



EUROPEAN UNION
Delegation of the European Commission
to the United Nations

Statement by

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Member of the European Commission

High Level Plenary Meeting of the 60th Session of the United Nations

General Assembly

Check against Delivery

New York, 16 September 2005

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Mr President, Mr Secretary General,

Standing here in this great hall brings back happy memories of my previous work here; but today I am speaking in my current capacity, as European Commissioner for External Relations. And from this vantage point, on behalf of the European Community, I welcome the promising results of this meeting. President Ping and his team have been untiring in pushing for a worthwhile outcome. And none of it would have been possible without Secretary General Kofi Annan's leadership and vision.

The European Community is happy that we could contribute to this outcome together with many others. How do we now see the results? Do they meet our original aspirations?

Not everything has been attained. Compromises were inevitable. But we have laid a solid foundation as we seek to re-build the UN and to make it capable of meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

Development, security and human rights are the three pillars of our common vision of the future. How do we measure up against that vision?

When it comes to **development assistance**, the EU leads the world. The European Community and EU member states provide some 55% of the world's overseas development assistance. From the outset, we have led the efforts to increase this assistance to 0.7% of GNI by 2015. We have set for ourselves an intermediate goal of 0.56% by 2010. Today we provide some 43 billion euro a year in ODA. This total will increase by another 20 billion euro over the next five years. At least 50% of this increase will go to Africa. This is not negligible! We very much hope to see other donors following our lead.

The other side of this coin of course is good use of these resources: it means that donors have to make increased efforts to coordinate and harmonize - another field where Europe is taking the lead - and that our partner countries, with our support, make a serious effort to establish and reinforce good governance.

Trade is also key to development. The WTO Doha Development Agenda can bring benefit to us all and in particular to developing countries. The European Community remains firmly committed to making a success of the WTO negotiations, including by the elimination of export subsidies. Our serious offer made earlier this year still stands. We hope that others will follow with similar commitments, on export as well as domestic subsidies. As you know, we have worked for a more ambitious outcome on trade at this Summit, including on immediate duty-free and quota-free market access for all exports of the least developed countries. The European Community's "Everything But Arms" initiative has been in place for more than three years; and it is time that others follow. Finally, we also need more efforts on trade capacity building. The

EU is the world's biggest provider of trade-related assistance to help developing countries fully exploit market access opportunities. The European Community this summer pledged to increase such assistance still further to 1 billion Euro a year.

Even in the wake of Katrina and the tsunami we did not focus enough attention on **environment**. Climate change and environmental sustainability have to be taken as seriously as they deserve. In this perspective, will it be enough to just "explore" the potential of the current institutional setup? We believe we should continue to work towards creating a strong, functional, action-oriented UN Environmental Organization.

Let me say that the European Community welcomes and strongly supports the initiative of President Bush concerning the looming danger of **avian flu** becoming a pandemic.

Mr President,

Agreeing on a Peace-Building Commission is without doubt one key result in the area of **peace and security**. We must now ensure that it begins its work by the end of this year. The European Community has long standing experience in helping to stabilize countries emerging from conflicts, in all possible corners of the world: from the Balkans to Indonesia, from Afghanistan to Africa. We are looking forward to taking an appropriate place at the table, side by side with other key institutional donors, and to contributing to the best of our capabilities – as we always have.

Another important outcome is our recognition of our collective **responsibility to protect** populations against atrocities. I have always strongly advocated that people must be at the heart of security concerns! The UN's credibility is much reinforced by adopting this concept.

Nobody questions any longer the need to confront **terrorism** in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purpose. Concluding a comprehensive convention on this topic during the 60th UNGA session is long overdue.

Peace and security is of course grounded in **education for peace** and human development. This is something I wholeheartedly endorse. Indeed, the ideas it embodies are very much in the focus of the EU's many and diverse educational policies and programmes.

Mr. President,

Human Rights are universal. And putting them on the same level as development and as peace and security underscores this. We cannot tolerate abuses of our fellow human beings, wherever they may occur. The Commission on Human Rights has lost its ability to act effectively on behalf of victims, and thus its credibility. Forming a new, smaller and more functional Human Rights Council will help the UN become a real driving force behind human-rights protection. Unfortunately, we could not agree any of the necessary details ahead of this Summit. I confess being disappointed at this meagre outcome which does not meet our ambitions. Let us not lose the momentum and finish this important chapter by February 2006! I express our full confidence in President Eliasson's leadership to fulfil this mandate before us.

On the other hand, the **Democracy Fund** is a tangible result which the European Community will support, politically and financially.

And perhaps in this human-rights context I might mention one of the EU's recent contributions – developing a convention against exporting instruments of torture. I invite all countries to join us in this.

Finally a word on UN **management reform**, where we also have not come as far as we would have liked. The Secretary General shoulders an awesome responsibility. Yet it is not always clear that he has the necessary authority over the administration to deliver. We will support the Secretary General, as we have in the past, in every step he will take or recommendation he makes to rectify this imbalance.

Mr President,

Effective multilateralism is the hallmark of the European Union's external policy. The United Nations system is its cornerstone. Let me pledge today that we will do everything in our power to ensure the UN will be a lean, fit and energetic organization for the 21st century.