

TODAY AT THE GA

GENERAL DEBATE

26 SEPTEMBER 2007

GENERAL DEBATE

Speakers

LEGEND

HS= Head of State
HG= Head of Government
FM= Foreign Minister
MFA= Minister of Foreign Affairs
VP= Vice-President

Morning Session

LATVIA (HS)
SWITZERLAND (HS)
MAURITANIA
FINLAND (HS)
TURKMENISTAN (HS)
LITHUANIA (HS)
ZAMBIA (HS)
EL SALVADOR (HS)
BOTSWANA (HS)
HAITI (HS)
COTE D'IVOIRE (HS)
SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE (HS)
1. Iraq (PM)
2. Cuba (MFA)

Afternoon Session

SWAZILAND (HS)
BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA (HS)
MOZAMBIQUE (HS)
CYPRUS (HS)
MADAGASCAR (HS)
NIGERIA (HS)
GEORGIA (HS)
ZIMBABWE (HS)
BOLIVIA
CZECH REPUBLIC (HS)
ECUADOR (HS)
POLAND (HS)
1. Norway (HG)
2. Malta (PM)

UNITED NATIONS WEBCAST

<http://www.un.org/webcast>

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<http://www.un.org/ga>

GA BROADCAST BY TELEPHONE

**x7.9420 (GA floor), x7.9421
(English),
x7.9422 (French)**

Summary

The United Nations needs to reform its main bodies by reducing the power of the Security Council and boosting the authority of the General Assembly, including on issues of peace and security. Many developing countries also demanded an immediate rebalancing of the Security Council itself.

“The non-aligned movement wants a more democratic and transparent United Nations, in which the General Assembly, its most representative and democratic body, can really implement the powers vested in it,” said Cuba on behalf of NAM.

“The fact that Africa is totally excluded from permanent membership of the Security Council is unfair, untenable and must be rectified,” said Nigeria.

Part policy, part political theatre, this second day of the General Assembly General Debate featured impassioned speeches – that were as much about the UN’s deep divides as they were about its common concerns – and witnessed several unceremonious exits from the GA hall by some delegations to protest individual speakers’ remarks.

“We are averse to a body where the economically and militarily powerful behave like bullies, trampling on the rights of the weaker States, as what happened in Iraq,” said Zimbabwe. This organization must surely examine the essence of its authority and the extent of its power when challenged in this manner.”

Bolivia called for a “decolonization of the United Nations,” including by moving its headquarters out of New York.

Many delegations, however, built their statements around achievements and positive progress. Iraq said that civil war has been successfully prevented and highlighted positive achievements made since the fall of the dictatorship mentioning a rapid growing civil society, the building of state institutions, the ‘blossoming of reconciliation’, the enhancing of security. He also expressed his hope that the United Nations will mobilize its activities in Iraq.

Swaziland announced a decline in HIV prevalence rates and Mozambique reported its achievements in disaster preparedness, including a mapping of high-risk areas, improving early warning systems, improved conditions for populations to store agricultural produce, the better disaster training and civic education, and the establishment of a 24/7 National Operative Emergency Centre.

During yesterday’s session, Afghanistan said that Afghan society is “brimming with freedom and activity” and enjoying some stability and progress – in the form of a 25 percent cut in child mortality, increased access to education and health care, and on track to become self-sufficient in cereal production. It added, however, that it remains

daunted by poverty and underdevelopment, climactic hardships, and the menaces of terrorism and narcotics.

Highlights

Climate Change

Many delegations highlighted the need to reach a globally inclusive agreement on the post-2012 climate regime and affirmed the central role of the United Nations in this process.

Lithuania called a more coherent and inclusive system of international environmental governance which should be strengthened by establishing a United Nations Organisation for the Environment, based on UNEP.

Switzerland mentioned that human security policy also applies to environmental threats and called for coherent and decisive environmental governance.

The Czech Republic said it considers the UN an irreplaceable platform on the issue of climate change, but said it objected to the idea of 'global governance' calling it an ambition that is based on an abuse of reason. It said it preferred a UN that was less operationally efficient organization and more consultative and respectful of divergent views.

Zambia reported that it had developed a national adaptation programme of action that identifies the most vulnerable sectors of its economy, as well as the adaptation activities required to alleviate the adverse effects of climate change. However, as a developing country, Zambia needed the assistance from the international community and called for relevant technological transfers as well as for a more coherent institutional framework of international environmental governance.

Mozambique said that climate change mitigation efforts will only be successful through the involvement of citizens and the beneficiaries, noting the positive impact recent government efforts to include beneficiaries had during the recent floods. Mozambique also said it hoped the climate change conference in Bali will include agreements on concrete targets for carbon dioxide emissions, a post-Kyoto agreement to bind all nations, funding for national action plans for adaptation to climate change, and a process for implementing the Buenos Aires Programme of work on adaptation and response measures.

Madagascar linked climate change to conflict saying that droughts and floods are behind increased migration and serious social conflicts in Africa. "The refugees and victims of climate change will be the refugees and victims of wars and poverty," it said.

Disasters

Swaziland said that its persistent droughts, worsened by wildfires have destroyed crops, land and livestock were due in part to climate change and said it hoped Monday's meeting had generated enough momentum to make the Bali meeting a success. It also hoped that developed countries would facilitate access to environmentally sound technologies and asked the private sector, particularly multinational corporations, to apply the same environmental and waste management principles they practice in the developed world.

Bosnia and Herzegovina said that it will host a regional disaster preparedness and prevention Initiative Secretariat, taking a strong regional ownership of Stability pact of South Eastern Europe Initiative. Bosnia and Herzegovina also said that, together with Jordan, it had promoted the UN Better World Campaign, which promotes timely and effective humanitarian disaster response.

Peace and Security

Switzerland acknowledged that the nature of conflicts is changing and that warlords, terrorists and gangs dictate the rules and it is no longer possible to limit security policy to traditional frameworks. The focus on maintaining peace and security policy should shift to the security of the individual and of governments, and non-state armed groups have to be convinced to respect certain basic rules endorsed by all concerned.

UN Reform

The need for the United Nations to reform was largely shared by Member States. The reform of the Security Council, the management reform, the strengthening of ECOSOC, the bolstering of UNEP and the enhancing of the Human Rights Council, were on the top of the agenda.

Latvia supports the G4 model of reform for the Security Council promoted by Brazil, Germany, Japan and India. Latvia stated that management reform is vital and looks forward to assessing results of the 'One UN' pilot programme. Switzerland reiterated its commitment to improve the transparency of the Sanctions Committee. Finland and Zambia considered enhancing the effectiveness of ECOSOC an important part of the UN reform and the concept of broad security.

Botswana said that important matters of international peace and security cannot be resolved through the monopoly of fire power. Zambia, Zimbabwe and Nigeria called for two permanent seats for Africa. Zambia suggested abolishing the undemocratic veto altogether.

Terrorism

Mauritania rejects any form of terrorism while remaining tightly attached to the values of Islam, which are based on tolerance and rejects violence.

Afghanistan (on 25 September) said that terrorism is not a home grown phenomenon, but that the past two years have witnessed a significant increase in terrorist attacks. It said the threat can only be overcome if addressed across regional and international dimensions.

Nigeria said it had established four counter-terrorism centres in addition to the Nigeria Financial Intelligent Unit which with the Bank of Nigeria monitors transactions as part of the mechanism to locate and terminate the illegal transfer of funds for terrorist acts.

Protection/Responsibility to Protect

Lithuania encouraged the SG to “operationalise” this principle.

Afghanistan (on 25 September) condemned the use of human shields by terrorists resulting in the loss of civilian lives. It emphasized the need for maximum caution on the part of international forces operating in Afghanistan as well as increased coordination with Afghan authorities to avoid such casualties.

Region/Country Issues

Afghanistan

Afghanistan (on 25 September) said it is working with international partners to address the narcotics menace, prioritizing alternative livelihoods to farmers, expediting poppy eradication and the interdiction of drug traffickers. But narcotics control must also be addressed outside of Afghanistan and by fighting drug mafias, ensuring strict border control and reducing demand in foreign markets.

Africa

Calling aid to African the second most pressing of UN priorities, Madagascar called for a Marshall Plan for Africa, calling the EU's recent aid to Africa as a good example of how Africa can benefit from such investment.

Cyprus

Cyprus, pledging its commitment to neighborly relations with Turkey, said that Turkey's actions confirm its objective of controlling Cyprus by partitioning it geographically into two ethnically clean parts with Turkey securing the rights to sovereignty and intervention. It also accused Turkey of illegally exploring the country's resources and destroying the cultural and religious heritage of Cypriots.

Darfur

Latvia welcomed Resolution 1769, authorizing the deployment of a hybrid operation for Darfur.

Nigeria, cited the Abuja Agreement as the reference points for a comprehensive settlement of the crisis in Sudan and Darfur and called on parties to respect their commitments to help drive the peace process forward. It reaffirmed its support to the AU-UN hybrid force in Sudan.

Swaziland said it was concerned about the situation in Somalia and Darfur because of their far-reaching consequences for regional security. It welcomed the UN/AU hybrid force in Sudan.

Lebanon

Switzerland stressed the importance of dialogue and offered to convene a forum to find a political solution to the crisis in the name of long-term stability.

Middle East

Mauritania stated the the Arab-Israeli conflict posed a major threat to international peace and security. Israel should accept the security guarantees of its Arab neighbours and stop occupation.

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe said that neo-colonialist forces are seeking regime change in Zimbabwe should not interfere, as they have no role to play in Zimbabwe's national affairs. “The colonial sun set some time ago,” it said.