

**62nd Session of the United Nations  
General Assembly**

**Statement by  
H.E. Tarja Halonen  
President of the Republic of Finland**

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Mr. President,

I would like to congratulate you Mr. President and express our support to your leadership of this session of the General Assembly. Finland aligns herself with the statement of the European Union.

The United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals continue to serve as our common pledge to create a better future for all of us. The United Nations is our world organisation and in addressing global challenges, the UN is the key forum for our cooperation.

In order to achieve comprehensive security, we must strive not only for security but also for development and human rights. In the World Summit two years ago, we decided that the UN system should be reformed to better ensure the implementation of these three fundamental principles. We should not spare any efforts to continue the overall reform of the UN.

A more just world is a safer world. Making ECOSOC more effective is an important part of the UN reform and the concept of broad security.

Establishing a new UN institution is truly a challenging task. We know it from our own experience. Finland was a member of the Human Rights Council during its first year. We must sustain our efforts to make the Council a credible institution - capable of defending and promoting globally the human rights of women, men and children. Our good words and intentions must lead to strong action.

The new Peacebuilding Commission must be developed into a platform which can successfully assist countries struggling in post-conflict situations. In order to support this work, also governments, parliaments, non-governmental organisations and the private sector must work together. The Peacebuilding Fund must be used as an effective tool to respond to the immediate needs of post-conflict countries.

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals calls for coherent action. Finland strongly supports the recommendations of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence. The objective of "one UN at country level" is worth striving for.

We also must reinforce our efforts to address the challenges in the field of health and education.

Finland warmly welcomes the Panel's recommendations concerning gender. We do need to take decisive measures to promote gender awareness across the entire UN system. We support the proposal to set up a new, consolidated gender agency and the new Under-Secretary-General position as its head.

In this context, I would like to stress the importance of engaging women in all phases of crisis management: conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding - not forgetting peace talks. Let me give one example: the UNIFEM Middle East Initiative. I believe that the cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian women under this initiative can help to restart the peace negotiations. I also use this opportunity to state that Finland is preparing her national action plan to advance the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on "Women, Peace and Security".

A stronger United Nations also needs the reform of the Secretariat. In this regard, we welcome the additional emphasis given to the rule of law. Support for the rule of law is a necessity in the consolidation of global security.

Sustainable development requires us to consistently promote fairer globalisation and the well-being of nature. Climate change affects the future of the whole of mankind. Finland highlights the necessity to reach, as soon as possible, a globally inclusive agreement on the post-2012 climate regime. The UN has a central role to play in this process.

Every nation has the right to develop and to aim for growth and prosperity. Industrialised countries must show solidarity towards developing countries and take all possible steps to promote access to environmentally sound technologies for all.

The tone of the climate change debate is developing – to my mind – in a promising direction. Many member states, different regions and social actors have become active and have made initiatives concerning the development of climate policy. We have to use this as an asset in the run up to the Bali Climate Change Conference to be held in December.

The High-Level event on climate change on Monday was a success. I feel that it gave us the necessary political support, when we are heading towards Bali. Everybody's input is required. Finland appreciates the fact that the President of the General Assembly has included this topic among his top priorities.

We need efficient international cooperation in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. When considering, for example, the number of victims in today's conflicts, small arms and light weapons are indeed "weapons of mass destruction". Finland, together with more than 150 other states, supports the process aiming at the adoption of an international arms trade treaty.

The role of the United Nations is vital for solving numerous crises around the world. This morning we have heard news from Burma-Myanmar where the fight of the people for freedom and human rights has been suppressed. We must react.

We value the determination of the Secretary General in searching for a solution to the crisis in Sudan. The new peacekeeping operation in Darfur would increase the total number of UN troops to more than 100 000. This remarkable figure proves that UN enjoys the trust of the international community. We welcome the UN Security Council resolution on international presence in Chad and the Central African Republic adopted yesterday.

In order to achieve success in crisis management we need partnerships and shared responsibilities. For example, the African Union and the European Union have been valuable partners for the UN. The support of local and regional actors is critical for successful UN peacekeeping.

For us Europeans solving Kosovo's status is vitally important. In this process the UN Special Envoy has played a pivotal role. We encourage all parties to engage constructively in finding a solution to this problem.

Mr. President, let me ensure you that Finland supports a stronger UN for a better world. It is upon us to deliver on our commitments for better security, for sustainable development and for the human rights of all people. I wish to express our firmest support to the Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon in pursuing these efforts.