THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL
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ADDRESS TO THE CANADIAN CLUB (TORONTO)
Toronto, Monday, 31 January 2005

I want to thank you, Mr. MacMillan, for your kind invitation to address this meeting of the Canadian Club. And I want to thank you all for your interest in the United Nations. I am very glad to have this opportunity to speak to a distinguished Canadian audience at the outset of a critical year for the United Nations – a year with the potential to be as important as any in the 60 year history of the United Nations.

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In September of this year, world leaders will gather at a Summit in New York to put new energy into implementing the Millennium Declaration, adopted five years ago. When they meet, they will have before them, for decision, far-reaching proposals to promote peace and security and fight global poverty. And they will be asked to make decisions to renew the very architecture of the United Nations itself.

The Millennium Declaration that will be reviewed in September emerged from the 2000 Millennium Summit, attended by about 150 Presidents and Prime Ministers. It was, if you like, the Road Map for the future of collective action through the United Nations. World leaders saw the new century as an era in which humanity could make measurable progress towards peace, security, disarmament, human rights, democracy and good governance. They committed themselves to eight goals, known as the Millennium Development Goals, as targets for development to be achieved by 2015. And they were agreed that the United Nations should become more, not less, engaged in shaping our common future.

A lot has happened since then. And as with some other Road Maps in international affairs, the cold hard realities of discord and lack of political will have, so far, prevented the full implementation of the vision of the Millennium Declaration.

The terrible events of September 11, 2001, and other terror attacks in many quarters of the world since then, shattered many people's confidence in our ability to shape our planet's future. People saw the dangers of a world threatened by violent extremists, who are difficult for States to detect or deter, and who might get their hands on weapons of terrible destructive power.

If this was not bad enough, the world also found itself deeply divided on how best to stave off that darker future. The period of global solidarity after 9-11 was soon eclipsed by the sometimes acrimonious debate over Iraq. One casualty of those divisions has been public confidence in the United Nations. Many who supported the Iraq war see the UN's failure to do so as symptomatic of its inability to provide a muscular response to

today's threats. Many who opposed the Iraq war are disillusioned that the UN could not prevent what they saw as an unnecessary war and its bloody aftermath.

At the same time, the accountability, transparency and management of the UN has been called into question -- particularly as a result of the serious allegations relating to the administration of the Oil-for-Food Programme. The Secretary-General is determined to get to the bottom of these allegations - and I will speak about them a little later. My point, for now, is that public confidence in the UN has taken a battering - confidence that we must work hard to regain.

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After all, the UN is a precious instrument, and its work matters a great deal. We see the value of the United Nations in the global response to the devastating tsunami which struck Asia last month. The tsunami claimed the lives of around 200,000 people and caused an immediate humanitarian disaster affecting millions. With the coordination of the United Nations, the combined efforts of governments, international organizations and aid agencies have prevented an outbreak of deadly infectious diseases that could have swept through the ravaged region, claiming many more lives. Through the work of UN agencies, food has been provided to more than 1.1 million people, and clean water to half a million people. While emergency needs remain the priority right now, very soon the task will move to helping shattered communities rebuild – a task that will require the sustained commitment of the international community.

The UN is also working to prevent renewed fighting, resolve disputes, and build long-term peace all over the globe. Did you know that the UN has over 75,000 personnel deployed in 17 peacekeeping operations on four continents, as well as a significant number of special political missions in trouble spots around the world? And we are preparing for the likely deployment of an 18th peacekeeping operation in Sudan.

Today, our peacekeeping troops are often deployed to support complex peace operations. We work not just to keep armies apart, but to re-establish the rule of law, disarm and reintegrate combatants into civilian life, move the political process forward, rejuvenate the local economy, and help heal the deep wounds of war. It is hard work, but from East Timor to Haiti to Sierra Leone, and in many other places too, its positive impact is incontestable.

Whether the task is humanitarian relief or peacekeeping -- or, for that matter, removing landmines or fighting HIV/AIDS -- a UN framework brings unique legitimacy to international action, and maximizes global cooperation. And UN staff have unrivalled expertise, often learned the hard way, on what works, and what does not, when international actors try to help solve local problems. These are precious assets.

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Nevertheless, there is plenty of room for improvement at the UN, and the Secretary-General believes that 2005 is the year when we need to make real progress towards three major goals.

The first goal is to rejuvenate our system of collective security. When the UN was set up in 1945, its primary goal was to stop aggression by any State against another. Sixty years later, the threats we face extend far beyond inter-state aggression. They include wars within States, genocide and massive violations of human rights, terrorism and organized crime, the existence and spread of weapons of mass destruction, extreme poverty, environmental destruction, and killer diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

In our globalized world, threats such as these can cross borders in an instant. No State is insulated from them, and no State acting alone can meet them. After the SARS outbreak, I don't need to tell Torontonians how quickly a lethal new virus can spread from one corner of the globe to another, leading to major public health crises even in countries with the world's best health systems . Or, to take another example, a terrorist armed with only a small amount of highly enriched uranium could level a medium-sized city in a rich country -- not only claiming the lives of hundreds of thousands, but also causing a worldwide economic downturn that plunged millions into poverty, leading over time to greater death and suffering in poor countries.

So these threats affect everyone, and our collective defences against them are only as strong as their weakest link. Our vision of collective security must therefore be updated. The old adage that a threat to one is a threat to all should apply not only to aggression by one State against another, but to <u>all</u> the threats we face.

This vision of collective security lies at the heart of the recent report of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, appointed by the Secretary-General. The report, entitled "A More Secure World – Our Shared Responsibility", points out some big gaps in our collective defences - gaps that must be filled:

- The absence of a comprehensive anti-terrorism convention undermines our attempts to unite the world for effective action against this scourge.
- Weaknesses in our non-proliferation regimes could lead to a cascade of nuclear proliferation unless major steps are taken now.
- And gaping holes in global public health defences make us more vulnerable to disease outbreaks and bio-terrorism, making a massive effort to improve health infrastructure in poor countries as vital for security as it obviously is for development.

We must get much more serious about preventing threats from arising in the first place. But sometimes, prevention will fail, and we need to find common ground on when and how we should decide that the use of force is required. I am not speaking here of self-defence - all States have an inherent right of self-defence. I am speaking of instances, not covered by the traditional understanding of self-defence, where a <u>collective</u> decision to use force may be necessary.

Take, for example, the threat of genocide and massive violations of human rights inside a State - threats, alas, which are still with us. We cannot allow sovereignty to be used as a shield behind which States commit such atrocities. And we must have the political will to prevent this from happening - something that was tragically lacking a decade ago in Rwanda. Where States fail to exercise their responsibility to protect their citizens, that duty must be assumed by the international community.

As the High-Level Panel noted, it would be a major step forward if UN Member States were to endorse the notion of a responsibility to protect - a notion first enunciated by the Canadian-backed International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty.

And this is not the only area where our understanding of when the use of force might be appropriate needs to evolve. In this day and age, the Security Council must be equally proactive in ensuring that other nightmare scenarios, such as a nuclear terrorist attack, do not unfold. It must stand ready to authorize force in appropriate circumstances.

Whatever the cause, the Panel suggests a number of guidelines to help make Security Council decisions more consistent - something that would also, I believe, make Council decisions more respected, and therefore more effective.

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I mentioned the need to get serious about preventing threats – and this takes me to the second challenge of 2005: the challenge of boosting global action for development.

The eight Millennium Development Goals agreed in 2000 are the benchmarks for measuring progress in development by 2015. They include:

- halving the proportion of people who suffer from extreme poverty and hunger;
- achieving universal primary schooling;
- increasing the power and status of women;
- slashing infant and maternal mortality;
- halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and malaria;
- getting all countries to ensure environmental sustainability;
- and a global partnership between rich and poor countries, based on free and fair trade, debt relief, investment, and financial aid.

Progress towards these goals is as important for security as it is for development. After all, a world in which billions remain trapped in poverty will never be fully secure, even for its most privileged inhabitants. So far, overall progress towards the goals has been too slow - and many nations in Africa, in particular, are lagging behind.

Yet the goals are achievable. They might sound utopian, but they are not. Many developing countries have already made big strides towards the goals.

In Vietnam, for instance, the Vietnamese Government made combating malaria a national priority. They distributed bed-nets free of charge, provided preventive treatment for pregnant women, developed and distributed anti-malarial drugs, and created 400 mobile teams to supervise health workers in malaria-endemic areas. And in just over a decade, deaths from malaria, a disease which once infected a million Vietnamese citizens, have plummeted by 97%.

In Tanzania, the Government has boosted education funding and abolished small school fees -- and in just four short years, enrolment rates have risen from about 60% to 90%, for girls as well as boys.

Even the fight against HIV/AIDS can ultimately be won. AIDS is probably the most complex health challenge ever faced. Three million people died of AIDS in 2004 alone. But just last week, the World Health Organization reported a 60% jump in the number of people receiving treatment in the developing world in the last six months alone. That is the direct result of a huge influx of international development aid and the growing determination of governments to combat the pandemic.

Africa is the region hardest hit by AIDS - but even in Africa, there are important success stories. In Senegal, for instance, a national AIDS programme, strongly backed by the country's religious leaders, including Muslim clerics, has kept infection rates to below 2 percent. And in Uganda, the Government's "big noise" campaign means that virtually every man, woman and child now knows what it takes to avoid infection.

If you are interested in development, as I think all thinking citizens should be, I commend to you a recent UN report commissioned by the Secretary-General and issued a few weeks ago - the report of the Millennium Project. You can print it out at www.unmillenniumproject.org. The report is not only very readable -- it is an enormous intellectual contribution to the development debate, and a global call to arms.

As it points out, poor countries must show real determination to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and embrace good governance, and rich countries must support them with increased development aid. And the report proposes a host of affordable initiatives that would have a quick and measurable impact in reducing poverty -- from mass distribution of inexpensive malaria bed-nets, to ending relatively modest user fees for education, to expansion of school meal programmes, to replenishment of soil nutrients on small farms.

It is heartening that a number of donor governments have now put forward concrete plans to reach the agreed international goal of devoting 0.7% of their Gross National Product to official development assistance. I hope more rich countries, including Canada, will soon follow suit. If they do, our world can begin to lift poverty from the backs of billions – particularly if, at the same time, we remove the barriers that

tilt the international trading system against poor countries. This would be the smartest investment that we could make, bar none, to make our world not just fairer, but safer.

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The third priority for the year ahead is to reform the institutions of the United Nations. The Security Council, for instance, reflects the world of 1945, not the 21st century. The High-Level Panel calls for expansion of the Security Council from 15 to 24, so that those who contribute most to be represented on the Council and that the voices of all regions are heard. At the same time, it proposes that the veto not be extended so that decision-making will not be made more difficult.

UN reform, however, is much larger than Security Council reform. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council need to modernize the ways they work, and focus on those areas where what they do truly adds value. While the Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights does sterling work on a shoestring budget, and is now led by our talented and passionate compatriot, Louise Arbour, the UN Human Rights Commission needs reform to be a more effective defender of human rights in all countries. Some institutions, such as the UN Trusteeship Council, have lost their reason for being, and should be abolished. New institutions should be established to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century – including a Peacebuilding Commission to give the UN an institutional focus for its work in countries under stress or emerging from conflict.

And the Secretariat still needs further reform to make it more open, more accountable, better managed, and better able to recruit, keep and promote the best people. The Secretary-General is preparing further management reforms of the UN, on top of the far-reaching changes already made during his tenure.

We are also awaiting, in the coming days, the first report of independent investigation led by the former Chairman of the Federal Reserve of the United States, Paul Volcker, into the allegations surrounding the Oil-for-Food Programme - allegations which have cast a shadow over an operation that brought relief to millions of Iraqis. It is very important to find out what happened and why; to sort out who among the Secretariat, the Security Council, and individual Member States had responsibility for what; to hold any wrongdoers accountable; and to introduce whatever changes are needed to ensure proper oversight and accountability in the future. We hope there will be greater clarity on these matters once the first Volcker report comes out. The Secretary-General will make it public, and he will act on its findings.

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After a period of deep division, heavy criticism, sober reflection and careful analysis, the United Nations must turn a new page. In 2005, the UN and its members face big challenges:

- Can they build a collective security system capable of meeting the challenges of the 21st century?
- Can they make the smart investments that will eradicate global poverty and free billions of people from the scourge of hunger and disease?
- And can our indispensable global institutions, including the United Nations itself, be updated and renewed?

I am realistic enough to know that this is a very ambitious agenda. But I am quietly hopeful that real progress is possible in the year ahead. I sense, on all sides, a new understanding that division is in no one's interest, and only allows the threats and challenges we face to grow. I also know that the Secretary-General is determined to do everything he can to help to bring about the changes I have spoken about, and to make the United Nations as effective and accountable as it can, and must, be.

So, with a sense of quiet optimism I believe the UN's best days are ahead of it. And I hope that, after my remarks today, you do too.

Thank you very much.