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In Geneva, Mikhail Gorbachev has just launched a new appeal for nuclear disarmament.

- Homepage - News - Communiqués -
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- ▶ Geneva, 2 September 2013
- ▶ from our special correspondent

Green Cross International, The NGO founded by Mikhail Gorbachev in the wake of the Rio Summit, is today celebrating its 20th anniversary in Geneva, where it is based. At the same time as these festivities, the body founded by the former Soviet President is holding its annual meeting.

This morning, during a public session led by the current Green Cross chairman, Alexander Likhotal, some 15 eminent speakers, including Lech Walesa and other Nobel laureates, addressed the assembly. They all thanked Mr Gorbachev warmly for the work that he and Green Cross have been doing for peace, justice, the environment and the safeguarding of the planet.

Mr Gorbachev himself, now 82, spoke in Russian without notes for half an hour, touching on numerous topics related to the survival of humankind and exhorting everyone to mobilise in this cause. Towards the end of his speech he cried out:

"Getting rid of the nuclear threat is our priority. Therefore today for this 20th anniversary I am launching an appeal to everyone to join some movement that is opposed to war and nuclear weapons and the new arms race."

In addition, he denounced the new kind of distance war that is currently being developed, for example through the use of drones. And he called on all international actors to come together to resolve at last the problems that make the Middle East a veritable powder keg.

It was back in January 1986 that Mikhail Gorbachev, then head of the USSR, launched the appeal: *"No nuclear weapons by the year 2000 !"*. Its first result was the signing by Ronald Reagan and himself, in December 1987, of the Washington Treaty which rid Europe of "Intermediate Nuclear Forces", in particular the SS20s and the Pershings. That was the start of the end of the Cold War.

Green Cross International continues its work now and into the future. Its slogan is: *"Give Humanity a Chance, Give the Earth a Future"* In French: *"Donnez une chance à l'Humanité, Donnez un avenir à la Terre"*.