

Prime Minister Prachanda's Speech at the United Nation

Transcript of Prachanda's September 26, 2008 address to the UN General Assembly.

Mr. President, Mr. General Secretary, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates

1. At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your election as the President of this Assembly and to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in discharging your responsibilities. I also thank the UN Secretary General for his comprehensive report on the work of the UN and his positive reference to the situation obtaining in Nepal.

Mr. President,

2. It is indeed a historic opportunity for me to address this august Assembly as the first Prime Minister of Nepal of the newest republic of the world. As I stand here in front of the global leadership, I think of the long struggle that I and my party waged with single mindedness for the liberation of the common man from the clutches of the age-old suppression, deprivation, marginalization and outright negligence of the then existing polity. My fellow countrymen and women, toiling in the mountains and valleys, working day and night in the low lands and the urban areas and yet unable to ensure even the simple necessities of life for his or her family had a hope and expectation that one day they would lead a decent life with equal rights and opportunities and be recognized as respectful citizens of the country. We are at this significant turning point in the political history of Nepal.

And I and my party are proud to be leading force of that positive historical change. Today I see a great hope in the glinting eyes of the dalit boy from the far west, downtrodden women from the indigenous nationality in the east, homeless Tharu girl and landless Madhesi and other peasants from the hills living under the thatched roofs. I intend to lead them with conviction and sincerity towards a new journey of sustainable peace and equitable progress in a modern Nepal. I have therefore the honour and great privilege of bringing with me the greetings and best wishes of the people and government of that new Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal to this august Assembly.

3. Following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in November 2006 after a decade long armed struggle, we began our peace process and eventually held elections to the Constituent Assembly in April this year. People have overwhelmingly voted for my party and made us the single largest political party in the Assembly with great hope and expectations. At its first meeting, the Constituent Assembly declared Nepal a Federal Democratic Republic formally ending the 240-year old monarchy and creating a new opportunity to transform the old feudalistic state into an inclusive and federated 'new Nepal'. This was in keeping with the long-standing aspirations of the Nepalese people. They voted in favour of change and transformation that my own party had fought for so many years. After the historic political transformations, our agenda now is to bring equally historic socio-economic transformation of the country.

Today I must inform you with all humility that our Constituent Assembly is the most inclusive representative body in which all marginalized, oppressed ethnic communities, indigenous nationalities, dalits, disadvantaged and the people from backward regions and communities are its members which will herald a new beginning in the country. This may very well be an example of representativeness to the world in the first decade of the twenty first century.

4. The Government is committed to restore law and order, provide relief to the people affected by the conflict, fight against the cancerous growth of corruption and start an economic recovery package focusing on pro-poor growth, infrastructure development and public private partnership. The government

will build an effective partnership with the international community in creating an atmosphere for unleashing a new socio-economic transformation that the Nepalese people are waiting for so long.

5. Nepal's peace process is unique in its characteristics and is based on multiparty democracy, inclusiveness, accommodation, dialogue, and the recognition of the people as the ultimate arbiter. It is the outcome of our own creative disposition toward peace and we feel that it can also serve as a reference model for peace elsewhere.

6. We appreciate the United Nation's continued support to the peace process, especially in monitoring the management of arms and personnel through the United Nations mission in Nepal (UNMIN). The UN Mission has undertaken its mandated tasks well. I also take this opportunity to thank our neighbors, friends, donors for their continued support in favor of the peace process and the institutionalization of democracy in Nepal. I am confident that they would do so for unleashing its development potentials also as per the wish of the Nepalese people.

Mr. President,

7. As we proceed along the peace process within the country, new problems in the form of global food crisis, rising oil prices and imminent dangers from climate change stare us in the face. These challenges also undermine our achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). There will be no success in achieving MDGs without ensuring them in the LDCs. Solemn pledges were made in the 2000 Millennium Declaration and in the 2002 World Conference on Financing for Development held in Monterrey. Many of these commitments are yet to be fulfilled and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals remains elusive to most the world's poor people.

8. The United Nations agenda today has to tackle these development challenges and many other issues such as religious extremism and terrorism, proliferation of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, transnational crimes such as drugs, human trafficking and money-laundering, continuing conflicts within and among states, and gross violations of human rights, genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. It is more than obvious that many of these global problems require global solutions. Together we can rise to the occasion and adopt a vision and strategy that the founders of the United Nations Organization charted in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the Organization. Multilateralism, not unilateralism is the answer to these problems.

9. The least developed countries like Nepal are faced with the special predicament in their development efforts. We are trapped in a vicious circle of poverty. For many historical reasons, we have low economic growth, low productivity, underdeveloped industries and traditional agriculture. Because of the low level of social indicators and less opportunities, conflict and crisis continue to be prevalent in these countries. Today, the growing gap between the rich and the poor within the country as well as between the nations is a sure sign of a looming disaster. It is also inhuman and unjust that such as high level of inequality is still so common in this age of human achievements, abundance and progress.

Equally important is the fact that islands of prosperity in the sea of poverty is not sustainable and certainly not in the enlightened self-interest of even the developed countries themselves, as it breeds resentment, fuels conflict and undermines their own progress in the long run. It also goes against the fundamental spirit of the United Nations. Because of the peculiar nature of the IDCs and their high level of vulnerabilities, I strongly urge that the issues of the LDCs should be looked at by the United Nations separately and with special focus programs. They should be ensured dedicated support and cooperation if we want to make our world just and inclusive that the United Nations so proudly espouses.

10. We are not only least developed but also land-locked. That is a double disadvantage in our efforts to fulfill the development aspirations. In fact, we feel further marginalized due to the overwhelming impact of the downside of globalization and the high cost of doing trade. We want full implementation of the respective global compacts, the Brussels Program of Action for the Least Developed Countries and the

Almaty Program of Action for the Landlocked Developing Countries. In particular, I would like to highlight the need in the part of our developed country partners to fulfill the commitment and pledges in allocating certain percentage of their GNP to these countries and in making available trade concessions, debt relief like to commit that Nepal will fulfill its pledge to own its development programs in accordance with its national priorities including on poverty reduction and pro-poor governance policies.

11. We need to protect our people from the rising vulnerabilities of climate change. For example, in my own country Nepal, the melting of glaciers and shifting weather patterns, are threatening the life support systems, undermining the sustainability of agriculture and inducing extreme climate-induced disasters such as frequent floods and landslides. The Himalayan range provides life supporting water downstream for more than a billion people. The Mt. Everest, as the roof of the world, and the Himalayan range need to be protected and utilized properly to contribute to the humanity as a whole. So I strongly appeal to the international community to extend all necessary support and cooperation to protect and promote its pristine environment. We need to create a regime of common but differentiated responsibilities, in which the developed countries will lift the burdens of adaptation in the vulnerable countries, such as the least developed countries and small islands. The world will stand to benefit in addressing the climate change if we are able to harness the tremendous potentials of Nepal's hydro-power as it a renewable and clean source of energy. For this, Nepal is ready to invite and encourage investment in its hydro-power projects.

Mr. President,

12. I am pleased that UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific has been now operational from Kathmandu twenty years after it was established by this august Assembly. I thank all the members, courtiers from the region and the Secretary General and the officials of the Secretariat for the smooth relocation of the Centre from New York to Kathmandu. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Nepal's commitment to make this Centre successful through the cooperation of all the countries concerned.

13. Over the years, peacekeeping has evolved as the soul of the United Nations. With this in mind, Nepal has been regularly sending its peacekeepers at the call of the United Nations since 1958. We are celebratory the 50th anniversary of Nepal's continuous participation in the UN peacekeeping operations, I take this opportunity to reiterate Nepal's commitment that we will continue to provide our troops for the cause of peace worldwide. Today, Nepal is the fifth largest contributor of troops and police personnel to UN's peacekeeping operations. We are glad that they have earned accolades for their professional competence and performance both at home and abroad. We consider this our modest contribution to international peace and security

14. Enjoyment of universal human rights is absolutely essential in creating the environment of peace, justice, democracy and development. As a democracy, Nepal is fully committed to protect and promote the human rights of its people under all circumstances with constitutional and legal guarantees and implementation of the international human rights instruments to which Nepal is a party. The government is committed to end the environment of impunity. The proposed Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which will seek to arrive at a necessary balance between peace and justice, so that there is justice, and that the centrality of the peace process is preserved. We will continue to strengthen the National Human Rights Commission so that it can take up its statutory responsibility for protection and promotion of human rights in the country even more effectively. It goes without saying that the environment for the protection and promotion of human rights in Nepal has significantly improved, especially after the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement in November 2006.

Mr. President,

15. As a least developed country that entered the World Trade Organization not too long ago, Nepal is concerned at the lack of tangible progress in negotiations on the Doha Development Agenda. We think that the opportunities in world trade through multilateral trading framework of the WTO should not be

delayed any further. The least developed countries deserve a duty free and quota free market access for all their tradable products from all major countries with sincerity, together with more favorable rules of origin and the support for enhancing their supply side capacity. Only then the Doha Round would be development round in the real sense of the word. Without meaningful integration of the LDSs into the global regime, I do not know how we can make the global trading regime sustainable, equitable and inclusive. Similarly, the least developed countries need more aid for trade and trade facilitation measures to enhance trading capacity.

16. Today, the United Nations needs to reform and democratize itself to take on the numerous challenges in international peace and security effectively. And it should also reflect the current realities of the world. We should also give necessary credibility, legitimacy, competence and effectiveness to the world body in solving the global problems. I take this opportunity to reiterate Nepal's solemn faith and commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. On behalf of the people and government of Nepal, pledge to work with all of you to take on the global challenges thought the United Nations in a spirit of goodwill, cooperation and mutual solidarity. It is with the belief that we have adopted them as one of the tenets of Nepal's foreign policy. Nepal is an example of how swords have been turned into ploughshares. That is what the United Nations believes in. Therefore, as I address this gathering here, I have a special feeling about the whole objectives and ideals that the United Nations stand for and the co-relationship between those ideals and the political, economic and social transformation that we would like to achieve in our country. May we all succeed in attaining our common objectives thought our collective and sincere efforts as the united and inseparable members of the single global family?

I thank you!