

Australia warns UN will become a 'hollow shell' unless it reforms



Kevin Rudd, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, addresses General Assembly

25 September 2010 – The United Nations will become “a hollow shell” with nations choosing to go around it to deal with the most pressing global issues unless its institutions are reformed to meet today’s challenges, Australian Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd **told** the General Assembly today.

“That is the question we all face today,” he said. “A question of our collective political will to make the existing institutions work. To combine the existing and unique legitimacy of the UN system with a newfound effectiveness on security, development and climate change.”

Mr. Rudd told the Assembly’s annual high-level debate that on several key international issues the UN had shown recently that it was unable to meet public expectations.

He cited the Millennium Development Goals (**MDGs**), saying the world was falling short on the targets in part because donor countries were not honouring the commitments they made on aid and official development assistance.

The Conference on Disarmament “has been in a state of inertia for 12 years,” despite the recommendations of a key conference on non-proliferation for action, while last year’s summit on climate change in Copenhagen “did not reflect the global challenge we are currently facing.”

The Australian official warned that “if we fail to make the UN work, to make its institutions relevant to the great challenges we all now face, the uncomfortable fact is that the UN will become a hollow shell. Nation States may retain the form of the UN, but increasingly seek to go around the UN and deploy other mechanisms, to achieve real results.”

Mr. Rudd said the UN has “most of the essential structures in place. But for the structures to work, we must harness the political will necessary to make them work. In other words, we must enable the institutions we have created to do the job for which they were created.”

Describing the UN as “inevitably imperfect,” the Foreign Minister said its imperfections “only mean that we need to work to make it better. That is up to us – the Member States. The Organization can only ever be what we Member States allow it to be.”

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