

The appointment of a new Secretary-General has come at a time when the UN is facing unprecedented problems, and when the need for institutional reform has become obvious. In his first Annual Report, the Secretary-General has addressed this need in direct and specific terms. He has put forward several innovative suggestions, in particular directed at a more effective Security Council. He has himself undertaken to play a more direct role in bringing urgent matters before the Council. These specific proposals -- and Javier Perez de Cuellar's commitment to administrative streamlining -- are very welcome and should be encouraged. Pragmatic reforms must be made, or the UN will lose its validity as a forum for international negotiations, not only for the promotion of peace and security, but also for the shaping of our economic future.

The aims of the institutions we have invented are under considerable and potentially crippling strain. We must rededicate those institutions, and the driving force of our determination must be a sense of shared vulnerability.

The present crisis demands intelligence and will. Intelligence must lead us to a more profound understanding of political and economic forces; our will must reside in commitment to those national concessions dictated by our mutual dependency. We cannot, must not, allow mutual antagonisms or self-absorption to divert our attention from the full range of difficulties we face, and which we must face together.