

ITEM 10:
REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ON THE WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION

STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President

The report on the work of the organization before us makes clear both how impressive the activities and achievements of the United Nations are and how complex and challenging the tasks it faces. It offers a rare glimpse into the range of undertakings of this organization and can serve as a useful tool in defending the organization against its numerous detractors whose arguments are as often based on ignorance as they are on malevolence. The report can even be used as a reference book, since it offers a concise account of the history and state of play in the areas where the organization is actively involved. A more analytical reading, however, leads to the significant question whether the Organization is truly equipped to successfully tackle all the issues before it. All these mandates, of course, are given to the United Nations by us, the Member States, and one must wonder whether we are fully living up to our responsibilities in this respect: The most complex problems of a globalized world, such as for example combating terrorism, HIV/AIDS or the eradication of poverty are handed over to the United Nations to deal with them. While we almost automatically do so, we have been negligent at giving the organization also the tools to do the job. At the core of a successful United Nations is the unequivocal commitment from its Member States to multilateralism. And the most credible and effective expression of this commitment is unwavering political and financial support as well as ongoing work to adjust the United Nations to the changed and changing circumstances in which it works.

Mr. President

The expectations concerning the outcome of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change are high, and we share them. Nevertheless, the decisions that need to be made cannot be outsourced, we have to make them ourselves. Changes in the institutional architecture are necessary and inevitable. The United Nations cannot remain a reflection of its history but must be designed in a manner that reflects the current challenges. The year 2005 will be decisive, and we must

think early about how to make the next year a successful one from the intergovernmental side. It seems crucial to us that we agree at an early stage on a comprehensive and interconnected agenda. It must be clear in particular that development and security are mutually reinforcing and inseparable, which means that one cannot be dealt with successfully if the other one is neglected. In this connection, the Millennium Development Goals must be the core of our deliberations since they constitute the biggest promise we have made collectively and the most ambitious goal we have set for ourselves.

Mr. President

We believe that institutional changes are needed, and we also believe that they must be carried out in a manner that preserves and indeed improves the institutional balance of the Organization. A more modern and more representative Security Council must be complemented by a leaner, more flexible and more relevant General Assembly that truly fulfills the tasks assigned to it under the Charter of the United Nations. Enlargement of the Security Council is a necessity, and if we were to fail to seize the growing momentum in this respect, we would probably have squandered an opportunity that is not to come back any time soon. However, the highly political question of enlargement must not distract us from effectively dealing with the other elements of Security Council reform that have to be addressed simultaneously. We believe that only a more representative and more accountable Security Council will be able to effectively tackle threats to international peace and security on behalf of the international community as a whole.

Mr. President

The report pays tribute to the victims of the attack on United Nations headquarters in Baghdad on 19 August 2003, and rightly so. We must remember this most painful event and be determined to take the action that is our responsibility: The security conditions under which UN staff worldwide operate must be improved and the relevant mechanism both at headquarters and especially in the field must be

enhanced. We look forward to the relevant suggestions of the Secretary-General in this respect and will continue working on the important aspect of legal protection in particular. At the same time, we must ensure that the United Nations remains committed to its most important function which is to bestow legitimacy to international and collective action. We therefore very much welcome the vision of the Secretary-General in placing the respect for the rule of law at the top of his agenda for the coming months and years.

I thank you.