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**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. ISIKIA R SAVUA,
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FIJI
TO THE UNITED NATIONS DURING THE 60TH SESSION OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS (NEW YORK)**

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Mr. President,

Fiji extends its warm congratulations to the Organization on the 60th anniversary of its existence, and to you Sir on your assumption of the Presidency of the 60th Session of the General Assembly and to express our confidence in your ability to guide our work during 2005 and 2006.

We also extend our appreciation to your predecessor, H.E. Mr. Jean Ping of the Gabonese Republic, for his outstanding guidance of the difficult business of the 59th Session. We like to place on record our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts and active role to bring about an outcome document that should become the centerpiece that guides our efforts in the many months to come.

Mr. President,

Last week the leaders of our States and Governments adopted a resolution on the outcomes of their deliberations. The document as anticipated did not have every individual expectations rather; it contained those key elements essential to addressing the three pillar issues of security, human rights and development.

Following the outcome, what is required of us is the commitment to support the implementation plan that will be drawn to convert to action what have up to now been merely hopes and aspirations. We must also undertake to ensure that the assistance so rendered trickles right down to the poor, the hungry, the needy and the

hopeless that need it the most. Far too often donations, funds and other forms of assistance are mired in the bureaucratic process and reduced by certain percentages to be passed off as administrative charges.

Fiji fully endorses the Outcome Document and we are committed to action those facets which we as a developing nation is required to pursue for ourselves. The formulation and implementation of the Fiji national sustainable development strategy outlining the visions of our leaders; and targeting the aspirations and objectives of the Summit outcome and the MDGs is paramount. We are in the process of reforming our public and financial sector and limited changes in the private sector. Infrastructure development and improvement are a priority in light of our occupational health and safety standards. Maritime legislations and regulations are being reviewed to ensure the safety at sea for both passengers and vessels alike, and the protection of our maritime resources such as our continental shelf. The principle of restorative justice in pursuit of reconciliation, tolerance and unity is being widely discussed through a democratic process of consultations among the public before it is introduced in Parliament.

Mr. President,

Under the reform of the Secretariat, Fiji subscribes to the thinking that the Secretary General should be empowered to enact the changes he believes best suits the Organization.

We must all help to create a United Nations Organization that is more efficient and accountable. Accountability can be achieved by the establishment of the much discussed oversight committee. The modalities and working methodology of the committee has to include clear and transparent terms of reference and a well balanced regional representation.

The UN must function always with integrity and urgent concern for the needs of member states. Above all, we must help the UN to concentrate, as never before, on reducing the shameful gap between developed and developing countries.

Mr. President,

There should be no pause in UN endeavors to establish and maintain international peace, security, and stability. The Secretary General and his staff are to be commended for seeking peace agreements or in trying to prevent disputes from violently escalating. Peacekeepers from many troop contributing countries deployed

to conflict zones are working not only to provide security but also to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate former fighters; to permit the safe and sustainable return of refugees and strengthen human rights and the rule of law.

We commend the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary General in Iraq and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) in trying to promote an inclusive, participatory, and transparent political transition process in the country. We are privileged to have our troops serving in UNAMI to help in the process.

Mr. President,

Fiji reaffirms its commitment to the UN. As always, we are for peace and this is the reason we have sent many of our soldiers and police officers to serve with the UN's peacekeeping and peace-building forces. Many of our servicemen have lost their lives, but we have accepted this ultimate sacrifice as our contribution to the unceasing global effort for finding peace and security.

Further, while fully appreciating the principles of stand-by force we are at the same time concerned by the fact that those Nations who are unable to properly equip their force are mainly from developing countries and will be marginalized should no arrangement be made to assist them in this area. If this assistance is not forth-coming soon; then peacekeeping is confined only to a select few mainly from developed nations.

Fiji acclaims the proposal for a Peace-building Commission. We will gladly share with such a commission our own experiences of reconstructing our country since the civil unrest which almost tore our country apart in 2000. Mr. President, we ask reconsideration regarding the makeup of the Peace-building Commission for while some of us have served longer than others the size of their contribution gives them an advantage under the current modalities.

We support the UN and other major groups' initiatives at establishing partnerships with regional groups. The South Pacific Region has constantly come together to address common problems that may beset its members. The Regional Assistance Mission in the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) is a peacekeeping/peace-building mission which was mounted by the Region. We would urge the UN to kindly assist in the humanitarian effort to bring the regional initiative on an even keel.

Mr. President,

Fiji is supportive of an enlarged Security Council membership which reflects current geopolitical realities. We maintain our support for the inclusion of India and Japan as permanent members under the new revised arrangements.

We look forward to the moment when peace finally reigns in the Middle East, and we commend all those countries that are helping with this global cause. For our Pacific Ocean region, we would like to see the Korean people, find just peace and lasting harmony. On the future of Taiwan, it is Fiji's fervent hope that a resolution through dialogue conducted in the true spirit of reconciliation, understanding, and devoid of violence can be found; that is agreeable to all parties and which can last for years to come.

Mr. President,

This age of globalization is marked by the adoption of universal principles governing such matters as democracy, human rights, trade and development. Fiji accepts these precepts; there is no question about that.

But we also say that countries like ours, undergoing profound transition, should not be held to unrealistic standards. We need time to evolve, to adapt and adhere. Do not judge us by what might be appropriate to your standards, but measure us by the progress we are making towards the universal ideals and the level of our commitment to change.

Fiji respects the principle of equality of human rights. We endorse the proposal for a Human Rights Council, directly accountable to the General Assembly as an improvement upon the present arrangements. However, in order for the Council to be effective the members have to be as widely represented as possible and are not subjected to special reporting.

Mr. President,

For Fiji, it is vitally important, as a factor for long-term stability, that the special interest of the indigenous people, including their right of ownership to their natural resources is protected; and that a careful balance between the rights of individuals and communities is maintained. This has particular relevance for a multi-cultural country like ours.

In this regard, we strongly endorse the intention to bring to the General Assembly as soon as possible for adoption; a final draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Mr. President,

To fund the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) developing countries ought to have access to markets and a fair return on their exports. This fact is important for Fiji and other small vulnerable States, our very economic survival is dependent upon it. Unrealistic and inequitable world trade policies simply make it much harder for our countries to eliminate poverty.

Fiji commends those developed States which are prepared to assist developing nations in cushioning the impact of WTO compliance. We pay particular tribute to the European Union for its willingness to assist and call on our EU partners to provide adequate long-term support as it begins to reduce preferential process for African, Caribbean and Pacific sugar.

We also express appreciation to our close neighbors Australia, New Zealand and our friends in Asia for their support in helping us get better access to their markets and assistance in other important areas of development.

Mr. President

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is a global concern as it impacts on our ability to achieve the MDGs. A cooperative effort by everyone remains the only way to control and eradicate the scourge. Action which integrates prevention, treatment and the medical and social vulnerability of infected persons should be our guiding principles.

We should not undermine the ravages of other infectious diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis. Effort should also be directed at other scourges such as victims of extreme poverty, and the plight of the disabled.

We can no longer ignore the plight of women and children who through the years have been subjected to sexual exploitation and abuse. Last week Fiji Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase, signed two optional protocols on the rights of the child; the first was "*On the involvement of children in armed conflict*"; and the second on "*The sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.*" In addition Mr. President, Fiji strongly believes that the time is right for stronger action to be taken

to address the issue of, “Young women who are denied the right to sexual and reproductive health.”

Mr. President,

We welcome the decision to hold a 2006 General Assembly High-Level dialogue on International Migration and Development. The amount of remittances from migrant workers has become a rich source of funds and has raised the standards of living of families, contributed substantially to the national economy and provided much needed employment to the job market. Fiji hopes that the High-level dialogue will be the catalyst to enable countries to work in partnership and agree to a better understanding to improve the conditions of migrant workers.

Mr. President,

Terrorism is a blight on all our horizons; it respects no borders; and it is neither an acceptable nor an effective way to advance any cause. Insularity is no longer a cushion to protect islands who believe themselves to be further away from the mainstream of International activities. In trying to fulfill the terms and conditionalities established by the various terrorism conventions more money that can hardly be spared has to be found to fulfill the obligations. In so doing the effort to achieve MDGs is stymied and in some instances stopped.

In this regard, a global effort to combat terrorism has to be instituted to include training, funding, transparency in the exchange of information and intelligence and a pledge to assist when needed.

Mr. President,

Fiji will always be in support of all efforts to reform the United Nations, and initiatives in the fields of security, human rights and development. Our efforts will be modest, commensurate with our ability to provide.

Thank you, Mr. President.