It is a pleasure to send my greetings to this timely seminar.

As all of you know too well, a world without weapons of mass destruction remains a distant dream. Yet, even the more immediate aims of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation have suffered recent setbacks.

Twice in 2005, Governments had a chance to strengthen the foundations of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In May, at the NPT Review Conference, and again at the UN World Summit in September, Governments could have agreed on energetic steps to meet disarmament requirements and strengthen the non-proliferation regime. Both times, they failed.

And this year, the nuclear test by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, as well as the continuing concerns over Iran’s nuclear programme, have underscored the urgent need for the international community to re-energize our efforts to contain and reverse the spread of nuclear weapons.

Your seminar is a welcome part of that process, and I thank the Governments of Indonesia and Norway for convening it. Through this meeting, as well as through their leadership in the Seven-Nation Initiative, these two Governments have demonstrated admirable resolve in addressing both global disarmament and proliferation challenges.

This diverse gathering can help chart a way back to the path of non-proliferation and disarmament. Your discussions can bolster consensus around a bold response, and propose immediate and practical steps on both fronts.

It is in this spirit that I wish you a most successful seminar, and thank all of you for your commitment to a safer, more secure world.