

7 November 2007

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Srgjan Kerim,
President of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly,
at the Third Meeting of the Friends for Human Security**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank Ambassador Takasu, the Permanent Representatives of Japan, and Ambassador Heller, the Permanent Representative of Mexico, as well as the Under-Secretary General for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Sir John Holmes, for inviting me to address the third meeting of the Friends of Human Security. I am also been in another capacity, as a genuine friend of Human Security.

Initiatives such as the Friends of Human Security, are an important vehicle for advancing the goals endorsed by the UN World Summit: “freedom from fear”, “freedom from want” as well as “freedom to live in dignity”, and promoting a more human centered approach to security.

I would therefore like to welcome the focus of today’s meeting on the human security aspects of climate change and the possible impact on achieving the Millennium Development Goals. These are, as you know, priorities of the 62nd session’s agenda!

Friends,

Human security is an obvious response to a world of interconnected threats and challenges. It extends the understanding of security beyond the state and calls for a more holistic approach focused on people, their protection and empowerment.

This includes natural and man made disasters, hunger, disease and socio-economic inequalities.

A human centered approach to security also goes hand in hand with individuals also accepting greater responsibility for their own well-being.

It also has implications for the role of the state too.

The state should place greater emphasis on responsibility to care for the well being of its citizens. In fact, people that may be threatened wherever they may be.

Acknowledging this expanded responsibility is the first step. And, at the 2005 World Summit our leaders made an important contribution by acknowledging the principle of responsibility to protect.

Some states have already responded and given greater importance to human security in their national security agendas - such as, by elevating the importance of the link between international development, and stability; global inequality and national security.

In our interdependent world more and more of the threats to peace and stability are challenges that states cannot deal with on their own. They must be addressed collectively through the multilateral system.

Friends,

I hope you would agree that the concept of human security lies at the core of an evolving new culture of international relations. A culture based on the values of human rights, the rule of law, human security, the responsibility to protect and sustainable development.

These values and principle are intrinsically embedded in the United Nations Charter, but more than ever before we need to put them into practice for the benefit of all.

I very much welcome the initiative of member states represented here to further explore ways to follow up on the human security aspects of the World Summit Document; to put into practice and develop the new culture of international relations.

The United Nations, in particular, has an important role to play to put positive peace, and not just the mere absence of conflict, at the heart of multilateral discourses on security.

It is of utmost importance that the promotion of the human security agenda is a collaborative effort. We need to bring together Member States, international organizations, UN agencies, civil society organizations and NGO's, as well as, maintain a close relationship with established partners such as the Advisory Board on Human Security and the Human Security Network. At the 9th Ministerial Meeting of the Human Security Network, in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 18 May 2007, I made the case that more needed to be done to prevent violence against children but also to address the underlying causes of this problem.

Going forward, we should try to make human security a principle that is better reflected in a wider range of UN activities - from peacebuilding, human rights, development, and migration, to the environment, gender equality and fighting organized crime and human trafficking.

Friends,

Let me conclude with a quote from a true believer in the concept of human security, Bishop Desmond Tutu, who throughout his life has worked as an ardent promoter of this concept. His words masterfully capture the essence of what human security should be all about:

“Human security privileges people over states, reconciliation over revenge, diplomacy over deterrence, and multilateral engagement over coercive unilateralism.”

Thank you very much for your attention. May I wish you a very productive meeting.