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ADDRESS

BY

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***MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY***

***AT THE SIXTIETH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY***

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Mr. President,

Let me start by extending to you my sincere congratulations on your election as President of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. I can assure you that in fulfilling your challenging and responsible duties, you will have the support and full co-operation of the delegation of Hungary. Our tribute and thanks are also due to your predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, who served us with exemplary devotion and honor.

Effective multilateralism remains an important objective of the foreign policy of Hungary. Therefore, we are pleased to see the United Nations standing ready to face the emerging threats and challenges by making efforts to adapt its activities to the realities of our contemporary world.

The United Nations for 60 years served as the Core Institution for collective security. In our global and interdependent world we have to acknowledge that development, peace, security and human rights form the indispensable foundations for the security and well-being of our times.

My Government is particularly pleased that issues such as the fight against terrorism, international protection of human rights, the proposed Human Rights Council, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, the reform of UN management as well as challenges related to development have found proper reflection in the recommendations of the Summit.

Mr. President,

International terrorism continues to be a major threat to our societies. The recently experienced horrors of terror are sowing the seeds of instability all over the world. Hungary, along with its partners in the European Union and NATO strongly condemns all forms of terrorism. Measures taken in the course of combating terrorist forces, however, must always remain in conformity with basic international standards, in particular with human rights, refugee and humanitarian law. We believe that the United Nations needs to accord top priority to the fight against the scourge of terrorism. My country is keen to see the elaboration and adoption by the General Assembly of a comprehensive convention on terrorism, which would, among others, give the proper legal definition of terrorist acts.

Mr. President,

Freedom, democracy and human rights should constitute the basic framework of life for every individual. We know from experience that they are not granted automatically, they must be won and enforced through hard and persistent efforts. It is of paramount importance, therefore, that essential human rights related activities, such as servicing the treaty implementation machinery or monitoring undertaken by the special procedures, are given their due share in the funding provisions of the UN regular budget.

Driven by the objective to promote democracy in the world, the Government of the Republic of Hungary has established the Budapest International Center for Democratic Transition. The Center is set to provide assistance for democratic reforms drawing upon the experience of countries which have recently undergone political, economic and social transition. These nations, having had to face and address the challenges of transition in the recent past, can probably best serve as helping hands to countries in need.

It is in the same spirit that Hungary warmly welcomes the establishment of the UN Democracy Fund. The Budapest International Center for Democratic Transition will be eager to coordinate its activities with the Fund in the framework of a close cooperative relationship.

Mr. President,

Hungary finds the resolution to establish a new UN mechanism dealing with the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities highly encouraging. The appointment of an independent expert on minority issues is an important step in the right direction. The United Nations, however, still has a long way to go in meeting the full scope of its responsibilities with regard to the international protection of minority rights.

Educating the young generations about the lessons of the past is an essential tool to combat discrimination and intolerance. For this reason a day of Holocaust Remembrance has been introduced into Hungarian school curriculum. Hungary supports the proposal to place Holocaust remembrance on the agenda in the United Nations General Assembly.

Hungary recognizes that development is a central goal by itself and is ready to reaffirm her commitment to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development and global prosperity for all. As a new EU Member, Hungary is ready to gradually increase her official development assistance. The European Union recently made important decisions in support of Africa's development efforts. We reaffirm our commitment to urgently contribute to meeting the special needs of Africa.

Mr. President,

We are encouraged to see that after so many years of wars and violence, democratic changes are bearing fruit for the peoples of the Western Balkans. It is more than promising that the political and economic perspectives offered by the European Union and NATO are the main driving forces today for the countries of this region.

In order to find lasting solutions to the yet unresolved challenges of the Western Balkans, it is crucial to tackle the basic issues of security and stability in their broader regional dimensions. Regardless of its future status, it is vital that Kosovo is transformed into a viable entity, capable of exercising firm administrative control with a stable law and order situation and a transparent, dependable economy. Given the turbulent history of the Balkans no long term solution is conceivable without establishing harmonious inter-ethnic relationships. Well defined and strictly implemented minority rights are the primary precondition of peace, stability and prosperity both in Kosovo and in the broader Western Balkans.

Mr. President,

The Middle East conflict has wide ranging implications on global peace and security, on the prospects of the world economy and, last but not least, on the fight against international terrorism. Hungary is of the firm view that the Road Map, based on the two states principle, still gives us the best chance for reaching a just and lasting solution.

The implementation of the Gaza Disengagement Plan by the Government of Israel has been a step of truly historic proportions. Thus, the Middle East peace process has been given a new lease on life but its sustainability is subject to further consistent, bold measures by both sides. In order to maintain the momentum Israel needs to return to the Road Map, while the Palestinian National Authority has to demonstrate its own commitment to the peace process by carrying out the long overdue internal reforms and, most importantly, by eradicating terrorism and taking the law and order situation under effective control.

Mr. President,

The continued instability in Iraq is a matter of grave concern. Hungary strongly condemns the acts of violence and terrorism in Iraq which aim to undermine the process of reconstruction and political normalization. In spite of the alarming security situation and the obvious internal instability, the political transition in Iraq is making progress in line with UN Security Council resolution 1546. The approval of the recently drafted constitution is indispensable to carry on the political process. Further consistent efforts are required to properly engage all Iraqi communities in building a united, stable and democratic country.

Let me reiterate, Mr President, Hungary's continued commitment to provide assistance to the people of Iraq in their efforts to build a democratic and prosperous country which will soon take its due place in the family of democratic nations.

Mr. President,

Hungary viewed the successful presidential elections last October as an important milestone on the way to political stabilization in Afghanistan. The parliamentary elections held only days ago marked a further major step leading to the establishment of proper democratic institutions in that country.

Hungary is proud of the humanitarian assistance it has provided to the people of Afghanistan as well as of its contribution made to facilitate the process of political stabilization. My country is ready to undertake further commitments in order to assist the Afghan people in rebuilding their country in peace and security.

Mr. President,

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction along with their means of delivery continues to undermine international peace and security. The threat that terrorist groups and non-state actors acquire nuclear, biological and chemical weapons is a major concern to us all.

At the last session of the General Assembly, Hungary expressed its strong support for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1540, and called on all states to establish effective national export controls. We have noted with satisfaction that a great number of Member States had submitted comprehensive reports on their national measures serving the aim and purpose of the resolution.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is still a cornerstone of international peace, security and stability. The 2005 Review Conference, however, failed to live up to our expectations. The international community needs to fulfill its responsibility in preserving the integrity of the Treaty while promoting its universal character.

Recognizing the grave threat posed by biological weapons, Hungary will work together with other nations in the run-up to the upcoming Review Conference. Hungary will strive to explore opportunities to strengthen the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention.

Hungary remains a committed Party to the Ottawa Convention. We will have destroyed all equipment under the provisions of the Convention by the end of 2005, well in advance of the deadline.

Mr. President,

At this session, beyond the wide range of issues to be tackled, we have to make important decisions to put on track the implementation of the outcome document adopted by the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly. If we are guided by a sense of common responsibility and firmly anchored realism, the momentum for reform will be maintained. The delegation of Hungary stands ready to work in partnership with other delegations to make this happen.

Thank you, Mr. President.