

Statement by President of the Republic of Finland Tarja Halonen
at the 65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York
on 24 September 2010

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your election. I assure you Finland's full support for your leadership.

Climate issues and the recent financial, economic and food crises call for a change. The world needs an understanding of global development which is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

Both developing and developed countries wish for economic growth. But growth needs to be green, equitable and inclusive. It must create jobs, promote opportunities for decent work and a better life for everyone.

Basic social protection is everyone's right and an important element of sustainable development. But the most vulnerable need our special attention. We need to do much more to combat discrimination and exclusion.

The current consumption and production patterns need to be revised in many countries.

Mr. President,

In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, there is enough in the world for everyone's need, but there cannot be enough for everybody's greed.

Our stocktaking of the Millennium Development Goals showed that there has been progress but that it still has been uneven. We agreed to redouble our efforts. The MDGs must become part of our everyday work and we all need to deliver on our commitments. The Millennium Development Goals are reachable by the year 2015. What we want, we can reach.

Our common work with the ecological welfare of the world has continued. Promoting biodiversity is vital for sustaining the ecosystems that our lives depend on. Preventing the loss of biodiversity is of great importance for climate change mitigation, ensuring food and water security and eradicating poverty. The High-level Meeting on Biodiversity, confirming our commitment to this goal, was a good step forward.

The impacts of the climate change are more and more visible and affect us all across the globe. Today I want to focus on the special needs and vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States and the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. Climate change is hard reality for them. Mitigating and adapting to its effects is crucial for their survival.

Finland is committed to a new ambitious climate agreement. All of us must work hard to ensure a global deal and commit to building a sustainable future, thus responding to what the Secretary-General pertinently calls the 50-50-50 challenge.

In order to reach our goals, we must mobilize all available resources. Cooperation to tackle climate change must involve states, NGOs, private sector and fellow global citizens.

Lasting solutions to global challenges cannot be found without women's active participation in decision-making at all levels. Women are agents of change and development. Investing in women and girls has a vital effect on eradication of poverty and sustained economic growth.

Having heard the discussions this week, I am happy to conclude that there has clearly been a breakthrough in this respect. This is a good basis to continue from. Women and men together can achieve a truly sustainable development.

The United Nations has to lead the global efforts to promote a new blue-print for sustainable growth and low-carbon prosperity. I am honoured to co-chair the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Global Sustainability together with my colleague, President Jacob Zuma of South Africa. We will - I promise - work hard.

Mr. President,

The words at the birth of the United Nations were peace and security, development and human rights. This trinity is still the key.

All human rights are equally important and must be enjoyed by everyone without discrimination. The protection and promotion of human rights must be an integral part of peace building and crisis management.

In combating impunity, justice must always go hand in hand with peace efforts. Finland firmly supports the International Criminal Court in its work in bringing to justice those responsible for the most serious crimes. We call on all States Parties to the Rome Statute to uphold their international legal obligations under the Statute.

The Human Rights Council was created in 2006 to promote the respect for human rights and its functioning will now be reviewed. To reach tangible results, the Human Rights Council needs effective tools. The independent thematic country specific

mandates continue to be vital in order to achieve full implementation of human rights for all.

The commitment of all the UN Member States to strengthen promotion of women's rights, gender equality and gender mainstreaming is welcome. Finland strongly supports UN Women and would like to congratulate President Michelle Bachelet on her appointment. We must assure that the UN Women becomes a strong advocate and actor for women's rights across the UN work.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Concrete improvements have been made but we must step up our efforts to turn the objectives into practice. National Action Plans are valuable tools for implementing the Resolution. We completed our own plan in 2008 and have now started a twinning initiative with Kenya.

Mr. President,

We need a comprehensive approach which integrates both the long-term development programmes and conflict resolution. In our common efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts, the contribution of regional organizations is valuable. Civil society can also play a role. Finland supports the development of the peace mediation activities of the United Nations.

After several rounds of proximity talks in the Middle East the parties started direct talks in September. The international community has welcomed this wise decision. We now stand ready to give our support when ever needed.

Finland is greatly encouraged by the new START agreement as well as the outcomes of the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington and the Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The world community must seize the moment. Global and bilateral efforts must be continued towards a world without nuclear weapons.

The United Nations remains the only forum where we can solve our common problems together. Therefore, we must continue to reform and increase the effectiveness of our organization without forgetting our own responsibilities as Member States.

This is absolutely necessary because we need to tackle the food crisis, financial crisis, various kinds of natural disasters, contagious diseases, terrorism and armed conflicts in different parts of the world as well as our common challenge of climate change.

In order to combat everyday crisis and work, at the same time, for the sustainable development is a huge task. But no other choice has been given to us.

Mr. President,

We have to combine our efforts for a better world.