



STATEMENT BY

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
H.E. MR. JAN ELIASSON**

AT THE

**OPENING OF THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE SIXTIETH SESSION OF THE UNITED
NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS
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**Mr Secretary-General, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The 2005 World Summit is now concluded. We have thoroughly reviewed progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and the reform process facing the United Nations. Our political leaders, who have come in such great numbers to New York, have instilled new energy into our efforts to meet these common development goals and to prepare the United Nations to meet the weighty demands placed on multilateral co-operation in the 21st Century.

Over the last three days, our leaders brought into the General Assembly their peoples' expectations of the United Nations but also their pain and anger from unmet needs and unfulfilled aspirations. In stark terms, they brought the realities of the problems of the world into this historic Hall. They told us unequivocally that progress towards the goals we agreed at the Millennium Summit, and towards the commitments we made at Monterrey, has been insufficient. The cost is being counted in the innumerable lives lost or made intolerable as a result of preventable poverty, and in the failure to unleash the massive potential of so many of our men, women and children around the world.

But the Summit also registered strong agreement on the way forward – for example, on the need for developing countries to be fully in the lead, through bold national strategies for achieving the MDGs by 2015. We heard a strong welcome for recent progress on aid and debt, though many of you expect further action on debt, more quickly and in more countries. And on trade, I trust the world will have heard the overwhelming message of so many of our leaders that failure to make real and substantial progress in Hong Kong must not be an option.

On this, and on all the actions needed to achieve the MDGs, this Organisation must continue to scrutinise progress and demand greater effort wherever it is needed.

What else did we hear from our leaders? Most importantly, an unfailing commitment to international co-operation and to the UN and the purposes and principles enshrined in its Charter. It was particularly gratifying to note the central role our leaders expect a revitalized and relevant General Assembly to play.

The basis for our reform agenda is the 2005 World Summit Outcome document, the result of much thought, labour and painstaking scrutiny. I want to join those speakers who have paid

tribute to the Secretary-General and my predecessor Jean Ping for all their tireless efforts. I also want to pay tribute to all of you - the final document is very much your achievement.

I believe the Outcome document is a strong and substantial foundation for our work on development, security and human rights as well as the organisation of the UN. Many see it as a solid basis for the most ambitious reform agenda in the history of the UN. Others argue it will make little difference in the outside world. Others still are frustrated that issues important to them are missing or insufficiently clear – be they on development, human rights, disarmament and non-proliferation or Security Council reform.

Who is right? The answer, I believe, is up to us. The document should, as one speaker put it, be a beachhead of common ground from which we launch ourselves forward with urgency and common purpose. The world will be watching to see if we do so.

Follow-up and implementation of the Summit outcome has been agreed as the major theme of this General Debate, starting today. I very much hope that Member States will use this opportunity to bring out their observations and ideas about both the substance of

our issues – the sombre realities of today’s world – and the process and work ahead.

Your views on the areas where we are expected to finish the work outlined in the Summit Outcome document will be of particular interest: primarily, the Peace Building Commission, the Human Rights Council, terrorism, and Security Council and management reform. As I indicated at the opening of the 60th session, once we have absorbed all the contributions from the General Debate, I plan to present an outline of work for the year ahead related to Summit follow-up. At that point, I also intend to share with you some thoughts on the revitalization of the General Assembly.

Let us now face these tasks energized by the realities brought into our deliberations by our leaders, never forgetting that we are here to serve the peoples of the world, a world where there is much suffering, insecurity and oppression. I would also hope that our leaders will continue to place the UN high on their agendas and in different formats and fora continue to press for fulfilment of the MDGs and implementation of the Summit Outcome.

Let us in our work here at the UN be as practical and concrete as possible and organise ourselves so that we can deliver results. This

requires a spirit of compromise, civility and discipline. And I would want us to conduct our work with transparency, efficiency and fairness. I look forward to our co-operation and count on your support in this our common and vital endeavour.