

28 September 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić,
President of the 67th Session of the General Assembly,
at the High-Level Meeting on Countering Nuclear Terrorism**

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

I am honored to address this important High-level Meeting on Countering Nuclear Terrorism.

I would like to thank the Secretary General for convening this meeting as a follow-up to the 2012 Seoul Nuclear Summit. I would also like to thank the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force for organizing it.

We live in increasingly volatile and unpredictable world. One of the most alarming aspects of the new global reality is that capabilities once thought to be exclusively in the hands of states such as the ability to inflict harm on a massive scale could become more easily accessible to non-state actors.

The threat of terrorists gaining access to nuclear weapons is a truly frightening prospect. The geostrategic consequences of fissible material falling into their hands may be dramatic.

Excellencies,

The Charter of the United Nations grants to the General Assembly a critical role in promoting cooperation between Member States, and encouraging the progressive development of international law and its codification.

In 2005, this body adopted the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. The convention criminalizes the possession, use, or threat of use of radioactive devices by non-state actors.

A year later the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy was approved by the General Assembly to enhance national, regional and international efforts the first time that all Member States agreed to a common strategic approach in this area. It remains one of the key instruments at our disposal.

Another one is Security Council Resolution 1540. It imposes binding obligations on all states to pass legislation preventing the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and their means of

delivery. It also calls for the establishment of appropriate domestic controls over related materials to prevent their illicit trafficking.

Excellencies,

In my address at the opening of the 67th Session of the General Assembly, I stressed that the fight against all forms of terrorism has to remain high on our agenda. We must spare no effort to defeat it. It represents one of the most pernicious dangers to establishing lasting international peace, threatening the security of many nations.

In our deliberations today, I expect we will build on the hard work and progress which has already been made to prevent nuclear terrorism.

As President, I will work with Member States on how the ‘chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations’ can play a more prominent role in encouraging the effective implementation of the multilateral instruments already at our disposal.

I will also engage with UN Entities and Specialized Agencies that focus on counter-terrorism and related illicit activities. These include the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF).

I believe that more concerted action should be taken by the Member States to finalize a draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism, in accordance with resolution 66/105.

Excellencies,

The consequences of a mushroom cloud will not stop at a state border. This has also been said, of course, of a number of other dangers, such as the typhoon season across southern Asia, the annual hurricane cycle of the Caribbean, and the environmental degradation that is contributing to climate change across the world.

There is one big difference, however. Natural disasters irrespective of whether our actions play a role in their occurrence are mostly beyond our ability to control, at least in the short term.

The same cannot be said when it comes to the grave threat to international peace and security that has brought us together today. On this, we human beings are the exclusive source of the problem, and of the potential solution. It is in the words of a prominent Harvard professor the “ultimate preventable catastrophe.”

Our safety perhaps our very survival is at stake.

This is not about making the right choice, but about making the only choice that will make us safe tomorrow in a way that we may not be today, and so help bring to pass the long-held aspiration of the

world, articulated in the UN Charter's Preamble: "To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which [...] has brought untold sorrow to mankind."

Thank you very much for your attention.