



**STATEMENT BY HON'BLE MR. CHARNJIT SINGH ATWAL, DEPUTY SPEAKER OF
LOK SABHA, ON PARLIAMENTS AND MULTILATERAL COOPERATION:
MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY AT TEHE SECOND WORLD
CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS OF PARLIMENTS NEW YORK, 7-9 SEPTEMBER
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Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,

In the 21st century we are living in an age of global interdependence. The world has become a global village leading to greater interaction within and between States and societies. In this integrated world, the rules of global governance have come to play an important role. The changing dimensions of international law, international organizations, the interests of transnational institutions and the emergence of the international Civil Society have resulted in increased consultation, negotiation and cooperation among nations in arriving at decisions, which have global manifestations.

Friends, when we met here last in the year 2000, we had unanimously resolved to give real meaning to the opening words of the United Nations Charter – “We, the peoples of the United Nations” – in addressing the challenges facing the world community in terms of development, peace and security, democracy, respect for human rights, and social progress. Since then, our Parliaments have worked towards setting national policies and strategies to realize our international commitments. Parliaments have interacted directly and more closely with the international organizations to promote the agenda of development and peace. Our Parliaments have been successful in building bridges of international understanding, necessary for global partnership.

Unfortunately, during these five years, we have witnessed unprecedented levels of violence. Terrorist attacks such as the September 11 incidents in this city of New York, the attack on the Indian Parliament on 13 December 2001 and those in London recently, take innocent lives, endanger the security of nations and divert attention and resources from development. Terrorism, the most dangerous challenge in the present day world, threatens to negate civilization, which has evolved over the millennia. As a victim of terrorism for long, India has consistently drawn the attention of the international community to the urgent need to fight terrorism. We believe that democracies are most vulnerable to this menace. It is important that we stand united and work to evolve appropriate measures to tackle this evil in all its manifestations.

Development, peace and security provide the most important basics for the full realization of humankind’s potential. Sustainable socio-economic development in its many facets, including eradication of poverty, would bring overall prosperity. Democracy creates the institutional framework to support stability, helps spread the benefits of economic prosperity to all, upholds human rights, promotes gender equality and facilitates peaceful relations among States contributing to global peace and security.

In a few days, leaders from around the world would meet in New York and consider the important challenges including development, peace and security, human rights and terrorism. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have set ambitious targets. Achievement of the MDGs in a sustained manner, leading to real economic transformation, can only happen with the fulfillment of MDG8 and would not be possible without a fundamental reform of the international economic and financial institutions.

In the recent decades, a large network of international organisations has emerged on the global scene to help nations in achieving their objectives and overcoming their differences. These political, social and economic institutions have, with time, grown stronger, more complex and play an increasingly important role in

international affairs. The special Sessions of the General Assembly and the World Conferences of the United Nations have made a vital contribution on issues that confront humanity. There is need for restructuring and the democratization of the United Nations institutions becomes an imperative need of the times.

Distinguished delegates, we are meeting at the Headquarters of the United Nations. This Organisation was set up in 1945 to ensure that we could live in peace and concentrate on socio-economic development. Sixty years later, it is essential that it reflects the realities of today and directs its energies to meet the aspirations of the vast majority of its membership, who are from developing countries. The need for expansion of the UN Security Council by including developing countries as permanent members is imperative in this context. This would ensure that the Organisation's decisions and actions bear greater credibility and acceptability. The developing country perspective will also bring new approaches, capacities and enhance effectiveness and legitimacy. There is need for restructuring and the democratization of the United Nations institutions.

Distinguished Delegates, the world today, more than ever before, is confronted with new challenges of varied dimensions. Parliaments, the world over, are increasingly debating and discussing various international issues which are of a global nature and which call for global cooperation to confront them. Parliaments are also enacting legislations, which have global implications. Parliaments must respond to the challenges of the 21st century with a common vision and collective action. Parliamentarians play a crucial role in moulding governmental policies and decisions. They also help the governments in building international cooperation and in reducing tensions and conflicts. Through discussions, debates and inter-parliamentary exchanges, they help in promoting greater understanding among nations and in building a conducive environment for further interaction at the governmental level. The Inter-Parliamentary Union needs our wholehearted support in its varied endeavours towards promoting multilateral cooperation among the comity of nations. This Conference, I am sure will go a long way in forging a greater partnership between the parliamentary fraternity and international organizations for creating a safe, secure and sustainable world for the humankind.

Thank you.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)