

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**STATEMENT TO THE 60TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
New York, 17 September 2005**

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We meet at the end of an historic week for the United Nations.

Progress has been made across a broader front than on any other single occasion in the 60 year history of the Organization.

World leaders have met to prohibit incitement to terrorism, pledge money to support democracy, and discuss the threat of HIV/AIDS, malaria and bird flu. The UN and ASEAN agreed to closer relations. The leaders of the EU 3 and Iran met to seek a way forward. Important discussions were held on the Middle East, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, and Haiti.

But by far the most important achievements were at the World Summit itself. We did not achieve everything - after all, we were ambitious, and set the bar very high. But by tackling a range of issues together, we clearly achieved a great deal.

The Summit made breakthroughs in adopting strategies to fight poverty and disease, creating new machinery to win the peace in war-torn countries, and pledging collective action to prevent genocide. It made real progress on terrorism, human rights, democracy, management of the Secretariat, peacekeeping, and humanitarian response. And it opened doors to further action on global public health, global warming, and mediation.

Now, we turn to a new task: to implement what has been agreed, and to keep working to bridge differences that remain. The Summit outcome imposes responsibility on each of us individually, and on all of us collectively. Many items must be completed during the 60th session of the General Assembly.

With so much work to do in one year, I propose that we start with an accountability pact. Let us each pledge to live up to what the Summit outcome requires of us, and hold each other to account for doing so.

I intend to follow through on every action asked of me. I ask you, the Member States, to tell me immediately if you think I am not doing so. I will also help keep score on progress you make in implementing what has been agreed, and I will speak plainly if I believe you are falling behind. And I have no doubt that global public opinion will keep a close eye on our progress.

Let me remind you of some of the important items on our checklist, and what each of us must do to make sure that we tick them off, on time.

First, management reform.

The Summit document gives the go-ahead for extensive management reforms to make the Secretariat more efficient, more effective, and more accountable. I will start, on Monday, to drive that process forward. Here is what I intend to do, as you have requested.

To update our work practices and improve effectiveness and efficiency, I will make recommendations to assist your review of all ongoing mandates agreed in the first 55 years of the Organization. I will also undertake a thorough assessment of our budget and human resources rules, and recommend ways of adapting them so that the Secretariat is administered in the most up-to-date manner. And I will offer you a detailed proposal for a one-time staff buy-out, to ensure that we have the personnel best suited to carry out the priorities you have set.

To promote accountability, after commissioning a full and independent review of our oversight and management system, I will present a blueprint for an independent oversight audit committee. I will also submit very soon the details of the independent ethics office that I intend to create, which will protect whistleblowers and ensure more extensive financial disclosure. And I will make proposals to ensure that, in future, the Secretary-General is fully equipped to discharge his responsibilities as Chief Administrative Officer -- and that you, the Member States, are able to hold him to account.

I ask you to live up to your commitments to follow-through on all these items, and to meet your pledge to provide greater funding for internal oversight. Let's stay focused in the year ahead, and make these reforms a reality. This is the only way to restore the confidence of people everywhere in the Organization's integrity and ability to deliver.

Second, we must strengthen our human rights machinery.

The High Commissioner for Human Rights will move ahead in implementing her plan of action, and you have pledged to assist her in strengthening her Office and doubling its budget. You have also agreed to strengthen the human rights treaty bodies.

Most important, you have agreed to create a Human Rights Council. President Eliasson needs your full support in conducting negotiations to finalize agreement on important details in the coming months. Mr. President, I believe negotiations should resume on the basis of the detailed language developed in the lead-up to the Summit, which enjoyed the support of the overwhelming majority of Member States. I believe that the majority must lead, and those who still have reservations should make an extra effort to show flexibility. Let's have a Human Rights Council that commands respect, and achieves results.

Third, we must move forward on terrorism.

The Summit contains, for the first time, an unqualified condemnation by all Member States of terrorism “in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes”. As you have agreed, you must build on that simple statement to complete a comprehensive convention against terrorism in the year ahead, and forge a global counter-terrorism strategy that weakens terrorists and strengthens the international community. We can do it, and we must do it.

Fourth, we must get the Peacebuilding Commission up and running.

Almost all the key details have now been agreed. Your task in the next few months is to finalize and operationalize the Commission. Mine is to set up a small support office and a standing fund to support the Commission. Let’s each do our part so that the Peacebuilding Commission can begin its work before the end of the year.

Fifth, and particularly important, we must meet our commitments on development.

This has been a historic year for development. After this week, any doubt that the Millennium Development Goals enjoyed universal support has been removed. We have an ambitious commitment to add \$50 billion a year to the fight for development, within five years. The scale of this achievement seems to have been missed by some. So let’s make sure we live up to our promises to the world’s poor.

Every developing country is now pledged to formulate, and begin to implement, by next year, a national strategy bold enough to achieve the internationally agreed development objectives, including the MDGs by 2015. For their part, developed countries must now deliver on their pledges to boost financing for development and relieve debt.

We also have hopeful signs that progress is possible towards the universal, rule-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system envisaged in the Summit document. Let’s build on that promise, and press ahead with the Doha trade round..

Sixth, we must keep working on Security Council reform.

We have tried hard to find a way forward on this vital issue. It has not been easy, and we have not yet succeeded. But world leaders agree that early Council reform is, in their words, “an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations”. They have called for a review of progress by the end of this year. Let all parties make a genuine effort to find a solution that can command wide support -- not for the sake of any particular group, but for the sake of the Organization.

Seventh, we must urgently begin to remedy our distressing failures on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

The consensus underlying the Non-Proliferation Treaty is badly frayed. Twice this year – at the NPT Review Conference and now at the Summit – months of negotiation yielded silence. States could not even agree to reaffirm their existing commitments, or find a way forward, even at the level of principles. They have been content to point fingers at each other, rather than work for solutions.

Yet we face growing risks of proliferation and catastrophic terrorism, and the stakes are too high to continue down a dangerous path of diplomatic brinkmanship. Let's instead work together to strengthen all three pillars of the regime -- non-proliferation, disarmament, and peaceful uses. I encourage Norway, Australia, Chile, Indonesia, Romania, South Africa and the United Kingdom to continue their efforts to find a way forward. All States should support their initiative to address this existential threat.

Mr. President,
Excellencies,

Sometimes, multilateral solutions seem impossibly difficult. But from time-to-time, it pays to step back and see how far we have come.

I first spoke from this podium in 1999 on the need for the international community to act in the face of genocide. My remarks caused intense debate among the membership. Yet now, six years later, after many States have worked hard, civil society has become fully engaged, and genuine concerns have been addressed, you have come together to acknowledge your solemn responsibility not just to care, but to act. You will be tested on that commitment in the years ahead.

Make no mistake. This is a hard-won revolution in international affairs, and a signal of hope for the weakest in our world. And it teaches us a vital lesson: if we persevere, we can find collective answers to our common problems.

So let us get to work, confident and determined. If we do that, and we do what we have promised this week, we will help save millions of lives, and give hope to billions of people. That would be a fitting achievement to mark the 60th anniversary of the United Nations, and a platform from which to do even more in the years ahead.

Thank you very much.