



REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY



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ADDRESS

BY

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***MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY***

***AT THE 63RD SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY***

New York, September 27, 2008

Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your election to the post of the President of the 63rd session of the General Assembly. In fulfilling your challenging tasks during this session, you may rest assured of the support and cooperation of the delegation of the Republic of Hungary. I also wish to salute your predecessor, H.E. Dr. Srgjan Kerim, representative of the Eastern European Group, who served us with distinction and dedication.

The challenges we have to face daily in an increasingly globalised world need answers originating from the principle of universally accepted values and the practice of flexible adaptation to swift changes in our environment. This necessity is reflected in the new external relations strategy adopted by the Hungarian government at the beginning of this year. Our strategy, as well as our policies and actions demonstrate our commitment to uphold the rule of international law, to give priority to an effective multilateralism, to spread the culture of co-operation and peaceful settlement of international disputes, and to work towards preserving a liveable and sustainable environment for future generations.

Hungary's geographic position, as well as our expertise in democracy building, good governance, promoting the rule of law and human rights, disarmament and non-proliferation will serve as a good basis for our effective contribution to the work of this organization.

Mr. President,

Skyrocketing energy prices, food and financial crisis, and commodity speculation are endangering the results we have achieved so far in implementing the Millennium Development Goals. Coherent and coordinated response is needed to reverse this process. As an emerging donor country, Hungary firmly believes that the international community cannot use the difficulties we all face as an excuse not to do the utmost to implement the MDGs.

We are firmly dedicated to broaden the outreach of our foreign policy towards the developing countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. International development cooperation and assistance is a growing segment of our foreign policy. We are strongly committed to intensify our efforts in the years to come and therefore, we are gradually increasing our official development assistance concentrating primarily on those activities, where Hungary has comparative advantages, especially in the field of agriculture to combat famine and poverty with modern plant productions, animal husbandry technologies, forestry and fishery programs, water management, developing health services and promoting good governance.

In this respect, we have to find a common ground between local and international policies, alleviate structural differences among different regions of the world and give opportunity for development to the least developed nations. The Government of the Republic of Hungary believes that the United Nations should be at the forefront of development efforts, and therefore we fully support the follow-up on the report of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

For thousands of years, we managed to keep our environment intact. Nowadays, with the extreme pace of development and the emission of greenhouse gases, we are ruining our environment on a daily basis. As a result, climate change is an established fact and a growing concern: we now need to adapt to the new weather and climatic conditions. To address these challenges a more effective institutional framework is needed with clear political guidance, adequate, stable and predictable funding, strong scientific base, as well as an improved assessment of activities and emergency response institutions. However, solutions can only be achieved if we do not stick to our theoretical dilemmas but come up with practical answers and durable solutions, which can be accessed by all. Hungary fully agrees with the urgency of the matter and hopes that the ongoing deliberations on the future of the Climate Change Convention and the Kyoto Protocol will lead to concrete results within the upcoming year.

This year we mark the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as 15 years of the existence of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Over the past 60 years, humanity has made extraordinary progress in the promotion and protection of human rights, largely due to the creative force generated by the Universal Declaration, undoubtedly one of the most influential documents in history. Our job is to work hard for the full implementation of the human rights treaties.

Our expectations came true on May 3rd this year when the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities entered into force. Hungary became the second ratifying member state of the Convention and its Protocol, and we hope that this new international instrument guaranteeing the fundamental civil and political rights of people living with disabilities will receive the universal acceptance in the near future.

We were a strong supporter of the establishment of the Human Rights Council and we are determined to continue to do so. In our view, the time has come for the Council as well as for all of us to redouble our dedicated efforts to make the work of the HRC more efficient regarding the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. After the adoption of the consensus resolution of the Council last September, the Forum on Minority Issues will also hold its first session at the end of 2008. I am personally very proud that the first Forum will be chaired by a fellow Hungarian, Mrs. Viktória Mohácsi,

Member of the European Parliament, and I hope that under her able guidance the Forum on Minority will be widely recognized, efficient and result-oriented.

We firmly believe that the lasting solution of the challenges of the present time cannot be completed without the effective involvement of women into all aspects of the international cooperation. I would like to state that Hungary fully supports the initiative to make a comprehensive overview of the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 by 2010, and I am confident that the UN should take the leadership. The outcome of such an analysis should provide us with sufficient ground to formulate concrete actions in fulfilling our obligations in this field.

The United Nations and the European Union – together with governments, NGOs and other international organizations around the world – have been placing tremendous efforts to promote international cooperation in the domain of prevention of genocide and mass atrocities. The measures taken so far, however, still fall short of preventing the many dreadful crimes against humanity. As a member of the United Nations and the European Union, Hungary is fully committed to the notion of genocide prevention and ready to take specific steps to that end. We have decided to prepare a feasibility study about the establishment of an International Centre for the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities (ICPG) in Budapest. In our view, it should be an independent institution with the aim to contribute to the international efforts for the prevention of the occurrence of genocide.

In the field of counter terrorism, the full and earliest implementation of the UN Counter-Terrorism Strategy is the most important outstanding issue, where the main responsibility is on the member states.

The conclusion of the Comprehensive Convention on international terrorism also remains a high priority for the Republic of Hungary, and we fully support the work of the Ad Hoc Committee. We hope that during the sixty-third session we will be able to finalize the drafting of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

Mr. President,

In spite of many security and political challenges that still persist in Afghanistan, we acknowledge and appreciate the achievements of the international community and the enormous work that has been done so far to bring tangible improvements to the everyday life of the Afghan people. In this process, the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan remains instrumental, especially in the preparation and conduct of the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections in 2009 and 2010. Hungary remains committed to help Afghanistan rebuild itself after many years of war and create a state that is safe, stable and democratic.

We are committed to continue our military assistance as a PRT leading nation in the Northern part of the country and to extend our development activities in Afghanistan.

Contribution to the peace and stability, and achieving prosperity has remained a cornerstone of the Hungarian foreign policy towards the Western Balkans for many years. We continue to believe that this aim is best served by actively supporting integration of the Region into the Euro-Atlantic structures. As we all know, on 17 February, Kosovo declared its independence and a number of UN member states recognized it, including Hungary. We deem it of crucial importance that the resolution of the Kosovo Assembly and its new constitution fully committed Kosovo to democracy, the rule of law, the protection of the Serb communities and the other minorities, the protection of the cultural and religious heritage as well as international presence. Without a stable Kosovo there is no stability in the Balkans. In this context, we welcome and support the continued presence of the international community based on UN Security Council resolution 1244. We also remain committed to contributing to the stability of Kosovo through the EULEX, KFOR and an international civilian office as part of the international presence.

Hungary fully supports the efforts of the international community and the different institutions to implement the peace agreement in Georgia. Hungary strongly believes in peaceful settlement of conflicts, the use of military force to settle territorial disputes represents a dangerous precedent which can have further implications in the whole region and beyond.

Any further steps and negotiations must be based on full respect of Georgia's sovereignty, territorial integrity, internationally recognized borders and democratically elected leadership. It is of crucial importance that all parties agree on a unified interpretation of the agreement. We fully support, and we are ready to participate in the planned missions of the different international institutions such as those of the EU and the OSCE in resolving the conflict and monitoring the implementation of the peace agreement. Hungary has offered humanitarian assistance, and we are studying further possibilities to assist Georgia.

Hungary attaches great importance to the comprehensive process initiated at the Annapolis Conference, convened by the President of the United States of America, in order to settle the Middle East Conflict. Since Annapolis, there are regular meetings between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority. We do hope that the peace process relaunched in Annapolis will lead to the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the normalization of Israeli-Arab relations.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

The nuclear programme of Iran continues to be a matter of serious concern for my Government. Iran has failed to provide the international community with credible assurances whether its nuclear projects are in line with its international obligations. We deeply regret that the leadership of Iran has refused to abide with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. Only full and unconditional compliance by the demand to suspend its enrichment related and reprocessing activities can pave the way for re-establishing confidence in the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme and open up prospects for intensified economic and political cooperation. We hope that Iran will change its present course of confrontation and opt for a constructive dialogue with its partners.

After five years of conflict, for the first time Iraq shows firm signs of recovery. With the help of the international community, Iraq is achieving major milestones in the reconciliation and reconstruction process. Hungary welcomes the fact that the improved security situation allows to set up a withdrawal schedule, assuming that the capability of control of the Iraqi government will change fundamentally, and provide ground for a long term settlement of the crisis.

Due to one of the most worrisome conflicts on the African continent raging in Darfur, the situation in Sudan and the nearby countries is still unpredictable and explosive. Hungary welcomes the extension of the mandate of UNAMID until 31 July 2009. It is essential that the mission is fully deployed by the end of the year. The establishment of the criminal courts in the region paves the way toward a solution of the crisis in Darfur, but nevertheless we should continue to closely follow the fragile peace process.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are convinced that in order to address the various challenges of the 21st century, the international community needs a strong, reformed and well-functioning United Nations. In the past two years, progress has been made in all areas of UN reform, and some of the new bodies have become operational. In other fields we need further considerations and negotiations with other member states in order to achieve a lasting solution, and Hungary is ready to contribute to these negotiations. We welcome the recent decision of the General Assembly to start the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council during the 63rd session of the General Assembly.

In conclusion, Mr. President, Hungary is strongly committed to work with you during the sixty-third Session of the General Assembly in attaining the objectives of the United Nations.