



# CROATIA

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**Statement by**

**H.E. Mr. Stjepan Mesić**

**President  
of the Republic of Croatia**

**General Debate**

**of the 62nd Session**

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Mr. President of the General Assembly,  
 Mr. Secretary General,  
 Your Majesties,  
 Your excellencies, presidents, prime ministers and ministers,  
 Ladies and gentlemen,

When I first took the floor, seven years ago, to address the representatives of the states of the world on behalf of the Republic of Croatia, I started off with the words "time is running out". At the time I did not even think that I would have to repeat these very words after seven years, but with a greater sense of urgency. However, current circumstances, the problems facing us and our inability or inadequate ability to deal with them, compel me to repeat, here and now: time is running out!

When we attended the millennial session, marking the beginning of the new century and new millennium, we also formulated our millennial goals. We identified our tasks and our aspirations. Quite appropriately. However, what is not appropriate is the fact that the implementation of those millennial goals is not proceeding at the proper rate and in the proper way - if we want them to be meaningful.

We are late, hence my warning: time is running out!

Among all global organizations, the United Nations is the one which has been sympathetic to the problems of developing countries, the place where loud and justified requests were voiced to stop the stratification of the world into the haves and the have-nots. I have also attended sessions and conferences dealing with the issue, and I have repeatedly drawn attention to underdevelopment as a generator of global terrorism along with inequality in international relations and unresolved regional crises. Yet, underdevelopment and poverty still weigh upon a substantial part of mankind, and the so far preferred methods in fighting against terrorism have been shown to be under-efficient, and sometimes even counterproductive.

We are also late in this regard, and here time is running out too!

We wanted and want this organization, our own organization, to be fit for better and more functional action in present-day conditions. In other words, we want to reform the United Nations, we want to transform the organization from a reflection of a world long gone into an instrument for safeguarding peace, establishing stability and ensuring development in the present-day world and the world of the coming generations. By putting up its candidacy for a nonpermanent seat in the Security Council Croatia wants to affirm its commitment to the global organization and its readiness to take part in its reform.

I do not want to misuse the time that was put at my disposal - in order to lobby for this candidacy. Our deeds say more than our words. And our deeds are: successful struggle for national independence, in spite of an imposed war; completing this struggle in a peaceful way through cooperation with the UN; courageous confrontation with the past and with the truth about this past; establishing of good relations with all our neighbors, including those who waged war against us; promotion of a peaceful resolution of conflicts always and everywhere; current participation in fifteen UN peacekeeping missions, which today puts Croatia at the very top of those countries whose soldiers are preserving peace under the blue flag; let me emphasize: only in those missions under the UN mandate. In short, we are putting forward our candidacy as a mature European democratic country committed to the goals of the UN. And there is nothing more to be said about this.

This commitment, as I already said, we demonstrate by supporting the reform of the world organization. But we are late even in the realization of this noble and certainly unavoidable goal. Even among us, there are voices suggesting that we should renounce the United Nations. There is less and less time for action.

Even here I must reiterate: time is running out!

This hall has heard, over past decades, many debates on the need to establish new international relations, both political and economic ones. Such new relations can only be based on equality. It is true that the big and the mighty have a greater responsibility, but it is also true that nobody, nobody at all can or may have greater rights, and even less usurp such rights by force. Just as nobody's rights can be denied by force. This holds true for global and regional developments alike. Unfortunately, force is still present in international relations, and on the European continent we are witnessing dangerous signs of a possible renewal of the arms race. Such a trend should be stopped, and such conditions changed. There is not much time.

Therefore, once again: time is running out!

By complying with the requirements of often uncontrolled development - not only of the most developed countries - and by giving in to the aggressive requests of capital guided exclusively by interest and never by a social component, we have agreed to condemning millions of people to death by starvation and lack of basic medical care, and hundreds of millions of people to bare survival in poverty with no prospects. But, by destroying nature we have also jeopardized everyone's survival. Climate change and global warming are only one, albeit the most evident, indicator of the situation to which I am referring. Those who underestimate and even deny this real danger that is evident on an everyday basis, will simply have to face the truth. Because we are already living this truth. Fast, coordinated and responsible action is called for. Action serving the interest of all even if it may momentarily run against the interests of some.

Because time is running out dangerously!

We have not met again in the General Assembly in order to describe our world and our environment from our individual angles. Our mandate is not mere diagnosis. Our mandate involves healing, changing, improving as well. With its foreign policy based on the value of the European Union which it will enter soon, and with its wish to develop good relations with everyone willing to reciprocate, the Republic of Croatia has shown by deeds that it is aware of the fact that no time can be lost, but it has also shown the capacity to act, to get things going in a positive direction - in its own interest but also in the interest of others.

We only have one world. Its destiny is in our hands. There is room for everyone in this world.

But this world can, may and must be only a world of equals, of people enjoying not only equal rights but also equal chances, knowing that nobody - however big and strong - can live alone and only for his own sake, and that together we can change our world. But, even more importantly, together we can save and preserve it for future generations.

But, let us not forget: time is running out!

Thank you!