

SWEDEN



STATEMENT

by

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of the General Assembly of the United Nations

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

Mr President, your Excellencies,

A small boy on the run remains vividly in my mind today. A boy with eyes that have seen more horror than most of us in this hall. A boy that all of us have failed.

There are thousands of children like him in Darfur. I met him when I visited areas of fear, suffering, hunger and senseless violence.

We owe that boy in Darfur more. A better performance. A stronger connection between our declarations and our actions.

We have tools to prevent armed conflicts. We have made many commitments to end oppression, radically reduce poverty and protect our environment. We have cures for many of the diseases that continue to kill.

The challenge before us is to use instruments for peace, development and human rights, and to transform our commitments into real action.

Excellencies,

Co-operation across borders is not just a good idea - it is a must. And for the truly global challenges, the United Nations is indispensable. Our joint commitment to the Charter of the United Nations is an excellent starting point. But as new threats emerge and the world evolves, the UN must also adapt.

We need a multilateralism that is effective, with institutions that have teeth and a strong political will to make them work. We need a multilateralism that is based on common principles, not on the smallest common denominator of the day. We need a rule-based international order, applicable to all.

Over the years we have developed an impressive framework of such rules. However, the framework has weaknesses and compliance is often inadequate. Therefore, we need to fill the gaps, and empower us to collectively respond to the new challenges.

This is a crucial year for the United Nations. The Secretary General has with great courage and vision led the way. The outcome of the High-Level Summit sets the direction. This session of the General Assembly has been given the responsibility to follow up on important decisions. We must together achieve real results in a number of areas. Let me highlight some of the main challenges.

Challenge 1. To make progress on the Millennium Development Goals.

Millions of people still suffer from extreme poverty. Important progress has been made towards the goal of eradicating poverty, but we need to do better.

All developed countries should make timetables for reaching the target of 0.7 percent of gross national income for international development assistance by the year 2015. Sweden will reach its one-percent target next year. Equally important is that all countries live up to

the commitments on aid effectiveness, to our agreements from Monterey and to our promises to find new ways of financing development.

Better progress in preventing maternal and child mortality is vital for reaching many of the Millennium Development Goals. We must renew our commitment of universal access to reproductive health by 2015 and give more focus to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Market access for goods and services must be substantially improved for poor countries. Trade-distorting subsidies need to be phased out. Sweden will continue to work for reduced agricultural subsidies and press for speedy implementation of the development dimension of the Doha work programme.

While the developed world can and should play a bigger part to reach the millennium development goals the developing countries bear the critical responsibility for their own development. The importance of good governance, well-functioning democratic institutions and full respect for human rights and the rule of law for the sustainability of development efforts cannot be underestimated.

Challenge 2. To halt climate-change

Awareness of the connection between the way we live our lives, particularly in the industrialised world, and its effects on the long-term survival of our planet is today greater than ever. But action is still much too limited. It is deeply regrettable that no firm agreement on the way forward was reached at the Summit. All parties to the Kyoto Protocol and to the UN Climate Convention must continue to implement their commitments. There is also a need to urgently initiate a process aiming at controlling climate change beyond the year 2012.

Challenge 3. To combat terrorism together

Terrorism has taken the lives of thousands of innocent people. One of our most urgent priorities must be to stop and prevent terrorism. It remains a threat to all of us. We need to address this threat together, with a broad strategy, and with respect for human rights. The outcome of the Summit has given us a platform to build on. The United Nations should now take the lead in developing a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy based on the Secretary General's excellent work. We must also conclude a comprehensive convention on international terrorism, including a legal definition, during the 60th session of the General Assembly.

Challenge 4. To better promote human rights

Human rights are violated across the world, creating enormous suffering and affecting both security and development. Human rights must be mainstreamed in all UN work, as a core task of the organization. Sweden welcomes the decision to create a Human Rights Council. This Council will need a strong mandate to address any human rights situation, respond to urgent human rights violations and monitor compliance by all states with their human rights obligations. We must all join in efforts to establish an effective and legitimate Human Rights Council during the 60th session.

The summit made a strong commitment to our common responsibility to protect. Now we must act accordingly. The world has a responsibility to react in order to prevent genocide, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. And the Security Council must be ready to take its responsibility, when and if a state cannot give its citizens the necessary protection. However, it is not just a question of acknowledging the obligation to act. It is also a question of being prepared to actually do so.

Challenge 5. To implement the commitments on disarmament and non-proliferation

Weapons of Mass Destruction can kill all of us here, all at once, and they can wipe out villages, cities and whole populations in seconds. Still, we do not take the threat seriously enough. It should have been made clear, at the Summit, that disarmament commitments are to be implemented, and that non-proliferation undertakings are to be complied with. The countries in possession of Nuclear Weapons have a special responsibility to disarm. At the summit, there should have been decisions to strengthen verification. There should have been commitments to make the NPT and other arms conventions universal. Negotiation processes should have been given a boost by the Summit. Nothing of all this actually happened.

Sweden looks forward to the recommendations of the Commission on Weapons of Mass Destruction, chaired by Dr Hans Blix. The failure to address the threat from weapons of mass destruction leaves us with an immensely important task ahead.

Challenge 6. To put the Peace Building Commission in place promptly

Far too many people in war-torn countries have experienced fragile peace relapsing into new conflicts. With the establishment of the Peace Building Commission the United Nations is better equipped to build peace in war-torn societies and prevent countries from relapsing into war.

To be successful, the Commission needs to draw on lessons from international peace efforts. Regional organisations will have important contributions to make. The Peace Building Commission needs a well-balanced composition, including major donor-countries. Let us establish this Commission before the end of the year. Sweden is ready to do its part, including through swift financial contributions.

Challenge 7. To reform the Security Council and the Secretariat

United Nations reform is not complete without Security Council reform. If the decisions of the Council are to be accepted as legitimate, and also effectively implemented, the Council needs to better represent the world of today. In addition, the Council's effectiveness must be safeguarded. There should be no extension of the right of veto and the use of the veto should be limited.

A reform of the UN also requires a reform of the UN Secretariat. The Summit took several important decisions on management reforms. These include a review of internal rules and regulations, a review of mandates and a strengthening of the oversight system. But greater flexibility must be given to the Secretary-General in managing staff and resources. This

would not only make the Secretariat more efficient, it would also enable Member States to focus more on strategic issues and produce a more dynamic organisation.

Mr. President, your Excellencies,

This Summit has given essential momentum to more effective multilateralism. The legacy of our efforts will continue to be shaped during the 60th session of the General Assembly. It is now, during the months ahead, that the task can be completed – the task to create a United Nations capable of facing the challenges of our time.

To conclude, let me go back to where I began, in Darfur. The United Nations must, above all, serve the interest of the boy that I met there, and of all others like him - all the other children, husbands, wives, grandparents, men and women of this world who lack security, hope and human dignity. That is our mission. Thank you.