



STATEMENT BY MR. NIRUPAM SEN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, ON AGENDA ITEM
102: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION
AT THE 61ST SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 02, 2006

Madam President,

We congratulate you on your election and on the efficient manner in which you have been conducting the work of the 61st session. We assure you of our constructive cooperation. We thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive overview of the Organization's main achievements and challenges during the past 12 months.

As the report highlights, the Secretary-General has overseen many achievements of this Organization during the past ten years. The Millennium Summit, which led to the adoption of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, was followed up last year with the five-year review and the adoption of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. The MDGs itself embody a quantifiable vision of certain important economic and social rights and, in this sense, they carry forward the right to development. The global partnership for development, as set out in the Millennium Declaration and reaffirmed by the 2005 World Summit, is primarily a commitment to make the Right to Development a reality for all and we should reach broad agreement in fulfilling the promise.

The report reminds us of the imperative of implementing the global partnership for development; the need for enhanced focus on peacebuilding; increased attention to the special needs of Africa, health issues, including HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis; and to the need for strengthening the United Nations and making it a robust and vibrant Organization, responsive to the needs of the time, and by implication to the needs of developing countries which constitute the vast majority of the Organisation. I may state categorically that unless there is a sharp increase in welfare and a sharp decrease in vulnerability across the African continent and across the Small Island Developing States, we cannot pride ourselves on any measure of success. It is worth remembering that what was achieved at the 2005 World Summit was to the extent of the solidarity of the developing countries. This remains important in the implementation of the commitments made in the World Summit Outcome; agreement reached in the context of Development Follow-up is indicative.

Madam President,

For developing countries, the centrepiece is development. Poverty and conflicts are not only the legacy of the colonial past, but also epiphenomena of the structural policies of the IFIs. The present international system takes from the poor – net transfers from developing countries continued to rise for the twelfth consecutive year reaching over US \$ 450 billion. Without addressing the development problems faced by the vast majority of UN membership, security in its full sense cannot be achieved. The report of the Secretary-General notes that, since the Millennium Summit in 2000, the progress has been uneven and the ongoing levels of human deprivations remain staggering. Implementing the global partnership for development [MDG 8] is a categorical imperative. The MDGs cannot be achieved without implementing the 0.7% ODA target in a time-bound manner and innovative financing; deeper debt relief, enhanced market access and improved global economic governance. Even though aggregate ODA reached a record high of US \$ 106 billion in 2005, only a small fraction of this nominal increase actually represented additional finance to support real investments in countries that need them most. We welcome the agreement reached to monitor the fulfilment of commitments made to provide development assistance. India is supportive of all initiatives in support of the low-income countries, including those in Africa, where debt burdens pose serious constraints to the attainment of MDGs. It is also important that debt stock cancellation is complemented by sharp increases in ODA.

Addressing systemic issues is an urgent practical necessity. As reaffirmed by the 2005 World Summit and subsequently agreed in the context of “development follow-up” this July, there is an overwhelming logic for the United Nations to give direction to the comprehensive reform of the international financial, monetary and trading systems. The democratic deficit in the international financial architecture can only be addressed through a fundamental reform of the quota structure, an absolute necessity for the credibility and legitimacy of international financial institutions. The UN should encourage further, effective and time bound steps for the second stage of IMF quota reform without delay, involving a basic revision of the formula, subsequent increase of quotas for all under represented countries and amendment of the Articles of the IMF.

The suspension of the Doha Round of trade negotiations is a cause of concern. Realization of the development imperatives of the Doha Development Agenda, the July framework and the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration is crucial for developing countries. The overarching principle of special and differential treatment remains a categorical imperative. Many developing countries’ problems are not because of inadequate liberalisation or corruption but because developed countries set the agenda and went back on their promises thereby ensuring that the history of trade negotiations would be a history of broken promises. In the Uruguay Round, in return for the developing countries’ reducing their tariffs and accepting new regimes like TRIPS, the developed countries’ promised to phase out textile quotas and remove agricultural subsidies. The former took a decade and the latter still remain. This amounts to barring the Punta Del Este Declaration. The Doha Development Round has delivered neither fair trade nor development. Demonstration of political will by the developed countries will be required if negotiations are to be saved. A clear political direction to the WTO that was not possible in the 2005 World Summit in spite of broad political support remains necessary.

The primacy of development on the global agenda can only be achieved if the UN takes a lead in setting the international economic agenda. The problem is the reform of the UN system, the reinstatement of the UN-driven and development oriented approach. What is needed is the UN overseeing the international economic agenda and promoting the reform of international economic institutions through a revitalized General Assembly, strengthened Economic and Social Council and a reformed Security Council. Only if we remain engaged actively can we correct the imbalance; ensure that no country is too weak to influence the UN; that the economic agenda is truly development-oriented; and that laws are made by the General Assembly. Professor Stiglitz, in his latest book "Making Globalisation Work" has suggested that the UN – the ECOSOC would be the appropriate body – should carry out regular independent evaluations of the performance of international economic institutions because those by the World Bank and the IMF cannot be "fully independent" and later adds that the ECOSOC should "play an important role in defining the global economic agenda".

The 2005 World Summit emphasised the need to strengthen the Economic and Social Council in order to enable it to play a critical role in promoting international cooperation for development as well as enhancing policy coherence and coordination among agencies. An early conclusion of negotiations on this issue is needed, as is a demonstration of political will to enable the ECOSOC to fulfil its mandate, as envisaged in the Charter, and to contribute to peace building and peace consolidation efforts in countries emerging from conflict in accordance with the agreements reached at the time of establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission. Similarly, in the context of strengthening of the role and authority of the General Assembly, early consultations on the establishment of the ad hoc working group is called for. In fact the early setting up of the ad hoc working group on GA revitalisation is essential. The General Assembly is best placed to ensure that the candidate proposed for the post of the Secretary-General is sensitive to the needs of the developing countries.

The Bretton Woods Institutions, like the UN Security Council, carry the stigmata of 1945 – the world was still colonised and these clubs of the rich play by rules totally inadequate for the 21st century. In the IMF, the rich countries, in fact a single rich country has virtually a veto, as we saw in Singapore recently. The most powerful countries appoints the Head of the World Bank, and, with Western Europe, shares the top two posts of the IMF. Is it any different with vetoes and appointments by the Security Council? The revitalisation of the General Assembly has not really taken place because the 2006 Resolution remains as much a dead letter as the 1997 Resolution and encroachment by the Security Council continues. Unless the developing countries managed to change things lock, stock and barrel, unless they eschew temporary and immediate but certainly evanescent gains and recover the energy of our founders, this organisation may pass out of their hands and we would end up in a limbo, a corner, on the margins, without any rights. And the continual adaptation to continually lower expectations would transform this august Assembly into irrelevant spectators.

Madam President,

The recent tragic events in Lebanon and the stasis in the peace process in the Middle East have highlighted the growing failure of the Security Council designated by

the Charter with primary responsibility for issues relating to peace and security. They reminded me of Emperor Nero who was fiddling while Rome was burning (incidentally this is not a reference to the Uniting for Consensus). The main problems that beset peacekeeping are not a lack of resources or even personnel, but an un-representative Security Council, which lacks the political will to act and when it does, does so in a manner that is entirely inadequate. The Council also needs to shore up its participation in peacekeeping operations; the Secretary-General's report states that an overwhelming number of troops in UN peacekeeping operations are contributed by developing countries. This is a distressing reflection on Security Council willingness to share the burden of maintaining international peace and security. It is no accident that the Secretary-General's report refers to the enhancement of the legitimacy and the urgent need for reform to ensure relevance and credibility. We agree with the Secretary-General that 'the Council should be more representative of today's geopolitical realities and more efficient and transparent in its working methods'. There is widespread acknowledgement that no reform of the United Nations would be complete without the reform of the Security Council. The Security Council must not only be more representative but also more effective, if it is able to satisfactorily perform the role mandated to it by the Charter.

The recent plenary debate on the UN Security Council reform held in July this year gave a clear signal that the momentum for reform remains intact and maintaining the status quo was unacceptable. Developing countries remain grossly under-represented in the Council even though most decisions taken by the Security Council directly affect them. Thus, developing countries continue to face the same underlying systemic challenges that brought them together in the 1960's; today in many respects, the environment is more harsh. The voice of developing countries and their further empowerment in the international arena is vital for leveling the so-called 'playing fields'. It is, therefore, imperative that any expansion and restructuring of the Security Council must include developing countries, both as permanent members and in the non-permanent category. We are committed to undertake intensive consultations with other developing countries in the spirit of solidarity, and to embark on a South-initiative for the reform of the Organisation in a manner that is reflective of the aspirations of the developing countries and that ensures that the reformed structures are responsive to their needs; in areas ranging from development to peace and security – strengthening of ECOSOC, revitalization of the General Assembly and reform of the Security Council. It is worth recalling that the spending cap was imposed by consensus. But the damaging proposals on governance and flexibility were first halted by the solidarity and resolute action of developing countries. The lesson is obvious: an organic initiative from below is necessary. This can only be a South initiative for the comprehensive reform of all the key institutions so vital for the South – General Assembly, ECOSOC and Security Council. What some of the P-5 suffer from – a virtue they share with the Russian Tsars, the French Bourbons and the English Stuarts – is a reification of the present – an unwillingness to accept that institutions can be different.

Madame President,

The Secretary-General's report speaks of the increased recourse to the United Nations for peacekeeping and for prevention of armed conflict. This highlights the need

for the Organization to develop capabilities in the sphere of peacebuilding, not merely in the cause of peacekeeping, underlined most starkly in the vicious circle of violence that continues to plague the Middle East; and that conflict resolution needs to go well beyond its current limited role of keeping belligerents apart. The Peacebuilding Commission is, in this sense, a welcome effort. Our pledge of US \$ 2 million to this body reflects our perception that there is a grave need for a shift of focus from merely peacekeeping to peacebuilding/peace consolidation. The PBC must establish its credibility. As a member of the Organizing Committee, we are committed to contribute in this direction.

The surge in peacekeeping reported by the Secretary-General has brought new challenges and more demands, though the earlier problems persist. The issues of effective planning, congruity among mandates, resources allocated and objectives to be achieved, safety and security of peacekeepers are some of the other areas of particular concern. These questions should be the subject of a constant dialogue and interaction among the troop-contributing countries, the Security Council and the UN Secretariat, if peacekeeping is to be effective.

India remains steadfast in its commitment to promoting world peace and security. Our contribution to UN peacekeeping is part of this broader commitment. We have been one of the most consistent contributors of troops to the UN, and shall continue to uphold this tradition. We shall continue to work with the Secretariat and Member States in order to make peacekeeping the effective instrument that we all wish it to be.

Madam President,

Nothing can justify terrorism. The adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is a step in the right direction to the extent that the Strategy would signal the will of the international community that it would no longer tolerate the actions of the sponsors of terrorism or of those who willfully fail to prevent terrorists from utilizing their territories for moral or material shelter. As for the concept of State terrorism, we mean by State terrorism, State sponsorship and patronizing of terrorists in order to disrupt the peace in other countries. Notwithstanding the setback of not meeting the timeline set by the 2005 World Summit for concluding a comprehensive convention, we believe that agreement on the draft convention is attainable. We must now work together for the early finalization and adoption of the CCIT. The problems in Article 18 (the new Article 20) can perhaps be overcome through formulations on not affecting the legal status of any entity under International Humanitarian Law.

Madam President,

The 2005 World Summit, while recognizing that peace and security, development and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, underscored the centrality of development. The Seventh session of the Working Group on the Right to Development, which was held in Geneva in January 2006, adopted a set of criteria for evaluation of the fulfillment of commitments towards global partnership for development [MDG 8] from the perspective of the right to development. It also said that the policies of BWIs have

to be corrected in terms of deficiencies from the perspective of the Right to Development. Thus, there is broad agreement that straddles across divides; there is no fundamental contradiction. The efforts to mainstream all human rights, including the Right to Development, by strengthening linkages between the normative and operational work of the UN system need to proceed in a measured manner taking into account the specific needs and requirements of the Member States concerned.

We welcome the establishment of the Human Rights Council whose focus should be the promotion of human rights through international cooperation and genuine dialogue among Member States, including capacity-building and mutual assistance. We believe that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) should extend technical assistance and enhancing capacity building in the area of human rights to Member States at their request. It is in this spirit that India supported the strengthening of the Office of the High Commissioner, including an increase in its resources from the regular budget of the United Nations.

We agree with the need for further steps aimed at enhancing the speed and effectiveness of the UN's response to humanitarian emergencies. India would continue to play a constructive role in this regard bearing in mind the lessons learnt from experiences in the field. India has been constructively engaged in the setting up of the Central Emergency Response Fund. India's contribution of US \$2 million to CERF at its launch in March 2006 is a reflection of our solidarity with other developing countries in the aftermath of disasters. We would remain actively engaged with the process of improving the working of the CERF.

Madam President,

Our Organization needs to reform to keep up with the complex challenges of today. We welcome the reforms that have been implemented in the United Nations Secretariat since 1997 and look forward to constructive discussions in the 61st session on important issues such as governance and oversight. The declared objectives of these reform proposals cannot be repudiated. Nevertheless, the process often becomes as important as the goal itself. We would, therefore, stress the importance of discussions on these issues to be undertaken in an open, inclusive and transparent manner and are ready to engage on these issues with an open mind.

On the issue of governance, we reiterate the importance of the existing structure of administrative and budgetary decision-making in the United Nations based on primacy of the General Assembly and its Fifth Committee. Improvement is an incessant process and we could discuss ways to make administrative and budgetary decision-making in the Organization more efficient and effective. Altering the unique all-inclusive character of the Fifth Committee, which is being proposed by some, has already been rejected by Member States and remains unacceptable. We strongly support strengthening the oversight role of the GA, maintaining the inter-governmental nature of the UN, and respecting the sovereign equality of all Member States to participate in the decision-making processes of the UN.

We need to strengthen oversight in the UN system by making the oversight bodies independent. We seek greater accountability from the Secretariat to Member States. We believe that the United Nations should have a fair, transparent, and rule-based selection process based on equitable geographical representation and with due regard for gender balance. We call for an administration of justice in the United Nations, based on due process of law that is fair, consistent, non-discriminatory and speedy. We look forward to comprehensive procurement reforms in the Organization.

Madam President,

There is a broad realization of the need to work urgently towards a nuclear weapon free world. Yet, the goal of nuclear disarmament remains elusive. We believe that the best non-proliferation measure is universal disarmament and the international community needs to take immediate steps to eliminate the threat of use of nuclear weapons. India will be presenting a working paper at this session of the UNGA on the issue of nuclear disarmament on which we look forward to working with UN Member States.

We shall provide more detailed comments during discussions of the respective agenda items in the General Assembly and its main Committees.

Thank you, Madam President.

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