



STATEMENT BY

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
H.E. MR. JAN ELIASSON**

AT

**THE CONCLUSION OF THE SIXTIETH SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS
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As Delivered**

Secretary-General, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

The 60th session of the General Assembly is coming to an end.

It has been a year of turmoil and a year of dramatic events in the world. Conflicts have erupted and taken a great human toll. Huge natural disasters have brought havoc and destruction. Terrorism has continued to plague us. And the silent disasters of poverty, disease and environmental degradation have continued to rage.

There have also been positive developments. The number of conflicts has decreased. Millions of children have been educated. Democracy and respect for human rights have made some gains.

But the trends are not clear. Hope is battling against hopelessness. Justice is living side by side with injustices. And losing lives is as common as saving lives.

Today, we face an historic test of multilateralism. The issues confronting us are global, and require global solutions. The challenge is whether we have the collective will to combine together for the greater good. The challenge is whether the multilateral system – primarily the United Nations – can rise to the occasion.

One thing is beyond dispute: we have worked very hard. We have had innumerable meetings – conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner. The starting point for our work was the ambitious and far-reaching 2005 World Summit Outcome with its emphasis on balanced progress on the three pillars of security, development and human rights. It was indisputably a long ‘to-do list’.

What did we accomplish?

This year, we established two new United Nations institutions. The first, the Peacebuilding Commission, which will help countries emerging from the scourge of war to build stability and lasting peace. No longer will the international community turn its back once the fighting has stopped.

You should be proud that this General Assembly adopted the resolution establishing the Peacebuilding Commission before the end of 2005 – just a few months on from the World Summit. Now is the time to finally translate this into action in the field - in Burundi and Sierra Leone. I urge you all to do this with the same zeal we had when we established the Commission last December.

The second new institution we created was the Human Rights Council. Now it too must prove itself.

It is my firm conviction that we have created a Council that can take concrete steps forward in the promotion and protection of human

rights. The Council's work will be truly universal. For the first time ever, every country in the world will have its human rights record reviewed. There will be no political selectivity, nor any place to hide. This year, we also agreed on an important resolution on development, designed to create maximum momentum for the commitments of 2005 to be implemented. I call on all of you to take careful note of that resolution, and to act on it with vigour.

With greater public awareness of poverty in the countries of the north, with better aid than ever before, and with so many governments in the south committed to improving the lives of their peoples, we have a once in a generation opportunity to 'make poverty history'. It is both a matter of enlightened self-interest and simple human decency that we must not shirk this responsibility.

We have also taken steps forward this year in our work on the environment, as well as on reform of this Organization – on Secretariat and Management Reform, including mandate review. We have realized that a strong United Nations is in the interests of all of us. We have also agreed on an important resolution on General Assembly revitalization.

Last Friday we all agreed on a counter-terrorism strategy. It is a concrete plan of action. It is genuinely relevant and answers desperate calls from all over the world. By adopting it, we have sent a clear message that we are shouldering our responsibility to act together to fight the scourge of terrorism. At the same time we have shown that

the General Assembly can take assertive action on one of the most serious global threats facing the international community.

Being here today on 9/11/2006 in New York City, I am certain I speak for us all when I pay homage to all those who were victims on that dark day five years ago, and to the thousands and thousands of others who have been victims of terrorism all over the world both before and after.

Our work must also pass “the field test”, that is: how will our decisions here improve conditions on the ground – for the human beings who are suffering and who need our support?

The Central Emergency Response Fund will ensure that never again must survivors of disasters perish while the international system shakes the fund-raising tin. Now, we have a way of making sure that the resources will be there the moment disaster strikes. Another important result this session was the agreement on improvements in the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel in United Nations field operations.

We can also be proud of the new dynamic and new impetus we gave to the fight against HIV/AIDS at our High-level Meeting. By this, we made a big difference to a pandemic which looms large over the development prospects of so many Member States. And it was no less gratifying to see the conclusion this year of the negotiations on the

Convention on the Rights and Dignities of People with Disabilities – people who make up one in ten of the world’s population.

Some reforms we did not achieve. Work is still ongoing to reach agreement on the important matter of strengthening the Economic and Social Council. I urge you to finish the work on this World Summit outcome early in the next Session.

Reform of the Security Council also remains unfinished business. This is an essential but also a difficult area of reform. Our debate in July introduced a new, more positive and sober tone to our deliberations and gave hope for progress. It is crucial that this central organ of the United Nations is effective and seen as legitimate and representative of the world community.

Lastly, the acknowledgement of the ‘responsibility to protect’ in the World Summit Outcome was an historic advance. We, the Member States, must now live up to it. From the days before the United Nations, we must never forget the horrors of the Holocaust. And in the time of the United Nations, we have seen the horrors of Cambodia, Rwanda and Srebrenica without taking action. The same tragedy must not befall the people in Darfur or elsewhere. The responsibility to protect must move from declaration to action.

Last September, I observed that the World Summit Outcome would be judged by our efforts this year to implement it. I believe we have done fair justice to the document. But the issues that our leaders could not

agree on have not gone away – far from it. Both non-proliferation and disarmament issues and the desperate need to bring greater justice to world trade have troubled us greatly this year. I call on you all to redouble your efforts to bring new energy to deal with these challenges.

But all in all, I as President of the General Assembly would say that you can be satisfied with what we together have achieved. The 60th General Assembly session's score-card is a good one. You have, in my view, revitalized the General Assembly by your willingness and ability to take strong and decisive action.

But our work is not finished. Many items on our reform agenda represent work in progress. We need to make extra efforts to ensure that the United Nations principal organs work effectively and harmoniously together. And we have to make sure that we inside the United Nations family, together with all those outside, work better, both together at Headquarters and in the field.

We should recognize and build on the great potential of regional organizations, the private sector, civil society and non-governmental organizations. We must remember that the word “together” is more powerful than the word “alone”.

Secretary-General, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

There are no fewer tensions in the world of September 2006 than there were in 2005. During the last two months we have seen growing tensions and explosions of violence in the Middle East. We must realize the futility of military confrontation and recognize the urgent need for political solutions.

More than ever before, we also need to focus on the underlying lack of dialogue among civilizations, cultures and nations. There is an obvious need for deeper understanding, wider knowledge and greater mutual respect between different parts of the global community.

This lack of understanding, knowledge and respect goes to the core of many of today's problems. We must face these issues squarely and accept that, while doing this, we have to face some fundamental issues related to conflict, poverty, injustices and human indignity.

Of course, the United Nations is not professing to solve these problems alone. The United Nations is not a panacea, a universal cure. On some issues, we may have shown the road ahead. The critics of the United Nations have not fallen silent – rightly so, when it comes to pointing at festering conflicts, mass killings, hunger and global threats.

But at different times through the year, we have seen Member States from all regions turn to the United Nations for multilateral solutions.

And this you have done despite the suspicions and mistrust so evident in the world, and despite the fact that Member States often have widely differing agendas. You have risen from the national to the international on so many occasions, for which I am deeply grateful.

Thus, we may have passed, in several respects, the test of multilateralism.

For this, I want to thank you warmly: you the representatives of the Member States, you the members of the General Committee, you the Vice Presidents of the General Assembly, you the Chairs of the Main Committees, and you the Co-Chairs and facilitators in the reform negotiations. Without your dedicated and skilful work I would have nothing to report today.

I also want to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his unfailing commitment to the principles and ideals of the United Nations, for his initiation and support of the reform process – and for his friendship over many years.

My gratitude is also directed to the Secretariat – especially the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management - and to the wider United Nations family. And it goes to many representatives of civil society and the NGO community, who are such great advocates for a strong United Nations and for international solidarity.

Last, but certainly not least, I want to express my limitless appreciation and warm thanks to the great staff of my office, who are indeed a microcosm of the United Nations. Your dedication, literally day and night, throughout this crucial year for the United Nations goes beyond both labour laws and the normal call of duty for international civil servants.

And I want to take this opportunity to extend the warmest of welcomes to my successor as President, H.E. Haya Rashid Al Khalifa. She is an accomplished lawyer, an experienced diplomat and a great believer in the United Nations. She is also the first female General Assembly President since 1969. It's about time, as I am sure you will agree. I know that you will all extend to her the same cooperation and friendship I have been so privileged to enjoy.

Secretary-General, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

In conclusion: "Well done". But again, let us not forget: we have serious work ahead. Much is at stake: our common security, the well-being of all, the quality of our individual lives and indeed, the quality of our heritage on Planet Earth, for the next generations. In all this, the United Nations and good multilateralism are indispensable for all of us. And remember: the United Nations is only as effective as its Member States wish it to be.

So I say to you: though you may be weary, do not falter. This year's reforms were unprecedented – but not enough. Have we kept alive the

dream of a United Nations that can live up to the expectations and aspirations of our peoples? Have we re-established the United Nations and international co-operation as the best way to manage our global affairs? We have only just begun.

The real test was not the past year. The real test is the years to come. Will we tackle the hardest issues of all, and follow through on what we have already done? Will the 60th Session be remembered as a temporary peak of activity, or the start of a renaissance?

If we are feeling daunted as we look at the year ahead, we can draw inspiration from my fellow countryman, Dag Hammarskjöld, who said:

“When the morning's freshness has been replaced by the weariness of midday, when the leg muscles give under the strain, the climb seems endless, and suddenly nothing will go quite as you wish -- it is then that you must not hesitate.”

Secretary-General, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates – thank you for all you have done this year, and in the interests of all our peoples, do not hesitate as you carry the torch of multilateralism forward in this troubled and uncertain world.