

Address by Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India at the High-Level Plenary meeting of the 60th session of the United Nations General Assembly on September 15, 2005



Mr. Co-Chairman,

I bring the best wishes and felicitations of the people of India to this august assembly meeting in its historic 60th Session. India has a special regard for the United Nations. The ideals of the UN run parallel to our own civilizational ethos. This is the ancient Indian concept of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" or "the whole world is one family". It is this idea of a shared destiny which encouraged this august assembly, five years ago, to adopt the Millennium Development Goals.

May I also take this opportunity to convey our deep condolences and sympathies to the Government and people of the United States on the widespread destruction caused by hurricane Katrina.

At the turn of the century, humanity was faced with a contradictory turn in its evolving history. On the one hand, we were faced with the contemporary challenges of pandemics like HIV/AIDS, environmental depredation on a planetary scale and terrorism targeting nations across the world. There has been growing recognition that these challenges cut across national borders and demand a global response. At the same time,

there was a new sense of hope and optimism. The world community welcomed the fact that advances in science and technology had made it possible as never before in human history to mount a frontal attack on global poverty, ignorance and disease. We had confidence in mobilizing through the United Nations, the collective will and wisdom of nations to herald a new era of peace and prosperity.

Five years later, we find that the international community is generous in setting goals, but parsimonious in pursuing them. We must make greater efforts to mobilize immediate resources necessary to meet the Millennium Development Goals. This would be a wise investment for the future. Failure will only make our task in the future more difficult and more costly.

Excellencies, we in the developing world face a dual challenge. First, there is the domestic one of managing political, economic and social change in an environment of rising expectations and growing disparities as well as the global challenge of securing for ourselves an international environment conducive to meeting our developmental aspirations. These challenges are interlinked in our globalized world and success or failure in this double quest would have global consequences.

We welcome the agreement reached on the Draft Outcome Document to be adopted tomorrow. It is a roadmap for the work ahead to re-orient the Organization to meet the challenges of the present. India will be a willing participant in this process.

All of us assembled here recognize that the United Nations is in need of urgent and comprehensive reforms. The management of global interdependence requires strong international institutions and a rule-based multilateral system. The reform of the United Nations must be based on this principle. It must include the expansion of the United Nations Security Council in both permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. Unfortunately, the United Nations suffers from a democracy deficit. Its structure and decision-making processes reflect the world of 1945, not the world of 2005. Unless it becomes more representative of the contemporary world and more relevant to our concerns and aspirations, its ability to deliver on the Millennium Development Goals, indeed on its Charter obligations, will continue to be limited.

Mr. Co-Chairman, in a democracy, it is the rule of law and transparency which safeguard the interests of the ordinary citizen. At the global level too, we need to ensure that multilateral rules governing the flow of goods, services and capital take adequate account of the needs and aspirations of developing countries. The world awaits a "New Deal" to spur development and create jobs on a global scale. It must address the challenge of eradicating mass poverty and pandemics like HIV/AIDS and other deadly communicable diseases. We need collective thinking and coordinated action to deal with the challenge of ensuring energy security, even while we address the consequences of climate change. We must turn the global outpouring of sympathy and mobilization of resources in response to national disasters into a more sustained effort to deal with apparently less dramatic, but in the long run, more damaging crises. We must renew our efforts to secure the world against nuclear proliferation and to promote global non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. Failure to address the global challenges

that I have mentioned in a timely fashion can only turn them into unmitigated disasters eventually.

Mr. Co-Chairman, democratic governance both within nations and in our global institutions would also constitute a powerful weapon in meeting the global scourge of terrorism. We must not yield any space to terrorism. We must firmly reject any notion that there is any cause that justifies it. No cause could ever justify the indiscriminate killing of innocent men, women and children. For several years, India has faced cross-border terrorism directed against its unity and territorial integrity. We shall never succumb to or compromise with terror in Jammu and Kashmir or elsewhere.

Sir,

In 1947, India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru said, and I quote "Peace has been said to be indivisible; so is freedom, so is prosperity, and so also is disaster in this One World that can no longer be split into isolated fragments". Today these words assume a compelling logic. In this One World there is only One United Nations. If we fail the United Nations, we will fail succeeding generations, who will expect a more enlightened legacy than is currently in sight. Globalization offers exciting opportunities to improve living standards world-wide provided the weak and the powerless are empowered to become genuine partners in progress. The world community, therefore, must muster the courage to harness the potential of globalization for the benefit of entire humankind.

I thank you, Mr. Co-chairman.