



**Statement**  
**by H.E. Mr. Vartan OSKANIAN**  
**Minister of Foreign Affairs**  
**of the Republic of Armenia**

**at the General Debate**  
**of the 62<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly**

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Mr. Chairman, each opportunity to speak from this podium is a humbling experience, knowing that every country in the world is listening to the other, trying to discern where common approaches and interests lie.

Those of us representing small countries have a sense that this is the forum where large states address the ills of the world, and we, smaller ones, ought to adhere to topics that are specific to us, to our regions. As if, addressing overarching, global issues would be pretentious, and they are best left to those with the power to do something about them.

This is my 10<sup>th</sup> year here, and I will risk breaking that rule. This year, as financial calamities have compounded political and natural disasters, it is so evident that although our common problems and challenges threaten us all equally, they affect us unevenly. Small countries, with less of everything – diversity, resources, maneuverability, options and means – are at greater peril, greater risk, greater vulnerability than those with bigger territory, larger population, greater potential.

At the same time, the major political, social and environmental issues on this Assembly's agenda -- peace and security, economic growth and sustainable development, human rights, disarmament, drugs, crime, international terrorism – know no borders. None of us can tackle them individually if we expect to resolve them effectively. Their solutions are in our common interest. The problems are vast and touch all of humanity. Because they cannot be solved within our borders alone, does not mean anyone has the right, or the luxury, to abdicate responsibility for their consequences.

When the speculative market drives the price of a barrel of oil to \$80, those too small to have significant reserves are more quickly affected. And just as large countries with huge appetites for fuel make deals sometimes inconsistent with their politics, so do we. For us, energy security is more than a matter of global arithmetic; it's a matter of life and death.

When climate change causes significant environmental transformation, it doesn't take much for prolonged droughts and excessive rains to harm our agriculture and damage our economy, or for rising shorelines to reach our cities. But we lack the diversity and the space to adapt and cope.

When it is news that there are no explosions in Iraq, and when large scale destruction is a daily occurrence, we in small countries become more keenly aware of our vulnerability and susceptibility to the will and capacity of the international community, to their tolerance for distant violence and humiliation.

When development depends on an absence of bad weather, disease and war, and when the capacity to ward off at least two of those three ills lies in the hands of those with huge ability to heal and to make peace, small countries are at risk and helpless.

When disarmament and arms control cease to be the means to world peace, and instead become the means to score political dividends, small countries resort to their own means

of self-protection. In other words, we become part of the problem, because the solution is neither straightforward, nor within reach.

When Darfur becomes shorthand for hopelessness, we in the small corners of the world realize that power has become a substitute for responsibility. The ubiquitous language of human rights cannot compensate for political will. Genocide must be prevented, not commemorated. Generation after generation, we find new names for man's appalling tolerance for what we think are inhuman machinations, new names for the places of horror, slaughter, massacre, indiscriminate killing of all those who have belonged to a segment, a category, an ethnic group, a race or a religion. Nearly 100 years ago, for Armenians it was Deir-El-Zor. For the next generation, it was Auschwitz, then the killing fields of the Cambodians. And most recently Rwanda. If in each of those cases, together with genocide, these names evoked ignorance, helplessness, wartime cover, today Darfur is synonymous with expediency, evasion and simple inconvenience. Darfur is synonymous with shame.

My appeal, on behalf of small countries, is that the international community tackle each of these problems in their own right, for their own sake, and not as pieces in a global power puzzle. When tensions among the world's great powers grow, there is an increase in polarization and a decrease in the effectiveness of the hard-earned -- and costly -- policies of complementarity and balance of small countries. Our own room to maneuver, to participate in global solutions, diminishes.

But Mr. Chairman and colleagues, let me say the obvious. We rely on the ability of global powers to put aside their own short-term conflicts and divergences and to recognize that their power and influence does not make them immune to the range of problems that afflict us. It also does not make them immune from the impact of the failure of appropriately using that power and influence -- for the good of humanity.

Mr. Chairman,

Over these 16 years since independence, we have weathered sea changes, and been swept up in regional and global developments which daily affect our lives.

We can only be proud of what we've accomplished -- an open, diversified economy, high growth, strong financial systems; also, improved elections, stronger public institutions, a population increasingly aware of its rights. This makes us more determined to solve the remaining economic ills -- uneven growth, rural poverty and low wages -- and further empower people and deepen the exercise of democracy.

We've done all this despite a still unresolved conflict and artificial restrictions, and in the absence of regional cooperation.

The Nagorno Karabakh conflict is included on the agenda of this General Assembly session under the topic of protracted conflicts. But Mr. President any resolution that places all conflicts in one pot is necessarily flawed. Each of these conflicts is different.

First, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict is not frozen. We continue to negotiate and we are inching towards resolution. Second, there is a well-developed negotiating document on the table, based not on wishful thinking, but on the core issue and the consequential issues. Together, they add up to a balanced solution. Third, at the core of the process lies the issue of the right of the people of Nagorno Karabakh to determine their own future. Indeed, the people of Nagorno Karabakh don't want anything that is not theirs – they want a right to live in peace and security and to determine their own future, they want to exercise the right that every people here has exercised at some point in their history. They will not be told that there is a quota on liberty and security.

Mr. President, at the end of the day, small countries' awareness of and place in global processes cannot, will not, substitute for those with extensive resources and the political will and ability to act. In this age of openness and inclusion, there is no room for the old instruments of coercion and exclusion. Instead, the new instruments of compromise and consensus are necessary to reach humanity's enduring goals of peace and prosperity.