

SWEDEN



STATEMENT

by

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of Sweden

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

Madame President,

The latest cycle of violence in the Middle East and the recent escalation in Darfur have once again highlighted the need for a strong multilateral response to global challenges.

Last year's World Summit set out an ambitious agenda on how to strengthen the United Nations.

The reform efforts must continue.

The decisions made here in New York during the 60th Session should be translated into concrete results in the field.

Madame President,

For too long, people in Darfur have suffered the appalling consequences of conflict. Our common efforts must be intensified to end the fighting and violence, to ensure respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, and to end impunity.

A UN peacekeeping force should be allowed to protect the people in Darfur. We urge the Government of Sudan to accept such a force.

A continued AU Force presence is crucial for the humanitarian situation and the transition towards a UN peacekeeping force in Darfur.

We urge rebel groups who have failed to sign up to the Darfur Peace Agreement to do so.

Sweden stands ready to contribute to a UN Mission in Darfur.

We need to live up to the principle of responsibility to protect that we accepted at last year's Summit. The Security Council must show the will to act when civilian populations are threatened by the most serious crimes.

Madame President,

A comprehensive approach to the conflicts in the Middle East is urgently needed with strong and increased involvement from the international community. Positive contributions will be required from key countries in the region, including Syria and Iran.

The events this past summer have shown that a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and long-term security for Israel are all objectives that cannot be achieved by military means. Negotiations are the only avenue to peace.

The Stockholm Conference last month resulted in immediate steps to extend support for Lebanon's early recovery. It is vital that we sustain our commitment to Lebanon's reconstruction and to the strengthening of its sovereignty.

Full implementation by all parties of resolutions 1559 and 1701 is needed. Sweden is preparing a military contribution to UNIFIL.

Madame President,

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict lies at the core of the tensions in the Middle East.

The vision of an independent, and democratic Palestine, living side by side with a secure Israel, based on the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 must be revived and concretized.

Israel's right to exist should be unequivocally recognized by all. We condemn rocket attacks against Israeli territory. Terrorist attacks can never be justified and must end.

Sweden remains concerned at the humanitarian situation in Gaza and the West Bank. Humanitarian access must be guaranteed, and humanitarian law should be observed throughout the occupied Palestinian territories.

The expansion of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian territories must stop. This settlement policy should instead be reversed. It undermines confidence in a credible political process, as does the building of the barrier on occupied Palestinian territory.

The situation in Iraq is serious, with a negative impact on security in the region and beyond, and with untold suffering by innocent civilians. We need to help the Iraqi people build a future free from war and internal strife.

Madame President,

With an estimated 27 000 nuclear weapons in the world, we have to make progress in addressing the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction. Disarmament and non-proliferation are crucial for world security. They are interlinked. We must press ahead for progress on both.

The international community's concerns over Iran's nuclear programme must be met. No one wishes to see an isolated Iran. Our wish is for Iran to take its rightful place among nations in international cooperation. But neither would we like to see an Iran that pursues a nuclear weapons option.

The Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, led by Dr. Hans Blix, has presented a large number of constructive recommendations in its report entitled "Weapons of Terror". These recommendations offer a way forward toward disarmament and non-proliferation.

Madame President,

There are over 1.1 billion people living in abject poverty in our world today. Well over 100 million children do not attend school.

It is true that there has been progress. The number of extremely poor has declined by 130 million since 1990. Since the Monterrey Conference in 2001, aid has increased by over 50 billion US dollars.

The World Summit gave increased attention to development issues, forging a vital link between security, development and human rights in the fight against poverty.

But this is not enough.

If we are to implement the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, we have to do more.

The primary responsibility lies with the developing countries themselves – they are in charge. Good governance must be the guiding principle at all levels.

Donor countries should actively support the efforts of the developing countries to reduce poverty, and lend their full support to the developing countries in their efforts to increase their participation in international trade.

The High-level Panel on UN System wide Coherence provides a unique opportunity to revitalize the support of the United Nations to the developing countries. If the UN can become more effective at country level, it will be able to mobilize more resources and ensure that they will reach the countries in need.

Madame President,

Sweden has always given high priority to the strengthening of the United Nations.

During this session, it is essential that we stay focused on implementing the decisions already taken, and continue to seek agreement on outstanding issues from the Summit.

We created the Peacebuilding Commission as a tool to assist countries to manage the difficult transition from post-conflict situations. The country-specific commissions should now deliver results, to begin with in Burundi and Sierra Leone.

The Human Rights Council must be a body that reacts firmly against violations of human rights.

Thousands of innocent men, women and children have been killed across the world through acts of terrorism. This global threat can only be met by collective action by member states.

That is why we adopted the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in the General Assembly a couple of weeks ago. It sends a strong political message that terrorism is unacceptable in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes, as it constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. This strategy should now be implemented, with full respect for human rights.

Let us also build upon this achievement to agree on a Comprehensive Convention on Terrorism during this session of the General Assembly.

The world needs a stronger and more effective UN. In order for this to happen, we need to make further progress in Secretariat and management reform. While a number of initial steps were taken during the past year, some key reform proposals have been deferred to the 61st Session. They need to be fully implemented.

Madame President,

The UN reform process will be incomplete as long as the Security Council remains unchanged. If we want its decisions to be genuinely accepted as legitimate and effective, we must reform the Council to better represent the world of today. This is a difficult but vital area of reform. While expanding the Council, we must safeguard its efficiency. Therefore there should be no extension of the veto power. The use of the veto should be limited.

The General Assembly will remain at the heart of the United Nations. During the past 12 months, by agreeing on a number of essential reforms, the General Assembly has in many ways revitalized itself. Let us now continue to make full use of the broad mandate of this crucial body, representing all the Member States of the UN.

Madame President,

The time has come to build on the achievements of the UN of the past year, and to seek solutions to the issues where we have been unable to agree.

The time has come to prove that the UN can continue to make a difference, in Darfur, the Middle East, or wherever there is conflict, poverty, and human suffering.

Thank you