

PRESS RELEASE



DJIBOUTI

STATEMENT

**BY HIS EXCELLENCY
ISMAIL OMAR GUELLEH**

**PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI**

**BEFORE THE 59TH SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

WEDNESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2004

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Mr. President,

The protracted period of tension in which the international community finds itself has served to reinforce the need for greater cooperation and commitment. It has, therefore, been most opportune that for the past year the General Assembly has benefited from the capable guidance of His Excellency Mr. Julian Robert Hunte as President. With your long and rich experience, rare skills and diplomatic acumen, Mr. President, we are confident you are at the right place, at the right time.

There is much to admire in the manner by which Secretary-General Annan has maintained, even increased, the relevance of the United Nations in today's most critical issues. The degree at which the United Nations is both consulted and participates in most pivotal events and tensions around the world, is a tribute to Mr. Annan's exemplary leadership and qualities.

He is also to be commended for the closer working relations he was able to foster with the private sector and civil society through the "Global Compact", with the aim of offering help and expertise to needy communities and the youth.

Mr. President,

As the Secretary General remarked in his recent Report on the Work of the Organization, the United Nations, in fact the world, has been through a most challenging year. Many of us are indeed traumatized by the drama of terrorism, the brutal repressions taking place in many parts of the world and the tensions and developments in Iraq. For the majority of the world's people, however, the most immediate threats are those of poverty, hunger, unsafe drinking water, environmental degradation and endemic or infectious diseases, such as AIDS and Malaria. Overall, he notes, that we have departed considerably from the vision and spirit of the Millennium Declaration of 2000, which embodied the aspirations of our time --- a world united by common values, with a common goal of providing a better life for humanity, in an environment of peace and security.

Unfortunately, events related to terrorism have shaken our sense of common purpose, as the Secretary-General notes. The tragedy of September 11, 2001, the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, the never-ending bloodshed in the Middle East, and other disturbing incidents around the globe, have "profoundly divided the international community.... on how to ensure our collective security". While there exist enough examples of state terrorism, terrorism has become essentially stateless, and is able to melt away at a moment's notice while enlisting participation across borders, nationalities and inclinations. Although there is no disputing the fact that it must be confronted promptly and vigorously, the knee-jerk reaction of crushing it militarily fails to address its many manifestations, or get at its roots and causes. As we contemplate solutions to problems, or seek a way out of political predicaments that have been building quietly for decades, we need to pay extra caution to our prejudices, biases and fears.

We must also accept that terrorism is not a faith or ideology. It may well be a tactic or strategy usually undertaken as a last resort by those who view themselves, their faith, beliefs, or physical environment, as endangered. While acts of terrorism need certainly to be addressed, to do so with only cursory lip service to the possible underlying causes, can be fatal and in itself destructive. No one should excuse what is happening in many places today --- the brutal and heinous crimes --- but, let us face it, those situations still require solutions.

The world community is threatened by the instability this phenomenon entails. We cannot underestimate the importance of realistic foreign and development policies directed at resolving tensions and reducing poverty. Clearly, a way must be found to bring the world together to heal differences and to eliminate reasons for misunderstanding. The words and thoughts of the past American President Franklin D. Roosevelt, are relevant here. For him security meant not only safety from attacks by aggressors, but also economic, social and moral security. Essential to peace is a decent standard of living for all individuals, he stated, for freedom from fear is eternally linked with freedom from want.

Mr. President,

We are all familiar by now with the commitments made by World Leaders at the General Assembly 2000 Millennium Conference. Critical needs and ills confronting mankind were identified and it was resolved they would be dealt with in various ways and by specific dates. These Millennium Development Goals, or MDGs, of which there are eight, guide the world's quest to eliminate poverty and hunger while improving health, education and the environment.

Sadly, an evaluation of progress toward reaching these goals by the target dates, reveals we are making erratic progress. A recent study in Geneva concludes the world is scarcely making a third of the effort necessary to achieve these "modest" targets. In particular, Goal 8 calls for a global partnership of rich and poor countries for development, envisioning substantial increases in ODA, a reduction or cancellation of LDC debts, the removal of protectionist barriers for agricultural products, and access to the markets of industrialized countries. Needless to say, progress in Goal 8 has been limited. It is the only MDG lacking a deadline or time-table, and is hampered by the apparent reluctance of developed countries to meet their commitments.

Mr. President,

Of the 50 LDCs, thirty four are in Africa. Although five or six African countries are close to graduating from the LDC ranks, in fact only one has successfully made the transition leap. Attempts to mobilize domestic resources through the private sector will require more time and funds. Low savings and investment ratios signal a huge shortfall in resources needed for development. Undoubtedly, there is a strong rationale for a consistent, increased flow of development aid to this group of countries.

Africa's need for development assistance has created the impression that the continent is a major financial burden to the international community. In fact, while Africa is disproportionately aid dependent, it does not receive a disproportionate amount of aid. Overall, as things stand, LDCs will not be able to reduce poverty, achieve universal primary education, or reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS to the targets set for the 2015 deadline. A report by UNCTAD describes how LDCs are woefully deficient in savings for investment in capital formation, public investment and essential services. The report goes on to say... "the conclusion is unequivocal: on the basis of domestic resources alone, LDCs cannot lift themselves out of poverty."

Now, in the post 9/11 world, a new rationale for aid is emerging. Aid is increasingly seen as a potent force in the war on terror by providing support to both frontline and weak states where terrorism could breed.

Additionally, there is a mounting recognition that global poverty and inequality threaten national security interests.

Despite this realization, however, aid programs have become more selective designed to reach a small group of countries who are in some way "qualified". The problem is that many countries fail to qualify for aid. Something must be done for the millions suffering in those countries, as well. To ignore them is at our own peril.

Mr. President,

Common sense tells us that conflict is endemic. Scarcely a place in the world has escaped its outbreak. Yet, the reality is that virtually no new civil wars have broken out recently, and there has been a fall in the number of continuing conflicts within and between States. We get the sense that although the number of victims has risen sharply, the number of terrorist incidents have in fact been tending downward. That said, fewer people are being killed by war than at almost anytime in the past century. Fewer wars are beginning and many old ones are ending. This is particularly true in Africa, where some seven millions souls perished in the conflicts of Angola, Congo, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Somalia. With the exception of the Darfur region in the Sudan, each appears to be over, winding down or stable. Of course, we are all deeply saddened by the scale of tragedy in Darfur. This issue, however, needs to be tackled with the greatest care, clarity, fairness and seriousness. We must be cautious about pervasive generalizations and prejudices. We need to direct our efforts to the right solutions.

Conflict, of course, requires weapons; and reducing this peril calls for a halt in arms shipments. These shipments divert vital resources from other critical needs. The countries of Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa spend some \$ 22 billion for arms each year, more than two thirds the value of arms deliveries worldwide.

Solidifying peace in the world calls for more preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and additional peacekeeping missions. Unless fully supported by the international community through additional resources, further operations would strain UN planning, force generation, logistics, procurement, and command and control capabilities.

What is required, therefore is greater assistance for regional peacekeeping capabilities, particularly in Africa.

Action "by all means" must increasingly come to mean through the United Nations. This is the only path that confers a degree of legitimacy for any actions taken. UN action usually means Security Council approval. Here it must be noted that the Council continues with its legacy of World War II in terms of its structure. Further, the extraordinary growth in UN membership is not reflected in the Council. There is clearly an urgent need for a stronger voice of the developing world in the Council, and a more realistic and fairer distribution of both its composition and membership. The reform of the Security Council is therefore long overdue; and there is an urgent need to expand in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, embracing developing and developed countries as new members. We are pleased with the establishment of a panel by the Secretary-General to assess the role of the UN in dealing with new global threats, challenges and changes. Some of its initial soundings cover the expansion of the Council, holding members to their commitment to contribute to world peace and security, and a full review of the Council's work after every decade, including the manpower and financing needs of peacekeeping missions. We await their report this December to the Secretary-General, and his own observations by the next Assembly Meeting.

Mr. President,

Following the Arta Conference that we initiated and whose outlines we presented to this Assembly several years ago, the IGAD Member States considered it necessary to complete this process by broadening its base. We are delighted that to date the Somali reconciliation Conference in Nairobi (Kenya), under the auspices of the IGAD, achieved tangible progress. A particular recognition should be addressed to all IGAD Member States for their sacrifice and devotion, especially to our brothers of Kenya, whose good offices, patience and steadfastness allowed the negotiations to continue even in the most critical moments.

Indeed, the Somali representatives, spurred by the determination and common vision of the region, and the political and financial support of the International Community, worked relentlessly to set up the first pillar of the Somali government institutions i.e. the Transitional Parliament. This first stage, warmly welcomed by the Somali people within the country as well as in the Diaspora, and the International Community, as a whole, finally engendered a sense of hope that the reign of anarchy and chaos will soon come to an end in Somalia.

Mr. President,

The divergences of views that prevailed for a long time among the countries of the region on ways and means of resolving the Somali conflict has now yielded to common sense and collective solution, to work in harmony and to collaborate in a sincere and brotherly spirit towards the ultimate goal of helping Somalia in restoring legitimacy and lasting peace.

The misunderstandings and difficulties encountered during the process have given cause to the regional actors to review their positions, reflecting the emerging wishes and solidarity of IGAD Countries towards the need to coalesce in order to help the Somali people setting up a broadbased and legitimate government. This Conference has culminated in a Somali Transitional Parliament, in which all the factions and various components of the Somali civil society are represented, such as the intellectuals, professionals, women... etc). Last week, the members of Parliament elected a Speaker, and today, they are electing his deputies before proceeding on October 10th, to elect the President of the Transitional Government.

Indeed, the facts bear out that we are today in a significantly different mood than the past, because it seems the Somalis people are this time more determined for a robust dialogue leading to an outcome. And as a region we have shown that we are collectively committed to achieving the goals agreed upon. It is now the responsibility of the International Community to act in tandem... in a strong and decisive manner to assist Somalia:

1. By providing the necessary financial and political support to enable rapidly the new Government to function.
 - a) To rehabilitate infrastructures needed to house the new Government.
 - b) To provide crucial budgetary support to pay wages and other administrative expenditures
 - c) To tackle the security issues head-on, in particular, with the implementation of Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration programs (DDR).

During the In this crucial phase of the first six months, the actions undertaken by the New Government will determine the capacity of its legitimacy; as it proceeds to consolidate the gains and the outcome of the process with the aim of addressing the formidable expectations of the Somali people.

2. At the political level, the new Transitional Parliament is an all-inclusive body, including members of the armed factions. By agreeing to be sworn in as members of this National Assembly, all its members in particular, the armed factions are accepting the primacy of the rule of law, responsible norms of behavior, and disarmament and demobilization. Any contrary attitudes, actions or activities, which will undermine the efforts to pacify the country or frustrate the effectiveness of the new Government, should not be tolerated or accepted anymore by the region or the International Community.

In this respect, the Security Council entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security, may be called upon to act in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations to determine appropriate measures in the event the new state confronts deliberate obstacles in the implementation of its mandate .

- In specific terms, it is important to establish a regime of sanctions directed against those who will continue to undermine the government's efforts.

Mr. President,

We are convinced that this is a unique opportunity for the International Community to put an end to the long-lasting conflict in Somalia. We need to acknowledge the changes that have taken place. The Somalis are determined and the region is united. We should, at all costs, avoid witnessing a resurgence of similar scenario we experienced in the past. Let us seize this opportunity. Let us, together, help Somalia in its quest for peace, stability, and unity.

Mr. President,

So far the uncountable number of resolutions, commitments, initiatives and peace processes to resolve the long festering Middle East conflict remain at best rhetorical. Such a clear-cut reaffirmation as the two-state solution, namely --- a secure Israel side by side with a viable Palestinian State --- rings hollow in the wake of relentless plans for large expansion of illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied West Bank, building thousands of homes on land confiscated from Palestinian families. All this sounds familiar --- we have witnessed in the last three and a half decades the blatant confiscations of Palestinian land, farmlands and water resources. The oppression and devastation occurring in Palestine transcends comprehension. And Palestinians continue to struggle against all kinds of odds to maintain some semblance of civil order.

Mr. President,

To make an already explosive situation worse, Israel, in defiance of international law and public opinion, embarked on building a separation wall, which is cutting into Palestinian territory, well beyond Israel's 1967 borders, thus creating facts on the ground. And, as we all know by now, Israel's proposed tactical withdrawal from Gaza is not a prelude to a Palestinian statehood. All these deliberate, unabated moves and actions have made a

mockery of the so-called "Road Map", and thus, rendered it worthless; the same fate that met the Oslo Accords.

Mr. President,

Abandoned by the international community, the Palestinians are struck with an indefinite deprivation, a sense of hopelessness and statelessness. That being the case, this Assembly has perhaps the sad duty to pronounce itself incapable of constraining Israel, a member state of this body... rather than continuing to give false hope to a people that has already lost everything.

Mr. President,

Djibouti has been fortunate in achieving a period of sustained growth, stability and improved governance, in a strategic location at a crossroad of the seas, serving as a gateway to the growing African and Middle Eastern markets. Many of our facilities are presently undergoing considerable improvements to respond to, and take advantage of the growing demands. In addition, a new modern port is under construction in phases, the first phase being an oil terminal expected to be operational by this time next year, followed by a major container terminal, and a free zone that will be first of its kind in Africa, offering light manufacturing and value added activities and services in a duty free setting, including warehousing, storage and distribution.

We owe deep gratitude to the inspiring and pragmatic leadership of Dubai, our key partners in this visionary venture, that will undoubtedly put Djibouti on the map of international trade and shipping.

Djibouti seeks to improve its private sector development by reducing the cost of doing business, improving its labor force through investments in education, health and social protection, and eliminating gender disparities. The government also recognizes that it must strengthen institutional capacity and governance, while enhancing the absorptive capacity to manage as well as effectively utilize the much needed donor support.

The Horn of Africa has seen its share of conflict and natural disasters. Together with our friends in the region, we are resolutely engaged in mitigating the plight of our people, reducing tensions and conflict, and enhancing cooperation in the areas of transport, communications, health and the environment. Regional and international security issues, in particular, the fight against terrorism, are of primary concern to all the countries in the Horn of Africa. We are doing all we can together with our international partners. The same is true of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, tuberculosis and malaria. There is no alternative for our region other than coalesce toward enhanced cooperation in all areas of economic development and improvement in confidence-building measures. Djibouti, a friend of all, and a foe of none, will spare no efforts in further broadening and deepening the search for greater regional harmony and cooperation; while promoting a pluralistic, open, and healthy society at home.

Thank you, Mr. President