

2005 WORLD SUMMIT

HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING | 14-16 SEPTEMBER 2005

**UN SUMMIT TAKES ON TOUGH GLOBAL ISSUES**

(New York, 6 September) Heads of State and Government arrive in historic numbers at the United Nations this month, 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.

The 2005 World Summit, to be held 14-16 September, 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.

The Summit will feature statements on global policy issues, delivered by Heads of State and Government in the General Assembly Hall. These sessions are expected to be co-chaired by President Omar Bongo Ondimba of Gabon and Prime Minister Göran Persson of Sweden — on behalf of the home countries of the outgoing and incoming Assembly Presidents. A special segment on 14 September offers an opportunity for countries and regional groupings to announce commitments or innovative approaches to fighting poverty and meeting development goals.

A key Summit event is the opportunity for Heads of State and Government to sign, ratify or accede to international conventions. The 32 treaties highlighted this year (*see backgrounder*) span a range of issues related to the Summit, including human rights, refugees, penal matters, terrorism, organized crime and corruption, the environment and disarmament. The recently adopted International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism will be officially opened for signature.

THE ROAD TO THE SUMMIT

Some of the proposals under negotiation 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.

Talks have been held under the leadership of General Assembly President, Jean Ping (Gabon). Delegations are expected to agree on an outcome document 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 have also been seeking consensus 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 and the Economic and Social Council, as well as the Secretariat — is also on the table. The issue of Security Council expansion is being discussed, although major aspects will likely need to be resolved after the September Summit.

In addition to formal statements in the General Assembly, world leaders will engage in informal discussions, including in four interactive round tables, each to cover the broad range of Summit issues.

Many additional informal events are expected to take place to advance the issues under discussion, as organized by various Governments, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and non-governmental organizations, both in the UN building and at nearby locations. A listing of some events can be found at the Summit website.

MEDIA CONTACTS

Background material and detailed information on media accreditation and logistical arrangements for the Summit can be found at www.un.org/summit2005.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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