

NEW ZEALAND MISSION to the UNITED NATIONS



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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SIXTIETH SESSION

GENERAL DEBATE

STATEMENT BY  
H. E. ROSEMARY BANKS

NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

FRIDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2005

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr President

Sixty years ago the New Zealand Prime Minister Peter Fraser told the Plenary of the San Francisco conference that its sole aim should be "the setting up of a world organisation that will really work, and that will be the background for an orderly progress towards security, prosperity and happiness for all the people of all nations". The new organisation would work only if its members were determined to stand by their commitments and principles.

Today the essential concept of the United Nations remains robust. We can be justly proud of its achievements in many areas including humanitarian assistance, development and peacekeeping. But we have collectively underperformed in others, sometimes with tragic results.

Our task this sixtieth anniversary year is twofold. First, to re-commit ourselves as member states to the enduring vision and values of the Charter. Second, to re-tool the United Nations machinery to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The Summit outcome provides the blueprint for the way forward. New Zealand would have liked more progress in a number of areas – such as more detailed agreement on the establishment of the Human Rights Council and greater authority to the Secretary-General to manage resources in return for greater accountability. We deeply regret the failure to back further disarmament and non-proliferation measures.

But we are encouraged by the many significant advances, including recognition of the need for more and better aid, establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, a doubling of resources for the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, and the recognition of our shared responsibility to protect.

Mr President, you have set as the theme for the General Assembly implementation of our Summit undertakings. We share accountability for getting the job done. I shall confine my comments here to the results of the Summit.

New Zealand is pleased with the Summit outcome on **development**. It represents a shared commitment by all Member States to the Millennium Development Goals and recognizes the importance of partnership between developed countries and developing countries in the effective use of aid.

This year New Zealand has increased its development assistance by 23 percent. Our ODA programme has a focus on poverty elimination, with the MDGs at the centre of our new policy framework and a core (but not exclusive) focus on the Pacific. Through our programmes we strive to address key areas such as aid effectiveness, particular problems faced by small island developing states, HIV/AIDS, the empowerment of women, sexual and reproductive health and rights, education for all, sustainable development and trade access.

We look forward to an ambitious outcome across all aspects of the Doha Development agenda - including for agriculture improved market access, the elimination of export subsidies and substantial reductions in trade distorting domestic support. In addition, improving the coherence of trade policies and development initiatives remains a critical element in achieving the MDGs. We believe this will lead to an improvement in the global prospects for sustainable development.

Mr President

New Zealand welcomes the decision to establish a **Peacebuilding Commission** to help break the cycle of conflict by better coordinating long term international recovery efforts and ensuring sustained political attention is given to those who need it.

We must move swiftly to get the Commission up and running by December this year. We look to you, Mr President, to take the lead in holding consultations to achieve this. The core elements of the framework have already been discussed at length and in detail. With good will and determination, we can surely get agreement within the coming weeks on a package. This should ensure balanced membership and flexible reporting arrangements. We would caution against raising the bar for assistance too high and hope that all States in need of help will be able to approach the Commission.

Our Leaders have spoken with one voice unequivocally to condemn all forms of **terrorism**. We must build on this and honour our undertaking to conclude negotiations on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism this Session.

New Zealand will continue to work closely with our friends in the Pacific region to improve our collective and individual abilities to identify, prevent or respond to terrorist threats. We believe that consolidating the considerable reporting requirements created by Security Council resolutions should be a priority step towards enhancing the UN's counter-terrorism programme. Member states should support the Secretary-General's counter-terrorism strategy.

One of the most far reaching achievements of the Summit is our collective acceptance that there is a **responsibility to protect** populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We now must all be prepared to assist the UN in establishing the early warning capability referred to in the outcomes document. It is vital that when the need arises we give effect to our resolve to follow the principles we have agreed upon.

In this context, New Zealand wishes to reaffirm its commitment to ending impunity for those responsible for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community. Adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court was an historic moment for the United Nations that

demonstrated the breadth and depth of political will to end impunity and secure the rule of law.

The absence of reference to the commitment to end impunity or of any acknowledgment of the International Criminal Court's central contribution to this goal is one of several significant silences in our Summit outcome.

We are particularly pleased that Leaders have recognised the need to conclude this Session negotiations on the draft **Protocol to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel**. This will be a major priority for New Zealand, and we call on all Member States to contribute constructively to the process so that we can reach agreement on a Protocol and so demonstrate our full support for the work of UN field personnel.

New Zealand welcomes the emphasis on **human rights** in the outcome document. That the budget of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is to be doubled and her office strengthened is an overdue recognition of the gap between expectations of delivery and resourcing.

While progress has been made through the Summit decision to establish a new Human Rights Council, we regret that an opportunity was lost to reach agreement on details of the Council's mandate and operation, despite the support of the great majority of Members for such a package. A small minority cannot be allowed a veto over the establishment of the Council.

Over the next weeks we must redouble our efforts to translate broad support into precise details on what the Council will look like, and its mandate. This will be a priority for New Zealand. We shall look to the President to set a work programme which will aim for agreement on these details well before the Commission on Human Rights next meets for what would be a wrap up session.

Our second human rights priority for the 60<sup>th</sup> **session** is to see negotiations on the **draft Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** completed. The constructive and collegial spirit of delegations in the Ad Hoc Committee on Disabilities has been extraordinary. New Zealand is confident that it will be possible to conclude the negotiations in 2006 if the Ad Hoc Committee is enabled to meet for three weeks next January.

Our ability to strengthen the UN across development, security and human rights will be enhanced by implementing Summit undertakings on **Secretariat and management reform**. We need particularly to improve the managerial effectiveness and accountability of the Secretary-General. He should be given, as he has requested, the tools that he needs to manage the Secretariat.

We strongly support the review of all budgetary and human resource rules and regulations, and the review of mandates. We support also the increased focus on ensuring ethical conduct of all UN personnel, and believe a system-wide code of ethics and an independent Ethics Office will facilitate this. New Zealand

also welcomes the commitment to strengthening the UN's Office of Internal Oversight Services.

The outcome document calls for early **reform of the Security Council** and the General Assembly to review progress on the issue by the end of this year. New Zealand continues to place a priority on ensuring that the Security Council is more effective and representative for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, although we have no illusions about the difficulties in reaching agreement on this.

We should in the meantime renew efforts to improve the working methods of the Security Council. For those many Member States who rarely if ever occupy a non-permanent seat on the Council, there should be other ways to participate in Council discussions and contribute to Council decisions.

Mr President

We as member states have shown in finalising the Summit outcome a mixture of courage and creativity on one hand, and of stubbornness and hesitation on the other. The implementation period ahead gives us a second chance to make good on those moments where we allowed agreements to slip through our fingers. We put our trust in you, Mr President, to set the structures for our ongoing work, and to be the catalyst who will motivate and energise us.

In closing, we acknowledge the much valued contribution that former President Ping has made over the last year, and we thank him.