



PERMANENT MISSION OF PORTUGAL TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

HIS EXCELLENCY
THE MINISTER OF STATE
AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF PORTUGAL

PROFESSOR DIOGO FREITAS DO AMARAL

TO THE SIXTIETH SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Speech by H. E. the Minister of State and Foreign Affairs of Portugal,

Dr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral,

at the Sixtieth Session of the UN General Assembly

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Mr. President,

Ten years later I return to this Assembly. In September 1995 - I had the honor of being elected president of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Therefore I know well what a difficult task it is, and I congratulate you, Ambassador Eliasson, on your election. I wish you every success in fulfilling such high functions.

To the Secretary-General, Mr Kofi Annan, I offer my best wishes. My country values immensely the excellent work he has done so far, and the Portuguese Government wishes to extend its solidarity with him in the difficult moments he has been through, and to continue its support for the huge tasks and challenges awaiting him.

We share some disillusionment felt by the Secretary-General regarding the non-approval of a large part of his propositions for reform of the United Nations, included in the excellent report "In larger Freedom".

All this process started ten years ago, in 1995-96, under my chairmanship. And I can guarantee you that one year later, when I left, there were already many consensual solutions that, meanwhile, could have been approved. These ten years were certainly insufficiently seized.

We are left with the certainty that some progress towards a good reform will only be viable if it keeps, as reference, the objectives foreseen in the proposals of the Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

And what is a good reform for the United Nations?

It is, in my opinion, a reform that fulfills, at least, five requisites. A reform that:

1. Respects and reaffirms the fundamental principles and values of the Charter;
2. Creates better conditions to maintain and reestablish peace, guarantee security and combat those that offend the former or the latter;
3. Makes a large effort supporting development aid, thus promoting the improvement of the living conditions of the world's poorest countries and reduces the existent far excessive gap between Northern and Southern countries;
4. Promotes Democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law, internationally and at state level;
5. Establishes the basis and the conditions which lead to a positive understanding among Peoples, to the dialogue of civilizations, the understanding of cultural and religious diversities, and to the spirit of tolerance, cooperation and friendship between nations, governments and individuals.

Besides these five requisites, there is still the need to consider the reorganization of the Secretariat. Nevertheless, I value this as an important instrument towards the prosecution of the United Nations objectives. I have enough personal experience to state that this Organization's personnel is, in

general, highly competent, dedicated and professional. However, we must all understand that this organization, being so large, is, like any other, always in need of constant modernization.

Last week the United Nations Reform has started. It is now required to continue, year by year, phase by phase, with hard work, energy and the spirit of compromise which is a hallmark of diplomacy and, being so, must not be absent from the "temple of diplomacy" which the United Nations is.

The tasks to be accomplished in the next months – with the unreserved support of Portugal- will be first and foremost to do what is necessary to put the Peacebuilding Commission to work, to implement the already approved concept of the "Responsibility to Protect", and to establish the new "Human Rights Council".

Mr. President:

Development is an urgent task that cannot be postponed. The poorest Countries claim for justice and deserve it; the richest Countries claim to subscribe to an Ethical code and therefore have to discharge themselves of the duties that derive from it.

In this regard, Portugal fully subscribes the vision – stated and reaffirmed by the United Nations – of the priority of Development, understood as a comprehensive Development, as expressed in the "Millennium Development Goals", closely linked to the Rule of Law and Security. In fact, Democracy and Security constitute themselves *sine qua non* condition for an effective, sustained and fair Development.

In terms of Official Development Assistance, Portugal hopes to reach the agreed value of 0.51% of the Gross Domestic Product in 2010, in order to prepare the path for an ambitious goal of 0.7 in 2015.

The Portuguese effort has been mainly directed — but not exclusively — to the *Least Developed Countries*, and, among these, particularly, to Sub-Saharan Africa.

We, therefore, reaffirm the need to pay active and committed attention to the special needs of Africa. In this way, we will fulfill effectively the commitments undertaken with regard to the reinforcement of cooperation with NEPAD and with regional and sub-regional organizations.

The report of the Secretary General reminds us precisely that each country is primarily responsible for its own development, in accordance with the procedures of good governance which, in this context, naturally take the importance, and the nature, of a pre-requisite.

This is, in fact, the implementation of the 8th Millennium Objective: to create a Global Partnership for Development, whose importance for the promotion of a more balanced and just world I would like to stress.

Therefore, I have no doubts in stating that we must continue actively committed to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, including strengthening actions in the areas considered to be priorities. It is our common future which is at stake.

I would like to take the opportunity to announce that Portugal has decided to contribute to the UN Democracy Fund.

For Portugal, concerns with the environment are a clear priority and this must strengthen and not harm Development. In this domain, we will actively participate in the international efforts to fight climate change, respecting the compromises undertaken and limiting the greenhouse effect gas emissions, so that the European Union can reach the commitment agreed in the scope of the Kyoto Protocol. We hope that - the next Conference in Montreal may mark the launch of the negotiation process on the climate regime after 2012.

Mr. President:

One of the most serious threats that Peace and Security faces today is terrorism, which must be fought with energy within the Rule of Law and in observance of Human Rights.

There can be no doubt that one of the aims of terrorists is precisely to provoke the distortion of the most elementary universal values adopted by States and their populations. And because we defend ourselves they want to make us all – us and them, the terrorists – look morally equivalent. Portugal rejects vehemently this vision.

In fighting terrorism there can be no ambiguities: we must be clear and say it bluntly that the actions destined to cause the death or seriously harm civilians or non-combatants are terrorist acts.

In our view the United Nations provides the framework of reference for the fight against terrorism, and in this sense we appeal to the conclusion of the Global Convention on Terrorism. Equally, we welcome the Counter-Terrorism Strategy drawn by the Secretary-General and we appeal to its effective implementation.

In this context, during this General Assembly, Portugal will sign the International Convention on Repression of Nuclear Terrorism.

Mr. President:

We must recognize that today the biggest cluster of threats to international peace and security lies in the wider Middle East. Independently of the position that each country has taken on the Iraq war, on the basis of the clear existing mandates of the UN, it is now essential to do all we can so that peace, democracy and human rights will triumph. This will imply some years of effort, as in Afghanistan.

Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is important that, following the current positive momentum, serious negotiations and bilateral and multilateral agreements occur. The "Road Map" cannot be forgotten or indefinitely postponed. Just as it is unquestionable Israel's right to live in peace within secure borders, it is also unquestionable the right of the Palestinian State to exist. Only with the so-called "two State policy" will there be peace in the Middle East.

As for Iran, I stress and support the efforts of the European Union in trying to avoid, through negotiation, another dangerous case of nuclear proliferation. The International Community as a whole, and the entire

Iranian People themselves, owe a great deal to the intelligent action of the European Union in this matter. We are united in solidarity and will continue to be so. Negotiations must continue.

With the aim of promoting international peace and stability, Portugal is committed to strengthen cooperation among regions and civilizations. In this sense, the high-level political dialogue between Europe and Africa must be further strengthened, including through the convening of the Europe-Africa Summit, for which Portugal has been working.

I reaffirm here the appeal of Portugal to all interested parties for the conjugation of our efforts in order to allow the re-launching of the Cairo process, which we believe to be instrumental for the establishment of that strategic partnership.

I also want to publicly support to the Spanish initiative for the Alliance of Civilizations. In fact, the European-African dialogue is also a dialogue between civilizations, as well as the Ibero-American process, in which Portugal, Spain, Andorra and the Latin American Countries are committed to, and which will be formally consecrated in the Salamanca Summit next October.

In the last nine years, through the Portuguese Speaking Countries Community (CPLP), the dialogue between eight Member-States, which represent 200 million people living in four continents, has been deepened and with great success. Portugal acts bearing in mind the orientation, which it would like to see widened, of dialogue between Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia, an indispensable tool for civilizations to live at peace and not at war.

I would like to finish by reaffirming the reliance of Portugal on the centrality, legitimacy and indispensability of the United Nations.

Without forgetting the setbacks, from which one should learn so that they will not be repeated, we should also bear in mind the successes, and these are many. Timor-Leste, present here today as a full-right Member State, is an example, among others, of a United Nations success story.

To conclude, I would like to remember the wise words from our second Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld: *"The pursuit of peace and progress cannot end in a few years in either victory or defeat. The pursuit of peace and progress, with its trials and its errors, its successes and its setbacks, can never be relaxed and never be abandoned."*