



STATEMENT BY

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**PRESIDENT
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

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Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your election as President of the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly and to wish you every success in your important duties.

Let me begin with a quote: "The great challenge of the twenty-first century is to raise people everywhere to a decent standard of living while preserving as much of the rest of life as possible." To preserve life, sustainability of our Planet, of every human, is not a pure theory. It is a practical question of our future, of future of our children. **Millennium goals**, post-2015 framework and climate challenge must form much more than theoretical basis of our discussion. The goals must **identify, address, offer solution** and **solve** the issues that in one or two generations may bring the human race to the edge of its own existence.

70 years ago when the World War II caused tens of millions of deaths, burning all principles of humanity, the patriots and democrats in my country Slovakia took up the arms and put their lives at risk to fight against the evil and for the liberty and democratic values. They fought together with many other nations to **create fundamentals for new global cooperation** embodied year later with the adoption of the United Nations Charter.

The horrors of the Second World War, the failure of the international community to maintain the world peace, the direct threat of larger countries of using the force against the smaller ones, the absence of an international order and rules which would be universally accepted and respected, were a **painful lesson for all of us**.

The cooperation of nations has come a long way in last seven decades. The United Nations played an important role on this road. But we have not gathered here to celebrate a false sense of success. We have to go much further than to identify challenges. It would be the lost opportunity, if the political correctness and diplomatic language will limit us from openly and freely naming and discussing the problems that plague our world, continents, countries and citizens we represent.

We must **not betray commitments** we all gave to the principles of democracy, peace and security of every single citizen of our Planet. We must look into the mirror **what we do, how we do it, what we do or did wrong** and what we can do **better**.

We have believed that the number of conflicts will gradually decrease as our civilization matures and develops. Today we are confronted with the opposite reality. Even more, the **instability is becoming a new status quo**. The instability, poverty, violence, hatred are the fertilizers for instability and catalysts of terrorism. And terrorism is a threat no one is immune to.

Mr. President.

A year ago, we, Europeans, could hardly imagine that after investing so much effort in reaching peace and stability a new armed conflict would arise in our neighborhood. Conflict similarly dangerous in its nature and consequences.

Twenty years ago, **Ukraine** abandoned its nuclear program in exchange of security and territorial integrity guarantees granted by the United States, United Kingdom, China, France and the Russian Federation. Today, instead of marking important anniversary of achievement in the area of security and stability on the European Continent, we are witnessing an armed conflict and political instability. Instead of building a world without weapons of mass destruction we encourage those countries, which seek their security under lethal nuclear umbrella. Bitterly we forget the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Slovakia strongly denounces the violation of the territorial integrity of any state. This is a trademark of our foreign policy. This is a pillar of stability of geopolitical architecture. We are consequent in this principle and Ukraine and annexation of the Crimea is not an exemption.

We are convinced that **only the dialogue and diplomatic solution** of the conflict, with the participation of Russia, will lead to a sustainable peace in Ukraine. We must respect its territorial integrity and the sovereign right of the Ukrainian people to decide their fate in a free and independent manner. The United Nations plays a crucial role in this matter. What Ukraine needs today is to restore peace, stability, implement reforms and be reassured of guarantees of the inviolability of its territory. Slovakia is ready to participate in this process.

Diplomatic language is full of allegories. But even the nicest language cannot hide the naked truth when people die. Acts of barbarism and cruelty have become a freely available article. They are broadcasted “live” to our homes. They make us immune to violence “far away”. In the same time they create the feeling of being born into an unsafe world when people are asking: where is the **effective protective umbrella of the United Nations?**

A year ago we could not imagine a sharp rise of **ISIL**, which has become a global threat in a short period of time. It overshadowed the long-term endeavor of the international community in Iraq. ISIL ideology and acts represent an unprecedented brutality and twisted use of media for their self-promotion. It represents a dangerous ideology of violent change to state borders. It embodies ethnic and religious cleansing, that will not stop at the borders of Iraq and Syria, or neighboring countries, but has the ambition to spread beyond the region of Middle East

The entire global community has the responsibility to act with a view to end the suffering of innocent victims of violence, to protect children and women. Today we have to **stand united in Iraq and to prevent ISIL** to take a hold of the occupied territory and to consolidate its military and economic power over there.

Autocratic and totalitarian ideologies always bring suffering, limitations of rights, internal conflict, injustice, death. We are all well too familiar with their ultimate price and catastrophic consequences. Among many tasks of the United Nations is to **prevent such ideologies from becoming successful**, to protect human rights, to take every possible preventive measures to avoid conflicts, to create sustainable peace

Slovakia with its own first-hand experience of the transition from the totalitarian regime to democracy supports creating conditions for sustainability of peace. We promote the **Security Sector Reform** as one of the key success factor for peaceful development in regions emerging from conflict, as well as states going through a regime change towards democracy. Stable security institutions, such as army and police, can better fulfill their duties in order to protect citizens, safeguard human rights and protect vulnerable members of the society, including women and girls.

The Slovak Republic actively fulfills its commitments towards **Afghanistan**. The UN mission in Afghanistan was led by a diplomat from Slovakia. We remain convinced that in the aftermath of the recent presidential elections, the new Afghan leadership will be able to create conditions to achieve national and societal unity and to continue supporting international assistance.

I am pleased to note that the two presidential candidates have reached an agreement. We believe that this will contribute to the stability of Afghanistan. Slovakia is ready to continue to do its part in assisting the Afghan people in this endeavor.

Disarmament is a key for elimination of the potential sources of tension and conflicts. The signing of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) last year was an important step towards establishing common legal standards for regulating and monitoring of the international trade with conventional weapons. The Slovak Republic was among the first 50 countries that have ratified the Treaty. We are hopeful that the implementation of this Treaty will contribute towards eliminating the risk of illegal arms trade and thus strengthening global security.

Mr. President

Last but not least – peace, security, stability are prerequisites for development. Rule of law, democratic governance, human rights are essential for every single citizen. But we have to address, respond and solve the global issues that may be as lethal for mankind as a nuclear war: the changes that are occurring in our planet. **Globalization** has brought borderless opportunities for entrepreneurship, but has also created new challenges we have to deal with in order to make the life on the Planet sustainable: climate change, inequalities in development and distribution of goods and services, poverty, unequal distribution of access to health and education. Slovakia is and will remain a responsible member of the global community. We participate in the discussion of financing sustainable development, offering our own experience for economic transition. Global challenges require global action and national responsibility. We are ready to bear our share.

Mr. President.

Peoples of the World had vested in the United Nations an exclusive and global responsibility – to **respond** to the violation of peace, **respect** international law and **protect** human rights and threats to humanity. Let us all make sure the United Nations is able to carry on its responsibilities further.

For decades this Organization has been the forum, where we could name those perpetrators who murdered their own citizens on a mass scale, those leaders who worshiped the cult of hatred and intolerance, those who favored arms to agreement and the international law. But in those cases when we failed, our failure caused suffering and death of innocent people.

Mr. President.

We (*the United Nations*) should not give up on the ideal of being the conscience of the world. Our organization shall be the authority with the ability to **define**, **prevent**, and **solve** conflicts and problems. We together should convince the people around the world to believe that we are safeguarding international norms and principles the United Nations is build on. If we fail to accomplish this on the soil of the United Nations, than we will not be able to give the mankind the guarantee that totality, injustice, impunity and immorality will not prevail.

Thank you for your attention.