



ESTONIA

**ADDRESS BY
H.E. MR. TOOMAS HENDRIK ILVES
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
TO THE 64TH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

United Nations Headquarters
New York, 25 September 2009

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Mister President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the last year, similarly to many of you, I have spoken about the effect of the current **global financial crisis** on our people and an effective national or international response to it. Although the crisis is closely related to issues such as peace and security, human rights, development and many other matters of common concern, we cannot let it cast a shadow over all global challenges that we currently face.

Today, a year after the collapse of the financial markets, cyclical indicators point to economic stabilization. The crisis is not over, however, and the need to restore confidence and repair the financial system remains. Moreover, each of us should make an effort to refrain from raising new barriers to avoid laying the foundations for new global imbalances in the longer run.

In combating **climate change**, we have finally understood the magnitude of our task and I would like to thank the Secretary General for hosting the Climate Change Summit a few days ago. We are not running a 100-meter sprint, but rather a marathon, where one must maintain speed. And in case we manage to stay on track, we all will be winners in the end. But time is running out. Melting glaciers, frequent and abnormally large hurricanes, floods, and heat waves - this is not the planet Earth we want to leave to our children.

Global and united efforts are needed to reach a comprehensive and ambitious post-2012 climate agreement in Copenhagen this December. I call upon all countries to set binding goals to share the burden. Responsibility must be proportional to the harm that is caused. I am convinced that applying the "polluter pays" principle would motivate the biggest polluters to multiply their efforts, thereby having the greatest effect.

Green energy production, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and diversification of energy sources – all these contribute not only to sustainable environmental and economic development,

but also to our security, as we will become less dependent on exhaustible fossil fuels.

As an essential part of cutting greenhouse gas emissions, we foresee a wider use of renewable energy in Estonia, particularly biomass and wind energy. By the end of the year, an Estonian Energy and Climate Agency will be established to help consumers cut energy expenditures and support building energy efficient homes. This is only one example of how an ambitious climate policy can trigger new growth in the economy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To uphold the core of the Charter, we must remain committed to providing the United Nations with sufficient resources to fulfil its unique role in contributing to **international security**. Compliance with the basic principles enshrined in the UN Charter, including the obligation of all Members to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, needs to remain the fundamental basis of the United Nations agenda. The UN should remain engaged in areas of tension where it can make a contribution.

My delegation takes this opportunity to reiterate its firm support for the security and stability of **Georgia**, based on full respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

I follow with deep concern the situation in **Afghanistan**. It is essential that the election process delivers results that are legitimate in the eyes of Afghans. The future of Afghanistan lies in the hands of Afghani people; we, the international community, can only help. By consolidating the efforts of the new government and the international community, lasting progress can and should be achieved. Estonia is one of the countries that have steadily increased military and civilian contribution to Afghanistan.

I am convinced that the UN's bolstered role and greater visibility throughout the country carries a positive impact on the coordination of development activities that in turn will attract more NGOs and other international organizations to the area.

Besides conflicts between and inside states, new and asymmetrical cross-border threats have also emerged – the threat from the Net, for example. **Cyber threats** cannot be underestimated as they

not only endanger vital IT-systems but whole communities. Concurrently with the rapid development of computer technology we are witnessing alarming signs of more sinister developments: cyber attacks are growing more complex and their use is increasing in frequency. Consequently, it requires major cooperative efforts of both governmental and private sectors to develop more effective response capabilities.

This growing global concern demands both a better coordinated international approach and enhanced legal domestic framework, including taking steps to criminalise malevolent cyber acts. Our long-term aim should be the creation of a universal cyber culture - a universally accessible, secure and safe environment for all.

Mr President,

Regarding **humanitarian affairs**, our task is equally challenging. Global ecological instability, political and military conflicts, combined with economic instability and population growth are expected to increase humanitarian needs considerably and require our efforts to be multiplied in the future. We must stand ready to provide a more predictable, equitable and consistently effective response to humanitarian crises. The growing needs require an increase in the amount of assistance, its coordination, and in the range of donors.

True, we all have economic concerns at the moment, but it is vital to keep our commitments to providing humanitarian relief. Today's short-sighted financial decisions or fading political will may in the end become much more expensive and entail severe long-term consequences.

I would like to commend the excellent work done by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Member States in making the coordination among humanitarian workers more efficient and implementing the cluster system. The launch of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) three years ago has also proven a justified effort in providing more rapid and equitable response allocations to disaster-affected areas. As Estonia, together with Ireland, currently co-chairs the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative, we urge all donors to apply the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship to make humanitarian aid more needs-based and its financing more flexible.

As a sign of the priority we give to global humanitarian issues, Estonia this year holds the vice-

presidency of **ECOSOC** and has been leading humanitarian discussions in this body. I am concerned that in many humanitarian situations, especially in conflict situations, adherence to humanitarian principles has become selective, hindering safe and timely access to the victims. I fully concur with Under-Secretary-General John Holmes that this is not an ideological luxury but a practical necessity to help ensure timely access as well as the safety and security of the humanitarian staff.

Mr. President,

It goes without saying that expectations are higher during trying times and therefore the United Nations' actions in carrying out its objectives have increasingly come under scrutiny.

Yet, how to live up to these high expectations when the UN is struggling to reform itself? Over the past years, member states have undertaken considerable efforts to improve the UN system, while one important element, **Security Council reform**, still remains pending. While recognizing that the reform process is complex, we must also realize that there will be severe consequences if the process remains incomplete.

Regarding another reform area, **gender reform**, considerable progress that is also relevant to achieving Millennium Development Goals has been made recently. No security, development or human rights-related goal can be achieved without the full participation of women. Estonia has been a dedicated supporter of the United Nations' funds and programs that foster gender equality. It is our common obligation to ensure that the reform becomes a reality without delay.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Facing the first financial crisis of the 21st century, and the accelerating global warming process, we see the necessity for a united response continuously growing. This is why we—the leaders of all nations—once again have gathered here this week: to remind ourselves to keep our eyes on the horizon of peace and prosperity, and to make sure that we are in the same boat.

Thank you