



IRELAND

STATEMENT

by

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Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ireland

to the 59th Session

of the United Nations General Assembly

New York, 23 September 2004

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**Address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ireland, Mr. Brian Cowen,
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Mr. President,

I first addressed this General Assembly in the year 2000. The Millennium year was a time of great hope, reflected in the outcome of Millennium Summit. World leaders committed the peoples of the planet to a new beginning in which the dawn of the twenty-first century would mark a break from the past, with a new sharing of burdens, and a new common dedication to peace and human progress.

Today, the light of that new dawn is obscured by the dark clouds of war, terror, ethnic violence and continuing abuse of human rights.

Twelve months ago, and again this week, the Secretary-General pointed out that this Organisation is at a fork in the road and that we have to decide on the way forward. Much work has been undertaken since the Secretary-General laid down that challenge. The Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change is working on its report and I am pleased to recall the European Union made a detailed submission to the Panel, drawn up during Ireland's recent Presidency of the Union. We also took a decision to mainstream the issue of effective multilateralism in the Union's discussions with other regional groups.

We await the Panel's report and the Secretary-General's recommendations which will follow. In his address on Tuesday, the Secretary-General expressed

the hope that when Heads of State and Government meet next

achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In sub-Saharan Africa, especially, many countries are caught in a poverty trap and face the crippling challenges of unsustainable debt and HIV/AIDS, often compounded by instability.

Ireland fully recognises the seriousness of the shortfall in development funding that faces us, estimated at \$50 billion. The best means of bridging this gap is for donor nations to recommit themselves to reaching the United Nations target for Official Development Assistance of 0.7 percent of GNP. The Irish Government remains committed to this goal. Ireland, which has increased its ODA very substantially in recent years, will continue working actively with its developing country partners to build a strong global partnership for development.

Economic and social development is the means by which the world's poorer countries can be lifted out of poverty. An open international trading regime aimed at facilitating investment is an integral part of our multilateral system, and fair market access is an essential part of this. Some developing countries estimate that, in a best-case scenario, a successful outcome to the Doha Round could help raise up to 500 million people out of extreme poverty. Fairer international trading arrangements are imperative if we are to address the problems of under-development.

Ireland and its European Union partners are determined not to be found wanting in the task of bringing the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations, finally, to a conclusion with an agreement that meets the essential concerns of all sides.

Mr. President,

Over the past year we have once again seen that failure of state institutions is a major source of conflict and human misery. The responsibility for protecting people from conflict and the effects of conflict, and from humanitarian catastrophe, lies primarily with the governments concerned. However, it has

been well demonstrated that events within a particular country can threaten international peace and security, and spread misery far beyond its borders.

Where governments are unable or unwilling to take the necessary steps to prevent catastrophe in their own country, I believe that the international community has the responsibility to protect in those circumstances.

It is increasingly evident that instability very frequently arises from situations where human rights are abused or denied. The abuse of human rights is also at the root of poverty and underdevelopment. Respect for human rights, on the other hand, is an essential element of good governance, and must be at the centre of efforts to prevent conflict, and of post-conflict reconstruction. Presently, 40% of conflicts which appear to have been resolved break out again within five years. We simply must do better in identifying emerging problems sooner. We also need to put in place policies and structures that are effective within a new, enforceable legal framework.

I hope, therefore, that the High Level Panel will address the serious questions involved in international intervention, and put forward recommendations that will act as a basis for consensus. We trust that they will also give full and careful consideration to the policies and structures that we need in order to carry out our responsibilities towards states and societies at risk of instability. Any such structures must facilitate a sustained engagement with these states, to ensure that they receive whatever assistance is needed - political, humanitarian and economic - to avert instability or a return to conflict. In addressing these problems, on the basis of the report of the High Level Panel, let us not sacrifice substance on the altar of process.

Ireland welcomes the increasing role of regional and sub-regional organisations in crisis management, under the overall authority of the Security Council. The European Union is engaged in developing its role in conflict prevention and crisis

management, while fully recognizing the central role and authority of the United Nations. I am pleased to state that, during Ireland's recent EU Presidency, important progress was achieved in implementing the Joint EU-UN Declaration on Cooperation in Crisis Management. It was agreed in June, during our Presidency, that the EU will make a rapid response capability available to the UN. This will take effect on an initial basis in 2005, with the full complement of 1,500 troops being ready and available by 2007.

The efforts of the African Union and ECOWAS in crisis management have been par f ion

targeted innocent children and the consequent trauma caused to children worldwide who saw the torn bodies of the children of Beslan on their television screens, make them all the more heinous. They reinforce, if reinforcement were needed, the absolute duty of member states of the United Nations to cooperate effectively in identifying and bringing to justice those who plan, direct, finance, facilitate and carry out terrorist acts.

Terrorist acts are always reprehensible, and those who carry them out bear full responsibility for them. This is true, irrespective of any underlying factors that might exist, such as national or civil conflict or oppressive economic or social conditions.

our systems of justice are not compromised and that our struggle is conducted in full respect for international law and human rights norms. If we fail to do this, any success we achieve over terrorists will be at the expense of the way of life we seek to protect.

Mr. President,

The people of Israel and Palestine continue to suffer from violence that is as futile as it is tragic.

The root of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a struggle over land. The land must be shared by agreement, arrived at through negotiation between the parties to the conflict. The continuing unilateral expansion of settlements and the construction and maintenance of the separation barrier on the West Bank will make the conflict more difficult to resolve. The entire international community – particularly Israel's friends – need to send this clear and unambiguous message to the Israeli leadership

Ireland, in common with its EU partners, continues to believe that the only way to reach a comprehensive settlement of the conflict is through the Quartet Roadmap. In the Tullamore Declaration, issued during Ireland's recent Presidency of the European Union, EU Ministers welcomed the expressed intention of Prime Minister Sharon to withdraw from Gaza, and acknowledged the impetus that such a withdrawal could give to the peace process, as long as it met certain conditions, including that it take place in the context of the implementation of the Roadmap.

I urge Israel and the Palestinian Authority, therefore, to cooperate closely with the Quartet, to ensure that the withdrawal from Gaza is accompanied by the full and effective assumption by the Palestinian Authority of its responsibilities in the territory, and that a momentum towards the full implementation of the Roadmap is developed.

Mr. President,

The passage of Security Council Resolution 1546, and the subsequent establishment of the interim Iraqi Government represented a crucial coming together by the international community on the importance of reconstruction in Iraq. It is vital that this Government should be able to move ahead and establish a full democratic mandate.. However, the security situation in Iraq remains a matter of grave concern to us all, and the challenges facing the new Government are great. An end to the lethal violence which is disrupting the normal development of the country is essential.

Ireland has always seen the role of the United Nations as central to the issue of reconstructing Iraq. We therefore welcome the forthcoming return of the United Nations mission. Ireland and its EU partners will seek to ensure that this mission is provided with the necessary security to allow it to carry out its functions.

commitments from all parties to fully participate in the institutions of the Agreement.

These were the issues that were addressed in three days of intensive talks which were convened by both Governments in Leeds Castle in England last week. Substantial progress was made in the talks regarding the issues of paramilitarism and arms decommissioning. As Prime Minister Blair said after the talks, the "contours of the paramilitary question" are now in sight of being resolved, to be accompanied by subsequent demilitarisation, as agreed in the Joint Declaration by the British and Irish Governments last October. In addition, significant progress was made in regard to the policing issue and the devolution of those powers to devolved institutions in Northern Ireland.

Regrettably, it was not possible to achieve agreement among the parties on the question of the operation of the political institutions of the Agreement. Talks are continuing in Belfast this week to see if the gaps between the parties on this issue can be resolved. The gaps are narrow and can and must be overcome at the earliest possible date. In this regard, it was noteworthy that the leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, Dr Ian Paisley, made the point immediately after the talks that 'a golden opportunity has been available to realise a stable and entirely peaceful future.' For our part, the Irish Government is open to considering changes which would improve the workings of the institutions, while maintaining compliance with the fundamentals of the Agreement, and we have brought forward proposals in this regard. But, I reiterate, as the Taoiseach emphasised last week-end, such changes must not disturb the fundamental balance of the Good Friday Agreement, in particular its key power-sharing provisions.

The resolution of these institutional questions would allow both Governments to bring forward a comprehensive package providing a template for political stability in Northern Ireland. It would be a tragedy if the failure to bridge the remaining gaps on this institutional matter frustrated the goal of definitively removing the

issue of arms from politics in Northern Ireland. The people, rightly, would not understand why this long awaited prize was denied because of a reluctance to fully embrace the structures of partnership and power-sharing.

If, on the other hand, these institutional issues can be resolved and a comprehensive agreement then brought forward, we can finally liberate partnership politics in Northern Ireland and allow its committed and talented politicians - from all sides of the community - to collectively get on with the job of providing better governance, a prospering economy and a fair society for all of the people.

Mr. President