



**PERMANENT MISSION OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**
771 UNITED NATIONS PLAZA, NEW YORK, NY 10017

**STATEMENT BY
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE MOHAMED BOLKIAH
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE
OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

**AT THE 64TH SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

SATURDAY, 26TH SEPTEMBER 2009

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Mr. President,

I would like to congratulate you on your election and offer my very best wishes for the coming year. May I also add my appreciation to our outgoing President for all his work. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and his staff, as well as the United Nations agencies who are doing such a fine job all over the world in very difficult situations.

Mr. President,

I like the theme for this year's debate, and would like to say a few things about the first two words, which I think are the most important ones.

“Effective Responses”.

We all know what “responses” are because we make them every day. But “effective” is a far more difficult word, and that is because none of us here actually decides what it means.

It is not up to us to judge whether our work is successful or not; that is up to the next generation. It is our children and grandchildren who are going to look back at the past and see whether we did a good job.

That is the way it has always been. And that is what many of us in Brunei Darussalam have been doing recently because this year is an important anniversary for us. It is now 25 years since we joined the organisation.

Those of us who were here at that time remember it very well. We remember exactly why we joined. It was a dangerous period, and a small country like Brunei Darussalam did not want to be left on its own.

We wanted to be part of a larger community, a world community, but there was a real problem. The Cold War was on and nearly everyone was divided into two camps. That meant that we had to choose sides.

Looking at the United Nations today, however, I would judge its response to the past 25 years as very effective. Things are much better now than they were back then.

Certainly, many of the old problems may still be with us: terrorism, poverty, disease, war, and the 60 year-old struggle by the Palestinian people for justice, hope and dignity.

But we also have a lot of good things going for us nowadays. We have more knowledge, and communication is better than ever before. Above all, we are not divided into two camps. As a result we have far more opportunities than we had 25 years ago.

When our next generation looks back at us, and judges us, the question they will be asking is what we did with those opportunities and whether our responses were effective.

I think we have opportunities to make a great response.

The Secretary-General and his staff have important proposals for reform, change and development. If we accept them and do something about them, we can take the biggest opportunity of all and change the whole direction of world affairs. I think this is exactly what people want us to do.

There is a lot of support for change outside this building. No one wants to remain divided into developed or developing nations any more, or first, second or third worlds. They want us to be in one world, in one situation, sharing its problems and being part of any solution.

Mr. President,

That is the message we received after the first G20 meeting in April this year. It seemed to give us a real choice; either to keep on doing things the way we have always done since 1946: or to change directions, and all work together, big and small, regardless of background, culture or faith, and find a new way into the 21st Century.

This week's G20 meeting in Pittsburgh sent out the same message, and it was good to hear. It is only a soft message, however, and a small change. The big decisions are still being made for us, and not with us. But at least it is a start. This is the kind of change we want to see and there is nothing to stop us from taking it a long way further. After all, it is not like 25 years ago. We have a real choice and no one is forcing us to take sides.

For the moment it is up to us. The keywords, though, are "for the moment."

The G20 are not the only ones sending us messages. There are other very urgent ones. They are coming from the environment, the climate, the global economy, and energy and food supplies, and they all add up to a serious warning.

This is telling us that very soon the choice will not be ours to make and any changes will be made by forces we cannot control. That means any "response" may be largely "ineffective."

When the next generation looks back at us, they may not just be judging us. They could even be condemning us.

Thank you.

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