



# ESTONIA

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ADDRESS BY  
H.E. MR. ARNOLD RÜÜTEL

PRESIDENT  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA

AT THE  
HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING

60<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS

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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Chair,  
Excellencies,

We are convening at the time when sixty years have passed since the founding of the United Nations Organisation. During this period the UN has achieved a great deal in securing peace and stability as well *as* in promoting development all over the world. However, the problems of the modern world are setting new challenges for the international community and the UN.

Five years ago, world leaders convened at the Millennium Summit to agree on the main goals for development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Today we are here to review the implementation of these goals, to set outlines for the future and to take decisive steps for making the UN as an organisation more efficient.

Estonia welcomes the Summit Declaration, which issues guidelines for the future. I believe that our discussion is a basis for the necessary reforms of the UN system, and for the accomplishment of the Millennium Development Goals.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The most significant issue of our meeting is, probably, the cooperation aimed at reducing the gaps between the different stages of development of the various nations of the world. We consider it extremely important to speed up the process for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. To this end we have to deepen global partnership and cooperation even further, to increase official development assistance for ensuring development and to be more efficient in using this assistance.

We are convinced, that such cooperation is efficient only if target countries feel that they own the results of this cooperation. We find that the primary responsibility for development lies with each country itself. The strengthening of national governance, the combating of corruption and the regulating of the economic environment are significant prerequisites for enhancing the impact and efficiency of development assistance. For assistance to bear results it must be based on local needs and sufficiently ambitious national development strategies developed in the target country.

Estonia, together with other European Union Member States, is consistently active in pursuing the increasing of resources devoted to development cooperation. Estonia is of the opinion that many development issues and humanitarian crises can be - also most efficiently - solved by means of multilateral organisations combining the resources and knowledge of individual nations. Therefore, we consider the supporting of the activities of the UN *as well as* other international development and humanitarian aid organisations to be extremely important, and we are also planning to increase our support in the future.

We are convinced that a factor in reducing development differences between the nations of the world is the broader implementation of the principles of free trade and the reduction of trade barriers. Estonia has been in favour of reducing trade barriers in the world, and in accordance with the EU's general policies also applies favourable unilateral customs duties for goods from less developed countries.

Peace and stability in the world are preconditions for development. UN peacekeeping, to which Estonia has consistently contributed over the years, has a significant role to fulfil in ensuring peace in the world. It is also important to improve UN cooperation with regional organisations. Estonia contributes to peace enforcement primarily as an EU and NATO member, supporting the strengthening of the cooperative relations of these organisations with the United Nations in the given sphere.

The UN has a significant role in the peaceful resolution and prevention of conflicts. Countries recovering from a conflict need more international attention and assistance than ever before, in order to ensure their development and to prevent conflicts from breaking out again. Therefore, Estonia is in favour of the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission which is one of the concrete outcomes of this Summit and hopes to see products of the work of this Commission.

As recent terrorist attacks in the world have confirmed, terrorism continues to be a serious threat to international peace and security. Estonia is of the strong view that terrorism has no justifications. We are convinced that it is possible to combat terrorism efficiently only through close transnational cooperation in compliance with international legal standards, therefore we deem it crucial to adopt swiftly the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

I am pleased to inform you that I have just signed, on Estonia's behalf, the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which is a significant step forward in the further development of the legal framework of antiterrorist cooperation.

We are convinced that development and security goals cannot be achieved without ensuring the protection of human rights. The UN mechanism for protecting human rights must be able to fulfil this responsibility more efficiently. Also, it is equally important that all UN activities for building peace and supporting development be closely tied in with the attainment of human rights objectives.

Therefore, Estonia considers the strengthening of the role of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, decision on the financing of her Office as well as closer cooperation of the High Commissioner with other components of the UN system to be a significant part of the UN reform. It is significant that we reached an agreement on the principle of the responsibility to protect. The primary responsibility for the protection of their civilian populations lies with nations themselves. However, on the international level as well it is essential to do everything possible to prevent genocide and crimes against humanity. It is important that the perpetrators of these crimes shall not be left unpunished; we reiterate our support to the International Criminal Court in this regard.

Estonia remains committed to making its contribution by sharing its experiences with the establishment of democratic institutions and the engagement of the civil society in order to assist countries in which these processes are just in their early phases. We also consider the setting up of a Democracy Fund to be essential, so as to support nations in their democratic development.

The protection of the rights of women and children deserves special attention. After participating in the celebration of the anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women during the last week of August, I remain convinced that the achievement of the goals set ten years ago in Beijing is still a challenge in need of decisive action. Equally important is the protection of the rights of indigenous people. We sincerely hope that the drafting process of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples will be completed in the near future.

The efficient performance of the United Nations is crucial for peace, stability and development in the whole world. A changed world in which new threats and challenges have cropped up in the last decades has made it imperative that the UN be strengthened and improved. This assumes that readjustments be made in the functioning of the UN in order to better respond to these new challenges. This will also ensure the greater reliability and authority of the UN.

Estonia is of the opinion that an institutional renewal is necessary for developing the UN into an increasingly efficient multilateral institution. To accomplish this goal, the UN bodies should be reformed and the coherence of the UN system increased. Estonia considers the *UN's* capability to ensure the protection of human rights to be one of the most significant premises of the credibility of the United Nations, and supports the speedy creation of a permanent Human Rights Council. We find that the Council should have the necessary status and competence to efficiently contribute to the protection of human rights.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe that it is possible to fulfil the tasks before us. And that, in the course of the current session of the General Assembly, we will manage to take an essential step in achieving the goals set for the UN, as well as in carrying out necessary reforms in the Organisation. I consider it essential that the relevant decisions be adopted. Our summit will be successful, however, only if these decisions are implemented within the agreed upon timeframe.

Allow me to conclude by reassuring you that Estonia is ready to contribute to the achievement of common goals, and is prepared to continue cooperating with the other member nations.

Thank you for your attention!