

We must spare no effort to convince the states not party to this Convention of the importance of signing and ratifying the Convention, so that it will become universal as quickly as possible.

Having signed this Convention, we should ensure that we continue to give priority attention to other weapons of mass destruction. We should, for example, consider strengthening the 1972 Convention on Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons by adding appropriate verification provisions, similar to those we have just adopted for chemical weapons.

We all welcomed the signature by Presidents Bush and Yeltsin of the START II treaty, providing for the greatest reduction in destructive power ever mandated by an arms control agreement. We must now work towards agreement on the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1995.

When serious negotiations on chemical weapons began a decade ago, after years of discussion, few were confident that the outcome would be an agreement to abolish these weapons forever and to introduce a comprehensive system of verification. We have defied the odds and have much to celebrate as we sign this Convention.

Over the past century, a distressingly large effort and immense resources have been dedicated to producing weapons of mass destruction. With this generation we are at last beginning to develop ways to abolish them. It is our hope that our actions here will accelerate the momentum for peace and stability throughout the world and usher in a new era of co-operation and trust.