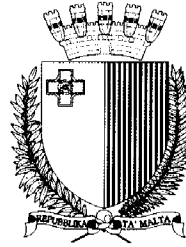


# MALTA



**STATEMENT BY**

**THE HON. DR. LAWRENCE GONZI  
PRIME MINISTER**

**GENERAL DEBATE**

**SIXTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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**Mr President,  
Secretary-General,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Mr President,**

**I would like first to extend my congratulations to you on your election to the Presidency of this Sixty-Second Session of the General Assembly. I am convinced that you will guide the General Assembly through its important deliberations and challenges. I can assure you of my full support and that of the Maltese Delegation.**

**I also take this opportunity to express the appreciation of the Maltese Delegation to the outgoing President of the Sixty-First Session, Her Excellency Shaikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa for her untiring work in facilitating a constructive dialogue among all the United Nations' Member States.**

**Mr President,**

**Once again, the United Nations General Assembly is meeting to consider and debate international issues that impact on the heart and soul of the world populations. We are concerned with the life and survival of those that do not have a voice to cry out against the injustices, underdevelopment, human rights violations, gender discrimination, poverty, child labour and environmental degradation.**

**Malta lauds the efforts of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon who, since taking up his Office, has validly been making a solid contribution towards a more secure world, which is "Our Shared Responsibility".**

**Mr President,**

**The challenge of global climate change, particularly of global warming, induces me to make a few remarks about this environmental threat and its serious economic and social impacts which will impede progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Almost 20 years ago, in 1988, Malta raised awareness about the grave repercussions of climate change through an initiative which led the General Assembly to declare that "Climate Change is the Common Concern of Mankind", and eventually to the adoption of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol.**

**I note with satisfaction the remarkable participation in last Monday's High-Level Event. The Secretary-General was unequivocal in outlining the challenge the World Community is facing. And I quote:**

**"Much has happened since those early days. But the fundamental challenge remains unchanged, and has become even more pressing. Indeed, I am convinced that climate change, and what we do about it, will define us, our era, and ultimately the global legacy we leave for future generations."**

**The disastrous effects on the local population which weather extremes are having as a result of global warming, such as Hurricane Dean which devastated the economies and infrastructures of the Island States of Dominica, St. Lucia, Jamaica, Martinique, Guadalupe, and other small Island States in the Pacific and the Caribbean, require the United Nations to strengthen its leadership in dealing with natural disasters.**

**Malta believes that the issue of climate change and its repercussions must be addressed in a more cohesive and concerted manner among all the international institutions and organizations. It is imperative that all actors involved in climate risk reduction take a unified stand on a strategy and action to strengthen the resilience of affected countries in building their ability to face and adapt to the adverse impact of climate change.**

**Malta also believes that the United Nations should establish a mechanism, through the General Assembly, which will report on the activities in the field of climate change throughout the past 20 years and propose elements of a possible future global strategy which avoids the current fragmented approach and takes special account of the needs of small Island States.**

**We owe it to present and future generations.**

**Malta looks forward to decisions at the Bali Summit next December that will orient and accelerate action within the United Nations framework to obtain agreement on a comprehensive, effective, fair and urgent global strategy to limit climate change and adapt to its impacts.**

**Mr President,**

**In a few weeks time, Malta together with the international community will be celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the initiative launched by Malta on the Law of the Sea, which, fifteen years later, saw the adoption of the United Nations' Convention, declaring the Seabed and its subsoil as the Common Heritage of Mankind.**

**Forty years after the launch of the Maltese initiative and after 25 years from the adoption of the 1982 Law of the Sea Treaty, we can safely state that this concept could appropriately also be attributed to the global environment, with the knowledge that this priceless possession is owned by all human beings of this planet. The environment is our common area, our common heritage and as such it is our global concern. As United Nations Member States, we must work together to ensure that this precious 'possession' is protected and enhanced.**

Mr President,

The maintenance of a special focus on furthering dialogue, peace, stability and prosperity in the Mediterranean and the Middle East is one of the primary objectives of Malta's foreign policy. Together with other European Union Member States as well as with its Mediterranean neighbours, Malta will continue to join in the calls for creating the necessary conditions for strengthening peace and co-operation in the region.

Malta's participation in the Euro-Mediterranean Barcelona Partnership, the Five plus Five, the Mediterranean Forum, the Euro-Med Parliamentary Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly for the Mediterranean complement Malta's longstanding vocation and commitment to, and understanding of, the Mediterranean region. Malta is proud to host the Headquarters of the newly-established Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean which will meet for the first time in my country this November, launching a new dimension of discussions on Mediterranean Affairs.

Close to Mediterranean Affairs, is the Middle East, with the Palestinian question at its core. Malta intends to continue, as it has done for many decades now, to support efforts to bring lasting peace in the Middle East. We are preoccupied about the economic and social repercussions on the living conditions of the Palestinian people. We remain concerned about the security of the state of Israel and of the Israeli people. We are troubled by the continuing violence between Israeli and Palestinians, as well as among Palestinians, violence that carries on claiming innocent lives on both sides. Malta will continue to work with the United Nations and the concerned parties for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian question. Malta supports the decision of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to meet regularly in their quest for a durable and long lasting solution. We also welcome the appointment of former British Prime Minister Tony Blair as the Special Representative of the Quartet and the initiative of the United States President George Bush to convene a major meeting on the issue in November 2007.

Mr President,

A centre-piece of our Organization is the protection of human rights worldwide. The Human Rights Council's first year of existence has witnessed the successful conclusion of its institution-building process. Malta augurs that the Universal Periodic Review becomes an effective and a proactive mechanism that not only provides an appraisal of United Nations Members' human rights records but also encourages further achievements.

Malta welcomes the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People by the General Assembly .

Linked to the promotion and protection of human rights is the right to life. It is Malta's belief that the abolition of the death penalty would enhance respect for the protection of the right to life.

Malta also commends and welcomes the Secretary-General's decision to appoint a Special Adviser for Responsibility to Protect on issues of genocide with an expanded mandate to cover cases of mass atrocities.

This year is the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Rome Statute which established the International Criminal Court. Malta reiterates its full support and commitment. Malta intends to work with the United Nations and the States Party to the Rome Statute, to ensure that the International Criminal Court strengthens its tools in the administration of justice, reconciliation and in the promotion of the rule of law and democracy.

Mr President,

Two weeks ago the international community joined the people of the City of New York to commemorate the sixth anniversary of the terrorist act on the World Trade Centre. While grieving with those who have lost their loved ones and with all the people of the United States, we reaffirm our commitment with United Nations Member States in the fight against terrorism. The completion of negotiations on the United Nations Comprehensive Convention against International Terrorism would complement and strengthen the United Nations Global Strategy on Counter-Terrorism and the United Nations Secretary-General's Implementation Task Force in addressing the threat of terrorism to global peace and security.

Mr President,

The plight of internally displaced persons and those that are seeking a better life elsewhere has continued to be one of the priority issues of the international community. Indeed, Malta has for some time been witnessing this tragic human migration caused primarily by internal conflicts, poverty and underdevelopment, resulting in a large influx of asylum seekers arriving irregularly on our small island state which, at 1,200 persons per square kilometer, has one of the highest densities of population in the world.

I would like to reiterate the calls made by Malta in this same Assembly last year for a concerted response from the international community as well as the United Nations, its institutions and organizations, particularly the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in addressing appropriately and adequately this problem. This response should be done particularly by combating the criminal organizations that are financially benefiting from illegal immigration while putting at risk the lives of these same immigrants and by providing particular assistance to those countries which, like Malta, carry a disproportionate burden in addressing this phenomenon.

Malta hopes that the High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development held last year and the follow-up meetings would continue to find support in establishing a comprehensive institutional and holistic response to international migration based on solidarity, respect for human dignity and responsibility-sharing.

**Mr President,**

**In a month's time the United Nations will be hosting the High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development with a view to review the six areas of the Monterrey Consensus. The detailed report of the Secretary-General recommends a series of policies for action by United Nations Member States and other stakeholders in advancing and consolidating economic growth, sustainable development, and social progress. As rightly pointed out by the Secretary-General, *"The Monterrey Consensus embodies a major commitment to keeping fully engaged at all levels... to continue build bridges among development, finance and trade organizations and initiatives."* In this context, the role of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are crucial. In addition, the conclusion of negotiations on the Doha Development Agenda would significantly contribute to the sustainable development of developing countries.**

**Mr President,**

**In order to ensure that the United Nations is better equipped to accomplish its mission and its mandates given to it by its principal Organs, the on-going process of reform has to be accelerated. The World Summit in 2005 agreed on a number of reforms, especially on the need to restructure the main United Nations bodies, including the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. Progress has been made but more progress has still to be achieved. Malta is an advocate of a stronger United Nations which is representative of the whole membership, transparent in its role and actions, and accountable, efficient and effective in its management.**

**It is also in this context that Malta strongly supports efforts to strengthen the system-wide coherence of the United Nations' operational development activities. The reform of the United Nations and the proposed establishment of the *'One United Nations'* country approach are in Malta's view, two important pillars on which our Organization can appropriately address the new and growing challenges it is facing. Member States must give the United Nations a new face, a stronger meaning and an innovative way of thinking, implementing, and acting.**

**The United Nations, our Organization, must be given the ability to respond, the capacity to effectively co-ordinate and deliver, and the means to truly reflect the aspirations of its whole Membership.**