



**PERMANENT MISSION OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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STATEMENT

BY

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OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

AT THE 61ST SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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**Madame President,
Secretary-General,
Your Excellencies,**

I extend my congratulations on your election, Madame President and my respects to His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa and my very best wishes to the Government and People of the Kingdom of Bahrain. I assure you of Brunei Darussalam's full support in the coming year and wish you great success during your term of office.

I would also like to thank your predecessor, His Excellency Jan Eliasson for his excellent leadership of the Assembly over the past year.

Finally, Madame President, may I express my special appreciation to our Secretary-General. For many years, he has been the United Nations' most public figure. This has never been easy but he has served us with great distinction. His programmes of action have strengthened our voice. His personal leadership has inspired us and I thank him most warmly for this.

Madame President,

During the past few years, we have regularly discussed United Nations reform and I am sure discussions will continue in the coming years.

At the opening of the Sixty-First Assembly, I would like to take the opportunity to mention a few of our own feelings in Brunei Darussalam about the question of United Nations reform.

I would like to start, Madame President, by acknowledging the fine work done for so many years by our United Nations' agencies in the field, particularly by the WHO, ESCAP, UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO and by the United Nations volunteers all over the world. These agencies can truly be called our body's life blood and at times literally so. Every day of every year they are attempting to bring hope, confidence and meaning to the lives of ordinary people. They provide people with the simplest and basic definition of security. By this, I mean giving people a feeling that even the most severe problems can be faced and solved.

I thank them with great respect for their dedication and their professionalism. They represent the United Nations at its best.

Consequently, I believe that any reform of our organisation should be considered with one crucial primary question in mind.

Does it directly strengthen the work of our agencies and people in the field?

Madame President,

This is becoming more and more important to the ordinary people we represent.

The new century has brought a host of new challenges.

The past year, like every year in this new century has presented problems that are typical of those the United Nations is increasingly going to face and expected to solve.

They are sadly all the stuff of regular "breaking news". Natural and environmental disasters, health, economic and security disasters, countless political failures and the enormous human suffering that follows.

The immediate impression is a dramatic one. Our new century seems to be defining itself in images of disaster; landslide, earthquake, tsunami, terrorist bombs.

The most lasting images are human ones.

These are the countless victims of events over which they had no control, knowledge or warning. The long term result is a deep sense of insecurity. It is reaching into the lives of every individual and every family and every community in every country we represent.

Many people are feeling so insecure and that they are engaged in finding any way to salvage some hope for themselves.

In Asia, Africa and the Americas, they are doing this in their hundreds of thousands. They are leaving their families and homelands to emigrate. They are often putting their lives at enormous personal risk in a search for somewhere where they hope to find hope.

It presents a bleak vision of the future for millions of our people. It would be even bleaker without the United Nations.

Sometimes, in the refugee camps, in the disaster areas and in all the other arenas of destruction the United Nations offers all they have by way of hope.

Hence, the second consideration we give to proposals for reform is a human one. We ask a simple question.

Is the proposal relevant to ordinary peoples' personal lives and problems?

Madame President,

Those lives are increasingly dominated by the extremely complex challenges of our new century. These are global. They are scientific, technological, economic, environmental and political.

They now involve over six and a half billion people. These people are becoming more and more dependent on each other for survival.

I believe that means that we must continue to stress the need for more than just administrative reform.

So, our third consideration about reform is practical.

Does the proposed reform reflect the current century, its priorities, its special challenges and its changing character?

In other words, are we certain that we are not trying to solve 21st century problems with the mechanisms, priorities and procedures of the twentieth century and sometimes even the nineteenth century?

Madame President,

We look forward to continuing our discussions with colleagues in the coming year on this critical matter of effective and lasting reform. We are starting to see what the twenty-first century is presenting, both the good and the disturbing.

We are also seeing the demands it is making on the United Nations. They are considerable. We believe, however, that the considerations I have mentioned are the essential basis for reforming the United Nations. It is reform in a manner that will ensure that our world body is well capable of meeting the 21st century on 21st century terms.

Thank you.