



NORWAY

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General Debate

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STATEMENT
BY

H.E. Mr. Jens Stoltenberg
Prime Minister

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President,

Excellencies,

The UN is now more the centre of international affairs than it has been for many years. We see the Secretary-General and his staff driving diplomacy. They are on the ground, moving peace efforts in the Middle East. They are coordinating and sustaining peace operations in Lebanon.

The UN is drawing up mandates and getting ready for new, urgent assignments, such as Darfur.

The UN is assisting countries coming out of conflict, such as Burundi and Sierra Leone.

Giving legitimacy and protection under international law to soldiers and civilians in Afghanistan.

And launching a Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

It is to the UN that we all turn when other processes fail. And Norway is working hard to support its leading role.

Be it by sending naval units to Lebanese waters.

Be it by having soldiers in Afghanistan

Or by training future peacekeepers for Darfur.

In the policy platform of the Norwegian Government, it is stated that:

"It is in Norway's best interest that we have a UN-led world order. The Government will therefore work to strengthen the UN and international law."

The UN can count on Norway. We believe that our combined efforts for peace, environment and development will pass the tests. Those of foresight as well as hindsight.

Those of us who are staunch supporters of a strong and effective UN, we must also be the key drivers of change and renewal.

I have the honour to serve with distinguished colleagues on a panel for UN reform appointed by the Secretary-General. The Panel is drawing up proposals for how the UN

can deliver more, better and faster on development, humanitarian assistance and the environment.

It was the Summit of 2005 which called for more coherence and better governance of the United Nations activities in these fields.

Over time the UN has added new bodies, new organs, and new activities to its portfolio. Few people have the overall picture. And few can tell what the UN is doing in a particular country for development. Or answer clearly how much money the UN is spending in a specific country.

In several countries the UN system is represented by more than 20 different organisations. A country such as Ghana is reported to be host to 14 different UN agencies.

Many UN organizations deal with many of the same issues. This is called overlapping.

More than 20 different organizations are dealing with water.

More than ten are dealing with promoting education for girls.

This leads to a fragmented, loosely governed system. It leads to duplication, and reduced possibilities for monitoring results.

This is not the way we would govern our own affairs, nationally or locally.

And it is we, the member countries, which are to blame.

We must put an end to duplication, fragmentation and rivalry between different parts of the system.

Instead, we must focus on results.

And we must be willing to change. Adapt to new situations, and relinquish tasks that are no longer needed.

We need to ensure that less is spent on bureaucracy, and more is spent in the field.

Let us take for example coordination of humanitarian relief after the establishment of the Central Fund, which Jan Egeland is in charge of. By having these resources, he is able to coordinate more, by directing the financial flows.

Similarly, outside of a crisis: Governance and financing cannot be separated. But this is often the situation today.

All matters of reform seem extremely controversial here in the UN. But it must be done.

The most irresponsible thing we could do now, would be to do nothing. Allowing bodies, the governing boards and their representatives, to duplicate work and squander scarce resources.

The panel's report will be presented to the Secretary General later this year. We have had an open, transparent process. We have held meetings in all parts of the world and listened to a great many stakeholders, practitioners, country representatives.

My plea to you all, Member States, is to meet that report with an open mind.

And let me be clear about this: Any efficiency gain must be channelled to the developing world.

Every single cent gained in improved performance, or reduced overhead, must go to aid that reaches the needy. Recipients and donors alike would find that attractive.

We are in the fortunate position of having set clear goals for the organization.

6 years ago we adopted the Millennium Development Goals here in New York.

We pledged to do our utmost to achieve these goals.

Norway is working on all eight. This year we give 0.96 per cent in development assistance. And we will reach the 1 per cent mark in a few years.

Now we have set out with vigour to take a lead in realizing Millennium Goal No. 4 which compels us to reduce child mortality by two thirds by 2015.

Every year, children in numbers equal to one and a half times the population of New York City die before their fifth birthday, most of them from preventable causes.

A number of children equal to the death toll of the Tsunami die every month from pneumonia alone.

Most such common diseases could have been prevented by vaccines costing just 20 dollars for each child.

Allowing such child mortality is putting shackles on the potential of states, prolonging the long night of underdevelopment.

This can and must be changed. Yesterday I announced that the Norwegian Government has decided to increase its annual contribution to child mortality and vaccines from 75 million dollars a year to 125 million as of next year.

In total, Norway will contribute 1,3 billion dollars through 2015 for vaccine related activities to reduce mortality.

The next step will be to develop a global strategy to reach Millennium Goal No 4.

A plan for financing and execution.

Meeting that goal, and other Millennium Goals, is really about UN reform.

An organization that sets goals,

and carve them in stone,

such as we did when we adopted the Millennium Goals,

must adapt its structure and method of work to these goals.

That is why we also have to reform the UN to reduce child mortality. To save lives. As we said we would.

We have done great things in the past. And we have greater means than any other generation. I invite all of you to join this global campaign for child survival

Thank you.