

NEW ZEALAND MISSION to the UNITED NATIONS

Te Māngai o Aotearoa

ONE UNITED NATIONS PLAZA 25TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10017-3515 USA
TELEPHONE (212) 826 1966 FACSIMILE (212) 758 0827 HOMEPAGE: misaloms.un.int/newzealand EMAIL: nz@un.int

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY FIFTY-NINTH SESSION

GENERAL DEBATE

STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE PHIL GOFF
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE OF NEW ZEALAND

TUESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2004

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY



Mr President,

Fifty nine years ago the United Nations was established by nations determined to work collectively to find alternatives to conflict as a means of resolving disputes and to create a stable, secure, and more just and prosperous world.

Devastated and exhausted by world war for the second time within 25 years, nations put their faith in multilateralism and this body to avoid future wars.

The name United Nations evoked the unity of humankind in which our shared needs and common humanity were more important than our differences.

It is obvious as we consider the world today that we have achieved that vision only in part. World wars have been avoided. International covenants have set out universally agreed human rights standards against which the performance of governments can be measured.

International law has been developed and strengthened. As Kofi Annan stressed this morning, putting into effect the rule of law at home and internationally is essential to achieve a fair, just and civilised world.

Cooperation has achieved advances in meeting social, economic and environmental needs.

But much more remains to be done.

War, more often within than across the boundaries of states, has taken the lives of tens of millions of people since 1945, most of them civilians. Weapons of mass destruction have accumulated and access to them spread to more countries.

New diseases such as HIV-AIDS have emerged with devastating consequences.

The gap between rich and poor countries has widened not diminished.

This year the Secretary-General's High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change will put forward proposals for reform and strengthening of the UN aimed at ensuring its relevance and effectiveness in addressing these issues.

It is critical that we seize this unique opportunity to institute positive reforms and not squander it by adopting narrow, self-interested and inflexible responses. A lowest common denominator approach will not achieve what we require.

Reform is long overdue. The composition of the Security Council cannot go on reflecting the world as it was in 1945. An expanded Security Council and reform of outmoded electoral groupings is necessary for the Council to be representative of the international community as it is today. These changes will strengthen the Council's mandate and enhance its credibility as the pre-eminent organ of the United Nations.

No solution will satisfy the viewpoint of every member nation. A willingness to compromise on a package of proposals will be essential. But clearly enhancing the representation of areas such as Asia, Latin America and Africa must be an objective and account taken of the significant contributions to the UN of nations such as Japan.

While the High Level Panel will focus on reform of the UN and security considerations, development goals to create a fairer world and promote economic and social progress in the developing world are further vital considerations for the UN in the year ahead.

For hundreds of millions of people starvation, disease, and poverty are more immediate threats than the concerns others of us have about terrorism and security.

We are now at a turning point in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Improving the quality and quantity of development assistance is crucial.

However real and lasting progress to meet development challenges is also dependent on building a fairer, more open and equitable global trading system.

OECD countries spend \$360 billion (US) each year on subsidising agricultural production in a way which excludes opportunities for the developing world to export not only to the OECD countries but also in third markets as well. This sum dwarfs the amount the OECD countries provide in development assistance.

New Zealand welcomes the progress made at the World Trade Organisation General Council meeting in Geneva in July which put the Doha Development Agenda back on track. Agriculture is at the heart of the round and the European Union and United States agreement to eliminate all agricultural export subsidies is particularly welcome.

The United Nations must also adapt itself to the changing nature of security and humanitarian concerns. The concept that national sovereignty is paramount and stands in the way of international intervention in local conflicts cannot be sustained.

As the Secretary-General has challenged us, "if humanitarian intervention is indeed an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica – to gross and systematic violations of human rights that affect every precept of our common humanity?".

The Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty concluded two and a half years ago that sovereign states have a responsibility to protect their own citizens from avoidable catastrophe – from mass murder and rape, from starvation. When they are unwilling or able to do so, that responsibility must be borne by the broader community of nations.

We are today witnessing a humanitarian and human rights catastrophe in Darfur.

The World Health Organisation reports that up to 10,000 people a month are dying or being killed. The very young and the elderly are most vulnerable.

In the last few days the Security Council has resolved to support an enlarged African Union monitoring force, has demanded that all parties cease all violence and human rights violations and has threatened further steps against the Government of Sudan if it fails to disarm the militias and protect civilians.

Within this assembly countries must work together in a united and determined way to enforce these resolutions and prevent the tragedy which is unfolding.

History will not forgive those who stand in the way of protecting the 1.5 million refugees in this region and allowing them to return safely to their homes.

It is also important that those responsible for the mass murder and abuse of human rights there are held to account for their actions.

There must be no impunity for such crimes.

This is also true of those responsible for the destruction of East Timor and murders of its people in 1999. The M Hoc Tribunals in Indonesia have failed to bring to justice those responsible. This failure can only encourage such people to commit future atrocities believing they will never be held responsible for their actions.

New Zealand welcomes the establishment of the International Criminal Court and the role that it will now play in dealing with genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. It urges all countries which have not yet done so to accede to the convention establishing this body and to recognize its jurisdiction.

In the area of conflict resolution, we face today two major challenges in Afghanistan and Iraq.

New Zealand has strongly supported efforts to bring security and stability to Afghanistan.

As a small country we have contributed more than \$80 million (NZ) in military and development assistance. We welcome progress towards Presidential elections next month and the essential democratic mandate that this will provide to the Government.

Strong international support will however be necessary to meet the challenges which lie ahead. This includes ending the production and trading of drugs. Afghanistan provides around 75% of the world trade in opiates. The money derived funds war lords and organized crime and undermines the ability of legitimate government to function.

In Iraq, New Zealand deplores the violence which has taken the lives of and maimed so many people, and the circumstances that have contributed to this. We call on those who continue to sacrifice the lives of the innocent to end their violence. They now have access to a political process which they should use to promote their views and interests.

A credible election process is vital to creating an Iraqi Government which has a popular mandate.

The UN has a key role to play in that process but an adequate security environment is first necessary for this to occur.

New Zealand will continue to support the Interim Iraqi Authority and the UN in their efforts to restore security, peace and prosperity to the Iraqi people who have suffered for so long.

In Iraq and elsewhere, close attention needs to be given to protection of UN staff.

The General Assembly this year will consider an integrated security strategy for the United Nations, which will incorporate a system-wide review of the UN security apparatus, accountability and resources.

The Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel must be strengthened and supported by all member states of the UN.

New Zealand condemns all acts of terrorism and will continue to contribute strongly to the campaign against it.

We in particular condemn the inhumanity of terrorists in Beslan who sacrificed children as pawns in pursuit of their political objectives.

