



NORWAY

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**General Assembly
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General Debate**

Statement

by

H.E. Mr. Jan Petersen
Minister of Foreign Affairs

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Mr. President,

Sixty years ago the United Nations rose out of the ashes of the Second World War. The creation of our organisation was the fulfilment of people's hopes for a better and safer future. Norway was honoured to provide the United Nations with its first Secretary-General, Trygve Lie.

Last week we saw agreement on a Summit Outcome Document. The document falls short of our expectations. Still, it gives important direction on how to improve and strengthen the role of the UN in building peace and security, and promoting human rights and development.

In some areas, Member States made considerable progress. In others, better results should have been achieved. In particular, I had hoped for - and worked for - a substantial text on disarmament and non-proliferation. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction represents a fundamental threat. There is a growing risk of proliferation, and of catastrophic terrorism. At the same time we see a reluctance on the part of some to accept that all states must advance disarmament and non-proliferation. During the past week, I have repeatedly heard in the General Assembly that we are willing to solve common problems. Yet, it has not been possible to reach any consensus on how to address these truly global threats. I can assure you that Norway will take up the challenge laid out by the Secretary-General and continue to seek consensus and concrete results. We will do this together with Australia, Chile, Indonesia, Romania, South Africa and the United Kingdom, and all those countries that supported our efforts.

Further progress is also urgently needed to prevent the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Norway welcomes the Outcome Document's call for implementation of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms. We would, however, have liked to see a stronger commitment to controlling international transfers of such weapons through legally binding agreements.

The international community needs to co-operate in order to meet global challenges. We are faced with an array of new threats and challenges. I just spoke of the risk of proliferation. Terrorism is another. The spread of new and infectious diseases is also a frightening prospect. Multilateralism is the answer. We must face all these threats together and reach agreement on how to meet them. The global arena must be continually reformed and adapted to make sure that we have a UN at hand that is in the best possible shape. We cannot blame others if it doesn't function. As the Secretary-General said in his statement to the Summit: "Whatever our differences, in our interdependent world, we stand or fall together."

Our greatest responsibility is for the strong to protect the weak. Our greatest failure is when we, the members of the UN, are unable to prevent atrocities against innocent civilians. For the first time, Member States have endorsed the principle of responsibility to protect. This creates an important new basis for collective action in cases of genocide,

crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and war crimes. We now have the tools to prevent another Srebrenica and another Rwanda.

Greater consensus on collective action and early diplomatic response are needed to prevent violent conflicts. Addressing the needs of countries under stress is a demanding challenge for the UN. So is assisting countries suffering from conflict and in transition from war to peace. The peace process between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, which Norway is facilitating, has benefited from UN support. The UN's role in providing humanitarian and development assistance to all areas of Sri Lanka has been indispensable.

I therefore welcome the initiative to establish a Peacebuilding Commission to marshal resources, give advice and propose comprehensive strategies for peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery. The situation in Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and other conflict-afflicted regions clearly demonstrates the need for a Peacebuilding Commission. As long as the Security Council remains actively seized of a matter, the Peacebuilding Commission should provide advice to the Council. Norway will contribute USD 15 million to the Peacebuilding Fund.

The role and needs of women should be duly reflected in the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission. The Commission should contribute to the follow-up of the binding commitments in Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (2000).

While supporting the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, Norway puts great emphasis on the need to maintain and strengthen the activity of the Secretary-General to take initiatives through his good offices.

Mr. President,

As we convene here in New York, an estimated 10 million people are facing severe food shortages in southern Africa. According to the Secretary-General, the chronic emergency state in the region is caused by a combination of HIV/AIDS, food insecurity and weakened capacity for governance. During recent months, there has also been a severe drought in Niger and parts of the Sahel region.

The response capacity of the UN is in need of reform. This means improving the speed, equity and predictability of humanitarian response. An upgraded and expanded Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is an important step in the right direction. So is the improved co-ordination at field level, including the Human Co-ordinator system. The General Assembly must now take the necessary decisions for the new fund to become operational as early as possible. Norway has pledged USD 15 million to the fund, and we stand ready to assist in putting the necessary organisational framework in place.

The UN is making a significant contribution to development. The universal endorsement of the Millennium Development Goals and the renewed commitment to achieving them

by 2015 are key results of the Summit. So are the strengthened commitments on increased ODA and debt relief made in the preparations leading up to the Summit, particularly by the EU and the G-8. The world community must now make sure that promises are followed by payments, and that the focus on Africa remains strong. Norway will do its part by increasing its ODA contributions to Africa for 2006 by USD 150 million.

International trade is a prerequisite for economic growth and development. Norway is committed to the further development of a rule-based and fair multilateral trading system. The ongoing WTO negotiations are approaching a crucial crossroads in Hong Kong in December. We must redouble our efforts to achieve the fullest realisation of the Doha work programme in order to successfully complete the Doha development round in 2006. Particular attention must be paid to the needs and interests of developing countries.

No cause can justify acts of terror. The UN should have a central role in leading and co-ordinating the international fight against terrorism. A broad-based strategy is necessary to counter this threat, as recommended by the Secretary-General. The fight against terrorism must be based on the rule of law. The role of the UN is essential, as it can provide the legal instruments and frameworks we need. I encourage all States to sign, ratify and implement the 13 UN conventions related to terrorism. Norway strongly supports the efforts to conclude the UN comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

Terrorism must be fought by a broad range of means, including military and legal means. Other threats to peace and stability must also be addressed, such as poverty and unemployment, lack of social and political rights, absence of the rule of law, and lack of access to education. The UN has a vital role to play in all these areas. It has more experience on these issues than any other organisation, and possesses the most suitable tools to address them.

Defending human rights is a principal universal objective. When human rights defenders are silenced, violations of human rights go unnoticed, unexposed and unopposed. The cause of individuals and groups subject to human rights violations, should be put firmly on all countries' agenda. I call for your continued support for a resolution to that end.

It is vital that we assign human rights to their rightful place as a fundamental pillar of the United Nations. Our goal in the coming months must be to bridge the gap between the expectations for credible UN action in the field of human rights and the capacities of the organisation. We must take the following steps:

- We must create a new standing human rights body as soon as possible, preferably as a principal organ of the United Nations. It must focus on both implementation and capacitybuilding. It must also be able to deal swiftly with human rights violations worldwide in a credible and effective manner. The strengths and best practices of the Human Rights Commission must be retained, and its weaknesses be left behind.

- And we must strengthen the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights by respecting, in the Fifth Committee, the decision of the Summit to double the regular budget resources of the Office.

There is a need for stronger executive leadership and thorough administrative reform of the organisation. Corruption, mismanagement and sexual exploitation and abuse are examples of conduct that cannot be tolerated.

Mr. President,

We have decided to make the Office of Internal Oversight Services more independent. The capacity of the Office in respect of audit and investigations will be significantly strengthened. It is necessary to further strengthen the accountability of the Secretariat and improve management performance, as well as reinforce ethical conduct. The responsibility for many of the weaknesses in the UN system lies, however, with the Member States themselves.

We need a more relevant General Assembly as the chief policymaking body of the organisation. This will require strategic leadership on the part of the Member States. The Secretary-General, as the chief administrative officer, must be granted sufficient authority and flexibility to carry out his duties. In order to strengthen the organisation's capacity to ensure that mandates are fulfilled, we need to provide the necessary resources. In order to maintain an efficient organisation, we need to review existing mandates and revoke those that are no longer relevant.

The management reform process provides a golden opportunity to increase the recruitment of women to all levels of the UN. Good governance in a modern organisation requires contributions from women on an equal footing with men.

Some have called the results of the Summit just another step along the way. In my view, many important steps were taken. Now it is for this General Assembly to follow up. I promise that Norway will do its part. We will continue to work for reforms. The UN system must become more effective in securing global peace and security, in combating poverty and in promoting human rights. In the end, it is we, the Member States, who are responsible for making this a reality.

Thank you, Mr. President.