



PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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(Translation)

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Wang Guangya,
Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations
On the Report of the Secretary-General "In larger freedom: towards
development, security and human rights for all" at the 59th Session of
the General Assembly
(6 April 2005)**

Mr. President:

On March 21, Secretary-General Kofi Annan formally submitted to the General Assembly a comprehensive report, which has attracted wide attention and commentaries. The President has today launched a round of discussions on that report, marking the start of the substantive phase in the preparations for the September Summit. China stands ready to remain in close consultations with all countries with a view to advancing these preparations.

As stated in the Secretary-General's report, this year represents a unique opportunity for the United Nations. The September Summit is to take important decisions bearing on the future orientation and role of the United Nations. Successful completion of the preparations for the Summit is a challenging task for all of us. The Secretary-General's report has for this purpose set forth a number of proposals marked by unique insights and boldness. We believe that the report is well intentioned, nobly inspired and contains many practical proposals. We appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General in this regard. China is making a comprehensive and in-depth study of the report. For the moment, I wish only to make some preliminary observations.

Mr. President,

The United Nations was born sixty years ago out of the ashes of a devastating war. On the one hand, the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter have retained their vitality and strong relevance to this day;

adherence to them should therefore predicate and orient the preparations for the September Summit. On the other hand, the dramatic changes in the international situation have meant that only by undertaking necessary reform can the United Nations maintain its vitality and play a greater role in international affairs.

Accelerating the pace of UN reform and the establishment of a renewed and highly efficient mechanism are common goals shared by all countries. It requires on our part a strong sense of urgency. Business as usual and standing pat will not help improve the United Nations' credibility or ability. Meanwhile, we must not lose sight of the fact that UN reform needs to be all-round and multisectoral. It cannot be accomplished overnight or in one go and one mustn't expect any permanent fix. Reform can only be a gradual process with a variety of national perspectives and dissimilar interests at play. It is therefore only natural for divergence of views and controversy to arise. Given this reality, we need to come to agreement on some basic principles for proceeding the reform, which we believe could include the following:

First, regardless of their size, wealth or might, all countries have the right to take full part on an equal footing in the discussion of all UN reform-related issues.

Second, reform should accommodate to the maximum extent the views and concerns of all UN members, especially the developing countries.

Third, reform should tackle the more manageable issues first and proceed gradually from there to the thornier ones. On questions where division persists, caution is called for. If consensus is not immediately reachable on them, consultations should continue. The temptation to force a decision at the Summit must be resisted.

Fourth, the focus of reform should be to effectively reverse the trend of giving priority to security over development that has characterized UN activities for a long time. The United Nations should increase resources input into development issues and effectively implement the MDGs.

Mr. President,

Narrowing the gulf between rich and poor and achieving development for all constitute an extremely important strategic mission for both North and South. They are central topics that require priority attention at the September Summit. The Secretary-General's report stresses the urgency of achieving the Millennium Development Goals, goals that are still achievable but only if we break with business as usual and dramatically accelerate and scale up action now. The report contains a number of practical recommendations, including recognizing the special needs of Africa and reaffirming solemn commitments made to address those needs, urging developed countries to establish timetables to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance by no later than 2015, the setting up of international financing mechanisms, the early completion of multilateral trade negotiations,

with full commitment to realizing its development focus and more debt reduction for HIPC countries. We welcome these proposals and look forward to further fleshing them out as discussions progress.

The report also contains sound recommendations on strengthening basic health systems, enhancing overall international response to major infectious disease and the establishment of a worldwide early warning system for all natural hazards. The General Assembly adopted by consensus two resolutions on enhancing capacity-building in global public health at its 58th and 59th sessions, attesting to a solid consensus in the international community on the issue. The General Assembly should build on this momentum to take follow-up action.

Mr. President,

We support the Secretary-General's proposition concerning collective action against security threats and challenges. It coincides with China's proposal for a new security concept that emphasizes "mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation". The proposals in the report on a strategy against terrorism, peacekeeping and the fight against transnational organized crime are on the whole sound and positive. Meanwhile, we take note that recent consultations in the General Assembly have shown that differences still remain on the issues of the definition of terrorism, the criteria for the use of force, the concept of the "responsibility to protect" and the prevention of proliferation. We believe further consultations are needed to seek consensus on those questions.

Mr. President,

The Secretary-General's report contains a range of proposals for the reform of the United Nations institutional machinery. We favor the adoption of a comprehensive package of reforms to revitalize the General Assembly and support the reform proposals concerning the strengthening of ECOSOC's role. The question of establishing mechanisms enabling the General Assembly to engage fully and systematically with civil society needs, in our view, further in-depth study.

China favors and supports the reform of the existing human rights machinery of the United Nations. The key to such reform is to change the current practice of politicizing the human rights issues, reduce confrontation and promote cooperation so that more resources can be devoted to technical cooperation projects aimed at national capacity-building in the area of human rights. Whether or not the replacement of the Commission on Human Rights with a smaller standing Human Rights Council will overcome the serious "credibility deficit" characterizing international human rights work is a topic that needs further earnest exploration.

China is favorably disposed toward the proposal for the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission and believes that its main responsibility should be

to help devise plans for the transition from conflict to post-conflict peacebuilding and to coordinate initiatives of the international community in this respect. We look forward to more specific recommendations from the Secretary-General on the Commission's functions and mandate.

China has serious reservations on abolishing the Military Staff Committee.

Mr. President,

Security Council reform is now a focus of universal attention. I wish to take this opportunity to further elaborate on China's position on the question.

First, China supports reform of the Security Council, with priority given to increasing the representation of the developing countries in the Council.

Second, the Security Council is a body entrusted with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. As the expansion of the Council involves the vital interests of all concerned, controversy surrounding the issue is therefore expected. What's essential is that full account must be taken of the interests and concerns of all regional groups and each country and that the process should be characterized by democratic, in-depth discussions, patient consultations and a deliberate, orderly procedure. Only a blueprint resulting from consensus can truly help strengthen the Security Council's authority and effectiveness and win broad trust and support from the general membership.

Third, China is open to all proposals for increasing Council membership as long as they are conducive to overcoming divergence and maintaining unity among the member states. In previous consultations in the General Assembly, the two options proposed by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change were discussed and major differences persist. China believes that those two options being what they are, namely ideas for consideration, there's no reason discussions of Council reform should be confined to the two models put forth by the Panel. It is important to tap the collective wisdom of all and treat all reform proposals and ideas with equal seriousness.

Fourth, in the long-term interest of the United Nations as a whole, China is not in favor of setting an artificial time limit for Council reform and still less of forcing through any immature proposals lacking consensus in the form of a vote.

Fifth, Security Council reform is only one part of the reform process of the United Nations and should not be allowed to eclipse equally important reform in other areas. We do not wish to see debate and controversy surrounding Council reform marginalize or even jeopardize consultations on other issues, particularly those concerning development. We should especially guard against the possibility of such controversy causing a major rift among UN members, with the unfortunate consequence of compromising the drafting and consideration of the final document of the forthcoming Summit.

Mr. President,

China will continue its active participation in the preparations that you are steering for the Summit. We are confident that under your able leadership and through the tireless efforts of the facilitators, work in the substantive phase of preparations for the Summit will smoothly proceed in an open, inclusive and transparent manner. The outcome document could take proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report as a basis but should widely consult all interested parties and take on board other useful proposals and ideas to reflect all concerns, particularly the reasonable calls of the developing countries. This is an important guarantee for the success of the Summit.

Thank you, Mr. President.