other funding agencies moving out of the field of disarmament or reducing their commitments to this goal. As funding grows scarce -- a problem aggravated by the turbulent global financial markets -- key groups in civil society are finding it increasingly difficult to sustain their work on disarmament issues. In academia, we find all too few articles in serious scholarly journals on disarmament per se and very few new doctoral dissertations that deal directly with disarmament. We find the news media focusing on the glare of current conflicts rather than the typically slow and incremental process of eliminating the weapons used in such conflicts -- or eliminating the weapons that could even destroy the world. These trends must be reversed, and at a minimum, more funding made available to non-governmental groups working in the field of disarmament.

On an inter-state level, we find few governments with offices specifically devoted to disarmament issues, and New Zealand still has the distinction of having the only minister of disarmament. We see a flourishing global arms market -- the U.S. Congressional Research Service estimates the total value of arms transfers from 1993 through 2000 at around $303 billion -- and almost 70 percent of these arms were imported by developing countries. Meanwhile, global military expenditures are again on the rise -- amounting last year to an estimated $800 billion. This growth in the arms trade and military spending contrasts with the terms of Article 26 of the Charter, which refer to the least diversion of the world's human and economic resources for armaments.

At times it appears -- certainly in terms of the United Nations budgetary procedures -- that we are seeing instead the least diversion of resources for disarmament. It goes without saying that the smallest department in the United Nations is the Department of Disarmament Affairs, which is now seeking a modest increase in the 2002-2003 biennium budget that is before this session of the General Assembly. It is also not uncommon to read of financial problems and resource shortages in key treaty-based organizations like the IAEA and OPCW.

Two of the classic diplomatic measures for advancing disarmament, non-proliferation, and anti-
terrorism goals -- export controls and sanctions -- are now in dispute, based on claims that they are ineffective, discriminatory, or harmful to other global values. The utility and legitimacy of these mechanisms requires that these criticisms be addressed, with a view to reaching universally-agreed guidelines. The danger remains that without them, the world community would find itself confronted with a stark choice between ignoring gross violations of global disarmament and non-proliferation norms and having to defend such norms by force of arms.

The treaties that constitute the global legal regime for disarmament are also seriously incomplete. None of the key treaties prescribing the elimination of weapons of mass destruction has universal membership, and un-documented allegations of non-compliance continue to be heard among the States parties, eroding confidence in the various treaty regimes. Many important treaties have still not entered into force, including START II and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), whose members will soon meet in New York to consider ways of accelerating the ratification process. With respect to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), many years of efforts to conclude a protocol to strengthen this key treaty have ended abruptly. The treaty's next five-year Review Conference, scheduled to convene next month in Geneva, provides an opportunity to revisit this issue. It must not be missed.

With regard to the NPT, while it is still too early to predict the fate of the "thirteen steps" to nuclear disarmament agreed at the NPT 2000 Review Conference, it is fair to say that delegates attending next year's first Preparatory Committee meeting for the treaty's 2005 Review Conference will certainly expect hard evidence of a good faith effort to implement each of these important goals.

The elimination of landmines is another very important international disarmament activity, given that they continue to impede the development and security of populations in almost one third of the world's countries. Last month, I attended the third annual meeting of the States parties to the Mine Ban Convention in Managua, Nicaragua, convened by the United Nations pursuant to Resolution 55/33 V. Despite the uncertainties of air travel at the time, the event was marked both by an impressive attendance of more than 90 states and by positive results that augur well for the future implementation of this convention. The second annual conference of States parties to Amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) will take place later this year. It will consider several proposals addressing the scope of the convention, compliance issues, small calibre weapons and ammunition, anti-vehicle mines, and the problem of explosive remnants of war. The Secretary-General is committed to fulfilling his responsibilities as Depositary to both of these important legal instruments.

The global legal regime is particularly underdeveloped in the fields of conventional weapons, small arms and light weapons, preventing an arms race in outer space, and missiles and other delivery vehicles for weapons of mass destruction. Some of these problems, however, have been getting increased attention in recent years. General Assembly Resolution 55/33 A has asked the Secretary-General to prepare a report, with the assistance of a panel of governmental experts, on the issue of missiles in all its aspects, and to submit this report to the General
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Assembly at its 57th session. China has introduced in the Conference on Disarmament a proposal for a treaty banning the deployment of weapons in space. The Programme of Action successfully adopted at the July 2001 Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects provides a blueprint for international cooperation that may eventually lead to binding international norms. A question remains: will the events of 11 September encourage States to consider once again the need to prohibit the transfer of military-grade small arms and light weapons to non-state actors?

The chronic deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament -- the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum -- is another serious problem that demands an urgent solution, one that will be found only in the political will of Member States to begin negotiations. Perhaps the new spirit of cooperation that has been re-kindled by the events of 11 September will help to breathe new life into this vitally important international institution.

Taken alone, any one of these obstacles would be a cause for concern, but taken together, they suggest that disarmament is facing a very difficult road ahead. The crisis that disarmament is facing in multilateral diplomacy may reflect a deeper crisis of the nation-state system as it copes with the new forces of globalization. Large-scale terrorist events, and the possession or proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, are only two of a growing list of twenty-first century problems that are straining the capacities of political institutions that were developed in other historical contexts, while casting new doubts on the utility of attempting to solve such problems through the exercise of military might. As highlighted in the Millennium Declaration, the Road Map to implement that declaration, and the Secretary-General's recent report on the work of the organization, the United Nations offers indispensable tools to address precisely such twenty-first century problems.

Despite the difficult challenges ahead for international peace and security, disarmament remains an attractive alternative to both deterrence and military defensive measures as responses to these challenges. One of the most important contributions of the United Nations in this field comes in the gathering and dissemination of information about worldwide progress in achieving important arms limitation and disarmament goals. On behalf of Member States, the DDA maintains the Register of Conventional Arms, which keeps track of the production and trade of seven categories of major weapons systems. This year more than a hundred governments made submissions to the Register, the highest level of participation since the Register was created nine years ago.

More Member States are also using the Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures -- this year, nearly 60 have reported data using this instrument, almost double the average number from previous years. Last July, the States attending the United Nations Small Arms Conference assigned the DDA the responsibility of collating and circulating data on the implementation of the Programme of Action agreed at that conference. DDA's role as the coordination centre in the Secretariat of all United Nations activities in the field of small arms was specifically welcomed in UNGA Resolution 55/33 F.
As requested by the General Assembly, DDA is also working with a group of outside experts to prepare a study on disarmament and non-proliferation education that the Secretary-General will submit to the General Assembly at its 57th session. These experts have met twice this year and are making progress in identifying constructive initiatives at the primary, secondary, university and postgraduate levels of education, in all regions of the world. Through its many symposia, newsletters, databases, monographs, films, posters, brochures, lectures to student groups, intern and fellowship programmes, a regularly-updated web site, and its new 454-page annual United Nations Disarmament Yearbook -- DDA is giving its educational responsibilities every bit of attention they deserve, despite the heavy strain on its limited resources.

I would like to take this occasion to invite all members of this Committee to attend a special symposium on "Terrorism and Disarmament" that the DDA will host on the afternoon of 25 October, involving experts from the IAEA, the OPCW, and other institutions. This timely event will examine the specific contributions that disarmament can make in addressing global terrorist threats.

Mr. Chairman, this Committee faces the difficult task of moving beyond the tears, the grief, and the anger from 11 September -- and from all acts of terrorism in all countries -- to the re-establishment of a just and stable foundation for international peace and security. The Committee must adhere to its long-standing priorities -- it must keep its focus on discovering the ways and means of eliminating all weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons. As the Secretary-General stated in his message last month to the General Conference of the IAEA, "Making progress in the areas of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament is more important than ever in the aftermath of last week's appalling terrorist attack on the United States." Though all terrorism is tragic and unacceptable, the United Nations must place its highest priority on eliminating threats that potentially affect the greatest number of people -- threats to international peace and security -- threats, in short, that arise from weapons of mass destruction.

The Committee has before it many resolutions that point the way ahead in achieving this basic aim. As it considers these resolutions, Member States may also wish to consider in their deliberations some broader questions that concern the disarmament machinery of the United Nations. Recent events, combined with the current crisis in multilateral disarmament diplomacy, may also suggest that the time has come to re-visit the proposal to convene a Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly on Disarmament.

There is one question, however, that surely does not belong on this agenda, and that is the question of whether the primary focus of this Committee should change from "disarmament" to merely the regulation or limitation of arms. There is of course an important need for efforts on both fronts. When it comes to weapons of mass destruction, there is no question that the world would be far better off pursuing the total and verifiable elimination of such weapons than in perpetuating the fantasy that their possession can be permanently limited to an assortment of exclusive, but by no means leak-proof clubs. By contrast, controls over conventional weapons
are in general better pursued by transparent regulatory approaches that limit the numbers or characteristics of agreed weapons systems -- approaches that are consistent with the inherent right of self defence in Article 51 of the Charter. Together, both approaches complement each other well in serving the common interest of international peace and security.

Much ground has already been tilled. In their Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, the States parties reaffirmed their common conviction that "the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons" -- and that includes a terrorist use of a nuclear weapon. Given the consequences of even a single use of a nuclear weapon, is international peace and security best preserved by partial or conditional guarantees, or by an absolute guarantee? The same question also applies to other weapons of mass destruction.

It is not at all unrealistic or inappropriate for this Committee to keep its focus on the search for absolute guarantees, and the more it searches, the more it will return to disarmament -- not regulation -- as the solution for weapons of mass destruction. In addressing such weapons, the Committee should explore ways of bringing disarmament to the world, or of bringing the world to disarmament, but disarmament must be done. As members of this committee, ask not for whom the Peace Bell tolls. It tolls for you.