

## **Address at the UN General Assembly**

New York, 12 September 2002

President of the General Assembly, Mr Jan Kavan,  
Secretary-General of the UN, Mr Kofi Annan,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I would like to add my voice in thanking the outgoing President of the General Assembly, Dr Han Seung-Soo for the diligent manner in which he managed the affairs of this Assembly. I would also like to congratulate you, President Kavan, for taking over the leadership of the 57th Session of the UN General Assembly. We hope that you will have a successful tenure in your stewardship of this important body.

Allow us to also welcome Switzerland and East Timor to membership of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

Two years ago, the world's political leaders met at this place and through the historic United Nations Millennium Declaration "reaffirmed our faith in the (United Nations) Organisation and its Charter as indispensable foundations of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world."

That an unprecedented number of Heads of State and Government had gathered at the United Nations to make this commitment to cooperation among the peoples of the world, to peace, prosperity and justice throughout our universe gave hope to the billions throughout the world who know the painful meaning of oppression by another, of war and violent conflict, of poverty and injustice.

None of those who spoke from this podium knew that a year after they had pledged to use their energies and talents to provide a meaningful life for all, peace in this country and the rest of the world would be brutally challenged by the murderous terrorist attack of September 11.

We meet a day after the first anniversary of that fateful September 11. We have a collective duty to reaffirm our united resolve to create a world free of the fear of terrorism. We have a common task to ensure that this Organisation truly lives up to its obligations to do all the things that make for peace. We have a solemn obligation to give real meaning to the message of hope we proclaimed in the Millennium Declaration. It may be that future generations will say that if we have learnt anything at all from the horrendous events of September 11, it is to the accomplishment of these tasks that this General Assembly should dedicate its efforts.

In keeping with that perspective, we have come to the 57th General Assembly to report that the peoples of Africa have risen to these challenges by forming the African Union. Our Union is based on the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. It results from the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which championed the cause of unity and independence of Africa, for nearly 40 years.

The African Union (AU) is Africa's practical and determined response to its past and present, in favour of peace and stability, democracy and human rights, cooperation, development, prosperity and human dignity.

Its programme for the socio-economic revitalisation of our Continent is the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which must help us to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment throughout Africa and, within the context of the African Union, end Africa's humiliation as an object of charity.

Clearly, the objectives of the African Union and the programme enunciated in the New Partnership essentially and of necessity seek to advance the aims contained in the Millennium Development Goals.

Naturally, the United Nations as an organisation seized of the task to address the critical issues of peace, human rights and poverty eradication within the framework of sustainable development, will forever be central to the success of the African Union and the accomplishment of the goals of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Accordingly, on behalf of the united peoples of Africa, we are honoured and privileged to commend to this august Organisation both the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development. We are convinced that with your support, we will transform this into an African Century.

We are happy that there are encouraging peace processes in Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan, with the Comoros already having held successful elections. We are particularly pleased because these positive developments will create the possibility for millions of our fellow Africans to reaffirm the sanctity of human life and security, and to engage in the important tasks of rebuilding their countries to bring about a better life for all.

As part of our commitment to wage a sustained struggle to realise the long-deferred hopes of the peoples of Africa, we have agreed to the establishment of various institutions, including a peer-review mechanism, which must help us ensure that we honour our commitments democracy, human rights and good governance.

I am confident that the United Nations will work closely with the African Union, and that this premier organisation of the peoples of the world will use its vast and invaluable experience to ensure that the African Union delivers on the important and pressing duty of achieving sustainable development in each and every country on our continent.

Together, the UN agencies and the organs of the African Union must give priority to such matters as human resources development and capacity building, modernising Africa's economy, dealing decisively with the intolerable debt burden, ensuring access for our products in the markets of the developed world, speeding-up the emancipation and empowerment of women, combating communicable and other diseases, including AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, and fighting against environmental degradation.

Mr. President,

At the end of August and the beginning of this month, the people of South Africa and Africa were honoured to host the World Summit for Sustainable Development. A number of far-reaching decisions were taken at this important Summit to ensure that we will bequeath to the next generations a better, humane and equitable world based on what we agree are the inseparable pillars of sustainable development - economic development, social development and environmental protection.

Delegates from around the world enshrined the decisions they took in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, to ensure that the billions of people who have placed their fate on our collective shoulders have a concrete programme of action to realise the goals contained in Agenda 21 and other documents adopted by the world community of nations during the last ten years.

The Johannesburg Summit confronted the stark reality that billions of people across the globe are poor, and, boldly confirmed the need for us to collaborate for a shared human prosperity through sustainable development. We agree that this goal can be achieved because we are inspired by the knowledge that the resources needed exist within the global community.

Indeed, Member States have already committed themselves to make available the means necessary for the implementation of our plans, especially finance, technology and capacity building. It is critically important that we implement everything we agreed, acting with the necessary sense of urgency.

Again, this we will do together, under the leadership of the United Nations while we continue to strengthen the multilateral system of global governance, as the only viable international response to all our challenges.

Fundamentally, this is the only credible response to the challenge of globalisation and the need to enhance human solidarity to meet our common needs.

Mr. President,

It has been our privilege to chair the Non-Aligned Movement for the past four years. During this time, NAM has ensured constant dialogue between the countries of the North and South, which has advanced the commonality of interest between States, confirming the view that the future of all humanity is interlinked. We are pleased that the views of the Movement have helped to inform the advance towards a better life for all to which we have all committed ourselves by word and deed.

In February next year, Malaysia will assume the responsibility of guiding our Movement as it responds to the changed and changing global environment. I am certain that this will add new strength to the Non-Aligned Movement in the interests of all humanity, especially the poor of the world.

As before, the Non-Aligned Movement is committed to the peaceful resolution of all conflicts, including those pertaining to Palestine and Israel, as well as Iraq, in keeping with the resolutions of this United Nations Organisations. These are urgent tasks to which this Organisation must respond.

In conclusion, we will recall that two years ago in the Millennium Declaration more than 150 Heads of State and Government resolved that 'we believe that the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalisation becomes a positive force for all the world's people'.

Through both our global and regional programmes we can and must ensure that globalisation indeed becomes a valuable process, which will bring about sustainable development and prosperity for all.

From this 57th Session of the General Assembly must issue the unequivocal message that the peoples of the world are united in their resolve to sustain the message of hope by advancing the goals of peace, democracy, prosperity and sustainable development.

I thank you.