



THE PERMANENT MISSION OF
SOUTH AFRICA

333 East 38th Street
9th Floor
New York, NY 10016
Tel: (212) 213-5583

**STATEMENT
BY**

**H.E. MR. THABO MBEKI
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**ON THE
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OF THE
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I say this because when I have asked myself the question – have we achieved the goals we set ourselves? – I have found it impossible not to answer that we have failed. There may very well be others among us who will take a different view and say that a good beginning has been made, and therefore that it is too early to say we have failed.

But I am certain that if we say to those affected by violence and war that we have made a good beginning towards the establishment of a just and lasting peace all over the world, they will not believe us. I am equally certain that if we say to those who, everyday, go to bed hungry, that we have made a good beginning towards freeing the entire human race from want, they will also not believe us.

I would make bold to say that the vision of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level we enunciated in this imposing forum four years ago resonates among the ordinary people who are victims of hunger and war as a beautiful dream that will inevitably be deferred.

Does this mean that when we made the promises we made, we deliberately intended to tell the billions of ordinary people a lie? The answer to that question is obviously no! Did we speak as we did simply because talk is easy and cheap? Again the answer to that question is obviously no!

The question must therefore arise as to why the grandeur of our words and the vision they paint - of a world of peace, free of war, a world characterised by shared prosperity, free of poverty – has not produced the grand results we sincerely sought and seek!

It would seem to me that the answer to that question lies in the fact that we have, as yet, not seriously confronted the difficult issues that relate to the uses and perhaps the abuses of power.

Yesterday our Secretary General, the Honourable Kofi Annan, spoke eloquently about the three thousand year old code of Hammurabi, and said "That code was a landmark in humanity's struggle to build on order where, instead of might making right, right would make might." We took it that the Secretary General was, in his own elegant way, drawing our attention to the central question of our day – of the uses and abuses of power!

Contemporary human society is characterised by a gross and entrenched imbalance in the distribution of power. That power is held and exercised by human beings. As human beings, the powerful share many things with the powerless. Together, the powerful and the disempowered share the common human needs to eat, to drink water, to be protected from the elements, to dream, to love, to laugh, to play, to live.

But life itself tells us that all that and only that describes what human beings share. The rest, the relations among us as social beings, is defined by our varied access to power and its exercise.

Without fear of contradiction, I have said that we all agree that later this year, we will receive the Report of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.

I am equally convinced that, depending on where we stand relative to the power equation, we will hold radically different views about what constitutes humanity's most serious threats and challenges, and therefore what must be changed to respond to that perceived reality.

Both the powerful and the disempowered will undoubtedly agree that terrorism and war represent a serious threat to all humanity. They will agree that we were right to make the

Many of those who have already addressed the Assembly have correctly drawn our attention to the reality of poverty that billions across the globe continue to experience.

Among other things, they have correctly reminded us of the fact that some countries are

humanity that what they decide is the principal threat they confront, is also the principal threat that all humanity faces, including the rich and powerful.

In the Millennium Declaration we spoke of the need to implement "policies and measures, at the global level, which correspond to the needs of developing countries and economies in transition and are formulated and implemented with their effective participation."

Perhaps the mistake we made was to assume that the contemporary distribution of power in human society would permit of this outcome, such that regardless of this fundamental consideration, it would be possible for the concerns of the poor to take precedence on the global agenda and the global programme of action.

We comforted or perhaps deluded ourselves with the thought that this Organisation is "the most universal and most representative organisation in the world", afraid to ask the question — is it?

Every year many of us who have spoken and will speak from this rostrum make an annual pilgrimage to this great and vibrant city to plead the cause of the poor of the world, hopeful that this time our voices will be heard. Every year, after a few days, we pick up our bags to return to the reality of our societies, whose squalor stands out in sharp contrast to the splendour of New York and this majestic precinct that constitutes the headquarters of the United Nations Organisation.

In the aftermath, resolutions are passed. Again and again our Permanent Representatives, the Excellencies with Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Powers, report that the resolutions oblige us to act to thwart the deadly plans of murderous terrorist gangs. Again and again their Excellencies report that yet another appeal has been made to the mighty