

**United Nations General Assembly
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General Debate

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Statement by

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The summit of our leaders is over. Each of us here at the General Assembly has different feelings about it. Mine are **anxiety** and **hope**.

I am anxious about the future of the United Nations. Not as an organisation – its existence is not an end in itself. I am anxious about the future of the **united nations**.

My hope is for *the future* of the United Nations. It is because the present does not evoke impetuous optimism. The source of optimism for all of us is only this: the summit should be a wake-up call for us.

Ernest Hemingway, an American who lived in Europe, once said,

“Ask for whom the bell tolls, for it tolls for thee”

Hemingway happened to be appallingly right. These words were written in late 1930's. At the time and in the place when and where Guernica was destroyed. It is not a coincidence that its depiction hangs on the wall by the Security Council. We all know what happened afterwards: amid the ruins of the world the United Nations had to emerge.

Belarus is not a doomsayer. On the contrary. We have experienced ourselves the utter horror of the WWII in greater measure than anybody else. We do not want it to be repeated. But in the year of the 60th anniversary of the United Nations and of the Victory it is quite appropriate for these things to be recalled.

I would not like to speak about the obvious – the United Nations is the organisation of **all** states, big and small, rich and poor. In this organisation **everybody** has **equal rights** and all work **together** to create the main product – peace.

Yet I have to mention this because under the guise of reform our Organisation is being turned – *de facto and de jure* – into an instrument of domination of some states over others. We all have witnessed this.

A short while ago we were officially offered to approve a new decision-making procedure in the operative activity agencies: those who pay more have more votes. Now we are being offered to elect to the main human rights body of the United Nations on the basis of subjective criteria. **This is a dangerous tendency. This is a clear deviation from the UN Charter. This is a road to the split in the UN.**

Does the UN need the 'reform' which creates **prerequisites for the more frequent and more arbitrary use of force at full discretion of the mighty?** We are against the 'reform' which is going to turn the Organisation created amid the fire of WWII into **an instrument of dictate by the militarily and economically most powerful states.** Does the UN need the 'reform' which is going to divide countries into 'worthy' and 'unworthy' of international assistance, into pupils and teachers in matters of governance and social development? We do not want such reform.

To preserve the core values of the UN Charter and to build upon them taking into account the reality of today – this is a major task of the true reform which our Organisation needs.

The diversity of ways of progressive development is among these basic values. The President of the Republic of Belarus stressed that it **ensures the stability of the world and is an enduring value of our civilisation.** In our currently unipolar world this value is not only belittled but questioned as well.

What stands behind the calls we heard in this hall last week to 'help those who want to help themselves'? In practice it is a selective approach which recognises the right for development for only those countries which have adopted state and economic reforms in accordance with a particular model. Let us consider whether we need to 'clone' *this model* world over? Does it represent the strength and the value of our civilisation? Is this why the UN is important? What this lop-sided world can give to people? Is it going to be a comfortable home for our children?

As never before we need to contemplate our world with an honest look which could allow us to discuss critical problems in a **free and transparent** manner and to look together for the ways of solving them.

An honest look at today's world, for instance, makes us recall the problem of **trafficking in human beings.** This disgraceful phenomenon has spread in this century to all regions of the world. The most vulnerable – women and children whose protection should be the priority task of the United Nations – are the primary object of 'live' trade.

Forced labour of adolescents, sexual slavery of women and girls, trade in human organs should be decisively opposed and **legally prohibited** by all states.

A lot has got to be accomplished in this sphere. **Less than a half of the UN member states** have ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons especially Women and Children. Just **a little more than a dozen countries** have adopted national strategies or action plans to combat trafficking in human beings. But to turn this social evil back is possible only by universal effort.

In this respect we consider it extremely important to introduce responsibility for all parties in this criminal process **including the consumers of 'live commodity'**.

It is high time to mount under the aegis of the United Nations a really decisive and organised resistance to all forms of trafficking and exploitation of human beings within the framework of a global **Partnership Against Slavery and Trafficking in Human Beings in the 21st century**.

An honest look at today's world does not let us forget the problem of dealing with the long-term effects of the Chernobyl disaster. The largest man-caused disaster of the 20th century has affected the lives of millions of people, caused an enormous economic damage. In Belarus only the cost of damage from the disaster amounted to US \$ 235 billion.

The Government of Belarus has accomplished a lot in these years to minimise the effects of the disaster. Now the time has come to assess the effectiveness of international assistance in this area, to chart the priorities of our joint work for the next decade. These issues will be on the agenda of **the Minsk International Conference in April 2006**.

We call upon the UN member states, all who care about the lot of victims of the Chernobyl disaster to support the adoption of the resolution of the General Assembly on Chernobyl.

We also propose **to convene on the 26th of April 2006 a special meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl tragedy**.

Belarus is a country which is used to relying on herself. We are not involved in any international scheming nor do we follow anybody's political prompting. We are sure of the strength, talent and diligence of our people. This is what makes it possible for us to speak and act in the international arena honestly and in a principled way, without looking back over our shoulder for the 'mighty of this world'.

It is precisely for this reason that we stand for an **open and honest dialogue in the United Nations**. Here we have our common home. Here – *for all countries* – we should have the same simple, unconditional and clear principle: **'equals among equals'**. Future of the United Nations lies in this. Belarus is ready to work with everybody to make this future happen.