

**ROYAL INSTITUTE
FOR
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**EXPERT SEMINAR ON GLOBAL THREATS,
CHALLENGES AND CHANGE**

**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS
BY
H.E. Karel De Gucht
Minister of Foreign Affairs**

**4 FEBRUARY 2005
BRUSSELS**

Pronounced by P. GREGOIRE, Advisor to the MINISTER

Mr. President,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Apologizes

The Minister of Foreign Affairs Karel DE GUCHT- as main sponsor of this seminar - is particularly pleased by the fact that Mr. Gareth Evans and Sir David Hannay have accepted to be present today to share with us some insights on the work of the Panel and on its recommendations. Indeed, their longstanding involvement in international affairs, their expertise and their dedication to the cause of the United Nations are well known to all of us.

2005 is a crucial year for the United Nations and for the multilateral system. The UN Summit that will be held in September will offer the opportunity to map together the future of the Organization, 60 years after its creation.

Belgium is convinced that the Secretary General of the United Nations took a sound decision by entrusting to the High Level Panel the task to

- reflect on threats and challenges in today's world,
- make recommendations on what our collective answer to these threats and challenges might be; and
- make proposals on what the role of the UN should be in this collective response.

Belgium does support the general thrust of the report and its call for the definition of a new global security consensus. It is in agreement with its conclusions on the use of force and on the "responsibility to protect". We agree also to a large degree with its views that economic and social inequalities are a threat for all and that development is the best prevention. And we generally share the analysis on failed states, terrorism, proliferation and organized crime.

At the same time, the Minister is aware that some individual recommendations of the Panel might be more controversial or raise a certain number of questions.

By organizing this seminar, the intention of the Minister is to give the opportunity to all participants to express those questions and engage with members of the Panel on issues that need clarification.

On the other hand, it is the intention of the Minister to continue to raise awareness in Belgium about the challenges ahead, both in Parliament and in civil society as a whole. Very recently for instance, the Minister of Foreign Affairs had the opportunity to present to the members of the Commission of External Relations of the House some of his general views about the reform of the UN and the Panel's report as well. And in a near future, he will do the same thing in front of the sister commission of the Senate.

It is also the Minister's commitment to take advantage of Belgium's official candidature to a non-permanent seat within the Security Council (2007-2008) to boost and nurture the debate.

Ladies and gentlemen;

The Summit of 2005 will need to take decisive and bold decisions. It is the conviction of the Minister that we cannot afford to lose the momentum. Belgium wishes the United Nations to emerge as a credible instrument to manage efficiently international relations in our globalized world. Our country is very much in favour of an efficient, pragmatic and proactive "multilateralism"; the Charter of the United Nations being "The" fundamental framework of the international relations. Belgium is encouraging as well further accountability, flexibility and transparency of the system and of its institutions and fully supports the Secretary general in this challenging task.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentleman,

Allow me to close these brief remarks here and on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Karel De GUCHT to wish you and our guests fruitful deliberations and a lively debate.

Thank you for your kind attention.