



Statement

by

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and
High Representative
for the Least Developed Countries,
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at the

**Opening Ceremonies of the Global Classrooms
Model United Nations Conference**

**United Nations Association – USA
Tampa Bay Chapter**

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Distinguished “delegates”,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Friends, teachers and students,

I would like to start by congratulating the United Nations Association - USA, and in particular its President and CEO, Ambassador Luers, who initiated the Tampa programme in 2002, for the wonderful work they are doing in policy research on global issues, in education and in strengthening the United States’ participation in, and support of, the United Nations System with a view to ensure its continued relevance in today’s world.

It is wonderful to be here today with such a great crowd of enthusiastic young but very committed students. The “Global Classrooms” is a highly commendable educational programme that offers students the unique opportunity to tackle the most important concerns of the international community by role-playing countries, interest groups and non governmental organizations.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Lucia Rodriguez, Chair of the Education Department UNA-USA New York and all its members.

Here in Tampa, let me express our gratitude to Tom Cook [consultant for “Global Classrooms”], Judy Hoffman and Suzanne Hammontree [from the Tampa Bay Chapter Board and Education Committee] and all the “Global Classrooms” advisors that contributed with their hard work and dedication to this programme, with the support of the Treasurer of the Tampa Bay Chapter, Ms. Mary Trevino, and the relentless help of Interns from University of Tampa, Elizabeth Rozman and Thiago Grijó Dal-Toe, and from the University of South Florida, Jennifer Kon. Last but not least, let me extend our deepest appreciation to all the participating teachers and to Dennis Holt [Supervisor, Secondary Social Studies, School District of Hillsborough] and Randy Lightfoot [Supervisor, K-12 Social Studies, School District of Pinellas].

As you all certainly are aware, even at your young age, the United Nations has been tested by conflicts, humanitarian crisis and turbulent changes, but has always lived up to the expectations by playing an important and often crucial role in preventing another

World War as its Charter set out to do, and has achieved much for people all over the world.

Today, we live in a world where the balances are fragile and instabilities are close at hand. Our common well-being can only be granted if we can achieve a true and sustainable peace based on respect for the rule of law, more precisely the rules governing international relations.

We are living in an increasingly globalized world. But globalization and liberalization of the international economy must also include measures that protect the weak and vulnerable economies and societies of especially the most disadvantaged countries. Market forces cannot alone resolve the problems of poverty, HIV/AIDS and other diseases, environmental destruction, global warming and climate change. Market forces alone cannot resolve the need for investments, infrastructure development and job creation in these countries.

The speed of changes and extent of divisions in today's world tell us that these days, the need for an effective United Nations Organization is greater than ever, especially if we want to help the world address the great complexities and challenges that we face. There is considerable increase in the level of expectations on what the United Nations can accomplish.

However all these problems can only be resolved when all Member States of the United Nations act together. All of them have a joint responsibility to resolve threats to Peace and Security and that of International Development, and the United Nations is the sole proper Forum for the debate and resolution of these problems.

On the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, Member States readdressed their commitment and added force to their belief in the United Nations as the "indispensable common house of the entire human family".

In the last years, the activities of blue-helmeted peace-keepers have emerged as the most visible role associated with the world organization although the UN does much more than peace and security. Yes, I know that, the way the UN is perceived outside is more related to peace and security issues. But, Ladies and Gentlemen, the United Nations does a lot more than peace and security.

The United Nations and its family of agencies are also engaged in a large number of worldwide activities to improve every aspect of people's lives around the world. The

promotion of developmental activities and humanitarian assistance relating to human survival and well-being represents the greatest achievements and mainstay of the UN. These issues may not get as much publicity as wars and conflicts, but they have made the existence of the UN more than justified. The scale with which the UN can reach out especially when it comes to humanitarian and developmental assistance, no other international organization can match or may ever match. Child survival and development, environmental protection, health care and medical research, alleviation of poverty and economic development, maintaining peace and security; agricultural development and fisheries, education, family planning, emergency and disaster relief, air and sea travel, peaceful uses of atomic energy, labor and workers' rights, to name but a few. The UN helps people not only to face the challenges of development but to make it possible. The existence of the United Nations makes a difference in people's lives every day.

As you all know, following the end of the cold war, and at the beginning of the new Century, there are countless new challenges and endless opportunities that we must create for peace, development, democracy and cooperation. Over the years, the UN has been instrumental in the formulation and promulgation of international laws that have greatly contributed to peace and security and human well-being. Some of these are the Conventions on Human Rights Protection, the Law of the Sea Convention, the Kyoto Protocol, the Convention on Biodiversity, the treaties relating to the use of space, or to environmental protection, and more recently the Millennium Development Goals.

The Millennium Declaration — adopted by Heads of States and Governments in 2000, showed a remarkable degree of agreement on the principles they shared and the goals they intended to pursue to build a better world. Yes, they also knew that they were separated on many issues, and they knew that they had many challenges to face. They were aware that globalization was not yet benefiting large segments of the world population. Poverty, disease, human rights violations and civil conflicts continued to badly affect millions. But they essentially saw the new century as a challenge and an opportunity; an era in which humanity could conquer peace, security, disarmament, human rights, democracy and good governance. In the Millennium Declaration, the world leaders vowed to defend the weak and meet the special needs of Africa. These are challenges we must meet if we want to build a better world.

The positive optimism of the year 2000 may now seem to be shaking.

But that positive optimism depends on you because you are the future of the World. The usefulness of the United Nations depends on you, young “delegates”. You would remember that after all the United Nations was founded to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, and to unite the strength of all nations in the task of maintaining international peace and security.

Is the UN fulfilling the primary mandate for which it was created?

YES is my answer!

Today the United Nations Security Council meets extremely frequently, and even in periods of major conflicts and disagreement, other issues that do not make it to the head line news are tackled and “resolved”.

HIV/AIDS is one of the top priorities at the United Nations, and we are doing everything we can to stop the pandemic. We are dealing with migration, ageing, Human Rights and many other issues that the UN, acting also as an element of change, is bringing to the forefront of the International Community’s attention.

The UN is adapting and adjusting to the needs and realities of the day. After the end of the Cold War, the UN began stepping into conflicts in which its involvement would previously have been unimaginable. The UN has engaged in peace-building missions, and in some places, such as Kosovo and East Timor, we even acted as the government of a territory as per Security Council mandate. The UN has risen to these challenges in face of major difficulties, sometimes even putting its staff in harm’s way.

We have accomplished many things and we have done lots of good: Mozambique, East Timor, Afghanistan or Sierra Leone to name a few, are good examples of our accomplishments. The UN has learned many lessons from its experience, and is making a reasonable progress in its work.

But we are always facing different crisis of sizeable or major magnitude, and these humanitarian crisis frequently, if not always, are not appropriately funded and when disaster strikes, depending on the attention they manage to get in the news the money starts to flow and yet we always manage to rise to the need of saving lives, sometimes with lack of appropriate resources. As Secretary-General Kofi Annan said during the launching of Humanitarian Appeal for 2005” The UN is sounding the alarm on behalf of 26 million people struggling to survive ravages of

war and other emergencies...” Distinguished “delegates”, we are the major relevant Organization to sound the alarm on a global scale, to call on our human spirit and bring the political will to save people.

Distinguished “delegates”,

Reaching decisions among 191 Members is complex, and the Organization must respond to the interests of countries with enormously different priorities and needs, but that is the way democracy works.

But the fact that the UN is a universal organization is, I believe, one of its greatest strengths. I believe that the universal nature of the Organization is an important asset in its efforts to reduce deep divisions in our world, resolve conflicts, promote good governance, and induce behaviour that is more respectful of human rights.

We need a strong UN, to meet all these challenges. Strengthening the UN depends on Governments, and especially on their willingness to work with others. The UN must act as a catalyst, to stimulate action by others. To meet the needs of the 21st century, we need a clearer consensus on priorities among Member States.

We must stress on particular relevance to the new century: Freedom; Equity and Solidarity; Tolerance; Non-Violence; Respect for Nature; and Shared responsibility. We know there is a decline in confidence and it has its roots in today’s conflicts, problems and challenges and the feelings of powerlessness and anxiety that they create.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan said in 2003 that the international community had reached a fork in the road. One path is to resign ourselves to the idea that an effective multilateral system is beyond our grasp, with the potential for reversion to the kind of dangerous, anarchic world order that the United Nations was set up to improve upon. The other path, also rocky but considerably more hopeful, leads to global solidarity based on shared doctrines and commitments, and a global security architecture that has a chance of commanding the respect — and adherence — of all States.

In September this year, world leaders will gather again in New York to review progress since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration. That meeting will be a real opportunity for them to unite around a shared vision of collective security, to renew and deepen their commitment to forge a global partnership for development and to take decisions to reform the United Nations to make it an even more effective organization.

The United Nations did well, is doing well and with your continuous support will do even better in future, for the betterment of all nations, large and small, poor and rich, and for men and women everywhere. You have a great role to play, you are our future leaders.

I wish you all great success in your work.
