



**Keynote remarks at “Nobel Laureates and the Prevention of Nuclear War”
Event**

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Distinguished guests, colleagues, friends,

It is my pleasure to join you this evening.

I wish to thank the organizers of this event, the Permanent Mission of Norway to the UN, the University of Chicago and the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists for the initiative that led to the Nobel Nuclear Declaration and for bringing us together here to discuss how meaningful progress can be achieved in preventing nuclear war.

Today, we are at a nuclear tipping point.

80 years after the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – and the founding of the United Nations - humanity remains unacceptably close to self-annihilation.

We have entered a new era of nuclear arms racing, both qualitative and soon perhaps quantitative. The space for dialogue continues to shrink. Mistrust between States festers. The disarmament and arms control architecture continues to deteriorate.

In the words of the UN Secretary-General - we are sleepwalking into nuclear Armageddon. We must reverse course.

As the Nobel Declaration rightfully notes, the only way to truly eliminate the risk of nuclear war is to fully eliminate nuclear weapons. However, even as we pursue that goal, we all agree that there are concrete steps that States can take now to reduce the risk of any nuclear weapon being used and to also re-pave the road towards nuclear disarmament.

Allow me to highlight four such steps:

- 1. Reinforcing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as the central pillar of the disarmament, non-proliferation**

and arms control architecture: 2026 is a critical year for the health of this Treaty that has underwritten all of our security. But success will not be possible without renewed commitment of all States Parties. This starts with greater accountability for the implementation of commitments already made.

2. **Maintaining caps on strategic arsenals and elaborating a successor framework to New START:** This is in the core security interests not only of the two Parties to the Treaty, but of the entire world. I hope the recent encouraging words about keeping New START's central limits for twelve months will translate into action that leads to negotiation of a successor framework.
3. **Urgently pursuing measures that reduce the risk of any use of a nuclear weapon:** These could include confidence-building measures such as launch notifications and other measures to prevent misperception, enhanced transparency measures related to nuclear arsenals to build trust, robust crisis communications to avoid mistake, and discussing doctrinal measures such as credible no-first use policies, that can lower the temperature.
4. **Taking steps towards mitigating the dangers posed at the nexus of emerging technologies and nuclear weapons:** To that end, all States should support the Secretary-General's call that pending their total elimination, humans must always be in control of nuclear weapons.

Reducing nuclear risk and preventing nuclear war are essential to our common security and the future of the planet.

However, if we are going to eliminate the threats posed by nuclear weapons, we need to re-examine and interrogate some long-held assumptions.

- First, we need to reinforce our scientific, fact-based understanding of the effects of nuclear weapons and nuclear war, taking into account recent developments in science. The independent Scientific Panel established by the General Assembly to study the effects of nuclear war has a leading role to play in deepening our collective understanding of the effects of nuclear war on the climate, public health, global socioeconomic systems, agriculture and ecosystems.
- Second, we need to push back against the enduring notion that nuclear weapons provide the ultimate form of protection. Nuclear deterrence is built on an increasingly shaky foundation. More to the point, it is a dangerous bet on which to gamble the fate of all humanity.
- Third, we should reject the notion that disarmament is a utopian ideal, and can only be pursued in a peaceful security environment. Disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control are not a reward for peace; they are the foundation for it. They are measures that can promote and reinforce our security.

I understand that the task we have at hand can feel like an uphill battle. But future generations deserve better than our inaction. We owe them a world free from the threat of nuclear conflict – a world free of nuclear weapons.

So, let us strategize and redouble our efforts. Let us remain focused on the prize: the prevention of nuclear war and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

I thank you very much for your attention.