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„The United Nations: The Embodiment of International Cooperation now and in the Future“

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Here, in Germany nearly seven years ago, one of the greatest global conflicts in history came to an end. As the Berlin Wall gave way, so did decades of Cold War confrontation. A new era was born and the world rejoiced.

Today we live free from the acute danger of global nuclear devastation. And, in this sense, the world is definitely a safer place. But the world today faces a new threat. Fragmentation can separate the peoples of a single nation. It can undermine human solidarity. It can lead to a turning inward. It can cause a failure to see the importance of our common international institutions.

There are those today who criticize the United Nations. Who negate its achievements. Who threaten to marginalize it. Yet the record of the United Nations shows more than fifty years of service to humanity. For those oppressed by colonialism, the United Nations was a beacon of freedom. At the United Nations, newly-independent peoples could take their rightful place on the international stage – within the system of sovereign States – and feel welcome and supported. States in conflict found in the United Nations a neutral and impartial mediator – and in United Nations peacekeeping, a valuable tool. Refugees found food, clothing and shelter. Children found protection from starvation and disease. Entire societies found support for economic and social development.

For all peoples, the United Nations elaborated and promoted human rights. It defended international law and promoted its progressive development. It provided a place where all States could meet, as sovereign equals, to forge consensus on global issues – such as disarmament, the environment, and the advancement of women. It provided a place to translate consensus into concrete commitments and cooperative action.

Look at the record: what we have in the United Nations is not only a forum for multilateral diplomacy on a global scale, but also a unique instrument for the realization of the collective will of its Member States and an organization critical to the future. It is far too valuable to be the scapegoat when international cooperation meets with setbacks.

But what is at stake in the debate about the United Nations goes far beyond the United Nations itself. Hanging in the balance is an entire range of international achievements and aspirations. At stake is what the future will reveal as the finest project of the twentieth century – the project for international cooperation.

This project goes back some three centuries. But it is the twentieth century that has brought the greatest advances in international systems, institutions, doctrines and agreements for the common good of all humanity. Consider four key elements of this project: the concept of collective security; the idea of universal human rights; the expansion of international law; and the recognition of the role of sustainable development.

Collective security was conceived and pursued as an alternative to big-power calculation of balance-of-power politics – an old and inherently dangerous method for maintaining international stability. The aim would be to achieve global burden-sharing for peace. All States would have a stake in a shared system, created not only to reverse acts of aggression, but also to prevent aggression and other threats to peace.

The idea of universal human rights took the human person – the one irreducible entity in world affairs – and made respect for its inherent dignity a foundation of peace and freedom for all peoples. A steady process of consensusbuilding over the past decades has strengthened this foundation. The rights

and groups to be protected have been defined more and more sharply, as international machinery to ensure protection has continually improved.

International law was conceived some three and a half centuries ago as a foundation for a stable and progressive system of relations among States. The effort to expand the law of nations represents a fundamental rejection of power and military might as the basis for international order. It aspires to replace superior force with legal superiority – to promote international relations governed by the rule of law.

International cooperation for development has come to be recognized as essential to removing the causes of deprivation and confrontation. The legacy of conflict can hamper development – and the lack of development can fuel still more conflict. The evolution of a consensus on development cooperation offers a way to help break this cycle and strengthen development respectful of the environment, for long-term stability, within and among States. The United Nations today is the embodiment of this wide-ranging project. Yet this great project is now under threat.

Today, we see dangerous signs of a weakening of international civility, solidarity and commonality of purpose. And collective security, human rights, international law and development cooperation are not the only foundations at risk. Even more fundamental concepts – the State, sovereignty, even the concept of universal human rights – are put in question.

If the United Nations is allowed to fall or to be marginalized, this entire project of internationalism will be fatally undermined. The world will lose the momentum to achieve structures of peace, justice and prosperity that apply to all nations and all peoples. If this project goes forward, it can only do so successfully with, and through, the United Nations.

The current phase in the continuous process of reform and renewal already under way at the United Nations has produced a vision of the future which can guide our efforts in the period immediately ahead. The United Nations of the future would offer an effective system of collective security, whose sheer existence would be a major contribution to prevention. Prevention would become the primary rule of action, and the requisite mandates and resources would be provided to all peace operations in a consistent and reliable manner. The division of labour with regional organizations would be rendered more effective. We are already cooperating with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in the former Yugoslavia; with the Organization of American States in Haiti, with the Organization of African Unity in Burundi and Rwanda; with an ad hoc group, the ECOMOG, in Liberia. In addition, some form of limited UN or UN-authorized rapid deployment force would be at the ready, to deal with violence that no single nation, or group, would consider a matter of national interest to tackle – though it would clearly be in the international interest. Such a capacity would be part of a new agreed mechanism to help failed States, that completely new phenomenon of the last few years, to rejoin the international community. The case of Somalia is a unique example of a failed State, a State without government, schools, hospitals, or customs facilities; a State made up of a group of tribal leaders fighting each other. We are reliving exactly the same experience today in Afghanistan. How can we cope with this new situation? Here, the United Nations can play an essential role.

In the human rights and humanitarian fields, there would be near universal ratification of existing treaties and covenants. Human rights machinery would be strengthened and function effectively. Jurisdictional protection for international humanitarian law would continue to expand. A strengthened systemwide capacity for early-warning and prevention of disasters would be in place. All this would help prevent humanitarian emergencies. The world, would be much closer to the conditions in which human dignity can truly flourish. The United Nations has created a new capacity to deal with natural disasters, so that whenever a natural disaster strikes anywhere in the world, we will be able to intervene within a few days and not only after long negotiations with donor countries or with different agencies of the United Nations system.

Development, too, would receive the attention and resources that it deser-

ves. The relationship between developed and developing States would change, fundamentally, from assistance to cooperation. Here we are again confronted with something new: the fatigue of donor countries, which are less interested in the marginalization of certain regions. It is said that the market economy will solve the problem of development. But the market economy can only solve the problem if a minimum of infrastructure exists in a country. In the poor countries of Africa, and in some poor countries of Asia, this minimum infrastructure does not exist. Globalization will aggravate the marginalization of those countries. We need something more. A market economy is essential, but we also need solidarity, and this means special attention. We have been able to convince the World Bank and the IMF to take into consideration the marginalized, less-developed countries, and the effect on them of economic globalization.

The Organization and its specialized agencies would reinforce an effective division of labour in supporting the policy consensus now being advanced. Investment in people would be understood as a prerequisite to progress. A strong civil society would shape, support and participate in the development effort. Social justice within and among States would ensure that material programs move forward without excluding those now on the margins of survival. Furthermore, we will have to take into consideration the problem of the environment. The United Nations has played an essential role in creating an awareness of environmental problems. Since the summit meeting held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, the great majority of member States have created a ministry of the environment. Thanks to the United Nations, there is an awareness of the danger of environmental problems. It is important that nature would be allowed to renew itself. Economic growth would be understood as essential not only to advance material progress, but to provide society with options in every important field.

A commitment to democratization would be seen as a key to long-term peace, the cornerstone of all development, and the driving force for progress on all fronts. Here again, we have created a new structure to offer electoral assistance. The UN has offered electoral assistance to more than 55 countries all over the world – before, during and after polls. We have participated in transforming liberation movements into political parties. This was the case of the FMLN in El Salvador, and in Mozambique. We are trying to do this now in Angola with UNITA. So we are participating in transforming certain countries from one-party States into multi-party systems.

We have helped to promote democratization – and I prefer to use the word democratization to the word democracy because Member States have to choose what kind of democracy they want. Our assistance will be limited to the process of democratization. In other words, we can have a very authoritarian regime and through our assistance it will be less authoritarian.

It is essential to promote democracy within the Member States. However, it will be useless to have democracy within Member States if we do not have democracy on a global level. The global problems of tomorrow cannot be solved by one State or group of States; they ought to be solved by the international community, by an international forum. If they are tackled by one or two States, we will have an authoritarian regime on the international level and democracy on the national level. Such democracy will not be in step with the global situation.

Hence, in encouraging democratization within the Member States of the United Nations, we must also encourage democracy among them. And here, we need to change the composition of certain organs of the Organization. We need to be able to talk to the new actors, the non-State entities such as the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), business, parliamentarians, the churches. All those actors are playing an important role. They must participate.

The municipalities must also take part. At the last Habitat summit in Istanbul, we invited the mayors of major cities to participate in the elaboration of the Declaration of Istanbul. And we invited NGOs to the summit meeting on social development held in 1995 in Copenhagen, where they participated in the elaboration of the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the con-

ference.

So if we want to have real democracy at the international level, we must be able to obtain the support and the participation of the new actors in international relations. Again, we have to find a way to manage the relationship between Member States and the new actors. In this we might have a problem: How can we invite the mayor of a municipality, who is a member of the government, and at the same time invite the representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs? This again shows the new approach: If we are able to reach public opinion – through the NGOs, through the cities, through business – we will be able to obtain the support of the governments. Unless we are able to talk to the peoples of the United Nations, the Organization will not be able to achieve its different goals. We know that Member States will not always be quite happy about this relationship with the new actors, but this is essential if we want to succeed. and it is in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, which begins with the words: „We, the peoples of the United Nations...“ I will repeat myself: Democratization within States would thrive as the process of democratization advances internationally. A society of States, and an enlarged international civil society, would emerge, committed to democratic principles and processes. International law and the expansion of international jurisdiction would be crucial to this process of democratization.

All States would accept the general jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. Where domestic constraints prevent this, States would provide a list of the matters they are willing to submit to the Court. A permanent international criminal court would be established. We are working at the General Assembly on the preparation of this permanent international criminal court. We have already contributed to the creation of two special courts: in the Hague, for crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia; and in Arusha, for crimes committed in Rwanda.

The United Nations of the future would remain an intergovernmental organization, in the service of its Member States and their peoples. Yesterday in Lübeck, while speaking about the new actors the United Nations has nurtured, I was asked how the sovereignty of the Member States would be protected. States will continue to play the most essential role, but we must recognize that we have to take new actors into consideration. This is not to diminish the power of the State. On the contrary, it is a way to protect the State against an authoritarian system which would deal with global problems without real participation.

So, while the United Nations of the future will remain an intergovernmental organization, an organization at the service of its Member States and their people, it will, at the same time, increasingly open its structures to non-State actors and other representatives of civil society. Streamlining of intergovernmental machinery would enable further streamlining at the institutional level. Other major remaining obstacles to reform would be cleared by decisions taken by Member States on key interrelated issues, such as the future composition and procedure of the Security Council; a revised scale of assessment; an improved mechanism to collect assessment; and the paying off of the Organization's peace-keeping debts.

The principal organs of the United Nations would function in the balance contemplated by the Charter. Among the core organs of the system – the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Secretariat – a new equilibrium would be achieved. And finally, steps would be taken to ensure that conditions of service, most urgently the safety of personnel – hundreds of people working for the United Nations have been killed during the last decades in different peace-keeping operations, while defending peace – are such that the United Nations can continue to attract and retain highly qualified personnel, capable of advancing the United Nations toward ever more effective service of humanity.

Today, here in Germany, I call upon the entire family of nations to show the courage to transform this utopian vision of today into the reality of tomorrow. Walls of isolationism, walls of ignorance, walls of fear, walls of fanaticism – we must tear down these walls that divide us, and strengthen the foundation of our common future. We must reclaim and pursue with renewed vigour this