



MALTA

STATEMENT BY

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HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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(Please check against delivery)

This gathering of world leaders constitutes an impressive manifestation of our collective determination to work together in the promotion of a more peaceful, just and prosperous global order.

On the one hand this meeting is a reaffirmation of the trust which our peoples put into the United Nations process in the pursuit of this objective.

At the same time this meeting is an expression of the concerns at the immense and growing challenges we face in this regard. We all share the sense of both risk and opportunity which arise from the contrasts and uncertainties of the current global order.

Ours is a time characterised as never before by the parallel existence of unbounded wealth and unrelievable poverty, of major scientific breakthroughs and pervasive illiteracy, of overwhelming gestures of kindness and charity and of atrocious acts of wickedness and inhumanity.

This mix of contrasts has the potential to seriously destabilise our societies and ways of living. At the same time it contains within it the germs of remedial and healing action.

Each one of us brings to this gathering his or her society's unique experiences of how these contrasts are working out at grass roots level. Some have been the direct victims of acts of savagery and terrorism. Others of catastrophic natural disasters.

Many bring evidence of the ravages of poverty, malnutrition and ill-health. Others of the dehumanising impact of internal conflict and political upheaval.

Malta is today experiencing the influx of overwhelming and unregulated immigration flows - in itself a resultant of many of the other problems. In our case this experience is all the more unnerving in that it has struck our small society with unexpected suddenness and magnitude.

The catalytic ingredient to transform all these challenges from threat into opportunity lies in the readiness to take collective action across the board.

In presenting his initial proposals for our Outcome Document last March, Secretary General Koff Annan aptly reminded that "The cause of larger freedom can only be advanced if nations work together".

We have before us at this meeting a package of proposals which address the cause of larger freedom in all its dimensions - those relating to development, to security and to human rights. We also have before us a set of proposals aimed at improving the effectiveness and responsiveness of the United Nations as an institutional structure.

Together with our partners in the European Union Malta has played an enthusiastic and constructive role in the preparation of this outcome document. On this occasion I wish to underline my firm commitment and the commitment of the Government and people of Malta to the values and principles that we have been promoting throughout this process.

Many aspects of the outcome document we have before us reflect the sense of solidarity, the humanistic spirit and the attachment to the rule of law which need to underpin international relations.

I will not hide my feeling that we would have wished this document to have been even more ambitious than it already is.

In particular, we would have wished to see a more forceful reference to the question of impunity, and especially the important role that is being played by the International Criminal Court. We would also have wished to see more ambitious sections on environment, on human rights and on disarmament.

At the same time we realise that the consensus that has been achieved on a number of sensitive issues lays a good foundation for further measures of reform.

There are, in fact, many encouraging examples of how we can achieve results, at times even against the odds. One of these was the recent conclusion of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which I will have the pleasure of signing on behalf of Malta tomorrow morning.

Enunciation of principles and adherence to values have a necessary counterpart in the collective responsibility to undertake concrete and action-oriented measures.

Our outcome document has identified a number of such measures. Discussion on many of them will continue through this Sixtieth Session of the General Assembly. Among other things we are defining long-term targets and objectives for development cooperation; we are laying the institutional foundations for two new organs within the United Nations - the Peace building Commission and the Human Rights Council - and we are breaking new ground in the areas of terrorism and of collective responsibility.

I would today like to affirm Malta's readiness to engage itself with vigour and determination in the implementation of these measures.

It is appropriate that this important exercise is being conducted at a time when the United Nations is commemorating the sixtieth anniversary since its creation.

Throughout these sixty years the United Nations, OUR United Nations, has served as a point of continuity and a beacon of hope. It provided continuity throughout the dark period of the cold war. It provided hope throughout the complex and transformative decolonisation process.

Though much has changed in our world over the last sixty years one thing has remained constant - Mankind's yearning for peace, dignity and freedom. It is right that on this occasion we rededicate ourselves in the pursuit of this objective.