

REPUBLIC OF POLAND
PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS



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ADDRESS

by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Poland
to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Witold SOBKÓW

during the General Debate of the 65th Session
of the United Nations General Assembly

New York, September 29th, 2010

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

2010 began with a tragic earthquake in Haiti, which took the lives of more than 200 thousand people, including United Nations staff and peacekeepers. Unfortunately months later Pakistan have been affected by floods with catastrophic effects. I would like to pay tribute to the women and men who lost their lives while working for the United Nations. I would also like to salute those who brought assistance to the victims. Those dramatic and very painful events highlight the essential role that the United Nations is capable of playing in our lives, the extraordinary performance of an organization that many seem to take for granted.

UN Reform

A universal character of the United Nations enables carrying out activities and achieving agreed goals by member states, regardless of their form of government and culture. One cannot underestimate the United Nations' contribution to peacekeeping and peacebuilding, its role in the promotion of the rule of law, and human rights, or its contribution to the codification of international law.

Poland has always been a firm and reliable supporter of the UN. Effective multilateralism is an objective reflected in the policies of my government and a guiding principle of the EU. We note both the heightened expectations and criticism with respect to the UN and other international organizations. We are therefore raising the issue of reform, as we want the UN to be more efficient and better adapted to the new global environment. If it fails to meet the hopes and expectations of its members, it will suffer marginalization, which might negatively affect multilateralism, certainty and predictability in international relations.

Poland has been participating in the ongoing process of reflection on the accommodation of the UN to contemporary and foreseeable risks and challenges. In our opinion, the UN should improve its ability to co-operate with other institutions and organizations, particularly on a regional basis.

Poland supports efforts aiming at reforming the UN Security Council, an organ tasked with preserving peace and security. We need to take into account changes in the international system brought about after the end of the cold war, and, at the same time, preserve the Council's cohesion and the feasibility of the decision-making process. We favour an additional non-permanent seat for the Eastern European Group. We also find interesting and worth discussing an idea of the EU representation. In general, we attach much importance to the EU's role in the UN system – that is why, we would encourage non-EU MSs of the UN to support our efforts to ensure a proper place for the EU, an observer in the GA, in the form of a resolution.

We attach great importance to the enhancement of the credibility of the UN action in the field of democracy and human rights. let me remind you of a successful meeting of the Community of Democracies in Krakow this year. Poland is convinced that promoting the universal respect for human rights throughout the world contributes to security and to social and economic progress. In this respect, we applaud the establishment of the UN's new consolidated gender entity, UN Women. We also believe that the review and reform of the Human Rights Council, of which we are a member, will strengthen the effectiveness of this body.

Global problems

Our planet is exposed to an increasing number of existential threats. Experience shows that no country can solve the world's problems alone. A global response is therefore necessary to meet global challenges. The UN has the capacity to justify and in many instances generate such a response. We expect excellence as a standard feature of the UN. In the final analysis, it is only with the consent and support of its member states that the UN can deliver such excellence.

The latest world economic crisis demonstrated the need for a globally coordinated economic and financial policy. These policies are currently being debated by the General Assembly's Second Committee, as well as by the specialized agencies and UN-related organizations, such as the IMF and the World Bank. Poland continues to expect the UN to be the key forum for multilateral debate on the issues pertaining to the crisis. We hope that the current crisis will not hinder UN member states from achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Security

Various political, economic, social and environmental problems make states more and more open to deepened co-operation. The complicated nature of new challenges demands sophisticated expertise and the integration of efforts. UN safeguards both. Poland deems the UN an appropriate body to address the global issues of security and economy.

Peace and security are a fundamental issue. Our goal is a world without nuclear weapons and other arms of mass destruction; a world without terrorism; a world capable of diffusing the threats of war and conflict. The UN should strengthen its involvement in meeting these objective: anticipate and prevent conflicts, where possible, and develop a capacity to resolve them effectively once they break out.

Peacekeeping operations

The engagement of the UN in peacekeeping operations continues to produce visible and desirable effects, especially in its political and humanitarian dimensions. The experience we have gained from the increased engagement over the past few years allows us to better understand its complexity, limitations and the challenges ahead. We believe that peacekeeping reform must continue. We support the efforts which will bring new quality to peacekeeping and, in this regard, we are committed to work towards achieving a wider consensus on its strategic aspects through a renewed partnership of all stakeholders.

Non-proliferation and disarmament

2010 will hopefully be associated with major progress in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. The success of the Review Conference of states-parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty has proved that a consensus is possible in this specific area of international cooperation.

Efficient and practical implementation of the NPT Review Conference remains a crucial task. We are convinced that the initiative launched recently by Australia and Japan, which involves the participation of Poland and 10 other countries, will contribute to this goal.

We perceive the NPT Review Conference, new post-START Treaty, and Nuclear Security Summit as significant steps forward but which implementation remains a challenge.

Among the issues related to nuclear disarmament there is one that clearly stands out: the status of sub-strategic nuclear weapons, whose reduction and elimination has not yet been covered by any legally binding international instrument. A world without nuclear weapons cannot be achieved if this challenge is left unattended.

The Conference on Disarmament requires our special attention. We applaud the efforts of the UN Secretary-General who convened a few days ago a special summit devoted to disarmament. Poland attaches considerable importance to this body and calls on all states to redouble their efforts to invigorate the Conference as a platform for multilateral disarmament and nonproliferation negotiations.

Economic issues

The impact of the economic and financial crisis continues to affect most countries. Scarcity of high quality jobs has become an issue of prime importance. Efforts are necessary to mobilize resources and provide opportunities for the benefit of the most vulnerable segments of society. Satisfying basic needs is once again coming to the forefront of global concern.

The energy sector has become an area of major attention: costs, security of supplies, reducing pollution are some of the sensitive issues. We face the challenge of making clean energy not only a social preference but also a market choice.

We need a shift in our thinking about the North-South dichotomy to allow the international community to move effectively forward. Allowing ourselves to be defined by our differences is a recipe for disaster. It is therefore important to focus on common elements, on the diversity of conditions and situations of states and move away from a claims mentality.

The pace of market globalization exceeds the capacity of many governments to ensure global economic stability. The growing interdependence of national economies increases a risk transmission of destabilising shocks between countries. Economic activities within the UN are today scattered between many institutions. This often leads to overlapping powers between them.

The UN's role might be to coordinate the objectives and to ensure the coherence between the activities of major international organisations, to provide the necessary political leadership and long-term strategic policy framework, and to promote a stable and sustainable development.

Millennium Development Goals

The High-Level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs that ended on September 22 reconfirmed the importance of development cooperation and restated the commitment of the international community to attain the MDGs by 2015. The meeting recognized the crucial role of the UN and the UN system in the field of development co-operation and commended their continued engagement and efforts.

Poland reiterates its support for implementing the MDGs. They constitute a primary point of reference for our programme of foreign assistance. We are also bound by the provisions of the Paris Declaration, and the principle of aid efficiency expressed therein. We strongly support coordination among all development partners.

Our official development assistance is oriented to serve the pro-growth policies of our partners. Mobilization of domestic resources, FDI, and good economic policy are the basic drivers of development. Development policies should therefore be implemented in accordance with the principles of sustainable development and good governance. We welcome the progress on the MDGs which is largely a result of continued efforts by developing countries. With regard to development assistance, it is extremely important that the principles of national ownership and leadership as well as of mutual accountability be strengthened and fully respected.

Poland is actively involved in promoting global development co-operation. We are committed to the UN activities in the field of poverty reduction and promoting of sustainable development. We note with satisfaction the positive results of the One UN reform and the increase in efficiency

of assistance provided by the UN. We support the activities United Nations agencies (including through voluntary contributions to various organizations), both in the development and humanitarian field.

UN Conference on Sustainable Development

Poland expects an ambitious, forward-looking and action-oriented outcome of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012. We are looking forward to attaining all the principal aims of the Conference. The Conference should also bridge the trust gap between developed and developing countries evident in the climate change negotiations. Its outcome should be a focused political document, universal in nature, aimed at identifying concrete actions for all countries. It should be linked to the MDGs, taking into account the specific needs of developing countries. We call for redoubling efforts to ensure that institutions involved in implementing the sustainable development agenda become more effective and efficient through improved synergies and thanks to the provision of adequate resources.

Climate change

Poland, as the host of the 14th session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the 4th meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, will continue its efforts aimed at building an international consensus on a global and comprehensive post-2012 agreement. The role of the UN system is essential to maintain an effective and efficient response to challenges posed by climate change. In this regard, we would like to thank the Secretary-General for putting climate change on top of the agenda of the UN system and for his numerous efforts to address the negative impact of such change. Climate change is a global challenge that can only be addressed effectively through a global effort within the UNFCCC framework.

International Environmental Governance

Poland believes that the international community should continue to focus its attention on improved and enhanced implementation and monitoring of the 3 Rio Conventions, developing synergies among them and on increasing efficiency and coherence of the UN system. The consultative process inaugurated by the 11th Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council on the reform of the IEG system was an important contribution to the debate on environmental governance in the context of UNCSD. While being realistic and pragmatic, we should also be ambitious.

Solidarity

It is necessary to understand the relevance of international solidarity, working closely together, building new coalitions and bridging old divides to arrive at common objectives. Our common future is at stake. There is no guarantee of success; but surely we risk failure, if we do not take action. New partnerships, building confidence in policy objectives and positive engagement among partners are the necessary elements.

Thank you for your attention.