

2005 WORLD SUMMIT

HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING | 14-16 SEPTEMBER 2005



» STAKES ARE HIGH FOR WORLD SUMMIT AT UNITED NATIONS, 14-16 SEPTEMBER

(NEW YORK, 30 August) World leaders will arrive in historic numbers at the United Nations in mid-September, with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reach major decisions on ending poverty, promoting human rights, fighting terrorism and helping countries recover from deadly conflict.

“A successful outcome at next month’s summit will be a success for all of us — for all the people that you represent,” UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said today, to diplomats negotiating the outcome document on behalf of Member States. “And failure would be a lost opportunity for us all. The stakes are high,” he added. “Very high.”

The 2005 World Summit will also focus on overhaul of the Organization itself, in order to make it more effective and efficient in its work throughout the world. More than 170 Heads of State and Government have signaled their intention to attend, making it almost certain to be the largest gathering ever of world leaders.

The challenge could not be starker. Well over a billion people still live in extreme poverty, and 20,000 die from preventable causes every day. Terrorism affects all parts of the world, from the richest to the poorest, amid the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Large parts of humanity are affected by civil war, and human rights continue to be violated throughout the world.

Some of the bold proposals currently being negotiated by national delegations in advance of the Summit include a new Human Rights Council to restore the UN’s credibility on human rights, a new Peacebuilding Commission to help stabilize countries emerging from conflict, and measures to improve management and accountability throughout the Organization.

Negotiations are currently being conducted under the leadership of the General Assembly President, Jean Ping (Gabon). Discussions are underway on language that could lead to a comprehensive convention against terrorism, as well as a commitment to take action to protect civilians from genocide, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

Negotiators are also working to come to agreement on further actions required to defeat extreme poverty, reducing its extent by half by 2015. Since approval at the Millennium Summit in 2000, nations have worked to meet the Millennium Development Goals on health, education, environment, water and women’s rights. Major new pledges on aid, especially by European Union countries, and on writing off \$40 billion in poor-country debt, announced at the July Group of 8 meeting in the run-up to the World Summit, have given an added lift to the anti-poverty effort.

The spotlight is also on reforms to strengthen the UN’s human rights machinery. In addition to a new Human Rights Council that would replace the discredited Commission on Human Rights, delegations are considering proposals that would bolster the budget and capacity of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Reform of all the major components of the United Nations itself — including the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and the Secretariat, is also on the table. The issue of Security Council expansion is also being discussed, though major aspects will likely need to be resolved after the September Summit.

For more information, see www.un.org/summit2005.

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