



THE PERMANENT MISSION OF
SOUTH AFRICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

333 East 38th Street
9th Floor
New York, NY 10016
Tel: (212) 213-5583
Fax: (212)692-2498
E-mail: pmun@southafica-newyork.net

STATEMENT
BY

H.E. MR. THABO MBEKI
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

TO THE

HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING OF
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK
15 SEPTEMBER 2005

Check against delivery

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT OF SOUTH AFRICA, THABO MBEKI, AT THE UN MILLENNIUM REVIEW SUMMIT: NEW YORK, 15th SEPTEMBER 2005.

Your Excellencies, the Outgoing President and the Incoming President of the General Assembly,
Your Excellency, the Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Annan,
Your Majesties,
Your Excellencies Heads of State, Government and Delegation,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

In the year 2000, we took advantage of a change in the millennia solemnly to commit ourselves to the Millennium Declaration, which led to the Millennium Development Goals and the proposals for the reform of the United Nations.

We have gathered here five years later in a Millennium Review Summit both to assess the progress we have made towards the achievement of the goals we set ourselves and to take any necessary additional decisions to help all humanity move forward faster towards the realisation of these goals.

It would therefore seem quite obvious that we should ask ourselves two fundamental questions. One of these is – what has the review told us about the last five years? The second is --- what decisions have we therefore taken in the light of the conclusions brought to light by the review?

One of the facts that stands out sharply from the review is that in truth we have not made the decisive progress we thought we would make with regard to the critical issue of the reform of the United Nations. We have therefore had no choice but to postpone to a later date the decisions we should have made.

The only saving grace with regard to this miserable performance is that as it closed, the 59th General Assembly "reaffirmed our commitment to strengthen the United Nations with a view to enhancing its authority and efficiency, as well as its capacity to address effectively...the full range of challenges of our time."

Yet another fact that stands out sharply from the review is that our approach to the challenge to commit and deploy the necessary resources for the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals has been half-hearted, timid and tepid.

In this regard, and illustrative of this reality, the Outcome Document honestly states that Africa is "the only continent not on track to meet any of the goals of the Millennium Declaration by 2015..." And yet, precisely because of the enormous and unique challenge it posed, the Millennium Declaration had included a specific section entitled, "Meeting the Special Needs of Africa".

The Outcome Document correctly says: "...We reaffirm our commitment to work towards a security consensus based on the recognition that many threats are interlinked, that development, peace, security and human rights are mutually reinforcing, that no State can best protect itself by acting entirely alone and that all States need an effective and efficient collective security system, pursuant to the purposes and principles of the Charter."

We firmly believe that the reason we have not made the progress we should have, during the last five years, is precisely because we have not as yet achieved what the Outcome Document described as "a security consensus".

We have not achieved that "security consensus" because of the widely disparate conditions of existence and interests among the Member States of the UN as well as the gross imbalance of power that define the relationship among these Member States.

It is the poor of the world whose interests are best served by real and genuine respect for the fundamental proposition that we need the "security consensus" identified by the Outcome Document. The actions of the rich and powerful strongly suggest that these are not in the least convinced that this "security consensus" would serve their interests.

Thus they use their power to perpetuate the power imbalance in the ordering of global affairs. As a consequence of this, we have not made the progress of the reform of the UN that we should have.

Because of that, we have the result that we have not achieved the required scale of resource transfer from those who have these resources, to empower the poor of the world to extricate themselves from their misery. Simply put, this means that the logic of the use of power is the reinforcement of the might of the powerful, and therefore the perpetuation of the disempowerment of the powerless.

This is the poisonous mixture that has given us the outcome that will issue from this Millennium Review Summit to the peoples of the world. We should not be surprised when these billions do not acclaim us as heroes and heroines.

Perhaps the time has come that we should drape ourselves in the clothes of heroes and heroines by ensuring that by the time the 60th General Assembly concludes, the billions we represent will have just cause to say that we did indeed act to ensure the faithful implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

Thank you.