



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**
866 UNITED NATIONS PLAZA, SUITE 517
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017
TEL: (212) 308-8504, 8723 FAX: (212) 308-8724
newyork@mfa.gov.mk

STATEMENT BY

**H.E. DR. GJORGE IVANOV
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE 67TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Check against delivery

**New York,
27 September 2012**

Distinguished President,
Distinguished Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor and a privilege to address this distinguished forum and today and share the views of the Republic of Macedonia regarding some issues of concern for all of us.

Allow me first of all to extend our congratulations to Mr. Vuk Jeremic on his election to the prestigious function of President of the 67th UN General Assembly. I believe, Mr. Jeremic that you will respond to all the challenges and tasks that await you and I wish to express our readiness for full cooperation in this sense. Allow me also to thank and compliment the now former President of the Assembly, Ambassador Al Nassir, for his successful presidency with the 66th session.

I take this opportunity to welcome the engagements and efforts of the Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon, which undoubtedly contribute to strengthening the role and reputation of the World Organization. It was a true honor for me and for the Macedonian citizens to be his hosts. The Republic of Macedonia highly values and supports the Secretary General's endeavors, and he can, as has been the case thus far, count on our full support.

Distinguished President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now more than ever in the history of humanity, nations in the world stand confronted against the same challenges, are the victims of the same threats, and share the wish for a better future. Effective multilateralism is of essential importance for the development of collective actions as a response to common challenges. The United Nations are an organization whose legitimacy to tackle global challenges through global actions is universal and undeniable. The support provided by member states is of crucial importance. In this sense, I wish to assure you that the Republic of Macedonia will continue to provide an active contribution to the reinforcement and improvement of the efficiency of this system.

Excellencies,

This world composed of diversities is in need of a common denominator, a link that relates all individuals, peoples and countries, regardless of the differences in terms of culture, language and religion. This link is the United Nations Charter, with its principles and fundamental values. The Republic of Macedonia is firmly dedicated to the respect of the United Nations Charter – a Charter which is the basic foundation of the foreign policy of my country. Ever since the declaration of its independence and after becoming a member of the United Nations, the peaceful resolution of international disputes has been one of our leading principles and guideline of behavior as a responsible member of the international community. Therefore, I wish to welcome the General Assembly recommendation to put this issue forward as the topic of this year's debate.

An ounce of prevention is the same as a pound of medicine. When speaking about international disputes, it is however inevitable to refer to the activities for prevention as one of the mechanisms for their resolution. Nowadays, preemptive diplomacy has proven its relevancy once more. In the early days of its independence, the Republic of Macedonia was host to the UNPREDEP mission, a one of a kind mechanism of the United Nations at that time. The experience of the Republic of Macedonia, the United Nations and the involved member states was positive.

We are witnessing the fact that the development of international relations and the increased complexity of challenges in the globalized world confirm the need of developing mechanisms and using good services.

At this point, I wish to acknowledge the Secretary General for advocating a deeper analysis of this issue which was presented in his report on *Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful resolution of conflicts, their prevention and resolution*. It produced good operative solutions for upgrading the capacity of the United Nations. I believe we should and must explore new ways and possibilities to strengthen the role of the UN Secretary General in the resolution of international disputes.

In times of a global economic crisis, the focus of the UN on prevention of conflicts and further development of preemptive diplomacy is understandable. The Republic of Macedonia believes it is reasonable to pay attention to the effective and efficient use of resources which are becoming scarcer. This is why we are attentively following all activities related to the report of the Secretary General on the Civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict and the implementation of the recommendations made by the Senior Advisory Group. It is very important for the international community to make progress in the field of prevention of new conflicts and to prevent possible return to conflicts in vulnerable countries.

The Republic of Macedonia stands ready to offer its experience in the area of democratic institution building, based on the Macedonian inclusive democratic model of integration without assimilation.

In this context, I would like to refer to the recently held High level meeting on the rule of law at the national and international levels. The Republic of Macedonia attaches great importance to this issue, which is undoubtedly the basis of all democratic societies. The report of the Secretary General on the rule of law has provided food for thought and further actions. The Republic of Macedonia believes that inclusiveness is an important principle that needs to be implemented when it comes to the rule of law. Its character is multifaceted and it should cover all stakeholders, and especially civil society.

Distinguished President,

Rule of law is incomplete and impossible to achieve without respect of human rights. As the UN Secretary General said in his opening speech of this General Assembly: „we shall have neither peace nor development without respect for human rights and the rule of law”.

As a country that builds a model of inclusive democracy, the Republic of Macedonia attaches particular importance to the development, promotion and protection of human rights. The right and duty of every country is to safeguard and promote the rights of its citizens. Human rights should reinforce and reaffirm national sovereignty. This will then be the best guarantee that the *safeguard responsibility* as a principle will maintain its desired first and primary pillar. In this sense, the Republic of Macedonia will continue making efforts to preserve and promote human rights – efforts to promote democracy and rule of law, gender equality and improvement of the role of women and protection of vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Also, we strongly support the active participation of member states in the Universal Periodic Review as the mechanism for promoting the capacity of the Human Rights Council.

In this context, I would like to remind you that the Republic of Macedonia presented its candidature for membership in the Human Rights Council for the period 2014 –

2016. We are convinced that with our experience in this area so far, but also with our specific achievements and open ambitions for promotion of this segment of global governance, we will be able to provide our full contribution to further strengthening of human rights and their additional affirmation in the years that follow.

Distinguished President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year yet again, all priorities are focused on the three most important pillars of our world organization: peace and security, sustainable development and human rights. All three are mutually related. There can be no sustainable development without peace and stability, and there can be no sustainable peace without development and poverty reduction. The Millennium Development Goals continue to be the parameters according to which we shall evaluate our success.

The aspiration of the Republic of Macedonia to become member of the European Union has created the necessary potential for political, economic and social reforms. The promotion of equitable and comprehensive development based on human rights has provided a solid basis for the national development agenda. Therefore, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia established a Program whose aim is to put the emphasis on economic development, to improve the living standard of our citizens, to fight against corruption, to increase educational opportunities and to promote democracy and interethnic relations.

Balanced and sustainable development is a major investment for the future. An investment whereby everyone must participate with a portion in the interest of general well-being. The outcome of the Conference on Sustainable Development Rio + 20 should be taken as an additional impetus for the use of alternative possibilities for achieving sustainable development. The Republic of Macedonia, in coordination with the policies of its European partners, will advocate an expansion of these alternatives. Sustainable development is closely linked to the disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change. Recognizing this interdependence, the Republic of Macedonia supports the holistic approach of their implementation in national, regional and global strategies, policies and plans.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our dedication to the region of Southeast Europe and regional cooperation is demonstrated through our Chairmanship of the Southeast Europe Cooperation Process. The region is not immune to global challenges and threats – threats that can be removed solely by fulfilling assumed obligations and numerous commitments that we have all taken. I am convinced that intensive regional cooperation in this field will help us build a region more resistant to natural disasters.

We wish to turn the focus of our Chairmanship with the Process to the real and everyday needs of our citizens – those of peace, security and development; the needs that are a result of global challenges. Challenges that do not recognize political or ethnic barriers, or religious groups. Among the priorities of the Macedonian Chairmanship will be the cooperation in the area of economy and agriculture, culture and tourism, science and education, cross-border cooperation and environment protection. Our principles are based on resolving the problems of citizens regardless of their ethnic, religious or any other kind of affiliation. I can see no other way of doing this then through close regional cooperation.

Let us build good neighborly relations on the basis of solidarity. In return, we expect from our neighbors to show solidarity in action for a safer region. We can and we

must be ready for future challenges, in order to provide a safer future to our descendants.

This is what we are bound to by our youth. Young people expect from our generation to behave in a responsible manner. They live in a time of new technologies, and they already know what is going on at the global level. I have no dilemma that we should focus our entire energy to young people, to the creation of youth for the future and future for our youth. Youth built in the spirit of dialogue, tolerance and respect of diversity. This is why, in parallel with the Summit of the Southeast Europe Cooperation Process, we will also host the 11th Forum of the Dialogue among Civilizations in cooperation with UNESCO and the Council of Europe, whose topic will be focused on youth. As President of the Republic of Macedonia with great hopes, along with UNESCO we are preparing to celebrate next summer the 10th anniversary since the first regional gathering of the Dialogue among civilizations. It was here, at this stand, that my predecessor, President Boris Trajkovski, with the great help of the United Nations and UNSECO, not only shared his dreams about this initiative, but also realized it in Ohrid, back in 2003, when the wounds from the bloody conflict in former Yugoslavia were still fresh. The words of the Ohrid message speak of the undoubtedly enormous capital of the Republic of Macedonia – to be a functional multiethnic, multilingual and multireligious foundation of European Balkans and of the Balkans in Europe.

Next year we will be hosts of the Third World Conference on Dialogue among religions and civilizations. The Republic of Macedonia has always believed and implemented in practice the position that dialogue is irreplaceable. We condemn all forms of violence. No one should be a victim of violence – neither individuals, nor peoples or states or their official representatives. Just as the limit of decency cannot be trespassed in public space, violence can never be a response to that.

Distinguished President,
Excellencies,

Rule of law and human rights are fundamental principles and they cannot be subject to compromise. I fully agree with the positions of the Secretary General stated during his visit to Macedonia in July this year that we should never make a compromise when it comes to universally acknowledged principles. The duty of the United Nations and of each and every one of us is not to allow the rule of law and human rights become a subject to compromise. Therefore, I have asked the Secretary General to bring to renewed attention the report of the independent expert on minority issues, Ms. Gay McDugall: Promotion and protection of all human rights – civil, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, from September 2008.

Allow me as well to recall the recommendation in this report stating that the Government of our southern neighbor should abstain from disputing on whether there is a Macedonian minority, and instead focus on the protection of the right to self-identification and, freedom of expression and freedom of association of that community. In the recommendation, our neighbor is urged to respect the judgments of the European Court on Human Rights according to which the association should be allowed to use the word Macedonian to denote its name and to freely express its ethnic identity. The report concludes that the right to protection must be respected as elaborated in the Declaration on Minorities and in the basic international conventions on human rights.

I expressed my expectation from the Secretary General to make use of his authority and engage in order to unblock the talks taking place under his auspices, and which regard the name difference. The respect of the ICJ judgment will mean respect of international law and rule of law in practice. I believe in this process. I believe that

this process can lead to a solution. But we cannot wait for another 19 years in order for this to happen.

Rule of law is facing a challenge if the processes it is supposed to improve or the solutions it is supposed to offer take too long, or if they take years and decades. A solution has to be reached, in the interest of good neighborly relations, in the interest of regional cooperation. And the best way to help is to provide full respect of the UN Charter, of the Interim Accord and of the judgment of the International Court of Justice. In other words, to provide uncompromised adherence to the framework offered by the resolutions.

Today, in the 21st century it seems quite absurd to be named “a former nation” or “a former colony”. In the name of the dignity of my people, I hereby take this opportunity to publicly thank all 134 member states of the United Nations that recognized the constitutional name of my country, which is the Republic of Macedonia. And here is an appeal to all of you: address us from the point of view of future.

I fully subscribe to what was said by US President Mr. Barack Obama just a few days ago, at this very stand: we believe that freedom and self-determination are not unique to one culture. These are not simply American values or Western values; they are universal values.”

It has happened in UN history that a country was given additional criteria to become member, but the 1948 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice stated that this was not correct and was contrary to the UN Charter. Except in our case, so far no one has been deprived from the right to self-identification. Macedonia should get what it deserves; something that all you member states already have and enjoy. By depriving Macedonia of this, you shall deprive it from being equal to all other member states.

Here we are discussing international law. We are talking about rule of law. Here is the judgment of the International Court of Justice adopted 10 months ago in favor of the Republic of Macedonia. We are asking for this judgment, adopted by a body of the United Nations, to be respected.

We ask for this because we have been prevented from using our constitutional name even at this very stand. The International Court of Justice, in article 95 of the Judgment, stated clearly: Macedonia has the right to refer to itself as the Republic of Macedonia in its relations with the other party and within international organizations.

In the spirit of good neighborly relations and our strong determination to overcome and resolve open issues, I take this opportunity to appeal to our neighbor to work together in this direction. Out of this place, out of the heart of the United Nations, I urge them to respect the judgment of the International Court of Justice and to respect its internationally assumed obligations from the Interim Accord.

We are neighbors. But we wish to be more than just neighbors. We wish to be partners, allies and friends and be able to build together the present and future of our people, our countries and our region. We wish to work together with them and build a safe, prosperous and free world for our children.

We wish to see our neighbor make its way out of the crisis as soon as possible. We proposed a series of practical measures on how to upgrade our economic and good neighborly cooperation. We propose to sign a bilateral agreement on the evasion of double taxation. Macedonian taxes are favorable for their businessmen and as always for them, the doors of the Republic of Macedonia are wide open.

Distinguished President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Republic of Macedonia strongly believes that the United Nations remain the center of multilateralism and global governance. Within the realm of its possibilities, my country will continue to be an active participant in the realization of the goals of the United Nations. The longevity of the Security Council reform and the revitalization of the General Assembly, as well as the comprehensive process of reinforcement of the coherence and efficiency of the system, should not be discouraging. It should, on the contrary, be an impetus and an incentive for further mobilization.

Only the United Nations can provide integrated solutions for interdependent issues such as: development, peace and security, human rights and humanitarian action. At the end, I invite you all to recall the words of Jean Monnet, the father of modern Europe: "the use of veto in modern European history is the expression of lack of power for dialogue and the impossibility of overcoming national egoism". United Nations stimulate universal dialogue; a dialogue which most frequently results in joint solutions for handling global problems in function of realizing the shared vision for the future of the international system.

Thank you very much.