

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

MESSAGE

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The rule of law is coming to nuclear disarmament, and parliamentarians have important contributions to make in advancing this historic process.

Inspired or assisted by the efforts of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, parliaments are showing an increased interest in promoting nuclear disarmament. This should come as no surprise. Parliaments represent the people, and across the world today we are seeing a groundswell of opinion among diverse sectors of civil society – doctors, lawyers, religious leaders, mayors, human rights activists, women’s groups, environmentalists, economists and educators in countless fields – demanding concrete steps to control and eliminate these deadly, costly, wasteful weapons.

The core role of parliaments in ratifying treaties and adopting implementing legislation gives them tremendous potential to extend the rule of law even more deeply into the domain of disarmament. Yet disarmament and non-proliferation can also appear to legislators as remote from daily concerns. This is where this *Handbook* has most to offer. It brings disarmament down to earth, offering specific guidance on why it matters and how to achieve it.

I thank the Inter-Parliamentary Union for preparing this publication and for supporting my own five-point proposal for nuclear disarmament and responsible non-proliferation policies. I also welcome the assistance provided by two non-governmental organizations – Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament and the World Future Council – and by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. Such partnerships will continue to be crucial in achieving our shared goals.

I commend this volume not just to legislators, but to all who truly care about nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and – without exaggeration – the future of our planet.

Ban Ki-moon