I am pleased to convey my warm greetings to all those gathered for this year’s Future Policy Award ceremony.

I commend your focus on disarmament – a challenge that has received much needed attention this year. In recent months, the international community has worked together to tackle the threat of chemical weapons. We made important progress with the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty, but we must continue all efforts to prevent the illicit trafficking in weapons, especially small arms and light weapons. The free flow of weapons heightens tensions, undermines peace processes, fuels armed violence and prevents the achievement of sustainable development. At the same time, nuclear weapons continue to cast a long shadow over humanity and pose an appalling threat to life on earth.

Disarmament is critical to achieving peace, development and lasting security.

By recognizing proven policies for sustainable disarmament, the 2013 Future Policy Award provides a roadmap which can inspire policymakers around the world. I trust that the Award will help fuel global efforts to abolish all weapons of mass destruction and achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

On this eve of UN Day and UN Disarmament Week, I thank the World Future Council and the Inter-Parliamentary Union for working together with the Office for Disarmament Affairs in organizing this ceremony. I congratulate the organizations and countries being honoured this evening as well as all others working to further our shared goal of strengthening peace and advancing our common security through disarmament.

Thank you.