



Plenary
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Plenary exchange on the President's draft outcomes document for the High-level Summit

Statement by H.E. Mr Peter Tesch
Charge d'affaires
Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative
Australian Mission to the United Nations

(Check against delivery)

Mr President

As a long-standing advocate of UN reform, Australia is ready to seize this crucial opportunity to ensure the Summit's success. States must demonstrate greater ambition and flexibility than we have seen thus far if the Summit is to fulfil its potential as a landmark meeting of our leaders. The draft outcomes document is a promising beginning. But its language and substance must be elevated to be worthy of the attention of the world's leaders.

Rather than providing you with a long list of comments, Mr President, we intend to focus on a few areas in the draft outcomes document which are of particular significance. We hope other States will take the same, focussed approach to give you clear guidance on the way forward.

Development

We welcome the balance emerging on development issues, which builds on the partnership founded in the Monterrey Consensus.

Financing development requires an integrated approach. The most effective formula for supporting sustainable global development must include official development assistance (ODA), mobilising domestic resources, improving governance, facilitating foreign direct investment, liberalising trade, enhancing aid effectiveness, and providing targeted and appropriate debt relief. Australia will continue to be a strong supporter of multilateral debt relief through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative.

However, the greatest benefit to developing states would come not from ODA, but from trade liberalisation. Leaders must call for the conclusion by no later than 2006 of the WTO Doha Round, and agree to grant duty and quota-free market access for all LDC goods. The World Bank has recently calculated that an ambitious result from the Doha Round could deliver up to \$269 billion in overall welfare gains by 2015, with around 40 per cent of these gains flowing to developing countries.



Leaders should recognise the immense development challenges faced by Africa. While noting these challenges, Australia targets its aid in its own Asia-Pacific region, where two thirds or 700 million of the world's poor live. We welcome references to Small Island Developing States in the draft Summit outcomes document, in recognition of the particular development challenges they face. We would support similar, specific references to the challenges faced by fragile states. In many cases, particularly in fragile states, achieving development goals will not be possible until law and order, stability and growth are achieved. Absent these foundations of society, development efforts may be thwarted.

Peacebuilding

Australia strongly supports the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission. If the Commission is to assume its rightful place among the headline outcomes of this process, it must be established by leaders at the Summit, leaving as few details as possible for later resolution.

To achieve this goal, the draft Summit outcomes document will need considerable supplementation. Leaders should agree to establish a small, focussed Commission, which should assist fragile States in both post-conflict and, upon their request, pre-conflict situations. Australia warmly welcomes efforts by Denmark and Tanzania to develop these and other details for inclusion in the Summit outcomes document. Similar processes should be used to tackle other, difficult issues before us.

Disarmament and non-proliferation

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), including the threat that terrorists could acquire WMD, is one of the key security challenges of our time. We strongly support draft recommendations in the Summit outcomes document for strengthening the multilateral framework for disarmament and non-proliferation.

Australia acknowledges progress in reducing nuclear arsenals, and expects nuclear weapon states to take further steps. But we do not accept that movement on nuclear disarmament should be a precondition for improvements to the non-proliferation regime. Such an approach puts at risk the security benefit all parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) derive from assurances that nuclear programs in non-nuclear weapon states are peaceful.

Existing non-proliferation measures have proven insufficient to stop determined proliferators, and must be bolstered. Australia remains deeply concerned about the risk of States misusing the peaceful-uses provisions of the NPT, and we firmly believe the Summit outcomes document should focus more on non-proliferation.

Language on Security Council resolution 1540 should be strengthened. Leaders should explicitly endorse the principles of that resolution, and 'commit all States to its early and comprehensive implementation'. Language on the verification regime of the NPT should also be strengthened. Leaders should not only recognise the Model Additional Protocol as the global nuclear safeguards standard, but make acceptance of the Additional Protocol a 'condition of nuclear supply to non-nuclear weapon States'.



The Proliferation Security Initiative continues to play an important role in efforts to stem the proliferation of WMD. Leaders should expressly ‘endorse the vital contribution of the voluntary Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) to preventing the spread of WMD’ and ‘encourage greater support for the PSI and other initiatives that address the gaps in existing non-proliferation measures’.

Terrorism

Australia supports recommendations in the draft Summit outcomes document for concerted action to combat terrorism. But we believe the text should be strengthened further. Leaders should call on the Security Council to consider ways to streamline and strengthen its counter-terrorism subsidiary bodies, including by consolidating States’ reporting requirements. Leaders should also encourage greater cooperation between the UN and regional organisations, which play a crucial, practical role in fighting terrorism.

Leaders should embrace the Secretary-General’s comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy. In particular, the Summit presents an opportunity to provide real momentum to negotiations on the comprehensive convention on terrorism. There is no reason why the convention cannot be concluded during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. The Summit also presents a valuable opportunity for States to become Parties to the existing 13 sectoral conventions against terrorism, including the recently concluded Convention to Suppress Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

Responsibility to protect

Australia sees the Summit as an opportunity to gain strong endorsement by leaders for the emerging norm of the ‘responsibility to protect’.

We firmly believe the international community has a responsibility to act where a government is unable or unwilling to protect its population from large-scale human rights abuses, such as genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. In such cases, the international community has a responsibility to use the full means available to it under international law, including Chapters VI, VII and VIII of the Charter. The responsibility to protect includes, as a last resort, the use of force by the international community, acting with Security Council authorisation and, as appropriate, in cooperation with regional organisations. Leaders should strongly endorse these elements of the responsibility to protect in the Summit outcomes document.

Security Council

Australia agrees with the call in the draft Summit outcomes document for ‘comprehensive reform of the Security Council’. Australia has long advocated expanding the permanent membership of the Council, without extension of the veto, to make it more compatible with geopolitical realities. Consistent with this approach, Australia supports a Security Council reform model along the lines of Model A, as set out in the Secretary-General’s report, with an expanded permanent membership including Japan, India, Brazil and appropriate African representation.



Human rights

Australia has been at the forefront of efforts to improve the effectiveness of the human rights treaty bodies, and we therefore welcome the reference to treaty body reform in the draft Summit outcomes document. We also support the idea of elevating the status of human rights in the UN system, and the proposed Human Rights Council may be a way forward, although details will need to be thought through carefully.

Secretariat reform

The Summit also provides a key opportunity to rethink and reform the UN Secretariat, and indeed the whole UN Organisation. A strong set of management reforms, including, but going beyond, those proposed in the Secretary-General's report, will be indispensable for enhancing the UN's credibility and strengthening its effectiveness in all fields. Present language in the draft Summit outcomes document is not sufficiently strong, nor specific enough, concerning the measures that should be taken.

More details should be added to the draft Summit outcomes document to strengthen accountability at every level. Leaders should support a full review of mandates to update the Secretariat's program of work. The Secretary-General should be empowered to take firm action to reform outdated work practices and improve productivity. Leaders should embrace measures to improve the performance of staff, in addition to the proposed staff buy-out, to reinvigorate the Secretariat.

If we are to hold the Secretary-General, and thereby the Secretariat, truly accountable, we must ensure the Secretary-General has sufficient authority and flexibility to act without constant second-guessing and self-serving interference by member States in simple management functions. Leaders should endorse the principle of giving greater authority to the Secretary-General to manage the Secretariat. This should be clearly stated as the purpose of reviewing the human resources and budget rules.

Mr President

In taking stock of the UN's many worthy achievements over the last 60 years, leaders need to look hard at the way the UN operates today. The UN's credibility is at stake. But the draft Summit outcomes we have before us now will not generate a 'San Francisco moment' in September. With less than three months remaining until the Summit, we must intensify our efforts to achieve concrete and comprehensive reform. Australia will continue to work actively to that end.