



SLOVAKIA

STATEMENT BY

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Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished Heads of States and Governments,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a distinct honour and pleasure for me to address this Assembly at the outset of its 66th session. This forum provides us with unparalleled opportunity to strengthen, through dialogue, our concerted efforts in the quest for solutions to the mounting challenges the international community faces today. We, the leaders in the United Nations, are expected to offer guidance and find solutions.

Mr. President,

I am convinced that under your able leadership and profound diplomatic experience, we will be able to make this session a successful one. I wish you every success in your demanding duties and assure you of my delegation's full support and assistance. I also wish to express my delegation's appreciation and gratitude for the exquisite work of your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss who so skillfully guided our proceedings during the 65th session.

Let me also join others in paying tribute to the remarkable work of the newly re-elected Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon. We deeply value his eminent personal and diplomatic qualities and look forward to working with him during his next tenure.

Slovakia warmly welcomes the Republic of South Sudan as a new member of the United Nations family. We wish South Sudan every success and above all peace, security and prosperity to its people.

Mr. President,

Her Excellency Dilma Rousseff, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, opened her speech with these words: "For the first time in the history of the United Nations, a female voice opens the General Debate. It is the voice of democracy and equality." And the main challenge for ongoing years Madam President expressed in two words - courage and sincerity. This challenge is accurate in the moment of an economic and debt crisis. We have to say openly that we still do not have adequate solutions. We are facing common risks in economy, in government and politics.

Citizens all over the world expect leadership and a mutual synergy of economy and politics. The majority of the world population expect economic growth, prosperity and better quality of life. Those living in poverty, millions of people without jobs, without water, without food expect real answers, quick action and results from political leaders.

What can such a small country as Slovakia do to address these challenges? First, it has to do its own homework in stabilizing the economy. That means pension system sustainability through deep reforms. Fiscal responsibility act which will ensure that fiscal policy is responsible towards future generations and counter-cyclical. That means labour market reforms which support the creation of new jobs the country badly needs, especially for some of its vulnerable groups. That means lowering the administrative burden and decreasing barriers in entrepreneurship, improving predictability of the legal environment, and a wider use of e-Government services. And of course, that means measures to tackle corruption and to increase transparency, for example by legal act ensuring that any contract concerning the use of public funds is valid only if published on the internet.

Mr. President,

The Slovak Republic is a small country, but it is a part of the Eurozone, which is in deep economic troubles. The courage and the sincerity are mostly needed these days in Europe. The financial crisis and its negative influence upon the entire European banking sector have clearly shown that the Eurozone was not prepared for a crisis.

The chaos when addressing these issues only deepened the general distrust and worsened the subsequent economic recession. The majority of European Union countries did not use the good economic times to consolidate their budgets.

Therefore, in many cases, the consequences of the recession shifted public debt into dangerous territory.

We need courage in the Eurozone to return back to the old principles which are necessary for successful international cooperation and integration. We need stricter European and national fiscal rules. We need institute of controlled default. And we need new rules for careful management of the financial sector.

We need sincerity, we have to be honest to our citizens, because we have to be very careful that the answer for forcing technical solutions of the debt crisis would not be the escalation of nationalism and populism. There is a chance that we will save the Eurozone economically, but at the same time, we must minimise the risk of losing the project of European integration politically and devalue it in the eyes of our voters.

Mr. President, it is not just Europe, every region of the world struggles today with serious economic difficulties. We live in global interdependent reality in which we can not afford to ignore anybody's problems. In this regard we believe, as a member of the Economic and Social Council that this body has the capacity to contribute more significantly to our joint efforts. To be able to do that we feel the urgency to adjust its mandate and enhance its ability to react more swiftly to economic and social needs of the world.

In times of dire financial restriction of our own national budgets, we, as the United Nations, also need to learn to do more with lesser resources. We welcome every effort the Secretary-General makes at utilizing the provided resources with maximum effectiveness and efficiency.

Mr. President,

Peace and security is ever harder to keep in these harsh crisis times. One of Slovakia's priorities in the fight against international terrorism remains the endeavour to move forward the negotiations on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. With regard to the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, Slovakia will continue in its implementation through concrete projects as it did by co-organizing special event on "Implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia" in Bratislava in December 2010. The respect for international law, human rights and the rule of law should be an integral part of the fight against international terrorism.

Peacekeeping missions are one of the most visible and successful activities of the United Nations and the true expression of the commitment to maintain peace and security around the globe. The Slovak Republic is active member in United Nations Forces in Cyprus since 2001 and it is involved in the Middle East. In recent decades, we have witnessed a proliferation of the United Nations peacekeeping missions in unprecedented manner. They become increasingly high on-demand, their mandates are widening and the management more complex. Thus, Slovakia supports every measure aimed to increase their effectiveness and efficiency, especially in the era of constrained budgets.

Peace is not merely an absence of war. Peace means safety in all areas of people's lives: economic prosperity, social stability, respect for human rights and fundamental

freedoms, access to health care and education, protection of environment, but also access to water and food. There is no chance for lasting peace without sustainable development. And this is an area we still have to work a lot and make concerned effort. Slovak aid is aimed at most troubled regions around the world since 2003. Recently, Slovakia is providing development and humanitarian aid in 41 projects to help starving children in Kenya, to deliver food and water in Ethiopia, humanitarian help in South Sudan, Pakistan, to help refugees from Libya to Tunisia, and also to provide technical assistance for countries in the Western Balkans and in the Middle East. Slovakia helps to secure democratization process in Afghanistan through 13 new projects.

Mr. President,

Slovakia is convinced, that mediation and peaceful settlement of disputes is the right path to follow, especially in times when cost of peacekeeping is skyrocketing. Mediation of disputes is the savviest of investments and the most efficient way to prevent conflicts before they escalate. In this connection, we welcome the adoption of the first General Assembly resolution, which Slovakia co-sponsored, dedicated specifically to supporting mediation as essential tool for maintaining peace and security.

We need to focus on eliminating the primary causes of conflicts, not just deal hastily with their grave consequences which so sadly often happen only after too many lives have been destroyed. No effort should be spared in exploring all political and diplomatic options to stop conflicts at their roots. Mediation has proved to yield tangible results. I want to stress the important role of women in these processes as it is often under-estimated. Slovakia is a firm supporter of effective multilateralism with the central role of the United Nations. Concentrated efforts help create just and lasting solutions.

Mr. President,

Yet again, this is going to be a challenging session for all of us. It calls for renewed shared commitment to the fundamental principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. We cannot afford to lose ability to understand each other's needs because of our own domestic problems. In these hard times, I wish to all of us enough strength to find necessary and mutual solutions.

Thank you, Mr. President.