

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR . MR.KAMALESH SHARMA,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE ON THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY
GENERAL ON THE WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION (AGENDA ITEM 10)
ON 25 SEPTEMBER 2001**

Mr. President,

Allow me to convey our congratulations to you on your assuming the office of the President of the General Assembly. We are confident that your wise and able leadership will guide us through a session that has begun under a terrible shadow. We place on record our appreciation for Mr. Harri Holkeri's stewardship of the last General Assembly. May I also thank the Secretary General for his report on the work of the organisation and his tireless efforts in promoting peace and development.

September 11 was a dark day for humanity. We grieve over the loss of so many innocent lives. We share the pain, the outrage and the revulsion of the people of the United States at the barbaric and senseless attack on them. Nearly half of the membership of the United Nations is embraced in this grievous and colossal tragedy. We know, from our own bitter experience, the toll terrorism exacts, particularly from open, liberal, plural and democratic societies. Over the last decade, tens of thousands of our citizens, at work, at prayer, in schools, in hospitals, have died at the hands of terrorists; 250 more died on September 11 in the World Trade Center. The human cost exacted from the murdered and the maimed is incalculable. Left unchecked, the cancer of terrorism will spread, bringing more deaths and more destruction to more countries. Condemnations do not touch terrorism. Its roots run deep and wide; they can be uprooted only through global cooperation and concerted action against terrorists as well as those who aid, abet, finance, train, harbour or in any manner assist them. There is no justification for terrorism, and none should be accepted.

We would suggest that future reports of the Secretary General should focus more closely on the issue of terrorism given the universal condemnation and commitment to eradicate this evil that we have seen. We also hope that the Comprehensive Convention against International Terrorism, now under negotiation, can be finalised at this General Assembly. Its early adoption and entry into force will provide a framework for international action against terrorism.

Mr. President,

Armed conflict is the traditional threat to peace, prosperity and security. Studies show that the number of armed conflicts has dropped in the last few years, but they still create instability and inflict suffering on millions. While we agree with many of the recommendations contained in the Secretary General's report on Prevention of Armed Conflict (A/55/985) we believe that action is required to strengthen and spread democratic governance, to remove poverty, to seriously address the question of disarmament. Above all, there must be respect for the principles of inter-state relations and a commitment to settle disputes through peaceful negotiations.

Integral to our efforts to end terrorism and prevent armed conflict is the denial to the perpetrators of access to arms and ammunition. We share the Secretary General's assessment that the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms is a significant first step, but we must urgently and fully implement it, while building a consensus on the outstanding issues,

particularly on the supply of weapons to non-state actors, the risks of which are self-evident. We call on all states to join in keeping weapons out of the hands and the reach of terrorists and non-state actors.

But while we address the problem of small arms we must remember that complete and global nuclear disarmament continues to remain an unfulfilled promise. The Secretary General is right in reminding us that at the Millennium Summit our leaders resolved to strive to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. We will look carefully at the strategies proposed in the road map for the implementation of the Millennium Declaration (A/56/326).

Mr. President,

We have followed very closely, and supported, the Secretary General's efforts to improve the Secretariat's ability to support peacekeeping operations. We continue to be among the leading contributors of troops and police to these operations. But peacekeeping cannot be a substitute for the task of nation-building. Therefore, while we support the proper coordination of all elements in a complex peacekeeping operation, we continue to believe that the mandates of a peacekeeping operation should not be confused with those of a post-conflict peace-building mission. Blurring the distinction between peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building not only leads to unrealistic expectations and unachievable mandates, but also prevents a clear exit strategy for UN peacekeepers.

The crisis in UNAMSIL last year clearly reinforced the need for a strengthened partnership between the Security Council and the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs). While we are aware that the Council has tried to address this problem since then, including in its Resolutions 1327 (2000) and 1353(2001), unless the recommendations of the Brahimi Panel, amplified in proposals made by a number of TCCs, are implemented, there are little prospects for such a partnership emerging. The absence of cooperation between the Council and the TCCs has been a bane of UN Peacekeeping and needs to be comprehensively addressed at the earliest.

Mr. President,

While terrorism and armed conflict pose dramatic and violent threats, endemic poverty is the single most important challenge confronting humanity. In the Millennium Declaration, our leaders resolved to reduce by half the number of people who live in absolute poverty by 2015. The Rural Poverty Report 2001 of the International Fund for Agricultural Development finds that this goal will not be met as 30 million people must escape poverty each year if it is to be met, but only 10 million are able to do so. With a much sharper focus on poverty eradication the UN must strive that justice is done to the world's population who earn less than 2 dollars a day. We note what has been possible to do in the UN system so far, but believe we need to do much more.

In Africa the failure to eradicate poverty has been the most acute. The rate of poverty eradication there, according to IFAD, is six times too slow to meet the 2015 deadline. The New African Initiative adopted by the OAU Summit on July 11, 2001, centred on African ownership, also calls on the rest of the world to complement its efforts. We note from the Secretary General's report that entities of the United Nations have remained deeply involved in a wide range of African development issues during the period under review. It is, in our view, also important to ensure that African priorities and concerns are fully reflected in this engagement and that the process does not become donor driven.

Where have the development resources of the UN system been diverted to? The UNDP, the flagship of the development efforts of the UN system, is mentioned in 24 paragraphs in the Secretary General's

report - in those dealing with crisis and post conflict situations, human rights, good governance, the global compact - but curiously never once in the context of technical assistance for capacity building in areas which would have a direct impact on poverty eradication.

We need to work collectively to ensure the success of the International Conference on Financing for Development, which is described as “a unique intergovernmental process” in the Secretary General’s report. For the first time, we will address development in a holistic manner from the perspective of finance. We must use the opportunity provided by this Conference to establish concrete measures and mechanisms that will ensure adequate, secure and predictable financial resources for development. An equitable basis for global development has become the crucial requirement in the management of the process of globalisation.

Linked to the outcome of this Conference will be the success of the World Summit on Sustainable Development where the international community, after ten years, will identify accomplishments and constraints in the implementation of Agenda 21. We believe that the UN system should help Member States, regional and other bodies contribute to the preparatory process.

We are of the view that the integrity of the three pillars of sustainable development must be maintained and that environment cannot be de-linked from development. The global partnership of Rio is based on this principle. Discussions underway on International Environmental Governance, mentioned in the report, should take this into account. We believe that the implementation of the multilateral environmental agreements is essential in the protection of our common environment.

Mr. President,

The advancement and empowerment of women is an important goal of the United Nations. It is a pity therefore that there is nothing in the report on the progress made in building on the outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly on Women, held last year. We are also mystified by paragraph 158, which claims that an NGO introduced a resolution in the March 2000 Session of the CHR. We thought that only Member States introduced resolutions; we hope that has not changed.

While the initiatives of the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights are important, the report restricts itself only to efforts at the monitoring of human rights. On the promotional side, areas which are important to the developing world, the report is silent, as it is on resolutions addressed to the Secretariat, for example on the issue of equitable geographical representation in the OHCHR.

Equally important: the report on OHCHR’s activities does not reflect constraints developing countries face in generating resources to implement various rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights. There is too much stress on the legal aspect of international instruments rather than on the developmental. There is an undue emphasis on the question of legal instruments, rather than on the progressive attainment of the goals of human dignity and freedoms, not only through the promotion and protection of civil and political rights, but also of economic, social and cultural rights.

Mr. President,

The UN's role in providing humanitarian assistance is important. The report states that the growing need for this assistance requires greater efficiency in relief efforts. This may be so but it misses the more important point that additional resources are required. The report notes that, as of June 2001, less than 33% of the requests listed in the consolidated appeals for 2001 had been met. What is, however, even more troubling is that this seems to confirm a trend. In 1994, 80% of the requirements were met; only 59% were met last year.

The report refers to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as an over-arching framework, but these do not have inter-governmental approval. The Guiding Principles for Humanitarian Assistance outlined in Section 1 of the Annex of Resolution 46/182, however, do have such approval. We, therefore, find it surprising that these do not find mention in the report. ECOSOC this year has again noted that Member States reaffirmed the importance and continuing validity of the framework provided by the guiding principles established in Resolution 46/182. These are what should guide the organisation's work.

We have taken note of what the UN has done over the past year to harness information and communication technologies to advance the millennium development goals. We recognise, as does the last Human Development Report, that the belief that there is a technological bullet that can solve illiteracy, ill-health or economic failure reflects scant understanding of real poverty. A judicious blend of basic social, education and health services with the development of both brick and click industries is required for sustained human development and poverty reduction. ICT is important in this context. Our own experience attests to this. We, therefore, strongly commend the Secretary General on the establishment of the ICT Task Force. It can, in our view, play an invaluable role in bridging the digital divide, in fostering digital opportunity and in firmly placing ICT at the service of development for all.

Mr. President,

On enhancing management in the organisation, we are heartened to note the Secretary-General's assertion that the United Nations is now equipped to operate more efficiently and effectively, and to make the best use of its financial and human resources.

But efficiency will not be able to make up for inadequacy of resources. We are therefore alarmed at the news from the Secretariat earlier last month at the "extremely precarious" financial situation, and cross-borrowing from the peacekeeping account to pay salaries to staff members. We hope that the collective efforts put in by the membership of the United Nations late last year will be rewarded, and that the financial situation will improve in the next few months. We attach significance to this as a country to which this organisation owes the largest amount of peacekeeping dues.

Lastly, while peacekeeping continues to be strengthened vigorously, including through the provision of additional post and non-post resources to the DPKO, we should, in this General Assembly, also strengthen Departments that service economic and social sectors, where the biggest challenges to the international community lie.