

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA



Check against delivery

STATEMENT

BY

H.E. Mr. Andrei STRATAN

**DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

AT THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE SIXTY FIRST SESSION
OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

New-York, 26 September 2006

Mme President
Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,

At the outset allow me to congratulate Ambassador Haya Rashed Al Khalifa with her election as President of the 61st session of the UN General Assembly and wish her every success in this highly honorable and responsible position.

My commendation also goes to her predecessor, Mr. Jan Eliasson, for leadership and dedication he provided during the 60th session as well as for the efforts he invested in reforming the Organization.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation and praise to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for commitment and determination he has shown in discharging his important duties. Concerning the forthcoming elections of the new Secretary-General it is the moment to remind that Eastern Europe is the only region that has not been represented in this high position. In this regard, we welcome the candidature of Dr. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of the Republic of Latvia.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the accession of Montenegro to the membership of the United Nations. We are confident that its membership will be an important asset in the promotion of the work of this organization in achieving its noble goals.

Distinguished delegates,

The terrorist attacks of the 11 September 2001 still loom large in our memory. The fifth anniversary of this tragedy has again filled our television screens with horrific scenes of suffering and death. It has served to remind us of the resolve which is necessary in combating terrorism, which constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security.

Like other countries, the Republic of Moldova believes that fighting international terrorism exclusively through military, political and economic actions is not enough. We must look for solutions which will resolve and not exacerbate the threat and which are based on the clear understanding of the factors that generate and sustain terrorism, fundamentalism and fanaticism.

The same is true when it comes to conflict resolution.

It is only through the development of integrated strategies that address the underlying causes of conflict and terrorism that the international community can bring about long term peace and stability.

With this in mind, Moldova has fully supported the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted recently by the General Assembly and welcomed its decision to continue the consideration of the Secretary General's progress Report on Preventing Armed Conflicts during the 61st session.

We consider that the specific measures reflected in the Plan of Action, which is foreseen by the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, are comprehensive in details and far-reaching in their insight. We need to take practical steps, individually and collectively, to implement the provisions of the Plan.

Likewise, we believe that the recommendations confined in the Secretary General's progress report on preventing armed conflicts will serve as guiding points for the member states in preventing conflicts throughout the world.

Mme President

The current High-Level debate, which is focused on the issue of implementing the Global Partnership for Development, is highly significant from the perspective of the challenges I have referred to above. As long as the world is stricken by hunger, poverty, underdevelopment, inequality, oppression, abuse of fundamental rights and freedoms, there will be no solution to the political, economic and social situations that are degenerating in phenomena that we continue to witness with a growing feeling of frustration and uncertainty.

The reaffirmation of the Global Partnership for Development in the World Summit Outcome Document is an implicit recognition by the international community of the imperative to pursue development not only for security but also for ethical, social and economic considerations.

It is essential, therefore, to take specific actions to advance the implementation of agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium, Doha, Monterrey and Johannesburg Declarations. Developed and developing countries must build their global partnership for development on the basis of mutual confidence and respect, whereas aid effectiveness and quality are ensured by the balance of appropriate financing and good governance and sound policies. The dynamic and active participation of private sector, civil society as well as Bretton Woods institutions, WTO and other relevant actors is also of utmost importance.

We all know that the current level of aid is not enough to achieve the MDGs. Therefore, we should look at ways to increase the effectiveness of existing aid, introduce innovative sources of financing, and adhere to the agreed timetable for progressively increasing flows.

Distinguished delegates,

The report of the Secretary General "Investing in the United Nations" with 23 far-reaching proposals on management reform of the organization transcends its intention to continue the consideration of measures endorsed by Heads of State or Government at the 2005 World Summit. My country supported the relevant resolution in the General Assembly in July this year in order to strengthen the United Nations by ensuring the efficient and effective functioning of the Organization and to promote a culture of accountability, transparency and integrity in the Secretariat.

To advance and further implement the provisions of the Outcome document, the Republic of Moldova is willing to support and contribute to the adoption of the necessary decisions which will lead to the revitalization of General Assembly, reform and expansion of the Security Council and increase of effectiveness of the Economic and Social Council.

In particular, we should intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council. Moldova believes that this reform should be guided by the principles of equitable geographic representation, democracy, effectiveness, efficiency and transparency.

It is on this foundation that we can modernize the composition of the Security Council and bring it into line with the substantial increase in the general membership of the UN. In this context I would like to reiterate the position of my country that the Security Council should be enlarged, both in permanent and non-permanent categories and that the Eastern European Group should be given one additional non-permanent seat.

The Republic of Moldova supported the proposal to set up the Human Rights Council. As a global standard-setting institution, the Council is regarded as a universal body to promote the respect for human rights worldwide, react and respond promptly to human rights violations and to assist countries in strengthening their human rights capacities. We place high expectations on this standing body's ability not only to react and respond, but also to enforce respect for human rights, especially in the cases of humanitarian crime or conflict zones out of control of sovereign states.

We note that the Council, indeed, had a swift reaction to the events in the Middle East, urgently recalling a special session and appointing an inquiry commission. However, we believe that a balanced approach to the issues of human rights without rushed, one-sided decisions would make the newly established UN body a more credible, trusted and respected institution. We assume that the countries elected to the Human Rights Council shall be guided by the principles of impartiality, objectivity and neutrality with an equitable and unprejudiced approach.

Guided by these principles and being aware of the stringent importance of promoting and protecting human rights worldwide, the Republic of Moldova has decided to present its candidacy for the election to the Human Rights Council for the term of 2010-2013.

Mme President,

Many regional organizations have been entrusted by the UN, under the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter, to deal with a number of conflicts that are not in the focus of the UN Security Council. We need a more systematic outreach to these regional organizations. Steps should be taken to increase their accountability, particularly in the case of protracted or frozen conflicts, when situation is not improving or even worsens over the years. The lack of progress should trigger more direct involvement from the appropriate UN organs. No conflict in the world should be left out of UN's attention, irrespective of whether they are on the Security Council's agenda or not.

From this perspective, we are delighted that the General Assembly, despite opposition from some Member States, agreed to include in the agenda of this session a new item proposed by Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova "on the protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development".

These unresolved conflicts continue to impact negatively the political, social and economic development of the GUAM States and the millions of people living in the region. We believe that bringing the matter to the international community through the General Assembly will facilitate the resolution of conflicts in Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova and will not undermine, as some fear, the existing mechanisms to negotiate settlements of these conflicts. In this context, I would like to express, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Moldova, deep gratitude to those countries that supported our initiative.

Distinguished delegates,

The transnistrian conflict is most and foremost a "product" of the geopolitical interests and designs. It has been unleashed with external support immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the declaration of independence and sovereignty by the Republic of Moldova. Unlike other internal conflicts, generated and fostered by ethnical and religious antagonisms, this one has a purely political character. The similarity of the ethnical structure of the population from both sides of the Nistru River speaks for itself in this regard and cannot be denied.

Over the years the Moldovan authorities have put in place specific policies aimed at ensuring full respect of the human rights of the ethnical minorities, in accordance with the highest international standards. International organizations dealing with the human rights issues have repeatedly attested that in the Republic of Moldova all the conditions for the preservation of the cultural and linguistic identities of ethnic minorities have been created, including the functioning of a great number of schools based on the languages of minorities as well as the broad use of the Russian language as the language of interethnic communication.

The satisfactory resolution of the Gagauz issue by granting a special status to the region concerned is one of the greatest achievements of the national policy of Moldova. It offers, indeed, a unique example in the post "cold war" Europe of an internal conflict settled successfully through political means.

These developments, against the backdrop of the lack of democracy and the growing criticism by the international community of the totalitarian transnistrian regime from Tiraspol, has determined the separatist leaders to cease the political exploitation of cultural and linguistic factors within the negotiation process.

It should be emphasized here that the territory controlled by the separatists is one of the few regions of the world where the political parties and the non-governmental organisations opposed to the separatist regime are prohibited, where the freedom of mass media and the freedom of opinion are non-existent and where other fundamental freedoms and liberties, especially of the native Moldovan population, are systematically violated.

Also, different types of conventional weapons, including those prohibited or restricted by the relevant arms control international regimes, continue to be manufactured illegally in the region concerned. The process of military build-up in Transnistria is conducted vigorously by the separatist leaders despite the steady efforts by Moldova to reduce its military forces and to settle the political conflict exclusively by peaceful means, without giving up its status of permanent neutrality.

Mme President,

The Moldovan authorities are determined to find a political solution for the transnistrian conflict based on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. This regional security problem should be resolved through negotiations, with the participation of key-actors in the "5+2" format. The end goal of negotiations should be the drafting of a special legal status for the transnistrian region within the Republic of Moldova. The democratization and demilitarization of the transnistrian region are indispensable conditions to register progress in the settlement process.

We have a sound roadmap for settling the conflict - the Ukrainian plan together with the documents passed by the Moldovan Parliament in the summer of 2005. It is important that the negotiations resume as soon as possible and without any preconditions. The calls for such negotiations are strongly supported by the Republic Moldova. Although little progress was achieved in the four rounds of the "5+2" negotiations, we believe it crucial to hold talks rather than preserving the status-quo.

With a view to advance the settlement process the Moldovan authorities undertook a number of complementary actions. Thus, on 22 July 2005, the Moldovan Parliament adopted the "Law on Fundamental Regulations of the Special Legal Status of Settlements on the Left Bank of the River Nistru". This law grants Transnistria the right to solve independently the problems related to legal, social and economic development, complying at the same time with the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of Moldova. Moreover, the Law grants the transnistrian region the right to have its own legislative and executive bodies, as well as more official languages.

Also, the Moldovan Government adopted decisions that establish a system of social and economic guarantees for transnistrian population, which should facilitate its reintegration into the socio-economic system of the country.

In the same vane, conditions have been created for bringing the activity of the transnistrian companies into the legal framework of the country through their registration with relevant constitutional authorities, which should allow those companies to fully benefit from the trade preferences Moldova has with its partners, including the European Union.

This has been possible due to a joint commitment of the Moldovan and Ukrainian authorities to secure our common border. The deployment on the ground of the EU Border Assistance Mission facilitated the cooperation between the Moldovan and Ukrainian relevant services aimed at establishing a single customs regime and controlling efficiently the frontier. We are confident that this trilateral interaction will contribute to settling the transnistrian problem.

We use this opportunity to inform the Assembly that on 17 September 2006, the separatist transnistrian regime held a so-called referendum on the region's future. We condemn this pseudo-referendum, which infringes flagrantly the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, undermines the country's territorial integrity and defies the democratic values and standards.

The Republic of Moldova is grateful to the mediators and observers of the negotiation process – EU, USA, OSCE and Ukraine for their resolute position on the non-recognition of that farce.

We continue to be concerned with the tensions in the Security Zone. The inefficiency of the current peacekeeping mechanism dictates the need for its transformation into a multinational peacekeeping mission with an international mandate. We welcomed certain proposals made in this sense and are ready to tackle in a result-oriented manner this issue without delay.

Referring to the military aspect, I should reiterate our concern and deep regrets that the Russian Federation has not yet fulfilled its commitments expressed at the 1999 Istanbul Summit. The complete implementation of these decisions will facilitate the process of entering into force of the Adapted CFE Treaty.

We also underline the need for an early international inspection at the depots with ammunition in the transnistrian region. The monitoring of the military-industrial enterprises from the eastern region of the Republic of Moldova is long overdue.

Distinguished delegates,

This year, the Republic of Moldova celebrates the fifteenth anniversary of its independence. During these fifteen years, as a member state of the United Nations, we have been fully sharing the common values, responsibilities, achievements and setbacks of our Organization. Since then, we also achieved many significant results in our internal development. Much more remains to be done to this end. Nevertheless, we laid down foundations of a democratic society, where the basic human rights and the rights of national minorities are fully respected. The main achievement has been the consolidation of the Republic of Moldova as a peace-loving independent European country.

The Republic of Moldova has irreversibly chosen the way of European integration as the strategic objective of its foreign policy. We are fully committed to the idea of integrating into the system of political, economic and social values of the European Union's family. We hope that the successful implementation of the EU-Moldova Action Plan will open for us the possibility to elevate to a new level of contractual relations with the EU.

In conclusion, Mme President, I wish to voice our hope that the proceedings of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session will be conducted in a spirit of solidarity and with a realistic and constructive approach to the complex issues confronting the world today. The delegation of the Republic of Moldova is committed to contribute, alongside other Member States, to the fulfillment of the lofty goals of the United Nations.

Thank you for your kind attention.