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**Statement**

**by His Excellency VIKTOR YANUKOVYCH**

**President of Ukraine**

**at the General Debate of the 68<sup>th</sup> session**

**of the UN General Assembly**

New York, 24 September 2013

*Mr. President,  
Dear colleagues,*

First of all, on behalf of Ukraine I sincerely congratulate Mr. John William Ashe on the election as President of the 68<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly.

I wish you, Mr. President, success and efficient work on this important post.

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

The theme of the current session – «The Post-2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage!» – is beyond doubts important for every UN member state.

The time before the deadline of the Millennium Development Goals is running out incessantly and the task to produce the ambitious “Post-2015” Action Plan is getting more urgent for the international community.

I am glad that practical work on implementing this task has already been launched. Its intensity is confirmed these days by two important events.

They are the General Assembly Special Event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and Inaugural meeting of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

I am convinced, Mr. President, that actions you have planned will allow already during the 68<sup>th</sup> General Assembly session accelerating substantially the work on elaboration of the development goals for the upcoming period.

We consider the innovative mechanisms of national consultations, which are successfully applied in Ukraine, as one of the important elements of this work.

Ukraine stands ready to be engaged fully and with the maximum efficiency in these developments that are extremely important for the international community.

The theme of sustainable energy as an item of the “Post-2015” Agenda is of particular significance to us. A new, inclusive approach to this issue has to ensure comprehensive consideration of security, social and environmental aspects.

Only such approach will facilitate sustainable development of energy, especially as regards efficiency and safety of its nuclear sector.

This objective will equally be favoured by the further development and joint action on implementation of the outcomes of Kyiv Summit on Safe and Innovative Use of Nuclear Energy, which was held in April 2011.

Ukraine, which experienced the worst nuclear accident in the history of mankind, is well aware of the priority of issues of ecological safety, comprehensive conservation of environment and prudent management of water resources.

We encourage UN member states to intensify international interaction in this field in the framework of observation of the International Year of Water Cooperation and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Water Day.

*Dear colleagues,*

Ukraine will keep doing diligently its “homework” towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals at the national level.

These indicators include poverty alleviation, quality education, environmental conservation, maternal health improvement, child mortality reduction etc.

We are eager to secure the positive momentum of many key indicators of the national development.

The leading catalyst for the progressive advance of Ukraine towards achieving the “Goals” is a program of reforms, the largest in scale in the recent history of our country, aimed at both social and economic transformations as well as further strengthening of democratic system and rule of law.

The fundamental basis for internal transformations in Ukraine will continue to be supremacy of the principle of social justice.

In the light of sustainable development we also view Eurointegration aspirations of Ukraine, which are determining vector for the country’s development.

Ukraine makes its contribution to the project of the Greater Europe that unites interests and development goals of the countries from the West to the East of our continent.

I strongly believe that signing in the coming November of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU including creation of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area will become an important tool in raising the welfare of Ukrainian citizens and will duly assist our country in achieving Millennium Development Goals.

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

It has long become the universal truth that sustainable development is impossible without efficient international security. Conversely, lasting peace is impossible without sustainable development.

Events that happened since last year’s debate clearly showed inconsistency and instability of the contemporary world.

It is the world that despite our common efforts has not embarked on more even and reliable trajectory of the universal peace.

On the contrary, according to the Global Peace Index, our world has become less safer than five years ago.

One of the most painful security problems of today is the civil conflict in Syria, which, unfortunately, increasingly crosses borders and grows into the source of threats of regional scale.

There is no justification for bloodshed and sufferings of the civilian population – women and children, more than million and a half of refugees and internally displaced persons, and tens of thousands of foreign citizens who found themselves in the danger zone.

We must do everything in our power to allay the pain, to localize and heal the open wound of this conflict as soon as possible.

In our joint actions on settling the conflict we have to rely on humanistic values, sobriety, competence and mutual responsibility.

Ukraine has extended its helping hand to the Syrian population by rendering assistance through UN mechanisms. Today we urge the entire international community to take part in this humanitarian mission.

We welcome the Plan produced by Russia and the United States to move under control of the international community the stockpiles of the Syrian chemical weapons for their subsequent destruction.

At the same time Ukraine is convinced that successful implementation of the mentioned plan gives hope to bring the conflict under control and leaves space for the political and diplomatic settlement.

It is time to enhance the establishment of as wide a platform as possible that will allow through multilateral negotiations to reach a political solution to restore peace and stability in Syria.

Speaking about pressing problems of the modern international security, I would like to draw attention to the cyber space security, which is becoming more and more urgent against the backdrop of the development of information society.

Ukraine attaches great significance to this issue as well as to the development of up-to-date mechanisms to combat cyber crimes.

In our opinion one should think not just about strengthening control over the use of Internet and cyber space for criminal purposes but also for other dangerous, primarily military ends.

I am convinced the leadership in this process should belong to the United Nations. UN is the best instrument for turning Internet into the space of freedom working in the interests and to the benefit of all nations over the world.

*Dear colleagues,*

I trust that it is within our power to make the world safer.

The ideals of peace and peaceful co-existence of nations are not hollow words for Ukraine but a clear guideline by which we check all our actions on the international stage since becoming independent.

This imperative is at the heart of every step and initiative of our country at the world arena.

This year's Chairmanship of Ukraine in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe – the biggest international regional forum – is a vivid example of that.

We view this honorary and responsible mission first of all as a lever to consolidate security and stability in Europe.

Special attention of the Ukrainian Chairmanship is focused on the settlement of protracted conflicts and resumption of control over conventional weapons within the OSCE area, combating trafficking in human beings and other most pressing issues of the Organization's activities.

I underline that in every mentioned sector some limited but practically meaningful progress has been achieved.

Ukraine also managed to enhance the urgency of energy security and environmental safety issues and take the issue of energy efficiency to a new level in the OSCE.

I am confident that successful realization of priorities of the Ukrainian Chairmanship will allow intensifying cooperation between the UN and OSCE.

*Dear colleagues,*

2014 will mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear weapon state.

By ridding of the world's third largest nuclear arsenal, our country made an unprecedented contribution to the global nuclear disarmament.

At that time Ukraine, the Russian Federation, Great Britain and the United States concluded the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances confirmed later by France and China.

In view of the historical significance of these events and considering recent alarming trends in nuclear proliferation, Ukraine will initiate holding at the current General Assembly session of a representative thematic conference.

We expect this forum will be participated by guarantor states, countries which followed Ukraine's example and other interested parties.

I hope such international event will become a good opportunity to come back to the thorough consideration of "negative" security assurances.

We keep insisting: security assurances for the states which gave up their nuclear arsenals and countries which do not make part of military unions must be reflected in a legally binding international document.

We are looking forward to successful Nuclear Security Summit in the Hague next year.

Ukraine stands for this global forum to produce new qualitative outcomes and encourages all other countries to make proper contribution to the cause.

*Dear colleagues,*

As a maritime state, Ukraine keeps making efforts to secure maritime navigation safety and combat piracy at the sea.

The primary task in this field is to reinforce the efficacy of mechanisms of prosecuting culprits for perpetrating and financing piracy.

We will further contribute to the strengthening of peace by active participation in the UN missions in hot spots of the world.

For over 20 years of our participation in peacekeeping activities under the UN aegis Ukraine made its contribution to more than twenty operations under the UN auspices.

Today the agenda includes consolidation and enlargement of this experience in the UN missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Cote d'Ivoire.

At the same time we cannot but take note of the existing problems of the present peacekeeping activities of our Organization.

Along with other countries-contributors of "blue helmets" we will carry on working to solve them, particularly as regards ensuring mobility and safety of air operations as well as legal protection of peacekeepers and investigation of crimes committed against them.

Ukraine will further make significant practical contribution in making the world safer.

We will apply to this end all available instruments, especially non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council in case our country is elected to this body for the period of 2016-2017.

I count on the support of the candidacy of Ukraine at the elections.

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

Our country is fully committed to the collective security system enshrined in the UN Charter.

The system that proved its indispensability and will further remain the foundation of the world order.

Ukraine upholds, Mr. President, your decisive determination to achieve long-expected practical advances in the reform of the United Nations.

We believe it is critically important to achieve early progress in the modernization of the UN Security Council.

Even greater is our concern about the present stagnancy of the process.

I would like to confirm time and again the readiness of Ukraine to discuss all progressive concepts of the Security Council reform that are capable of accelerating the implementation of the long-overdue changes.

We consider that the reform must account for legitimate interests of all regional groups, including the Eastern European one. The countries of our region should be allocated one additional seat of non-permanent member in the enlarged Security Council.

***Mr. President,***

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

We have every precondition for the 68<sup>th</sup> General Assembly session to go down in history as one of the most fruitful in the work of the main political body and the most representative among world organizations, which is the United Nations.

I am strongly convinced that the community of nations is up to the task.

Thank you.