



SLOVENIA

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ADDRESS

BY

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PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

**AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SIXTY-FOURTH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

New York, 24 September 2009

Distinguished Heads of State and Government
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates

This, 64th session of the General Assembly is starting in the spirit of hope. Yesterday we heard important and promising words concerning the future of UN.

The peoples of the United Nations legitimately expect from us, representatives of member states, to make this institution effective and to work together, with the sense of common purpose, truly as United Nations.

I express full confidence in the experience and wisdom of our President, Dr. Ali Abdussalam Treki. I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election and wish you every success in your work. At the same time I wish to express our gratitude to Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, President of the 63rd Session, who has guided this Assembly with determination and with an ethical commitment to fairness and justice.

I also wish to pay tribute to our Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, whose tireless efforts are guiding the UN during these trying times.

In the past days many of us were engaged in an effort, spearheaded by the Secretary-General, with an aim to generate the necessary political will "to seal the deal" at Copenhagen. We all appreciate this example of leadership. The humankind must make a resolute step towards a new and effective system to mitigate the effects of global warming and to ensure the necessary adaptation. Our responsibilities are common but differentiated. Today we understand that each of the member states of the UN must do its share and that together we can save the planet. Let the Copenhagen conference be the turning point.

We also need to broaden the front and fully include civil society and business sector into a broad action for the needed technological and social transformation. Action starting now to mitigate the consequences of climate change will have to lead to profound societal change - the change of the way we produce, the way we consume and the way we live. Let us not be afraid of these changes. If guided in a wise and timely manner they can improve our common future.

However, for that to happen, the World needs a comprehensive strategy. Such a strategy would need to address all the main challenges of our time in a consistent manner: the food crisis, climate change, the energy crisis and the spreading of infectious diseases may have different roots but produce a single,

cumulative effect. They hobble global development and make the achievement of the millennium development goals only a distant possibility. Clear policy responses are called for.

What is the role of the United Nations in this context? Some of the answers are already defined. They are enshrined in the outcome of the United Nations Conference on World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impacts on Development, held in New York last June. The results of that conference should be elaborated further. Specific priority tasks for global development must soon be defined.

These days many expectations are linked to the forthcoming Pittsburgh Summit of the G-20. Much needs to be done to bring greater discipline and responsibility into the global financial system. This is an important and immediate priority. Moreover, it is necessary to increase resources and adjust the Bretton Woods institutions with a view to proper maintenance of global financial stability and of development financing. Restarting of global trade negotiations has become an urgent priority.

But more is needed, including improvement of the official development assistance and a particular priority to development of Africa.

Issues of global development represent a large part of the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly. But we must also think about the fate of human rights in the current global circumstances. Human rights and development are closely connected. Recession has already increased the global levels of poverty. Unemployment is growing. The fate of many young people is becoming ever more uncertain. All these are serious challenges to social and global stability that may turn into serious security problems of tomorrow if left unattended.

I welcome the efforts of the International Labour Organization and the Global Jobs Pact adopted last June. Today, there is no challenge to human rights more strategic and more pressing than the challenge of poverty and unemployment. Policy makers need to ensure that both economic policies and human rights policies are coordinated and that appropriate mechanisms are put in place both at the national and international levels.

Slovenia is among the first member states to sign today the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. This protocol will give individuals an additional and potentially significant instrument of implementation of rights. This is a small step but one which demonstrates our awareness of the problem and our commitment to action.

We are also looking towards the Human Rights Council as the main body of the United Nations to devise strategies for human rights. Slovenia has been active member of the Council and we remain optimistic. The progress achieved so far in developing new methods of work is encouraging albeit not yet sufficient. We welcome the election of the United States to the Council and believe that only an inclusive forum for human rights can be effective. Members of the Human Rights Council must realize that they bear a special responsibility to lead.

But there are problems which exceed the potential of the Human Rights Council.

The failures to protect human beings from mass atrocities and from gross and systematic violations of human rights should not be repeated. We still haven't found the right tools to respond in a timely and effective manner. I welcome the debate on the responsibility to protect that took place in the General Assembly in July. Continued engagement of the General Assembly on this subject proved to be necessary.

Mr. President,

Issues of environment, development and human rights represent the bulk of the current UN agenda. But it is in the area of maintenance of international peace and security where some of the most urgent thinking and action is needed both within the UN and within other international institutions. Four areas of work are of special importance.

The reform of UN Security Council is long overdue and progress made during the preceding, 63rd session of the General Assembly is insufficient. However, the negotiations have generated a positive momentum. It is apparent that the expansion of the Security Council in various types of both permanent and non-permanent members has gained broad support among UN member states. Exactly a year ago, from this rostrum, I suggested a specific model of the Security Council expansion. This and other specific proposals made in the past need to be approached head-on.

In addition to structural change, the UN needs to strengthen its practical role in the maintenance of international peace and security. I welcome the thinking expressed in the report by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations entitled "A New Partnership Agenda - Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping", published in July this year. The report showed many of the most pressing and subtle needs for improvement in the system of the UN peacekeeping. Member states should give careful consideration to such concepts as the "expanding the peacekeeping partnership" with a view to strengthening the operational capacity and political sophistication of the UN peacekeeping. And let us not overlook the

fact that progress in peacekeeping would strengthen all other UN activities of maintenance of international peace and security, including preventive diplomacy and post conflict peace building.

In the domain of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control we witnessed far too many stumbling blocks in the past. UN action needs to be energized and the forthcoming review of the NPT has to be a step forward.

Fourth, UN remains an indispensable forum for political consultation and policy advice. The experience of the UN is irreplaceable. The situation in Afghanistan is a case in point. For three decades now UN has been seized with a variety of problems affecting that UN member state. Nobody should doubt that Afghanistan belongs to the Afghans or that 'Afghanisation' of security is the only real path towards security in the country. There is no military solution to the variety of country's problems. It is becoming ever more apparent that the international community will have to assist in an Afghan process of transition which will decrease and eventually phase out the international military presence in the country.

Let me, Mr. President, emphasize the role of the UN in this context. Sometimes subjects like the situation in and around Afghanistan are discussed at specialized international conferences. But wisdom and common sense suggest that the experience of the UN be made use of. Let us not forget the unique success of the UN - led Bonn Conference of 2001 and that of the subsequent constitutional Loya Jirga. The time has come for a broad look of the entire experience since that period, for an assessment what exactly went wrong and why, for a sober assessment of the current situation and for a careful definition of further steps which will make the international political, economic and administrative assistance more effective.

The assistance of the UN Security Council and the General Assembly will be valuable in this context.

Mr. President,

The agenda of the UN today is heavy. But this is not news. UN has always been the home of the World's most intractable problems. But at the same time the UN has always represented the hope for and the promise of an improved World. Let us live up to this hope and promise. Let us make this the era of the UN and of the UN's finest hour.

Thank you Mr. President.