Your Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the General Assembly, Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much, Your Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the General Assembly, for convening this very important meeting. I also thank the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for its initiative.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the United Nations — but we also remember that seventy years ago the world suffered the first and last use of nuclear weapons in war. We remember the victims of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And we pledge to respond to the cry of the survivors: that no one else should ever endure such horror.

The devastation of the Second World War inspired the birth of the United Nations as an organization for peace.

The very first resolution adopted by this General Assembly reflected the world’s concern about the use of atomic weapons.

For seven decades, the norm against using these weapons has stood strong. But we will only be truly safe when they are completely eliminated.

The vast majority of the world’s countries share this goal — but I am deeply concerned about the growing rifts among them on how to achieve it.

These differences were on stark display at the Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in May.

When it comes to our common objective of nuclear disarmament, we must not delay — we must act now.

I call on States to join forces, engage constructively and find a way forward.

Leaders have just adopted the visionary Sustainable Development Goals. These global goals show a growing appreciation that humanity shares just one earth. By the
same sound logic, leaders must protect our planet from the threat that nuclear weapons pose to our collective existence.

I also call on the world’s peoples to rise up and demand action.

My highest expectations are for young people.

Too many leaders think young people are strong enough to send to war but not mature enough to make peace.

I reject this completely.

I am calling for investments in the world’s young peacemakers.

This week, I attended a student conference at the United Nations.

Although I could not stay until the end, my wife did, and she told me about what I missed.

One young woman made an impassioned plea to eliminate all nuclear weapons.

She said, “Empowering young people for nuclear abolition is not just a nice thing to do; it is actually very important because we can make a difference.”

Let us heed the calls of youth so they can come of age in a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Thank you.