



ESTONIA

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

STATEMENT BY

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Madam President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Madam President, upon your assumption of the office as President of the General Assembly. We have full confidence in you and wish you every success. I would also like to praise Foreign Minister Jan Eliasson for his effective leadership during the sixtieth session of the UN's General Assembly, which I think received some truly valuable results.

I would also like to warmly welcome the Republic of Montenegro as the 192nd member of the United Nations.

Madam President,

The United Nations is confronted with huge tasks. The Establishment of the Human Rights Council, the Central Emergency Response Fund, and a Peacebuilding Commission are important achievements for us. We also attach great importance to the launching of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which calls for enhanced UN measures to deal with terrorism, and to make sure that efforts are better coordinated.

Estonia is strongly committed to promoting peace and security throughout the world. We have been following the events in the Middle East with concern and compassion. The recent events have once again demonstrated that along with securing lasting peace prompt action and generous contributions of the international community are also needed to resolve humanitarian crises. Estonia has not stood aside. We have been responding to the needs of people in Lebanon and have provided assistance to the people in Iraq so that they can rebuild their country.

Estonia continues to actively support the United Nations in advocating peace and security and its important role in international development. We remain convinced that the United Nations is an answer to the current and future threats and divisions in the world. As we fully subscribe to the comprehensive statement delivered by the President of Finland on behalf of the European Union on opening day of the General Assembly, let me briefly highlight some aspects of global partnership to which we attach great value.

Madam President,

One of the main aims of the Millennium Development Goals is to develop a global partnership for development. This includes commitment to good governance, well functioning of democratic institutions, full respect for human rights and the rule of law for the sustainability of development efforts. As we have already emphasised in the final document of the 2005 World Summit, no country can tackle today's complex challenges alone. While countries take principal responsibility for their development, individual efforts should be supported by concrete global actions and programmes. Partnership is truly a central element in all we do.

Joint global action is most urgently needed when the disaster hits a country or a whole region. For timely and efficient response from the international community, a well-coordinated and properly resourced global disaster relief system is required. Estonia gives increasingly high priority to the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance on the global level and finds it important to further strengthen the UN's humanitarian response capabilities. The first year of the Central Emergency Response Fund has been a promising step towards balanced and more responsive international humanitarian system, although many challenges remain. We are committed to further increase our financial contribution to the United Nation humanitarian system disaster relief assistance.

In this regard, we should always ensure that disaster relief and all other development activities favour environmentally sustainable solutions. Environmental sustainability is our urgent, but at the same time long term task, which demands common action. Estonia attaches great importance to the need for coordination and coherence in the field of the environment related activities and supports the creation of more coherent institutional framework within the UN.

The fulfillment of the internationally agreed development goals obliges further engagement of not only governments and intergovernmental bodies. The commitments made at major conferences cannot be implemented without cooperation with local institutions, private sector and non-governmental organizations.

Our experience clearly demonstrates us that non-governmental organisations can play crucial role regarding effective development cooperation. In many cases civil society institutions are much more efficient in establishing dynamic working relations with NGOs of partner countries than government institutions. The cooperation with NGOs has been notably advantageous in such sectors as sustainable development, information and communication technology and e-governance.

This brings us to another area of cooperation – using information and communication technology to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Since my country has been notably successful in employing new information and communication technologies and carrying out extensive improvement, we shall continue to increase our input for overall development in this field. But we also need to reinvigorate and reform the United

Nations. Estonia is ready to contribute to the development of a comprehensive information and communication technologies strategy for the UN system to the best of its ability.

All these issues – information technology, sustainable development, humanitarian and disaster relief – are also on the agenda of the General Assembly's Second Committee, which will be chaired by the Permanent Representative of Estonia during this 61st session. We will do our utmost and move forward with all those and other crucial topics effectively.

Madam President,

We must remain strongly committed to the respecting of the rule of law, human rights and dignity as human beings. Indeed, if we want human rights to form one of the three main pillars of the UN, together with security and development, it is essential to implement the General Assembly resolution 60/251 according to its letter and spirit. We expect the Human Rights Council to be strengthened and become an authoritative institution and human rights issues to gain an equal standing with other major items on the UN's agenda. This first year of the Human Rights Council is the year of transition and capacity building. Estonia's vision encompasses establishment of an operational body reinforced with special procedures and a new efficient and universal mechanism, which monitors individual countries together with NGO-s as essential partners.

We should also make sure that the rights of indigenous peoples remain an integral part of the human rights and continue to be a matter of substance at the Human Rights Council. The adoption of the Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples by the 61st General Assembly is of great importance for the millions of indigenous peoples worldwide. Therefore it is crucial to pass the Declaration at the plenary of the General Assembly this year. Its implementation could be a major step towards eliminating the widespread human rights violations suffered by many indigenous peoples.

Another new instrument that needs to be adopted by the General Assembly and implemented by the States as soon as possible is the Convention on enforced disappearances – a recurrent phenomenon that we have to fight against. It is essential that the Convention would be adopted already at this session so that states can start signing and ratifying it already at the beginning of the next year in Paris.

Madam President,

The Millennium Development Goals are also intended to promote gender equality and empower women worldwide. And that includes us in the United Nations too. Estonia shares the vision that the role of women within the decision-making system of the UN should be increased. As the General Assembly is going to approve the next Secretary General this year, we support the proposal to consider Mrs. Vaira Vike-Freiberga as a candidate for Secretary General of the United Nations. President of Latvia could be the first women leading the United Nations in its sixty years of existence. Our commitments

must be reflected in our decisions. The time has also come to have more representatives from Central and Eastern Europe in high-ranking posts in the United Nations. I believe we are ready to make history.

Before finishing, I would like to express my deepest respect to our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan. We appreciate your dedication and personal determination in addressing enormous challenges of our time and shaping our common future. During nearly ten years of service you have held high our universal values and lead the United Nations with true vision.

Thank you.