



ESTONIA

**ADDRESS BY
H.E. MR. TOOMAS HENDRIK ILVES
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
TO THE
62ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

United Nations Headquarters
New York, 25 September 2007

Please check against delivery

Address by Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves

President of Estonia

To the 62nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly

UN Headquarters, New York, 25 September 2007

Please check against delivery

Mister President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Mr. Srgjan Kerim, upon your assumption of the office of President of the General Assembly and wish you every success. I also wish to express our appreciation to your predecessor, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, for her effective leadership during the sixty first Session of the General Assembly.

Mister President,

I shall speak today on four fundamental topics: climate change, cyber security, conflict resolution, and co-operation among international organizations.

First, climate change. Climate change now receives the attention and political commitment it deserves. The United Nations has over the decades increased general awareness of this issue. The basic findings of the UN's Panel on Climate Change, made public in May of this year, attest to the need for quick action.

In accordance with the UN's Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as the Kyoto Protocol, industrialised countries are obligated to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases. Estonia has already achieved the basic target of the Kyoto Protocol – our emissions of

greenhouse gases have been cut back by over 50%. Fully subscribing to the EU statement on the post-2012 vision for international climate released by the Portuguese Presidency, we hope that the negotiations concerning a new global climate deal will reach a new comprehensive and global political agreement already by December 2009. Only then will we be prepared to implement the agreed new commitments and signal relevant industries to make necessary decisions on time.

Yes, we recognise that developing countries have special needs, in the areas of sustainable economic growth and eradication of poverty. But we also need to decouple economic growth from energy consumption and CO₂ emissions. Estonia has demonstrated a unique sustainable development trend – our annual economic growth is over 10%, yet primary energy consumption has, on the average, decreased by 2.5% a year. Investing into energy efficiency will have a huge impact on our future. Diversification of energy supply and larger use of renewable energies is the way forward. All of us should assume our share of common responsibilities in increasing energy efficiency.

The resources and technology for decarbonisation come primarily from industrial nations. Therefore, we need to continue the dialogue between industrialised and developing nations concerning the adoption of a green economy – reducing carbon fuel dependency, and counterbalancing climate change caused by human activities. We need to promote the technology transfer, necessary for developing environment-friendly energy production. Estonia believes the best way would be to tie development and investment in clean technologies.

There is perhaps a need for a global institution such as the UN Environment Organisation that would deal with environmental issues, including facilitating the adoption of the most suitable technology and know-how in developing countries. We also hope that efforts will be made to identify the needs of those states and regions that will be the most negatively affected by the inevitable further warming of the climate.

Recent years have also shown a significant increase in the number of natural disasters. Better preparedness as well as the more efficient coordination of assistance by the international

community is vital. Estonia contributes increasingly to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. We are also among committed donors to the upgraded Central Emergency Response Fund – early action is vital especially in the early hours of a disaster, when people are most at risk. More funding should be allocated by donors for early response to disasters.

Mister President,

If in the past people were connected by sea lanes and trade routes, then today we are often connected by the Internet, along with the threats that loom in cyber-space. Cyber attacks are a clear example of contemporary asymmetrical threats to security. They make it possible to paralyse a society, with limited means, and at distance. In the future, cyber attacks may in the hands of criminals or terrorists become a considerably more widespread and dangerous weapon than they are at present.

Cyber attacks are a threat not only to sophisticated information technological systems, but also to a community as a whole. For instance, they could be used to paralyse a city's emergency medical services. The threats posed by cyber warfare have often been underestimated since, fortunately, they have so far not resulted in the loss of any lives. Also, for security reasons, the details of cyber attacks are often not publicised. In addition to concrete technical and legal measures for countering cyber attacks, governments must morally define the cyber violence and crime, which deserve to be generally condemned just like terrorism or the trafficking in human beings. Fighting against cyber warfare is in the interests of us all without exception. This fight requires both appropriate domestic measures as well as international efforts.

In April and May of this year Estonia successfully coped with an extensive cyber attack, and we are prepared to share with other countries the know-how we have acquired. We call upon the international community to cooperate in legal matters in questions concerning cyber security. But, since this whole subject is a relatively new field, it is essential to establish an appropriate legal space. As a first step, we call upon all countries to accede to the Convention on Cyber

Crime of the Council of Europe. The Convention is also open for accession for non-members of the Council of Europe.

We should move ahead and create a truly international framework to combat these vicious acts. The Global Cybersecurity Agenda of the International Telecommunications Union, launched by the Secretary-General in May, is a very important initiative for building international cooperation in this field. Estonia also agrees with the assessment of the specialists of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, that a globally negotiated and comprehensive Law of Cyber-Space is essential, and that the UN can provide the neutral and legitimate forum for this task.

Mister President,

The UN is determined to resolve conflicts. Conflict prevention and resolution, particularly in Africa, is understandably a top priority at the moment. We welcome the creation of a United Nations-African Union peacekeeping force to quell the violence and instability plaguing the Darfur region of Sudan and the commitment to improve the lives of the people of the region.

It is important to settle conflicts in other places as well, such as in Afghanistan. The UN supports the process of national reconciliation and the rebuilding of the country alongside NATO's efforts and the European Union's commitments. We need to increase the presence and visibility of the UN, which would be an encouraging sign for the local population, and also send a signal for the international aid organizations and NGOs to increase their activities. The United Nations should also assume a greater role in coordinating the reconstruction effort in Afghanistan.

I would like to highlight one conflict in Europe where the UN has a significant role to play – the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia. Along with the other frozen conflicts in the neighbouring region, it remains one of the last unresolved conflicts in Europe. I wish the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General determination to find solutions, which honour Georgia's territorial integrity. We can not be satisfied with the current situation. It is important to build confidence between parties and resume the meetings between the representatives of Georgia's government and

Abkhazia. There is no place for any military provocations, internal or external. A major task of the UN remains the facilitation of the return of refugees to Abkhazia, which has unfortunately been significantly hampered. Progress regarding the conflict is possible if all interested parties act in a constructive way. We must generate the necessary political will to resolve the conflict, and in this context I welcome the EU's increased contribution.

Mister President,

The international community should also secure the best and the most rational use of available resources, including in emergency and crisis response situations. For example, both the UN and EU were involved in managing the response to the Asian Tsunami in 2004 and the Lebanese crisis in 2006. It once again brought forth the necessity to develop common needs assessments – to further discuss the roles and mandates of the relevant actors, like the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the DG/ECHO of the European Commission, and the Civil Protection Mechanism of the EU.

Poverty, armed conflicts, and natural disasters like floods, tsunamis, or forest fires are all causes of another global problem – forced migration, which should also be tackled in a more concerted manner by the whole international community. Being forced to leave one's home is always a tragedy. I know. My family was forced to leave my country by Soviet occupation forces. Trying to integrate into a new society is always a significant challenge. Only with well coordinated common efforts can we ensure that people should never have to leave their homes because they have no other option. Thus, a global approach to people's migration should remain a vital issue on the United Nation's agenda.

Thank you!