



SLOVENIA

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**STATEMENT
BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SLOVENIA**

H.E. DR. JANEZ DRNOVSEK

**AT THE HIGH LEVEL PLENARY MEETING OF THE
60TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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PERMANENT MISSION OF SLOVENIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished Heads of State and Government,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sixty years from the founding of the United Nations, and five years after the adoption of the Millennium Declaration on development goals, mark both an opportunity and our duty to take a close and critical look at the reality of humanity's situation today and the effectiveness of United Nations. This is our responsibility to humanity, to this planet and to future generations.

The question arises of whether today we can be satisfied with the situation attained and the trends, firstly regarding the state of humanity and secondly regarding the effectiveness of the operations and responses of the United Nations Organisation to the current issues of human development. My answer to both questions is, sadly, no. I think it would make little sense for this high-level jubilee meeting to be just one more of the many where we politely exchange friendly words, adopt some general declaration and go our various ways leaving nothing substantially changed.

The findings of experts in the area of achieving some of the Millennium Goals are frightening. World poverty is not diminishing, but is in fact growing. More than a billion people live below the threshold of absolute poverty.

Mr. President, the reasons for this are known.

Access for developing countries to rich and developed markets, and their access to financial institutions, to new technologies or medicines is still being prevented or at least significantly limited. Global trade relations are also unfair. The pressures of agricultural policy, especially from the developed countries, are such that they are literally destroying agriculture in the developing countries. As the calculations at Oxfam indicate, an improvement in access to world markets of a mere one percent each for Africa, East Asia, South Asia and Latin America could raise as many as 128 million people out of poverty.

Financial relations are extremely unfair. Developing countries today are paying enormous sums just to service the interest on debts. Much of this debt has never been used for the benefit of people and has therefore been classed within the definition of illegitimate or "odious" debt. Lenders knew very well that they were making loans to corrupt regimes and that these would not help people in hardship. Repaying such debts has rendered poor countries even poorer. And we should not deny that in recent months and years some significant efforts have been made. The recent writing off of multilateral debt for the poorest countries of the world is welcome, but not enough. For numerous countries that are struggling to attain the Millennium Goals, their debt should be written off without any further conditions.

Official development aid is growing extremely slowly. While we welcome the recent agreement on increasing aid up to 2010, we must be aware that this commitment was first made in 1970 and has not been honoured right up to the present day. In recent years several innovative proposals have been made to increase development funds. Yet none of them has

broken through the inertia of the financial institutions. And it is completely clear that we cannot expect any positive breakthroughs with the existing financial instruments.

Mr. President,

poverty is not the only danger that burdens the world. Our very existence on the planet is under threat. I wish to draw attention to climate change, to atmospheric warming. There would appear to be an emerging consensus among scientists that each year we are witnessing increasing numbers of catastrophic events linked to global warming: hurricanes, floods and droughts. It is in this area perhaps most illustrative and clear to everyone that on this Earth we are in fact all connected and interdependent. Under the aegis of the United Nations we must therefore work together in the world to find more effective, more determined solutions and to contribute to raising the general awareness of people, and especially politicians. For this reason the United Nations must take a decisive step towards seeking consensus among the member states. I believe, therefore, that the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations provides an occasion for us to turn our attention seriously to these issues.

Mr. President,

one could reel off staggering facts and figures ad infinitum. The consequences of a world without balance are becoming increasingly catastrophic. Global imbalances are increasing and are now at their highest level in the history of humanity. It is therefore an illusion to expect that the world will be balanced, that there will be no wars, no terrorism, corruption and crime of the most brutal dimensions, if such trends continue.

No kind of security measure and no kind of protection against terrorism and global threats can give anyone complete security. We will all be defeated. So burying our heads in the sand is a reflection of our lack of responsibility to humanity today and to all future generations. A decisive role here should be assumed especially by the developed world, the biggest and most advanced countries and all those international organisations, together with the United Nations, that have a decisive impact on the current trends of humanity and bear the responsibility for its development. There is an extraordinary responsibility of all of us participating today at this high-level session of the United Nations.

If we wish to hand down a more just, sustainable and humane world to the next generation, we must be prepared to significantly alter our habits and beliefs. We have to be aware of the suffering of a large part of humanity and strengthen our sensitivity towards people around the world who live in distress.

Thank you.