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Statement by  
H.E. Dr. N. Hassan Wirajuda  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Republic of Indonesia

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Mr. President,

We live in an age of unpredictable threats, against which there may be no airtight security measures.

Tragedy could strike in the form of a deadly epidemic. It could be the handiwork of terrorists like the 9-11 attacks against New York City in 2001 or the Bali bombings of 2002.

It could be a convulsion of nature like the tsunami that demolished the Indonesian province of Aceh and nearby Indian Ocean Rim areas, or the storm tide that drowned New Orleans and much of Louisiana recently.

On the tragedy of New Orleans, we extend our deepest condolences to the American people.

We Indonesians know too well the enormous suffering that a natural catastrophe can bring. In Aceh alone, the tsunami of 26 December 2004 killed outright some 130,000 individuals. It destroyed 220,000 homes and displaced 572,000 individuals. Some 100,000 persons are still missing.

The death toll could have been higher if it were not for the quick and vigorous response of the international community and the United Nations. For this the Indonesian people are deeply grateful.

The outpouring of sympathy and solidarity as well as humanitarian assistance from all over the world deeply touched us.

Eleven days after the tragedy, we hosted in Jakarta the ASEAN Special Summit on aftermath of earthquake and tsunami. In that Summit, world leaders and the UN Secretary-General, as well as representatives of multilateral institutions, worked out a system of coordination and division of labour in attending to the stricken countries. Pledges were made for urgently needed assistance. A decision was reached to develop a multi-nodal early warning system covering the Indian Ocean rim countries. Within ASEAN, an agreement to establish stand-by arrangements to mitigate natural disasters was concluded last July.

The reconstruction and rehabilitation of Aceh had an early start as the emergency relief phase was completed ahead of schedule. A master plan for reconstruction and rehabilitation was then devised. An Agency for the

Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of Aceh was established and given broad powers. Through the World Bank's multi-donor trust fund and bilateral mechanisms with donors, we have instituted a strict system that guaranteed transparency and accountability in the disbursement of funds.

Rehabilitation and development, however, cannot run smooth without peace. And for many years there had been no peace. Before the tsunami, Aceh saw three decades of armed conflict between government forces and a separatist movement caused by perceived economic injustices. Many Acehnese felt they were not being given a fair deal by the central government.

As the conflict raged and took a heavy toll on human life, a vicious cycle was at work: violence impoverished the people, and in their poverty many resorted to violence.

In the spirit of reform and in a democratic environment, efforts to address the problem of Aceh through dialogue and reconciliation were initiated in 2000. These efforts led to the signing of a final agreement in Helsinki last month.

That was the "silver lining" to the tragedy of 26 December: it opened the eyes of both sides to the hopelessness of the situation without peace.

It helps that there is international support for the peace process. On our invitation, the European Union and ASEAN contributing countries have provided monitors for the implementation of the peace agreement. In a way, it has created a precedent for the collaboration of two regional organizations in peace-building.

The decommissioning and destruction of rebel weapons are working according to the peace agreement. The former rebels are back in the fold of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia and are fighting on the same side as the government—in the struggle against poverty.

Peace and development in Aceh are the fruits of reform and democratization, which are pervading all of Indonesia. Starting this year, local officials—governors, regents and mayors—are directly elected by the people. Where the former rebel leaders once sought power through the bullet, they can now seek their legitimate aspirations through the ballot.

Since 1998, we have enhanced our political institutions through constitutional amendments. We have overhauled our legal system, and we are adopting high standards of good governance in the corporate and public sector. We have pursued a vigorous campaign against corruption.

We are now pursuing an economic strategy that is pro-growth and pro-poor. We are strengthening the export sector, promoting investments to create jobs, and speeding up rural economic development. In a few weeks, we will put in place a social safety net that will cushion the impact of high oil prices on the poor. We are on target with our Millennium Development Goals on poverty reduction.

Wherever there is social unrest anywhere in Indonesia, we bring justice and foster dialogue and reconciliation—as we did in Aceh.

In the same spirit of reconciliation, Indonesia and neighbouring Timor-Leste have reached out to each other so that both nations may together close a painful chapter in our shared history.

Together we have established a Commission of Truth and Friendship tasked to bring about exposure of the truth and acknowledgement of responsibility for the human rights violations committed prior to and immediately after the popular consultations in Timor Leste in 1999. The Commission started working last August.

The fledgling democracies of the two countries stand a better chance of succeeding if they work together in the spirit of reconciliation, friendship and cooperation—complementing prosecutorial justice that has been carried out in Indonesia and Timor Leste.

Mr. President,

With our other closest neighbours in Southeast Asia, we are striving hard to become an ASEAN Community that is at peace with itself and all others, a prosperous ASEAN living in harmony in a community of caring societies that we have long envisioned.

We hope to see ASEAN play a pivotal role in the evolution of a new equilibrium in the Asia-Pacific region that will consolidate peaceful engagement of the regional powers with one another. Today ASEAN already

serves as the driving force toward the development of an East Asian economic community.

We Indonesians love to build bridges. Last April we served as host to the representatives of 106 Asian and African countries, many of them heads of state or government for the Asian-African Summit of 2005.

During that historic summit, we put the cornerstone to a bridge of cooperation across the Indian Ocean—the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership—on behalf of the 4.6 billion people of the two continents.

Through that partnership, both continents will intensify their political solidarity, economic cooperation and socio-cultural relations, including technical cooperation and human resources development.

The establishment of that Partnership was the most meaningful way we could observe the golden jubilee of the Asian-African Conference of 1955 in Bandung—which heralded the emergence of many new sovereign nations from the shadow of colonialism.

In those formative years of ours, we sought to reform international relations through the United Nations. Today we feel called upon to seek the reform of the United Nations itself.

For we are faced with the formidable challenges of development, security and human rights—three challenges that are interlinked, interdependent and cannot be addressed separately.

We therefore need a United Nations that has become more effective and efficient, more democratic and accountable to its members—and with a balanced focus on these three challenges.

We need a reformed UN Security Council that has become more democratically representative. As the Asia-Pacific region is home to more than half of the human race and the cradle of ancient civilizations and religions, we in Indonesia feel that it should have more seats on the Council. We must do away with the right to veto.

We cannot afford to leave out global disarmament and non-proliferation from our agenda. We are not out of danger of nuclear annihilation. At the

same time, developing countries must be allowed peaceful use of nuclear energy to hasten their development.

We need a Peace-building Commission to help conflicted countries make the transition from war to durable peace, This Commission must work in coordination with the Security Council and the ECOSOC—under mandate of the General Assembly.

On the fight against terrorism, we hope a comprehensive convention can be concluded soon. International cooperation to address this problem should include efforts to deal with its root causes.

We also hold that no human right may be sacrificed and no international law may be violated in the fight against terrorism.

We in Indonesia believe that interfaith dialogue and cooperation to empower the moderates can significantly reduce violent radicalism. That is why we have sponsored and hosted Asia-Pacific and Asia-Europe dialogues on cooperation among the faiths.

We urge that the Economic and Social Council be empowered so that it can effectively review and coordinate international cooperation in development.

The projected Human Rights Council must uphold human rights as universal, indivisible and interdependent. It should be free from the politicization and double standards and instead it should promote dialogue as well as concrete cooperation. It should be a subsidiary body to the General Assembly.

Finally, no effort at UN reform is complete unless it affirms and brings into reality the central role of the General Assembly as the main deliberative body of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

We may not have a realistic hope that these reforms will be realized this week or in the months to come. We the UN members are not sufficiently in concert to make an early breakthrough. But we who desire reform must keep faith and persevere.

For three decades, armed conflict smouldered in Aceh, until it became clear to both sides that the only way out of a tragic situation was the way of peace.

For more than three decades, Indonesian reformists struggled against the crushing weight of an authoritarian regime—until it became clear that our only way out of the Asian crisis was through democratic reform.

We do not know when the moment of truth will come for the United Nations. We hope that it will come not in the wake of a crisis but in the dawning of a more enlightened time.

Above all, we must never lose hope in its capacity to reform, in its perfectibility. We must keep on working even harder than we ever did.

Thus, when the moment of truth comes, we will be ready to seize it.

Thank you.