

Statement by the President of the Republic of Latvia
H.E. Mrs Vaira **Vike-Freiberga**
at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly
New York, 14 September 2005

As we gather to mark the 60th anniversary of the United Nations, we recognize that it needs fundamental and far-reaching reforms to remain viable as an organization, and to be capable of meeting the modern-day challenges of the 21st century.

Freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom to live in dignity must be the leading goals of our organization, in order that we meet the rightful expectations of our people across the globe.

As one of the Secretary General's five special envoys, I met with many of you during the past six months to establish whether a consensus could be reached concerning the Secretary General's proposals, contained in his report 'In Larger Freedom'. This has proved to be a very difficult task, as many of us have approached these proposals from our different viewpoints.

Former GA President Jean Ping deserves our praise for showing leadership and crafting an outcome document that reflects in a delicately balanced way our concerns and aspirations. Adoption of this document provides us with a framework for action. The stakes are higher than ever.

We must all now display the political will and courage to forge ahead with implementation of our decisions.

We have reaffirmed our commitment to achieving the UN's Millennium Development Goals of reducing poverty and disease, of promoting children's education and gender equality, of fostering sustainable and environmentally friendly development, of creating an international climate of peace and security among the nations of this planet. Any aid program must be administered responsibly through good governance, in an honest, open and transparent manner.

I am pleased that we have agreed on the necessity of establishing a Peacebuilding Commission by the end of the year. The Commission can fulfil a vital role in post-conflict recovery and consolidation of sustainable peace.

I am also pleased that we have agreed on the establishment of a Human Rights Council, but wish to stress that such a body must be endowed with genuine authority. I welcome the decision to strengthen the office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights.

Human rights go hand in hand with democracy, which is why Latvia supports the establishment of a Democracy Fund. I am firmly convinced that such a fund could provide valuable aid to those countries that have embarked on the path of consolidating democratic political systems and the rule of law.

A major step forward is our unequivocal condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Terrorism is a scourge that requires the concerted efforts of the entire international community to be defeated. We

need to achieve rapid progress on concluding a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

For the past 12 years, we have been engaged in discussions about changes to the UN **Security Council**. Although practically everyone agrees on the need to reform this important UN body and on the need to render it more representative of today's geopolitical realities, no consensus has been reached regarding the manner in which this should be done. This promises to be one of the most difficult issues to resolve, but we should nevertheless not abandon our efforts to reach a feasible accord by the end of this year.

The United Nations has recently gone through some difficult times. We have seen cases of graft, theft and embezzlement in the UN's administrative structures. We have heard horror stories of women and children being raped and abused by individual blue helmet peacekeepers. That is why we must take some hard and responsible decisions, and that is why we must implement some resolute measures to ensure that such major transgressions do not occur again.

We must do what is required to strengthen and reform this organization, for despite its imperfections, the world needs the United Nations. Now more than ever before.