



Address by
the Rt. Hon. Madhav Kumar Nepal
Prime Minister of Nepal

to the
General Debate of the 64th Session
of the United Nations General Assembly

New York
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Mr. President
Mr. Secretary-General
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates,

1. I would like to begin by extending my warm congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your election as President of the current Session of the Assembly. As one of the incumbent Vice Presidents, I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in the discharge of your responsibilities. I also take this opportunity to place on record our appreciation for His Excellency Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, the outgoing President, for his exemplary leadership during the 63rd Session.
2. I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization. We appreciate him for the efficient stewardship of the Organization on various issues of critical global significance and on reform of the United Nations. He also deserves our appreciation for supporting the nationally-driven peace process of Nepal.

Mr. President,

3. I bring with me greetings and good wishes from the people and government of Nepal, a country which expresses unswerving commitment to the ideals of the United Nations. We look to the United Nations as a true advocate and upholder of the universal values of peace, justice, equality, freedom and human dignity. As has been so aptly recognized in the Millennium Declaration, the United Nations is indeed

'the indispensable common house of the entire human family'. A more efficient and stronger United Nations is obviously in the common interest of all of us.

4. Sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference, and peaceful settlement of international disputes have become the bedrock of inter-state relations. These principles enshrined in the UN Charter more than six decades ago, represent the highest ideals of contemporary international relations. They have stood the test of time, and have proved to be timeless and universal. They provide the basis for a smooth and harmonious conduct of international relations among States which are sovereign, independent and interconnected. As we march ahead towards increasing interdependence through globalization, these well-established principles and norms of interstate relations assume even greater relevance for us.

5. History stands testimony to the fact that human civilization has no linear progression. We live in changing times. Today, the nature, speed and scope of such changes are astounding. New opportunities and unforeseen challenges always await us along our way to peace, progress and prosperity. We often find ourselves at the crossroads of stability and peace on the one hand and conflict and domination on the other. It is only with our principled stand and determination that we have moved towards peace and development throughout history. Whenever we have digressed from these principles, perils and catastrophes have visited us. International solidarity and a true spirit of global partnership are therefore indispensable. And multilateralism offers the best means and opportunity to address global problems of our times.

Mr. President,

6. Nepal is currently in the midst of a great political transition. With the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord in November 2006, the decade-long armed conflict has ended and a nationally-driven peace process is now in progress. The Constituent Assembly consisting of 601 members elected through a mixed-proportional system of election has been engaged in writing a new, democratic, republican constitution. It has been one of the most inclusive and representative elected bodies in the history of Nepal. Almost one-third of the CA members are women, and it has a fair number of members representing the various ethnic minorities in the country. Thematic committees on various aspects of the new constitution have been preparing their respective reports following the process of broad consultations with the Nepali people. We are determined to take the peace process to a positive conclusion as envisaged in the Comprehensive Peace Accord by building consensus among the political parties through dialogue and consultations.

7. We are a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious country. As our people have opted for a federal democratic republic, we are now engaged in restructuring the State by organising it into federal units as desired by the people. Democracy we believe is more meaningful when it is closer to the people. We hope that reconfiguring the State into federal units is one such significant step towards deepening the roots of democracy in our country.

Mr. President,

8. My Government has four major tasks at hand: taking the peace-process to its positive conclusion, writing a new democratic constitution through the Constituent Assembly within the stipulated time-frame, gearing up the country's economic development for the upliftment from poverty and meeting and managing the rising expectations of our people in the new democratic environment. We have been doing our best to accomplish these tasks through dialogue, consultations and consensus among the major political parties in the country.

9. Looking at the overall progress we have made over the last three years, there is reason to be forward looking and optimistic about Nepal's peace process. We have come a long way in terms of our transition from conflict. Like in every post- conflict situation, there are ups and downs and obstacles in the way. Managing the legacy of the violent past with justice and reconciliation and mainstreaming all the forces into a democratic order are major challenges before us. Avoiding relapse into conflict and fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of the people have constantly prodded us to make progress with dialogue, consensus and unity of purpose. Therefore, we know that we have to go even a longer way. And we are determined to reach our destination that is a peaceful, prosperous and stable Nepal. In achieving that, we know that we must be alert to the aspirations of our people for both freedom and development. Freedom rings hollow when there is no development. Development loses its soul if it is not accompanied by freedom. These are

the twin goals for us and my Government is committed to pursuing these goals with clear vision and commitment. I am confident that we shall receive continuous support and cooperation from the international community. Needless to say, the failure to address the rising expectations of the people and provide peace dividends to the conflict affected grassroots people may lead to unintended consequences challenging both the peace and democratization process of Nepal and elsewhere. Therefore, for the positive conclusion of the peace process and institutionalization of our hard-won democracy, I request for special support from the development partners in addressing our post conflict development challenges.

10. We are fully committed to the protection and promotion of human rights. Since the end of the decade-long armed conflict and beginning of the peace process in 2006, the human rights situation in the country has improved significantly. The Government is determined to establish a truth and reconciliation commission and a disappearance commission as a part of ensuring transitional justice and restoring social harmony and peace. We already have the National Human Rights Commission as a constitutional body with full autonomy in its area of work.

Mr. President,

11. We appreciate the continued support of the United Nations to the ongoing peace process of Nepal through UNMIN. We are determined to take the peace process to a positive conclusion as early as possible.

12. As we are ourselves now passing through a post-conflict situation, we understand the importance of peace-building in post-conflict societies. Nepal is pleased to contribute to the work of the Peace-building Commission (PBC) as a new member of its Organizational Committee starting this year. We understand that a review of the activities of the Peace-building Commission is slated for 2010. This would provide an opportunity to assess the activities of the Commission and explore ways to make peace-building a more effective and innovative mechanism as well.

13. Whether it is the issue of peace, conflict, terrorism, climate change, financial crisis, food security, development challenges and other vulnerabilities, we are so much interconnected with each other that no country can escape from their impacts. Global village has become a palpable reality before us. As such, global problems require global solutions. It is in this context that I appreciate the selection of the theme "effective responses to global crises: strengthening multilateralism and dialogue among civilizations for international peace, security and development" for this year's general debate.

14. The economic and financial crisis that swept the world within a relatively short span of time is a most recent reminder of the vulnerability inherent in the process of globalization and its global implications. If we look around we will see that climate change is another issue staring at us. Regional conflicts are yet other global issues of concern to all of us.

15. The least developed countries and landlocked developing countries are the most vulnerable ones among others in all

these aspects. Their special needs call for more specific and enhanced level of international support in terms of their concerns and challenges. At the same time, the outcome of the UN Conference on the Financial and Economic Crisis held here in New York in June this year should be implemented in all seriousness. We also stress on the early implementation of the outcome of the international conference on Financing for Development held in Doha last year.

16. While the world financial and economic crisis wreaked havoc on the already fragile economic health of the least developed countries, this unanticipated shock has also brought into sharper relief the urgent need for enhanced level of understanding, resources and policy space for the developing countries to mitigate their impact and avoid their recurrence.

Mr. President,

17. The global crises have posed a serious challenge to the fight against poverty in the LDCs. The MDGs can still be achieved if all of us in the international community act together and act constructively. The proposed review of the implementation of the progress of the MDGs should provide us a renewed opportunity to reinvigorate our development agenda. We urge the developed countries not to let the economic and financial crisis become an excuse for curtailing their aid commitments regarding MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals.

18. Indeed, as recognized at the G-20 Summit in London earlier, this year and as so consistently emphasized by our Secretary General, the people of developing countries and especially the LDCs, need their own international financial rescue package to ensure we do not backtrack on programme towards the MDGs.

Mr. President,

19. Nepal is a country with young mountains and fragile ecosystem. Global warming, one of the most ruthless signs of climate change, has led to unprecedented melting of the Himalayan snow. Nepal experienced an annual increase of 0.06 degree Celsius temperature between 1977 and 2000. With this the threat of glacial lake outbursts has increased. Flash floods have become more frequent and more destructive. Delayed and insufficient rainfall has affected crop production. It is the poorest of the poor farmers who have been the worst sufferers of all this. Agriculture, health, livelihood and infrastructure are all being affected by it.

20. Nepal hosted a high level regional conference on climate change with focus on the Himalayan region recently in order to highlight the seriousness of the problem of global warming and its impacts on the Himalayan range. The conference has come out with a 10-point understanding which lays emphasis, among others, on the need for translating the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and historical responsibility of the developed countries as envisaged in the UNFCCC into operational practice, as well as financing mechanism on adaptation and

technologies to sufficiently meet the urgent and immediate financial needs of the region in a predictable, easy and direct manner.

Concrete actions that match the level of threat are needed. The other day we have had a fruitful discussion at the Summit on Climate Change convened by the Secretary General. While I appreciate the Secretary General for this important initiative, I urge all to keep up with that spirit of positive thinking and work together to converge all our efforts to find a just and effective solution to this ever enlarging problem of climate change.

21. The Copenhagen Conference should be able to "seal the deal" and work out a new global compact to address the problem of climate change beyond 2012 in keeping with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities with special considerations given to the characteristic vulnerabilities and weaknesses of the least developed and other developing countries.

Mr. President,

22. LDCs have particular vulnerabilities associated with their structural constraints, systemic deficiencies and historic socio-economic factors. The bottom half of a billion people face a daunting task of uplifting their lives despite persistent efforts and commitment. Their plight is further exacerbated by the global problems which affect them more

disproportionately than others. It is because they do not have cushions or alternatives. Therefore, their plight deserves special consideration by the international community.

23. As we prepare for the fourth conference of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), we need to give a serious look to the implementation status of the Brussels Program of Action for the decade 2001-2010, and endeavor to tackle all existing obstacles in our way through a committed and collaborative partnership. We would also emphasize on the need for full implementation of the Almaty Program of Action for the Landlocked Developing Countries.

Mr. President,

24. Continued lack of progress in the global disarmament agenda, including on nuclear disarmament, is a worrying situation. We hope that the proposed review of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 2010 will provide the necessary momentum for a substantial way forward in nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament in a coordinated manner. We also view with equal seriousness the growing menace of the proliferation of small arms which threaten peace, order and human security.

25. Disarmament being a comprehensive issue, we are of the view that promotion of regional discourse on disarmament would be helpful in building confidence and preparing the necessary groundwork so as to arrive at the eventual goal

of general and complete disarmament. In this context, we see an important role for the United Nations Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament (RCPD) which has become functional from Kathmandu since last year. We urge Member States to be generous in extending financial support to the Center in conducting its programs and activities.

26. In spite of sustained and concerted efforts on the part of the international community, terrorism continues to pose a serious threat to international peace and security. Nepal strongly condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and calls for early conclusion of a comprehensive convention against terrorism. We reiterate our commitment to combat international terrorism, including through the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted on 8 September 2006 and the various Security Council resolutions such as Resolutions 1373 and 1540.

27. At more than sixty, there is no denying that the United Nations needs institutional reform and reinvigoration to maintain its continuing relevance and effectiveness. In this context, we hope that the intergovernmental negotiation started by the General Assembly would lead to a significant reform of the UN system including the Security Council by adding new members in a fair and equitable manner so as to reflect the current realities of the contemporary world.

28. In an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, the issue of migrant workers has become prominent. Remittance has been one of the major sources of earning foreign currency

for almost all the least developed and other developing countries. We therefore urge the international community to take a comprehensive approach and policy towards migration, including on the protection of the rights of migrant workers in the face of current economic crisis.

29. We are concerned over the continued deadlock in the Doha Development Agenda of the WTO negotiations and the new waves of protectionism that is built in inward-looking stimulus packages that are being adopted to face the global financial and economic crisis. Given the exceptional vulnerabilities of the LDCs and LLDCs, developed countries should immediately make available to them duty free entry to their products, debt relief packages and other capacity building measures in accordance with agreed international compacts and commitments including in the Monterrey Consensus in 2002. These resources are very important to fight against poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease in all the LDCs, particularly the conflict affected ones that are encountering huge development challenges during their post-conflict recovery phase.

Mr. President,

30. While peacekeeping remains one of the core activities of the United Nations, its multidimensional nature has posed new managerial and logistical challenges in recent years. Peacekeeping evolved out of necessity and it has to be adapted to match the new and emerging challenges and complexities inherent in today's increasingly complex peacekeeping missions. In this context, we appreciate the

non-paper entitled "New Horizons" produced by the Secretariat to engage and ensure broader support of member states and the troop contributing countries.

31. Let me recall here that Nepal has been one of the longest continuing partners in the UN peacekeeping missions. Today, we are the fifth largest troop contributing country. Our commitment to international peace remains as strong as ever, and our support to the United Nations in its peacekeeping activities will continue unabated.

32. In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Nepal's abiding faith in the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. We stress on the need for introducing timely reforms in the UN and its operational mechanisms in order to enhance its role and relevance in the emerging new global order for the 21st century. Nepal is always willing to contribute in whatever ways it can in the attainment of the noble objectives of international peace, security, development and prosperity for all.

Thank you.