



S L O V A K I A

STATEMENT BY

**His Excellency**

**Mr. Ivan GAŠPAROVIČ**

PRESIDENT

OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

IN THE GENERAL DEBATE

OF THE 59<sup>th</sup> SESSION

OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)

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**Permanent Mission of the Slovak Republic to the United Nations**

801 Second Avenue, 12th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10017 Phone: (212) 286-8880, Fax: (212) 286-8419

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

Allow me, Mr. President, to begin by congratulating you on your election as President of the 59<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly. I am convinced that your work in this important post will ensure further progress towards achieving our common goals. I wish you the greatest of success, and pledge full support of our delegation. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank your predecessor – His Excellency, Mr. Julian Hunte, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saint Lucia – for his excellent work, and above all, for his personal contribution to the revitalization of the General Assembly.

Mr. President,

It is for the first time that the Slovak Republic is participating in the General Debate of the UN General Assembly as a member of the European Union. Slovakia fully endorses the position set out by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands on behalf of the EU. I am convinced that the enlarged EU will further strengthen its constructive partnership with the United Nations.

Mr. President,

The international community is now facing challenges and threats that were unknown when the Charter of the United Nations was drafted. The multilateral mechanisms set out in the previous century have proven to be less than adequate. Recent global events, accompanied by an increase in new and potentially more dangerous and destructive threats, have clearly demonstrated that no country can cope with security issues single-handedly, let alone tackle them over the long term. There is a greater need than there has ever been before for international solidarity, together with a sense of responsibility on the part of all UN Member States for consolidating peace and stability.

The Slovak Republic is convinced that a multilateral approach is the best response to emerging threats, and that the role of the UN is irreplaceable in maintaining global security. In addition, we also agree with the opinion of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan that the UN can only maintain such a status if it is able to carry out its basic functions effectively, embark upon internal reform, and adapt to current conditions. To this end, the only way forward involves strengthening the authority of UN institutions – by making their work and decision-making mechanisms more efficient. That is why we have welcomed the establishment of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change. Its work will undoubtedly rank among the most important contributions made towards reform in the history of our United Nations. We believe that this team of eminent personalities will provide a realistic definition of how the UN can contribute to global security and development. Slovakia will help turn these objectives into reality.

We perceive the **issue of reforming the Security Council** in the same light. The reform should not only involve the enlargement of the Security Council, but also make its methods and the implementation of its decisions more efficient. The Slovak Republic continues to support the enlargement of the Security Council by both permanent and non-

permanent members, with the aim of ensuring a balanced regional distribution of seats – including the greater representation of the Eastern European region.

In addition, I rest assured that this year's General Assembly will help build a global security system by strengthening and consolidating the Anti-Terrorism Coalition under the auspices of the United Nations, along with the Anti-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council.

Continuing terrorist attacks are leading to significant changes in the area of global security. Terrorists do not shy away from perpetrating the cruellest and most bestial of acts, and as the recent events in Beslan have shown, neither do they hesitate to take the lives of innocent children. Terrorism poses a threat to everyone. No one can be neutral or indifferent. It is necessary that we are resolute and we jointly mobilize our efforts in combating it. The governments of Member States must fight more effectively against this inhuman phenomenon through mutual support, the application of international law, and by improved cooperation between international and regional organisations. The twelve UN anti-terrorism conventions and protocols are of utmost importance in the fight against terrorism, and the UN must continue to play a key role in bolstering legal instruments in this battle. The Slovak Republic supports a prompt approval of a comprehensive convention against terrorism as a whole, along with a convention aimed at averting acts of nuclear terrorism.

Maintaining international peace and security has always been one of the Slovakia's main priorities. We have long contributed military units, observers, and equipment to UN peacekeeping missions. Since our accession to the UN in January 1993, we have participated in 14 UN-led missions – from military observer missions, through humanitarian and demining operations, to peacekeeping duties. Throughout the 1990s, and continuing to the present day, the Slovak Republic has dedicated itself both militarily and politically to the peace process in the Balkans. Nonetheless, Slovakia has never abandoned its efforts to help bring reconciliation and humanitarian aid to other parts of the world. We have gained respect for our participation in UN peacekeeping missions in Africa and the Middle East.

Slovakia also contributes to the training of peacekeeping forces. In line with UN General Assembly resolutions, the Slovak government co-sponsored a UN Seminar held in the Slovak Republic last May, which was attended by a wide range of delegates from over 70 member countries. The seminar discussed the conclusions of the Brahimi Report, which highlighted the importance of standardised training for UN peacekeeping missions.

In recent years, the number of attacks on UN personnel has increased alarmingly. Slovakia is a signatory to the Convention on the Security of UN and Associated Personnel, and appeals to all those countries that have not yet done so to endorse this important international legal instrument, which guarantees protection for UN staff.

Mr. President,

Stabilising the Western Balkans is a global priority, which also has a direct effect on the stability of Europe. For this reason, it is also one of Slovakia's foreign policy priorities. We have fully supported the activities of the UN to date in using its authority well to help resolve the conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the Serbian-Montenegrin province of Kosovo, and in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Slovakia's proactive approach was demonstrated by the political stance it adopted towards the resolution of these conflicts,

along with its participation in peacekeeping missions to Bosnia and Herzegovina (SFOR) and the province of Kosovo (KFOR). We believe that resolving the situation in the province is a prerequisite for the stabilisation of the Western Balkans as a whole; Kosovo still represents a potential source of regional instability. This is why we attribute great importance to next year's evaluation as a part of the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan, which – in the event of a favourable result – could launch a process whereby the future status of this Serbian-Montenegrin province would be defined by the UN. We perceive the UN activities, and its UNMIK mission, as being of great importance in search for a solution that is acceptable to all parties concerned, in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

The Slovak Republic welcomed the transfer of power to a temporary, sovereign, and independent government *in Iraq* at the end of June. The Interim Council, which was recently established by the National Conference, represents a significant step forward in preparing for the elections to be held in January 2005.

I call upon this esteemed Assembly to join us in our absolute condemnation of all acts of violence committed in Iraq aimed at spreading chaos and instability – whether they be assassinations, the taking of hostages, or the intimidation of civilians and public figures.

We welcome the determination of the Secretary-General to continue providing humanitarian aid and support for the political process in Iraq. We believe that the UN must play a leading role when supporting the Iraqi people and the government in their efforts to rebuild their society.

Improving the security situation in Iraq is an essential condition for the building of long-term stability, democracy, peace, and prosperity in the country. A Slovak unit, which specialises in locating and destroying landmines, weapons, and ammunition, is currently engaged in a humanitarian mission there. In addition, Slovakia has stepped up its participation by joining a programme for training Iraqi police officers.

The Slovak Republic supports and appreciates the efforts of the international community to establish security and stability in Afghanistan. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is playing a vital role there, demonstrating how essential international cooperation can be. The most pressing issues we currently face with regard to creating stability in Afghanistan are firstly, the forthcoming elections, and secondly, laying down the foundations of democracy. But in addition to these political processes, establishing favourable conditions for economic development is also essential for Afghanistan's long-term stability. The Slovak Republic is contributing to such efforts through its participation in the ISAF, and its planned involvement in provincial reconstruction teams.

Mr. President,

*The Middle East* peace process must continue in accordance with the Road Map set out by the Quartet and endorsed by the UN Security Council, which envisages the establishment of two separate Israeli and Palestinian states in 2005. Both sides should fulfil their obligations stemming from this plan and preceding UN resolutions. They should also rely upon the international Quartet for help and good counsel when taking these steps.

Mr. President,

Another issue that calls for efficient international cooperation is *the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs)*. The Slovak Republic welcomed the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004), which sets out principles and directs the collective efforts of member states towards preventing WMDs falling into the hands of non-state actors and terrorists. Slovakia also backs the toughening of international treaties that relate to disarmament and prevention of spreading WMDs, including international control mechanisms. As a member of the European Union, the Slovak Republic will also play an active role in implementing the EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Mr. President,

The Major Event in 2005 will enable us to assess in detail the progress achieved in fulfilling the *Millennium Declaration* and the Millennium Development Goals, as well as the integrated and coordinated implementation of conclusions reached at important UN conferences. Please allow me at this point to confirm our full support for the principles and objectives set out in the Millennium Declaration.

Even though we have already entered the new millennium, and are faced with many new challenges, we should not forget about the problems that have long been thorns in all of our sides. Sadly, hundreds of millions of people still suffer from poverty and hunger. Finding specific solutions to *the problems of hunger, poverty, and financing of development* must be one of international community's main priorities. We cannot permit the disparity between the rich and the poor to widen any further.

Convinced as we are that international peace, security, and development are closely linked, *official development aid* and cooperation with developing and transition countries is becoming an integral part of Slovakia's foreign policy. Slovakia's EU membership and its growing economic potential provide both the opportunity and the obligation to cooperate in the field of development. This year, the Slovak government has allocated €25 million for development aid. In 2005, this figure is set to rise to almost €30 million. Slovakia as a new donor country must work to further improve and formalise its mechanisms of providing official development aid. It is doing so with support of the European Commission and the UNDP.

Mr. President,

Severe *humanitarian crises* also pose a threat to peace and security in the modern world. They do not necessarily result only from armed conflicts, but they sometimes have a potential of causing such conflicts. The international community has the means to intervene in humanitarian crises. As for the current humanitarian and security crisis in the Sudanese region of Darfur, I am convinced that the international community in cooperation with the Sudanese government will find a solution to the situation, through economic and financial assistance. The Slovak Republic has provided humanitarian aid to this region, and supports the continuation of peaceful negotiations towards resolving the humanitarian and security crisis there.

Mr. President,

Let me to also address the crucial issue of human rights. We perceive democracy as the system of government that is capable of fully guaranteeing respect for *human rights*, whilst simultaneously ensuring progress, prosperity, and peace. The observance of human rights throughout the world is one of Slovakia's foreign policy priorities. The Slovak Republic is a signatory to all key UN conventions on human rights, and has taken all the efforts necessary to implement their provisions. In addition, the Slovak Republic supports every international endeavour aimed at strengthening human rights mechanisms, as well as the UN's concerted endeavors aimed at establishing international standards in this area.

Mr. President,

The Slovak Republic is fully aware of the enormity of the tasks facing the United Nations in the field of ensuring global peace and security. In this regard, I would like to highlight that *Slovakia is a candidate for the seat of a non permanent member of the UN Security Council* for the term of 2006 and 2007, in the elections to be held during the next session of the United Nations General Assembly in the fall of 2005. I can assure you that in every respect, the Slovak Republic is ready to take on the responsibilities arising from the membership of this key UN body. As my country's Head of State, I feel it important to make this personal pledge before the highly esteemed Session of the UN General Assembly. We want to use our membership of the Security Council to intensify cooperation with member states in all regions, and to be a dependable partner when seeking consensus in the resolution of complicated global-policy issues.

In conclusion, allow me to wish this year's Session of the UN General Assembly the greatest of success; may it reach conclusions that promote cooperation among Member States, international and regional organisations, and non-governmental organisations and associations – based, above all, upon the principle of multilateralism.

Thank you, Mr. President.