

Check against Delivery

**The address of the President of Albania,
His Excellency, Mr. Bujar NISHANI
at the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

New York, on September 23rd, 2016, at 9.00

Honorable Mr. President,

Your Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen!

It is a special pleasure for me, in the capacity of the Head of State of the Republic of Albania to address the 71st Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

From the outset I wish to greet and hail the election of the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Peter Thomson, and to wish him good luck and every success in fulfilling the agenda and ambitious commitments undertaken.

Beyond the honor and privilege to address for a second time this very distinguished Assembly of the United Nations, I also have the specific sense of responsibility to provide a modest contribution, especially during these important moments of regional and global developments and when our attention has been focused on ensuring a sustainable development.

I would also like to express the deep appreciation about the substantial vision, role and contribution that the Secretary General has provided at the helm of the United

Nations, by orienting our attention on fundamental issues associated to values and human dignity and to the issues related to peace and security in our common planet.

Mr. President,

This year Albania celebrated the 61st anniversary of its membership in the United Nations and with legitimate pleasure I wish to emphasize that my country remains faithful to the principles of the United Nations Charter and maximally contributes with all its possibilities and capacities for peace and safety, and to improve human rights as well.

I would like to seize this opportunity to assure you that my country has the necessary sensitivity towards the challenges facing the world today and that it supports all common efforts to address them, with unwavering conviction that the prevention of conflicts and ensuring global peace and security where the focus is the attention paid to people and human society, require close cooperation and coordination.

Towards these challenges, Albania is inclusively and comprehensive engaged to prevent crises; and its possible engagement is focused on humanitarian aid; its contribution to regional stability and security; sustainable development; ratification of the Climate Agreement and depositing of the instruments of ratification to the Secretary-General; the implementation of all its commitments in the field of security and appreciated and assessed contribution on the regional and international level; playing a proactive role on international platforms for the promotion and advancement of human rights.

Albania also views the implementation of 2030 Agenda as an international platform for strengthening the connection that exists between development and security, believing that this Agenda will serve as a guide for our action aimed at

the sustainable development during the next 15 years for the peoples, the planet, peace, partnership and prosperity as well.

Albania is a pilot country in designing the global indicators for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals 16 (SDG) for peace, justice and strong and consolidated institutions. The objectives of this Agenda have become an integral part of the programs and sectorial strategies of the Institutions and the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI), urging the Albanian institutions to draft and develop new and ambitious programs in all areas of development, and therefore making the country part of the highest European and international standards.

I seize this opportunity to announce that Albania is determined to be active at the Third United Nations Conference on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development (HABITAT III), which offers a unique opportunity for the adoption of a new Urban Global Agenda to strengthen relationships and synergies among urbanization and sustainable development and climate change.

Mr. President,

The 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement righteously so are considered as the opportunities of this present generation and for the ones to come for a better life. The implementation of these two international documents, where Albania is proactive, is rightly considered as a key global strategy for coping with climate change, achieving sustainable development, international assistance and peace-making and peace-building issues.

The agreement signed by 187 countries at the COP21 Conference of the Parties in Paris, marked a milestone in the international community's efforts to successfully deal with climate changes.

Albania was among the countries that have ratified the Paris Agreement in a short time, with the sole aim to contribute to the acceleration of its entry into effect and it becoming active as soon as possible.

Therefore, two days ago I had the pleasure to deposit Albania's instruments of ratification of the Paris Agreement, expressing my country's concrete commitment to the future of our common planet, and reaffirming our engagement to this major commitment. In this context, Albania has committed itself until 2030 to reduce the emission of greenhouse gas by 11.5%.

Mr. President,

In May of this year, I attended and welcomed the first Humanitarian Global Summit organized and held under the auspices of the Secretary-General in Istanbul, noting in particular Albania's support for the Humanity's Agenda and the vision that a shift from perpetual crisis management effectively managing toward prevention and early action is urgently needed. I am convinced that this Agenda will help us to move from the initiative into action for the good of humanity and the generations that will come after us.

At the Istanbul Summit Albania engaged and pledged to address the deterioration of some humanitarian situations around the world and it joined the policies of the United Nations calling for humanitarian aid and response as well.

Albania joins the international community's efforts to deal with migration and refugees' flows in a consistent and coordinated manner. Today, the reality on the ground and at the policies' level are leading and forcing us to change our approach at the regional level and beyond it, in order to take qualitative steps forward in our work and approach and cooperation about migration.

A few days ago, Albania organized a senior level international conference on the challenges of the Ombudsman offices, regarding the migratory flows. One of the results of this Conference was the adoption of the Declaration of Tirana, which has already been forwarded to the United Nations' Secretary-General. Based upon the values of humanism, Tirana Declaration aims to pave the way for a new approach in the context of migratory flows, the respect and protection of human rights and human dignity, regardless of country of origin or individual status.

Albania, as a European Union candidate country and in anticipation of the opening of accession negotiations, joined all the stands and commitments of the European Union, whenever it was required and it was necessary. Even within the Agenda for Humanity, Albania joined the European Union positions and will contribute with all its possibilities and capabilities in meeting all those commitments.

I take this opportunity to compliment once again the Secretary-General about the report published earlier this year: One Humanity - Shared Responsibility, as well as to reaffirm the support of my country to the basic principles of that report, which offered us a complete picture of the sad reality of human society, the humanitarian situation and human rights around the world.

Mr. President,

Another fundamental challenge to the common values of human society is the fight international terrorism and violent extremism.

A few days ago, the citizens of New York, the city where we have gathered today, but all American citizens as well, painfully and with grievance commemorated the victims caused by terrorism 15 years ago.

Terrorist attacks, especially those with religious background have intensified during recent years, hitting with ferocity and savagery the major cities of France, Belgium, Turkey, Kuwait, Egypt, Tunisia and Lebanon and of many other countries across the world, aiming to intimidate and kneel down our societies.

In this context, Albania appreciates the irreplaceable role played by the United Nations in the global fight against terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism, considering the Organization as a key actor. Albania also supports the Action Plan of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Violent Extremism, and the active role of the United Nations in finding political solutions and addressing the roots of conflicts in areas affected by them.

Albania reaffirms its support for Security Council's Resolutions 2170; 2178 and 2253 that require the states to take necessary measures to ensure the respect and upholding of human rights, as well as addressing the issue of so-called "foreign fighters" and the financing of international terrorism.

My country will continue with determination to be involved and contribute on the regional level to address and answer the violent extremism and the phenomenon of "foreign fighters" and to promote the ideas and programs which urge and incite inter-religious respect and coexistence.

Albania was among the first countries that joined the Global Coalition against ISIS / Daesh and it has so far contributed with five 5 packages of military equipment for the Peshmerga Armed Forces in Iraq. At the present day Albania is enlisted and ranks among the proactive countries committed to fully implement the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Given the experience of many centuries of peaceful religious and harmonious coexistence but also the need to address this challenge domestically, Albania is implementing a pilot program for prevention and countering terrorism and violent extremism through education, with the ambition to turn this program into a platform of a wider dimension than the domestic one. Albania is ready to share its experience with other countries and peoples.

We believe that, through special education programs and the preservation of social cohesion we can effectively oppose violent radicalism and extremism.

Also, Albania has adopted a special legal framework for dealing with these phenomena by undertaking such strong measures; It approved the strategy for the fight against violent extremism (on November 2015); and it has established the Office of the National Coordinator of Radicalization and Violent Extremism (Countering Violent Extremism) (ever since 1 August 2016).

Albania is solidarity and will contribute as much as it can to prevent and end the conflicts and sufferings of human society, both in its region it belongs to as well as globally.

Mr. President,

With the policies pursued over the past two decades, Albania has become increasingly active in contributing to security issues in the international arena.

My country has ensured this role and is strengthening it through the pro-active membership in NATO, its clearly support and concrete commitment to the implementation of the common security and defense of the European Union, its support and participation in the framework of United Nations' operations, in the police advisory assistance missions carried out in Afghanistan and Sudan, the OSCE missions, strengthening the strategic partnership with the United States and European Union, as well as through its serious engagement in the fight against terrorism and combating threats to peace and security in the world.

Ever since September 1996 to the present day, Albania has contributed with 6528 troops to international peacekeeping operations.

Albania believes that the peace process in the Middle East can be achieved through negotiations and that the parties involved in it should benefit from the energies and attention paid by the actors' of international community to the final and lasting solution of this issue.

Albania also confirms its support to the efforts of the United Nations to facilitate a peace process in Syria, and it hailed the engagements to establish peace in Syria, to open and secure the routes of humanitarian aid and assistance and to fight with determination Daesh and Al Nusra that operate in that country. But the development unfolding during the last days and hours are very worrying. The striking and interruption of sending the humanitarian aid to the civil population mines the up to the present efforts to reach an armistice and put an end to violence.

Albania has recently followed with concern the nuclear tests carried out in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, condemning them and calling them open, systematic and provocative acts in violation of the resolutions of the Security Council of the United Nations.

Those acts affect peace and security in Northeast Asia and worldwide as well, therefore Albania demands from that country the compliance and enforcement of international law and United Nations' resolutions.

Mr. President,

Albania pays a special attention to the regional cooperation in its entirety. Our foreign policy is maximally oriented to strengthening good neighborly relations with all countries of the region and their fully-fledged integration into Euro-Atlantic processes.

The energetic engagement of Albania in this context, and its active and constructive role in all regional initiatives have served and helped to strengthen the political, economic and human development among all partner countries in the region towards the establishment of an interaction agenda among them, the European Union and the Western Balkan countries, as part of the common journey of regional countries towards European Union membership.

Albania supports Kosova's participation in all multilateral regional and international activities based on this fundamental principle of active participation and contribution of all countries in the region in the process of regional cooperation.

Kosova has made extraordinary achievements in consolidating its democratic institutions, good governance, multi-ethnic coexistence of religions and in particular the progress in the Euro-Atlantic processes. It has taken important steps in bilateral cooperation with Serbia, aimed at solving practical problems and creating a climate of confidence for regional cooperation.

In this spirit, we support and encourage without any hesitation the advancing of the ongoing dialogue between Kosova and Serbia, mediated and facilitated by the European Union and supported by the United States and other international partners. We consider it a very suitable platform for ironing out all outstanding issues, in order to set the sight towards the future.

Albania will continue to strongly support the expansion of international recognition of Kosova, the active role that it plays as a fully-fledged member in all regional organizations, as well as the inexorable process of its membership in international organizations. These will serve to the inclusive international policies, to the contribution that Kosova will provide global policies, but also to the strengthening of peace, security and development in the Balkan region.

Today, Kosova is recognized by 109 member countries of the United Nations, and I am convinced that soon other countries of the Organization will recognize it, contributing to the further strengthening of peace and stability in the region of Southeast Europe and beyond it as well.

Mr. President,

Albania is fully committed to the process of European integration, considering the prospect of European Union membership as an indispensable stimulant for

carrying out deep reforms in the interest of achieving better standards of the Rule of Law and achieving a sustainable development for the country.

Obtaining the status of the European Union candidate and expectation to soon open the accession negotiations, these are recognition of Albania's achievements in implementing the necessary reforms and achieving the required standards.

The European Union is facing severe challenges, especially after BREXIT, but Albania is determined to pursue the path of reforms, considering the European integration as its major objective and its best and only alternative.

In the framework of domestic reform, one of the largest reforms has been and remains the judicial one, which not only constitutes a solid basis for the opening of accession negotiations to the European Union, but it also improves the performance standards of the Rule of Law and guarantees sustainable economic and social development.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to confirm once again the determination of Albania to continue its support to the Agenda of the United Nations, particularly to the 2030 Agenda and all its efforts for a sustainable development of our planet, as well as continue to actively contribute in further strengthening and enhancing the role of the Organization on the global level.

Thank you!