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UKRAINE

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Statement

by His Excellency VIKTOR YANUKOVYCH

President of Ukraine

at the General Debate of the 65th session
of the UN General Assembly

New York, 23 September 2010

*Mr. President,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

On behalf of Ukraine I sincerely congratulate His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss on his election as President of the 65th session of the UN General Assembly.

I am convinced that your rich experience, Mr. President, will contribute to the achievement of significant results in our joint work.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have started our work in New York on a high note. The Millennium Development Goals Summit has just successfully come to a close. The Outcome Document of the Summit, together with the Millennium Declaration and the Final Document of the World Summit-2005, have become our "Road Map" for sustainable development and a better future. Their rigorous and coherent implementation is a common task for all the Member States. Ukraine is ready to work actively to this end.

Ukraine approaches with full responsibility the issues of poverty eradication, providing high-quality education, developing proper conditions for preservation of environment, improving maternal health and reducing child mortality, curbing HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, and ensuring gender equality.

Our achievements as well as problems we face are laid out in the National Report on implementation of the Millennium Development Goals which we have presented at the Summit.

Today my country undergoes profound internal changes. We have finally achieved political stability and launched comprehensive economic and social reforms.

To make it short, my country has received a new progressive impetus allowing us to make real practical steps towards transformations that are long overdue.

I am confident that it will enable us to participate more actively in implementing the purposes of the United Nations to which Ukraine has been committed all along.

The world economic crisis has become a major problem that has slowed down progress in Ukraine as well as in other countries.

Global challenges require a global response. The world must develop a new financial and economic system of relations. Further trade liberalization, prevention of protectionist measures, new solutions and transparent tools for safeguarding global competition can contribute to the economic recovery.

We believe it is necessary to support further global processes of expanding free movement of people, goods, services and capitals. New free trade areas and visa-free travel regimes are an important component of the right response to the global challenges of today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We all know that sustainable development is impossible without security, and security is impossible without sustainable development. Ukraine has always been an active contributor to peace and security worldwide. I believe that our contribution is beyond any doubt.

This year Ukraine has declared its non-block status. This helped to significantly reduce tension in the region and establish a zone of stability and strategic balance around Ukraine.

In 1994 we were the first in the world to voluntarily give up the third most powerful nuclear arsenal. Sixteen years have passed, but that decision of Ukraine has not lost its importance.

In April of this year, Ukraine took a next step at the Washington Summit on Nuclear Safety by announcing its decision to get rid of all its stocks of highly enriched uranium.

The experience of the recent decades shows that nuclear weapons do not always increase security. Moreover, the countries that try to acquire nuclear weapons may be exposed to the impact of new risks and become more vulnerable.

The best way to counter proliferation of nuclear weapons is to achieve its gradual total elimination. We welcome the signing of a new START Treaty between the USA and Russia as well as further reduction of their national nuclear arsenals.

Today there is also an urgent need for concrete steps to reduce the risks related to the proliferation of nuclear materials and technology.

We encourage all the UN Member States to follow our example in the area of global nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation.

In view of those steps, Ukraine hopes to see our international partners unswervingly comply with their obligations with regard to the security guarantees for my country. I mean primarily the Budapest Memorandum of 1994.

Ukraine insists that security guarantees for the states that have disposed of their nuclear arsenals and for the countries that do not belong to any military alliance should be reflected in a legally binding international instrument. This is the best way to ward off regional nuclear ambitions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The principles of peaceful coexistence, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of the UN Member States, good neighborly relations and equality have always been the cornerstone of Ukraine's foreign policy.

We believe that the spirit and letter of the UN Charter is the foundation for any regional agreements and arrangements in the area of security architecture.

Yet our Organization can make greater use of the potential of the existing regional security mechanisms so as to strengthen global security.

We have never distinguished between our own woes and those of others. From the very first years of her independence Ukraine has actively participated in the UN efforts to maintain international peace and security. We strongly support the strengthening of the UN peacekeeping capabilities.

Ukraine also intends to keep working on improvement of legal protection of the "blue helmets". We welcome support of our initiatives by the UN Member States.

In our opinion, we also need to develop mechanisms of responding to the new or modified challenges to the international peace and security. One of these is piracy and armed robbery at sea. I am convinced that this threat can no longer be underestimated. Without effective and decisive intervention by the international community this evil will only gain force.

In the fight against maritime piracy, the United Nations should play a key role. Ukraine is determined to continue its efforts to increase the international maritime security and protection of the seaman's social rights, and we call upon all the Member States to cooperate to this end.

Today humanity is increasingly confronted with the "soft security" challenges. The word "soft" should not mislead us, though.

Climate change constitutes a global threat to the very future of mankind. The experts are saying today that some of those changes are irreversible.

That is why the international community should immediately make all possible efforts to avoid the worst-case scenario. The political will of all UN members should be mobilized. By signing the Copenhagen Agreement, Ukraine has taken a step in that direction.

The Earth is our common ship, and it should not become a "Titanic." We believe there should be an effective international mechanism for environmental protection of the Earth as our only planet. The world needs a standing **global environmental organization** with universal membership.

Against the backdrop of environmental, financial, economic and energy challenges, peaceful use of nuclear energy is becoming increasingly crucial.

The states that possess nuclear technologies bear a huge responsibility to their own people, neighbors and all mankind.

Next year the world will commemorate a sad date, the 25th anniversary of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. That tragedy is still an open wound for us.

Overcoming its consequences remains a serious challenge for the international community as the scale of the problems requires a coordinated effort involving all of our international partners.

Ukraine plans to host a High-Level International Conference "Twenty-five years of the Chernobyl Disaster. Security for the Future". We intend to hold it in Kyiv, in April 2011, and with UN participation.

The forum should assess progress in restoration and normalization of life in the affected regions and discuss nuclear safety issues. I invite all of you to take part at the Conference.

Dear Colleagues,

The world of today is changing at an ever faster rate. Our Organization has to change along with the world.

The United Nations should not be an observer but an architect of events. For this to happen, it urgently needs to undergo a comprehensive reform.

Ukraine welcomes the progress we see in organizational consolidation of the UN, in particular in the areas of gender equality and peacebuilding.

However, far-reaching changes are impossible without modernization of the UN core, i.e. its Security Council.

Transformation of the Security Council into an institution that would be more representative and balanced in composition, with improved working methods and higher transparency, is an essential precondition for increasing its effectiveness and adapting the UN to the current world processes.

Ukraine stands ready to discuss all progressive concepts of the UN Security Council reform. We believe that the key to success is to take into account the interests of all the under-represented regional groups, including the East European one.

I would like to use this opportunity to confirm Ukraine's intention to acquire membership in the Security Council for the period of 2016-2017.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am confident that the work of 65th UN General Assembly session will be an important step as we move to a peaceful, safe, and prosperous world, the world of freedom, democracy and effective international cooperation.

To achieve this, we have a strong political will, a clear understanding of the challenges, and a common vision of the problems. I believe in our success.

Thank you.