



# General Assembly

Sixty-third session

**21**st plenary meeting

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*Official Records*

*President:* Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann. . . . . (Nicaragua)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Mbuende (Namibia), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

## Agenda item 100 (continued)

### Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/63/1)

**Mr. Ali** (Malaysia): My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization contained in document A/63/1. Despite the increasing demand on the resources of the United Nations, the Secretary-General has succeeded in ensuring that the Organization remains relevant and committed to the purposes for which it was created. In that regard, my delegation wishes to congratulate the Secretary-General on his tireless efforts.

It is heartening to note that the work of the United Nations and its specialized agencies continues to be acknowledged. Last year, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was jointly awarded the Nobel Prize for its efforts in the field of climate change. That honour, the sixth time the Nobel Foundation has awarded the Peace Prize to the United Nations, was recognition of the United Nations contribution to the world community.

The United Nations is also recognized for its humanitarian assistance. The United Nations has managed to deliver assistance to those most affected by calamities through the Central Emergency Response Fund and flash appeals. In all this, for an Organization

such as the United Nations, delivery therefore becomes the key. Central to the work of the Organization, over and above whatever else it is seized with, is the impact of the work undertaken, overseen or executed by the Organization on the people who need it most.

In that connection, my delegation welcomes the intention of the Secretary-General to strengthen the Organization's overall accountability framework — its accountability within the Organization and the Secretariat's accountability to Member States. We also welcome the continued periodic briefings by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on his most recent activities, which we view as one avenue, among others, for direct interaction with the Secretary-General while keeping abreast of developments involving the Organization.

An Organization that has been around for as long as the United Nations has cannot but undergo certain changes. That process of reform must be undertaken in order to strengthen the Organization and address its shortcomings. But change does not come easily to any entity. Indeed, as the inventor Charles Kettering once said, "The world hates change, yet it is the only thing that has brought progress".

My delegation therefore commends the Secretary-General's ongoing efforts on management reform. We agree with the Secretary-General that a results-based management approach requires managers clearly to state their intended target. That will in turn afford the Organization the opportunity to formulate a better strategic plan that will enable Member States to make

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better informed decisions. However, those management reforms must be tackled holistically, with full emphasis on, first, a clear understanding of the process, in that it must be transparent, inclusive and open-ended; secondly, full adherence to the rules and procedures and the United Nations Charter; and, thirdly, a clear understanding of the priorities we intend to achieve.

On peacekeeping, there has been much discussion on the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), which eventually saw the creation of a new Department of Field Support, the establishment of the Office of the Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the DPKO, integrated operational teams and a number of new shared mechanisms. The restructuring was intended to streamline peacekeeping activities in order to ensure a more effective and efficient delivery, in line with the increase in the number of missions and personnel deployed in missions throughout the globe. Yet despite the restructuring, there have been instances when troop-contributing countries have been left out of the loop in matters of communication and information. We view that with concern. The DPKO should maintain the primacy of disseminating information to troop-contributing countries, particularly when the personnel of these troop-contributing countries are involved on the ground.

The report of the Secretary-General that we have before us today starts off with the work of the Organization in helping Member States to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed development goals. Malaysia commends the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General in that regard, in particular the recent convening of high-level meetings on the MDGs. While the high-level meeting itself has resulted in new and additional pledges to the tune of \$16 billion, we hope that the funding and resources to attain the MDGs will also be made available in a systematic and predictable manner, and not in an ad hoc way, and as a response to specific events. Malaysia trusts that the Secretary-General's full report on the pledges will not be long in coming.

On the MDGs themselves, we need to understand that the Goals represent the barest minimum objective. The United Nations should encourage those better-placed countries to further achieve the MDG-Plus objectives. It is with that end in sight that Malaysia

pledges a higher level of cooperation with the United Nations in the area of South-South cooperation.

The achievement of Millennium Development Goal 6 remains a major question mark for many countries of the world, Malaysia included. We note the many efforts that have been launched both within and outside the Organization in recognition of the problem. Despite it all, the number of people who suffer from HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases continues to rise. That merely means that more needs to be done, and we hope that the Secretary-General's target of 2010 to ensure universal coverage against malaria will be echoed in the fight to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases.

I would be remiss if I did not address the question of Palestine. That is an issue that has been on the agenda of the United Nations for more than 50 years and remains one of the most vital components of general peace and security. The Security Council has adopted important resolutions on that question that should have accorded to Palestinians the restoration of their rights. Unfortunately, there has been no follow-up action to compel Israel to respect international law and thus end its illegal occupation and illegitimate practices in the occupied Palestinian territories. Today, the violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people continue and the daily life of ordinary people in Gaza is made difficult by economic blockades.

Illegal settlements are still on the increase despite widespread condemnation. Thus, the Organization has not delivered on its potential in that situation, at least not to the millions of Palestinian refugees caught in the conflict or to those whose human rights continue to be violated.

My delegation believes in the multilateral, inclusive nature of the United Nations. With so many of the world's peoples looking to the United Nations for leadership, coordination and hope, Member States must ensure that the Organization is able to deliver on its promise of a better tomorrow. Deliverables can be achieved only if there is a strong political will to see the matter through. An Organization that can effectively deliver to the people and uphold its mandated promise will be a strong, viable and relevant Organization, able to respond to the challenges of the future. Malaysia is committed to that vision and

pledges its support for the Secretary-General's endeavours in this matter.

**The Acting President:** I now call on the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

**Monsignor Bharanikulangara (Holy See):** I make this statement on behalf of the Permanent Observer.

My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization and looks forward to working with him to help ensure that this institution builds upon its successes and bridges its shortcomings. We are witnessing intractable conflicts in many regions of the world. Whether under the guise of civil turmoil, terrorist activity or international conflicts, they perpetuate the flawed belief that violence and war can replace cooperation and dialogue for the common good. In that context, the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and the growing strain on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons are enduring obstacles and severely hinder the promotion of the common good and mutual cooperation.

However, rather than addressing the symptoms of humankind's failings, we would do well to focus on the underlying causes. Some 40 years ago, Pope Paul VI stated in this Hall that development is the new name for peace, and the wisdom of those words should guide us in crafting adequate solutions. At this point in time, we cannot but acknowledge a number of setbacks in our work to globalize solidarity towards the poor. With the failed trade talks in the Doha Round, the increasing international economic slowdown and the missed development assistance targets, we have seen the need for effective consensus and delivery. The upcoming Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development in Doha presents an opportunity for the international community to consolidate promises and renew cooperation between developed and developing countries. My delegation looks forward to working with the participants in order to put the ingenuity of global economic activity at the service of people rather than putting people at its mercy.

The sixty-third session of the General Assembly stands at a poignant moment in United Nations history. Sixty years ago in December, this body produced the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by which world leaders agreed that human rights are not

bestowed by Governments at their whim, but rather are inherent in all individuals regardless of race, nationality or religious belief. It is humbling to recall the war that preceded the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but also empowering to know that if the world could come together to ensure the rights of all after such a devastating conflict, then surely today we can find the political will to guarantee the full enjoyment of all human rights. The right to life and the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion remain the core of the human rights system. The discourse over those two fundamental rights is on the rise.

However, too often those rights are neglected in favour of more politically expedient issues, and only when the voices of the disenfranchised and discriminated against become too loud to be ignored do we give them their proper attention. Only by respecting the right to life from the moment of conception until natural death, as well as the consciences of all believers, will we promote a world cognizant and respectful of a deeper sense of meaning and purpose. A year ago, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We encourage the membership to build on that common commitment in order to foster greater understanding between Governments and indigenous communities.

Finally, it is my delegation's hope that this session of the General Assembly can serve to promote renewed cooperation and harmony among all peoples. Time and time again we have seen an increase in the use of rhetoric that, instead of bringing nations together, chastises and divides them. In all corners of the globe, such rhetoric has been used to foment mistrust between States. However, it is my delegation's hope that this session will reverse that crescendo of suspicion and mistrust and give way to confidence in our common leadership and shared values. To that end, the fully operational Mediation Support Unit serves as a valuable tool for restoring lost trust, and we look forward to following its further development.

The Secretary-General's report recognizes the need to address an ever-growing number of issues. Be it in humanitarian assistance, mediation or the ability to bring parties together, this Organization must continue to be shaped in a way that is more responsive to the needs of the twenty-first century.

**Mr. Heidt** (United States of America): I should like to briefly address the portions of the Secretary-General's report dealing with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The United States is committed to working with its partners to achieve and sustain the development goals of the Millennium Declaration. Collectively, the Member States worked diligently at the Millennium Summit to arrive at agreed, time-bound commitments to pursue our shared aspirations for global development.

The Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization rightly notes the significant progress we have made towards achieving the MDGs, as well as the important challenges that remain. Global rates of extreme poverty are falling and access to education is rising impressively. Much still needs to be done to address maternal mortality and to reduce the spread of AIDS, malaria and other major diseases. Additionally, the overall pace of development remains troublingly uneven, particularly in the case of fragile and failed States.

The United States, together with its development partners, is working hard to meet those challenges. We participated actively in the Secretary-General's very successful high-level event two weeks ago and sponsored a side event focusing on the crucial importance of raising agriculture value chain productivity as a strategy for combating hunger and poverty.

As in previous years, in considering the Secretary-General's report, the United States wishes to express its concern about the continued revisions to the Secretariat's framework of goals, targets and indicators, which it presents to the international community as the time-bound Millennium Development Goals. We are puzzled as to why the Secretariat has selectively incorporated as Millennium Development Goals new targets drawn from the World Summit Outcome Document when that same Document clearly defines the MDGs as those laid out in the Millennium Declaration.

The United States remains committed to the World Summit Outcome Document, which presents a comprehensive vision of the development process and the United Nations role in it. However, we do not accept the Secretariat's decision to selectively elevate commitments from the World Summit, including one related to universal access to reproductive health, into

a special category of commitments worthy to be regarded as MDGs or as MDG targets or indicators. Finally, we are troubled by clear changes in wording between intergovernmentally agreed documents and several of the Secretariat's new MDG targets, which attempt to expand and redefine the Millennium Development Goals without consulting Member States.

As we have noted previously, such expansion and redefinition threatens to dilute the carefully considered political commitments all of us made at the Millennium Summit in 2000 and distracts attention from our joint pursuit of the internationally agreed goals. Rather than expanding targets, we should be focusing them and engaging the many sources of financing for development, including trade, investment, other capital flows and domestic resources, both public and private, to achieve them. Let us remember a key development principle enshrined in the Millennium Development Goals: It is up to each country to determine its development priorities. MDG targets that would dictate how a country should develop and that do not recognize the critical importance of self-determination are destined to be ineffective.

There is no doubt that, despite our best efforts to meet our commitments, we have yet to fulfil our development aspirations. Many challenges remain, but creating new definitions or expanding the scope of previously agreed Millennium Development Goals will not help us maintain consensus. Let us recognize the progress that we have made, take note of the successes we have witnessed and the lessons we have learned, and rededicate ourselves to the ambitious and vital goals Member States set in 2000.

**Mrs. Asmady** (Indonesia): My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization. We very much value his overview of the United Nations during the past year. We appreciate his highlighting of the critical factors that need to be addressed if we are to realize a future that is prosperous, stable and secure for all. Clearly, we are at a crucial juncture. The world faces a series of parallel crises — financial, food, energy and environment.

A number of world leaders and the President of the General Assembly, speaking recently from this podium, aptly alluded to the fact that business cannot go on as usual in the face of such serious problems. The international community needs to come together so

that it can tackle the global crises effectively. The solution is to be found in working together and making the United Nations a strong pivot for achieving an equitable international socio-economic and political order. In that respect, we support the focus in the report on three areas — delivering results for the people most in need, securing global goods, and creating a stronger United Nations through full accountability.

I should like to take a few moments to share our thoughts on each of the three focus areas.

First, the United Nations Charter vision of achieving “better standards of life in larger freedom” remains the paramount unfulfilled agenda. We are past the halfway period in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the results so far are uneven, to put it mildly. Pockets of poverty still exist in rural regions of developing countries where conditions may have become worse due to high food and energy costs. I will not dwell on the skyrocketing global food prices. Indonesia’s view on that issue has been elaborated on many occasions, including just last week. Suffice it to say that a focus on agriculture as a core of the national development agenda, along with massive investment, especially to help small farmers grow and distribute their crops, are vital.

The unfolding financial crisis and the uncertainty and slowdown of the global economy are other serious emerging issues. What adds to the anxiety is that no one yet knows what the full implications for the world economy will be. It is in times like these that the United Nations system, with the Economic and Social Council at the helm, needs to actively engage with the Bretton Woods institutions and other relevant financial institutions to ascertain the impact of such turbulences. The Council must intensify its central role for coordinating international economic relations. It should draw together timely policy responses and assure their coherence with an invigorated result-orientation. But for that to happen, the political will of Member States must also be present. To effectively address the plight of those most in need, let us all come forward and actualize our commitments under the global partnership for development. It is important that the momentum generated by the recent high-level meetings in New York not be lost.

Secondly, a greater effort should be made to secure global goods, especially for those who are marginalized. The Secretary-General has appropriately

highlighted the challenges of climate change, counter-terrorism, disarmament and non-proliferation, and global health in that context. We must vigorously conserve our natural resources, especially our carbon sinks, forests and coral reefs so that we do not deprive future generations of the resources they need for survival. The Bali Road Map has been critical in galvanizing the international community on the cause of climate change.

I should like to reiterate my Government’s wish that “by 2009 we should produce an ambitious post-2012 global climate regime that will contain global warming to within two degrees Celsius in the next 20 years” (A/63/PV.14). We need to intensify international efforts towards a timely fruition that will stop and reverse the deterioration of our planet.

On the subject of counter-terrorism, Indonesia has been and will continue to be in the vanguard. In that regard, we are convinced that the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy will facilitate international efforts. We need to explore every type of cooperation at different levels and to implement the Strategy and its Plan of Action to the fullest extent. While the delegation of Indonesia looks forward to a consistent, transparent, comprehensive and balanced implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, we also look forward to negotiating a comprehensive and balanced convention that respects the principles of international law, humanitarian law, and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

On disarmament and non-proliferation, we regret to say that, despite some earnest efforts by many Member States, the disarmament machinery remains mired in deadlock on some fundamental and previously agreed points of the global disarmament agenda. Today, we are more convinced than ever that nuclear disarmament is imperative for international peace. We are faced with the dangers of nuclear weapons finding their way into more military arsenals and the risk that those tools of deterrence might become new tools for terrorists, with devastating consequences. Non-proliferation is vital but is not sufficient. Nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are mutually reinforcing and both must be pursued actively in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner. Otherwise we may soon enter a new nuclear arms race with new types, uses and rationales for such weapons.

Thirdly, Indonesia fully supports creating a stronger United Nations through full accountability. We agree with the Secretary-General when he states that goals will not be reached “unless full accountability becomes both our organizing principle and our operational guideline” (A/63/1, para. 141). In that regard, we appreciate such steps as the new accountability compact with senior managers and the implementation of results-based management and enterprise risk management. We commend the Secretary-General’s effort to strengthen the Secretariat’s accountability to Member States for ensuring that the Organization is well managed and delivering results. It would also be appreciated if regular updates could be provided to Member States on the progress being made in that respect.

The United Nations is the best representation of the aspirations of the global community, and we must do all that is in our power to make the United Nations manifest the will of we the peoples. In that regard, it is imperative that the Security Council, which is entrusted with the immense responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, should also reflect the views of people everywhere. We are pleased that the democratization of the United Nations is part of the theme of the present session of the General Assembly and that the President has told us

already about the various initiatives that he will be taking to advance democracy at the United Nations. Reform of the Security Council is a must, as is the strengthening of the role of the General Assembly as the highest deliberative and decision-making organ of the United Nations.

Lastly, I should like to emphasize the role of regional organizations and how valuable their contribution can be in matters of peace and security, as we have seen through the United Nations partnerships with the African Union and other groupings. The regional entities are also important for issues of development and humanitarian help.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/63/1?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 100.

*The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.*