

**PERMANENT MISSION OF DENMARK  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**



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The 63<sup>rd</sup> Session of  
the United Nations General Assembly

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Statement by  
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Permanent Representative of Denmark

New York  
Monday, 29 September 2008

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## Statement of Denmark to the 63<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly of the United Nations

Ambassador Carsten Staur, Permanent Representative of Denmark to the UN

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Mr. President,

My Government agrees entirely with the UN Secretary General's remarks at the opening of this debate: The world is on the eve of a great transition. The problems we face have grown much more complex - and our challenges are increasingly those of collaboration rather than confrontation. The quality of life in most parts of the world has improved tremendously over recent decades, but challenges clearly remain, not least in Sub-Saharan Africa. New challenges – such as climate change, migration, increasing energy and food prices and financial instability – all have the potential of embedded conflicts and of further polarization.

Mr. President,

Global challenges call for global responses. The best way to deal with global issues is through an effective and strong multilateral system – through a strong United Nations system. We need to build on the comparative advantages of the UN, to define global agendas such as climate change, to deal with conflicts and humanitarian crisis, to focus on the special needs of developing countries, and to define and defend global values such as human rights.

As President Sarkozy, the current Presidency of the European Union, stressed last week, continued **reform** of the United Nations is crucial to improve the ability of the UN to do its core business: problem solving. We must continue the progress made on System Wide Coherence and on the "*Delivering as One*" agenda. As regards Security Council reform, Denmark welcomes the agreement to initiate intergovernmental negotiations in the near future. At the election for the Security Council next month, Iceland is a candidate for membership, representing all the Nordic countries. We are strongly backing Iceland's candidature.

Mr President,

On **climate change**, the IPCC reports have served to crystallize an international consensus on the need for action. This consensus has been nurtured by the determined leadership of the Secretary General promoting global action to curb global warming – with the UN at its centrepiece.

We need to address climate change as an integral part of sustainable growth and development in the poorest countries, taking into account that climate change will affect the poorest and the weakest the most. This means addressing mitigation and adaptation but also the security risks emanating from climate change in all parts of the world. This would include movements of people as a consequence of changed living conditions, and the conflict potential related to land degradation and water shortage in many parts of the world. Climate change is an existential threat for states risking extinction through rising sea levels, and for poor people whose livelihoods and food security are undermined by changing temperatures and precipitation patterns.

Economic growth and environmental protection are fully compatible. The challenge is to establish a framework for low-carbon growth, where increased energy efficiency, increased use of renewable sources of energy, carbon capture and storage and the development of a global carbon market are vital elements.

Denmark will host the climate conference – COP15 – in Copenhagen in 2009. The ambition is to get agreement on the succession to the Kyoto Protocol, making it an ambitious and truly global instrument. Momentum for a new comprehensive international climate agreement is growing, almost day by day.

Mr. President,

During the past weeks we have witnessed new cruel and meaningless acts of **terrorism**. The evil terrorist attack in Islamabad on the Marriott Hotel this September 20<sup>th</sup> resulted in the loss of many innocent lives; most of the lives were Pakistanis, and also other nationalities, one of them Danish. This and other attacks came only a few weeks after all UN member states had reaffirmed their commitment to the UN counter terrorism strategy. We must respond to these despicable acts of fanatics with great determination to strengthen international cooperation in this area. All UN bodies must join up in the fight against terrorism. Hopefully, this General Assembly will, finally, agree to a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. In addition, we must

focus on due process and sanctions, as it becomes increasingly clear that the lack of adequate due process hampers the efficiency of the sanction systems.

Mr. President,

Sixty years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights severe violations of human rights continue to take place. Extremists try to instigate “a clash of civilisations” by creating mistrust and polarization among different civilisations, cultures and religions. It is a major challenge for the UN to counter those trends and promote the universality of human rights.

The number of armed **conflicts** is steadily decreasing. The United Nations has played a major part in ensuring this positive trend. However, several bloody and difficult conflicts remain high on the international agenda.

In *Afghanistan*, measurable progress has been made, but the security situation remains challenging. Corruption and drugs undermine the achievements made and the long term development. Denmark has increased its engagement in the UN-mandated NATO-lead mission significantly and doubled its development assistance. Much has been achieved, but the UN needs to play a much stronger role in the coordination of the international engagement. A lack of success in Afghanistan will have serious regional ramifications.

In *Africa*, the deployment of UNAMID in Darfur has been delayed due to various factors, including actions by the Government of Sudan, allowing attacks and killings to go on. Those responsible for the grave crimes committed in Darfur must be held accountable. Fighting impunity is a prerequisite to sustainable peace. We thus stress the need to comply with SC resolution 1593 and express our support for the ICC. In Zimbabwe, we hope that the power sharing agreement will pave the way for durable peace and return to democracy and rule of law, ending the suffering of the people of Zimbabwe. In Somalia, the international community is trying hard to improve the deplorable situation on the ground and the prospects for a long-term political solution. The scourge of piracy is one the factors undermining stability in Somalia. The Danish navy is taking an active role, together with other nations, in addressing this problem off the coast of Somalia and in the region. We need to increase our common efforts to handle all aspects of fighting piracy, including strengthening the international legal framework for handling detained persons. Denmark has taken the lead on the broader issue of handling detainees in armed conflict through the Copenhagen Process. We believe there are already valuable lessons here which can also be applied in relation to piracy.

In the *Middle East*, and in spite of continuing violence, effective regional and international diplomacy has contributed to breaking the political deadlock in Lebanon. The Palestinians and the Israeli Government are making progress too. We urge the parties to the Middle East conflict to honour Road Map commitments and settle their differences in accordance with the international agreements and the Arab Peace Initiative. Allow me to use the occasion to strongly condemn the unacceptable remarks made by the president of Iran calling for wiping Israel off the face of the map.

In *Burma*, the cyclone Nargis killed over a hundred thousand people earlier this year. The slow and inadequate reaction of the regime demonstrated its disregard for the welfare of its people. The UN is working hard to ensure the initiation of a genuine political dialogue between the government and the political opposition, and the release of all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi. We strongly support these efforts.

In August war erupted in the *South Caucasus*. The conflict in Georgia has dramatically affected not only the region, but clearly also entails repercussions which go beyond. However, not least thanks to the EU and the French Presidency, the international community has been able to contribute constructively to the process. Now it is up to all parties of the conflict to live up to the conditions of the six point- and Moscow-agreements and to act in a positive spirit to reach long term solutions to the conflict in a peaceful manner that respects Georgia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

This year saw a new country appear in the Balkans. UN has played a substantial role for *Kosovo's* development and is still present in Kosovo with UNMIK together with a new substantial contribution from the EU regarding rule of law, EULEX. With the reconfiguration of UNMIK, UN has demonstrated a substantial pragmatism and willingness to cooperate with the EU. Later this year the UN is expected to hand over tasks related to the rule of law area to the EU mission. We welcome this development.

Mr. President,

The good offices of the Secretary General, the mediation and conflict prevention efforts of the UN, and the peace-keeping operations, now entailing 19 missions and more than 130.000 staff members, remain the backbone of the UN peace and security efforts. However, we need to improve the capacity of the UN system to assist countries in **early phases of recovery** after conflict, or

countries with very weak institutions, which might easily fall into conflict. This means building stronger bridges from humanitarian assistance, political good offices and peacekeeping efforts to early recovery, peace building, reconstruction and transitional assistance to sustain state building and avoid weak states lapsing back into conflict or chaos.

The creation of the Peace Building Commission and the Peace Building Fund was important in strengthening the UN's capability to build and cross that bridge. But so far, it's only a footbridge. Much more engineering and craftsmanship is needed, also on the parts of funds and programmes.

Mr. President,

At the World Summit in 2005, the concept of **Responsibility to Protect** was endorsed. We must develop this concept further and ensure that states do their utmost to protect their citizens from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We must discuss what the international community and the UN can do to assist states in meeting these obligations, and consider the means available to the international community if states manifestly fail to protect their populations.

Mr. President,

Last week an impressive number of Heads of State and Government took part in the first High Level follow-up to the Millennium Summit Declaration and the establishment of the **Millennium Development Goals**.

We are not on track, but we are not sidetracked either. We all have to make an extra effort, if we are to succeed, and we need to get our priorities right. Special focus on the **empowerment of women** is essential – socially, politically and economically. Increased investments in women are crucial, across all the MDGs, across all sectors. Gender equality is a basic human right – and it is smart economics too. On that basis, the Danish Government has initiated a specific Call to Action on gender equality and empowerment of women.

Another crosscutting factor that might determine success or failure for all countries is **governance**. Political leadership, democratic institutions, rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is called for. Not only nationally, but also internationally. International rule of law with strong emphasis on respect for the fundamental principles of international law, respect



for human rights and fighting impunity is a key to international peace and stability. The evidence is loud and clear and we need to focus our efforts.

Mr. President,

The evidence is equally loud and clear, in another area. Sub-Saharan Africa is lagging in its trajectory towards the MDGs. The Danish Government, therefore, has established an international, high-level **Commission on Effective Development Cooperation with Africa**. The aim of this Commission, in which a number of African leaders and UN officials take part, is to present creative and concrete recommendations in the cross section of youth, employment and economic growth. By May 2009, the Commission will present its ideas on how African countries and the international community can address these challenges prior to the 2010 review of the status of the MDGs.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, let me reiterate the interrelationship and interdependence of the issues that I have addressed - there can be no development without security and human rights, and visa versa. Progress is needed in all areas, if we are to advance as a global community.

And we ARE to advance. In the area of development, in the area of peace and security, in the area of human rights – and in the many areas that transcend borders. But this can only be addressed through multilateral cooperation, like counter-terrorism, non-proliferation, pandemics – and climate change. Multilateralism is our only response to the challenges, risks and opportunities of an interdependent and globalised world. It is our responsibility to ensure that the UN is properly equipped to address the global challenges and opportunities.

I thank you.