



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 60TH SESSION
GENERAL DEBATE

ADDRESS

BY

H.E. MRS. RITA KIEBER-BECK
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President

One week ago, the World Summit sent a message of hope for peace, development and human rights for all, and took a number of steps towards institutional reform at the United Nations. The Summit meeting has achieved much. It has also left a lot undone and not met the expectations in several areas. We agree with your assessment, Mr. President: Only the work we do over the next few months will allow us a final assessment of the value of the outcome document. The Summit did certainly not constitute the comprehensive breakthrough we had hoped for. We therefore look forward to working under your guidance on follow-up and implementation and welcome the fact that you have started this process immediately. Institutional change must be at the center of our attention over the next few months – both through the creation of new bodies and the adaptation of existing ones. We will give particular attention to the Human Rights Council, the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Secretariat.

Mr. President

We shared the general relief at the last-minute agreement on the outcome document, since a lack of agreement would have been disastrous. We had *created* expectations that were much higher than what we could possibly achieve, at a time when the United Nations seemed more in need of reform than ever. The reputation and worldwide image of the United Nations is clearly not what it used to be: The Oil-for-Food scandal, cases of sexual exploitation by UN peacekeepers, inaction in the face of mass crimes and humanitarian crises have overshadowed the many success stories which this organization has to tell.

It was important to move on from the Oil-for-Food scandal. Moving on, however, must not mean that we ignore, yet again, the fact that the massive abuse and mismanagement revealed in the Volcker reports are but one expression of what is a systemic problem. Too much went wrong in the Oil-for-Food Programme, and everybody involved failed their responsibilities one way or the other, including the Security Council. No bureaucracy can be changed overnight, as we all know from our national experiences. But it is clear that only a more accountable Secretariat that works without undue pressure from us, the Member States, can restore the confidence of the peoples it is meant to serve.

Mr. President

Accountability must also be a key principle for the intergovernmental bodies and thus guide us in our work on the relevant reforms. We are concerned at the increasingly skewed institutional balance within the organization. The Security Council has clearly taken on a role that goes far beyond the central place it was rightfully given under the Charter. Indeed, its activities are increasingly venturing into the domains reserved for the General Assembly in particular. This entails a twofold risk: On the one hand, many countries increasingly feel a lack of ownership of the organization – while collective ownership based on the principle of sovereign equality is one of the cornerstones of the organization. On the other hand, the Security Council is at risk of being paralyzed by the sheer amount of issues on its agenda. The answer to this challenge is clear: We need a stronger General Assembly that asserts its central role and carries out its functions effectively. In parallel, the Security Council must become more transparent and accountable, in order to truly carry out its functions on behalf of the entire membership.

Mr. President

The lack of a solution to the complex issue of Security Council reform is a disappointment to many. Enlargement and a more representative Council are clearly a necessity, and we will continue to contribute our part to achieve an early solution with the strongest possible political support. In addition, and not less importantly, we must also improve the working methods of the Security Council, as stated in the World Summit Outcome. Transparency, accountability and stronger involvement of States not members of the Council are of decisive importance to enable the Council to truly act on behalf of the membership, as mandated by the Charter. We will work hard for early and concrete results since effective changes in the daily workings of the Council would benefit the entire membership.

Mr. President

We routinely repeat our year-long calls for a stronger General Assembly. Small steps are taken every year, and all of them are important. It appears to us, however, that the most essential efforts to revitalize the General Assembly do not consist of measures contained in General Assembly resolutions on this topic. Much rather, we Member States must ensure that the

Assembly is seized with truly relevant topics and that these are treated efficiently and effectively. We may deplore the migration of topics to the Security Council that we think should rather be dealt with by the General Assembly. This trend, however, will continue unabated unless the Assembly proves to be a central decision-making body that takes its responsibilities seriously. The General Assembly is what we as Member States want it to be. A genuine and sustained effort is therefore required from all of us.

Mr. President

We continue to fully support the early establishment of a Human Rights Council, to replace the Commission on Human Rights. Like others, we were disappointed at the meager substance on this topic that found its way into the outcome document. The organization needs a standing body that effectively promotes human rights worldwide, swiftly responds to gross and systematic violations of human rights and reflects the importance of human rights for this organization. Close cooperation with a strengthened Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights will be essential. The Council must not duplicate the work carried out by other bodies, in particular the General Assembly. It must therefore not be a remake of the Commission on Human Rights with a new label. We look forward to working with you towards an early solution which adds concrete value for the protection and promotion of human rights.

Mr. President

We consider the recognition of the *responsibility to protect* as one of the most positive elements in the outcome document. The main obligation for its implementation naturally falls on the Security Council. The Council has to ensure that disgraceful inaction such as in the case of the genocide *in* Rwanda cannot occur ever again. When the lives of innocent civilians are at stake, such a responsibility must not be compromised by political considerations. Collective action to prevent and respond to genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes must therefore not be made impossible by a veto or threat of veto by one of the Permanent Members of the Council. We hope that the Council will stand the test presented to it by the World Summit. The membership as a whole clearly has a shared obligation in this respect.

Mr. President

Our achievement in the World Summit Outcome on the responsibility to protect stands in stark contrast to our silence on the importance of fighting impunity for the worst crimes of international concern. More progress has been made in this area in the past few years than in almost any other area of international relations: Transitional justice is now an inevitable element of any serious effort to help societies in post-conflict situations. There is now a close and well-established relationship between the International Criminal Court and the United Nations, in particular after the Security Council decision to mandate the Court with the investigation of crimes in Darfur. We trust that efforts to fight impunity will remain a high priority for the organization, recognizing the central role of the International Criminal Court in this respect.

Mr. President

While it may be premature to give a final judgment on the value of the outcome document, one thing can be said with certainty: This document is a reflection of what is agreeable five years after the Millennium Summit. It is remarkable how uneven progress has been in the various areas. Major advances such as the decision to fill an institutional void by creating a Peacebuilding Commission are accompanied by major failures such as the absence of any agreement in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. We have no choice but to build on the positive elements of the Summit Outcome and to find early solutions to the institutional questions in particular. Progress in these areas should help us to intensify our work and to eventually find agreement on unresolved questions in vital areas such as disarmament and non-proliferation. This way, we can make the Summit Outcome a turning point in the history of the United Nations.

Mr. President

Two years ago, the Secretary-General said that we had reached a fork in the road and was quoted many times in the course of the process leading up to the Summit. So where are we today? Looking back at what we have achieved, it seems that we have taken the advice of Yogi Berra, one of the great legends of the city of New York, who said: "When you come to a fork in the road, take it!"

I thank you.