



ITALY

Statement by the
Prime Minister of Italy

H.E. Silvio Berlusconi

To the High Level Plenary Meeting
of the Sixtieth Session of the General Assembly
of the United Nations

New York, September 15, 2005

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Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The sadness we share for the victims of the hurricane that struck the great Country hosting the United Nations leads us to reflect on the principles underlying this Organization.

Who are we? The answer is inscribed in the Charter that established this Organization 60 years ago: We are "The peoples of the United Nations." We are the States serving every human being. We have a duty toward every inhabitant of the planet, wherever human dignity is denied, wherever the exercise of fundamental rights is impeded, whenever natural disaster strikes.

It is our duty to safeguard the freedom of each man and woman: freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom from oppression.

Freedom from want is our primary goal. It is the responsibility of more developed Countries to provide support and resources for economic and social growth; it is the responsibility of developing Countries to create the conditions at home for all citizens to reap the benefits of these resources.

Our discussions of poverty and development cannot ignore the problem of debt. As regards debt relief, Italy is at the forefront. It has already canceled the debts of many of the poorest Countries, and is committed to their total cancellation.

The fight against poverty also entails a commitment to safeguard health. Here I wish to recall the Global Fund to fight AIDS and other epidemics, established during the Genoa G8 Summit, as well as Italy's commitment to vaccine research and to making vaccines available and affordable in the poorest Countries.

Another crucial front is further liberalization of international trade and market access. Italy supports the efforts for successful negotiations in the framework of the World Trade Organization. We cannot continue to leave entire populations on the margins of globalization.

Freedom from fear is our other main goal. Terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction pose a serious threat to peace and security: the success of United Nations reform will also be measured by its ability to fight and eradicate these new global perils.

In this field, too, Italy is a lead promoter of a common strategy. Yesterday we signed the new International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. But this is not enough. We must oppose with all our means not only terrorists but also all those who support, protect, and justify them by inciting acts of hatred and intolerance.

The United Nations must be in a position to respond courageously to the complex crises generated by conflicts. This is why the commitment of every Country and International

Organization is so vital. Here, too, Italy is playing a lead role. We are among the most active participants in missions authorized by the UN Security Council.

More than 40,000 Italian troops are dedicated to peace-keeping and peace-enforcing operations to bring stability and development, from the Balkans to Afghanistan, from Iraq to the Sudan.

To achieve these inescapable, fundamental objectives, the United Nations must have new and more effective tools. This is why Italy strongly supports the establishment of the Peace-building Commission and the Human Rights Council. At the same time, new thinking and a new vision of the international community's responsibilities are needed: The protection of States must go hand-in-hand with the protection of civilians.

The affirmation of the "responsibility to protect" principle is a major result that responds to the shortcomings of recent years.

In the light of this, we need to strengthen the UN's role in promoting democracy and freedom. This is why we commend the establishment of the Democracy Fund, to which we shall not fail to contribute.

Finally, we must avoid impositions and divisions on the questions of Security Council reform.

Together with the other Countries that belong to the *Uniting for Consensus* movement, Italy has submitted a flexible proposal that provides for an increase only in elective seats.

Only by enacting a reform that enjoys the broadest possible consensus will the Security Council be stronger, more transparent, more true to the principles of the UN Charter. This is the only way to foster the trust and the cooperation needed to bring to a successful conclusion the reform of the United Nations as a whole.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to conclude by repeating the words I pronounced in this Hall two years ago, which are as relevant today as ever.

"In the Millennium Declaration we promised food, water, health, and education to all. Now the democracies must commit themselves to providing, also and above all, the intangible goods from which the other more tangible goods spring: because without the prerequisites of freedom and democracy there can be no hope for lasting peace and development, nor can there be an ultimate defeat of the challenge of poverty."

Thank you.