



PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE KINGDOM OF TONGA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

MR MAHE 'ULPULI TUPOUNIUA

CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES, A.I.

AT THE

SIXTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

27th September, New York

Please check against delivery

**Madam President,
Mr Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

The Tongan delegation joins others in congratulating you, Madam President, on your assumption of the Presidency of the General Assembly. Let us reassure you of Tonga's full support and every confidence that the 61st Session of the General Assembly will be productive and successful under your very able and competent leadership. Full recognition is also in order for the excellent work of your predecessor, HE Mr Jan Eliasson during the 60th Session of the General Assembly.

In the same vein, the Tongan delegation takes this opportunity to commend and extend its gratitude to the outgoing Secretary-General of the United Nations, HE Mr Kofi Annan for his tireless service over the last ten years in the stewardship of our Organisation.

Madam President

It has been a year since our Leaders met at the Historic World Summit, in an effort to embrace the realities of the world we live in and to duly reflect these challenges in the work of our Organisation.

We are pleased that there are concrete landmarks that attest to the fact that some progress has been made in the implementation of the 2005 Outcomes Document. This includes the inauguration of the Peacebuilding Commission, coupled with the establishment of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund, the creation of the Human Rights Council, and the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund.

Tonga also welcomes the adoption of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which forms the basis for which we can build our consistent and unequivocal condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, whenever and for whatever purposes, as it constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. We look forward to the effective implementation of the Strategy, as well as the conclusion of the comprehensive convention on international terrorism during the 61st Session of the General Assembly.

Madam President

Tonga further remains committed to supporting the work of the Counter Terrorism Committee, and gives due recognition to efforts with consolidating State reporting requirements. We also wish to acknowledge the corroboration provided by bilateral, regional and multilateral agencies in assisting the fulfillment of international and regional commitments to combat transnational organized crime and counter terrorism.

Madam President

Tonga shares the call for the full restoration of the role of the General Assembly as the main decision-making, representative, and policy-making body of the United Nations in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter. This will further enhance the credibility of multilateralism and the important role of addressing the multifaceted and interconnected challenges

and threats confronting our world.

Tonga supports the work pertaining to the remainder of the Reform mandates especially concerning the United Nations Secretariat and management reforms, the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, and the strengthening and streamlining of management in the Organization.

Madam President

The important issue of the Reform of the Security Council still remains unresolved although our World Leaders acknowledged that it was an "essential element of our overall effort."

Tonga supports the call by the Secretary General in his Annual Report to find common ground for action on this fundamental piece of overall United Nations reform, and that the decision on such reform be taken sooner rather than later in order to ensure that the United Nations machinery to promote the establishment and maintenance of peace and security will remain relevant and credible to meet today's and tomorrow's challenges. Tonga continues to maintain its support of Japan's proper and permanent place in any enhanced Council.

Tonga commends the contributions of United Nations peacekeepers in fulfilling its vital role in helping parties in conflict to end hostilities. Tonga is committed to, as far as it is competent, supporting not only international but also regional peacekeeping efforts, including the current Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands.

Madam President

For many island developing countries, including my own, the development Agenda remains a top priority. In this regard, the theme of the 61st General Assembly "Implementing Global Partnership for Development" is not only very pertinent but also very timely.

While reiterating that we take primary responsibility for our own development, the maintenance as well as the enhancement of support at a regional and international level to complement our national efforts continues to be welcomed as a necessary step. This includes the support provided under the Pacific Plan for strengthening regional cooperation and integration, which was endorsed by Pacific Leaders in 2005, as well as the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

Tonga looks forward to the progression of the work to enhance the mechanisms to promote coherent support for the UN system for small island developing states through a strengthened interagency consultative process; the finalization of a strategy for resource mobilization and the promotion of partnership initiatives.

In May of this year, His Majesty's Government ratified its Strategic Development Plan 8 entitled "Looking to the future, building on the Past", which sets out the Government's roadmap for the Kingdom's future development path for the period 2006/07-2008/09. The document was formulated following a lengthy and extensive consultative process with all of the relevant

stakeholders. It provides due recognition to the fact that the success of the implementation of the Development Plan will require the efforts of both State and Non-State Actors.

Madame President

You rightly observed that the recent hosting of the historic High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development revealed the potential and opportunities that globalization presents as a force for improving the lives of millions of people. The meeting provided Tonga, a "mature-migration remittance economy" with the opportunity to showcase the important nexus between migration and development.

A Study recently produced by the World Bank concluded that for Tonga, recipient household migration and remittances have positive impacts on migrant sending countries through improved income distribution and poverty alleviation, induced higher savings and stimulated business activities resulting in larger investments in education. The Study also highlighted that improved and restricted but organized labour mobility can significantly contribute to a country's GDP and the overall global income.

Labour mobility is therefore a potential vehicle for achieving our commitments to pro-poor strategies, such as the Millennium Development Goals and other commitments, and also for achieving national sustainable development strategies.

Madame President

The suspension of the Doha Round of Trade Talks was disappointing. The failure to conclude the talks will negatively affect global economic prospectives and the growth of low-income countries, including Tonga. We join others in urging WTO member-countries to maintain their commitment to the rules-based multilateral trading system, preserve progress that has been achieved and to continue with the negotiations. We also continue to urge the donor community to move forward with the delivery of "aid for trade" independent of the Doha Round. Regional cooperation on trade-related projects has the potential to promote the competitiveness of low-income countries, such as the island economies of the Pacific.

Madam President

In October 2005, Tonga's Legislative Assembly passed a motion to establish a National Committee of the Kingdom of Tonga on Political Reform. With the support of His Majesty's Government, the Committee chaired by His late Royal Highness Prince Tu'ipelehake has completed public meetings and consultations throughout Tonga, as well as the countries where the majority of the Tongans reside, namely: New Zealand; Australia; and the United States of America. It is anticipated that the Report will be deliberated by the Legislative Assembly during its 2006 session, as well as by His Majesty's Government, with a view to attaining an appropriate political reform agenda that is not only responsive but also responsible for fulfilling the objectives of building national unity and promoting the social and economic advancement of the people of Tonga.

We thank you.