A Ard-Mhéara, ambassadóirí, a aíonna ghreadamúla agus a dhaoine uaisle go léir, ba mhaith liom fáilte o chroí a ghabháil ronmháth chuig an Helix anseo in Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Atha Cliath.

Lord Mayor, Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of our Chancellor, Senator Martin McAleese, and the entire University Community at DCU, I wish to welcome you all here to the Helix for this wonderful occasion.

DCU is a young university with a global reputation for the quality of its graduates and the impact of its research. Put simply, our mission is to ‘transform lives and societies’.

We develop creative, enterprising, globally-engaged and socially-responsible citizens that can flourish in 21st Century society. We create and translate knowledge to address major global challenges. That context provides a great resonance with our welcome today for the US Secretary of State, Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Few people have had greater impact and few have positively transformed more lives and societies in modern times than Hillary Clinton. We are honoured that she has chosen to return to DCU to deliver her address today.

In thinking about the Secretary’s life and accomplishments, I am reminded of the work of Nobel Prize-winning Indian poet Tagore, who wrote: “I slept and dreamt that life was Joy, I woke and saw that life was Duty. I acted, and behold, Duty was Joy.”

For Secretary Clinton, duty is about addressing global problems, from violent extremism to worldwide recession, from climate change to poverty.

These issues demand collective solutions and effective international cooperation. Hillary Clinton has redefined the role of Secretary of State and has pioneered the concept of "smart power" in solving global problems -- elevating diplomacy and development alongside security in her approach.

This approach has been instrumental in her many achievements in orchestrating tactful diplomatic successes in many parts of the world. Moreover, through this more sophisticated approach to international affairs, she has helped promote better government and has effected lasting changes around the world.

Coupled with these achievements, Secretary Clinton has been a great advocate for the rights of women and children. Much as she did when First Lady, Secretary Clinton has continued her commitment to the advancement of girls and women around the world.

Recognizing that the status of women correlates with, and impacts strongly on, global development, she has stressed women’s rights as a way to promote peace, vibrant civil society, and long-lasting change. As a measure of her commitment to prevent and resolve conflicts all around the world, Secretary Clinton has logged more air miles than any of her predecessors.

Building on her commitment to peace on this island, it is therefore fitting that she joins us today and launches DCU’s new Institute for International Conflict Resolution and Reconstruction. Our aim is to learn lessons from our own history here in Ireland, and to apply those lessons in both current-conflict and post-conflict regions around the world.

Working with partners, nationally and globally, DCU will build on its strong expertise in this area and focus on the implementation-phase of peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction.

Ladies and gentlemen, Secretary Clinton’s career may be characterised by her tireless and passionate commitment to peace, by her sophisticated and intelligent leadership, and by her stalwart defence of the most vulnerable among us. Truly, she is a global leader who has transformed lives and societies.

In Ireland, we are familiar with strong female leaders from the mythical Queen Maeve of Connacht to recent Presidents, Mary Robinson and Mary McAleese. In reflecting on Hillary Rodham Clinton’s leadership, I am reminded of the words of WB Yeats as he described Queen Maeve:

And she had … a high heart.
And wisdom that caught fire like the dried flax... (repeat)

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming the Secretary of State of the United States of America, Hillary Rodham Clinton.