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*General Debate*

*Statement by*

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*Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and  
Herzegovina*

*New York, 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2005.*

Mister President,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me to express my great pleasure to attend this 60<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly and to address you all on behalf of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia-Herzegovina. I would also like to congratulate you Mr. President on your election, and at the same time to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to Mr. Jean Ping on his successful presiding over the 59<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

Mister President,

Let me start by making reference to historical Summit that took place last week. In its 60th year of existence, striving and struggling for global peace, the UN has reached its maturity. Our planet is not what it was 60 years ago, and we will leave it to the historians to say if our generation is better than the ones before. We need to face challenges of globalization that await us in this 21<sup>st</sup> century with capacity and competence. We need to show multilateralism and cooperation, relying on basic values outlined in the Charter. Above all, we need to identify explicit obligations and make sure that they are fulfilled. Organization of the UN, unique and uncontested when it comes to global credibility and capacity, should not be content with being what it used to be. This organization needs to be reformed, not only to quiet the criticism, but more importantly, to earn uncompromised respect.

On the other hand, the fact is that the strength and efficiency of the UN, like any other organization, depend on collective strength of its members. Its strength stems from the unity of the member countries. Our organization, as imperfect as it is, reflects the world of today, the international community and our entire generation. The outcome of the High Level Plenary Meeting and the final outcome document that we adopted a week ago is encouraging in a way that it has summarized the issues on which we reached consensus, but has fallen short of providing us with the time frame and modalities for the accomplishment of some important goals. It is a pity that the reform of the Security Council has lost its momentum and has been postponed for the future. Our enthusiasm in supporting the establishment of the Human Rights Council was shadowed by the fact that the final document has not defined the modalities for realization of this idea in a precise timeframe. Therefore, we strongly urge the appointment of the facilitator who will streamline the efforts of the General Assembly in order to see this newborn get on its feet.

As to the Responsibility to Protect, which found its rightful place in the Final Document, we would like to point out the paramount role of preventive diplomacy. From our painful experience we have come to realize the importance of the Fact Finding Missions and Early Warning Systems for potential or imminent conflicts. In order to have efficient

early warning, we need to strengthen the Department of Political Affairs of the UN. The individuals from the countries emerging from conflict, or from the post conflict societies, with their first hand experience, could become an asset to the Department. Thus, we will restore credibility of the UN that was in great part overwhelmed by the NGOs such as ICG and others.

Having traveled the path from the subject of the Security Council emergency meetings to the potential candidate for the non-permanent membership in 2010-2011, BiH strongly supports the conclusion of the final document that the Security Council should stay committed to its primary responsibility under the Charter and maintain international peace and security, rather than expend its agenda at the expense of the General Assembly.

Mister President,

Another serious challenge of today, the one that Bosnia-Herzegovina is facing quite successfully, is the war on terrorism. No doubt that a global threat requires a global response, and such is only possible through the institution of UN. Defining terrorist acts and unequivocal condemnation of such acts by the IC, identifying international cooperation benchmarks in the fight against terrorism, and unhindered functioning of international justice can only be secured if they are supported by the UN. Special Ministry of Security has been established, aiming not only to improve domestic security, but also to contribute more efficiently to the global fight against terrorism. The Anti-Terrorist Team that operates under this Ministry had already blocked the bank accounts of suspect individuals and organizations, and raised a number of charges. We have signed all the international conventions against terrorism, and we stand ready to give our constructive contribution in drafting the Comprehensive UN Convention Against Terrorism, as agreed in the Final Document.

The accomplishments of the HLPM are quite encouraging. The Summit demonstrated power of universalism and multilateralism by choosing agreement over unilateralism. We made this Assembly an arena of agreement, instead of being an arena of conflict. The lesson learned in Bosnia-Herzegovina has taught us: if we find in ourselves enough strength and courage to prove our commitment to these principles in practice, indeed the course of history can be changed towards times of peace, stability and prosperity for all.

Mr. President,

With no intention to go too far in the past or interpret facts that already belong to the archives, I must remind you that this year we are marking two anniversaries: Srebrenica and Dayton. Close to 8000 names of Bosniacs on the list of Srebrenica Report reveal the terrible truth about the genocide that took place in Srebrenica. This crime was committed 50 years after the fighters for free Europe liberated Auschwitz and vouched "never again". Yet it happened again, not once but trice. After the Summit, we will have the power and the instruments that will prevent anything similar from happening ever again.

Dayton Agreement, the peace agreement that was reached in Dayton and signed in Paris, although often criticized for its complicated and non feasible provisions, indeed stopped the war and enabled freedom of movement. It meant the new beginning for Bosnia-Herzegovina. However imperfect, it provided the framework that enabled us, ten years down the line, to turn the situation around and complete fundamental reforms that became part of our everyday life: creation of single defense system with state level Ministry of defense, unification of two economic spaces, merging of two intelligence services, single custom service and revenue system, standardization, to mention but a few.

Nonetheless, obvious limitations that the Dayton framework imposes, like the last one that we faced during police reform, will be dealt with according to the international standards of Euro-Atlantic integration, same as we did with defense reform. International standards and best democratic practices will take us to the future, free of fears and tensions. We believe that the road that Bosnia-Herzegovina firmly follows is a precious experience, in international terms. The peace is now firm and the state reintegrated. Ongoing processes in Bosnia-Herzegovina are clear proof of that.

We have done more in terms of integration and state-building over the past three years than in the previous seven. I would like to especially bring to your attention the fact that the correlation between international affirmation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and fulfillment of our obligations is interconnected. There is a correlation between encouragement and obligations on one side and the tidal wave of the reforms on the other.

The key feature of all the reforms up to date is the fact that all of them are implemented through political agreement. They were not a result of international pressure and they were not imposed by the current High Representative. Entities have agreed to transfer their jurisdictions to the state. Forming and operating of the state-level Ministry of Defense was the crucial step forward in terms of NATO's Partnership for Peace program. Numerous institutions and agencies in the field of sanitary protection now operate with state-level mandates as well. We are in the final phases of introducing a single-rate VAT in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which will consolidate and accommodate the business environment to foreign investments. We mark continued growth of Foreign Direct Investment over the past 2 years, whereas our GDP growth in 2004 was 6%, which is a record growth in our region.

One of our most important international obligations is of course the cooperation with ICTY, and we pay great deal of attention to it. Despite the fact that this year Republika Srpska also marks substantial progress in this area, we are discouraged by the fact that the two most wanted war criminals have not yet been brought to justice. Evident improvement in cooperation with The Hague, sudden voluntary surrenders to the Tribunal after years of hiding, and the locations from which the runaway criminals are being extradited, clearly point to the amount of responsibility of Serbia and Montenegro in this whole issue, especially as compared to the responsibility of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

We are extremely concerned by the fact that many criminals who are still at large have obviously used Belgrade as escape route for securing hideouts outside the region.

The reform of justice established the institutions of State Prosecutor, National Court and High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of Bosnia-Herzegovina. We are the first country in the region to meet the international standards required for processing of war crime cases. The state-level Council will operate under optimum technical conditions, and according to best European practices. The process of organizing trials in the countries where crimes have been committed is somewhat hindered by the dual-citizenship issue, but we hope to have this resolved shortly, with the assistance of relevant international institutions.

Acting in accordance with its international obligations, Bosnia-Herzegovina supports all activities and peace initiatives aimed at conflict prevention, peace-building and safety in post-conflict zones. Bosnia-Herzegovina participates in international peace-keeping operations, despite our limited capacities. We have military observers in Congo, Cyprus and Ethiopia and Eritrea, and civil police officers in Liberia and Haiti, as part of the UN operations there. We also sent a de-mining team to Iraq, as a sign of our support to Iraqis in the process of establishing a democratic state.

As for the situation in Iraq, we are pleased to see the consensus of UN SC members regarding the transfer of authority from the occupation forces to the legitimately elected judicial and executive authorities, as this leads to establishing of Iraq as a sovereign and democratic country. This is a necessary precondition for the beginning of comprehensive reforms of Iraqi state and society. Reconstruction will still remain the key issue for their citizens. The UN should play more important role here. It provides humanitarian aid, and helps reconstruct both the infrastructure and government institutions. The firm determination of the UN members to assist in the establishing of stability and safety through participating in the reconstruction, through assistance in the form of human resources or in the form of technical support, is vital.

Bosnia-Herzegovina supports the global implementation of the Action Plan endorsed at the UN Conference on Small and Light Arms. We also supported the conclusion of the special UN session dedicated to AIDS by creating a special National Council for Prevention of AIDS. The Council will meet all required international obligations in this area by the end of this year.

When it comes to financing of international peace-keeping operations, we are quite aware that this issue is the key to accomplishment of the UN goals, and we recognize that a shortfall of funds can indeed hinder protection of human lives. We plead for more balanced and just principles of contribution, and we call upon the developed countries to set a good example for the rest. They need to demonstrate clearly that we all share this obligation.

Being the under-represented country in the UN Headquarters and generally in the UN system, we would like to see more balanced representation. Bosnia-Herzegovina is keen to see its nationals being elected to high-ranking positions in the UN bodies, as we do have high quality personnel to offer.

Mr. President,

Allow me to use this opportunity and express once again, on behalf of the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the gratitude that we feel for the assistance and aid that IC provided us with, during times of hardship. Since the day we were admitted to the UN membership, Bosnia-Herzegovina has fought for independence and survival. Today, we are a credible international partner, and we stand ready to assist in the process of creating a better, more efficient and more alert UN system that will address the threats and challenges of the XXI century.

Before I conclude, allow me to make yet another recommendation, which too I base on our own experience. The UN should cooperate more closely with other organizations, especially the regional ones. Regional cooperation in our corner of the world has enabled stabilization and provided for political, economic and all other bonds to grow stronger between us. We are building our cooperation on the grounds of mutual respect and codependence. We have intensified the democratization, liberalization of trade and cooperation on cross-border issues to the point that the negative image of Western Balkans is being reversed, placing Bosnia-Herzegovina in a position of a cornerstone of stability in the whole region.

Mr. President,

In conclusion I would like to reiterate that we fully share the view of the Final Document of the HLPF that each country must be responsible for its own sustainability, stability and prosperity. The Government of Bosnia-Herzegovina will take immediate measures to prepare National strategy for fulfillment of the MDGs by the end of next year, with special emphasis on transparency, good governance, better employment and better use of internal resources. Any forthcoming assistance in a form of debt relief and capital inflow from private investments and Breton Woods institutions would be more than welcomed.

For helping underdeveloped countries and post conflict societies is not a charity, but the investment into the future of the entire world

Thank you, Mr. President.