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Statement by
H.E. Mr. José Sócrates
Prime Minister of Portugal
on behalf of the European Union

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I have the honour to address this General Assembly on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. President,

1. I bring you our best wishes for the mandate you are now beginning. You can count on the firm support of the European Union throughout this General Assembly, certain that you will continue the excellent work of your predecessor, Haya Al-Khalifa. As this is the first General Assembly since the inauguration of our Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, I also wish to take the opportunity, Sir, to renew on behalf of the EU our solid support to you in your leadership of the United Nations.

2. In a globalised and interdependent world, only strong multilateral institutions can promote the fundamental values of peace, democracy, human rights and development.

Reaffirming the ideals that oversaw the creation of the United Nations, the EU believes that only with a stronger organisation will we be able to live in a safer, fairer and more developed world.

3. This is why we support the primacy of the United Nations in maintaining peace and security, as the foundation and focal point of our shared ambitions and concerted efforts and why we adopted effective multilateralism and a rule-based international order as the objective of the European Security Strategy.

4. If the turn of the century has taught us only one lesson, it is that global challenges require global responses. They need effective multilateralism, and that is our business here, in the United Nations and with the United Nations. All this will be possible only if we all invest in this structure the trust and the public will, allowing it to act effectively on the international scene with both legitimacy and determination.

5. A United Nations which is equal to the principles which oversaw its creation, capable of adapting to its growing responsibilities and challenges.

A United Nations where all the international players contribute the resources to achieve its ongoing mission of international cooperation for sustainable economic and social development.

A United Nations capable of dealing with the crises which threaten international peace and security.

6. The commitment I wish to leave with you today, on behalf of the European Union, is that you can rely on us in making this effective multilateralism a reality.

Ladies and gentlemen,

7. I propose to begin with what is beyond doubt one of the greatest ambitions we have set ourselves so far here in the United Nations. That is, to meet the internationally agreed development goals including the Millennium Development Goals and contribute to a sustainable development which embraces the social, economic and environmental aspects and which above all encompasses every one of the countries brought together here in this General Assembly.

8. These Goals are demanding, but they should not discourage us. On the contrary, they should oblige us to hasten and enhance the efficiency of our work to eradicate poverty and build a true partnership for development, capable of coordinating – including through improved financing – our efforts and resources, fragmented through unilateral actions. They should serve as an instrument for promoting education and decent standards of health, in combating climate change.

9. In this context I must mention one of the stated aims of the European Union: the adoption of an EU-Africa Joint Strategy to be endorsed by the Second EU-Africa summit, which will be held in Lisbon this coming December. I mention it because it is a clear sign

of our times: a strategy defined jointly by Africans and Europeans, which reflects our commitment with the MDGs and is consistent with the action of the multilateral institutions of both continents. An inclusive and ambitious strategy, which reflects the progress made in Euro-African cooperation in the widest range of areas and sets the standards to be achieved through shared responses to the challenges, likewise shared, which the two continents face.

10. Climate change is one of the great global challenges facing mankind. It threatens our prosperity and will undermine our ability to achieve the MDGs. Here, too, our response must be global, and collective. As the theme of the High-level event being convened by the Secretary-General so aptly puts it, "The future is in our hands". It will take both political will and determined urgent action to respond successfully to this challenge.

11. I was pleased to take part in the High Level Event on Climate Change, and its results are encouraging. Sustainable Development and emission reductions need to go hand in hand – this is our shared responsibility. This initiative will add momentum to the formulation of a global comprehensive post-2012 agreement on the climate regime. We should agree to begin negotiations on such a regime at the Bali Climate Conference in December. The EU will make every effort there to obtain an ambitious consensus.

12. But even more important, we need the support of all.

The EU has already committed itself unilaterally to cutting its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20%. But we want to go further. We are ready, in the framework of a global agreement on future climate rules, to raise our commitment to 30%. And I repeat our call for global emissions to be reduced by at least 50% of their 1990 levels, by the year two thousand and fifty.

13. We will need to limit climate change but also to adapt to its effects, namely by rethinking our model for development, in the light of the two other factors in the equation for sustainable development: energy and innovation.

14. The world needs a more responsible energy policy. That is why, in the EU, we are developing an integrated Energy and Climate policy which promotes environmental sustainability, and why we support the Heiligendamm process to intensify and develop cooperation in this area. And we also have to develop innovative technologies in order to exploit new sources of energy and to improve our energy efficiency.

15. Concerning the reform of the institutional framework of the UN environmental activities, the EU firmly believes that an ambitious reform is required in order to achieve real change. In this context, the EU and others are pursuing the upgrading of UNEP to a specialized agency, a United Nations Environment Organization (UNEO). The process for the establishment of a UNEO would build on existing processes, structures and systems and should be accompanied by a broader strategy for strengthening the international environmental governance.

16. Sustainable development also implies respecting, protecting and fulfilling Human Rights around the world. We believe this to be crucial, and that it must remain at the heart of the all the UN's sectoral activities in order to enhance the human rights mainstreaming throughout the UN. The human rights-based approach agreed upon by the UN Common Understanding of 2003 was an important first step to ensure this aim.

17. The 3rd Committee should continue to play a central role in the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide. As in the past, the EU will do its utmost to ensure the success of the next session of this committee.

18. With the institution-building process of the Human Rights Council now complete, if we all continue to work together, this body has the potential to equal the expectations when it was created, and allow more vigorous and dynamic UN action in

this area. It is now up to its members, all other states and stakeholders to work towards the fulfilment of this goal.

19. The EU is fully committed to devising ways of furthering and strengthening the work carried out by the UN in the field of human rights, through increased cooperation with the special mechanisms. We emphasise the importance of promoting and protecting children's rights, as we celebrate the 18th anniversary of the UN Convention on Rights of the Child and we will have the follow up to the Special Session on Children held in 2002, during the current session of the General Assembly.

20. I should also like to reaffirm our longstanding opposition to the death penalty and repeat our call for its total abolition worldwide. In this regard, jointly with countries of all regions, the EU will be co-author of a draft resolution on a universal moratorium and the abolition of the death penalty.

21. The EU is especially committed to promoting implementation of and compliance with International Humanitarian Law. We must urgently enhance the cooperation between all the relevant players, including the UNHCR, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, IOM, NGOs and national authorities in response to attacks against civilians and humanitarian workers in the field.

Ladies and gentlemen,

22. Effective multilateralism also requires a concerted response to the ever-widening range of threats to international peace and security.

Every time that states and organisations, be they international, regional or sub-regional, are able to respond in a coordinated and collective manner to these threats, the results are measurable. Cooperation between the EU and the United Nations in this area has

been intensified, just as we, too, are developing our own capacity through the European Security and Defence Policy.

23. In accordance with the concept of African ownership, the EU reiterates the important role of the African Union as the leading partner and essential player in the preservation of peace and security in the continent. The EU continues to provide strong support to the AU's and African regions' efforts and their long term vision of an African Peace and Security Architecture. The examples of cooperation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in Somalia and in Sudan itself should encourage us to new initiatives. Our concerted action will further accelerate the downward trend in conflict in Africa.

24. In this context, the EU welcomes the creation of UNAMID, the hybrid peace operation for Darfur of the United Nations and the African Union, so that together we can contribute to the political resolution of this conflict, with its tragic humanitarian consequences in Sudan and the wider region. In order to address these consequences, the EU reaffirms its support to the deployment of a multidimensional presence in Eastern Chad and northern Central African Republic and welcomes the opening of political talks on Darfur, which will take place in Libya on 27 October.

25. But peace and security are a challenge in Europe, too.

We share the opinion of the Secretary-General that the status quo in Kosovo is not sustainable.

The EU supports and participates actively in the ongoing efforts of the international community, namely those of the Troika, to bring the parties closer together and obtain a comprehensive political solution that will lead to a democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo, and will contribute to the consolidation of stability and prosperity in the Balkans. We urge both parties to engage constructively and creatively in this process. The EU stands ready to play a significant role in the implementation of a future status settlement.

26. Reactivation of the Middle East Peace Process remains a priority for the International community. We have to act quickly: the door is presently open, but it will not stay open for long. The EU, as a member of the Quartet, reiterates its commitment to reaching a just, global and lasting solution for the Israeli-Arab conflict. This can only happen through the creation of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State living side by side, in peace and security, with Israel.

27. The stabilisation of Lebanon will also contribute to the stabilisation of the Middle East. The solution to the present political crisis requires a special commitment and dialogue by Lebanon's leaders and the countries of the region. For its part, the EU is committed to assuring Lebanon's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity.

28. Concerning Iraq, and following the meeting of the High-Level Group held on 22 September, the EU will participate in the collective effort demanded by an extremely precarious humanitarian and security situation. We will continue to support the Baghdad Government in the implementation of measures which contribute to the country's stability.

29. In the same way, the EU continues to support the promotion of peace, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan and the wider region. With this aim, we are present through the form of a police mission and together with UNAMA and other relevant actors, remain committed to help foster Afghanistan's stabilisation. Accordingly, the EU remains one of the top donors in this country.

30. We are committed to upholding, implementing and further strengthening the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation framework in the fight against threats which are tending to escape the control of national sovereignty, the challenges deriving from destabilising accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons, from illicit or irresponsible arms trade, and from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which are creating new and growing hot-spots of international tension. In this regard,

the EU welcomes the growing support in all parts of the world for an International Arms Trade Treaty and is firmly committed to this process.

31. All terrorist acts are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, their form or their manifestation. We must therefore make resolute efforts to counter terrorism, in accordance with our obligations under International Law, and fully respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, the protection of which are essential in tackling this threat.

32. The adoption of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by the General Assembly was a significant achievement. Now we must ensure its full implementation, including by reaching agreement on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism as soon as possible.

But our multilateral action to fight this scourge goes further. Promoting peace requires a culture of dialogue. Only in this way will we overcome the tensions, prejudices and above all the ignorance on which terrorism feeds.

33. The Alliance of Civilisations is an important and well-timed initiative, as it seeks to strengthen dialogue between peoples, cultures and religions. The EU supports the nomination of former President Jorge Sampaio to the post of High Representative of the Alliance of Civilisations and welcomes his Action Plan. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the commitment of the Group of Friends of the Alliance of the Civilisations, for which we ask for the support of all.

Ladies and gentlemen,

34. For centuries, international trade has been the main means of bringing different cultures and peoples together. That is why we also call for the earliest possible

agreement in the World Trade Organisation's Doha Development Round. This month will be absolutely crucial for the DDA. Therefore, it is vital for all key Members to show a spirit of compromise and constructiveness and a genuine will to commit to a balanced agreement.

35. Peace has to be consolidated, failing which it can be no more than the interval between wars. One of the newest members of the United Nations is an example of this: I am referring to Timor-Leste, which thanks to the efforts and commitment of the international community to consolidate the foundations of its statehood, its democracy and its development, recently successfully held its first independently-organised elections. But the presence of all players continues to be required, to ensure the country's political, economic and social stability and security.

36. This is why the United Nations' response to war cannot be reduced to keeping the peace. We must make the Peacebuilding Commission an active and efficient body, a central component of the international community's response to the challenges of consolidating peace in many of the world's regions through integrated strategies for reconstruction, institution-building, sustainable development and medium and long-term investment in states which are fragile or in a post-conflict situation.

37. Peace also depends on our capacity to ensure that justice knows no frontiers, and we shall never fail in our defence of the Responsibility to Protect, for we believe that the inalienable rights of the individual need the protection of international mechanisms. We support the International Criminal Court, and we call for the universal ratification of the Rome Statute. We stress the need for cooperation by both member states and non-member states with the Court in general, and as regards the execution of arrest warrants in specific.

We believe in, and give our support to the Secretary-General's proposals concerning the Rule of Law, namely the establishment of the Rule of Law Unit.

38. The long-term success of a global organisation such as the UN depends upon its capacity to respond to ever-changing challenges and new international players, by reforming, adapting and continuously reinventing itself. In this context, and following on from the reform commitments made at the 2005 Summit, we welcome the reports of the High-Level Panel and of the Secretary-General on System-Wide Coherence, intended to lead to strengthened capacities in development, humanitarian aid and environment. Furthermore, the EU values as an essential part of the development agenda the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women. In this context, the EU looks forward to a strengthened gender entity and architecture, which is able to perform and deliver for women and girls at the normative, policy and operational level.

39. We believe, and wish to make it clear beyond all doubt, that the only possible response to the challenges of our times lies in effective multilateralism based on the United Nations system. This is why we remain committed to the reform of its main bodies in order to enhance the Organization's representativity, transparency and effectiveness.

40. In our view it is also a priority to strengthen this Organisation's management. Its budget, paid for by all Member States, should reflect the main priorities accepted by all and the principles of sound management and budgetary discipline which we have defended for many years.

Ladies and gentlemen,

41. We shall need political will in order to adapt our international system to the challenges which we face today. This Assembly and the Secretary-General can rely on the EU to help turn that political will into action.

The response to these challenges lies in active and effective multilateralism. And for all of us it lies in the United Nations.”