



**THE HON JOHN HOWARD MP  
THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA**

**ADDRESS**

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We must also recognise the high cost of ignoring fragile states. Responding to their challenges requires new ways of acting which recognise the links between security and economic development. Our leadership of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands speaks for our experience in this area, which we look forward to sharing. In this context, Australia welcomes the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, and I am pleased to announce a contribution of \$3 million over 3 years to its new standing fund.

On human rights and the rule of law, leaders' endorsement of the concept of a 'Responsibility to Protect' is a significant step forward. But we are concerned at the limited outcome on the Human Rights Council. Australia supports a strong Council that is capable of responding to serious human rights abuses effectively and with credibility. Member states must work assiduously during this session to inject substance into the agreed negotiations on the Council's modalities.

We welcome the resolve to strengthen the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and will make our own additional contribution to its operations.

I was also pleased to announce here this week a contribution of \$10m to the Democracy Fund. History has shown that the most stable and prosperous nations over time have responsive political institutions as their common link.

We could have hoped for more progress on management reforms for the organisation, particularly in light of the findings of the Volcker inquiry and support the ongoing need for reform. We remain hopeful that a formula for Security Council expansion that will better reflect today's geopolitical realities, including through the permanent membership of Japan, can be worked out.

In summary we welcome the outcomes document as a reasonable balance of issues overall. The challenge for the United Nations now is to re-define its authority and responsibility in the global environment in which we find ourselves. Australia, as always, will be an active player in these deliberations.

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