

September 9, 2005

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Next week, over 170 world leaders will gather together at the 60th Annual General Assembly Summit of the United Nations. We sincerely hope that you and other Administration officials will be present to work with these world leaders to advance critical reforms being considered at this historic Summit and to promote the UN's role in realizing Member States' shared commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

At the center of this year's General Assembly agenda is the advancement of unprecedented initiatives to improve the United Nations. Every institution needs periodic retooling to meet new challenges. After 60 years, the UN is no exception. The UN must modernize to meet 21st century challenges ranging from security and terrorism to poverty, disease and sustainable development. U.S. leadership is vital to achieve the summit's goal of revitalizing the UN. We urge the full engagement of your Administration to build broad support, both at home and abroad, for a stronger, more effective United Nations.

Many of the reforms that will be considered were included in Secretary-General Kofi Annan's report, *"In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security, and Human Rights for All."* Moreover, the creation of a new Human Rights Council, the Democracy Fund and a Peacekeeping Commission are important common sense initiatives that enjoy bipartisan support and are included in the State Department's "U.S. Priorities for a Stronger, More Effective United Nations."

Now more than ever, an effective and accountable United Nations is critical to U.S. interests. The United States and many other UN members face pressing international challenges from the nuclear programs of North Korea and Iran to the ongoing violence in Sudan. No single nation should bear the entire burden and cost of resolving these international challenges. Therefore, it is imperative that the UN be even more capable of working effectively with the United States to meet these complex and costly challenges. We have many recent examples such as tsunami relief in Southeast Asia, the elections in Afghanistan and the peace agreement in Sudan of the UN's ability to promote peace, democracy and development around the globe. We must ensure the UN can continue to replicate and improve on such successes, while also committing to a responsibility to protect civilians from future atrocities, including genocide.

The Summit is also an opportunity to improve the lives of the most impoverished of the world by affirming the Millennium Development Goals and committing to concrete policies on development. All nations, both rich and poor, must work together to reduce poverty through timebound, measurable internationally agreed development goals that promote good governance and sustainability. In our view, the Millennium Development Goals represent this important mutual partnership between developed and developing countries. We urge you to state the U.S. commitment to these goals during this historic summit.

In the words of former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and former Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, “just as the United States took the lead in forging the consensus that led to the creation of the United Nations after WWII, we believe the United States, in its own interests, must lead the organization toward greater relevance and capability in this new era.”

We once again urge you and your administration to take a productive role in helping to adopt a comprehensive and constructive agenda on development, security, democracy and human rights, and reform that will be discussed at the upcoming 60th UN General Assembly meeting. Such an outcome would be beneficial to U.S. national interests and to a long term effective United Nations.

Sincerely,

20/20 Vision*

African Medical & Research Foundation USA

The American Humanist Association

American Progress Action Fund

Baha'is of the United States

Better World Campaign

British American Security Information Council (BASIC)

The Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)

Church Women United

Church World Service

Citizens for Global Solutions

Coalition for American Leadership Abroad

Concern Worldwide

Council for a Livable World

Democracy Coalition Project

The Fund for Peace

The General Federation of Women's Clubs

Global AIDS Alliance

Heifer International

The Humpty Dumpty Institute

International Crisis Group

International Relations Center

International Relief and Development

International Rescue Committee

MercyCorps

National Wildlife Federation

Open Society Policy Center

Oxford Council on Good Governance

Physicians for Human Rights

Physicians for Social Responsibility

Population Action International

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Refugees International

Robert F. Kennedy Center for Human Rights

The Stanley Foundation

United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society

United Nations Association of the USA

United Nations Foundation
U.S. Chapter of Global Action to Prevent War
Women's Action for New Directions
Women's Edge Coalition
Women's Environment and Development Organization

*More organizations may be added.

Cc: Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice
Ambassador John R. Bolton
Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns