

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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REMARKS UPON ACCEPTING THE MILLION FACES CAMPAIGN PETITION 26 June 2006

Thank you for presenting me with this Petition. The faces in it prove that a picture can speak not just a thousand words, but a million words.

As you all know, the uncontrolled spread of illicit small arms is responsible for untold human suffering.

It is thus heartening to see the Control Arms Campaign bringing together individuals and groups from around the world to confront this problem. The vital role of civil society in helping to combat the illicit trade in small arms is now well recognized – it brings expertise, communication networks, and impassioned advocacy to a grave problem. Moreover, non-governmental organizations play an essential role in encouraging governments to implement the commitments made in the 2001 Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons.

Julius [small arms victim presenting the petition], I am honoured to receive this petition in recognition of the people in more than 160 countries who have supported it, and given it a million ‘faces’.

I shall transmit your call for an international arms trade treaty to the President of the Review Conference for the information of all Member States. It will be in their hands to decide the future direction of the initiative.

I hope that this petition comes to symbolize how governments and people can work together to achieve the fundamental purpose of the Review Conference - that is - saving lives.

It is in that spirit that I accept the Million Faces Petition, and I thank all of you once again.

Kofi Annan