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Statement

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of the Republic of Austria

at the 62nd Session of the

United Nations General Assembly

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Check against delivery!

Mr. President,
Ladies and gentlemen,

1. At the outset let me mention a burning issue – the situation in **Myanmar / Burma**: we join the call of many, including our partners in the EU and in ASEAN, for an immediate cessation of violence. The bloodshed has to stop. Democratic rights, the freedom of assembly and expression have to be respected. We reiterate the call for the release from detention of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the Burmese democratic opposition. This appeal was also made at this morning's meeting of the Women Empowerment Network that unites women leaders from around the globe.

Mr. President,

2. We can all feel a sense of **urgency** at this 62nd General Assembly: the need to counter contemporary challenges with decisive **joint action**, Climate change, disarmament and dangerous technologies are just three examples requiring such joint action, now.
3. Let me thus call for **re-launching effective multilateralism**. And let me make the case for a **new global partnership** - the joint search for sustainable joint solutions. United by a shared sense of responsibility and purpose.
4. The very concept of **partnership** is key in addressing the new challenges, both inside our societies and in the global village. Partnership is an eye-to-eye level approach, based on recognizing and respecting each other as equals. Partnership is a demanding offer: who wants to be treated as a partner has to behave as a partner.
5. We know: none of us, not even the strongest can master the challenges of the 21st century on his or her own. In the age of globalization **unilateralism** and **nationalism** are dead-end streets. They simply do not achieve effective and durable results. We thus need both **global processes** and **global objectives**. We need to actively engage to build **confidence** and counter the erosion of **trust** that so often breeds unilateral action.

Mr. President,

6. **Climate change** is the obvious challenge to be addressed in such a **new global partnership**. The United Nations are the only framework in which a fair and truly global agreement can be designed. Regional and sectorial efforts need to be linked, feeding into this global process. Furthermore, it is here only that those who contribute least to climate change but are most affected by it – such as the **Small Island Developing States** - can make their voices heard.
7. **Disarmament**, arms control and conflict prevention are next in need of a credible re-launch of multilateralism and a new partnership. In the nuclear age, we simply cannot afford to acquiesce to the present level of armament and to signs of a new arms race. Non-proliferation and an actual reduction of the weapons stockpiles thus have to make an **immediate come-back** to the top of the global agenda.
8. On limited issues multilateral progress is within reach: a consistently growing number of states is rallying behind our call for a legally binding instrument by 2008 to prohibit **cluster**

munitions which cause unacceptable harm to civilians. Austria is determined to continue leading this process by example, with a total national ban of this atrocious weapon.

9. **Nuclear technology** is a third field for a new global partnership. The world turns nuclear, whether we like it or not. This in itself is regrettable for countries like Austria who have renounced nuclear energy altogether because we believe it is a dangerous and non-sustainable source of energy. Inevitably, the rise of nuclear power across the globe will lead to more and more tensions with regard to the nature – for energy purposes or for weapons development – of national nuclear programmes. There is a highly dangerous “grey zone” between what is permitted and what is possible.
10. A new global partnership where sensitive parts of the **nuclear fuel cycle** are **multilateralized** could offer a way out. We should create a regime in which enrichment facilities would be placed under the control of the IAEA. The Agency would guarantee adequate fuel supply to those who fulfil strict non-proliferation criteria through an international “nuclear fuel bank”. This would help to dissuade tensions and make new national enrichment facilities superfluous.
11. At present, the **Iranian nuclear program** - for many reasons - is deeply upsetting for the entire international community, not just for some of us. Iran should take these concerns very seriously. It is clearly up to Iran to dispel any shadow of doubt over the nature of her program, by providing undisputable proof to the world’s “nuclear watchdog”, the IAEA, now. Like many others, we strongly support Director-General ElBaradei’s appeal for a double time-out and urge Iran to heed to this call.

Mr. President,

12. Our engagement for peace and security is rooted in the firm belief that right must prevail over might. Smaller and medium-size member states like Austria understandably have a profound attachment to the **rule of law**. For us the respect for the rule of law is not a matter of choice but a necessity. Together with many other like-minded countries we will continue promoting the rule of law and give strong support to the newly established Rule of Law Unit.

Mr. President,

13. Austria believes in the power of **partnership** where equality, mutual trust and respect for diversity overcome the crude logic of power. From our experience, effective global partnership best builds on **both regional partnerships** and **regional ownership**.
14. Austria is thus committed to developing a **new relationship among equals** between the European Union and the **African Union**, at the forthcoming EU-Africa summit in Lisbon.
15. To this end, Burkina Faso and Austria will co-host a **conference in Ouagadougou** in November on how to create sustainable peace. This meeting will unite participants from ECOWAS countries and Europe in an endeavour to provide a common input to the Lisbon summit – by furthering policies of good neighbourhood, rule of law and good governance; by fighting the proliferation of small arms and light weapons; by creating employment for young people; and by actively promoting the education of girls.

16. Together with the UN, the African Union is currently breaking new ground with the preparations for the hybrid force for **Darfur**. The **human suffering** we witness in the region sometimes goes beyond imagination. We therefore welcome the ongoing efforts to alleviate this plight, including in neighbouring states.

Mr. President,

17. We Europeans cannot credibly call upon other regions of the world to assume their regional responsibilities if we remain unable to cope with the challenges on our own continent – and in particular the **Kosovo** issue.
18. We **need to resolve** the last open status issue in the Western Balkans **now**. We therefore fully support the ongoing efforts of the Kosovo troika and encourage Belgrade and Pristina to energetically make use of this negotiating space. The Special Envoy of the Secretary General, President Ahtisaari, has provided us with a clear sense of direction. We Europeans want each and every person in Kosovo to live in dignity, freedom and security. The international organisations concerned, including the European Union, must spare no effort towards this end. It is also our continued obligation under SC-Resolution 1244 which referred to the specific contribution the EU can make to the stability of Kosovo as well as the entire Balkan region.

Mr. President,

19. **Women** across the world are ready to bear a key responsibility in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace building. But women also need to be given a fair share of positions in international mediation and peace building efforts. Not so long ago, there was not a single woman among the 54 United Nations Special Representatives and Envoys to conflict and post-conflict regions. I am encouraged by the Secretary General's support on this matter and the recent nomination of three women Deputy Special Representatives for Liberia, Sudan and Lebanon. It is also up to us, the Member States, to nominate more women for such positions.
20. No conflict is too complex or too deep to durably resist **dialogue**. The absence of dialogue breeds misperceptions, sometimes even opens space for violence. Austria has a long-standing experience in promoting dialogue between civilisations, religions and cultures, and will continue her activities in this field with vigour. We must actively combat attempts to hijack religion for other purposes – anywhere in our global village. Religious leaders must also take a clear stance in condemning and fighting practices not related to religion such as “honour killings” or “female genital mutilation”.

Mr. President,

21. Austria firmly supports the current bilateral and international efforts that are taking place to **renew the dialogue between Israel and her Arab neighbours**. We hope that the meetings between Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas will create the basis for implementing the “two-state-solution”; Israel and a Palestinian State living as neighbours in peace and in security.

22. We appreciate the efforts by the United States for an **international meeting** later this year to assist the parties in their quest for a just solution. We expect this meeting to advance the peace process substantially and sustainably by addressing the core issues and stand ready to assist in preparatory and follow-up activities.

The people of the entire **Middle East** region are thirsty for a new perspective of hope.

Mr. President,

23. In 2008 we will celebrate a hallmark in the promotion and protection of **human rights**: the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its immutable foundation – the **universality of fundamental rights**. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. It is, therefore, not acceptable that human rights are relativized or diminished in relation to geography or other factors. No doubt - women must enjoy the same universal rights - wherever they live, whatever their culture, creed or religion.
24. Our peoples expect from their leadership nothing less than a life in dignity, but above all - a life in freedom from fear and in freedom from want. If we are truly committed to **human security** it is essential that we make every effort to meet the Millennium Development Goals, by determined, concerted action to **eradicate poverty and hunger**, to promote equality between men and women and to protect our planets' resources. The Austrian Government has made it an explicit priority to actively live up to the rising challenges.

Mr. President, Ladies and gentlemen,

25. Based on our long-standing engagement for the principles and values of the United Nations, I pledge that Austria will be a responsible and reliable **partner** as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the term 2009-2010.
26. We hope that the members of the United Nations will entrust Austria with this responsibility which we stand ready to shoulder in a spirit of true partnership.