



**PERMANENT MISSION OF  
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**STATEMENT BY**

**H.E. Dr. Jan Peter Balkenende**

**Prime Minister  
of the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

**HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING**

**United Nations General Assembly**

**NEW YORK, 14 September 2005**

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen,

We are capable of sending spaceships to faraway planets in search of life. But are we sufficiently smart and determined to save the lives of innocent children on *our own* planet?

We live in a world where HIV/AIDS undermines entire societies. We have the knowledge and the resources to do something about it. But do we also have the political will?

We live in a world where the prospect of devastating climate change confronts us all. The recent floods in the heartland of Europe, in China and, of course, in this very country, might be seen as clear warnings. One third of my country, the Netherlands, lies below sea level. We can raise our dikes. But isn't it high time for us to work together on a *real* solution?

We live in an age when our shared values, such as freedom, justice and respect for all, are under attack by terrorists. Will we be able to overcome the boundaries which divide us in the fight against violence and terror?

Poverty, disease, pollution, terrorism and violence have a worldwide impact. And they are all interconnected.

Let us not make the mistake of thinking that if threats are far away they are not our business. Such threats can set off a global chain reaction that will affect us all.

All of us are equally vulnerable. Only united we can transform our world for the better. Together, we are responsible for taking action.

In 2000, we promised the world that we would achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Now the time has come to fulfil that promise.

As political leaders we must have the courage to choose a model for international partnership that does justice to the tasks confronting us. We need an effective, multilateral system with clear commitments and rules, and strong institutions. Only that will give us the chance to make the world more secure, just and humane.

Rather than pretending that the UN is some entity, distinct from us member states, we should acknowledge that the UN is "us" and that we together determine whether it is an effective tool or not. If we do not want the UN to be a lame duck, we must dare to give it the wings to fly.

Multilateralism works. Whenever we join forces, we help people to live their lives in dignity, freedom and peace.

I applaud the efforts made so far in the running up to this summit.

The outcome document presented to us today in many respects presents much needed progress. In other areas, however, we clearly must be more ambitious.

We welcome the establishment of the Peace Building Commission to deal with conflicts in a more structural way.

Also, I applaud our readiness to address deficiencies in the management of this organization.

We are equally pleased with the reaffirmed ambitions on development co-operation.

We welcome the recognition in the document of the important contribution of the private sector and civil society to our common objectives. Public private partnerships are an effective and indispensable tool in combating poverty. Let us put these lofty principles into practice.

We can. Together with the private sector, for example, the Netherlands and Ghana will take up an idea of the Hunger Task Force to support a school feeding programme which will increase school enrollment, reduce hunger and strengthen the local economy. Examples like these show that it is possible to bring the MDGs within reach.

But we can and should do more to enhance our capacity to deal with human rights violations. The Human Rights Council should be up and running by early 2006. We need to take the appropriate steps to make the Council a truly effective tool to promote and protect human rights.

Equally pressing is the need to enhance the credibility of the multilateral mechanisms in the field of non proliferation. The documents' deafening silence on this issue undermines the credibility of the UN-organization.

Mr President,

No country in the world — no matter how powerful — can achieve these results alone. We must do it together.

The key question is: are we able to combat poverty, disease, environmental degradation, terrorism and violence?

Yes we are. So now, let's act. It is time to deliver, for the sake of our children and grandchildren.

Thank you.