

2005 WORLD SUMMIT

HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING | 14–16 SEPTEMBER 2005



» SECURING A DANGEROUS WORLD

We have come to a fork in the road,” UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said in 2003, reflecting on new challenges to peace and security and on failed efforts by the Security Council to achieve consensus on what action to take in Iraq. He urged world leaders gathered at the General Assembly to take a “hard look” at fundamental policy issues, warning that inaction would risk erosion of the world community’s collective security.

Against this backdrop, Governments are negotiating a document that is up for approval at the 2005 World Summit this September.

As a first step in the process, an independent panel (the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change) — whose formation the Secretary-General announced in his 2003 General Assembly address — reported back last year (www.un.org/secureworld) on the need for a “new vision of collective security”. This would address disparate challenges that were largely unknown at the UN’s creation in 1945. Some — terrorism striking across continents; biological and chemical toxins used as weapons; and the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their acquisition by non-state actors — have loomed large in recent years, complicating global collective security arrangements.

Several of the proposals by the High-level Panel were endorsed by the Secretary-General in his March 2005 report, *In Larger Freedom*, and a selection in turn are up for approval by Member States in September or later in the sixtieth-anniversary General Assembly session, running through 2006.

Along with important responses to new threats, such as a new global treaty on nuclear terrorism, Governments have been discussing ways to upgrade the UN’s traditional peacekeeping role, and provide the necessary support to an expanding portfolio. They have reviewed formulae for creating a Peacebuilding Commission that would assist countries in making the transition from war to lasting peace, and fill in the gaps that emerge at the conclusion of peacekeeping mandates. They have been debating wording for a universal definition of terrorism that would lay the groundwork for a comprehensive convention against terrorism.

Other proposals under discussion include the importance of mediation and the peaceful settlement of disputes, with a recommendation to strengthen the Secretary-General’s good offices.

PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION

As the facts and figures below make clear, ending wars is not enough; building peace is essential, if we are to avoid the phenomenon of relapse back into conflict. The UN plays a vital and growing role in peacebuilding. To consolidate and build on these efforts, Member States are deliberating the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission — an advisory body and coordinating mechanism to address the special needs of countries emerging from conflicts and moving towards recovery and development.

The Commission’s main purpose would be to bring together all relevant actors, to marshal resources and offer advice and comprehensive strategies for peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery. It would support — but not replace — country-level planning and policies. It would also provide a forum in which UN system mem-



FACTS AND FIGURES

- » Roughly half of all countries that emerge from war lapse back into violence within five years.
- » In the last 15 years, more civil wars were ended through negotiation than in the previous two centuries.
- » The rapid growth of UN and regional organization activity in civil wars coincides with a sharp decline in their incidence. Since 1992, the number of civil wars taking place at any one time has declined steadily, and by 2003, had dropped by roughly 40 per cent to less than 30.
- » Mediation has resulted in settlement in only about 25 per cent of civil wars, and only some of those agreements attracted the political and material resources needed for implementation.
- » Millions of lives could have been saved if more effort were placed on implementing peace agreements. Two examples of major failures of peace agreements to take hold occurred in Angola (1991 Bicesse Agreement) and Rwanda (1993 Arusha Accords).
- » It is estimated that criminal organizations gain \$330 billion to \$500 billion annually from narcotics trafficking, their single largest source of income. Proceeds from the drug trade have been linked with the financing of terrorist groups and other criminal activity.

Source: *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, Report of the Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, 2005.

bers, major donors, troop contributors, relevant regional actors and organizations, international financial institutions and national or transitional authorities of the country concerned could share information about post-conflict recovery activities, in the security and development spheres.

The work of the Peacebuilding Commission would be facilitated by a Peacebuilding Support Office within the UN Secretariat and by a standing Peacebuilding Fund that would be financed through voluntary contributions.

STRENGTHENING PEACEKEEPING

UN peacekeeping missions around the world continue to play a vital role in fostering international peace and security. There is growing concern, however, over their ability to fulfil their mandates and mount operations with sufficient capacity and resources. In pre-Summit talks, establishment of a strategic military reserve capacity has been proposed to reinforce missions in times of crisis, as has a proposal to create a standing capacity for rapid deployment of UN civilian police in peacekeeping operations.

It also has been suggested that Governments recognize the crucial role of regional organizations and that they support strengthening UN partnerships with regional organizations. In recognition of the special needs of Africa, it has also suggested to support a ten-year plan to build standby capacity in the African Union.

Another area for concern is the conduct of personnel deployed in peacekeeping operations, and reports of sexual exploitation and abuse. Member States have been asked for the full and vigorous application of the Secretary-General's zero tolerance policy towards violators with adherence to the highest standards of conduct for peacekeepers with no impunity for those who have committed crimes and appropriate disciplinary action to address wrongdoing.

FIGHTING TERRORISM

Many Member States believe that the UN's moral authority in the fight against terrorism has been undermined by the inability of Member States to agree on a comprehensive anti-terrorism convention as well as a universal definition of terrorism.

Such a definition was proposed by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, namely, that "any action that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, when the purpose of such an act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act, cannot be justified on any grounds and constitutes an act of terrorism". There have been energetic discussions in the run-up to the September Summit as Member States struggle to express — through different regional and political perspectives — their shared condemnation of the phenomenon of terrorism.

In the absence of a universal convention, thirteen treaties have been adopted by the international community with the aim of suppressing terrorist activities and access to material and financial resources. The most recent, the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, was approved by the General Assembly in April 2005 and will be open for signature at the World Summit.

DISARMAMENT AND NON-PROLIFERATION

Disarmament and non-proliferation issues are areas of vigorous debate among Member States. It has been proposed that they accede and adhere to legally binding instruments such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

Another proposal concerns a fissile material cut-off treaty that would establish a schedule to end the production of highly enriched uranium both for non-weapon as well as weapon purposes. If there is adequate Member State support, the Geneva-based UN Conference on Disarmament would be asked to initiate talks on the treaty.

Other aspects of collective security that may be addressed during the World Summit include wider adherence to international treaties, including on land mines, and improving safety in transporting nuclear weapons by sea. Small arms and light weapons are another focus; it has been proposed to initiate negotiations to restrict their marking, tracing, illicit brokering and transfer.

COMBATING TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

International awareness has grown concerning the negative effects on development, security and human rights caused by transnational crime, including smuggling and trafficking of human beings, narcotics, and small and light weapons. Entrenched corruption, the use of violence to protect criminal activities and close ties between criminal enterprises and political elites hinder establishing the rule of law and effective state institutions. Organized crime is increasingly operating through fluid networks that take advantage of the cumbersome procedures for sharing information and weak cooperation in criminal investigation and prosecution on the part of States.

Combating organized crime requires sufficient international regulatory frameworks and mechanisms for cooperation. More than half of UN Member States have not yet signed or ratified the 2000 UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three Protocols and the 2003 UN Convention against Corruption. The UN Convention against Corruption will be available for signature at the Summit, requiring only one more ratification for its entry into force.