



STATEMENT BY MR. K. NATWAR SINGH, MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 60TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON SEPTEMBER 19, 2005



Mr. President,

Your election as President of the 60th Session of the General Assembly comes at a significant moment in the history of the United Nations. The Outcome Document adopted by our Heads of State and Government at the beginning of this Session represents the culmination of a long process. This started with the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. It continued with the Secretary General's "In Larger Freedom" report, and the efforts of your distinguished predecessor to synthesize these ideas for the consideration of the Member States. We thank all those involved for their dedicated efforts.

We are united in our commitment towards multilateralism and this is a good foundation for our further efforts.

Mr. President,

All countries and especially those from the developing world played a significant role in the negotiations on the Outcome Document. Much was achieved. Much has been left incomplete. There are foundations on which we have to build but there are also shortcomings which we need to correct in the process of implementation. A notable omission is the theme of disarmament. Our struggle for multilaterally negotiated, universal and verifiable nuclear disarmament, in a time bound manner, has to continue with vigour. The Outcome Document must serve as a Road Map, with its main elements as signposts in the discussions that would follow, in the coming months, under your stewardship.

Mr. President,

You have suggested for the general debate, a most appropriate theme for discussion, "For a stronger and more effective United Nations: the Follow-up to, and Implementation of, the High-Level Meeting in September 2005". We believe this captures the spirit and essence of all that we, co-partners in the United Nations, wish to achieve.

Mr. President,

We are the world's largest democracy. There is no precedent in history of a democracy of over one billion people. It is a tremendous undertaking. Also an exciting and inspiring one. We are breaking new ground. That Indian democracy works is a political miracle. The credit goes to the Indian voters. They ensure that India remains secular, democratic and pluralistic.

We also believe that we need to do much more to inculcate respect and acceptance of pluralism. I am reminded of what the Father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi said and I quote:

"I do not want my house to be walled in all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any".

Mr. President,

Humankind is now learning to cope with the menace of terrorism. This evil is increasingly directed at innocent civilians. It invites the strongest condemnation. We all agree that there can be no justification for terrorism. Whether it is terrorism or non-proliferation, unless there is a non-selective, uniform and sustained approach, the objective of the international community cannot be achieved. The Outcome Document reflects the joint resolve of the international community to fight terrorism. In our

judgement, there is no better institutional setting than the United Nations capable of providing cohesion and vigour to these efforts.

As a victim of terrorism for the past two decades, India understands, and is fully supportive of, the need for United Nations action on counter-terrorism. A key aspect of the implementation of the Outcome Document will be the development and adoption by the General Assembly of a strong counter-terrorism agenda, to supplement the existing General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism. As an initiator of the draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism, India welcomes and is fully committed to the decision taken by the Heads of State and Government to conclude negotiations on the Convention during the 60th Session of the General Assembly.

Mr. President,

The main purpose of the Summit last week was to review the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. Unfortunately, most developing countries will not be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, given the current levels of their growth and levels of international support. We must strengthen efforts at both the national and the international levels for taking us closer to the development targets in the Millennium Declaration.

The Millennium Development Goals embody a quantifiable vision of human dignity and solidarity. Also of important economic and social rights. Yet, important objectives such as employment, critical for developing countries, are not included. India's use of innovative financial instruments for rural infrastructural investment as well as our Rural Employment Guarantee Bill, I believe, may be of interest to other developing countries.

Most of us had much higher expectations from the Summit in the area of development, particularly in agreeing on definite time-tables for the achievement of the 0.7 percent target for Official Development Assistance. This is equally true of innovative sources of financing because developing countries cannot break out of the circle of poverty without enhanced resource flows and the application of science and technology to meet their developmental challenges.

As India's own economy develops and its technological advancement comes of age, we are expanding our economic and technical cooperation with the developing countries, reinforcing our political solidarity. We have extensive programmes in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world. We are also happy to have contributed to the South Fund for Development and Humanitarian Assistance. The India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Facility for Alleviation of Poverty and Hunger is a good example of South-South Cooperation.

India has written off the debts of all the highly indebted poor countries. Given India's long-term association with and commitment to Africa we welcome the recognition given by the high-level plenary meeting on the need to urgently address the special needs of Africa. On its part India has undertaken several initiatives in partnership

with Africa. The Techno-Economic Approach for Africa-India Movement initiative is designed to promote technology transfer to West Africa. The pivotal role of scientific knowledge and technology for economic development cannot be overstated. India stands ready to share its experience with the developing countries in Africa and elsewhere. To bridge the digital divide within a country itself, which sometimes become as problematic as at the international level, Wireless In Local Loop Technology developed in India which eliminates expensive equipment and copper lines has already been used in several countries in Africa. India has put together a connectivity mission in Africa, using fiber optics and dedicated satellite. It will support tele-education, telemedicine, e-commerce and e-governance, infotainment, resource mapping and meteorological services. India is also earmarking US \$1.5 billion for lines of credit to assist developing countries, in particular those in Africa, fight HIV/AIDS and other pandemics.

The international community needs to address intellectual property regimes that seek to deny technologies rather than facilitating their transfer to the developing countries, including in the areas of environment and public health.

Although both the Millennium Declaration and the Outcome Document have spoken of exploiting the beneficial aspects of globalisation, we are yet to agree on and implement the modalities for such a process. Making the process of globalisation fairer and more equitable remains one of the main challenges of our time. At present, the accumulation of wealth is accompanied by the accumulation of poverty. Ruskin, the 19th century British author, in his "Unto this Last" (a favourite of Mahatma Gandhi) had described such wealth as "the gilded index of a far reaching ruin, a wreckers pile of coin gleaned from a beach to which he has beguiled an argosy." Poverty is sometimes attributed to lack of entrepreneurship: the poor of the world prove their entrepreneurship everyday by ensuring their families' physical survival.

Regrettably the Summit has not given a clear and comprehensive direction to the WTO Doha Round of trade negotiations. Formulae are not an end in themselves: the end has to be a decrease in poverty and an increase in employment. Therefore, equal treatment cannot be forced on unequal partners. Special and Differential Treatment remains an integral component in all trade negotiations, including agriculture and non-agricultural market access. India, as a member of the G-20, will continue to promote in the WTO and elsewhere the interests of all developing countries, including the Small Island Developing States, the Least Developed, the Landlocked and the highly indebted poor countries.

An achievement of the developing countries in the Group of 77 is their hard fought and reasonably successful struggle for progress on systemic issues critical for good international economic governance. We have to build on this to ensure the reform of Bretton Woods institutions and the restoration of the central role of the UN in setting the international economic agenda.

A change in the composition of the UN Security Council is an imperative. The G-4 framework resolution has made UN reform a central issue, which can no longer be ignored or disregarded. There is a democracy deficit, as the Secretary General has also

said in July, in the governance of the United Nations. There is not much point in speaking of inclusiveness, transparency and democracy and leaving the Security Council as a glaring exception to these principles. Measures taken so far to revitalise the General Assembly are not enough. Only by electing permanent members committed to rendering unto the General Assembly what is the General Assembly's can this be done. This is essential for a world order in which decisions are optimal and therefore acceptable and the use of force minimal. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, aptly stated: "Above all we have to participate in the growing structure of a world order. We cannot rely on others to do it on our behalf." One cannot argue in favour of democracy in the rest of the world and leave the UN Security Council undemocratic. Effectiveness is a function of right decisions with broad support. Negotiations on the Outcome Document and many subsequent statements have demonstrated that if more could not be achieved on the developmental aspects of trade in the Document, it is because the Security Council has not been made representative. If institutional reform has been faltering and many are doubtful of securing a just solution, it is because the Security Council does not reflect the world of today.

The unsatisfactory progress on other issues shows that critics of UN Security Council expansion in both the categories were profoundly mistaken. UN Security Council reform, far from hindering progress, was actually helping it. In its absence, fears of intervention have prevented agreement on a Human Rights Council and other issues. Therefore, UN Security Council reform remains more necessary than ever and should preferably, as the Secretary General has said, be completed by the end of the year. This should be our main priority. The UN Security Council reform is not about any country's prestige or power but about transforming the balance of power in the world. Our experience in India from the freedom movement to present times shows that diversity is a source of strength and effectiveness. The same would be true of a reformed Security Council. We would continue also to engage actively in the strengthening of ECOSOC, restructuring of the Secretariat and the setting up of Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. President,

As we observe the 60th anniversary of the United Nations, I am reminded, once again, of the words of India's first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, at this very forum 45 years ago, and I quote:

"During these past fifteen years, the United Nations has often been criticized for its structure and for some of its activities. These criticisms have had some justification behind them. But, looking at the broad picture, I think we can definitely say that the United Nations has amply justified its existence and repeatedly prevented the recurrent crises from developing into war. It has played a great role, and it is a little difficult now to think of this troubled world without the U.N." Unquote

Mr. President,

In the life of individuals as also of institutions, the completion of sixty years is a significant moment for stock-taking. Even as we reflect upon the functioning of this

august institution since its inception in 1945, all of us gathered here look forward to the realization of new hopes and aspirations, and indeed to a rejuvenated United Nations which is fully geared to meet the myriad challenges of our times and effectively contribute to the well being and development of the humanity at large.

The vision which we have for a better world is best described in the words of a great son of India, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore and I quote:

“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
By narrow domestic walls
Where words come out from the depth of truth
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit
Where the mind is led forward by thee
Into ever-widening thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.”

Thank you, Mr. President

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