

**Speech by the Minister for Foreign and Political Affairs  
of the Republic of San Marino**

**Antonella Mularoni**

**66th session of the UN General Assembly**

**New York, 27 September 2011**

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary General,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of San Marino, I wish to congratulate His Excellency Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser on his election as President of the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly. His long experience as Ambassador of Qatar to the United Nations and his deep knowledge of this Organization are valuable resources to push ahead with the necessary reforms involving the most important sectors of the UN activity. In the last few years, Qatar has played a significant mediation role in the Arab world. San Marino delegation will provide its full cooperation throughout the works.

I also wish to sincerely thank the Secretary General, H.E. Ban Ki-moon, for his energy and praiseworthy efforts, for the interest he constantly demonstrates towards all UN member Countries and for his constant and crucial presence in all international politically relevant and emergency situations. His re-election as Secretary General for a further term is very important to promote the reform process of the United Nations, guarantee full effectiveness of the Organization and prevent any action aimed at decentralising global governance.

I seize this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude for the excellent work done by the UN, under the careful and effective leadership of the Secretary General, in South Sudan. By putting an end to the violence and atrocities which have plagued that part of Africa for several years, the UN action has led to the declaration of independence of the Republic of South Sudan and its admission to our Organization as a new Member in July 2011.

Mr. President,

on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the tragic attack on the World Trade Center in New York, I would like to stress the importance of an effective fight against terrorism and an effective action aimed at preventing the formation and development of terrorist groups. A crucial task of policy makers is to create the conditions so that terrorism cannot find any breeding ground.

This year's theme "*The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means*" no doubt represents the purpose of diplomacy, the fundamental reason why States have decided to cooperate in the framework of international bodies and mechanisms headed by the United Nations. And in a certain sense it is closely connected with the reform process of our Organization.

The principle of peaceful settlement of disputes between States is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in many resolutions of the General Assembly. The Republic of San Marino cannot but support such principle. Indeed, our country has always tried to settle conflicts by peaceful means and has always believed in the power of dialogue, democracy and tolerance, values upon which peaceful coexistence among peoples is based.

With a view to achieving the aforesaid principle, for the purposes of maintaining international peace and security, the Republic of San Marino supports the role and authority of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Mr. President,

during this year we have assisted to a massive popular uprising spreading across the squares of the cities in North Africa and the Middle East. These are protests for democracy and freedom, respect for human rights and social justice. At the forefront of this revolution are young people from the middle class. Despite their education, they are exposed to exclusion from the labour market or suffer from poor working conditions.

The unusual scale of the Arab revolution, which has taken the world by surprise, demonstrates that major political and institutional changes are needed, because the economic and social foundations have also changed due to globalization.

We cannot consider this spontaneous uprising of people looking for freedom, justice and democracy just in terms of security. If the United Nations intends to play a pivotal role in managing global governance, it should also be able to interpret the need for such changes and support them, as far as possible.

San Marino believes that the United Nations Organization must continue to play a leading role in managing global governance. The deeply democratic nature of our Organization, with a universal participation and undisputed legitimacy, the richness and diversity of cultures and traditions herein represented, allow to adopt an approach harmonising the interests of the entire international community and aiming at human and sustainable development.

The global economic and financial crisis, the devastating consequences of which are evident to all, has unfortunately demonstrated that existing institutions are unable to respond rapidly and adequately to the crisis. This has led some informal groups – such as the G8 and the G20 – to have more influence in the management of global economic governance.

San Marino is grateful to such groups and thank them for the role they have played. However, it deems it important to underline that it is essential that in their decision-making process, which should be more transparent and inclusive, these groups take account of the interests of non-Member States, of their worries and aspirations, with particular reference to developing countries. The action of such informal groups should be complementary to that of the United Nations. This requires the development of specific mechanisms regulating the relations of these groups with our Organization.

We welcome the participation of the Secretary General in the G20 meetings and the consultations held by the rotating Presidencies with the United Nations. However, we stress the importance of transparency in the relations between the informal groups and the United Nations system, the only organization which can adopt decisions the legitimacy of which cannot be challenged by anyone .

The Republic of San Marino is concerned about the consequences of the economic and financial crisis and other crises closely and inevitably connected with it.

Unemployment is a very serious problem facing all countries, without distinction. Furthermore, in many States youth unemployment rate is twice as high as adult unemployment. Long-term unemployment has risen as well in the last few years.

We believe that special attention should be paid by the UN to unemployment.

Unfortunately, the negative effects of the global economic and financial crisis can still be witnessed today. Even though last year international economy experienced a modest recovery, we have not yet been able to exit from the 2008 crisis. Besides the problem of unemployment, the global sovereign debt crisis is in front of us.

Is there a good recipe for recovering from crisis? Is a rigorous economic policy sufficient? Are there innovative measures to re-launch the world economy? Can these measures be shared? Or are we facing a deep systemic crisis requiring an in-depth analysis of the way our societies function and a rethinking of current business models?

I believe that if the United Nations focused on these important issues, its leading role in global governance could not be questioned by anyone.

Mr. President,

The destinies of our peoples depend on global threats in an increasingly direct way: climate change and biodiversity, economic, financial and employment crises, food security, public health, disarmament and non proliferation of weapons, fight against terrorism. Today, these threats are recognised as interdependent and a new form of international cooperation and multilateralism should be based on this recognition in order to coordinate our policies, internationally, nationally and regionally. We have the duty to guarantee full effectiveness of the Organization's activities, with a view to preserving and strengthening its essential value as a point of reference for the international community.

The interdependence of such threats is now more than ever evident. This is the case, for example, of the impact that climate change has on world food security, which, in

turn, poses a threat to security and peace, not only in Africa, where perhaps this relationship can be more easily observed, but throughout the world. Food insecurity fuels violent social conflicts.

Climate change leads to a reduction in global food production and the most damaging effects thereof are experienced in Africa and Asia.

The populations of countries in a post-conflict situation or depending more directly on agriculture or of the poorest developing countries will have more difficulties than others in facing rising food prices due to droughts or other disasters caused by climate change.

Our country is following with great concern the humanitarian emergency in the Horn of Africa. The populations of Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti are victims of a severe drought. This is a humanitarian emergency affecting over 12 million people, including many women and children.

The Republic of San Marino is grateful to the Secretary General of the United Nations for his rapid and important action in favour of the populations concerned and to OCHA and CERF for their immediate response and the substantial contribution they are making to resolving the humanitarian emergency in the Horn of Africa, also thanks to the financial commitments of UN Member States.

Another and no less important effect of climate change is the sea level rise, which has an impact on the very existence of many Member States. Such problem affects not only small islands, but also large islands and countries having many coasts at sea level. Therefore, it is a phenomenon affecting a significant number of UN Member States.

The implications of serious global threats for populations, their interdependence, their effects on world peace and security are increasingly evident. With a view to addressing such challenges, we need a strong United Nations Organization, as well as effective and coordinated action in our economic, environmental and food policies at all levels – both globally and regionally. These policies should be designed to achieve sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth.

Mr. President,

As I mentioned earlier, this year's theme is inevitably linked to the reform process of the United Nations. Such reform becomes fundamental for the future world stability, the maintenance of international peace and security and it must remain the target of all our efforts.

The Republic of San Marino has been following with interest the reform process of the Security Council since 1994. In this regard, it is grateful to Ambassador Tanin for the wisdom and impartiality with which he has presided over intergovernmental negotiations concerning the reform and for having always tried to reach the broadest possible political agreement.

We are prompted by the conviction that intergovernmental negotiations are the right framework within which it is possible to find a solution taking into account the interests and positions of all. It is fundamental to overcome the initial respective positions in order to negotiate the broadest possible agreement.

The Republic San Marino believes that the five key issues of the reform (*categories of membership, the question of the veto, regional representation, size of an enlarged Council and working methods, relationship between the Council and the General Assembly*) are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole.

Another major reform of the United Nations, to which our Country attaches great importance, is the revitalization process of the General Assembly.

The Republic of San Marino supports this reform process and, in this regard, wishes to thank Lithuania and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for having co-chaired this year the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the UN General Assembly.

The revitalization of the General Assembly is a politically necessary reform and, at the same time, is essential for the future of the United Nations. It is a reform which should involve all States in reaching an agreement based, again, on the broadest possible political consensus, aimed at reaffirming the central role of the General Assembly as the most representative body of the United Nations, as well as the role and leadership of its President.

The reform should make the work of the General Assembly more effective, avoid duplication of its activities and improve its relations with the other UN bodies. Nevertheless, the revitalization of the General Assembly should not concern only these aspects, however important they may be.

The General Assembly should become a key forum where solutions can be found to the problems posed by global threats, which increasingly unite the destinies of our peoples.

There are many issues and themes on which the United Nations Organization focuses its attention and it is impossible to address all of them. Therefore, I will highlight some aspects that are maybe lesser known, but not less important.

Mr. President,

about 15% of the world's population has some kind of disability, whereas between 2 and 4% suffers from severe disabilities. Since 2006, through the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, we have assisted to a clear affirmation of the rights of disabled people. Today, this Convention has been ratified by over 100 countries and the international community has taken important steps forward in the field of equality and non-discrimination of disabled people, their full inclusion and participation in the social, political and cultural life of societies. However, much remains to be done in order to implement said Convention by establishing legislative frameworks and policies at a national and international level.

The international community should also deal with the strong relationship existing between disability and poverty and include such issue in future political strategies. A similar approach is fundamental for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

At present 80% of persons with disabilities live in developing countries and most of them live below the poverty line. In addition, many of the children who do not attend school have some kind of disability. Therefore, it is clear that targeted strategies and policies taking into due account the situation of children with disabilities should be adopted to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education.

More than 8 million children under five and 350,000 mothers die every year. Today, 67 million children are still out of school and 195 million children under 5 suffer from chronic malnutrition, which remains the major cause of childhood deaths. Every day more than 1000 babies are born with HIV and about 5 million young people between 15 and 24 are living with this virus.

Children continue to be the most vulnerable and the most affected by violence, abuse and exploitation. Currently, more than 200 million children do not have a birth certificate, especially in developing countries. Sadly, most of these children can hardly have access to basic services, such as healthcare and education, or enjoy their rights and it is also difficult to protect them.

This threatens to seriously undermine the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Republic of San Marino joins the international community in supporting Resolution 65/1 “Keeping the promise: United to achieve the Millennium Development Goals”.

Gender equality is rightly placed high on the Agenda of the United Nations. In many countries, maternal mortality is still worrying, especially in the poorest areas of the world. Furthermore, young people, girls and women are the most affected by HIV. Unfortunately, trafficking in women and children remains a serious problem. Women and girls continue to be subjected to humiliating practices, such as the payment of bride price, child marriage, kidnapping and sexual violence, including domestic violence.

Protecting the rights of women in conflict and post-conflict situations continues to be another high priority for the United Nations. Women facing such situations are very often victims of sexual violence, mass rape, torture and arbitrary executions.

Schooling and education are vital to counter discrimination and favour the empowerment of women. Improving quality and access to education for women and children means to provide them with instruments to improve their economic and social living conditions.

Mr. President,

I have talked about groups of people who live in extremely difficult conditions in many areas of the world and represent a very large share of the world's population. The primary task of each individual and State is to support every effort to help them live in decent conditions and feel fully included in society. Their progress will be our progress and their smile will be the light allowing us to look to the future with optimism.

Thank you, Mr. President.