

21 December 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić,
President of the 67th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Closing of the Main Part of the Sixty-Seventh Session of the
General Assembly**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Standing before this greatest of parliaments more than three months ago, I pledged to faithfully serve the cause of the United Nations, and to exercise my authority in a forthright and even-handed manner with the utmost respect for the sovereign equality of the Member States.

Now that the main part of the 67th Session is drawing to a close, I can only hope that I have fulfilled most of your expectations.

I truly look forward to the start of the resumed part in a few weeks' time, and to joining you again in this chamber after the holiday break.

Allow me to thank all the distinguished speakers who, in expressing their countries' positions, have made substantial contributions to the work of the plenary.

In addition, I would like to express my most special and sincere appreciation to my Vice-Presidents for their assistance and cooperation.

I am also grateful for the leadership and guidance of the Secretary-General and the institutional support of the Secretariat, particularly the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.

Excellencies,

As of this morning, the plenum has adopted 193 resolutions and 55 decisions with many more still to come.

Highlights include the so-called 'humanitarian omnibus resolution,' human rights improvements, freedom of religion or belief, combating intolerance, and strengthening disarmament machinery, amongst others.

The issue that perhaps drew most attention was the historic vote held on November 29th on granting Palestine Non-Member Observer State Status in the United Nations.

Moments before the ballots were cast, I extended an appeal from this rostrum to the General Assembly and in particular to my dear friends from Palestine and Israel to work for peace with the aim of reaching a comprehensive settlement.

Today, allow me to call again for a just peace in the Holy Land.

I fervently believe that when it comes to the Middle East or, for that matter, to the Sahel, the Great Lakes region of Africa, and a number of other conflict-ridden areas across our planet good-faith engagement in a peace process is the only way to bring strife to lasting conclusion.

In today's globalizing, interconnected world, what happens in one part of the world invariably affects us all.

It is with this in mind that I chose as the overarching theme for the 67th Session bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means.

In these tumultuous times, the enormity of this challenge is evident.

So we look with hope to far-sighted leaders mindful of democratic aspirations, yet capable of making tough decisions.

Their task is a truly monumental one to "see ahead what not appears" as the poet Robert Frost wrote so many years ago, "and to remember the future and the path that beckons."

Excellencies,

The content of the General Debate reflects the fact that there is now a congruence of views amongst the Member States that conflict prevention, durable peace and security, and sustainable development can only be achieved through an integrated approach.

Fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals must remain at the core of our shared vision for a more prosperous, peaceful and equitable world.

At the same time, we must also focus on the post-2015 agenda.

I must admit that I had a very long part of my speech here written about Sustainable Development Goals. I am going to leave it aside. I had certain strong beliefs which I am no longer prepared to share with this audience before the next attempt is made to make certain breakthroughs in this process.

Personally, I do strongly believe that sustainable development agenda is critical to the prosperous future of mankind. And I very much hope this view is also going to be reflected in the decisions that we might make in the future in this chamber.

But before we come to an agreement I must admit that I am no longer prepared to speak in public about sustainable development as the President of the General Assembly.

Excellencies,

Over the past few years, the G-20 has come to play an increasingly important role in the debate on how to improve global economic governance. Their decisions have world-wide implications and, in one way or another, affect every Member State's political, economic, and social development.

I believe the General Assembly, which operates on the basis of the sovereign equality principle, can provide a unique platform to exchange views and share information on shared economic concerns.

To that end, I intend to launch a process that would lead to the establishment of a non-intrusive form of regularized interaction between the General Assembly and the G-20, with the participation of IFIs as appropriate.

Let me be very clear that the intent of this initiative is not to infringe on established prerogatives, but to complement existing international efforts, in accordance with the G-20's outreach to non-G-20 countries and the United Nations. This would certainly help answer a number of questions related to transparency and inclusivity.

I intend to organize a thematic debate on ways to enhance dialogue between the G-20 and the rest of the world. I will extend invitations to several G-20 and non-G-20 Heads of State and Government, as well as the Russian G-20 presidency and other key stakeholders.

In my view, the need for regular consultations has become all the greater in the wake of a number of sobering studies that forecast a slowdown in global growth and job creation, including, most recently, the UN's alarming 2013 World Economic Situation and Prospects report.

Excellencies,

I will also convene several other high-level thematic debates in the months to come.

One will be organized on Social Inequality, in partnership with the Organization of American States.

Another will focus on the Role of International Criminal Justice in Reconciliation.

In collaboration with UNESCO, I will also invite Member States to participate in a thematic debate on Culture and Development.

In addition, we will have a session devoted to examining tools of peaceful resolution of conflicts in Africa.

Moreover, a thematic debate will be held on Climate Change, Green Energy, and Water Sustainability, in partnership with the United Arab Emirates and the newly established United Nations Sustainable

Development Solutions Network spearheaded by the Director of its Secretariat, Professor Jeffrey Sachs of Columbia University.

As mandated by relevant General Assembly resolutions, a thematic session will also be held to mark the International Year of Water Cooperation. Other debates will be held on Entrepreneurship for Development, Improving Coordination of Efforts Against Trafficking in Persons, External Debt Sustainability and Development, and International Migration and Development among others.

Excellencies,

The themes that we have chosen for our debates during the resumed part of the 67th Session are not only important in and of themselves, meriting significant attention from the Member States. They are also designed to advance our efforts to revitalize the General Assembly.

At the same time, we must endeavor to consistently implement what has already been agreed in this chamber.

Doing so should be seen by all Member States as a core principle of effective multilateralism in the 21st century.

As President, I will also continue to encourage greater transparency in the conduct of our affairs, making more efficient use of our time and resources in the advancement of our common objectives.

However, at the end of the day, it is the conduct and dedication of Member States and Member States only that will determine the future strength of the General Assembly.

In coming to the end of my remarks, I would like to extend my best wishes to all Delegations and their families for a joyful festive season. As we take the time to reflect on what has been achieved and what remains to be done during the resumed part of the 67th Session, we could draw inspiration from the words of one of my predecessors as President, Namibia's Theo-Ben Gurirab, who while addressing the plenary from this rostrum a little over a decade ago said that the United Nations must always be a "beacon for all worthy causes in the far corners of the world, especially among the small, or the poor, or the needy in the developing world."

Thank you very much for your attention.