



LITHUANIA

59th SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL DEBATE

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. VALDAS ADAMKUS
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

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22 September 2004
New York

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to start by expressing my sincere thanks to President of the previous General Assembly session, Julian Hunte, whose able and skillful leadership we enjoyed during the past session. I also wish the lean Ping, President of the 59th session, a year of highly constructive and successful work.

It is our common duty to make this 59th session a success and a fitting preparation for the 60th anniversary of the United Nations and the first high level review of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, to be held next year.

I believe these two occasions will offer an excellent framework for a serious review of how the changing global situation can be met by a renewed United Nations.

Mr. President,

The risks and challenges of the new millennium affect us all and can only be tackled by common efforts. Threats like terrorism recognise no borders, no differentiation by race, religion, or ethnicity. The horror, devastation and fear terrorism brings are the same whether in Casablanca, Madrid, New York, Jerusalem or Beslan. Terrorism cannot be justified. And there can be no excuses and no leniency in confronting it. The fight against terrorism must remain one of the priority tasks of individual member states and of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

Even as we talk, humanitarian crises, poverty, famine, and diseases continue to plague large parts of the world. Across the globe, almost a billion people survive with less than a dollar a day. In Sub-Saharan Africa alone around 300 million people live in absolute poverty.

In Iraq, the hope for universal and free elections is marred by almost daily explosions, and the security remains too precarious for the UN to resume its pivotal role. The Middle East conflict continues the desperate count of deaths. And the word genocide is once again on our lips, due to the Darfur crisis in Sudan.

We therefore need to go an extra mile, to put an extra effort to empower the United Nations to deal successfully with these and other threats and challenges. Because the United Nations, for all its criticism, remains the only organization capable of embodying the principles of a truly global and effective multilateralism. The UN can offer a global reach and legitimacy necessary to bring the international community to action.

Mr. President,

As the nature of threats before us is changing and new responses are needed, it is high time to agree on future policies and principles. Today we need to build a shared understanding of the nature of modern threats to international peace and security. Much depends on the ability of the United Nations - that is, on us - to reach a new consensus on collective security. Our strength lies in our resolve to deal collectively with major challenges to peace, security, and sustainable development.

Today more than ever before the United Nations has to play the leading role in building societies that follow the path of good governance, respect human rights and the rule of law. We must be able to intervene and prevent situations of massive human rights violations.

We must also be firm in our struggle against all attempts to encroach at human dignity, against all forms and manifestations of intolerance, anti-Semitism, racism, or islamophobia.

Mr. President,

International community is vulnerable to the dangers posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international organized crime, the spread of highly dangerous diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, or environmental degradation. Our common efforts against these and other threats must be universal, consistent, systematic and unwavering.

No less universal and consistent must be our efforts to reduce poverty and hunger, to diminish disparities between and within nations, to improve the condition of living for women and children, and to offer a hope of a dignified living to ever larger segments of world population, as pledged in the Millennium Declaration.

We need to press ahead with the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. We need reinforce our political will to make our global partnership more effective, by fully honoring the commitments undertaken by the Monterrey Consensus.

Mr. President,

Without peace there is no development. Without development there is no peace. This recognized linkage of security and development should be better reflected on our global agenda. Only by confronting these issues in a coherent and coordinated manner shall we be able to build our common future.

Lithuania is ready to contribute bilaterally and multilaterally to the implementation of the Millennium Goals, also by sharing our experience of national reform process. Our membership in the enlarged European Union and North Atlantic Alliance enables us to play a more active role by embracing the principles of development policy and adopting the role of a donor.

Mr. President,

Next year we shall be discussing how to find consensus on the institutional and political framework for the UN to operate in the future. Lithuania fully embraces the need of the reform of the United Nations for the sake of enhancing its effectiveness and inclusiveness. We hope that the outcome of the deliberations of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change will be able to contribute significantly to giving a renewed impetus to the reform of the United Nations. If so, the next test will be to find broad agreement on changes and follow their implementation.

I hope too that next year will be crucial to move ahead with the long debated reform of the Security Council. The issue is not whether the Security Council should be enlarged. It is how to make it effective and representative. Therefore, Lithuania fully embraces the idea of ensuring broader representation and responsibility of the Security Council.

ECOSOC, too, must be renewed and strengthened. By dedicating ourselves to ECOSOC reform we have a real chance to make it an effective tool in the hands of active and responsible UN members.

Mr. President,

It is my hope and wish that by the end of this session we shall arrive at marking the 60th anniversary of the United Nations with a conviction and satisfaction that we have done everything in our power to build a better organization, capable of responding to both, old and new, hard and soft threats and challenges in an effective and comprehensive way.

Fully aware that the United Nations was created to serve us as mankind, let us embrace this challenge. Let us make true the promise of the United Nations capable of fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of the peoples to whom it was created to serve.

Thank you.