



THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement  
By H.E. Mr. Tassos Papadopoulos  
President of the Republic of Cyprus  
at the High-level Plenary Meeting  
of the General Assembly of the United Nations  
  
( New York 15 September, 2005 )

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Messrs. Co-Chairmen  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sixty years after the end of World War II, which brought untold sorrow to mankind, the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly has rightly gathered here together an unprecedented number of Heads of State and Government to mark a historic event. A mark of esteem for the sixty years of firm resolution of all the peoples of the United Nations to combine their efforts to accomplish the noble aims enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations; a mark of renewal of a sixty-year commitment to an international order based on the rule of law. We ought to grasp this opportunity to take stock of the progress in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and revitalize consensus on new and old challenges, which necessitate urgent collective action.

In that respect, allow me, Excellencies, to first thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Kofi Annan, for his inspired report entitled "In Larger Freedom", and H.E. Mr. Jean Ping, President of the 59<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly, for the leadership and outstanding capability with which he guided the works for the preparation of this meeting.

Messrs. Co-Chairmen

More than ever today, the world needs a strong UN if we are to successfully confront the many challenges we all face and honour long standing commitments, as last reaffirmed in the Millennium Declaration. In the five years that followed the adoption of the Millennium Declaration with the jubilation of the turn of the millennium, the world has witnessed unprecedented ruthless terrorist attacks and a severe crisis in our Organization. We witnessed deep divisions among the Member States on the nature of the threats that we faced and the appropriateness of the use of force to address those threats. The Republic of Cyprus has always been a fervent supporter of multilateralism and we believe that the UN remains the cardinal expression of effective multilateralism and a unique framework for the development of an international system based on clear and foreseeable rules.

It is incumbent upon us at this historic juncture to agree on joint actions for the much needed reform of our Organization and to give it a restored purpose. This can be achieved through the adoption of a comprehensive and action oriented strategy. A strategy that encompasses concrete measures for the timely implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the tackling of the new challenges and threats that the international community has to face. Equal weight and attention should be given to the fields of development, peace and security, and human rights, since the interlinkages and interdependences between these major goals of the Organization have been long discussed and fully demonstrated. We firmly believe that the strengthening of the rule of law, both at the national and international level, is an essential element for the successful achievement of those goals. Adherence to commonly agreed rules and trust in the system to prevent or sanction the violation of the rules are underlying principles of effective multilateralism.

Messrs. Co-Chairmen

In a world where over a billion people, in particular in Africa, face extreme poverty and hunger and live in miserable conditions, our fundamental responsibility is that, in a credible way, we declare development to be a central issue on the agenda of the UN. We need to pass urgently from rhetoric to action because the gap between the haves and have-nots is widening dramatically, rather than narrowing. We need to honour past commitments and take concrete measures for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. That means, inter alia, increased development assistance, promotion of innovative sources of financing for development, and debt relief. We also need to improve market access to developing countries, promote micro-credit activities, facilitate technology transfers, and provide resources for a comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS and other endemic diseases.

Cyprus, as a Member State of the EU and fully subscribing to the statement delivered earlier by the UK on behalf of the European Union, will play its part by raising its Official Development Assistance, in accordance with relevant EU decisions.

Environmental degradation and natural resources depletion are issues of major international concern and closely related to sustainable development. We therefore support a more integrated structure for the international environmental governance.

Messrs. Co-Chairmen

The UN should be empowered to deal effectively with the changing nature of threats to collective security, such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and transnational crime, while not forgetting the settlement of old disputes. Detecting the seeds of conflict at an early stage and preventing conflicts should become the corner-stone of our collective security. Peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict resolution, peacekeeping and peace-building are vital activities for the strengthening of the Organization's capacity to promote collective security. The proposed Peace-building Commission will provide the long overdue answer to the need for post-conflict action. As to the fight against terrorism we fully agree with the Secretary-General's counter-terrorism strategy and its five pillars. On disarmament and non-proliferation we offered our support to the relevant initiative of Norway and others.

The Security Council, which has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, should reinforce the fundamental obligation of Member States under the Charter to refrain from the threat or use of force and to avoid aggression. The Republic of Cyprus, which has suffered from the use of force and foreign aggression and is still suffering from occupation, firmly believes that we need to reform the Security Council so as to reinforce its credibility and legitimacy, through inter alia the improvement of its working methods and decision making procedures. Securing efficiency in the implementation of its resolutions remains an absolute necessity. In fact, our Organization will be as strong and effective as its membership wishes it or allows it to be.

Messrs. Co-Chairmen

Even though the 60 year legacy of the UN human rights programme is impressive and provides a wide-ranging body of norms and standards, the system for protecting human rights at the international level is today under considerable strain. The current UN human rights institutional framework faces considerable problems in the implementation of those norms and standards. Mainstreaming of human rights in the entire UN system has yet to be achieved. The respect and promotion of the human rights of all people and in particular of internally displaced persons, refugees and missing persons are of vital importance to Cyprus. It is for these reasons that we support the upgrading of the Commission on Human Rights to a Human Rights Council and the enhancement of the leadership role for the High Commissioner for Human Rights. We also believe that the UN and the world community have an obligation and a responsibility to protect innocent populations against awful violations of human rights, such as genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing.

Messrs. Co-Chairmen

In an era of globalization and interdependence, where global challenges require global responses and concerted action, we ought to send the signal in no uncertain terms that the clash of civilizations will simply not take place, because we all share a universal civilization, which is based on the belief in mankind, as encapsulated in the UN Charter. The Charter remains our common and unique political, legal and moral compass.

Thank you.