



# **CZECH REPUBLIC**

Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the United Nations

Check Against Delivery

**Statement by**

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**at the General Debate of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Session  
of the United Nations General Assembly**

**New York, September 27, 2008**

Mr. President,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by extending my congratulations to you on your appointment to the important function of the President of the General Assembly. You would steer the deliberations of this key body of the UN through a difficult period of growing challenges to our common security and prosperity. Let me assure you of our full support in your endeavours. I also thank your able predecessor Minister Kerim.

My country is in full preparation for an enormous task that has no precedent in our history. In January of 2009, the Czech Republic will assume the responsibility of the Presidency of the European Union. We will do our utmost in order to uphold our shared commitment to world peace and prosperity within this organization. The European Union stands at the forefront of the efforts to strengthen the United Nations' capacity to deliver effective international responses to global challenges. The Czech Republic is committed to play its part and to further enhance the EU's contribution by searching for common responses. The motto of the upcoming Czech Presidency "Europe without Barriers" reflects our desire to promote the removal of barriers not only within the European Union, but also between the Union and third countries. In our opinion, it is very much in line with the efforts to enhance cooperation and strengthen the principle of effective multilateralism.

Mr. President,

The agreements reached at the 2005 World Summit sparked some substantive reforms, but the process has reached a point when it is necessary to give it a new impulse for further progress. An important part of this process is the Security Council reform. A more representative and transparent Security Council will act with a greater international legitimacy and authority. The Czech Republic, therefore, welcomes the recent decision on launching the intergovernmental negotiations. However, the Security Council authority is being undermined by its inability to

address some acute international issues. I call on the Council to reassert its authority for maintaining the international peace and security and stand up to its obligations.

The United Nations' authority is being tested. So are our political and moral responsibilities. By signing up to the United Nations Charter, all of our countries have committed themselves to live in peace and harmony and to respect the principles of peaceful resolution of disputes and of refraining from the threat and use of force, except in self-defence. Today, as security is being challenged in too many parts of the world, these basic principles, and the international law system in general, need to be upheld as ever.

And yet, we have recently witnessed systematic provocations and finally a military aggression of a powerful country, a permanent member of the Security Council, against its small neighbour with the aim to carve it up. This action was designed to create two tiny entities totally dependent in its administrative, economic and military structures. Colonial powers used to act this way. And, I would like to stress that alleged interests – privileged as they may be considered - cannot justify the violation of our highest common principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Therefore, I fully subscribe to the words pronounced by Sergey Lavrov here earlier today: “We cannot tolerate any more attempts to settle conflict situations by breaking off the international agreements or by unlawful use of force. If such a venture goes unchecked, we will risk a chain reaction.” However, how can one think of redesigning new Euro-Atlantic security structures without renewing the trust that has vanished over the last few months?

After the Czech Republic sent a substantial humanitarian aid, it initiated an international support conference for Georgia to be held next month in Brussels. We call upon the international community to help to alleviate suffering of tens of thousands of people displaced by the conflict, as well as to help the country with a post-conflict reconstruction. We insist that all internally displaced persons return home. The immediate task is to ensure that all the military forces are withdrawn to pre-war positions. There is an urgent need for deployment of an international and impartial mission in Georgia to oversee the military withdrawals and ceasefire implementation. But let me stress once again that a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict must be based on full respect for the principles of Georgia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Mr. President,

We need to step up efforts in combating international terrorism. The stakes remain high. With our deep condolences to the people of India and Pakistan, we strongly condemn the recent terrorist attacks in New Delhi and Islamabad. We must not be shaken but stand up to this scourge united, stronger and more determined. I was deeply moved by the condolences expressed by my Pakistani counterpart. It is touching to hear this from someone whose country has suffered immensely from terrorism.

Promoting and maintaining international security require concerted actions. While there is a need for strengthened United Nations peace-keeping capacity, other organizations can effectively complement the work of the United Nations in areas where they have comparative advantage.

We have all felt the pains of stabilizing a war-torn country like Afghanistan. Despite the persisting lack of security, the international community continues to support development even in remote areas. By establishing and running the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Loghar province, my country has undertaken a long-term commitment to contribute to the security and development of Afghanistan. Let me express our full support to the UN Secretary-General Special Representative, Ambassador Kai Eide, and invite the United Nations to take a more active approach and enhance its involvement and assistance to Afghanistan. The Afghans need our support so that President Karzai's words, "we must do what it takes to win the battle of Afghanistan's economic development", turn into reality. A concerted effort between the Government of Afghanistan and United Nations and other key international players, including Pakistan, is a prerequisite to achieving this goal.

The cooperation of the United Nations, European Union and NATO needs to continue to the benefit of the Balkan region as a whole. Looking into the future, let me assure you that both democratic and prosperous Serbia and Kosovo do have a place in the European family and that the Czech Republic is ready to lend them a helping hand. We, in the Czech Republic, have

always had long-standing and traditionally close and friendly relations with Serbia and are keen to develop them further.

The recent arrest and transfer of Radovan Karadžić to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia was a promising sign of cooperation of the new Serbian Government with the international community. I call on the Security Council to provide sufficient time to the Tribunal for the completion of its work.

The Czech Republic considers international criminal justice to be one of the pillars that uphold the basic values of the United Nations. The ad hoc tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda as well as the Security Council decision of 2005 to refer the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court must be supported in order to end impunity for the most serious crimes. Let me recall the Secretary General's commitment at the opening of this session: "We have it in our power to combat impunity. And therefore, we must."

Mr. President,

We need to undertake some bold steps in the area of weapons of mass destruction and non-proliferation. We should reduce the risk that those weapons are misused or fall into the hands of terrorists. The immediate task is to ensure a successful outcome of the Non-Proliferation Treaty review process and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

In this context, I would like to express our concern over the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programmes. We fully recognize the indispensable right of every country to exploit nuclear power for civilian purposes, but we should act when it could be diverted toward military purposes in breach of international commitments.

My country was among those, who vigorously called for a new universal norm to prevent risks stemming from the use of cluster munitions. The Czech Republic will be among the first to sign the new Convention on Cluster Munitions this December. I am convinced that the more countries

join the Convention, the more profound and positive effect on the lives of countless individuals and communities it will have.

Distinguished Delegates,

Security goes hand in hand with development and human rights. In this sixtieth year of existence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, there is still a long way to go from just formal commitments of governments to universally shared respect to rights and liberties of every human being.

In recent years, the United Nations human rights institutions have undergone a long-awaited reform. However, its goals have been only partially achieved. Let me express my deep regret that the Human Rights Council has been unable to tackle, timely and properly, several serious human rights situations. Although the Council puts meritorious effort to the newly established Universal Periodic Review mechanism, the political imbalance of its agenda and the attempts to weaken the role of special procedures and non-governmental organizations further diminish the reform expectations. Moreover, flouting the appeals of the international community, such as demonstrated by the Myanmar regime, has to be denounced.

The Czech Republic supports the principle of responsibility to protect formulated by the 2005 United Nations World Summit. The international community is responsible to protect peoples worldwide in case their governments are unable or unwilling to do so. Just over the last few years, we have seen some quite tragic examples desperately requiring our attention. I, therefore, welcome the Secretary-General's efforts to advance this issue. A valuable contribution can be also provided by non-governmental initiatives by leaders such as Václav Havel, Kjell Magne Bondevik and Elie Wiesel. Earlier this week, I had the honour to host an event in New York aimed at presenting their thoughts and recommendations on the tragic human rights and humanitarian situation in North Korea.

Mr. President,

This week, I took part in High-Level meetings on Africa's Development Needs and on the Millennium Development Goals. We already witnessed early successes as well as setbacks and we realized that some goals are more difficult to achieve than others. Now, at the halfway point towards the target date, we are well aware of how much needs to be done in the remaining seven years. Our commitment to development and notably to Africa must not wane.

At the end of this year, the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development will present an opportunity to review the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus of 2002. The conclusion of the ongoing talks on the Doha Development Agenda within the World Trade Organisation should also bring tangible benefits of further trade liberalisation for developing countries. To make that happen, the European Union has already shown the necessary flexibility. Other key actors have to follow suit if the talks are to get back on track and be concluded soon. In this context, let me recall once again the Czech Presidency motto "Europe without Barriers".

Let me assure you that the Czech Republic fully supports the European Union commitments to intensify EU development assistance. The Czech Presidency of the Union will be yet another incentive for us to step up our development assistance.

Soaring food and commodity prices as well as the negative impact of the climate change hamper international development. All these issues require strong political will. The new legal framework to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases beyond 2012 is one of the most important issues. The Czech Republic is fully aware of the necessity of significant progress towards the adoption of a new post-Kyoto agreement. The Czech Presidency of the European Union will play an active role in this process, which will culminate in Copenhagen next year, where a new agreement should be adopted.

Mr. President,

I have outlined just a few points that are awaiting our action. In many areas, time is running out. I would like to encourage all members of this universal organization to cooperate in our common efforts to make this world secure and prosperous. The Czech Republic is committed to do its part.

Thank you for your attention.