

UN Secretary-General
Kofi Annan

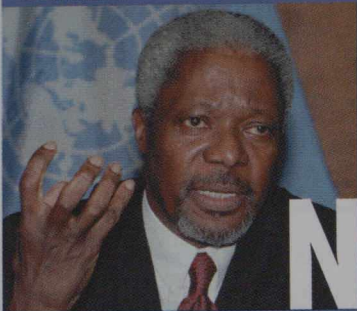


photo: CANAPRESS

Last September 6 to 8, global leaders met in New York for what was estimated to be the largest-ever gathering of heads of state and government. The agenda for the UN Millennium Summit was highly ambitious: finding ways of reshaping the United Nations so that it can do more to fulfil its original mandate—maintaining international peace and security—and to make life better for all people of the world.

Did the meeting reach that goal? At its conclusion, the 152 leaders attending the Summit unanimously adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan noted, "If measures are really taken, we all know that targets can be achieved."

A LOOK AT THE SUMMIT'S ACHIEVEMENTS

We solemnly re-affirm, on this historic occasion, that the United Nations is the indispensable common house of the entire human family, through which we will seek to realize our universal aspirations for peace, co-operation and development.

—United Nations Millennium Declaration
NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 8, 2000

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Peacekeeping

Canada was particularly pleased with the unanimous approval of a resolution calling for a comprehensive review of UN peacekeeping operations. Modern conflicts are fought mainly within rather than between states, and most of the victims are civilians. Keeping the peace after a conflict is not enough. The UN must also be able to prevent conflict from erupting again or even to head it off before it starts, and this poses the thorny issue of intervening in another country's internal affairs. In his address to the Security Council session held during the Summit, Prime Minister Chrétien stated, "If the Security Council is unable to adapt it will seriously undermine its credibility as a guarantor of peace—credibility that is essential to maintaining the moral authority of the UN as a whole."

Important goals

The Millennium Declaration sets important goals in the key priority areas of peace, development, environment, human rights, the special needs of Africa, and strengthening the UN. It also calls on the Secretary-General to issue periodic reports as a basis for further action.

Amnesty International welcomed the decision of several countries at the Summit to sign and ratify key human rights treaties; these included the conventions on the Rights of the Child, the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, plus other agreements to which Canada adhered long ago. Noted Amnesty, "People in these countries are today better protected. The momentum created by this historic occasion must continue."

Development

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) said of the Declaration, "The ambitious commitments made by world leaders—including halving the number of people in extreme poverty by the year 2015—are attainable." A central component of the UN system, the UNDP confirmed that millions of people have already been freed from poverty and disease through a combination of better economic, social and health policies, and democratic accountability. It concluded, "The task of the United Nations and partners is to accelerate this progress."

In his address to the plenary session of the Summit, Mr. Chrétien promised, "With the will and the resolve, the United Nations—which is the cornerstone of Canada's foreign policy—will remain the world's indispensable institution in the 21st century. And Canada is committed to being an indispensable partner." ●

World leaders at the UN Millennium Summit, New York, September 6–8, 2000. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien stands 6th from left in the 3rd row.



photo: UN Photo Unit

For more information on the UN Millennium Summit, visit:
www.un.org/millennium/summit.htm
www.unic.org.in/nl16sept.htm