



# **THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

**PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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## **Statement**

**by**

**H.E. Mr. BAN Ki-moon  
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
of the Republic of Korea**

**at the 61<sup>st</sup> Session  
of the United Nations General Assembly**

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**New York**

Madam President,

May I begin by congratulating you on the successes of the High-Level Dialogue on Least Developed Countries earlier in the week. I had the honour of partaking in the Dialogue, which heralds a very productive year for the Assembly under your astute leadership. I would like to express my deepest thanks and admiration to H.E. Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his unparalleled dedication and contributions to world peace and prosperity through his dedicated service to our global organization.

Madam President,

The United Nations was created, first and foremost, to forestall another world war. Not only has it achieved this cardinal goal despite four decades of Cold War, but it has also offered states multiple means of resolving their differences short of war. However, we cannot be sanguine about future trends. If the UN's primary task in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was to curb inter-state conflict, its core mandate in the new century must be to strengthen states and to preserve the inter-state system in the face of new challenges.

Some assert that the UN is poorly equipped to deal with new threats, such as those posed by non-state actors seeking to undermine the international order. The Charter was crafted to give the Member States ample flexibility in adapting the UN machinery to respond to novel threats in a changing world. But our tools need sharpening.

Madam President,

Since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the UN has played an increasingly indispensable part in the international community's counter-terrorism efforts. Still, agreement on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism remains elusive. But we must continue to try. In the meantime, the global counter-terrorism strategy, adopted at the end of the 60<sup>th</sup> Assembly, will guide our collective efforts to free the world from the scourge of terrorism.

The proliferation of WMD poses an equally urgent and unacceptable threat to the peace and security of the world. We cannot permit the credibility of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, built around the NPT, to be undermined by evasions and concealments in safeguards obligations. We should redouble efforts to get more countries to sign and ratify the IAEA Additional Protocol. An early start of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) and an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) should also be supported.

Meanwhile, we must seek peaceful solutions to the outstanding challenges to the system, including the Iranian nuclear issue that is before the Security Council. It is not too late to work towards a negotiated solution on this issue with far-reaching implications. I would call for creative, constructive thinking on the part of all parties concerned, so as to resolve this issue within the framework of the NPT regime.

As for the situation on the Korean peninsula, the nuclear and missile programs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea constitute a serious challenge to the non-proliferation regime as well as to regional security. My government fully supports Security Council resolution 1695. We urge the DPRK to refrain from any action that might aggravate the situation, and to return to the Six Party Talks without precondition for a diplomatic resolution of the matter.

In this regard, during the Summit meeting last week in Washington, DC, President Roh Moo-hyun and President Bush agreed to work with other nations of the Six-Party Talks to develop a common and comprehensive approach to energize the stalled Talks. I strongly hope that these efforts will bear fruit, and we can work to realize the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula as envisaged in the Joint Statement adopted on 19 September last year.

Madam President,

Though not mentioned in the Charter, peacekeeping has become a defining feature of the post-Cold War era, as well as the UN's largest, most expensive, and most visible operational activity. The surge in calls for the services of the blue helmets attests to the Organization's continuing, even growing, relevance.

The expanded UNIFIL mission in southern Lebanon is a challenging case in point. To succeed, UNIFIL must have the active support of all Member States, backed by timely humanitarian and economic assistance. To this end, my government has been providing substantial humanitarian assistance to the afflicted population.

The undiminished human suffering in Palestine remains another source of deep concern. We urge the early revival of the stalled peace process. The violence and loss of innocent lives in Iraq concern us enormously as well. We trust that Iraq will become a stable and prosperous democracy under the leadership of its new government. As a friend of Iraq, my government supports its efforts for national reconstruction and welcomes the recent launch of the "International Compact with Iraq" to speed the process.

In Africa, stability and democracy are gaining ground, step by step, in Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The security and humanitarian crisis in Darfur, however, remains

acute. The Secretary-General's strong personal engagement has been critical to sustaining international attention and the flow of assistance to the beleaguered people of Darfur. Now, the smooth transition of AMIS to UNMIS must be accomplished in accordance with Security Council resolution 1706.

Madam President,

UN performance cannot be measured by the creation of new machinery any more than by the passage of resolutions. As the Secretary-General has wisely reminded us, what matters is whether and how they make a difference in the lives of people and in the conduct of states and non-state actors over time.

Two new intergovernmental bodies, the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, seek to make just such a difference. Their success, however, is far from assured. A great deal is at stake. Will the new Human Rights Council usher in an era of renewed cooperation and solidarity in the UN's work on human rights? Will the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) succeed in offering all states a candid and constructive assessment of ways to enhance their human rights practices?

Together, we can make the Council the pre-eminent global forum for the advancement of human rights around the world. Divided, a historic opportunity will be lost. The protection of human rights is not a matter of choice. It is a solemn duty of all responsible members of the international community. Without respect for human rights, particularly for the most vulnerable members of society, peace and development have little meaning.

The successful conclusion of the negotiations on a convention on the rights of persons with disabilities speaks to the UN's essential humanity, its most precious asset. The Republic of Korea is fully committed to "all human rights for all". We deeply empathize with the suffering in those areas of the world where human rights are given little more than lip service. In particular, we fully share the international community's concerns over the situation of human rights in the DPRK. We call upon the DPRK to heed these concerns and to meet the call for dialogue on human rights.

Madam President,

The UN greeted the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a solemn promise: to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Progress has been made, but it has been far too uneven from country to country, region to region. In Africa, those countries that lack the minimum resources for development require the focused attention and assistance of the international community. Key goals, such as the eradication of extreme poverty and curbing the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, are in danger of slipping out of reach if we do not act quickly and decisively.

Meeting the MDGs by the year 2015 is a tall order. But we should never forget that for the neediest members of the humanity, the UN may be the only beacon of hope for a better life. The credibility of the UN largely rides on its ability to accomplish its mission on the MDGs. While developing countries should take primary responsibility and ownership for their own development, we must honour our commitments and redouble our efforts to realize effective global partnerships for development. The targets established at the 2005 World Summit of 0.7 percent of GNI for development assistance form the cornerstone of our strong commitment to achieving the MDGs. Innovative sources of financing, such as the air ticket solidarity fund, need to be further explored. New sources of financing should not, however, be a substitute for existing ODA.

As part of its commitment to doubling overall ODA by 2009, this year my government launched “Korea’s Initiative for Africa’s Development”. Under this initiative, we will substantially increase our development assistance to Africa. The key lesson to be drawn from the Korean experience over the past decades is that education is key to development, and women and girls are the most effective agents for change and social progress. In particular, in attaining the MDGs, such as eliminating poverty and fighting HIV/AIDS, gender mainstreaming must be made a central pillar of policy strategy. Lasting social change cannot be realized until women are fully incorporated into the process.

Madam President,

The urgency, complexity, and scope of the three pillars of the UN’s work — peace and security, development, and human rights — demand the highest standards of efficient, effective and accountable management. The highly decentralized nature of the UN system puts a premium on coherence and coordination. We must streamline the UN machinery, re-organize priorities and minimize redundancy. The high-level panel on UN system-wide coherence may offer some fresh ideas in this regard.

A number of valuable ideas for reforming UN management practices were contained in the Secretary-General’s report “Investing in the UN”. Some of those proposals have already been adopted by the General Assembly, while others await further consideration during this session. The Secretary-General’s comments on the evolving nature of the UN’s human resource needs were especially apt in light of the accelerating demands for field staff.

The General Assembly should give positive consideration to steps to make the Secretariat more mobile, integrated, and multi-skilled. The UN needs to be able to deploy the best people where they are needed, when they are needed, to insure that managers have the requisite expertise and experience for overseeing highly dynamic and professional operations under often trying conditions. Improving the accountability

and oversight of the Secretariat, building upon the measures already taken over the past year, remains a priority.

The early launch of an Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC) that is genuinely independent and professional, along with steps to ensure management accountability, would be instrumental in this regard. The UN procurement system requires strengthened internal controls and transparent management to match the growing dimensions of its work. As Member States and stakeholders in this vital Organization, we should address the mandate review as a historic opportunity to streamline, focus, and strengthen our collective efforts.

Madam President,

This unique world body was forged by men and women of conscience, courage, and determination. Their genius was to understand that we need the United Nations not because we always agree, but because frequently we do not. The United Nations remains no more, and no less, than what we make of it. The UN's journey is never easy, but is always well worth taking. We have come a very long way, but the road still stretches out endlessly before us. I have every confidence that with the founding principles and purposes as our guideposts, and powered by renewed faith and commitment, we can, together, go very far and fast in the challenging and exciting years to come.

Thank you.