

# United Nations Nations Unies

THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

LE PRESIDENT DE L'ASSEMBLEE GENERALE

14 January 2013

## **Statement of H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić, President of the 67<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly, at the New Year's Concert in the Hall of the General Assembly**

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

It is an enormous honor and privilege to welcome you—together with His Excellency, Ban Ki-moon to the General Assembly in celebration of our 67th Session, on the first day of the traditional Orthodox New Year.

We gather this evening in one of the world's most iconic settings the beating heart of the UN.

Since the free nations first moved into this Grand Hall following our epic victory over fascism these walls have witnessed some of the most memorable moments which shaped the future of our planet.

From this stage, visionary leaders and courageous activists have made historic calls for peace and forsaking vengeance to former adversaries.

We live in a period of change that is unlike any the world has ever seen. There is no other way to face the resulting challenges except to find the strength to act in unison.

Despite its many imperfections, the General Assembly remains the only place where all nations convene as equals to address the most pressing issues of the day from peace in the Holy Land to climate change, from global development to human rights.

It is therefore truly humbling for Serbia to have received the trust of the peoples of the world to preside over this House.

We are a small nation, very proud of our history.

From our lands have emerged a number of inspiring artists and renowned scientists.

We have born gifted writers and celebrated athletes.

Seven of our most treasured monuments have been inscribed by UNESCO on its List of World Heritage. These are not only a testament to our culture, but also to our resilience as a nation, which has paid an enormous price for its freedom many times over.

Today, we stand with confidence before the world again only two decades after having been left out of this hall. We do so as a country steadfastly determined to advance the common interest of mankind, dedicated to help shaping a world in which peace may triumph and justice prevail.

It is against this backdrop that we present Viva Vox the first time in the history of the UN that a choir from Serbia will have the privilege of appearing on this grand stage.

These 40 young, amateur vocalists who represent a new generation of Serbian performers will render tonight songs from several traditions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Great music can cut across every boundary, and touch every soul.

It is an art form that transcends all differences.

Irrespective of where we come from, it binds us together as human beings.

A track can become an anthem for a generation, an embodiment of our deepest hopes.

I believe that today, there is no more urgent missive that music may convey to a global audience than for the guns to fall silent. Striving to lay the world's arms to rest must not be portrayed as a mission impossible.

“You may say that I’m a dreamer, but I’m not the only one.”

We will soon hear these famous words again, in voices much more palatable than mine.

Let us dedicate this concert to those who dream about a peaceful planet to the many billions of good-hearted men and women of all colors and faiths.

They are the true owners of this noble hall; our real masters, whom we have the duty to serve so that the world of their children may come to live as one.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

From Serbia to New York, and from New York to every corner of the Earth, tonight we are offering our humble gift: the music of Viva Vox yours and ours.

Thank you very much for your attention.