



General Assembly

Fifty-sixth session

46th plenary meeting

Sunday, 11 November 2001, 9 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 9.05 a.m.

Address by Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Cyprus.

Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Clerides: I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your well-deserved election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I also extend my appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for his effective leadership during his presidency.

The heinous terrorists attacks of 11 September have undeniably transformed international relations. The United Nations is called upon to reinforce its primary role as the standard bearer of the principles that will shape the new environment and unite humanity in the pursuit of justice, tolerance, the dignity of human beings, respect for human rights, the promotion of peace and zero-tolerance for the dark forces of terrorism.

On behalf of the Government and people of Cyprus, I reiterate our deep condolences and sympathy to the American people for the tragic loss of innocent lives caused by the abhorrent terrorist acts of 11 September. We unreservedly condemn these barbaric acts, which we consider to be attacks against the values and principles of humanity.

The community of nations must individually and collectively take concerted and resolute action against terrorism. We believe that there is no justification or excuse for terrorism and, at the same time, we reject any notion of linking this scourge with any particular religious faith or ethnic group. We renew our commitment to implement fully Security Council resolutions on terrorism, in particular resolution 1373 (2001). Cyprus is actively participating in the common effort. It has ratified or acceded to nine of the 12 international conventions pertaining to international terrorism. Furthermore, we expect an early ratification of the most recent Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, which is already before the House of Representatives.

The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cyprus approved on 20 September a comprehensive proposal for the establishment of a task force to combat international terrorism.

The United Nations continues to be faced with old and new tasks: globalization, good governance, protection of the environment and the need for sustainable development. The elimination of poverty and pandemics, securing a world free from the threat of

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.



Union could or would execute and when it could do so. In Finland's case, our law requires that either the United Nations or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe mandate such an operation.

In today's complex crises civilian aspects of crisis management have and will become all the more relevant in all organizations. The European Union has developed its civilian capabilities in four priority areas, namely civilian police, strengthening the rule of law, strengthening civilian administration and civil protection. In these areas, the European Union and the United Nations, as well as other international organizations, must also seek synergies and complementarity.

The Millennium Summit and the Millennium Declaration are outstanding achievements in the history of the United Nations. The Declaration manifests a unique commitment to multilateralism by all the Member States of the United Nations. It sets an ambitious agenda and goals for the United Nations for years to come. However, without effective implementation it is only a piece of paper. Its implementation also requires common action and strengthened commitment to multilateralism. The Secretary-General's road map gives us guidance on how to maintain the millennium momentum and how to proceed, although the onus is on the Member States.

This year alone the United Nations has organized five conferences and special sessions and hundreds of other meetings that are an integral part of the follow-up and implementation of the Millennium Declaration. These processes should show the same kind of commitment as was encountered in the Summit. Unfortunately, I have to say that none of these recent conferences and special sessions has come close to reflecting the commitment that was so noticeable in the Millennium Summit. We need invigorated common efforts to genuinely implement the ambitious agenda adopted only a year ago and to uphold multilateralism. I hope we can see improvement in this respect in coming summits and conferences.

The moral and political commitment to the Declaration should lead to its effective implementation. The strong support for these common objectives and our determination to achieve them need much more action in order to become a reality. Such challenges as halving, by the year 2015, the proportion of people

living in poverty should not be jeopardized by narrow national interests.

Globalization and harnessing it to benefit all humankind remain one of the major challenges to the international community. A common approach is needed in this work too. We have to learn how to deal with the paradox of democracy spreading across the world, and there is much disillusionment about its workings. The key to explaining this paradox is globalization. It poses a demand to develop strong, new, democratic policies and institutions for international and global governance. They must be developed in the United Nations, but also at the regional level, such as in the European Union.

The Government of Finland recently prepared a study on Finnish policies on globalization. One of its main conclusions was that in resolving multinational crises created by globalization, the role of cooperation between national Governments will be growing, not diminishing. The United Nations is the most universal forum for intergovernmental cooperation. Finland supports the United Nations as one of the central actors in harnessing globalization at the universal level.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Reinaldo Ruggiero, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy.

Mr. Ruggiero (Italy): I wish to congratulate the President on his election to head the first session of the General Assembly of the new millennium. I am certain that his experience and commitment will enable us to achieve the high goals that we all share. I also renew the Italian Government's warmest congratulations to Secretary-General Kofi Annan on his receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize. His appointment to a second term to the leadership of the United Nations is both welcome and unanimously appreciated.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium addressed the General Assembly yesterday, speaking on behalf of the European Union. Italy fully shares his views and supports his statement.

Like our Belgian colleague and previous speakers, I would like to express once more, on this solemn occasion, to the Government and people of the United States our deep solidarity following the appalling terrorist acts perpetrated against them. We share their suffering over the shocking loss of human life and the sorrow of thousands of families.

These acts defy the most basic values of civil coexistence. We condemn them and reaffirm our full commitment to the fight against international terrorism, a struggle on which the United Nations has conferred full legitimacy. We believe that the United Nations remains the central forum to which we must turn in drafting a comprehensive response to terrorism.

This is why we need strict application of the full range of measures adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council during the days immediately following the 11 September attacks. Resolution 1373 (2001), in particular, must be implemented, urgently and vigorously. I also hope that everyone shows the necessary flexibility to allow a swift conclusion of the negotiations on a comprehensive convention against international terrorism.

On 7 November, by a majority of more than 90 per cent, the Italian Parliament approved the Government's decision to contribute ground troops, naval forces and air units to operations against international terrorism. This confirms my country's awareness that the stakes are high and proves the robustness of our national consensus in facing this challenge. The fight must be conducted in a targeted manner, avoiding the loss of innocent lives, until the objective has been fully achieved, without, however, neglecting humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people, both within the country and in the refugee camps. But the problem of the political future of Afghanistan, a problem to be solved only by the Afghan people, must, of course, remain a high priority in the agenda of the United Nations, together with the objective of regional stability.

But in crafting a credible, diversified global strategy to eradicate international terrorism, we must also search for solutions to the most delicate regional crises and to the global problems that loom over our lives. These include hunger, poverty, ignorance, inequality, underdevelopment, violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms and threats to the environment and health.

At the top of the list of regional crises is the Middle East, an area physically close to Italy, and one to which we pay close attention. Here, we are working both in a national capacity and within the European Union to create, as soon as possible, the conditions for an end to the violence and a true return to negotiations for a comprehensive, lasting peace in the region based

on the establishment of a viable and democratic State for the Palestinians and an end to the occupation of their territories and on Israel's right to live in peace and security within internationally recognized borders.

This framework should also include an ambitious plan, like the one adopted to rebuild a devastated Europe in the wake of World War II, for public and private investments and inter-regional assistance towards fostering solidarity among the region's States and peoples — in other words, a new Marshall Plan. Special attention should be paid to the economic and social growth and development of the Palestinian population, to which Italy is fully committed and for which it remains prepared to do more in the future.

In the Balkans, we have noted encouraging progress despite persisting tensions. Our goal there is to prevent destabilizing tendencies and to foster regional cooperation and economic development, including closer ties with the European Union.

As for the challenges of globalization, we should first of all make the success of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference in Doha a primary objective. In fact, many of the global problems I have listed can be alleviated by ensuring that the international market economy and multilateral free trade operate fairly and continue to foster inclusiveness, integration and more equitable and sustainable growth of all countries through agreed rules. This latest WTO round should be one of growth and development, focusing in particular on the problems of the developing and least developed countries.

But in order to assure a better response to globalization's most problematic aspects, other major objectives must be pursued. And the universal organization with the moral authority to meet this challenge is the United Nations.

The first objective is the maintenance of international peace and security. Italy's commitment is strong and long-standing. In fact, we are one of the top three contributors of men and resources to peace operations led and authorized by the United Nations. In this light, we appreciate the reports that the Secretariat has issued in the past two years, which suggest a vision of peace activity as a single, three-sided concept, encompassing conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building.

Italy also values the document that the Secretary-General submitted to Member States on the prevention of armed conflicts, emphasizing the direct connection between safeguarding peace and fighting underdevelopment. In fact, no peacekeeping action can achieve lasting results unless it is coupled with measures to strengthen government institutions, safeguard the human, civil and cultural rights of all communities and rebuild the economic and social fibre of affected areas.

The second objective is to foster development and eradicate poverty. We must ensure that all the countries of the world benefit from the opportunities created by interdependencies and progress, in particular in the areas of information and communication technology. The global United Nations conferences of the 1990s laid the groundwork for the definition of poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon. It is not only characterized by low income and consumption, but also a lack of food, health care, schooling and environmental stability. This is a vicious cycle that we must break, through coordinated and integrated initiatives. To reverse the downward spiral, we must enhance both the material and the human dimensions of development.

The Millennium Declaration spells out the objectives to be attained by 2015. Italy has shown its commitment to these goals through the shaping of its international actions and the shouldering of its responsibilities during the year of its G-8 presidency. One example was the substantive outreach initiative at the Genoa Summit, involving a meeting with five African Heads of State and the Secretary-General to discuss the New African Initiative and launch a global fund to combat HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases.

Finally, we must continue to nurture and strengthen development assistance and reach the goal of having the most developed countries dedicate 0.7 per cent of their gross national product to this pursuit. In this context, debt relief is another essential tool to free up the necessary resources in developing countries in order to stimulate their economies, for instance by promoting public investment in health care and schooling. Italy is a leader in this field by virtue of recent laws that allow it to gradually cancel the debt of the poorest countries.

As I said before, the United Nations has the moral authority to take on today's new challenges. This fact was highlighted by the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Secretary-General and to the Organization as a whole. However, its structure and procedures must keep pace with the times. Italy believes in the reform of the United Nations, a reform that should affect all of its bodies, including the Security Council. Let me reiterate the need for a comprehensive reform that addresses the relevant issues in all their aspects. Such a reform should be designed to produce greater efficiency, legitimacy and transparency. It should also meet the general expectations of democracy, universality and inclusiveness.

In addition, to create the conditions for stable growth of prosperity and security for all humankind, we need more effective governance of globalization. The documents prepared by the Secretariat make great strides in this direction. Now is the time to translate the commitments of the Millennium Declaration into action. Italy will support every initiative undertaken for this purpose.

Never have we had a better opportunity to solve our problems, yet never have we faced greater risks. The answer does not lie in denying the reality of interdependence and growing globalization. It is within our ability to promote better governance of the international system. Never before has the world had so many human, financial and technological resources at its disposal. The answer lies in our hands, in our collective will.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Djibouti, Mr. Ali Abdi Farah.

Mr. Farah (Djibouti) (*spoke in French*): In view of the catastrophic events that took place on 11 September, it is only fitting that first and foremost we once again offer our deepest condolences to the Government and people of the United States. This was a hateful and diabolical act of terrorism that claimed thousands of precious human lives and caused untold physical destruction, without parallel in history. This brutal attack has put us all on notice. It was truly the day the world changed.

One way or another, this tragedy affects us all. Not a single country is immune from terrorism, inasmuch as it is beyond the capacity of any one