

**STATEMENT BY  
THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**THE HONOURABLE  
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**TO THE 59<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

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Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I have the honour to address the 59<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly for the Republic of Italy, which fully shares the statement made earlier by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Bernard Bot, on behalf of the European Union.

This year's general debate unfolds against an international backdrop in which terrorist acts of great ferocity have become all too common. The latest, heinous form of terrorism is hostage-taking, which has caused deep sorrow to many of our nations. Again and again the international community has been caught off guard, unable to respond quickly and effectively. New humanitarian catastrophes have afflicted some of the world's poorest peoples. Difficult stabilization processes are still underway in many regions where the international community is implementing the United Nations resolutions.

Some areas of the world have seen economic and social progress. Yet we cannot ignore that entire regions, especially in Africa, are crippled by poverty, malnutrition, disease and illiteracy. This is why Italy takes a leading role in combating these ills in multilateral fora and through bilateral means.

Our peoples demand security. We must join forces to strengthen international cooperation and confront the common threat of terrorist organizations. The false prophets of terror spread their message of death also thanks to ignorance between cultures. To counter their distortions, we should mobilize people's consciences and strengthen dialogue among civilizations with different histories but also with shared values and a common belief in human dignity.

Mr. President,

Peace and development - the agenda of security and the agenda of human promotion - are related goals that require a coordinated approach through multilateral institutions and in a spirit of equal partnership with developing countries. I would like to stress the fundamental importance of the major event that will take place in 2005. This initiative will be a unique opportunity for a comprehensive review of progress toward fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. President,

In our globalized, interdependent world, the international organizations are expected to provide leadership not only through abstract formulations of general principles but also through effective, shared initiatives supported by broad consensus. Our priority is to strengthen the multilateral system and reinvigorate the role of the United Nations. This is the responsibility that the Secretary-General put to us at the last General Assembly. There are two conditions for success: a sounder understanding of the threats we face and a broad consensus on the policies for confronting them. Effective

multilateralism depends much more on political will and shared goals than on structures and procedures.

The multilateral system—which demands responsibility and commitment—is judged by the results it enables. That is why the whole international community must be involved, starting with the States that command greater resources and capabilities. Multilateral decisions can be difficult, but this is no excuse for inaction.

Mr. President,

The starting point for UN reform is a review of the Organization's policies. Italy welcomes the reform of UN peace-keeping and peace building, which we support as the sixth largest contributor to the UN budget and one of the top contributors of troops to peace-keeping operations over the past ten years. Strengthening this critical sector will help to prevent the recurrence of conflicts, consolidate the gains of peace, re-establish the rule of law and guarantee freedom for all. Italy will also continue to support the growing financial, operational and training demands of the new missions particularly in Africa—I am thinking also of NEPAD—and elsewhere.

Crisis management is a UN priority that demands greater coordination of its components and a stronger commitment from Member States to protect human beings and uphold their dignity. We thus look forward to the report of the Panel of Eminent Personalities appointed by the Secretary-General. The membership will have to examine it and discuss its recommendations thoroughly and openly.

Mr. President,

A firm agreement on the United Nations' policies must be upheld by institutions that enjoy the consensus and participation of the membership. We are encouraged by the results achieved so far to improve the functioning of the General Assembly.

On Security Council reform, we have not yet been able to find an agreement that reconciles the different approaches on the table. This should not deter us from seeking solutions that are not divisive. Any decision imposed upon Member States would seriously undermine the credibility of the Council and the legitimacy of its action. Confronted with global challenges of great magnitude, the international community cannot afford profound divisions within its ranks.

Italy is in favour of a Security Council reform inspired by the principles of greater inclusiveness, effectiveness, democratic participation and geographic representation, starting with the developing countries. We are firmly convinced that the best way to pursue such a reform is to establish new non-permanent seats. Since the States occupying these seats would have to be periodically elected, they would be accountable to the general membership.

Some Member States, however, have advocated the addition of new permanent seats: for themselves. We do not believe the Council's difficulties can be resolved through new permanent, irrevocable appointments and national mandates. Such a move would sow division, frustration, and perhaps disengagement among the membership. Important areas of the world would be left without representation. For one, there would be no seat at the table for the Arab and Islamic world. Can the international community really afford this at a time when we are all trying to broaden the dialogue among the different faiths and cultures?

On the other hand, if a broad consensus emerges—and with full respect for the sovereign equality of all UN Member States—we are willing to contemplate more frequent rotation or longer terms for countries that make a greater contribution to the purposes of the United Nations. Should the High-Level Panel's reflections be driven by such a bold and innovative approach, we would strongly support their endeavour.

I am convinced that many other countries would also be ready to accept it.

Mr. President,

A closer relationship should be built between elected members and their regional groups. This would enhance the accountability of elected members and make the Council more representative and its deliberations more legitimate.

Already in San Francisco in 1945, the founding fathers recognized the importance of regional organizations, whose relations with the United Nations are governed by Chapter VIII, and whose role has grown steadily in the years that followed. States belonging to the same region have more and more felt a sense of common responsibility for crises affecting them all. Moreover, regional arrangements provide small to mid-size States with a greater say in the decision-making process of international fora.

More should be done to express these realities at the United Nations and in the Security Council. As a founding member of the European Union, the depositary of its Treaties, and the host for the solemn signature of the new European Constitution, Italy believes that today's 25-member EU has a fundamental contribution to make to the purposes of the United Nations. We have always worked to allow the European Union to speak with a single, more influential voice. We realize, of course, that we are dealing with a gradual process. Nonetheless, we must stay the course and not jeopardize the achievement of this goal in the interest of all of us Europeans.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude with a final, strong appeal to the membership. Let us join forces, abandon national ambitions, and seek the least divisive ways to enhance multilateralism. This is the only way the international community can meet the global challenges of the new millennium. In deciding between the satisfaction of the few and the inclusion of the

many, the wrong choice is a luxury that the United Nations, at the very heart of the international system, can ill afford to make.