

Mr. President,

Five years ago, the governments of our countries gathered in this very site, hoping to work together in solving some of the most urgent and serious problems that our peoples were - and still are- facing.

That is how the Millennium Declaration arose and, with it, a renewed commitment by the international community in favor of multilateralism and respect for human dignity.

Concrete goals in development were favored, aimed at solving the imperative issue of hunger, of poverty, of infant mortality rates, of diseases such as HIV/AIDS, of malaria and other pandemics and of social and juridical gender inequality.

The assessment of what we have achieved in these few years is far from satisfactory. The severity of the situation is, basically, the same.

The modest advances in some issues cannot, however, weaken our will nor numb our conscience. Poverty, hunger and disease continue to afflict a vast proportion of women and men in the globe to the point of obscenity.

The absence of the rule of law and the massive violations of human rights in various places cause great suffering and deepen political instability and civil conflicts.

The new and grave threats to international security have permeated the whole spectrum of international debate.

Poverty, social inequalities, injustice, social exclusion and the estrangement between expectations and reality bring about an element of instability, working against the strengthening of democracy and development.

A large part of the problem lies, perhaps, in the lack of correspondence between declarations –true expressions of wish- and acts. This is evident in two key matters: debt and international trade.

The persistence of discriminatory and inequitable policies in international trade is included in this list of impediments of development, both for the poorest nations and for middle-income countries such as my own, Argentina.

The prevalence of an ideological component in the policies of international credit institutions is also distressing.

The so-called “orthodox” approach that some are attempting to apply to the issue of indebtedness, an approach that has exhibited its shortcomings and inefficiency and that has worsened the conditions of poverty in the developing world, is maybe the area where the prevalence of this component becomes more evident.

Economic development, security and human rights are the basic pillars of the United Nations, and therefore the simultaneous progress we may achieve in all three levels are the best guarantee for international peace and the well-being of humanity.

With great effort, Argentina is managing to return to the path of development and has achieved an important and sustained growth in its economy, while at the same time has succeeded in significantly reducing unemployment, poverty and destitution indexes.

After coming out from the crisis, indicators show a sustained growth in the economy and a surplus situation in the fiscal and external accounts, together with the recovery in [national reserves](#).

Argentina has grown 8.8% in 2003, 9% in 2004 and over 9% during the first semester of 2005.

The consolidated primary surplus is 5% of the GDP and the reserves have increased from nearly 10 billion dollars to over 25 billion. Exports this year will exceed 40 billion dollars, with an estimated growth of about 15%.

The labor market shows a declining trend in unemployment, paired with a recovery in salary levels, a pointed improvement in the social situation and a clear decline in the poverty and destitution rates.

Unemployment has dropped from 24% in 2003 to 12.1 over the first semester of 2005. Poverty rates have dropped, from 57.5 to 40.2, and destitution rates have come down from 27.5 in 2003 to 15% 2004 and continue to decline. The improvement in salary levels in the real general salary index has reached 16%.

Since overcoming default, Argentina is consolidating as an opportunity for foreign investment.

The primary education enrolment and the number of students starting the first grade are over 91.5% and 86.9%, the illiterate population is below 3%, and women's literacy rates are over 97.4%.

Women's participation is growing, as a result women hold over 33% of seats at the House of Representatives and 43% of the seats at the Senate.

The infant mortality rates have dropped significantly, from 16.8 per 1000 to the current 13 per 1000.

Public health programs are implemented that extend prevention to the whole of the population, drinking water supply and sewage systems are being increased, and through an agreement with Brazil, medicines shall be produced in order to cover the population infected with AIDS at an affordable price.

Regrettably, throughout this process of recovery, expansion and transformation, we did not have the support of the IMF, which in turn had indeed supported until only weeks before the convertibility regime. During its crisis, Argentina made net payments of about 13.5 billion dollars.

As many developing countries, we continue to endure both this archaic conception of the indebtedness issue and an international trade system that is unfair to agricultural products, where subsidies and non-tariff barriers in developed countries continue to restrain our countries from their full growth based on their genuine resources.

In this sense, we call for the ministerial conference of the World Trade Organization to be held at the end of this year in Hong Kong, China, to fulfill the unfulfilled promise of placing development in the center of the international trade.

We follow attentively the international debate on the notion of sustainability of external debt.

We believe that international finances are too important to be left in the hands of concerted interests that affect the stability of markets, discriminate against the small investor and spawn pro-cyclic policies.

That is why, in various fora, we have put forward proposed modifications which increase the transparency of the international financial system, which free these Organizations from certain financial lobbies, which bring an enhanced stability to the capital flux and which favor small investors.

There is neither ideology nor politics in this. We show concrete facts showing that these Financial Organizations did not perform the role they must perform.

Looking ahead, our country has structured a debt-reduction strategy, designed to gain degrees of independence in the implementation of its plans for its development and the growth of its economy.

In this regard, we want to reaffirm our decision that payment of external financial commitments must not be made with detriment to resources pledged to social areas such as education, health, housing and employment promotion.

We shall be firm in maintaining this position when dealing with the international credit organization, and we reiterate our call for increased transparency, democracy and deep restructuring and revision of their policies in order to ensure their equity and efficiency.

In this line, Argentina has been since 2004 a co-sponsor in the UN Commission on Human Rights of the resolution on the "Effects of structural adjustment policies and foreign debt on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights". This resolution clearly deals with the existing link between external debt and the impossibility of full enjoyment of human rights.

We consider democracy to be a universal value that is not owned by any country or region, and our government directs its efforts towards improving the quality of democracy, reinforcing the rule of law and ensuring the impartiality and independence of Justice, as well as implementing the international conventions on human rights which have been incorporated in our Constitution.

Argentina -who in the past endured systematic violations of human rights, characterized by the systematic use of torture, forced "disappearance" and summary extra-judicial execution of its citizens- has given decisive steps in the internal judicial sphere to put an end to impunity regarding the authors of such atrocious crimes, and has also taken a proactive attitude to find the identities of its "disappearance" victims.

In this perspective, Argentina joins the efforts by the international community to ensure that the persons responsible for crimes against humanity are brought before a court and

punished. The International Criminal Court is an essential component in this struggle, which we support and defend and whose integrity must be respected at all times.

Argentina condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, as a practice that affects the first fundamental right of every human being, the right to life.

There can be no excuses for the indiscriminate attack on innocent civilians and noncombatants, whatever the motive or grievance alleged to justify the act.

We stress that this fight, as all others, must be undertaken in conformity with international human right standards, an indispensable condition to gain the legitimacy that will guarantee our success.

Our country –that was the victim of two international attacks in 1992 and 1994, taking hundreds of human lives- has decided to play an active role in the struggle against international terrorism.

We are offered today a special opportunity to make an objective analysis on the functioning of our Organization after 60 years, and to adopt the innovative and brave measures –both at the normative and at the institutional levels- that are needed to adapt the United Nations to the challenges that the new Millennium brings.

We need a reform that is, first and foremost, on target and perdurable, and that leads us to a revitalized, modern multilateralism, more fair and just. The rule of law, the respect for and promotion of human rights, peace and dignity for the peoples of the world, are pressing demands that we need to answer.

The building of a new, fairer world order demands not only the reduction of inequality within our countries, but also among all countries.

In turn, the building of a more democratic world order demands that all countries have the chance to make a contribution, since only an authentically collective exercise contemplating the interests of all actors, big and small, will enhance the legitimacy of any new design.

It is not through the reaffirmation of old privileges or the creation of new ones that this result will be accomplished - that would only place a greater emphasis on existing inequalities between those countries with a greater economic, military and technological capacities, and all the rest.

That is why we consider that any reform of the United Nations must provide the Organization with more transparency and democracy, without creating new situations of privilege that would perpetuate the inequality between its members.

In tense, troubled times as these, it is indispensable to reinforce international cooperation and to avoid the lure of isolation and unilateral solutions.

There is no single nation or region able to handle by itself the sum of challenges and threats characterizing our times, and only the multilateral work in this Organization and within the framework of regional and sub regional organizations can allow us to attain the solution to our shared problems.

That is why we wish to renew our participating vocation and the search for enduring solutions, indispensable tools to ensure respect for the dignity of peoples.

In this regard, allow me to pledge the full disposition of the Government of Argentina for the United Nations to be able –through this reform- to fulfill the role it is called to play in this new millennium.

Our country aspires, as a result of this High Level Session, to hear the Heads of State and Government of developed countries ratify their decision to fulfill the commitments made in favor of the sustainable development of the peoples in developing countries.

In this context, Argentina shares the appeal to those developed countries that have not yet done so to set timeframes for the fulfillment by 2015 of the commitment to allocate 0.7% of their gross national income for official development assistance and to ensure that such assistance reaches as soon as possible those countries further behind in the fulfillment of the MDGs.

The implementation of the right to development implies that each State must act to adopt sustainable development policies, in accordance with the provisions of the Summit of Johannesburg.

In this field, Argentina endeavors to take the initiative and to bring up in all international forums the ethic and equity dimensions that are essential to face local problems with global impact.

Regarding the fulfillment of the human development goals set forth in the Durban Conference and later in the Millennium Declaration, achieving gender equality has a twofold function as an objective in itself and, at the same time, a tool to attain the other objectives.

From this perspective, we may point out that, in the field of the promotion and protection of women's rights and gender equality, our country has achieved substantial progress.

The empowerment of women and the progressive elimination of all forms of discrimination are inescapable components of the efforts by our governments, regional and international organizations and civil society organizations to promote sustainable development within the framework of inclusive societies, based on equity and full respect for human rights.

I wish to conclude by pointing out that the people of Argentina fervently expect the United Nations to help direct our destinies along the path of peace, justice and development.

Numerous resolutions by this General Assembly and its Decolonization Committee have established that the question of the Malvinas, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands constitutes a special colonial Question that must be solved through bilateral negotiations between my country and the United Kingdom.

The Decolonization Committee has made repeated declarations to this effect, and we greatly value its action in favor of seeking a solution to this question.

We once again reaffirm the permanent willingness of our country to reach a final, fair and peaceful solution to this sovereignty dispute which is a central preoccupation of the people of Argentina.

We therefore exhort the United Kingdom to promptly fulfill the call of the international community to resume negotiations.

On the other hand, Argentina actively and constructively participates in favor of a new world order that can succeed in making globalization work for everyone and not for just a few, allowing us developing countries to increase employment creation, to raise the income level of the poorest and to provide a better access to education, health, housing and vital services.

It is crucial that we guarantee a sustainable development strategy with social inclusion.

Together with other countries which believe that the building of consensus is the best way to preserve international peace and security, we trust more than ever in the future of this organization and in the strengthening of the multilateral system.

We are ready to persevere until sense and solidarity finally prevail among nations. Only then will we know that with our efforts we have been able to leave to the next generations a better world than the one we were born into.

This better world greatly depends on the courage, creativity and bravery each of us puts forward to lead change. It is the time to put utopias to work.

It is the time, in summary, to reduce the gap that separates declarations from acts, finding a way to put the best ideas to work.

Thank you