



United Nations General Assembly
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General Debate

H.E. Mr Jonas Gahr Støre
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Mr President,
Distinguished representatives,

These weeks we are witnessing a resurrection of the authority of this Assembly and a new belief and commitment that multilateral cooperation can and must be made to work.

The new tone of voice we have heard from the United States here in New York is setting forceful persuasion above persuasive force and extending a hand to those who are willing to unclench a fist.

We must all seize this moment. Every country – also the smallest and weakest - can make a difference. And building bridges means that we must all reach out from where we stand today as we struggle together with the crisis of finances, food, energy, climate and health.

(Check against delivery)

Mr President,

Last month the UN Secretary-General visited Norway's Arctic to study the impacts of global warming.

As we approach Copenhagen, the pace of negotiation must increase. Economy-wide reduction targets must be set for all developed countries. Large and more advanced developing countries should commit themselves to measurable, reportable and verifiable actions. Cuts in emissions from rainforest preservation must be institutionalized, funded and included in a new treaty.

Financing is key for success in Copenhagen. Our Norwegian contributions and proposals may generate substantial new and additional financing for measures in developing countries, based on public finance the global carbon market.

Mr President,

The financial crisis have pushed millions of people back in the trenches of poverty, and staggered us in our pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals.

Loss of income is placing public policies at a perilous risk, potentially undermining services on which the poorest and weakest depend the most, such as health and education.

Norway supports all the Millennium Development Goals. We will for the second year in a row surpass 1 percent official development assistance, and we have increased our ODA in absolute terms after the financial crisis hit us to show solidarity with those who are less fortunate than we are.

We engage with a particular focus on areas where Norway can make a difference. We will continue to take on a special obligation with regard to the health related MDGs. We have trippled our contributions to health since the year 2000. Millions of lives have been saved.

We will continue to play a leading role until we have achieved these MDGs.

The most disgraceful underachievement today is the lack of progress to improve maternal health. While we can vaccinate children and give mothers a bed net under a tree at a particular time, what women need are round-the-clock services in clinics to ensure safe deliveries as well as preparedness for transfer to a hospital in the event of complications.

Strengthening health services is key for reducing mother and child mortality, and is also a vital element in realising the rights of women and children.

The appalling rise of rape and other forms of sexual violence reveal an ugly story of men around the world still regarding women and children as secondary citizens. My fellow delegates, we must never rest as long as women are denied the services and rights that we men take for granted. Nothing less than our claim to civilization is at stake.

Today, the Security Council is debating the situation in Afghanistan after the elections and the need for a new Afghan government to connect more strongly with its people, fight corruption and narcotics empower state institutions, protect human rights in particular women's rights, and develop policy so that Afghanistan will be able to sustain itself so that the day may come – soon – when Afghans take care of Afghanistan's security and when Afghan men and women can run a democratic Afghanistan.

We must continue to support UNAMA which has a mandate to coordinate the international assistance with the Afghan Government. UNAMA requires additional resources as well as a strong commitment on the part of all UN member states to the coordination of efforts under Afghan leadership.

Mr President,

We stand on the threshold of a new era of nuclear disarmament. The Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty next year must set a clear and specific agenda for the elimination of the existing nuclear arsenals, and for ensuring that nuclear technologies are only applied peacefully, to the benefit of mankind.

Recent information cast new doubt on Iran's nuclear ambition. Iran itself has the opportunity and responsibility to remove this doubt and it is imperative that it does so.

However, while nuclear weapons pose a threat of mass destruction, actual destruction of mass proportions do indeed happen every year, by small arms, cluster munitions and landmines. Norway is committed to humanitarian disarmament, motivated by the unacceptable harm these weapons cause to civilians. We urge all states to accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and to join intensifying efforts to control small arms and arms trade.

Mr President,

Norway is honoured to have been elected member of the Human Rights Council and will work with others to raise the credibility, effectiveness and visibility of that important body. Last week Norway submitted its first report to the council of the human rights situation in Norway, taking a critical look at our own record and inviting constructive criticism, as we believe all states should welcome similar constructive criticism of their own records.

Here in New York, we welcome the decision to establish a new and enhanced gender entity and hope to see it operational as soon as possible. We will pursue the reform agenda of system-wide coherence and the delivering as one agenda. The UN will be subject to more public scrutiny and reform must be an ongoing effort.

