

21 September 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić,
President of the 67th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Peace Bell Ceremony**

Mr. Secretary-General, Distinguished guests, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am humbled by the fact that one of my first official duties as President of the General Assembly should be to attend the ringing of the Peace Bell, here at United Nations headquarters, on the International Day of Peace.

Strengthening peace lies at the heart of everything for which the United Nations stands. It is with this in mind that the central theme running throughout this session of the General Assembly will be bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means.

Peace is one of the most powerful aspirations that unites us not only as Member States, but as human beings “in the full understanding of our common destiny,” as one of my predecessors put it.

But there are some people—in reality, a tiny minority of people—who seek to thwart humanity’s desire to live in peace.

As we stand here today, in this small corner of New York, in this oasis of tranquillity, we should turn our thoughts to those parts of the world where people are indeed struggling to overcome conflict.

Excellencies,

We should be aware of the terrible consequences when disputes are not resolved peacefully, where belligerence and confrontation rather than dialogue and compromise are the norm.

As the General Assembly heard back in 1981 when the International Day of Peace was established, since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.

It is therefore our shared responsibility, not just as members of the international community but also as human beings—as citizens of the world—to seek peace and prevent conflict in any way we can, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

I would like this to be at the heart of this session of the General Assembly, for which I pray will go down in history as an Assembly of peace.

The symbolic act of ringing this bell is supposed to call for a cessation of hostilities across the world for the duration of the day. As we approach the moment when it will be rung, may I ask those of you who are present to join me in endeavors to ensure this one day of peace could be followed by another, and then by many more.

As this bell echoes out across the United Nations, let its meaning reverberate across the world.

I hope that people in all the conflict-ridden corners of the world will hear the loud message that this bell brings, that they too, shall one day, enjoy the blessings of peace.

Thank you.