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Statement by  
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President of the Republic of Finland

New York, 21 September 2004

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Statement by The President of the Republic of Finland Tarja Halonen at the 59th Session of the UN General Assembly In New York on 21 September 2004

In today's globalizing world, security and prosperity are inseparable.

There can be no lasting peace in any part of the world, when millions of people suffer every day from deprivation, poverty and armed conflicts and terrorism.

There is no human dignity, when even the most basic human rights of millions of people are violated every day.

There is no equality as long as there is discrimination because of gender, race or beliefs.

There is no fairness, when international and domestic rules favour the rich and powerful and oppress the poor and weak.

We, the Family of Nations, cannot remain on the sidelines. We need multilateral tools to meet the challenges of a globalizing world.

We must develop and enhance our multilateral institutions. This applies especially to the UN, whose position in promoting peace and development is unique.

The member states have given the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The members of the Security Council - and especially its permanent members – must display a common will and compromise on narrowly defined national interests. The other nations must show support for the Security Council's position and its decisions.

Before the war in Iraq, the international community failed, however. Conflicting national interests prevailed over common will. There was not enough commitment to act within the boundaries of Security Council resolutions. Some nations resorted to use of force, which was not compatible with international law.

Now we must turn our eyes and energies to the future. We need to restore security and stability in Iraq so that the building of democracy and prosperity can begin for real.

Finland is participating in training of Iraqi police forces and we have decided to contribute one million euros for security for staff members of the United Nations system working in Iraq.

There is no sustainable alternative to multilateralism. The international community must recognize its collective responsibility. We must be able to intervene and prevent situations in which where human rights are seriously violated.

We cannot afford to let the Darfur situation get out of hand. The UN and the international community must be able to act - in time, effectively and as long as needed.

Globalization could and should be a force for a brighter future for all people. But globalization, as we experience today, falls far short of this promise and is ethically and politically unsustainable.

To implement the Millennium Declaration we need to make globalization fairer. A globalization that pays attention to people's needs and aspirations. This requires more coherence, closer and better international co-operation as well as stronger, democratic states that work for fairness at home and abroad.

We must act without delay in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We have agreed on additional resources, we have agreed on local ownership and we have agreed on good governance. Let us deliver on these promises! The poor of the world cannot wait.

We must make the 0,7 % target on development assistance a reality. We need to give an open minded consideration to new and innovative proposals for additional development funding, including international taxation.

One concrete indication of the desire to implement the Millennium Declaration is the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. The commission has drafted numerous recommendations, which the UN system should study before the review of the Millennium Declaration next autumn. Tanzania and Finland will present an initiative for this General Assembly to deal with the commission's recommendations in the UN.

The United Nations has a key role today and tomorrow in promoting peace, security, economic prosperity, social welfare, human rights and the rule of law.

Finland gives full support to the broad reform of the UN that is now under way. The time is ripe for a reform of the Security Council and the expansion of its membership so that it corresponds better to today's world. We need also to vitalize the General Assembly and give the ECOSOC the role envisaged in the UN charter.

I hope that when we meet here at the United Nations Headquarters a year from now we can proudly note that we have taken concrete steps towards a better world. This is a responsibility that all of us share and it requires a lot of work from all of us.