

EU
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**PERMANENT MISSION OF
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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**ADDRESS
ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

BY

**THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF
THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS**

H.E. Dr. BERNARD BOT

**59th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations
General Debate**

NEW YORK, 21 SEPTEMBER 2004

Mr. President, Heads of State and Government, Mr. Secretary-General, ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is an honour for me to address the 59th General Assembly of the United Nations on behalf of the European Union.
2. With its 25 member states, the European Union represents 13% of the UN membership and accounts for almost thirty percent of the world's economy. Our contributions to the UN go further: EU member states pay more than 36% of the UN regular budget and about half of all voluntary contributions to the UN Funds and Programmes. They contribute more than 50,000 troops to UN-led and UN-authorized international peace missions.
3. We in the EU are proud of our contribution to the United Nations and to international cooperation. But we are not complacent. We understand that our security and prosperity are inextricably linked to the fate of others. We know that we cannot isolate ourselves from cross-border threats and challenges. We realise that climate change does not respect nationality, ethnicity or religion. That HIV/AIDS knows no borders and that terrorists kill indiscriminately. No nation can respond to these threats in isolation; the only way forward is collective action.
4. In a world of global threats, global markets and global media, our security and prosperity depend more and more on an effective multilateral system. The search for a strong, rule-based international society is more imperative than ever.
5. That is why reform of the United Nations, with a view to making it stronger, more effective and more efficient, is a high priority for the European Union. The EU remains committed to multilateralism and a rule-based international order, with the United Nations at its core. What gives great strength to the United Nations is its legitimacy. It has no substitute in the international community. It is unique. But the Organisation must adapt to changing circumstances. The reform efforts that have already been set in motion by the Secretary-General, must be intensified and deepened with a view to making the UN stronger, more effective and more efficient.
6. The EU looks forward to the report of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and to the Secretary General's recommendations, which will be submitted to the General Assembly. Next year the General Assembly will meet at the highest level to review progress in honouring all of the commitments of the UN Millennium Declaration. The review must be comprehensive, balanced and effective. The summit must deal with the major concerns, all interlinked, of peace, security, poverty and sustainable development. The recommendations in the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation are an important contribution to the review.
7. We have committed ourselves to combating poverty and promoting sustainable development. The MDGs must be achieved. Urgent action is called for. Both developing and developed countries, must set in place a range of measures which include good governance, expansion of trade opportunities, in particular for developing countries and an increase in Official Development Assistance, as agreed at the Monterrey Conference. The EU is committed to these objectives. It is very much

on track in increasing its ODA to 0.39% of GNP in 2006 as part of a longer-term effort to raise ODA contributions to 0.7% of GNP.

8. Combating HIV/AIDS must be an integral part of our global campaign against poverty. As one of the most devastating pandemics in human history, HIV/AIDS is literally a "disease of mass destruction". A disease which strikes ten people every minute. In Africa especially, AIDS is tearing society's fabric apart. Fighting that disaster is a priority for us all.
9. The prevention of HIV/AIDS is inextricably linked to sexual and reproductive health and rights. We wish to reaffirm our commitment to the agenda of the International Conference on Population and Development and will do so again at the tenth anniversary commemoration on 14 October. Reproductive health and rights are an essential part of development.
10. One of the greatest threats to international peace and security today is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The international community must effectively address this challenge. The EU adopted a comprehensive and coherent strategy against the proliferation of these weapons last December, covering a wide spectrum of measures. The EU is guided by the conviction that a multilateral approach to security is the best way to maintain international order. That is why we are firmly committed to uphold, implement and strengthen the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements. The multilateral treaty system provides the legal and normative basis for all non-proliferation efforts.
11. International treaty regimes and export control arrangements are in place to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. These instruments, however, have not succeeded in putting a complete stop to proliferation. Additional measures are necessary, in particular to combat the risk of terrorist organisations gaining access to those weapons and delivery systems. In this context, the EU welcomes the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1540, which is fully in line with the EU strategy.
With others, the EU will also explore the possibility of establishing a relationship between the United Nations and the Hague Code of Conduct on Ballistic Missile Proliferation.
12. Terrorism is another threat that can be dealt with only by effective multilateralism and close international cooperation. Terrorists' capacity to strike is still very substantial, as shown by the heinous attacks in several countries over the past year. I wish to reiterate that the EU utterly condemns all terrorist acts, irrespective of their alleged motivations, and to express the EU's profound solidarity with the victims of such acts.
13. The EU welcomes the development of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, which will strengthen the UN's ability to oversee implementation of anti-terrorism resolutions and conventions. Obviously, the UN can do its work well only if member states honour their commitments and assume their responsibilities. Equipping the UN to deal with terrorism also demands readiness to act in situations in which states cannot or do not wish to implement their international obligations in the fight against terrorism.

14. Which brings me to the issue of human rights - another common concern. Human rights lie at the core of the work of the United Nations. The EU fully agrees with Secretary-General Annan's statement that terrorism must not be used as an excuse to trample on human rights. States must ensure that any measures taken to combat terrorism comply with their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law. We must protect the universal values and fundamental freedoms whose enjoyment is seriously impaired by acts of terrorism.
15. The European Union is a committed supporter of initiatives to improve the implementation of human rights obligations world-wide and at country level. The EU recognises the responsibility of the international community to protect mankind from genocide, war crimes, and grave and massive violations of human rights. The EU welcomes the introduction of the human rights-based approach into the work of all UN agencies and programmes. This will ensure that UN assistance activities contribute to achieving such rights for everyone everywhere. Our own initiatives in that area often complement and strengthen those initiated within the UN framework. We especially welcome the close cooperation between the EU and the UN special mechanisms in respect of children in armed conflict and human rights defenders.
16. The valuable work being done by the UN, especially by the Special Rapporteur against Torture, in pursuit of the prevention and eradication of all forms of torture is strongly supported by the EU. The EU would also like to take this opportunity to reaffirm its opposition to the death penalty.
17. The European Union stresses the importance of the International Criminal Court in putting an end to impunity and strengthening the rule of law throughout the world. It will pursue its efforts to ensure the widest possible ratification of, and accession to, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
18. The world needs a United Nations that can intervene decisively to prevent, limit, and put an end to military conflicts. An estimated 40% of countries emerging from civil wars relapse into conflict within five *years*. The lesson – familiar but often forgotten – is that the United Nations system must be better attuned to how such conflicts can be prevented and peace preserved. No matter how difficult, preventing conflict and preserving a precarious peace is less costly than intervening in a full-blown conflict.
19. The European Union is aware of its responsibility in that area and is increasing its capabilities to maintain its already significant contribution to conflict prevention, international crisis management and peacekeeping operations. It will also continue to assist other regional organisations to enhance their own crisis management capabilities. The United Nations must intensify its cooperation with those organisations, in part with a view to enhancing their capacity for crisis management in accordance with Chapter VIII of its Charter. To that end, the EU is working with the UN Secretariat to implement the EU-UN Declaration of September 2003 on Cooperation in Crisis Management.
20. Several regional issues warrant special attention. The Middle East Peace Process must be put back on track. That means that the entire international community must back the Road Map – the only road to an agreed negotiated two-State solution. The EU and

its Quartet partners will remain engaged in the search for a settlement. The European Union thinks that this Assembly can make an important contribution to that objective by focusing on substantive issues in the peace process and adopting a pragmatic and constructive approach towards this problem.

21. The Security Council's unanimous adoption of Resolution 1546 marks the restoration of sovereignty to Iraq. The European Union wholeheartedly supports the political process and the new Iraqi interim government and calls on all member states to do the same. It gives its full backing to the holding of democratic elections in January 2005. It is committed to unwavering support of the United Nations' pivotal role in that country. The Iraqi people have suffered so much and deserve the chance to have a better life. Let us offer them that chance.
22. In a similar vein, the process of securing stability, reconstruction and democratisation in Afghanistan must remain an international priority. The Afghans are desperate for peace. They demand a say in their country's future. Over 10.3 million Afghans, more than 40% of them women, have registered to vote in the presidential elections on 9 October. There can be no better sign of their enthusiasm for democracy. The EU will continue its political and financial assistance to Afghanistan and its people.
23. Developments in Africa are cause for both optimism and concern. Increasingly, Africans are taking responsibility for solving the problems of their continent. The progress of the African Union in establishing its architecture for peace and security is a case in point. The EU will use its Peace Facility for Africa to help the African Union build capacity to engage in peace support and peacekeeping operations.
24. The European Union will closely cooperate with the African Union, the United Nations, the Arab League and the United States with a view to harmonising international efforts to contain and resolve the conflict in Darfur. It will continue to support the efforts of the UN, in particular by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.
25. The European Union expresses its concern over the recent increase in tensions in the Great Lakes Region and calls on all countries in the region to adhere to the Principles of Good Neighbourly relations and cooperation. It remains our conviction that the resolution of conflicts in the Great Lakes Region requires a regional approach. In the DRC, the EU supports a more focused and robust mandate of MONUC and related increased capabilities. It is actively examining different options for continued support to UN efforts to strengthen MONUC.
Also, the EU remains deeply concerned about the situation in Zimbabwe and urges that the Government of Zimbabwe establish the conditions for and hold free and fair elections in line with the SADC's August 2004 electoral guidelines.
26. Many courageous men and women are trying to make a difference under the blue flag of the United Nations. Last year's bombing in Baghdad was a tragic demonstration of the fact that the work of the UN is often dangerous. The EU supports the Secretary-General's efforts to improve the safety and security of UN staff. We are keen to discuss his proposals. Through our policies, actions, and resources, we, the member states, bear the responsibility of making it possible for the UN to go where it should.

27. The EU itself is an example of multilateralism at work. Conflicting interests and diverging views still exist within the EU, as they do everywhere. But conflicts are resolved in the framework of common institutions and binding rules. Multilateralism works. A rule-based international order is possible. And necessary. The EU will strive to achieve that goal everywhere.