



NORWAY

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General Debate**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

STATEMENT

BY

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Mr President.

When we met here in the General Assembly last year, it was against the backdrop of the terrible and devastating attack on the UN headquarters in Baghdad. This year we are meeting after a number of terrorist attacks, most recently the gruesome terrorist attack on children on their very first day of school in Beslan, Russia.

Terrorism is not a new threat. But the scale and brutality of recent terrorist operations have altered our lives and our thinking and have forced us to take new measures to protect ourselves against this threat. Terrorism can strike anywhere and any time, but it strikes harder and more often in developing countries. Terrorism is a threat to our security; it creates fear and want, and severely hampers economic and social development. No cause, however legitimate, can justify acts of terrorism.

The fight against terrorism must continue to be a top priority for the UN and the world community. We must act in accordance with international law and human rights. Democratic values and rule of law are our strongest cards in the fight against terror.

Mr President,

We, the members of the UN, have a responsibility to make the Organisation robust enough to address the many tasks we have assigned it. The challenges are many.

Unified efforts are needed to bring peace and stability to Iraq. Security Council resolution 1546 stresses that the international community must help the new Iraqi government in its present effort to create a better future. However, functional national democracies and constitutional institutions are not created by UN resolutions. They can only be created by the Iraqis themselves. The international community and the UN can, and should, facilitate and assist in this process, provided that the necessary security is ensured. Our government fully supports the efforts of Special Representative of the Secretary General Ashraf Qazi and his team of dedicated women and men.

Afghanistan is at a critical juncture. More than 1000 people, both Afghans and internationals, have been killed so far this year. Reconstruction and efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable are blocked. Development activities are key elements in ensuring stability and security. Without security there will be no progress - and without progress, no security. There is a continued need for international security forces. The political process leading to elections is another essential requirement for stability. The UN must continue to play an important role.

Mr President,

While the world is waiting for a political solution to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, the situation continues to worsen. The construction of the separation barrier and the expansion of settlements are serious threats to the two-state solution.

The Israeli plan to withdraw from Gaza and four settlements on the West Bank might be a step in the right direction. This requires that it is implemented in accordance with the Road Map and Security Council resolutions, and in keeping with the vision of a two-state solution.

A viable and well-functioning Palestinian Authority is critical to a peaceful solution to the conflict. The Palestinian leaders themselves have to contribute by implementing reforms as set out in the Road Map. The Palestinian Authority has a clear responsibility to tight Palestinian terrorism.

In my capacity as chair of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) for assistance to the Palestinians, I am encouraged by the many statements that the international community stands ready to assist in implementation of the planned withdrawal. However, key issues must be addressed. Most importantly, withdrawal from Gaza must be carried out in a way that is conducive to the normalisation of the Palestinian economy.

Norway, together with other partners in the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, will host a donor conference before the end of the year. I appeal to the member states of the UN to support the Palestinian Authority.

Mr President,

In Darfur we are facing another crisis which is first and foremost a question of the safety and security of the civilian population, humanitarian access and the provision of food, medicines and shelter. The concern of the international community was expressed in Security Council Resolution 1564 from last Saturday. All armed groups must cease the violence. The Norwegian Government expects the Sudanese authorities to fully comply with the Security Council Resolutions.

The Darfur crisis makes it even more important to continue the Naivasha Peace Process. A Comprehensive Peace Agreement for Southern Sudan will lay the foundation for a national solution to the political issues in Darfur. We welcome the decision to resume the talks between the Government of Sudan and the SPLA in Kenya. We urge them to work without delay to conclude the comprehensive peace agreement.

Targeting humanitarian personnel in conflict areas is absolutely unacceptable. Such acts of violence constitute grave breaches of international humanitarian law. We are being forced to re-think our approach to security. However, it is important to avoid a situation where too strict security rules prevent the UN from acting effectively on the ground. Such rules might create greater distance to the civilian population and thereby a loss of legitimacy and local support.

Providing security for UN personnel is not without costs. When we ask the UN to carry out difficult tasks in unsafe environments, we must also be willing to cover the expenses involved.

We look forward to the Secretary General's recommendations on the basis of the report of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. This report comes at a crucial point in time for the United Nations. The UN needs to take earlier and more co-ordinated action as threats to peace and security emerge. This action also needs to be sustained in a co-ordinated and effective fashion. We agree that our collective security system needs reform. This includes among other issues the sensitive question of Security Council enlargement. We hope that a broad set of concrete recommendations of the High-level Panel will enable us to agree on measures to better meet current and new threats and challenges. The Panel should take care to ensure that both the "hard" and the "soft" security issues are addressed, as well as the linkages between them. Member States have the responsibility to ensure that the Secretary-General's recommendations based on the report of the Panel are actively followed up.

Mr President,

The resolution of armed conflicts is not solely the province of the UN. Regional organisations also have significant contributions to make - and their capacities should be strengthened. The UN is indispensable in delivering legitimacy. Regional organisations, with their local knowledge, are well placed to meet challenges on the ground. Yet the institutional mechanisms for ensuring effective partnership and real burden-sharing between the UN and regional organisations are not in place. This situation must be rectified.

A case in point is the involvement of the African Union (AU) in Sudan. Norway welcomes the response to the Darfur crisis by the AU and its member states. The AU mission must be enhanced, both in a more pro-active direction and in the number of participants. Norway has supported the AU and the UN in providing security and humanitarian relief in Darfur. We stand ready to continue to support these efforts.

I believe that strengthening Africa's capacity for peace-keeping and peace-building is essential if we are to deal with the challenges that UN peace-keeping is facing. For nearly ten years, Norway has contributed to peace-keeping through the Training for Peace in Southern Africa Programme. We plan to expand this program to West Africa.

It is uplifting to see the progress being made in many African countries. We applaud the basic principles and political priorities being addressed by NEPAD. We welcome last week's inauguration of the Pan African Parliament. This strengthening of the political dimension of the regional co-operation testifies to the dedication of African leaders and holds promise of an even more active and efficient role for the AU in the years to come.

Mr President,

Without economic growth there will be no improvement in welfare and distribution, and little hope of peace and security. International trade may be an important engine for creating growth

and welfare. However, this will not happen by itself. A sound base for growth and welfare that benefits all countries can only be created by means of fair trade rules developed through international co-operation. In this respect, the WTO-framework agreement reached in Geneva in July is a milestone. We avoided a deadlock and setback, and can now renew our efforts to achieve substantial progress on the Doha Development Agenda. I noted that President Fula da Silva in his speech said that "a successful Doha Round could take more than 500 million people out of poverty". This certainly shows the opportunities of globalisation. However, ensuring that economic growth actually improves the livelihoods of ordinary people requires adequate domestic policies.

In an ever more globalized world, we need arenas to develop the international guidelines necessary to facilitate co-operation. However, we all need to do our part. It is ten years since the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change entered into force. More than 120 countries have ratified the Kyoto Protocol, and we are now awaiting the ratification that will allow it to enter into force. I welcome the news that Russia is seriously considering the ratification of the protocol, but regret that some countries have not yet been willing to join forces in facing one of the most serious global challenges of our time.

Fulfilling the requirements of the Kyoto Protocol is a first step towards coming to grips with the challenge of climate change. The whole international community, and notably the largest emitters, must make a much more ambitious commitment in this field. And we have no time to lose. In the Arctic region we are already experiencing the effects of climate change, through a rising temperature substantially larger than the global average.

Mr President,

Next year we will take stock of developments since the Millennium Declaration was adopted. This is an opportunity to review progress and, where necessary, intensify efforts to fulfil our commitment to reducing poverty and achieving development. True gender equality and education for all stand out as crucial in this regard. The Summit in 2005 should also focus on international efforts to promote peace-building, reconciliation, global security and respect for human rights. We must take decisive steps during the next General Assembly to meet development targets and create a safer and more peaceful world.

The UN is indispensable as our most universal and representative organisation. Norway has devoted a great deal of effort to building the multilateral system. We are proud of our political and financial contributions to the UN system. We are eager to see the UN strengthened and reshaped, so that it can remain our most important instrument for addressing global challenges. Norway remains committed to supporting the United Nations in meeting these challenges.

Thank you, Mr President.