

Let me first congratulate you on your election as President of the General Assembly. Your wisdom and experience will help make this a particularly productive session. It is an honour to be here today speaking to the General Assembly of the United Nations, the crucible of human hope for peace in a troubled world.

I believe we are on the brink of a new age where the differences that have divided us are becoming less important than the dangers we must face together. It is a new age where concrete acts which make our world more secure must -- and can -- be matched by tangible commitments to reduce poverty in the developing world and protect our common environment.

Mr. President, for two generations the world has lived in the shadow of nuclear war. But today we meet at a time of significant achievement in arms control.

The INF Agreement is an historic first step in arms reduction for which we owe a great debt of gratitude to the courage and the leadership of President Reagan of the United States and of General Secretary Gorbachev of the Soviet Union. They have built a foundation, and we can now expand upon it.

We can cut strategic weapons. We can limit the spread of nuclear weapons. We can limit nuclear testing, and every step in this direction takes us closer to a comprehensive test ban. We must redouble our efforts to reach a treaty banning chemical weapons.

In this respect, I welcome President Reagan's proposal for an early meeting of the signatories of the Geneva Protocol on the prohibition of chemical weapons. We must also control conventional weapons. Let us not forget that it is in conventional wars that people are still dying today. I encourage this Assembly to provoke and provide even more achievements in the field of disarmament.

Mr. President, we have also seen progress on regional security issues this past year, progress of which member nations could only have dreamed before.

In Afghanistan, the attempt to impose solutions by invasion and occupation has failed and the Soviet Union is withdrawing its forces. The United Nations remains heavily involved in the search for solutions. In the Gulf, no