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Statement by

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**General Debate
Sixtieth session of the General Assembly**

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Mr. President

Allow me to express the pleasure of the Republic of Croatia at your election to the post of President of the General Assembly. At this crucial moment in the history of the United Nations we are gratified that a friend of multilateralism shall be guiding the work of the Assembly. May I also commend the work of your predecessor Mr. Jean Ping of the Gabonese Republic for his remarkable leadership and tenacity in bringing the 59th session to a successful conclusion.

I would like to extend the sincere condolences of the people of Croatia to the people of the United States of America on the loss of life and suffering occasioned by Hurricane Katrina. We can take some small comfort from the fact that at such times of need nations instinctively reach out to help others_ This provides vivid illustration of the best of humanity and its enormous potential to do good and build a better world.

Mr. President

We believe that the United Nations continue to be indispensable to building a better world. All states benefit from a strong United Nations. Small and medium sized states, which form the great majority of members, can articulate their diverse interests at the global level through this universal forum more effectively than in any other. In the experience of my own country, the United Nations have played a prominent role in its re-emergence as a sovereign state.

Yet the difficulty with which agreement was achieved on the Outcome Document best reflects the present state of the world in which we live. We should not look at this imperfect document through rose-colored glasses. Rather, we should grasp the potential that it holds for moving towards broader and deeper reforms.

While we may have wide agreement on the goal - a more efficient and effective United Nations working in the service of mankind - we have only created some of the contours of reform. As the Secretary General has reminded us, we should not consider that the job has been done. The details remain incomplete.

Let us move now to the details without delay. Let us move forward in assisting developing countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), let us operationalize the Peace Building Commission and the Human Rights Council, let us introduce the required processes to strengthen Secretariat management.

Mr. President

Diplomacy is often about compromise. That word has been used frequently in describing the World Summit Outcome Document. However, compromise should not be used as a synonym for regression. Development is a pillar of the United Nations' mandate and the MDGs are international obligations.

Over the years the development dialogue has resulted in a number of key international documents which bear witness to the progress on poverty-related issues - and the ways in which we have agreed to address these most vital challenges. Johannesburg and Monterrey are prominent among them.

While it is important to reaffirm the agreed international development framework, it is equally necessary to move forward. Comprehensive debt relief, on which there has been progress earlier this year at Gleneagles, and better trade access to the markets of developed countries, which must be an outcome of the Doha round, chart the way forward.

The road to the achievement of the MDGs set five years ago has been an uneven one. There has been rapid growth in some parts of the globe resulting in the movement of millions out of poverty. At the same time Sub-Saharan Africa has stagnated. Small island developing states have special vulnerabilities which threaten their very existence. The achievement of the MDG targets by 2015 requires national and international implementation strategies.

We know that the current level of aid is not enough to achieve the MDGs. It is necessary to look at ways to increase the effectiveness of existing aid, introduce innovative sources of financing, and adhere to the agreed timetable for progressively increasing flows. In this regard, Croatia supports the Declaration on innovative sources of financing for development.

Mr. President

As a country with an economy in transition and as a European Union (EU) candidate, Croatia is undergoing significant internal structural change and external policy scrutiny. We seek to balance these often competing demands by including our MDG obligations within the context of other policy implementation in the transition and EU accession processes. We have developed national development targets based on the MDGs and taking into account our progress to date.

From our coastline with its over 1,200 islands, to its karst hinterland and the mountains and plains beyond, Croatia's environment offers rare diversity in a relatively small geographic area. We are vitally interested in the preservation of our national environmental heritage, as well as the whole of the common environment of mankind. For this reason, we welcome the extensive treatment of environmental issues in the Outcome Document and reiterate our support for the key concept of sustainable development.

Mr. President

An effective multilateral system is reliant upon the interaction of states which are responsible domestic and international actors. In recent years, threats to peace and security have become very common in the parlance of global affairs. With good reason, much effort has been invested in rallying the required international cooperation for the creation of strategies to confront the old and new threats which challenge states. For Croatia, the United Nations should continue to be in the frontline of this process.

The fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime is among the greatest challenges we face today. Last week, the Croatian President signed the Convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism. The agreement on this convention, which took several years to negotiate, is a step forward towards concluding a comprehensive international convention on terrorism. States must make greater efforts to ensure that it comes to fruition during the term of this sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

Croatia regrets that there has been no meaningful progress on disarmament and non-proliferation. The ongoing stalemate coming, as it does, in the aftermath of the unsuccessful Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference in May is a disappointment.

We support the recent efforts by a number of states in relation to the NPT based upon the three pillars of non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful nuclear cooperation, as well as universal adoption of the comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols.

Mr. President

Countries which have had the experience of conflict and have subsequently rebuilt their national capacities and institutions, understand well the link between security and development. Both security and development are individual pillars of the work of the United Nations. However, we know that together they are vital for sustainable development. Security and development are mutually reinforcing, providing the foundations for the well-being of individuals and the States in which they live.

Croatia has taken an active interest in the negotiations on the Peace Building Commission. It is clear that such an intergovernmental body is needed to fill a void in the United Nations system. While the expertise of the United Nations in peace keeping is undoubted, the challenges of building and entrenching peace are different.

We have argued for the inclusion in the membership of the Commission of countries with national experience in peace building. We are pleased that this position has been reflected in the Outcome Document. The inclusion of small states which have, by their own experience, spanned the transition from conflict to relief and then development will add an important dimension which would be absent if the Commission was constituted solely by large, wealthy or powerful states.

The Peace Building Commission should assist states to develop and strengthen their key governance institutions and assist local authorities in creating the conditions for sustainable development, including economic growth. It should always ensure that the process is one which is driven by the state concerned and the key stakeholders within it. If internal conflicts can be quelled and prevented from reoccurring then we are creating the conditions for a safer world.

Mr. President

We believe that reform of the Security Council is necessary, both as to its membership and working methods. We look forward to more progress being made during the current session of the General Assembly on this matter. Clearly, any solution shall require the support of as large a group of member states as possible.

Croatia has been a factor of stability in a neighborhood where past instability has been at large cost not only to the countries in the region but also to the broader international community. Our enhanced cooperation with our neighbors is a sure basis for entrenching stability and ensuring the preconditions for the expansion of economic opportunities for south east Europe as a whole. We shall continue to play this regional role.

Having successfully evolved through the peace building spectrum, Croatia is now playing its part as a contributor to more than half of the United Nations peace keeping operations throughout the world and training peacekeepers from emerging troop-contributor countries. We are using our national experience to help others in need.

We are now ready to take the next step in our responsibilities as a member of the United Nations and as a global citizen. For this reason, the Republic of Croatia has presented its candidature for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council at the elections to be held in 2007.

Mr. President

The postulates within the United Nations Charter on human rights serve as a universal measure for all nations and peoples. They are at the core of the work of the United Nations. This is why we have supported the efforts to reform and strengthen the United Nations human rights machinery.

Croatia supports the decision to strengthen the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and to increase the resources allocated to it. Human rights, as one of the fundamental pillars of the UN system, require these reforms.

Croatia welcomes the decision to establish a Human Rights Council, as a new organ with the responsibility for promoting universal respect for the protection of human rights and addressing their violation, wherever they may occur. We are disappointed that the necessary political will was not found to conclude an agreement on the Council in the lead-up to the World Summit. However, we will work constructively with other member states in seeking consensus so that the as yet undecided elements of the Council are settled during this sixtieth session..

Croatia is pleased to see the inclusion of an agreement on the responsibility to protect in the Outcome Document. The frustration and suffering that can be caused by the inaction of the international community inert in the face of aggression has been witnessed all too frequently. We welcome this positive development as a step towards a new normative framework.

Mr. President

Democracy brings freedom for the individual and contributes to the legitimacy of states. As a signatory of the Warsaw Declaration of the Community of Democracies, Croatia fully recognizes the importance of strengthening democracy and advancing its global acceptance as a universal value. Capacity building can strengthen states by reinforcing the institutions which ensure rule of law, equity of access and stable governance.

Croatia supports the enhancement of the United Nations' capacity to promote and reinforce democratic institutions and practices around the world. We welcome the decision to establish a Democracy Fund and have, as a concrete measure of our support, made a financial contribution towards its establishment.

Only an efficiently functioning United Nations system can respond to contemporary challenges. This requires effective mandates for the principal organs. Yet there are distinctly different conceptions amongst member states of the principle of state sovereignty and these

differences, as we have seen in the recent negotiations, impact directly upon the prospects of attuning the mandates and interrelation of the United Nations principal organs to the realities of the twenty first century. We all have more work ahead of us on this account.

Croatia supports the efforts to introduce significant human resource management reforms in the Secretariat. The United Nations cannot afford to have a Secretariat which is not managed according to contemporary standards and practice. For the same reasons we support system-wide coherence both in management and policy.

Mr. President

There have been many high-minded words uttered on behalf of the United Nations in this chamber during the past week. When we leave this place let us not forget the principles we have invoked and the pledges we have made. Only this can ensure that we accelerate progress toward achievement of both the MDGs and United Nations reform. For its part, you can be assured that the Republic of Croatia shall continue to be a constructive participant in these efforts.

Thank you