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**STATEMENT BY
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE PAUL MARTIN
PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA
TO
THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING
OF THE SIXTIETH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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The international response to the devastation wrought by hurricane Katrina reminds us once again that there are connections between people that have nothing to do with a common language, race or creed, and everything to do with the most fundamental considerations: of what it means to be a human being, what it means to be a person with rights, needs and responsibilities toward others.

Indeed, this is one world.

“In Larger Freedom” makes the case eloquently: security, development, and human rights, the three pillars of human freedom, are not abstract concepts. They are responsibilities we, and every UN agency, every member country, must take seriously. If the United Nations is to work, we know what we have to do, and we also know we are not doing nearly well enough.

Canada cannot conceive of a world succeeding without the United Nations. But, make no mistake the UN needs reform. I want to talk today about security, development, and human rights within the context of that need for reform.

Security represents the protection of life and thus is the basis for everything else we do. That is why our discussions of Security Council reform are so important. And why there has long been an argument that the Security Council should be more representative.

We agree.

But we believe it is even more important that the Council be effective. Too often, Permanent Members have used the veto—real or threatened—to prevent effective action. Too often, we have debated the finer points of language while innocent people continue to die. Darfur is only the latest example.

Clearly, we need expanded guidelines for Security Council action to make clear our responsibility to act decisively to prevent humanity’s attack on humanity. The “Responsibility to Protect” is one such guideline. It seeks rules to protect the innocent against appalling assaults on their life and dignity. It does not bless unilateral action. To the contrary, it stands for clear, multilaterally-agreed criteria on what the international community should do when civilians are at risk.

It is a powerful norm of international behaviour. And this week, we have taken a very important step to that end. We are proud that R2P has Canadian lineage, that it is now a principle for all the world. That being said, our collective responsibility does not end there. I would have hoped that we could have agreed now to make the new peace building commission operational. Building the peace is a huge undertaking and, to do it well, we need to bring order out of chaos.

Which leads me to the second pillar, economic development. The record is far from brilliant. After decades of effort, money and development only go together if donor and recipient countries take their responsibilities to heart. This is a lesson that needs to be embraced. Donor nations must do more, and we have begun to do so, by increasing

our development assistance budgets and accelerating the pace of disbursements, as well as forgiving old debts.

More consistent policies are needed, however. How can we talk about development as we chase poor farmers from their land because of their inability to compete on their own agricultural export markets, which are oversubsidized by rich countries!

What good comes from lamenting the lot of the poor while seeking to sell as many weapons as possible to as many developing nations as possible? How can we preach the virtues of free trade while preventing market access to least developed countries?

Developing countries must do more as well. True development will not take place until local populations have the confidence to invest their own energy and resources into making a better future for themselves. They will only get this confidence when they see their governments investing in areas that make a tangible difference to their lives—not disproportionate military expenditures but investments in health, in education, in good governance, and in creating an environment that frees up the entrepreneurial spirit that exists in all our countries.

We need to see the world through the eyes of the people we are trying to help. When we can meet benchmarks that matter to them, then and only then will we build the foundations to sustain development for the long haul.

How many more infants have been vaccinated this year compared to last?

How many more children can read and write?

How secure is a family's title to their land?

How many small businesses have survived for three years or more?

Let me turn now to the UN's third pillar: Respect for human rights. Our reform efforts on security and development will ultimately fail unless they are grounded in respect for individuals :

- 1) Respect for their rights,
- 2) Respect for their cultures, traditions and beliefs.
- 3) Respect for their opinions dissenting or not.

Respect for human rights is the living heart of democracy, the key to unlocking the potential of every person to contribute to their own welfare and to the prosperity and security of their communities. The UN's Commission on Human Rights has a serious credibility problem. Its membership, its increasing politicization and its overall lack of effectiveness at tackling human rights violations around the world have overwhelmed its achievements. We need a standing body at a higher level in the UN system,

commensurate with the importance of human rights. That is why we support the proposal for an effective Human Rights Council.

I cannot disguise our profound disappointment that we were not able to agree at this Summit on all of the elements required to make it operational. Canada will not cease to promote actively, bringing a standing council into being, with credible membership criteria. In the meantime, we welcome the universal endorsement of the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour and our collective decision to double the resources available to her office.

I have talked about the three pillars - security, development and human rights. Each poses its own unique challenges, but there is also one common element that runs through all three if the UN is to work well, and it is this: we need new and innovative approaches to global challenges in which every country contributes and every country shares in the benefits.

One striking example is climate change. This November, Canada will host the UN Conference on Climate Change, and our goal for this conference is clear: climate change is real, and the world must recognize it; human activity is a defining cause, and the world must act on it.

Our mandate in Montreal will be two-fold: first the Kyoto parties have started their work and need to build on it by making continued progress on their existing commitments, second we will initiate discussions to achieve a truly global and inclusive regime to achieve deep and genuine reductions of greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. President,

As the Secretary-General has observed, the United Nations is at a crossroads. In order to achieve lasting and effective reform, it must thoroughly reform its administration—its management methods—and introduce verification mechanisms with more clout. Such reform is crucial. We want to work with other member nations and the Secretary-General to obtain this general assembly's endorsement of a set of reforms to meet the demands of the 21st century.

In conclusion, the status quo and too often empty rhetoric must make way here for a new and pragmatic multilateralism measured by concrete results, not simply by promises. Our citizens want security, based on international law. They want opportunity, based on more effective aid. They want empowerment, based on respect for human rights. And they want a clean environment. These are not utopian dreams. They are among the most urgent challenges we face. We are national leaders.

In today's world, however, we cannot serve our own countries well unless we rise above narrow national interests. If we fail to act responsibly on the world stage, we will fail our own people at home.

It is one world.

That simple statement finds its most profound expression here, in our hopes for the United Nations. We face difficult decisions but, with courage and vision, we can build a United Nations for the future, a United Nations that serves all the world's people because that is the best way to serve every single one of us.

Thank you.