



CZECH REPUBLIC
Permanent Mission to the United Nations
1109-1111 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10028 Tel. 1 (646) 981-4000

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Václav KLAUS

President of the Czech Republic

**at the General Debate of the 62nd Session
of the General Assembly of the United Nations**

New York, September 26, 2007

Check Against Delivery

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to congratulate you on your election as President of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly. I also welcome the highly respected Secretary General at his first opening session of this Assembly.

I would like to start with saying that my country is proud to be one of the founding fathers of the United Nations in its current form. The Czech Republic, a successor state of Czechoslovakia, has been actively participating in all kinds of UN activities in the past and it will continue to do so in the future.

We take part not only in the work of the United Nations itself, but also of its specialized organizations and agencies such as UNESCO, UNDP, FAO, WHO, International Atomic Energy Agency, and many others. We have always supported any meaningful initiative, which leads to the increase of stability and prosperity of the world.

I am proud to confirm that the Czech Republic has the ambition to be elected to the Security Council as a non-permanent member in the period 2008-2009. I believe that we can be trusted by the majority of Member States and that we do deserve their votes.

We are convinced we have already demonstrated our devotion to freedom, democracy, international cooperation, economic development and respect for sovereignty of countries belonging to this community of nations. My country served in the Security Council in 1994 and 1995 when I was Prime Minister. We tried to do our best. We were predictable and committed to hard work. Now, as President of the Czech Republic I can assure you that we will do even a better job.

We have always recognized the principal responsibility of the UN Security Council for maintaining international peace and security. Since the 1990's, the Czech Republic has contributed to more than 20 UN peace-keeping missions and UN mandated operations in the Balkans, Asia and Africa. We deeply believe in the prevention and non-violent resolution of disputes and conflicts. This can be proved by our own behavior – by the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1992. Over the last years, we have multiplied our official development assistance.

In the last 18 years, the Czech Republic has been undergoing a radical and dynamic development which was made possible by the fall of communism and by our rapid departure from that oppressive, inhuman and inefficient political, social and economic system. Our profound transformation strategy – based on the acceptance of political pluralism, parliamentary democracy and market economy – was successful.

A further important impetus to our development was our approaching the European Union and the entry into it three years ago. Today, the Czech Republic is a full-fledged member of the Union and will hold the EU Presidency in the first half of 2009. It might be of interest to this forum that the slogan of the Czech Presidency is “Europe without barriers”. This means both internal and external barriers of the Union. I fully support this concept as I strongly believe in the need of removing barriers that hinder economic progress, especially of developing countries.

Mr. Chairman, we consider the United Nations to be an extremely important and in fact irreplaceable platform. There is no substitute for it in the current world. It is a platform for meetings and consultations, for dialogue and – eventually – for reaching agreements on treaties among nations sharing the same or similar values and political stances.

This unique platform is based on the plurality of views of 192 Member States and on our mutual respect towards their, sometimes differing positions. The ambition of the UN is not, and should never be, searching for one obligatory, unitary view imposed by some of us on those who disagree.

I did not use the term platform by chance and without any purpose. By saying that, I implicitly object to the alternative concept, to the concept of global governance which is based on the indefensible idea that the world can be “globally governed”, masterminded, controlled, managed and/or even planned. To aspire to do that is something we can never accept. It is an ambition based on the “abuse of reason” and on the “pretence of knowledge”. Democracy is something else.

There are some among us who prefer the operational efficiency (or the ability to act) of this organization to the recognition of the existence of different views. They want to make decisions in an easier and faster way. Our communist past tells us that we should not do that. We also want the UN to be reasonably operational. But we categorically oppose that it happens at the expense of individual Member States. And we have to respect views of individual countries regardless of their size. It is crucial that every Member State has equal status and that its voice is not ignored.

We have to go forward. The UN needs changes. We do support the UN reform because this organization should reflect the current situation in the world more than the situation of the era when the UN was founded. Some changes are inevitable and we should discuss them seriously.

To our great regret, we are – in the current world – witnessing many cases of the lack of freedom and democracy. Our task for the future is to minimize them. I do not see and hear the terms freedom and democracy here and elsewhere as much or as often as they deserve. We hear other words more frequently – aid, government initiatives and interventions, social justice, positive rights, environment, resources, climate, solving of problems, facing the threats, global challenges, etc.

Here we have to be very careful. We should support meaningful activities, not programs which in effect put constraints on local development. We should use natural resources efficiently and protect the environment but not in a way that restricts human activity and harms economic development. We would help global development more by reducing barriers than by providing more conditional aid. Reduction of protectionism and lowering of export subsidies is a far more efficient way for helping developing countries than anything else. We should not allow that developing countries are prevented from their own economic growth by additional burdens imposed upon them they will not be able to bear.

At the Conference on Climate Change the day before yesterday, I resolutely warned against the unjustified alarmism of global warming activists and their fellow-travelers in some governments and international organizations, but even this potential problem, as well as any other, can never be solved without relying on freedom, free markets, free trade and other attributes of free society.

To preserve environment is very important but we have to be more modest in our attempting to control the complexities of the world.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished colleagues, let's use the potential of this organization as much as possible. Let's cooperate, let's listen to each other, let's negotiate to the last possible moment, let's try to understand the others. The Czech Republic tries to follow those rules.