

**Report of the Secretary General
(In larger freedom : towards development,
security and human rights for all)
Speech by H. Exc. Mr. Jean-Marc de La Sablière
(04/19/2005)**

Unofficial Translation

Mr. President,

France aligns itself with the statement made by Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union and wishes to add the following brief comments.

In the past few years there has been a growing awareness that development, security and human rights cannot be dissociated. The Secretary-General justly reflected on this inter-relationship in his report, and we welcome his approach.

The proposal which commands the most attention is the bold one for the creation of a human rights council. We will come back to this later during the exchanges on institutional questions. But we wish to emphasize right now that the debate on establishing such a council cannot be dissociated from the larger one of the place of human rights in the United Nations system.

We consider the Secretary-General's proposals in the chapter "Living in Dignity" offer a balanced basis, for the convergence of approaches of Member States.

I would like to illustrate this estimation by three points that have priority in our view:

1/ Strengthening the role of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: we all recognize that the financial and human resources of this office are not commensurate with expectations. Increased financing from the regular budget means more efficient action, better guarantees of independence and greater technical assistance. We all stand to gain from this.

2/ Assistance to populations in danger: we support the Secretary-General's proposals in the humanitarian sphere. No state is immune to catastrophes. France has proposed the establishment of an international humanitarian force in order to strengthen the United Nations capacity to deal with environmental, humanitarian and health crises. This proposal is an important contribution to Jan Egeland's study.

3/ The responsibility to protect: the formula proposed by the Secretary-General offers states that have reservations the desired checks. States' first responsibility to protect their populations is clearly reaffirmed, with respect for national sovereignty. In the event of failure to do so and as a last resort, it falls to the Security Council, and to this body alone, to decide on the need for intervention. Recent history has shown us that the Member States of the United Nations cannot avoid their collective responsibility. We expect the Summit to produce real progress on this question.

Mr. President,

While it is true that the Secretary-General's report is in itself a well-balanced working outline, there is undoubtedly some slight room for improvement. France would accordingly like to make two final remarks:

1/ The contribution of the International Criminal Court to the fight against impunity is crucial; we note that the Secretary-General's report says substantially less about the

ICC compared with that of the High-Level Panel. The Security Council's use of its right of referral must be reaffirmed and encouraged.

2/ The gains of the major conferences in the 1990s, especially Cairo and Beijing, might have deserved greater emphasis in this chapter rather than being perceived solely from the standpoint of their contribution to the Millennium Development Goals. In particular, gender equality, women's rights and their situation in armed conflicts (SCR 1325) should have been addressed in the report.

Thank you./.