

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to congratulate Mr. Nassir Abdul Aziz Al-Nasser of the State of Qatar on his election to the post of President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. On behalf of Poland let me assure you of our full support for your endeavours in the capacity of the President.

I am honoured to speak on behalf of my country at this session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, to be able to address from this historic place representatives of all the nations of the world - representatives of the entire international community. Our participation in this Session is also a chance for dialogue, to familiarize oneself with the problems of nations from different regions of the world, to learn about their achievements and aspirations, but also their worries and fears. It is an opportunity for reflection on how to deal with the challenges faced by humanity, by all of us.

I speak on behalf of a country that over the past two decades has become a symbol of positive changes, which required courage and hard work. At the time of the collapse of the communist system, Poland was a country of a devastated state economy, an impoverished society, with uncertainty regarding its borders and its place in Europe. Thanks to the deep economic and political transformations, Poland has become a stable democracy and a dynamic economy. It has become a country that makes an important contribution to international relations in Europe, to security and stability in its immediate neighborhood and beyond. The Polish economy, as the only one in the European Union has maintained, since 2008, a positive growth rate during the financial crisis. This was possible thanks to the work and the entrepreneurial spirit of the Polish people and thanks to the successive governments' courage to make difficult decisions.

In its foreign policy, Poland is building good neighborly relations with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, strengthening security and unity of Europe. A hallmark of the Polish foreign policy remains the solidarity with nations that aspire to live in freedom based on democracy and respect for human rights. This is an obligation derived from our national experience, the experience of a peaceful struggle of the "Solidarity" trade union, which paved the way for democratic and economic transitions in the countries of the former communist bloc. At this moment we stand ready to share our experience. This is our active and continuous approach in relation to the societies of Eastern Europe and, recently, in relation to the societies of the Arab states, which have taken upon a similar challenge, as we did 20 years ago. We wish them luck, perseverance and courage not only to fight for change, but also to conduct dialogue and communicate with all those who can take part in this process. From our Polish experience we know that sometimes the inability to communicate and reach compromises and to overcome internal divisions - the inability to openness and dialogue with those who just recently were seen as enemies - hinders progress and is the cause of failures of movements initiating major changes.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today I speak on behalf of the country which holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Union, the former Community, has become in recent decades a laboratory of huge positive developments in international life. The beginning of the integration process, with the creation of the European

Coal and Steel Community sixty years ago, was the Copernican revolution in international relations. A mechanism, to effectively eliminate war between countries that seemed to be permanently in conflict with each other, was successfully introduced. Arch enemies have become irreplaceable friends. The number of countries that have opted for co-operation rather than conflict, has been steadily growing. This has given Europe an unprecedented long period of peace and enabled the economic and social development, not only in the sphere of the market, but also in the field of human rights and in equalizing the levels of development. The European Union provides its members with security, stimulates their development and provides assistance to the less developed regions and social groups. This is possible since it is guided by the principle of solidarity which goes beyond states borders.

The European Union has introduced a new quality to the international life on a global scale. It stabilizes its surroundings and is an inspiration and a role model in various regions of the world, where integration initiatives derive from the European experience. The EU is also an active participant in the process of shaping a better world order, better for everyone. The progress, which the world has experienced after the Cold War in the fields of human rights, international security and arms control, environmental protection, sustainable development and many other areas, is in its major part due to the initiatives and the involvement of the European Union. The President of the European Council, Mr. Herman van Rompuy, has just spoken about it.

I am convinced that the current difficulties, this time related to the financial standing of some of its Member States, will not only be overcome, but the EU will also emerge stronger from this crisis. I am convinced that the European social model as well as the model of the EU's relations with the outside world will remain a point of reference for other regions of the world. Poland, currently holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, will spare no effort in ensuring that Europe remains committed to global affairs and could be counted on as before. Europe's solidarity with the world and Europe's openness shall remain our priority.

The challenges facing the international community are considerable. The last decade in the international life has been turbulent and difficult. Its beginning was marked by the tragic terrorist attacks here in New York, on September 11th, 2001. A shadow of global terrorism that one day may result in the use of a weapon of mass destruction has hung over the world. Fortunately, our worst fears have not materialized. It was possible to significantly reduce the terrorist threat.

At the same time, the atmosphere of the war on terror did not help in fostering trust and strengthening the international stability as well as solving other important problems. In the last decade we have had to deal with increasing tensions between richer and poorer, between more and less developed countries and regions of the world. There have been signs of cross-cultural mistrust. The climate change negotiations, the new WTO negotiation round, and the non-proliferation discussions were stalled. The Middle East peace process has broken up. On top of these negative trends, the international community was hit by the outbreak of the financial crisis in September of 2008.

We must not ignore these disturbing phenomena and signals. Nonetheless, there exist good grounds for optimism and a belief that we can overcome difficulties and effectively face challenges. Hope is raised by economic growth in many countries and regions which were once referred to as underdeveloped countries or the Third World. Many countries were able to seize the opportunities made available by globalization and to give their societies a prospect of development and prosperity. The responsible attitude of many governments, within

the G-20 and far beyond this formula, prevented an escalation of the financial turbulence of 2008 into an economic crisis like the Great Depression of 1929. Openness and interdependence, prevailed over protectionism or economic nationalism. Similarly, President Barack Obama's initiatives to reduce nuclear arms and ensure nuclear non-proliferation should be supported.

The "Arab Spring", regardless of the dramatic events accompanying this process, is yet another step in the transition of countries of various regions of the world towards democracy, towards the empowerment of individuals and societies, based on respect for their aspirations to live in freedom and prosperity. These are aspirations for a life in harmony with the values and standards which are not – as until recently considered – exclusively Western. They are entitled to everyone and everywhere; however, it is necessary to respect the local forms and flavors of these aspirations and rights that cannot be excluded from the cultural context.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The road to reaching a solution to any of the key global problems we have in mind always leads us through the United Nations or its specialized organizations. Not so long ago we had to deal with a risk of marginalizing the United Nations, or even building parallel structures. The United Nations, however, remains indispensable in its role, as defined in the Charter and the main UN documents, especially those from the years 2000 and 2005. In Poland we combine optimism with realism, so we like a description of the UN which says that our Organization "was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell."

The Organization faces many tasks, which are meant to protect the international community from crises and a decline in international life. The UN is to defend the already achieved level of civilizing relations among nations, of which the key measure is to move away from violence towards self-determination of nations, democracy and material prosperity.

I see the main task of the Organization within its new axiology adopted in the Outcome Document of the World Summit in 2005, which was shaped into the triad of development – security – human rights. I am aware of the complexity and extent of the problems of development, which encompasses the issues of trade, finance, economic growth, environmental protection and development aid. I am aware of the limitations the United Nations experiences in the field where the main instruments are in the hands of private entities – corporations, banks, stock exchanges, and investment funds. The UN and its specialized agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions and others, proved in the past their usefulness in this area.

Today, our Organization must ensure effective aid to the poorest and those in real need. They are the ones that are hardest hit by the crises. Our responsibility is to limit the scourge of hunger in the world, help in combating the pandemics and in providing access to drinking water. Without ensuring to people a minimal subsistence level, health care and basic education, it is difficult to expect that the poorest and those in real need can begin to fend for themselves.

We are facing the need to agree on a new paradigm of global economic exchange. A global equilibrium requires that states with a high surplus of exports over imports begin to switch to growth, stimulated by internal consumption. Incidentally, it is the domestic demand that saved Poland from the economic crisis after 2008. If we fail to balance the relationship between these two groups of economies, export-oriented and easily importing, new turbulences await us. Developing countries must increasingly take responsibility for the global

economy. This also includes responsibility for the least developed countries that cannot be limited to import, which prevents the development of their own manufacturing and export potential. UN agencies and entities not related to the UN, such as the WTO, must assist in the evolution of this paradigm.

The issue of international security in its broader and narrower meaning requires a new approach. At this point I shall confine myself to the latter. Poland has a living interest in the progress of reduction of nuclear and conventional armaments. We are concerned about the prospect of returning to the arms race, as well as the increase of spending on armaments on a global scale. More attention should be paid to the categories of weapons which kill most people in the world, which cause conflicts, mostly internal, and which are the main factors of instability in various regions of the world. The United Nations Conference on Disarmament should be reformed in this respect. We provide full support for the efforts of the Secretary General going in that direction.

Security in a broad sense as well as respect for human rights and various forms of transition towards democracy, that is, ultimately building a lasting peace, depends on the ability to communicate, to negotiate and to compromise. And in this dimension, the role of the UN is irreplaceable. The United Nations has been, and must remain the main forum and instrument of international mediation. We in Poland and Europe know from our own experience how valuable is this way of solving difficult social and political problems. The Polish Round Table of 1989 paved the way for transformation in our part of Europe. I am convinced of its usefulness in the process of the “Arab Spring”, particularly in the difficult situation that arose in Syria, a country of great Islamic culture and traditions. We are ready to share this experience with the societies that wish it. Mediation is an irreplaceable way to a lasting and just peace. This also applies to solving very difficult problems in relations between Israel and its neighbors, especially with the Palestinian Authority. I urge the UN and the Secretary General to actively use this form for building trust and peace between peoples, cultures and different social groups who frequently legitimate reasons are often in a situation of antagonism.

The spirit of solidarity must penetrate through the activity of our Organization aiming for peace, security, development and respect for human rights. *Si vis pacem, para solidaritatem*, said right here ten years ago a former prisoner of Auschwitz and in 2001 the Polish Foreign Minister, Wladyslaw Bartoszewski. The spirit of solidarity has been the source of Polish success since 1989 and is a source of strength and value of the European Union. It is nevertheless needed on a global scale, in times of openness and interdependence of countries, economies and societies. This requires awareness of the unity of mankind, the consciousness of a deep community of interests of the international community, without respect of which it will fail to effectively take the challenges it faces. I could only point some of them. Finally, being here, I cannot resist recalling the important thought of my great countryman Pope John Paul II. Speaking in the same hall in October 1995, he said: “The answer to the fear which darkens human existence at the end of the twentieth century is the common effort to build the civilization of love, founded on the universal values of peace, solidarity, justice, and liberty. And the "soul" of the civilization of love is the culture of freedom: the freedom of individuals and the freedom of nations, lived in self-giving solidarity and responsibility”.

Thank you for your attention.