



**Address  
by**

**Anwarul K. Chowdhury**

United Nations Under-Secretary-General  
and  
High Representative for the Least Developed Countries,  
Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island  
Developing States

at

**The Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies**

On

***UN Reform and Related Issues***

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Director Ashimbaev,

Ambassador Kazykhanov,

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honour and a pleasure to be here with you this morning in the prestigious Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies.

I would like to pay tribute to the high profile role that Kazakhstan plays in the United Nations. We are very happy about the remarkable collaboration with Kazakhstan,. The UN Country Team is here led by Ms.Yuriko Shoji. This kind of collaboration is an example for many countries in the region.

The issue that I have been invited to address today is of paramount importance for the well-being of humankind. Our world body, the United Nations, is now 60 years old and the need for its reform is more urgent than ever.

It is undeniable that the world has undergone sea changes since the post world-war-two period, when the organization was created, in 1945. In order to remain relevant and become more effective, the United Nations needs to be reformed to take account of the new multifaceted reality in which we live.

The 2005 Summit, that will take place in New York in September, will review the progress made by the international community in the past 5 years in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. All of you are aware of the 2000 Summit when this Declaration was adopted. The forthcoming September Summit will indeed be a unique opportunity for world leaders to come together and agree on a collective response to the multiple threats and challenges faced by people worldwide in this new century.

Last week, the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan presented his much-awaited 5-year progress report to the General Assembly. The report suggests bold but realistic decisions which world leaders could actually agree to adopt when they meet.

The SG Report is entitled "In Larger Freedom". These are words taken from the UN Charter, must be read in conjunction with two other wide-ranging reviews of global

challenges that were recently submitted to the Member States' attention. One came from the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, and focused on how to strengthen our collective security system. The second one was prepared by 250 experts who undertook the Millennium Project and presented a plan of action to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. On behalf of the United Nations, I personally launched the Millennium Project report for the Central Asian region, three days ago, on 29 March, here in Almaty, during a very successful event which benefited from the participation, through video-link from New York, of the head of the Millennium Project and Special Adviser to the SG, Professor Jeffrey Sachs.

Let me now introduce you to the main features of the Report of the Secretary-General "In Larger Freedom", which contains his proposals for reform and will thus be the basis for the inter-governmental consultations on this matter beginning next week.

The Report of the Secretary-General starts from the assumption that the status-quo is no longer acceptable. His proposals must not be seen as a wish-list, but as a carefully crafted and achievable package of policy commitments and institutional reforms, an agenda of the highest priorities for the September Summit.

The threats and challenges that our world faces range from terrorism and weapons of mass destruction through genocide and civil war to extreme poverty, endemic diseases and climate change. All these threats are interlinked and the world needs a comprehensive strategy for dealing with them. The strategy, put forward by the Secretary-General, encapsulates his own vision of **development, security and human rights** as equal and mutually interdependent parts of a seamless whole.

The Secretary-General states in his report that: "*We will not enjoy security without development, we will not enjoy development without security, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights.*"

These goals can only be advanced in a world composed of strong sovereign states, states that serve the needs of their peoples and are accountable to them. But the world also needs effective global institutions through which those states can work together and strengthen each other. These institutions, like their member states, must be open,

accountable and able to work in creative partnerships with the private sector and civil society organizations.

The United Nations must be remoulded accordingly. *“From overhauling basic management practices and building a more transparent, efficient and effective UN system to revamping our major inter-governmental institutions so that they reflect today’s world and advance the priorities set forth in this report, we must reshape the Organization in ways not previously imagined, and with a boldness and speed not previously shown.”*

The report is divided into four main sections. The first three deal respectively with development, collective security, and human rights (and the rule of law), which are the three main purposes and objectives of the United Nations. The last section deals with the strengthening of the United Nations Organization to make it a more effective tool for pursuing those priorities.

**(1)** The first part is entitled “Freedom from Want”. For the first time in its history, the human race has the power to end endemic, life-destroying poverty, and give all its members the chance to earn a decent living. There is also a broad consensus on how to do it. The first step is to strive to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, which range from halving extreme poverty to turning the tide against HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases. It is not too late to do this, if rich and poor countries agree to act now on the bargain they struck in Monterrey three years ago: developing countries must mobilise their resources behind national strategies giving top priority to this objective, while developed countries must level the playing field for world trade and increase the amount they spend on official development assistance and debt relief. All governments must be accountable for fulfilling their part of this bargain, both to their own peoples and to each other.

All developing countries are asked to commit themselves now to broad-based national strategies for achieving the MDGs by 2015, mobilising all national resources.

All developed countries are asked to commit themselves to support these strategies by reaching the target of spending 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product on official

development assistance by 2015, with priority for measures to reduce extreme poverty and defeat HIV/AIDS. Such increase in ODA spending must be front-loaded through an “international finance facility” so that the MDGs can be achieved on time. The development partners are also asked to speed up the completion of the Doha round of trade negotiations, with full commitment to realise its promise for development. As a first step, they should give immediate duty-free and quota-free market access to all exports from the fifty Least Developed Countries.

Development must also be sustainable. Environmental degradation and the depletion of the natural resources of our planet must be fought relentlessly. The entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol is in this context welcome but efforts must be immediately undertaken to plan for the post-2012 era, so that greenhouse gas emissions can be stabilised beyond that date, based on a more inclusive international framework.

(2) The second part of the Report is entitled “Freedom from Fear”. In this context, world leaders are called upon to agree on a new security consensus, by which they commit themselves to treating a threat to one as a threat to all, and work together to prevent catastrophic terrorism, stop the proliferation of deadly weapons, end civil wars, and build lasting peace in war-torn countries.

Among various proposals, the Secretary-General has asked all states to commit themselves to complete, sign and implement a comprehensive convention on terrorism, based on a clear and agreed definition, as well as the convention on nuclear terrorism and the fissile material cut-off treaty.

A very innovative proposal for reform focuses on the establishment of a Peace-building Commission, within the United Nations, to help war-torn countries make the transition from war to lasting peace.

(3) In the third part of the Report, which is entitled “Freedom to Live in Dignity”, world leaders are urged to agree to strengthen the rule of law, human rights, and democracy in concrete ways. These are both ends in themselves and also essential for a world of

justice, opportunity and stability. While there is an existing international normative framework which is indeed impressive, steps must be taken to reduce selective application, arbitrary enforcement, and breach without consequence. *“We must move from an era of legislation to an era of implementation.”*

All states are thus asked to embrace the principle of the “Responsibility to Protect” as a basis for collective action against genocide, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, recognizing that this responsibility lies first and foremost with each individual state. However, should national authorities be unable or unwilling to protect their citizens, the responsibility then shifts to the international community. In the last resort, and in accordance with the Charter, the UN Security Council may take enforcement action. Among other measures, under this chapter, a Democracy Fund should be established at the UN, to provide funding and technical assistance to countries seeking to establish or strengthen their democratic institutions.

In a far-reaching proposal for reform, the present Commission on Human Rights, an organ of the UN that has come under growing criticism for declining credibility and professionalism, would be replaced with a standing UN Human Rights Council, to be composed of a smaller membership, elected directly by the General Assembly, by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting.

(4) This brings me to the last part of the reform package, dealing more specifically with the “Strengthening of the United Nations”. As I said in my introductory remarks, the basic institutions of the United Nations, including the Secretariat itself, must be brought fully in line with the above priorities and the needs and circumstances of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, to be truly able to pursue the causes of development, security and human rights with equal vigour.

The proposed reform of the UN’s main inter-governmental organs is bold and thoroughgoing. The recommendations foresee a system of three Councils, which would cover, respectively, (a) international peace and security, (b) economic and social issues and (c) human rights. The first two correspond to the existing Security Council and Economic and Social Council. Both will indeed be strengthened. The third Council refers to the new Human Rights Council that I mentioned earlier, and that would require a

groundbreaking overhaul of the current inter-governmental human rights machinery. This would bring human rights to the same level as security and economic and social development issues of the organization.

The expansion of the **Security Council** has been a topic of discussion for a long time now. There is general agreement that this critical organ of the UN must be more broadly representative of the international community as a whole and of the geopolitical realities of today. In his Report, the Secretary-General refers back to the two options for expansion from 15 to 24 members (so-called options A and B), that had been presented in the report of the High-level Panel and urges Member States to agree to take a decision on such important issue, preferably by consensus, but not necessarily so, before the September Summit. The two options have already been widely discussed in open-ended, informal meetings of Member States in the United Nations. The next months will see further consultations going on on all of these proposals.

As the Secretary-General said, *“What is needed is not more declarations or promises, but action to fulfil the promises already made”*.

This is as far as what is contained in the Report.

[Mr. Chowdhury briefly described the process of consultation among the UN Member States on the proposed package of reform, to be launched by the President of the General Assembly. He also described the mandate and activities of his Office - UN-OHRLS - related to the three most vulnerable groups of countries.]

I thank you for your attention.