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**STATEMENT BY**

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**THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
LATVIA**

**AT**

**THE SIXTYSECOND SESSION OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Mr President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen!

I wish to begin by congratulating you, Dr.Kerim, on assuming the post of President of the current session of the General Assembly. Your wise and energetic leadership will reflect the abilities of the people of your country, and of our region as a whole.

I also wish to congratulate and extend my best wishes to the Secretary-General, Mr Ban Ki-Moon. I pledge him my full support. It is evident that the Secretary-General recognizes the multitude of challenges the world is facing today. Only two days ago, I took part in the high-level meeting on climate change here at the UN. This meeting was organised by the Secretary-General to highlight the urgent need for decisions that will prevent long-term negative consequences. Now we must all work towards a satisfactory outcome to the Bali conference at the end of this year.

I welcome the fact that the Security Council was able to adopt the groundbreaking resolution 1769, authorising the deployment of a hybrid operation for Darfur. It is now imperative that the resolution is brought to life – we all recognize the difficulties involved. It is also imperative to continue the political process. Only a negotiated solution has the potential to bring sustainable peace to the long- suffering region.

The stability and prosperity of Iraq to a great extent depends on support from its region. We therefore welcome that the Security Council could unite in adopting Resolution 1770. This resolution gives a renewed and strengthened mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq. Since the launch of the International Compact with Iraq this May, the world community possesses an effective instrument of rendering further assistance to Iraq in the most needed areas. We encourage the Government of Iraq to continue steps towards bringing peace and stability to its people and towards advancing economic reforms.

Mr President,

Just a couple of weeks ago I visited Afghanistan. I had the chance to meet with President Karzai, with the representatives of the Afghani government, with the Latvian troops and civilian experts. The message from all these meetings was clear. Assisting, through the international force, in providing security is just one side of the coin. The other is contributing to building a solid foundation for sustainable development of the country. Latvia is present in Afghanistan as part of both the international military and civilian rebuilding effort. Latvia's government is contributing financially to the reconstruction of infrastructure in Afghanistan. However, it is my strong conviction that the key to success in Afghanistan is cooperation. Cooperation among countries, cooperation among international organizations. To succeed, the EU, the UN, NATO and others must adopt a comprehensive, long-term approach to development assistance to the country.

In the Middle East, the past year has brought no significant breakthrough. Yet, we continue to place our trust in the work of the Quartet. It supports the efforts of responsible regional states in helping to calm the situation. It is a crucial tool to promote a negotiated, comprehensive, just and lasting Middle East peace, in line with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. I am sure that the Quartet's newly appointed special envoy will invest great experience and sincere efforts in fulfilling his challenging mandate.

The international community is currently also seized of the matter regarding the final status of Kosovo. The Secretary-General has endorsed the Comprehensive Proposal of his Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari. This proposal currently remains the only viable diplomatic solution on the table. Active involvement of the European Union is important to achieve a lasting solution. We urge both parties to show flexibility and commitment to a peaceful negotiated outcome. We sincerely hope that the ongoing talks under the auspices of the Contact Group troika will result in success.

Mr President,

In my previous capacity as a surgeon, I performed many operations. But I also closely followed the recovery process of every one of my patients. I ensured that they get the necessary post-operative therapy, and encouraged them to maintain healthy habits. In this phase I had to rely heavily on the work of my able and dedicated team.

Likewise, it is not enough for the Security Council to prescribe peacekeeping operations, crucial as they are for international peace and security. The whole United Nations system is necessary for the long-term recovery of conflict zones. Here I pay special tribute to the peacekeepers and the UN staff working in difficult conditions on the ground. It is our duty in our capitals and here at the UN headquarters to support their efforts, each member state according to its capacity. At the same time, we expect high standards in peacekeeping forces.

For many decades Latvia suffered extensively from foreign occupation. Now that we have regained freedom, we hope to prevent the sufferings of others. We wish to promote the healing process. The international community must bring to justice those who have committed war crimes and massive violations of human rights. Latvia commends the work of the International Criminal Court. We set our hopes on the UN Peace-building Commission to be an effective tool for consolidating long-term peace.

Mr President,

Even where military conflict is not a factor, human security in many parts of the world is undermined by poverty, hunger and disease. The 2007 Millennium Development Goals Report gives some good news. However, it warns us that the Goals will not be achieved by the year 2015 - certainly not in sub-Saharan Africa, unless our efforts are scaled up. Latvia therefore supports the calls to review progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and accelerate action.

Latvia is a candidate in the 2010 elections for ECOSOC. We have the know-how to share. We also have the empathy for the pain that reforms may cause. As an emerging donor, we have undertaken commitments in the field of Overseas Development Assistance. We believe that our recent intensive and successful experience of development would be an asset to the work of the Council.

Mr President,

Latvia has a strong commitment to multilateralism and the values embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. We want to see an organization of effectiveness, efficiency and authority. It is regrettable that the reform process launched at the 2005 World Summit has been slow and uneven. We recognize the forces that make the reform so difficult, but we must not give in to fatigue and frustration.

Management reform is vital. I already mentioned the dire necessity for a comprehensive approach among the different international players on the ground. Likewise, there is a great need for system-wide coherence of the various UN funds and programmes. Provision of aid should be targeted and efficient. Those in need should be our focus. We look forward to assessing the results of the 'One UN' pilot programme that is now underway in eight volunteering countries.

The beginnings of the new Human Rights Council were a cause for concern. Still, we are confident that after making important decisions on institution-building earlier this year, the Member States will take full advantage of the Human Rights Council. We have to live up to our task to further promote and protect human rights. The Council now has the tools. But it will be up to the members to use those tools. It will be up to the members to advance the credibility of the UN as an organization able and willing to protect and promote human rights. Latvia has always placed promotion of human rights among its top priorities, and in the light of this commitment we have decided to aim for membership in the Council in the 2014 elections.

No reform will be more difficult or more significant than that of the Security Council. There are many achievements by the Security Council. However, we share the widespread belief that the composition and the working methods of the Council need to be brought up to date. We have stated many times our reasons for supporting the G4 model of reform promoted by Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan. We consider it to be the best of the models currently available. We welcome the prospect of intergovernmental negotiations beginning in the current Session and hope that they will bring early positive results.

Mr President,

The UN is as important as ever, being the only truly universal forum for dialogue. We must not forget that it is also the only truly universal forum for action. This is the forum where all states, big and small, have a voice. We must not forget that this is a forum where all the states have a responsibility to contribute. Latvia looks forward to a fruitful 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the General Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. President.