

statement of enlightened political will, capitalizing on the current climate of achievement and building on a record of recent success.

When this idea was first proposed in the fifties, the times were not right. However, a spirit of leadership and catalytic change, which we are in now, have ensured that this concept -- a helpful, confidence-building measure -- will receive, for the first time, serious consideration today, probably in Ottawa in the course of our considerations.

I invite all present to pursue this agreement, this time with vision and vigour for the future well-being of mankind.

Quarrels and competition between East and West have had a profoundly negative influence on many areas of the world. Perhaps most significant, the Cold War distorted the functioning of the United Nations, stunted the development of multilateral co-operation, and inhibited genuine opportunities for dialogue and progress. The prospect of real peace in Europe at last provides us the opportunity to return to the unfinished business of building a modern and effective multilateral system.

The challenges we face as dynamic societies go well beyond orthodox definitions of national security. The global natural environment is threatened, and the international institutions to protect it are clearly inadequate. The scourge of drug abuse is felt around the world, north and south, and yet we have found no satisfactory collective means to curtail it. The burden of debt is a prejudice to the future of middle-income countries around the world. And hunger and disease are too often the fate of the world's poorest countries mired in economic hopelessness and social despair.

And so this meeting in Ottawa has, in my judgment, two main tasks: first, to concentrate diligently on the work at hand so that an agreement on Open Skies will be achieved when the delegations reassemble in Budapest; and, more generally, to seize this unprecedented moment in recent history to replace the Cold War and its incalculable costs in economic wealth, misspent human genius, and wasted social opportunity, with a new ethic of co-operation based on peace and prosperity and common purpose.

We who are gathered here in this room today bear a heavy responsibility to our nations and to history because the opportunity is given to few people to help shape a new era in world affairs. We carry the hopes and the prayers of people from Vladivostok to Vancouver, and from countries far removed from the old East-West axis of conflict.

So let us work together to multiply the gains that we have made in relations between the countries of East and West. And let