

# United Nations Nations Unies

THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

LE PRESIDENT DE L'ASSEMBLEE GENERALE

8 June 2012

## **Acceptance Speech of H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić, President-Elect of the 67<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly, at the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

Thank you, Mr. President.

Let me express my deep respect for the tireless efforts you have made as the leader of this chamber. I look forward to engaging with you to assure a seamless transition between our terms.

Excellencies, it is a great honor to stand before you as President-elect of the United Nations General Assembly for its 67th Session.

At the beginning, allow me to extend my sincere gratitude to the states that supported the candidature of the Republic of Serbia.

We are a small, developing country that belongs to no military alliance or political union. It is therefore truly humbling to have received the confidence of so many nations from all over the world to preside over the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN.

I look forward to working with all of you, beginning with H.E. Ambassador Dalius Čekuolis of the Republic of Lithuania. I wish to thank him for his gracious conduct throughout this campaign, and hope to be able to draw on his wisdom and expertise during my time in office.

I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to the many diplomats of Serbia for their diligent efforts to advance this candidature. Let me extend my special appreciation to the most senior and experienced amongst them, our Permanent Representative to the United Nations, H.E. Ambassador Feodor Starčević.

Excellencies,

I consider my election as President of the UN General Assembly for its 67th session primarily as a tribute to the Serbian people, whom I have had the honor to serve as foreign minister for more than five years.

Like many other nations, mine has traveled through periods of tragedy and periods of glory.

At the close of the 20th century, one of the proud victors over fascism and a founding member of the United Nations descended into ferocious internal strife. The ensuing devastation and fratricide left deep wounds in their wake.

In the past few years, under the courageous leadership of Boris Tadic, Serbia reached out to its neighbors, offering a hand of friendship and reconciliation. We also reached out to all other members of the global community, including those with which we have had bitter disagreements.

A painful era has now come to an end.

Today, our nation can proudly stand before the world again—less than two decades after having been left out of this chamber.

We are a country in which the transfer of power is accomplished peacefully and in accordance with the rule of law. Serbia is a democracy that, apart from working to ensure its own sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the well-being of its citizens, has no ambition other than to advance the common interest of mankind.

We therefore remain steadfastly committed to the maintenance of international peace and security—the first stated purpose of the United Nations.

Working to fulfill this task—second to none in importance and nobility—is a most solemn undertaking.

Excellencies,

The theme that I propose for the high-level debate at the opening of the 67th session is: bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means.

Given our experience, we believe we could facilitate the implementation of any resulting proposals, including those related specifically to conflict prevention.

In taking up this critical issue in September and beyond, let us not forget that peace is not merely the absence of war.

As was once remarked by Spinoza—the first philosopher to argue that democracy is the best form of government—peace is a “virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence, and justice.”

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I pledge to fulfill my duty as President to the very best of my ability, in order to try and justify the confidence you have bestowed upon me. I will exercise my authority in a forthright and even-handed manner, with the utmost respect for the equal rights and dignity of each member State.

I hope that our joint endeavors may help bring us closer to the day when mankind shall have assuaged its hurts and abolished its fears—and in so doing, further the aspirations of the peoples of the United Nations to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

May it be the Will of God that the next Assembly go down in history as an Assembly of peace.

Thank you very much for your attention.