

(Please check against delivery)

ADDRESS
BY
HONOURABLE MR. K.P. SHARMA OLI,
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
LEADER OF THE DELEGATION OF
NEPAL

AT
THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE SIXTY-FIRST SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK
25 SEPTEMBER 2006

Madame President,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I warmly congratulate you, Madame President, on your election as the chair of this session and assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in discharging responsibilities entrusted to you. I am fully confident that, we will be able to bring the business of this session to a successful conclusion under your leadership.

His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, the outgoing President, deserves our sincere appreciation for the job well done.

I join the previous speakers to heartily welcome the Republic of Montenegro as a fellow member in this world body. The continued expansion in the membership underlines the importance of the UN as an organization truly of global character and its centrality and indispensability in global affairs.

Madame President,

It is, indeed, a great opportunity for me to represent the voice of the democratic Government and the sovereign people of Nepal in this august Assembly. I have brought with me greetings and best wishes from the Government and the people of Nepal for the success of this session.

I wish to inform this august Assembly that Nepal is undergoing fundamental transformation following the restoration of democracy through peaceful People's Movement in April this year. The people of Nepal have become, for the first time in history, the real sources of sovereignty and state authority. The historic Parliamentary Proclamation of May 18, 2006 and its subsequent decisions have made real contributions in safeguarding and consolidating the gains of the People's Movement. We are currently engaged in institutionalizing an edifice of a democratic and inclusive Nepali state through the reinstated parliament.

The people and Government of Nepal are thankful to the international community for their strong support during our struggle for democracy. We are hopeful of even greater support and solidarity in our transition towards full-fledged democracy and lasting peace.

This momentous change in Nepal has also led to conversion of a protracted conflict into a peace process, which we are confident to bring to a successful conclusion. I take this opportunity to sincerely appreciate the UN Secretary General for his assistance to the peace process, including in monitoring of human rights, assistance in ceasefire monitoring, arms management and observation of elections to the Constituent Assembly at our request. Successful resolution of our internal conflict

will set a worthwhile example to the rest of the world that democracy is indispensable and brightens the prospect for resolution of all kinds of conflicts.

Now, we have pressing post-conflict reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction needs. Meeting these challenges necessitates an enhanced level of international support and assistance.

Peace, security, stability, democracy and development constitute global public goods. It is critically important that newly emerged democracies are safeguarded and protected, allowing them to develop further and flourish. With this vision in mind, we strongly support the newly established Democracy Fund in the United Nations.

Madame President,

The United Nations today confronts with numerous challenges such as international terrorism and transnational crimes, threat to use the weapons of mass destruction, narcotic drugs and human trafficking, money-laundering and other financial crimes, regional conflicts and low-intensity wars, extreme poverty and hunger, human rights abuses, recurring natural disasters, threats of pandemics such as HIV/AIDS and avian flu.

These challenges call for new wisdom founded on the principles of collective security, well-being and prosperity. The United Nations is uniquely placed to muster much-needed philosophical underpinning because of its standing as a global body wielded with legitimacy. New wisdom alone will not be enough to deal with these problems if new strategy, new tools and new resources do not match it.

Nepal firmly believes that multilateral solutions are required to address problems and challenges of global nature. Multilateralism is the key to promote global participation in problem solving and to ensure collective ownership of outcome.

Madame President,

Today, old and new threats to peace and security exist side by side. While the military threats to security are diminishing gradually, new sources of threat have emerged and are likely to disturb international peace and security in more than one way.

Growing menace of international terrorism characterizes the post-cold war world security scenario. It has been the consistent policy of Nepal to unequivocally condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. It is disheartening to note that no international consensus has yet emerged paving the way for an early conclusion of a comprehensive international convention against terrorism. In this context, we welcome the adoption of the global strategy to combat terrorism.

We are concerned by dismal progress in disarmament. After failure to agree on non-proliferation last year, we could not produce an agreement during the review of the regime of the control over small arms and light weapons. We are also constantly reminded of deadlocks in efforts of the peaceful means to resolve nuclear issues.

Nepal stands for general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction, including biological, chemical, nuclear and radiological weapons, in a time-bound manner. The demand of the time is that we compete for peace but not war, for development but not armaments.

We have offered to host the UN Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament for Asia and the Pacific in Kathmandu. Despite our long-standing commitment and sincere efforts, the Center is yet to be relocated. I wish to reiterate that the Government of Nepal is ready to sign the host country agreement as per this Assembly's resolution as soon as the UN Secretariat provides it with a draft. We urge the Secretariat to conclude necessary procedure for the relocation of the Center to Nepal without any further delay.

Madame President,

Recent upsurge in violence in Lebanon has left unbearable human tragedy and huge destruction of material property. We welcome the ongoing ceasefire and express our support to UN resolution 1701 on strengthening the UNIFIL in Lebanon. We have committed to contributing a battalion of our troops for the cause of peace there.

Nepal's profound interest and continued participation in the UN Peacekeeping missions underscores her contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. Even when it had its own internal conflict, Nepal never gave up sending its troops to UN peacekeeping missions. The Nepalese blue helmets have been serving in various missions, including many troubled spots, in an exemplary manner, earning international repute for them and for the country. Currently, Nepal has over 3,500 troops in various UN Missions. Many of them have sacrificed their precious lives in the service of peace and humanity. Nepal will continue to uphold this noble cause and participate in future missions when asked.

It is unfortunate that the UN peacekeepers have increasingly become the target of senseless attacks. This world body must explore innovative ways and means to ensure the safety and security of the peacekeepers while on duty. Equally important is to promote ethics and the culture of discipline among peacekeepers to avoid possible sexual harassment and other abuses by peacekeepers.

The United Nations is being increasingly asked to play an active role in the areas of peace-making, peace-building, post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction as well as nation-building in some cases. We should encourage the United Nations system to work in coherence to lift such countries from conflicts. We welcome the

establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission as an innovative mechanism to deal with the complex issues of peace and security.

Madame President,

Nepal's commitment to human rights is total and unflinching. Nepal firmly believes that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing. We have welcomed the establishment of the Human Rights Council with the belief that this body would prove effective in protecting and promoting human rights across the globe based on the salient principles of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity.

The present Government of Nepal has given top priority to the protection and promotion of human rights with a view to translating Nepal's international human rights commitments and obligations into a reality. We have been working closely with the United Nations Human Rights bodies, including the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal, to create an environment in which full enjoyment of human rights by all is guaranteed.

Return of democracy and the start of peace process have led to big improvement in the protection of human rights in Nepal. We highly appreciate role played by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Nepal in improving the human rights situation in the country.

We are determined to bring to an end the culture of impunity, which was so pervasive during the autocratic regime. Our belief is that no one is above the law and that those who violate and abuse human rights must be brought to justice. We are fully committed to protecting human rights in all situations and creating a framework for justice to those who have abused human rights in the past.

Madame President,

Opportunities arising out of globalization, such as that from global migration, have been stifled by unfriendly policy regimes around the world. The rights of migrant workers must be protected in all situations in accordance with international norms. Nepal's experience shows that the benefit of remittances generated by the migrant workers count a lot to developing countries. But this cannot any way substitute development assistance, debt relief and concessions in trade

Benefits of trade liberalization are not distributed equitably. Multilateral trading regime must be made responsive to the needs and requirements of developing and least-developed countries. Enhanced trading opportunities coupled with productive capacities are critically important to achieve sustained economic growth and poverty reduction in the least developed countries. The agreed commitments for duty free and quota free access of the products of the least developed countries need to be complemented with favourable rules of origin. We are concerned at the suspension

of WTO talks on the development round and urge for an immediate revival of the talks to complete the Doha Development Agenda.

Madame President,

Our development agenda has been advancing rather slowly. We are realizing that many countries, given the present pace, will not be able to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. It reminds us the urgency to sincerely implement all the agreed commitments in various global compacts in recent years, including the Monterrey Consensus, Millennium Declaration, Johannesburg Plan of Action and the Brussels Programme of Action for the LDCs.

A mid-term review this year of the program of action for the least developed countries showed that most of the least developed countries cannot achieve the agreed targets within the time frame defined previously unless we accelerated the pace of implementation.

The least developed countries want policy, not charity. They need a better policy on aid, trade, investment, debt relief and capacity building and timely reforms in the international financial institutions. We call on the international community to take a holistic approach combining these policies to support the LDC development agenda. The least developed countries need substantial flow of external aid and investment to it meet these goals. Investment in poorer countries is not just a moral responsibility; it is investment in the collective security of the world.

Many least developed countries are handicapped by landlockedness, which significantly reduces their competitive edge in the regional and multilateral trading regimes. This state of affairs continues to frustrate their development efforts. We urge the international community to pay greater attention to the plight of these countries and make serious efforts to implement internationally agreed commitments.

Madame President,

It is a scar on our conscience that hundreds of millions of our peoples are living as refugees in various parts of the globe. The international community must take it as its bounden duty to address their concerns in a non-selective manner.

I regret to inform this assembly that more than 100,000 refugees from southern Bhutan have been painfully remaining in camps in Nepal for over a decade and half, despite some bilateral agreements reached between Nepal and Bhutan. In absence of no sight of an early and lasting solution, the refugees are showing increasing signs of frustration and desperation. In essence, this is a problem between the Government of Bhutan and its citizens. Nepal has come to the picture simply because it has provided shelter to fleeing refugees on humanitarian grounds. The issue cannot be resolved in the absence of a genuine willingness to resolve this problem on the part of the Government of Bhutan. The international community must assert positive

influence to break the impasse. We stress that the Bhutanese refugees must be given the right to return to their home country with dignity and respect and that any solution must be acceptable to the refugees. Nepal also supports the democratic aspiration of the people of Bhutan and urges Bhutan to accommodate the plight of the refugees in their political dispensation.

Madame President,

Our Organization has made great strides, especially in the adoption of reform measures endorsed by the world leaders here last year. The Government of Nepal welcomes remains committed to support all reform initiatives that aim at addressing the concerns and aspirations of all the member states.

The strengths of the United Nations lie in its democratic decision-making, impartiality, neutrality and efficiency. The General Assembly, which is the only global body to represent the voice of the peoples in the world, must be placed at the forefront of all decision-making within the United Nations. The organs dealing with socio-economic issues must be strengthened and enabled to take a lead role in the fulfillment of international development objectives.

The contemporary realities dictate that the United Nations undergo fundamental transformation without undermining the founding principles and objectives upon which it is built. The reform of the United Nations will be incomplete without the commensurate reform in its principal organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Security Council must be democratized to provide it with greater legitimacy and credibility. There is a genuine need to increase membership of the Security Council in both permanent and non-permanent categories to make the Council more representative. We also need to improve its working methods.

This year, this assembly will elect the next Secretary General of our Organization. In accordance with the principle of equitable geographical representation and that of rotation, Nepal reiterates that the next Secretary General should come from Asia. We also subscribe to a greater role of this assembly in the appointment of the Secretary General. I commend the role played by outgoing Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan, during his tenure in office. He steered important reforms at the United Nations and made genuine efforts to establish the central role of our Organization in solving the global problems and debating the international issues.

Madame President,

Nepal has submitted its candidature for a non-permanent membership of the Security Council for the period 2007-2008. We think that we rightly deserve it after a gap of nearly two decades since we last served the Council in 1988-89. This world body is fully aware that Nepal has been making substantial contributions in the maintenance of international peace and security by regularly providing its troops in

various peacekeeping missions for a long time. Moreover, we feel that Nepal's election to the Council this time will be a great recognition to its democratic credentials in the changed context. The people of Nepal deserve due recognition from the international community for their unprecedented courage and determination with which they have defeated autocracy and restored democracy. I make a sincere appeal to the fellow members to extend their valuable support to Nepal's candidature, allowing it to serve the Council with renewed confidence in fulfillment of its fundamental responsibilities.

Madame President,

The purposes and principles of the United Nations contained in its Charter, including that of sovereign equality of nations, peaceful resolution of all disputes, non-interference in the internal affairs of states, and no threat or use of force are sacrosanct to Nepal. I solemnly reiterate Nepal's profound commitment to the founding objectives and principles of the United Nations as enshrined in its Charter.

The United Nations today is fraught with lack of credibility, inability to arrive at important decisions, weak implementation of its own declarations and decisions, and slowness in responding challenges that require its most pressing attentions. We need to change this situation. Together, we can make our organization better equipped to respond to these challenges.

I thank you!