

Launch of the International Human Solidarity Day

Keynote address
by

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/Main themes/

United Nations, New York, 10 November 2006

1. I am honored to be invited to the ceremony of launching the International Human Solidarity Day. For me it is a very important day. The Solidarity movement changed my country – Poland. It brought us freedom and conditions for dynamic development. I believe that the idea of human solidarity in the global scale can change our world.

2. We are all aware that our world requires changes and urgent measures need to be taken. Hunger is still a weapon of mass destruction against millions of people. Conflicts and human rights violations bring enormous suffering and death. We are not able to stop the pollution of environment and climate change, which produce grave risks to our planet, the only place we can live. Diseases and epidemics kill the most productive groups of population. Terrorism is also a calamity directed against civil population. We continue to be helpless in face of natural disasters that cause thousands of deaths and damages in property.

3. A lot has been already done to address these challenges. In this respect the activities of the United Nations are much appreciated. But there is a need to act faster and more efficiently. We need an idea that would unite and consolidate these activities and would make each of us responsible for the future of our world.

Every day we become more and more interdependent and interlinked. None of the great problems facing humanity can be resolved without cooperation among governments but also among nations, cultures, religions and civilizations. What humanity needs is a great, global partnership.

The underlying principle and reason for such partnership should be the concept of common interest of the whole world and concept of human solidarity. For me solidarity is not only compassion and willingness to help other people. Solidarity is first of all the comprehension of unity and concurrence of interests and activities of all, understanding of the common responsibility for our today and tomorrow. This is how we understood “Solidarity” in Poland.

4. The concept of solidarity is present in many cultures, religions and traditions. Today we should make solidarity the foundation and basic principle of the new contemporary international order. The concept of Solidarity should bind the diversity of today’s world with shared responsibility and the sense of unity. It should lead to recognition that the unity of the world has an advantage over the existing divisions and national selfishness. We should stand together against those who see the world as a battlefield of nations, religions, civilizations and races. We should oppose such a vision of the world by the world of solidarity.

5. Dreams can change lives of individuals. I believe that the dreams shared by many are able to change the destiny of the world. However, we should combine these dreams with practical measures. That is why I would like to reflect on two issues:

5.1. Let us create a great movement of world solidarity. The Solidarity movement in Poland united almost 10 million people, more than a quarter of the population of Poland. If the world solidarity movement would unite a quarter of the population of the world, it would be an enormous power.

Such a movement would be a great support for the work and effectiveness of the United Nations, the Organization that was established to express the dreams of the peoples. The first words of the United Nations Charter are “we, the peoples of the United Nations”. And it is “We, the peoples..” that should give the Organization, sixty years after it was founded, a new vitality and a new significance.

5.2 Let us establish a fund for human solidarity. It should not replace many important and valued initiatives of governments, intergovernmental entities and international organizations.

The fund for human solidarity should give every ordinary citizen of the world the possibility to contribute, even in the very modest way.

We all know how new communication technology – internet, cellular phones, make everyday life easier and make it possible for us to be in touch with people thousands of miles away. Thanks to them we can learn very fast about disasters that happen far from us. We can also rapidly react and provide assistance.

I believe that an ordinary man or woman understands best the needs of poorer people and, according to his or her possibilities, is willing to help.

I propose to establish a fund, to which every person could contribute a small amount of money in a year – let us say - 5 or 10 dollars. For many of us it is not a very significant amount of money. But for many it means survival for the next couple of days. It could be a fund of human solidarity, solidarity in the fight against poverty, malnutrition, lack of education, lack of hope for better tomorrow, for a decent life. It would be a fund through which people would help other people and not governments helping other governments. The fund could finance the education of children in the poorest countries, building schools, educating teachers, providing books and school supplies for children, feeding children at schools. So the children, being given access to education, would get a chance to improve their future, to get out of the vicious circle of poverty, to have a better life than their parents.

The fund could be administered by the United Nations Secretary General. Governments could assist by disseminating information on the fund and exempting payments to the fund from taxes and other fees.

6. I would like every school to have access to internet, which every child could use to find useful information. The children could then see how children in the other regions of the world live, what can be achieved by hard work and study. Internet can be used to share information on initiatives promoting entrepreneurship, implementation of activities improving the quality of life.

7. The experience of Poland and the Polish Solidarity movement have shown us, that we should not be afraid to dream. In Poland the Solidarity movement succeeded in mobilizing millions of people, overturning wrong ideologies, wrong governments and wrong borders. “Solidarity” changed the destiny of Poland and the European continent. I believe that human solidarity can change for better our modern world.