

United Nations Nations Unies

THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

LE PRÉSIDENT DE L'ASSEMBLÉE GÉNÉRALE

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Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly, at the Opening of the General Debate of the 61st Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Secretary General,
Heads of State and Government,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, the General Assembly starts its annual General Debate. During the next two weeks world leaders will address the most pressing issues and challenges facing their respective nations and peoples.

We face a global change that in its speed, scope and scale is unprecedented. We are all increasingly exposed to sharp social and economic inequalities that take on new dimensions.

We live in a world afflicted by violent armed conflicts, hunger and disease; a world threatened by international terrorism, organized crime and the proliferation of all types of weapons; a world brought closer together by the forces of globalization, yet divided by ethnic strife, and a growing technological gap; a world where the enjoyment of human rights is still an unrealized dream for millions of people. We, the international community, have a moral duty to reach collective solutions to resolve these mutual concerns.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome you all, to this historic Hall. Your participation in the Sixty-first Session is an expression of your dedication and commitment to the United Nations and the spirit of multilateralism.

Last year at the 2005 World Summit you reached a consensus on a wide range of far-reaching measures to enhance the collective response of the international community to the challenges of today's world.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate my predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson. Under his leadership, this Assembly was able to fulfill many of the commitments you agreed in 2005.

Allow me to also pay special tribute to Secretary General Kofi Annan for his farsighted vision, leadership and dedication to the principles and values of the United Nations.

Now the challenge before us is to ensure that our decisions make a more lasting difference to the lives of millions of people around the world. In particular, our efforts must focus on the poorest and most vulnerable. In the face of increased poverty especially in developing countries, we must all rally to ensure the effective implementation of our global development agenda, in particular the Millennium Development Goals. In his recent report on the work of this Organization, the Secretary General noted and I quote, "If history judges 2005 for its promises, then 2006 must be judged on implementation".

Hence, we shall continue to make development the "central goal" of the overarching framework of the United Nations, with sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental aspects the key elements of this framework. This is our common responsibility, upon which, rests the credibility of the United Nations.

As you are aware, the Assembly has accepted to focus its general debate on the theme - "Implementing a Global Partnership for Development". We have to examine the practical measures and strategies which can enable us to make consistent progress, and build on previous international and national efforts. This will be critical in our quest to achieve the progress we all seek in the Sixty-first Session and beyond.

Just a few days ago we held the High-level Dialogue on 'Migration and Development' and the High-level Meeting on the 'Midterm Comprehensive Global Review of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010'. Both meetings revealed the potential and opportunities that globalization presents as a force for improving the lives of millions of people.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Making our world a more secure place requires the United Nations to take a more proactive role when addressing the many armed conflicts within and amongst states. We need to make further progress in the area of conflict prevention. It is imperative that we have a high level debate that can deliver an actionable outcome on this issue.

In the same vein, we need to address specific potential causes of tension in our world, notably in the field of disarmament and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

With the adoption of the United Nations Comprehensive Global Counter-terrorism Strategy, we have made a historic step forward. We now need to work towards its effective implementation. Meanwhile, we should redouble our efforts towards reaching consensus on the most needed and long-overdue Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On institutional reform, we need to complete the outstanding commitments from the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, such as, the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, Security Council reform and strengthening the organization and streamlining its management.

I also look forward to reviewing the Secretary-General's recommendations, as well as the important contributions that Member States' will add to the debate on System-Wide Coherence, in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment.

In this process, the voices of civil society and the private sector if well channeled can constitute a valuable asset to our work.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is no perfect world and the United Nations is a reflection of our world. If we remain committed to multilateralism, the values and principles enshrined in the Charter will strengthen our resolve to overcome the challenges and threats ahead of us and bring about a safer and more prosperous world for all.

Thank you.