



Queen Elizabeth II hails UN's leadership in ever-changing world



Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom addresses the General Assembly

6 July 2010 – Addressing the United Nations for the first time in more than 50 years, Queen Elizabeth II today lauded the world body for its many achievements, while exhorting it to continue playing its lead role in the cause of peace and prosperity for all.

“In my lifetime, the United Nations has moved from being a high-minded aspiration to being a real force for common good. That of itself has been a signal achievement,” the British monarch, who was accompanied by her husband, Prince Philip, told the General Assembly.

She noted that for over six decades, the UN has helped to shape the international response to global dangers. “The challenge now is to continue to show this clear and convening leadership while not losing sight of your ongoing work to secure the security, prosperity and dignity of our fellow human beings.”

Queen Elizabeth is the Head of State of 16 of the UN's 192 Member States and head of the Commonwealth of 54 countries. She last addressed the General Assembly in 1957 at the age of 31, four years after she was crowned queen.

She noted that during her reign, the world has witnessed tremendous changes, including in science and technology, as well as social attitudes.

“Remarkably, many of these sweeping advances have come about not because of governments, committee resolutions, or central directives – although all these have played a part – but instead because millions of people around the world have wanted them,” she stated.

“For the United Nations, these subtle yet significant changes in people's approach to leadership and power might have foreshadowed failure and demise. Instead, the United Nations has grown and prospered by responding and adapting to these shifts.”

The Queen added that while many things in the world have changed, the aims and values which inspired the UN Charter endure – to promote international peace, security and justice; to relieve and remove the blight of hunger, poverty and disease; and to protect the rights and liberties of every citizen – have not.

She highlighted some of the UN's "remarkable" achievements, including helping to reduce conflict, offering humanitarian assistance to millions of people affected by natural disasters and other emergencies, and tackling the effects of poverty in many parts of the world.

At the same time, she noted that much remains to be done, from achieving the global anti-poverty targets known as the Millennium Development Goals (**MDGs**) by their 2015 deadline to tackling new and emerging challenges such as terrorism and climate change.

Calling her "a living symbol of grace, constancy and dignity," Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed his gratitude for the Queen's dedication to the common values embodied by the UN.

"With you at the helm, the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth have contributed immensely to the United Nations," said Mr. Ban, who noted that the four largest providers of UN peacekeeping troops today are Commonwealth countries.

"Around the world, you are working with us to foster development, advance human rights, and promote global security," he said. "In September, we will gather to advance this mission further still by pushing for progress towards the Millennium Development Goals," he added, referring to the high-level summit he will convene in New York to advance progress on the MDGs.

General Assembly President Ali Treki said the UN is focused on making the world a better place, to stand for justice and for peace, to relieve suffering and to help the poor lift themselves out of poverty.

"Many times, we come up short and do not live up to our commitments or meet the expectations that are laid upon us," he stated.

"But through your sense of duty and tireless public service you have demonstrated to those of us at the United Nations that we must not waver from our purpose and must remain steadfast in our will and determination because the poor, the disadvantaged and the weak do not have the luxury of our failure."

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