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A Time For Change

*UN Foundation
News Wire*

There has been a lot of discussion recently about reform at the UN. The challenges facing the world have changed in the 60 years since the UN was founded, as have the amount and complexity of issues that the world asks the UN to take on—making it critical that the UN and the world work together to adapt to new realities.

There has also been a lot of action. In September of 2005, more than 150 heads of state gathered at UN headquarters in New York to discuss these challenges, as well as the changes needed for the UN and the world to meet them. Below are some key steps the UN has taken toward reform since the Summit in September.

- **UN Democracy Fund.** Through this newly established fund—first proposed by President Bush—the UN will provide legal, technical, and financial assistance to new and emerging democracies. More than two dozen countries have already pledged their support, for a total of \$44 million.

- **UN Peacebuilding Commission.** Roughly half of all countries emerging from war relapse back into violence within five years. This new UN body aims to help war-torn countries avoid that path, and instead lay the foundation for stability, growth, and a sustainable future.

- **Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).** In late 2005, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs established the Central Emergency Response Fund, or CERF. The fund will speed-up humanitarian response by providing predictable, rapid funding to UN agencies within 3-4 days of a crisis, and funds for neglected and forgotten emergencies. The UN Foundation will be working with OCHA in 2006 to help operationalize CERF.

- **Ethics Office.** The UN Ethics Office, which opened on January 1, 2006, is working with UN staff to enforce ethics rules and prevent potential problems. It is already overseeing several new policies, including a stricter financial disclosure policy, an enhanced whistleblower protection policy, and an expanded sexual harassment policy.

- **Management Reform.** To increase transparency and accountability, the UN has formed an Independent Audit Advisory Committee, and has strengthened the expertise, capacity, and resources of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on audit and investigations.

In 2006, the UN and its Member States will continue to build on the progress that has been made, with a particular focus on management and structural reforms. Among the items on the agenda are: restructuring the Human Rights Council; performing a comprehensive review of all the mandates and programs of the General Assembly from the UN's first 55 years; and continuing negotiations to establish a common definition on terrorism.

Further information is available at:

<http://www.un.org/reform> and

http://www.unfoundation.org/features/un_reform.asp