



LITHUANIA

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**Address by
H.E. Valdas ADAMKUS,
President of the Republic of Lithuania**

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New York
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Madam President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The last session of the General Assembly created high expectations for reform and comprehensive renewal that would ensure the continuous success and relevance of the United Nations well into the 21st century. Thanks to the initiatives launched by the Secretary General, today we have the Peace Building Commission, the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, the recognition of a collective “responsibility to protect” where the states fail to protect their citizens from genocide and crimes against humanity, and a new Human Rights Council. Lithuania is committed to work so that the new Human Rights Council can strengthen the protection and promotion of human rights in the world.

It is said that state building is a long and difficult process. This is precisely why UN assistance in this area is much needed. The Peace Building Commission brings renewed hope for post-conflict countries to avoid slipping back into chaos. But institutions alone do not count if not supported by political will. Strong international commitment is necessary in offering hope of a better life wherever nations struggle to get back on their feet.

Lithuania’s lead in a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan has given us first hand understanding of the vital importance of sustainability and continuity of such efforts. However, whether in Afghanistan or elsewhere, our efforts will be successful only to the extent that the nations themselves are fully engaged in post-conflict state building and rational, market-sound economic development. Today we welcome an increasing Afghan capacity to rebuild their country and we are encouraged by the expansion of the International Security Assistance Force area of responsibility. On the other hand, the challenges ahead will require an ever more increasing focus and efforts on the ground.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The tragic events in the Middle East in the last twelve months have vividly demonstrated the human and financial costs of inability to reach compromises and find solutions for problems that have divided societies and poisoned the region for long years. Therefore, an effective promotion of a comprehensive peace plan in the Middle East is as topical as never before. Security Council Resolution 1701 and major donor conferences offer hope for the development of a sovereign and strong Lebanon. Let's make it a reality by pooling our efforts and contributing to this cause today, and not tomorrow. The two states of Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace is our goal.

Few security issues are as dramatic as terrorism, with its indiscriminate targeting of civilian lives in an ever expanding geography. Five years ago, the people of this very city suffered a brutal and cold blooded attack on the values of humanity and tolerance that forever changed the world as we knew it. It is therefore essential that we unite our efforts for this to happen never again. Welcoming the adoption of an anti-terrorism strategy we call to complete our work on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism as soon as possible and put it into practice.

To succeed in our fight against terrorism, we must not yield to fears that separate; instead, we must build on our common humanity. We therefore hope the Alliance of Civilizations will become an integral part of our interaction, promoting solidarity, inclusion and understanding, and reinforcing the values and principles, which extremists seek to undermine.

Furthermore, we should redouble our efforts to tackle the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the challenges to non-proliferation are mounting. Lithuania strongly supports the strengthening of the effectiveness and efficiency of the IAEA's safeguards system. Compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions is a

key to global security. We therefore call on all the states to exercise full compliance in this area vital to our common peace and security.

At the same time, security, as it has usually been defined, has a broader meaning now. With equal attention we should deal with climate change, energy security, and dire water or food shortages.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Indeed, we must be firm in our common fight against terrorism. But we must be as firm in fighting poverty and upholding the dignity of the individual. We need to put the available resources to the best possible use, such as ensuring significant progress in the implementation of the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals.

Lithuania is proud to follow up on these commitments. As a new donor country, we know that it will take time to measure up to the high expectations in the field. We are providing advice and assistance in an increasing amount and geography. Over the past year alone, our development aid has grown by 60 per cent. We are determined to further increase our aid and diversify its geography. We remember what it means to receive help when we needed it. And we know and accept the responsibility to help others in our turn.

Only a comprehensive approach can ensure that the inextricable link between security, development, and human rights that we all agreed on will translate into a real and positive impact on the lives of countless millions of human beings around the world.

As we pursue the commitments already undertaken, we must look beyond tomorrow to be able to empower the United Nations to deal successfully with the challenging diversity of issues and concerns of all our nations.

It is natural that in debating such vital issues as reforming the United Nations we, the Member States, disagree. But we should also remember that, while we are disagreeing here in New York, millions of the poorest suffer from degrading starvation; millions of children die of preventable diseases; and millions have nothing else to rely on but the UN to protect them.

If we want the UN to effectively deal with development challenges and new deadly threats and to restore the value of human life to countless people around the world, an ongoing change is a must.

I therefore urge to continue in the vital areas of management reform and mandates review in order to increase the Organization's efficiency and effectiveness for the benefit of all.

We also urge progress-strengthening international environmental governance, translating the World Summit agreement on the collective "responsibility to protect" into a willingness to act when such action is needed, and ending impunity for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community.

A vital element of the United Nations renewal is the issue of the Security Council reform. Lithuania has consistently supported this reform, both in terms of Council membership and its working methods. Enhancing the Council's legitimacy through such reform will enable it to improve the discharge of its primary responsibilities vis-à-vis international peace and security.

A renewed Security Council should ensure adequate voice and representation to all regions. As a member of the East European group, Lithuania believes this group too, deserves better representation on the future Security Council. Our collective experience of dramatic and peaceful transformations of our societies has a lot to offer. In this respect, we believe, our group can offer an excellent candidate for the post of the next Secretary General.

Ladies and gentlemen,

For all its criticism, the United Nations remains the only organization with the potential of embodying a truly global and effective multilateralism. Therefore, whatever we do, we should continue to ask ourselves: are we, the Members States, doing enough to help the UN fulfill its promise to mankind? We are a world family and we have responsibilities to one another.

Thank you.