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Statement by

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**at the General Debate of the 60th Session
of the United Nations General Assembly**

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Check Against Delivery

Mr. President, ministers, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your election. You are at the steering wheel of one of the most challenging sessions of the General Assembly in history – not only because it is the 60th anniversary of our Organization, but mainly because of our agenda, the gravity of problems awaiting resolution. While thanking to your able and devoted predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, I would like to wish you, Mr. President every success in the coming months of hard and hopefully rewarding work.

The EU invested a huge effort into the preparation of both the Summit and our current session, and my country was an integral and active part of this process. We heard the statement of the EU Presidency a few days ago and I have no intention to repeat it. Rather, let me present here several ideas and comments of more general nature.

Mr. President,

Millions of our fellow human beings in Africa and elsewhere are trapped in absolute poverty, with little or no access to education, medical and other services, deprived of dignified existence. In their neighbourhoods, or in other parts of the world, fascinating technical achievements and thriving economies enable large numbers of people to enjoy an unprecedentedly high quality of life. Some may simply conclude that there are several distinct "worlds" on this planet. But while the gaps may be still widening, let us be sure that we all live in only one, increasingly interconnected World. There is no way to separate the rich and the poor or different ethnic groups. And the responsibility for our future is equally indivisible.

Moreover, we are repeatedly reminded that this world is, despite all the advancements, still very fragile and vulnerable. What is the common feature of the 9/11, Bali, Madrid, Beslan, Baghdad or London terrorist attacks, floods in China or in Central Europe in 2002 and again in 2005, drought in parts of Africa, the Indian Ocean tsunami or devastating hurricanes in the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico? They all expose - in their own way - the vulnerability and fragility of our civilization. Developed or developing, big or small, we continue to be vulnerable to the forces of nature, as well as the forces of evil. Fortunately, the worst of situations tend to awaken the best in human character: after any such disaster or terrorist attack we have seen raising waves of solidarity on a global scale, we have seen renewed determination to fight the evil.

It is our duty to tap this positive energy. Although no one will ever achieve 100% safety, much can be done by deepening our cooperation, strengthening preventive measures, stepping up our efforts in combating terrorism, enhancing the mechanisms of development and humanitarian aid, or - in the longer run - simply fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals. And the UN, if reformed and mandated, can play a central role in this process.

Mr. President,

Last year, many of us spoke of reform, and reform has indeed been one of the most frequently used words since. There was much expectation in the air, much sincere effort to bring about the change, as well as many brilliant contributions to the debate: the report of the High-Level Panel, the Sachs report, the report of the UN Secretary General "In Larger Freedom...". After rounds of discussions we could say we knew the diagnosis and we knew

the medicaments. And we were hoping that the Summit would add the most needed ingredients - the political will and the means of delivery.

So, was the Summit a success, or a failure? I tend to view its results, the Outcome document, with sober optimism. The challenge was enormous – to bring together development, security and human rights and to craft a new delicate balance among the elements which constitute our global agenda. In my view, the Summit managed - and this could be its major achievement - to set the tone; to set at least rough parameters of a new equation, the fine-tuning of "details" being left for the coming months. We have guidance for further talks on assistance and relief for developing countries, we have a prospect of increasing development aid, including from my own country.

At the Summit, we reached an agreement that the human rights machinery needs strengthening and redesigning. Indeed, it was probably the first time at such a major event that human rights have been placed on equal standing with issues like development or security. But many pieces of the puzzle have yet to be put in place. In shaping the future Human Rights Council, we have to make sure that the progressive features and experience of the Commission are not lost - while avoiding its weaknesses and what particularly did not work: securing cooperation from countries like Belarus, Cuba, Myanmar, Zimbabwe or others who repeatedly failed to respond adequately to human rights concerns of the international community.

Moreover, the Summit reinforced our commitment to join forces in fighting terrorism, made the groundbreaking decision to create the Peacebuilding Commission, and endorsed the twin concepts of "responsibility to protect" and "human security" which bring new hope to many people facing lawlessness and oppression, which extend the existing standards of peace and security. But there are also areas where the Summit failed: among others disarmament and non-proliferation, and most notably the expansion of the Security Council. Our reform mission remains unfinished, and it must continue

Mr. President,

To live up to new challenges and tasks, the UN Secretariat has to be strong and healthy. It has to undergo a profound reform, and the need for such a reform is further underlined by the recent findings presented in the Volcker report. I welcome the emphasis the Summit has put on the UN management and its call for efficiency, effectiveness and accountability.

All in all, the Summit made many steps in the right direction, in shaping our visions and sharpening our tools. But there is another, and more hidden part of the story. Do all of us really want the UN to grow stronger and more efficient? And will the better, reformed - and truly universal - UN be enough to spare the world all of the today's troubles? Will it be able to find solutions to all the conflicts and bring lasting peace to all the notorious hot spots like the Balkans, the Middle East, Iraq, Afghanistan and a number of places in Africa? Will it be able to prevent millions of people from dying from hunger and diseases like HIV/AIDS? Will it be strong enough to guarantee or promote democracy and human rights?

There is a hope and there is a chance - but the answer depends on us. I can assure you that the Czech Republic is ready to carry out its part of the assignment, including in the Security Council if elected for the term 2008-2009. I thank you for your attention.