



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

866 SECOND AVENUE • NEW YORK, NY 10017-2905

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**Sixty-sixth session
of the General Assembly of the United Nations**

**Statement by
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**NEW YORK
Friday, September 23, 2011**

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Mr. President,
Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Je tiens à remercier le Président sortant de la 65^{ème} session de l'Assemblée Générale, M. Joseph Deiss de la Suisse, ainsi que féliciter M. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser du Qatar pour son élection au poste du Président de la 66^{ème} Session de l'Assemblée Générale.

Je tiens également à exprimer ma gratitude pour le travail et le leadership démontré par notre Secrétaire Général, M. Ban Ki-moon, qui a guidé avec habileté notre Organisation dans ces temps difficiles et exigeants.

Two world wars taught humanity of the necessity to infuse international relations with respect for a few simple yet powerful ideals. This is what the United Nations is all about: Respect for peace and good neighborly relations; respect for the rule of law and the international justice system; respect for the fundamental right of every person on this planet, to have a chance for a better life.

The United Nations is what we, its member-states, make of it. We are the driving force behind its accomplishments. We are the reason behind any of its failures. The United Nations is where we meet and agree or disagree on global cooperation. And when we agree, humanity becomes stronger.

Today, the UN is leading vital international cooperation to confront climate change and desertification. There is, too, the challenge of non-communicable diseases – which hinder macro-economic development and keep the bottom billion locked in chronic poverty. Unregulated migration is putting huge pressure on some countries – including Greece – while at once resulting from -- and often exacerbating -- a lack of development in countries of origin, poverty, and wars.

There is the crucial contribution of the UN and its Human Rights Council on human rights issues – a contribution that can grow with a stronger mandate for the HRC. Greece stands for election to the Council for the 2012 term and deeply values the support of every single one of its partners in that effort.

The UN's perhaps most overarching responsibilities lie in the area of peace and security, for without peace and security, it is much more difficult, if not impossible, to pursue the myriad other goals of our Organization. This means ensuring nuclear security, combating terrorism, combating piracy. It means managing crises as they arise – as in the recent case of Libya. It means working together with our partners in the international community to establish and keep peace. It means, as I said earlier, fostering good neighborly relations the world over.

Dear friends, just as we need to work together as global partners to face the challenges of our time and the challenges of the future, each of us also has a role to play in our given region.

Greece's immediate region is Southeast Europe -- the Balkans. And Greece has a vision for peace, stability and cooperation in our region. Its key component is the European perspective of our region as a whole and of our individual neighbors. To this end, two

years ago we launched "Agenda 2014," which is aimed at revitalizing our neighbors' efforts to realize their European aspirations, on the one hand, while also reigniting the European Union's vision of welcoming the countries of the Balkans into the European family. Indeed, creating a European neighborhood of peace and cooperation in Southeast Europe should be our collective goal. And that is because peace and cooperation are anything but a foregone conclusion in the Balkans. Recent history – often bloody history – makes this abundantly clear. And there are still pending issues that need to be resolved.

One serious obstacle to the consolidation of peace and security in our neighborhood is the Kosovo issue. Recent progress in the EU-brokered talks between Belgrade and Pristina is some cause for optimism in the wake of the tensions we saw in the region over the summer. But those tensions are not over, they still need to be dealt with and defused. Greece wishes to facilitate the process of reconciliation and compromise. It wishes to foster the kind of understanding that our neighborhood needs on the path to its common future in the European family.

This is a policy that works. Regional cooperation platforms – the SEECP, BSEC, the RCC, and others – are bringing us closer together as partners. Serbia has made impressive progress on its EU path – a progress that must be recognized without caveats and asterisks. So has Montenegro. Bosnia-Herzegovina must be supported in its efforts towards reconciliation, unity and progress. Albania is in the process of overcoming internal divisions and returning to the path of reforms under specific EU criteria. Croatia's success story gives impetus to the entire enlargement process for the Balkans.

Another issue that needs our attention is that of the name of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Which is not really, and never has been, a "name" issue *per se*, but instead a sincere effort to ensure that, in our volatile region, we once and for all put behind us notions of irredentism, of attempting to re-write history and borders, so that our children can be raised not with suspicions and bitterness towards each other, but with friendship and hope for living with each other. Greece believes and has repeatedly stated that the solution lies in a fair compromise, in a name with a geographical qualifier, since Macedonia is a geographic region that overlaps the territory of more than one country. And that this name must be used in relation to everyone, *erga omnes*. We want to resolve this issue so that we can finally realize the huge potential of our relationship, on the basis of openness and honesty. It is high time to reach a successful and mutually beneficial conclusion. As I have often said, this should be a time to write history, not to keep trying to re-write it.

Dear Colleagues, Southeast Europe is only one side of Greece's neighborhood. In our southern neighborhood – the Eastern Mediterranean – we have witnessed the awakening of peoples' desire for democracy; the hope for a better future. We have witnessed the Arab spring.

Our proximity to the countries swept by calls for change is reflected in our active presence in this region. Add to this our long tradition of relations of trust and friendship with the Arab world, and you can see why Greece has embraced a vital role in these developments. We conducted unprecedented evacuations for tens of thousands of citizens, provided ground support for the implementation of the Libya no-fly zone, mediated for the release of European military personnel early in the crisis, established a

diplomatic presence early on in Benghazi to liaise with the National Transitional Council. And we are now offering infrastructure on Crete as a staging area for the efforts to deal with the humanitarian situation in Libya.

The importance we attach to developments in Libya, Egypt, Tunisia and throughout the region derives from the point I made earlier: Without peace and security, you do not have cooperation; the cooperation needed for development and for improving the day-to-day lives of the peoples. And we, as the international community, have an obligation to help our Southern neighbors achieve their goal of democracy, of a voice in their affairs, of hope for a future of prosperity.

I am talking about the same rights that the Syrian people have also been demanding for months. The rights that their own leadership is at present violently denying them.

Dear friends, the Arab world doesn't need new hegemon, who see the present turmoil as an opportunity to promote self-serving agendas of establishing new spheres of geostrategic influence or economic power. It needs genuine – and equal – friends, who are willing to selflessly assist it in its transition to democracy and true self-determination. Greece and the European Union, under the guidance of the United Nations, can and must play that role.

Nowhere is the lack of peace and security more pronounced and more chronic than in the Palestinian question. Greece supports unequivocally Palestine's right to statehood. It is now our responsibility, the responsibility of every member-state of the UN, to respect the Palestinian decision to request membership and more importantly to turn this into an opportunity that will jumpstart anew direct negotiations. Palestine has a right finally to exist as an independent state just as Israel – let us not forget -- has an equal right to exist in full and uncompromised security. The EU, on its own accord and within the Quartet, has a crucial role to play in this effort. Greece will continue to engage in dialogue with both sides and support Cathy Ashton's and the European Union's efforts within the Quartet and with the parties.

Dear Colleagues,

Within this context of regional tension and volatility – but also of great potential hope -- it should be self-evident that we need to avoid adding even further tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean region. Which is why we are deeply concerned by the recent threats and hostile actions against the Republic of Cyprus by our neighbor Turkey, in violation of international law. As the EU, the U.S., Russia, and others have already stated, Turkey's threats and actions of the past few days and weeks are contrary to international law, and they must cease.

We believe that the path of tension is a wrong and dangerous path. Instead of threats, our region needs strong countries, which can work together to promote stability, cooperation, and good neighborly relations among all, and always within the confines of international law. This is the hope and the example we can give to our region and that our region expects of us.

Which is why Greece is committed to the peaceful path of exploratory talks with Turkey for the delimitation of our continental shelf, failing which we believe we should submit the issue for resolution at the International Court of Justice, and expects Turkey to refrain

from actions that undermine that spirit of cooperation.

And which is why we strongly support the UN-sanctioned talks currently underway between President Christofias and Mr. Eroglu – talks aimed at the reunification of Cyprus and the ending of Turkey’s illegal occupation, in accordance with UN resolutions and EU law, as a bizonal, bicomunal federation.

Colleagues, finally,

Economic development and fair distribution of wealth are key prerequisites for long-term stability and security. My country, in the midst of its own worst financial and economic crisis in recent history, has not only not shut itself in its shell, but remains a leading investor in our region, especially in the Western Balkans, contributing to the creation of tens of thousands of jobs. Internally, we are rehauling our economy by investing in sustainable growth and in Greece’s competitive advantages -- with green energy projects, shipping, tourism, sustainable agriculture, and high-tech infrastructure among our key priorities. Externally, our businesses are becoming even more extrovert. The economic integration of our region, along the above and other complementary growth axes, is certain to multiply its economic potential. It is thus certain to further enhance the peaceful integration and cooperation of all of its people.

Every crisis, it has often been said, is also an opportunity. If this is true, then our region, riddled as it has been for decades with big and small crises, is arguably the region in the world that today harbors the greatest opportunities for peace, growth, and stability. It is in our hands to make this happen. Let us, dear Colleagues, begin!

Thank you.