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Statement

by

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of the Republic of Austria**

at

**the 65th Session of the
United Nations General Assembly**

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Mr. President, distinguished delegates,

The tragic earthquake in Haiti, the devastating floods in Pakistan and the financial crisis reminded us that the global challenges of the 21st century require concerted action. The United Nations needs to be at the center of our activities. It is the forum in today's multilateral system that enjoys the highest degree of legitimacy. Inclusiveness is its key comparative advantage. However, this moral authority must be matched by mechanisms and resources to ensure its effectiveness.

Adherence to the rule of law is fundamental. All multilateral efforts and activities need to operate on the basis of clear and predictable rules which equally apply to all Member States. Member States, but also men and women around the globe, must be able to trust in the United Nations' capacity to turn the promises of the Charter into reality.

Cooperation with other international actors is indispensable for the UN's efforts to deal with the complex challenges of today. Austria and the European Union stand ready as reliable partners for the United Nations, in areas ranging from development cooperation and humanitarian aid to the maintenance of international peace and security and to promoting the respect for the rule of law and human rights. In this context, we do hope that our initiative to obtain modalities for the EU's participation in the General Assembly reflecting the changes provided for in the Lisbon Treaty will soon be adopted. This would greatly help to reinforce the productive partnership of the UN with an organisation that is fully committed to the principles and objectives enshrined in the Charter.

Austria is proud to contribute to the work of the United Nations through hosting the UN headquarters in Vienna. We will continue to offer Vienna as a platform for dialogue and cooperation.

In our view, good governance is an inherent element of global governance. The Vienna-based UN Office on Drugs and Crime is central in the UN's efforts to combat corruption and organized crime by supporting Member States in implementing international standards, including the UN Convention against Corruption. Corruption presents one of the major challenges with dire consequences for the international community's efforts to reduce poverty. The recent foundation of the International Anti-Corruption Academy in Austria is an important step to address this challenge. This institution aims to provide a tool for research, education and training for professionals from all fields, including law enforcement officials, judges and prosecutors.

The fight against climate change is one of the central issues of the 21st century. Climate change has a far-reaching impact on the economic and social development of the entire international community. We need global consensus now if we want to achieve the goal to limit global warming to 2°C and to reverse the trend of rising greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. Nobody should underestimate the difficulty of this task. However, the fight against climate change is also an opportunity. We have the chance to create a framework for sustainable, qualitative growth at global level. Austria is committed to contribute to this endeavour.

This week, leaders agreed upon concrete actions to get the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) back on track in the fight against world poverty. We now need to mobilize all our efforts to live up to this renewed commitment, particularly in addressing the special needs of Africa in this regard. Governments of developing and developed countries, as well as the private sector and civil society need to work together to achieve our ambitious goals by 2015.

Mr. President,

Let me now turn to one of the most urging threats to peace and security. During these days our attention is focused on the recently initiated direct talks between Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas. We welcome the leadership and commitment of President Obama, who made this development possible. These talks offer the first concrete prospects for a sustainable peace in the Middle East in many years. An agreement between Israel and Palestine would not only radically improve the lives of the peoples concerned, it would also provide the key to a more stable region and a more peaceful world. We hope that both sides are aware of their enormous responsibilities.

The process is still fragile. We believe that the extension of the settlement moratorium is fundamental for keeping the talks on track and creating an environment in which the core issues can be tackled successfully. It is equally important that the efforts of the Palestinian authorities to build up functioning institutions for a future Palestinian state will move forward dynamically.

It is ultimately up to the parties to bring the peace process to a positive conclusion. However international actors, in particular the members of the Quartet have an important role to play. As a member of the European Union, Austria is ready to fully play its part.

In order to ensure that the UN continues to play a central role in global governance, we must continue with our efforts towards internal reform of the UN, including a reform of the Security Council. Both, an enlargement of the Security Council that reflects today's political, economic and social realities and a reform of the Council's working methods will enhance the Council's legitimacy and the acceptance of its decisions.

As an elected member of the Security Council we participate in its work with great commitment and are doing our best to promote effectiveness and transparency.

Significant efforts are underway to ensure and sustain UN peacekeeping as an essential tool for achieving the goals of the United Nations. Confronted with limited financial and human resources and the increasing complexity of peacekeeping operations, the UN has started a review of the whole UN peacekeeping system with a view to adjusting it to the needs of the 21st century. It is of vital importance for the Council to effectively monitor and oversee the implementation of peacekeeping mandates in close cooperation with troop- and police-contributors, the Secretariat and UN missions. Austria fully supports the ongoing peacekeeping reform and stands ready to play its part in a renewed global peacekeeping partnership.

We also have to work on making peace consolidation irreversible. The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission together with Integrated Peacebuilding Support Offices have a key role in fostering sustainable peace. By optimally using the peacebuilding architecture lasting peace can be achieved with determination and political will of the country concerned as well as the support of the international community. Since peacekeeping and peacebuilding must be approached in an integrated manner, we strongly support an enhanced interaction of the Security Council with the Peacebuilding Commission throughout the conflict cycle, as was affirmed also by the Security Council Summit this week.

Due to the changing nature of conflict and an increase in the activities of non-state actors, the protection of civilians in armed conflict constitutes a core task of a large number of UN peacekeeping missions. The effective protection of those affected by hostilities and violence has become a yardstick for the success and credibility of UN missions in the field and the UN at large. Security Council resolution 1894, unanimously adopted in November last year, was a major step forward in the Council's efforts to better protect civilians from physical violence, displacement and violations of their rights.

However, resolution 1894 has not yet had its full impact on the ground. Violations of international humanitarian and human rights law and impunity for such crimes continue to pose a major threat to the rule of law and lasting peace in post-conflict situations. Austria acknowledges the primary responsibility of States to ensure the protection of civilians, including credible prosecution of those responsible for war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity or other serious violations of international law. We support the use and promotion of mechanisms such as the International Criminal Court, commissions of inquiries or panels of experts. These tools should be seen as a viable complement and reinforcement of steps taken at the national level to ensure accountability. The Security Council has a central role in this endeavour. Ensuring the implementation of Resolution 1894 will be one of the key priorities of Austria during the remainder of its term on the Council.

Equally, Austria attaches utmost importance to enhancing the role of women in conflict and post-conflict situations. Even 10 years after the adoption of Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security, we can still witness major gaps: Women continue to be largely absent in peace processes and conflict resolution efforts, and crimes against them all too often remain unpunished. The latest shocking mass rapes in Eastern Congo demonstrate more than ever that there is urgent need for action. We cannot afford to ignore these gaps. The occasion of the 10th anniversary of resolution 1325, will, therefore, provide a crucial opportunity to work towards a more consistent implementation in promoting women's issues in all aspects of international peace efforts. These efforts are fully supported by our development cooperation.

Austria warmly welcomes the milestone decision of the General Assembly to establish "UN Women", which will make the UN a stronger and more effective partner in the advancement of women worldwide. We are looking forward to working with Michele Bachelet towards our common goals.

Children in armed conflict deserve special protection. I am very satisfied that the UN system made concrete progress in combating serious child rights violations and in fighting the recruitment and enlisting of child soldiers.

Austria reiterates the pivotal role of the United Nations at the centre of our counter-terrorism efforts. Respect for human rights and the rule of law is a fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism. As chair of the Al-Qaida/Taliban sanctions committee, Austria is committed to enhancing due process in the Council's sanctions regimes. We therefore welcome the substantial improvements of the listing and delisting procedures, and the recent appointment of Ms. Kimberly Prost as Ombudsperson.

The Austrian candidature for the Human Rights Council for the period 2011-2014 is a logical continuation of our long term work and engagement for the respect for human rights, including in the Security Council. Dialogue and partnerships are crucial for turning the promises of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into a reality for all people around the globe. Austria has consistently worked with all actors towards narrowing the gap between standards and their implementation at a national and international level.

Finally Mr President, and to end on a positive note: This past year saw the first positive developments towards nuclear disarmament in a decade. Security Council Resolution 1887 adopted just a year ago provided a powerful impetus. Although many issues are still unresolved and require our close attention, the Review Conference in May produced an outcome that restored confidence in the NPT.

For the first time, a comprehensive Action Plan dealing with all three NPT-pillars was agreed; - and let me stress here that Austria is honored to have contributed to that success.

For the first time, a "world without nuclear weapons" was accepted as the goal of all parties, who pledged to ultimately eliminate all types of nuclear weapons.

For the first time, the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of such weapons were recognized – an important step towards the eventual legal ban of nuclear weapons by means of a nuclear weapons convention or framework of legal instruments.

Although the results of the Conference are positive much remains to be done: The Action Plan needs to be implemented. The Nuclear Weapon States – who promised to engage among themselves on a number of vital issues and report by 2014 - must lead by example.

The international disarmament structures must be reformed. I am grateful for Secretary General Ban`s initiative in this respect.

Finally we must learn from successful disarmament initiatives. Let me underline that Austria is delighted that the Convention on Cluster Munitions entered into force last month. This Convention is a positive example how committed Governments, International Organizations and civil society can work together to achieve real progress.

In order to promote interaction in this respect also in the nuclear field, Austria supports the establishment of a Competence Center for Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation in Vienna early next year. Conceived as a platform for open

discussion and independent expertise, monitoring and advocacy, this Center shall facilitate understanding and cooperation among all entities involved. I hope it will contribute to further progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen,

We, the United Nations, have shared responsibility to move forward jointly in order to reach our common goal of international peace, security and development for all.