

**UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 62<sup>ND</sup> SESSION**  
**GENERAL DEBATE**

**ADDRESS**

**BY**

**H.E. MS. RITA KIEBER-BECK**  
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**OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President

Climate change - at the centre of the high-level event a week ago - constitutes one of the greatest challenges of our generation. It puts to the test our ability to create the collective political will necessary to counter a phenomenon of potentially disastrous socio-economic consequences. It also offers a great opportunity to make best use of the unique framework that this organization provides. The Bali meeting must bring about a long-term commitment by all States to launch an ambitious and practical roadmap towards a gradually decarbonized global economy. We can reach this goal if we translate today's political momentum into concrete action that goes beyond tomorrow's activities.

Mr. President

Climate change is but one of the areas of concern to the international community where it is absolutely clear that the United Nations is today, more than ever, an indispensable organization. It appears indeed that its unique nature and potential are more widely recognized and accepted today than just recently. In the words of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon: "The pendulum is swinging back in our favor". As a strong believer in multilateralism, we welcome this development.

But, as true friends of the United Nations we must also continue to question the ability of the organization to fully use its potential and to fulfill the purposes and principles of its Charter. Our record in the area

of **reform**, two years after the 2005 World Summit, is mixed: We yet have to achieve certain institutional reforms and the principle of the *responsibility to protect* must yet be translated into concrete action – such as in the case of the oppressive policies of the regime in Myanmar against its own population. But of course reform of an organization with tasks as diverse and daunting as the United Nations' is never concluded. We must always be prepared to make the adjustments which are necessary to improve its impact, its legitimacy and its efficiency. Today, such adjustments require a two-fold approach: on the one hand, we must strengthen its operational parts, and on the other hand we must ground the work of the organization more firmly in its origins, the United Nations Charter.

Mr. President

The demands in the area of **peace-keeping** are greater than ever before. This bears testimony to the faith placed in the United Nations – but it also makes the deficiencies in the management of the organization a more pressing issue. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was therefore right in proposing changes to strengthen the institutional support for the organization's field activities. We look forward to further progress in this respect, in particular in the area of procurement. We are not convinced that the lessons from the Oil-for-Food scandal, which has done great damage to the United Nations, have been fully absorbed, let alone fully translated into concrete action. We must also credibly improve the **financial efficiency and accountability** of the organization, this will in

turn allow us to present to our domestic constituencies the ever increasing bills for peace-keeping operations.

Mr. President

All the strengthening of the operational and managerial capabilities of the United Nations will not change the fact that, operationally and financially, this is not a powerful organization. Its budget will always pale in comparison to what a number of States spend on their defense budgets, to quote an obvious example. The genuine power and strength of the organization lies in its foundation in **international law**. The Charter itself can be regarded as the greatest achievement in the history of international law. More importantly though, the United Nations has the unique ability to bestow legitimacy and legality on international action. In the eyes of the world, the United Nations symbolizes the rule of law in international relations. This is a tremendous asset that we must cherish and promote wherever possible. The United Nations and its organs must always be seen as a guardian of international law. Given its central place in the institutional architecture of the organization, this applies in particular to the Security Council. The current practice of the Council with respect to the listing and delisting of individuals targeted by **sanctions** is therefore a cause of concern. We believe that disregarding international standards of due process does nothing to improve the effectiveness of the sanctions regimes, but much to undermine the authority of the Council itself.

Mr. President

Long years and much energy have been spent on the **reform of the Security Council**. It would appear today that we are as far from a solution as ever. We believe that the legitimacy of the Council's action has a number of sources: The most important source is the quality of its decisions and the extent to which they reflect international law. Also, the decisions of the Council have the necessary legitimacy if they are genuinely taken on behalf of the membership as a whole, and thus also on behalf of the vast majority of States that do not serve on the Council. This can be achieved through the stronger involvement of such States – in particular if and when their interests are directly affected. Finally, of course, the membership of the Council must be more representative of the overall membership of the organization and the developing world in particular.

Mr. President

The past few years have not brought about the era of the **rule of law** that some had hoped for. Quite to the contrary, there have been concerted and ultimately unsuccessful attacks on the importance of the rule of law in international relations. Nevertheless, we have achieved very significant progress in some areas, in particular in the area of international criminal justice. The Security Council has led the way through the establishment of international and hybrid tribunals, but the crowning success was of course the establishment of the **International Criminal Court**. The referral of the situation in Darfur to the Court was a landmark decision, both legally and politically. It was a strong message by the Security Council that the international community does not

accept impunity for the most serious crimes under international law. This statement, however, needs to be backed up by enforcement action, in particular by the arrest of all indictees sought by the Court. We therefore call on all States and the United Nations to cooperate with the ICC to that effect.

Mr. President

We will continue to take strong interest in the work of the Security Council. At the same time, of course, we will focus our energy on making the General Assembly a more relevant and more essential part of the UN system. In this respect, my delegation looks forward to your leadership and close cooperation with you on the priority issues you had identified.

I thank you