

S U O M I



F I N L A N D

---

Check against delivery

**60th Session of the United Nations  
General Assembly  
General Debate**

**Statement by  
H.E. Ms. Kirsti Lintonen  
Permanent Representative of Finland**

**on behalf of  
H.E. Mr Erkki Tuomioja  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland**

**New York, 23 September 2005**

PERMANENT MISSION OF FINLAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS

866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 222 • New York, NY 10017

Tel: (212) 355-2100 • Fax (212) 759-6156

E-mail: [sanomat.yke@formin.fi](mailto:sanomat.yke@formin.fi) • Website: [www.un.int/finland](http://www.un.int/finland)

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

Let me start by noting that Finland is pleased to see you, Mr. President, preside over this most crucial of General Assembly sessions. We also salute your distinguished predecessor, Jean Ping of Gabon, who worked tirelessly and successfully to strengthen the United Nations and make it more relevant.

Mr. President,

Five years ago, at the Millennium Summit, we set a forward-looking and ambitious agenda for the United Nations for the new Millennium. That success was a result of unique common political will and an optimistic, can-do spirit. At that Summit, the spirit was strengthened and deepened among and by the world leaders. Our successes were further continued in Monterey and in Johannesburg. There was hope of the world moving towards a virtuous circle, of all boats being lifted and both new and old threats being met with common resolve.

The outcome document adopted by last week's World Summit was, in many respects, a step forward. In some others, we failed to match the expectations of our peoples. However, this does not have to signal a permanent erosion of our common political will and common agenda. Rather, I am confident that it has been primarily a result of the immensity of the task at hand - to reaffirm the goals agreed upon five years ago, to assess and expedite the progress made since then and to fundamentally reform the United

Nations organization, all at the same time. We are confident that under your leadership, Mr. President, this session of the General Assembly will be able to make further significant progress. Let me pledge Finland's full support to you as we prepare to assume the Presidency of the European Union during the second half of next year.

Mr. President,

Finland aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union. Let me make just a few additional comments of substance:

Firstly, if one would try and identify the single biggest positive outcome so far out of the momentous process that has been under way at the United Nations since the "Fork in the Road" speech by the Secretary-General two years ago, it would probably be the near-universal acceptance of the close linkage between development, security and human rights. Compared with five years ago, we now view all issues in a truly integrated fashion. Above all, it is the wide realization of the pivotal role of the rule of law for both security and development that strikes us as almost revolutionary.

I would particularly stress the centrality of the rule of law in promoting sustainable development and sustained economic growth. Finland's own experience supports this claim, as it was in no small part thanks to our strong attachment to the rule of law and good governance that we were able to emerge from a poor agrarian country to an affluent and well-educated information society in a matter of only two, three generations. Today, the solid foundation of the rule of law is needed more than ever if we are to help developing countries build their national capacity, create wealth and take off economically. To give an example, a transparent, equitable, predictable and streamlined framework of commercial law is needed for small- and medium-sized businesses to get started, not to speak of taking root and growing up. What is at stake is fair and

predictable rules of the game for people and businesses to rely upon - nothing more, nothing less.

Finland is happy to note the increased attention and resources devoted within the whole UN system to rule of law -related activities and rule of law support. Much more, however, needs to be done. We must remember that accountable and good global governance starts at the national level by strengthening domestic democratic institutions, internal democratic processes, rule of law, independent judiciaries and the role of parliaments. This is where the United Nations can and must assist the national capacity of those Member States that need it.

Secondly, a subject area which we would like to see discussed and elaborated further here at the United Nations is the interrelationship between development and social justice. Again, the success of the egalitarian and effective Nordic model speaks strongly for the important role of social justice in promoting development domestically. As the UNDP's Human Development Report put it, "[d]eep disparities based on wealth, region, gender and ethnicity are bad for growth." The report goes on to add what we already knew, namely, that that such disparities are bad for democracy and bad for social cohesion as well.

Thirdly, I would single out corruption *as a* scourge which undermines both the rule of law and social justice. Corruption - the exploitation of a position of influence for private benefit - is a serious obstacle for development. It erodes democratic foundations and viable economic structures. Again, our own experience shows that a value base that promotes moderation, personal restraint and the common good tends to check corruption. The same goes for legislative, judicial and administrative structures that closely monitor and guard against abuse of power. Other factors contributing to a low level of corruption include the prominence of women in political decision-making and low income disparities. Low corruption often correlates with high economic competitiveness and increased efficiency in governance. I would strongly

urge the United Nations and the whole UN system to redouble their efforts to help Member States fight corruption. It is of essence if we are to reach the MDGs.

Fourthly, Mr. President,

Turning to the environment, I would stress the complementarity of the Johannesburg plan of implementation and the MDGs. MDG number seven, on environmental sustainability, is essential for other MDGs on poverty, health, education and gender equality. The protection and sustainable management of the natural resource base is necessary for development and poverty eradication. All developed countries, inter alia through the promotion of sustainable production and consumption, need to undertake substantial efforts in order not to undermine the carrying capacity of eco-systems. Mainstreaming environmental sustainability in nationally owned development plans of the developing countries is also essential as part of our efforts to achieve the MDGs.

These challenges cannot be successfully met without effectively tackling the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss. To this end we need to promote energy efficiency, the conservation and wider use of alternative energy sources as well as technological innovation. We wish to see a rapid initiation of negotiations to develop a more inclusive and in a longer term more effective international framework for climate change beyond 2012.

We also need a more coherent institutional framework of international environmental governance. As the European Union has previously stated, Finland believes that the establishment of a UN specialised agency for the environment, based on UNEP, with a revised and strengthened mandate, would best serve to this end. This agency should be financed through stable, adequate and predictable contributions.

Mr. President,

The fifth issue I would wish to highlight is that of small arms and light weapons, which, like corruption, was identified as one of the priority areas of the Helsinki process. That process, which culminated just two weeks ago in the Helsinki conference, was set up to look for concrete proposal to enhance the human security across the globe. Reckless trade and badly guarded stockpiles have led to a world awash with small arms and light weapons, where human rights are violated, humanitarian aid is looted and economic development is halted - at gunpoint. In addition of being the real weapons of mass destruction in terms of people killed every day, the implications of the SALW scourge to democracy, rule of law and economic development are dire.

Finland has also called for a better regulation of international arms trade in order to stop irresponsible trade. The main ideas are to make all arms transfers fully transparent and establish universally accepted criteria for them. We are of the opinion that these criteria should be strictly enforced, legally binding and strongly based on human rights considerations. This is why we have supported the initiative to negotiate an Arms Trade Treaty. It is high time to bring rule of law to the international arms trade.

Last but not least, Mr. President,

I would join those who have stressed the need for the United Nations to take prompt action towards further management reform. This is an issue which cannot wait, as it is the very credibility of the Organization which is at stake.

Especially in the light of recent events around the Organization, if there is a perception among our publics that business at the UN remains as usual, we risk undermining the support that the Organization enjoys. It is therefore obvious that an unreformed Organization would be less, not more relevant and less, not more effective. We must stress the rule of law and good governance internally within the United Nations just like we stress it externally. In this connection, we would call for the eventual establishment of the post of Chief Operating Officer at the level of Deputy-Secretary-General, tasked with overseeing the day-to-day operations at the United Nations. We also call for sunset provisions for new activities of the Organization, so as to make sure that obsolete programmes are no longer funded.

Mr. President,

I would conclude by saying that we have to be measured in our expectations as to what the Organization can accomplish, as too grand expectations may lead to disappointment and frustration. Reaching common positions and devising joint action at the international level require patience and persistence and a liking for practical and pragmatic steps. With such an approach, we are confident that the 60th session of the General Assembly will be a success.

Thank you, Mr. President.