



REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY



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ADDRESS

BY

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OF THE REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY***

***AT THE 62ND SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY***

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Mr. President,

Allow me first of all to warmly congratulate you as President of the Sixty-second Session of the General Assembly. I am pleased to see you as a high ranking official from the rather under-represented Eastern European Group assuming this prestigious post of the UN. In fulfilling your challenging tasks during this session, you may be assured of the support and cooperation of the delegation of Hungary. I would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa.

During the 61st session, Member States worked hard to come to agreement on the proposals made by the 2005 Summit meeting but we still need to do more to ensure that the United Nations system is managed coherently and effectively. I believe that the world needs, more than ever before, effective multilateralism, which is still a key word for the future. We should make progress on management reform, mandate review and disarmament, and define further concrete steps towards a renewed Security Council.

Hungary would have preferred if the issue of Security Council reform had seen more progress during the 61st session of the General Assembly. The impasse was certainly not due to the lack of efforts on the part of the President of the General Assembly, neither to a shortage in creative ideas. We believe that the best solution would still be a balanced increase of seats to better reflect the political realities of today. The enlargement process should be combined with tangible improvement of the Council's working methods.

We welcome the adoption of the new resolution on the revitalization of the General Assembly. It is up to each Member State to make the work of the Assembly meaningful, to ensure that the Assembly takes up issues of genuine concern and takes decisions that have a real impact on the political process.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

Let me now turn our eyes towards Geneva where important reforms have taken place as well. The Human Rights Council has finally started its work among high expectations. The consensus over the Universal Periodic Review mechanism sends a clear message that all countries will have their human rights records examined at regular intervals, thus no country will be immune from global scrutiny. However, in order to make the UPR truly meaningful we have to build a credible and robust mechanism: contributions from treaty bodies, special procedures and non-governmental organizations to the review will prove to be essential in this regard.

In order to better protect human rights and fundamental freedoms the system of special procedures, a unique web of protection, has continued to provide effective action for the benefit of victims of human rights abuses. Special rapporteurs and independent experts have carried on with their task, giving voice to the voiceless, even at times when the Council was mainly focusing on its institution-building task.

We are firmly convinced that both thematic and country specific mandates remain valid in the face of the numerous human rights violations still occurring on a daily basis. In this regard, we concur with the Secretary-General who emphasized the need to consider all situations of possible human rights violations on an equal footing. Not having a special rapporteur assigned to a particular country does not absolve that country from its obligations under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or other human rights instruments.

I should devote some thoughts to an issue dear to my country. We welcome with great satisfaction the recent decision of the Human Rights Council to establish a forum on minority issues. I am confident that this forum will provide a useful platform for dialogue and exchange of views between minorities, governments and other stakeholders on issues related to national or ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

Allow me to put a special emphasis on women's empowerment. We firmly believe in the need for effective involvement of women in the decision-making processes at both national and international levels. In this respect Hungary supports the ongoing debate on the future of the strengthened gender equality architecture and welcomes the steps towards an effective gender mainstreaming throughout the entire UN system.

On 30 March we witnessed the signature ceremony of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This new international instrument will improve the living conditions of almost 650 million persons with disabilities all over the world, ensuring equal opportunities for them in all aspects of life. Being the second ratifying State Party to this Convention and its Protocol, we hope that they will enter into force soon.

Mr. President,

Seven years ago our governments made a remarkable promise to the world: they signed the Millennium Declaration. There have certainly been some improvements in the accomplishment of its objectives, however, if we do not strengthen our efforts there will be regions on our planet where the Millennium Development Goals will not be met by 2015. In the meantime, we must also emphasize the central role of national policies and development strategies in achieving these goals. Sustainability of development depends heavily on national ownership and leadership. At the global level, the United Nations has a comparative advantage to provide technical assistance for preparing and implementing national development plans. We fully support the recommendations of the System-wide Coherence Panel to improve the operational effectiveness and interagency cooperation, predictability and accountability of the UN system.

The Millennium Development Goals represent the global commitment to fundamental rights which must be guaranteed if we genuinely seek to strengthen our democracies. Democracy should also mean creating the conditions for sustainable economic development that provides people access – through decent jobs – to conditions for their fullest personal development.

We are particularly pleased that Hungary may share its transitional experiences both as a member of the Advisory Board of the UN Democracy Fund, and through the International Centre for Democratic Transition that operates in Budapest and has a Partnership Agreement with the UN Democracy Fund. The UN has a special responsibility to address challenges related to institution-building and to promote democracy. As Amartya Sen, the Nobel Prize winning economist used to say: "Countries need not to be fit for democracy: they need to become fit through democracy."

Hungary, as an emerging donor, is determined to meet the obligations set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals. We are ready to increase our official development assistance and to carry out our efforts in line with the European Consensus on Development and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. However, we are convinced that scaling up the volume of aid in itself does not necessarily lead to reaching the Millennium Development Goals. It is also important to emphasize the need for better complementarity, coordination and coherence in development cooperation.

We are committed to undertaking a qualitative change in the outreach of the Hungarian foreign policy after having been fully integrated into the EU and NATO structure. We want to make our policy and our presence more visible in all parts of the world; an active development co-operation and assistance policy coupled by a reinforced presence in UN bodies. We are resolved to attach special attention to creating a more balanced geographical span of our co-operation policy, including African, Asian and Latin American countries as well. Stepping up outreach efforts and developing not only assistance activities but also economic ties with Africa marks the beginning of a new era in our relationship with this continent. We are also ready to undertake more responsibilities in different international fora. Our ambitions are best embodied in our application for a non-permanent seat in the Security Council for the period of 2012-2013. We perceive our desired membership as an opportunity for engaging with all our partners in a constructive co-operation for attaining our common objectives, on the basis of shared interests and values.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me now focus on some of the most urgent foreign policy issues of our days.

Peace and stability in the Balkan region is of paramount importance to my country and to Europe as a whole. While the question of the future status of Kosovo compels international attention, we are aware that the issue of Kosovo is a challenge that needs to be tackled primarily by Europe. Nevertheless, the United Nations has played a pivotal role in the process so far, and our hope is that this will remain so, until a proper solution is found.

No doubt that there is a significant role for the EU in facilitating a satisfactory solution. Among all uncertainties one thing is sure: the status quo is not a solution. The region needs, more than ever, stability, economic development and interethnic reconciliation. The European Union has invested much in the region, in terms of material, political and military assistance. It has also offered these countries the perspective of joining the European Union. We are convinced that in the case of Serbia reinforcing the perspective of a future EU membership may facilitate the solution of the question of Kosovo. Hungary is therefore looking forward to a successful outcome of the new round of negotiations facilitated by the EU-US-Russia Troika that the parties should approach in a constructive and frank manner. We hope that the encouraging signs of trust and constructivity will prevail in the course of the whole process and the parties will be able to come to an agreement endorsed by the UN Security Council.

We follow with great attention the work of the teams set up recently by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to negotiate core issues of a permanent solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We welcome the initiative made by the President of the United States to convene an international conference in November.

Hungary is strongly committed to the reconstruction of Afghanistan: as a member state of the North Atlantic Alliance we have been involved in the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) since 2003, and we took over the leadership of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Baghlan Province on 1 October 2006. I am proud of the work carried out by the Hungarian military contingent and teams of aid workers in a successful way. Moreover, I can confirm our future commitment in Afghanistan which enjoys a broad political consensus among all the parties represented in the Hungarian Parliament. Nevertheless, we must not forget that the primary responsibility for the stabilization and development of Afghanistan lies with the Afghan people themselves. We are concerned about the security situation and the attacks carried out by Taliban and anti-government forces, and we firmly condemn all hostage taking actions. Drug production and trafficking continue to be a major source of instability, and we note the increase in opium production with great concern. We encourage the Afghan government, in close cooperation with the international

community and in particular its regional partners to take effective measures to stabilize the whole region.

The stabilization of Iraq is one of the major challenges in the Middle East. We appreciate the results that have been achieved so far in the course of the country's democratic transformation. However, the Iraqi political class needs to overcome the present state of deep division, and start walking down the road of reconciliation and cooperation in order to bring peace and stability to the country. As a precondition for long lasting settlement of the conflict the international community must enable the Iraqi leaders to assume ownership and govern their country in an independent way.

Hungary is very much concerned about the acts of violence perpetrated by the security forces of the Burma/Myanmar government. Being committed to respecting human rights and democracy, we strongly condemn the brutal physical attacks against peaceful demonstrators. I reiterate our previous call on the government of Burma/Myanmar to fully respect human rights and the norms of democracy, in particular the rights to peaceful assembly and free expression of opinions.

Due to one of the most worrisome conflicts on the African continent raging in Darfur, the situation in Sudan and the nearby countries is still unpredictable and explosive. Hungary welcomes the renewed momentum of the efforts to resolve the Darfur conflict, in particular the agreement on the deployment of the AU-UN hybrid force (UNAMID), and the subsequent adoption of Security Council resolution 1769. We consider it essential that the hybrid operation is launched and the troops are deployed in full number as soon as possible.

I would like to commend Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on having made resolving the Darfur conflict a priority and on his visit in Sudan. It is in this context that I reaffirm our support for the peace-building and peace-keeping efforts of the United Nations.

Hungary welcomes that the Peace-building Commission has started its work and met in a country-specific format to consider the cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone. We are looking forward to the 1st report on its work. We consider the Commission as an important instrument enhancing UN capabilities to support countries emerging from conflict.

We are fully aware of the need to strengthen the capacity of the UN to mount and sustain complex and multidimensional peacekeeping operations. Hungary commends the efforts made by the Secretary General to achieve this purpose and welcomes the General Assembly's decision to establish the Department of Field Support. My country's track record in the field of peacekeeping demonstrates that we are willing to actively support the Security Council's decisions. Hungarian military and police personnel is present in many of the United Nations' peacekeeping missions, namely in Cyprus, Georgia, Kosovo, Lebanon and Western Sahara.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

My recent participation at the 51st General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency and my talks with Director General Mohamed ElBaradei reaffirmed my conviction that questions relating to nuclear safety and non-proliferation should remain high on our agenda.

Hungary shares the concerns of the international community over Iran's nuclear program and deplores Iran's failure to take the steps required by the IAEA Board of Governors and the Security Council resolutions necessary for re-establishing international confidence in the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. We welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolutions 1737 and 1747, and we fully comply with the obligations set forth therein. We hope that Iran will soon realize that a diplomatic, negotiated solution is possible and that compliance has many benefits.

Hungary continues to support the process aimed at achieving the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner, and welcomes the first promising results of the Six-Party Talks. The developments related to the North Korean nuclear issue have underscored the importance of the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

Hungary supports all multilateral, regional and bilateral efforts that contribute in an effective manner to our common goal of disarmament and of curbing the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Such efforts must also aim at upholding and strengthening the key international treaties and export control regimes. In this context one of the most important challenges is assuring compliance with the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. Moreover, Hungary welcomes the entry into force of the International Convention on the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism which we ratified back in April.

In the field of counter-terrorism, the full and earliest implementation of the UN Counter-Terrorism Strategy is an urgent issue. Here the main responsibility lies with the Member States who should all actively participate in the upcoming review of the implementation as well. The conclusion of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism remains another high priority for Hungary.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

15 years after the Rio Summit it is evident that our efforts carried out at the present pace will not be sufficient to halt the emerging global hazards, in particular that of the climate change. The European Union has a clear position and it has proposed to speed up the elaboration of a new global compact. As a member of the EU Hungary fully agrees with the urgency of the matter and hopes that the ongoing deliberations on the future of the Climate Change Convention and the Kyoto Protocol will lead to concrete results within the upcoming two years. I am taking the opportunity to welcome the efforts made by Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon for raising awareness in the international community regarding climate change.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

On behalf of my country I would like to reiterate Hungary's commitment to upholding the rule of international law, to giving priority to effective multilateralism, to spreading the culture of co-operation and peaceful settlement of international disputes, and to making every effort to preserve a sustainable environment for the future generations.

In conclusion, Mr. President, Hungary is strongly committed to work with you during the Sixty-second Session of the General Assembly in attaining the objectives set out in the Outcome Document of the 2005 Summit.

Thank you, Mr. President.