



BELGIQUE

**Discours de
S.E. Monsieur Steven Vanackere
Vice-Premier Ministre et
Ministre des Affaires Etrangères
du Royaume de Belgique,
lors de la
65^{ème} Assemblée Générale des Nations Unies**

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Vérifier au prononcé

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Monsieur le Président,

Mesdames et Messieurs les délégués,

L'histoire démontre que des mots peuvent changer l'image du monde.

Elle prouve que des paroles peuvent influencer l'avenir.

Mais seulement quand elles dépassent le stade du déclaratoire.

Que vaut notre "gouvernance mondiale" si elle ne va pas au-delà ?

Au-delà de la formulation d'ambitions et d'intentions ?

Les mots restent sans effet si les actes ne suivent pas.

Nous devons donc agir.

Je dis « nous », les nations, de manière unie, car aucun pays, si grand soit-il, n'est en mesure de répondre seul aux grands défis de l'humanité.

Je dis « nous », car aucun problème d'envergure ne se limite à un seul pays, ne touchant pas la vie de ceux et celles qui vivent ailleurs.

L'obligation d'agir est une responsabilité mondiale et partagée.

That is why today my message is about responsibility and increased accountability.

At the heart of any form of governance lies responsibility.

Be it global or local, national or international.

But this is not enough.

Indeed, governance is not only about behaving responsibly, it is also about being accountable.

This applies at the level of the single state, but also at the level of "our United Nations".

Human Rights, Security and Development are at the core of the mandate of the United Nations.

Former Secretary General Kofi Annan already pointed at the fact that the three are inextricably linked when he said « there is no development without security, no security without development, and both depend on the respect for human rights and the Rule of Law. ».

It has indeed become common knowledge that human rights are unlikely to be protected in an insecure and underdeveloped environment and that

economic development cannot be durably sustained in a society where there is no rule of law.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates,

Accountability in international affairs is about respecting international law, the rules that govern relations amongst states.

Without a solid legal basis, international cooperation remains optional and falls short of the necessary transparency and long term sustainability.

Important steps have been taken in upholding the rule of law at the international level over the past decades. Belgium pleads for a universal acceptance of the competence of the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court.

If all countries were willing to follow up on this appeal, we would be a step closer to having an effective and accountable international system.

Taking up our responsibilities in the field of human rights implies ensuring efficient means and mechanisms in order to ensure their protection. We need to establish more coherence in our action. Unfortunately, today we focus our attention all too often on how to react to human right violations while we should focus more on prevention and on the root causes of those violations.

Human rights are universal. My country strongly opposes any form of relativism in this respect.

International and regional human rights instruments need to be strengthened. The evaluation within the Human Rights Council in 2011 should serve as an important momentum for this.

In the field of security as well, another pillar of the UN, there is a need for increased accountability.

Over the last year, important progress has been made.

The Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty has come to a substantial and balanced result.

Respect for Non-Proliferation Treaty provisions and cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency is accountability in practice. Unfortunately, the non-acceptance or non-respect for these provisions by countries like North Korea and Iran threatens the international non-proliferation regime.

Belgium particularly welcomes the entry into force earlier this year of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The prohibition to produce and to use cluster munitions has become the international standard. I am pleased to

announce that Belgium has recently destroyed its entire stock of cluster munitions.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates,

The Millennium Development Goals and the climate negotiations are at the top of our 21st century agenda, and rightly so.

We are all responsible for our planet.

In fact we are all accountable to current and future generations. Especially in the field of poverty reduction and environmental protection.

Let's not forget the ancient native American saying : "we do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children".

Creating a world that is equitable, a world that will last, is our common responsibility.

Belgium is doing so by spending 0,7 % of its GDP on development cooperation.

Mister President, distinguished delegates,

If we indeed accept to be accountable for the results we do or do not obtain, we should have the courage to evaluate and adapt the institutions and instruments at our disposal.

In that respect, Belgium fully supports the efforts of the European Union to participate in a timely and effective manner in the work of this General Assembly.

In order to effectively contribute to global governance, and to take up its global responsibility, the UN needs to continue its efforts to become more representative and more efficient.

The creation of UN Women is a welcome development. It has my country's full support.

Of course, gender will need to stay a mainstream theme influencing the actions of each and every UN institution.

Important discussions on the Reform of the Security Council have been ongoing for quite some time. Belgium hopes the negotiations will soon lead to concrete results.

Mister President, distinguished delegates,

I have talked about institutions.

Concerns about institutions are legitimate.

But they should never make us forget that the first accountability of mankind is not created by abstractions, but by the face of a person in dire need.

By the man, woman or child that is the victim of violence.

By those who suffer from violence from nature. Or violence from other men.

When it comes to humanitarian protection and aid, responsibility and accountability are never needed more.

That's why UN Peacekeeping Missions with strong mandates, especially in the field of protection of civilians are important and should be given the necessary instruments, not the least in the context of the fight against sexual violence.

In this context, Belgium strongly supports UN Resolution 1325 and its goals of participation, protection and promotion of women in peace and security.

The concept of sovereignty cannot be used as a justification for human rights violations against citizens of any country.

On the contrary, sovereignty implies the "responsibility to protect".

We support the efforts of the Secretary-General to further put this principle into practice.

Mister President, distinguished delegates

My key message of increased responsibility and accountability does also apply to certain situations in the world that I would like to address briefly: the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Le 50^{ième} anniversaire de l'indépendance de la RDC a été l'occasion de prendre la mesure des progrès indéniables réalisés ces dernières années.

Ce qui importe dorénavant, c'est la consolidation de la paix et de la démocratie en RDC.

La Belgique se félicite dès lors que le mandat de la MONUSCO a intégré le volet de consolidation de la paix (*peacebuilding*) à côté du volet maintien de la paix (*peacekeeping*).

Les élections de 2006 ont permis à la RDC de choisir le chemin de la démocratisation.

Les autorités congolaises manifestent leur détermination de persévérer dans cette voie en confirmant leur intention de tenir des élections en 2011.

Cela mérite tout notre soutien.

Malgré toutes ces avancées, il est clair que de nombreux défis demeurent. En dépit du rapprochement avec les voisins de la RDC, la situation à l'Est du Congo demeure préoccupante.

Cela nous a été rappelé de manière frappante par les rapports de viols massifs à Luvungi.

La lutte contre l'impunité, cruciale pour mon pays, passera avant tout par un renforcement de l'Etat de droit.

C'est une responsabilité première des autorités.

Mais là aussi, le soutien des Nations Unies et de la Communauté internationale s'avère crucial. La Belgique appelle à la Communauté internationale de continuer à assurer sa responsabilité.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates

Like in every country, the Afghan Government is equally held accountable by the Afghan people.

We hope that last weekend's elections have contributed to this.

However, the Afghan authorities do not stand alone.

The International Community – with a central role for the United Nations – assists the Afghan Government to enhance the level of accountability towards its population.

Gradually, the Afghan authorities need to take up more responsibility, especially in the field of security.

This transfer is welcomed, but rather than calendar driven, it should be result driven.

The Belgian Government decided to extend its current military and civilian presence until the end of 2011.

We believe that 2011 will be of crucial importance in transferring further security responsibilities.

The focus of the Belgian presence beyond 2011 will therefore likely be more and more on civilian assistance.

Mister President, distinguished delegates

Nobody remains untouched by the devastation and human suffering caused by the floods in Pakistan.

As International Community, we have to take up our responsibility.

This "slow motion Tsunami" – as the Secretary General called it – demands a long term and strategic answer.

Belgium therefore welcomes the three step approach – the meeting last Sunday in New York, the meeting in Brussels next month of the Friends of Democratic Pakistan and the Donor Event in November – which clearly sets out the framework for reconstruction.

We have to move beyond the stage of emergency aid.

In this respect, the European Union last week took the firm commitment to improve market access for Pakistan as a concrete measure to reinvigorate Pakistan's economy.

Mister President, distinguished delegates,

Allow me to conclude by quoting John F. Kennedy: "The only reward for a politician is a good conscience."

It may be true that not many other rewards should be expected for politicians.

But even then, the conscience of a politician cannot free himself from the obligation of being accountable to those he wants to serve, to the people he wants to represent, and to the country he wants to lead.

I thank you for your attention.