Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon congratulated the winners of the United Nations Art for Peace contest. Youth aged between 5 and 17 years of age were invited to draw, paint, sketch, use pens, pencils, crayons, charcoal, oil, acrylic paint or watercolor to depict their vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. From thousands of submissions, twelve young artists were selected as winners in their respective categories.

"I spend a great deal of time urging governments to create a nuclear-weapon-free world for the sake of children and youth," Mr. Ban said in his remarks during the award ceremony for the contest at UN Headquarters in New York. "Today, I get to see how children and youth themselves envision a nuclear-weapon-free world."

The Art for Peace Contest was sponsored by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (ODA) and the Harmony for Peace Foundation. More than 6,600 young people from 92 countries took part in the contest, which was administered online and judged by a panel of 140 jurors, mainly art and education specialists, who evaluated each work of art based on it creativity, composition, theme and technique. The judges then selected four top winners from three age groups: ages 5-8, ages 9-12, and ages 13-17.

Seventeen year-old Haruka Shoji from the United States won first-place in her age group for her painting entitled 'Someday,' depicting a young woman looking into the distance to a better future.

Mr. Ban said he would present Ms. Shoji's painting to the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations.

"All of the contestants said they want peace. They inspire me to fight even harder for a safer world," Mr. Ban said. "They inspire me to keep insisting that spending on education and health care is much more valuable than spending on tanks and missiles. They inspire me to keep demanding that everyone work for a world free of nuclear weapons."

All winning artwork will also be reproduced in a United Nations calendar for the 12 artists to keep as a lasting memory of their efforts.

Source: UN News Centre