



PERMANENT MISSION OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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ADDRESS BY
HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAJI HASSANAL BOLKIAH
SULTAN AND YANG DI-PERTUAN
OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

AT THE HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

15 September 2005

New York

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Co-chairpersons
Your Majesties
Your Excellencies
Secretary-General

The opportunity to meet like this is a rare privilege and I very much appreciate the chance to hear your views and share your experiences. So, I would like to thank our Co-Chairpersons and Secretary-General very much indeed for bringing us all together again. It gives me the opportunity to express my people's deepest sympathy and condolences to our American hosts, whose people have suffered so much from the effects of Hurricane Katrina.

Your Excellencies,

In assessing our progress in Brunei Darussalam towards the Millennium Goals, one thing has become clearly apparent. The Goals have taken on an even deeper significance than perhaps we initially realized.

At first they seemed to represent a kind of development checklist. Some set national aims such as halving extreme poverty, establishing universal primary education, reducing infant and maternal mortality, reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS and endemic diseases and setting economic targets.

Others were aimed at universal objectives, promoting gender equality, sustaining the environment, and developing international partnerships. Looking at them in this way, our people at first tended to see them as targets that mainly applied to other countries in the world beyond our shores.

They felt they had, in fact, already reached most of the specific social, economic and cultural goals. So, the instinctive feeling that the Millennium Goals largely applied to other countries was perhaps quite understandable.

That, Your Excellencies, was five years ago. Since then, there have been profound changes. They have led to a far deeper understanding among our people. This has been prompted by real events. The outside world has imposed itself on our region in dramatic fashion. Our people have witnessed terrorist attacks, natural disasters, climate changes, strange new viruses, often bewildering new technology, and rapid and sometimes equally bewildering economic change.

All this has shown us that, in today's reality, the expression "the world beyond our shores" does not have a great deal of meaning. There may be other countries beyond our shores. But there is, in fact, just one world which we all share.

This has brought new realizations. They can be put quite simply that the future will involve more and more contact with the rest of the world. We will be more and more affected by what happens outside our borders. And we will be more and more dependent on that outside world. This means one thing. Future peace, prosperity and confidence depend not just on ourselves but on the success of all nations. Hence, we are all partners, no matter what our backgrounds, cultures, faiths and histories.

In other words, our people have begun to realize that confidence in the future for one community can only be achieved if all communities feel similar confidence.

For us, this understanding has been the most important result of setting up the Millennium Goals. We have realized that, unless the goals are reached by everyone, there is no lasting security. Each failed objective is a root cause of insecurity.

Your Excellencies,

This places the Millennium Goals in an extra dimension. It reveals them as crucial not merely for each individual nation and its people, but as central to the profound political, economic, cultural and social challenges we must all meet together. Achieving the goals will help consign the twentieth century concept of first, second and third world countries to history. It will help to develop a single one twenty-first century world in which we all have shared responsibilities and shared hopes. In this way, Your Excellencies, our people see the Millennium goals as a historic United Nations task and we will continue to work with our fellow members to do whatever we can to ensure that we all reach the targets we have accepted.

Thank you.