

# Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **U.S. NGOs Demand Bush Administration Play a Constructive Role at the UN World Summit**

### **Letter to Bush Urges Concrete Commitments to Tackle Global Problems**

New York - New York - Over 35 U.S. based non-governmental organizations (NGOs) sent a letter today to President George Bush criticizing the U.S. negotiating strategy during the lead up to the United Nation's World Summit (Sept 14-16) in New York. The NGOs warned that by not committing to concrete development and disarmament goals, the U.S. government was taking a confrontational stance that "hurts our ability to cooperate with other nations, undermines our efforts to address global problems and discourages other countries from meeting their commitments."

Some 170 Heads of State are expected to attend the World Summit, the single largest gathering of world leaders in history. The World Summit is intended to evaluate progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), strengthen the United Nations, and commit countries to peace-building measures.

The NGOs wrote the letter to highlight how the U.S. negotiating approach, led by U.S. Ambassador John Bolton, has dramatically complicated discussions and undermined six months of work. Just three weeks before the start of the Summit, Bolton's team asked for drastic changes to the Outcome Document throwing the negotiations into disarray. The proposal ate up valuable time and immediately put other countries on the defensive, making agreement on strong language toward firm commitments next to impossible. After a strong backlash, the U.S. backtracked on some of these proposed changes, but the damage has been done.

"The American people expect their government to take a cooperative leadership role in global events like this," said Patricia Jurewicz, who heads up UN efforts for the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. "Instead, the Bush Administration has been like a bull in a china shop. We can't continue to strong arm other countries and then expect them to engage in a constructive dialog with us."

U.S. NGO's signing on to the letter include: Abolition 2000, ActionAid International U.S., Foreign Policy in Focus, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Institute for Policy Studies, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), and the Unitarian Universalist UN Office.

See next page to read the full letter, sent to President Bush and U.S. House and Senate leaders.

September 12, 2005

Dear President Bush,

As U.S.-based non-governmental organizations, we are writing to express how outraged we are with the confrontational interaction by the United States with the United Nations and its member countries over the past two weeks. The United States' approach is jeopardizing a historic effort to end global poverty, promote peace and strengthen the United Nations that has virtually universal international support. This go-it-alone stance damages our ability to cooperate with other countries, undermines our efforts to address global problems and, by signaling our own unwillingness to commit to specific objectives, discourages other countries from meeting their commitments.

The approach that Ambassador Bolton took by first suggesting drastic changes to the "Draft Outcome Document" (removing all reference to the Millennium Development Goals or MDGs, Nuclear Disarmament and the International Criminal Court) just three weeks before the World Summit was an insult and wreaked havoc on six months of negotiations. Although the United States is no longer blocking text that refers to the MDGs, it has diverted valuable time from the discussions and minimized support for other important priorities in the final agreement.

The United States is missing out on a unique opportunity to show the world in concrete terms what our values stand for. The U.S. government must match its rhetoric in support of freedom and democracy with leadership in the fight to eliminate poverty, end war, promote gender equality, protect human rights, and support the United Nations.

Specifically, we request that the United States government:

1. Commit to new obligations on development assistance and an affirmation of specific U.S. contributions to meeting the MDGs.
2. Reaffirm the long-standing international norm of military force as a last resort.
3. Embrace the international community's responsibility to protect those who are being horribly abused and slaughtered, including genocide prevention.
4. Affirm a commitment to nuclear disarmament and strengthening export controls on small arms and conventional weapons.
5. Support the international community's widely-accepted agreements on environment and energy; and recognize the integral relationship between climate change and the increase in natural disasters.
6. Reaffirm the commitments made in the UN Conferences, especially the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.
7. Bolster U.S.-UN relations by engaging in more cooperative diplomacy and affirming the U.S. commitment to paying UN dues.

We live at a time when the world faces many critical challenges that can only be resolved if all nations work together. We expect our government to play a constructive role in achieving this.

**Endorsers:**

Abolition 2000  
ActionAid International USA  
Alliance for Sustainability  
Atomic Mirror  
Carlisle Peace College  
Catholic Peace Fellowship, NJ  
Center for Women's Global Leadership  
Coalition for a World Parliament and Global Democracy  
Democrats.com  
Earth Rights Institute  
EcoEarth Alliance Partnership Initiative  
Family Care International  
First Universalist Church Pathways to Peace Committee  
Foreign Policy In Focus  
Friends of the Earth - U.S.  
Generation for Change and Growth, Inc.  
Global Community Initiatives  
Global Local Link Project

Ground Zero Minnesota  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers  
New Internationalism Project, Institute for Policy Studies  
North Country Peace Group  
Peace and Justice Council of the Basilica of Saint Mary, MN  
Peace Action and the Peace Action Education Fund  
Peoples Program  
Presentation Sisters of Fargo, ND  
Simply Help  
Sustainable World Coalition  
Unitarian Church of Staten Island's Social Concerns Committee  
Unitarian Universalist UN Office  
Uniting for Peace Coalition  
Unity Church-Unitarian, St. Paul, MN  
US Peace Council  
Women's Environment and Development Organization

