



# CROATIA

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Statement by

**H.E. Dr. Ivo Sanader**

**Prime Minister of the  
Republic of Croatia**

**GENERAL DEBATE**

**of the 63rd Session**

**of the General Assembly**

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Mr. President,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would first like to congratulate H.E. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann on assuming the presidency of the General Assembly in its 63<sup>rd</sup> Session, as well as thank H.E. Srđan Kerim for the excellent work he demonstrated during his presidency of the General Assembly in the preceding year.

As we gather here once again to address the most significant issues on the global agenda, the General Assembly opening session reminds us of our shared vision of the United Nations as the embodiment of a family of nations.

It reminds us of the constant need for an effective multilateral effort to address global challenges, and to maintain and build peace in a range of conflict zones and post-conflict societies, searching for solutions within the rule based international order, through the promotion of freedom, democracy, development and the respect for human rights.

It also gives us the opportunity to take stock of our achievements, as well as to redouble our commitment to world peace and progress.

This is a commitment that Croatia and its people accepted even before our independence. A commitment to strengthen international cooperation through effective multilateral organizations for advancing peace and security, facilitating development and combating poverty, protecting our environment, eradicating diseases and promoting public health.

As a renewal of that commitment, we celebrate this year the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Andrija Štampar, a founding father of the World Health Organization and the first President of the WHO Assembly.

In his inaugural speech in 1948, Štampar clearly stated that the Organization should become "a pioneer of world peace and promote understanding among nations".

Štampar's words are also true for the broader family of UN institutions. His words are a testimony to the lasting commitment of Croatia and its people to the promotion of peace through international cooperation.

Since our independence, Croatia's leaders have come every year before this Assembly to renew this solemn commitment. Even in the most difficult of times, when our own existence was at peril and collective security guarantees vanished, we still came to New York to express Croatia's adherence to the values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Croatia has come a long way since those testing days of struggle. Yet, our determination in pursuing the UN Charter principles has remained intact.

We have developed a stable democracy and a growing economy, but we have not forgotten those brave men and women who struggled for and achieved our independence, as well as those men and women of good will who, under the flag of the United Nations, assisted us in our time of need.

With that conviction and determination, with that sincere sense of gratitude and a genuine vocation for cooperation, I come today before this Assembly to share with you Croatia's views on the most pressing and relevant issues for our international community.

On this occasion, though, Croatia is for the first time in the position to address these issues from a different angle – that of an elected member of the Security Council. Membership in the Security Council is not only a great honor for Croatia, but also a great responsibility we have been preparing for in the last years.

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,

Over the past decade, we have completed a transformative journey and emerged as an anchor of stability, security and cooperation in South East Europe. Croatia is also at the doorstep of the European Union. We are confident that we will conclude the Accession negotiations in 2009, thus completing a demanding process of deep and profound political, economic and social reforms.

Our European vocation led us in the testing period of our transition, and it will continue to lead us once Croatia becomes a full member of the EU.

We attach equal importance to our membership in NATO and we look forward to the celebration of our accession to the Alliance at the next summit in Spring 2009, which will also mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NATO.

Through reforms, we have successfully turned our country from a consumer to a net contributor to international peace and security. Today, Croatian Forces are engaged in 13 UN peacekeeping operations in four different continents. Our men and women in uniform also serve in the NATO-led operation in Afghanistan and the EU operation in Chad, in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

In all these conflict areas, our servicemen and women have proven their dedication and professionalism. However, probably their most valuable contribution is their ability to share with the local population Croatia's own experience in overcoming the consequences of war and taking the road of reconciliation, cooperation and development.

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,

As a member of the Security Council, Croatia will continue to work as a responsible and dedicated partner in the common effort to maintain and build peace through the promotion of human rights and democracy, the fight for the eradication of poverty and injustice, and the advancement of effective multilateralism.

In this Croatia will be guided by a sense of responsibility, solidarity and good faith. We hold that effective multilateral action, including with regional organizations, is our best guarantee in safeguarding these values.

While we see progress in advancing these values in some troubled areas of our world, such as Afghanistan, Iraq and the Middle East, we have also witnessed other conflicts arising, such as in Georgia.

In this respect, we welcome the six-point agreement brokered by the EU Presidency in August, as well as the implementing agreement from September.

We are also aware of the fact that the failure to address these issues in a multilateral context of cooperation could lead us into old paradigms of confrontation. At the same time, the lack of audacity to confront them could endanger the democratic gains obtained with the end of the Cold War. These gains should be preserved, as they themselves derive from the fundamental principles emanating from the UN Charter.

We should not forget that the UN stands for the common fundamental values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, and respect for human rights. In this regard, the suffering of the people of the Sudan, particularly in Darfur, Somalia, and Myanmar, are also stark reminders of the gap between the goals this Organization has set and the realities on the ground.

Croatia welcomes joint international efforts to address the question of flagrant violations to international humanitarian law and human rights through established international mechanisms and institutions like the International Criminal Court (ICC). The ICC provides a vital recourse to justice in situations where national governments cannot or will not address these issues themselves.

Human rights and the rule of law are essential building blocks for a more peaceful, just and prosperous world. This year we are marking the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As a member of the Security Council, Croatia is dedicated to advancing these rights to those most vulnerable in conflict: civilians, notably women and children.

We are pleased by the fact that this year the Council adopted a strong and action oriented resolution addressing the disturbing practice of sexual violence as a method of warfare. We also continue to work on advancing the cause of preventing children to become part of armed conflicts, believing that the realities on the ground require stronger Council involvement. For this and many other reasons, Croatia has decided to present its candidature for membership in the Human Rights Council for the period 2010-2013.

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,

We live in a world that has significantly redefined the traditional notion of threats to international peace and security. In an increasingly interconnected world, global threats are taking many forms.

Terrorism, poverty, disease, climate change, environmental degradation and rising food prices command that we work together, as only a common vision and collective action, implemented in the spirit of solidarity and responsibility, can counter these challenges.

Terrorism attempts to undermine the core values of the modern world, and poses a serious challenge to our security, to the basic principles of democratic societies and to the rights and freedoms of our citizens. Terrorist acts are criminal in nature and cannot be justified under any circumstances. Croatia appreciates and fully supports all efforts in the global struggle against terrorism, within the UN system and beyond.

Since the beginning of this year, Croatia has been chairing the Security Council Counter Terrorism Committee, which was established in the immediate aftermath of the devastating terrorist attacks against the United States and the whole democratic world on September 11, 2001. We have assumed this responsibility with utmost seriousness and are working towards moving the Committee forward by focusing on concrete results and achieving realistic objectives.

I would also like to reiterate the importance Croatia attaches to the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy as one of the primary international documents in the global fight against terrorism. Croatia is also active on the regional level, presiding over CODEXTER within the Council of Europe.

In overcoming global threats and challenges, initiatives such as the Alliance of Civilizations can also act as a stimulus, augmenting mutual respect, understanding and cooperation amongst States and peoples across cultures and religions. As the Alliance's main goal is to counter intolerance, religious fundamentalism and extremism, Croatia is pleased to be a part of this ever growing group.

Our dialogue and cooperation should also be directed with more emphasis on combating poverty and establishing a global partnership for development. In this regard, Croatia welcomes the UN Secretary General's leadership in calling for action to make progress for the poorest of the poor, the so-called "bottom billion".

We also believe that it is essential for governments to support the delivery of commitments made with the aim of getting the Millennium Development Goals back on track. Specific arrangements between donor and recipient countries on MDG implementation should be put into action through a human centered approach to the key themes of the MDG's, or more precisely health and education, the environment, and for the eradication of poverty.

In this sense, we recognize the importance of mobilizing financial resources for development, as well as their effective use in developing countries. The Monterrey consensus remains the foundation of the global partnership for development and Croatia believes in a positive outcome of the Review Conference which will take place in Doha later this year. In this context, Croatia will honor the obligations and figures established pursuant to its status as a candidate for membership in the European Union.



Through its transition process Croatia has emerged from that of a recipient country to a country whose own experience and resources has enabled it to become an international donor. As a contributor to various UN funds and programs, Croatia has confirmed its capability to support the activities of the UN in numerous fields, and will continue to do so through sharing our experiences and assisting those in need.

However, while Croatia increases its contribution to global progress and takes a more assertive role in the international arena, it also remains active and committed to fostering stability in South East Europe. Our membership in the UN Security Council and our advanced phase of integration in NATO and the EU has not led us to turn our back to our neighbors. On the contrary, it has enabled us to redouble our efforts in preserving stability and maximizing the benefits of peace.

Through initiatives such as the establishment of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), headquartered in Sarajevo and with a top Croatian diplomat, Mr. Hido Bišćević, as its first Secretary General, we have actively contributed to regional stability.

However, there is still unfinished business in our neighboring region. Let me mention one: Bosnia and Herzegovina. The foundations for stability in this country reside in the respect for equal rights for all three constituent and sovereign people, Croats, Bosniaks and Serbs.

The Republic of Croatia, along with the international community, stands ready to support and assist Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as all the countries in the region, through an active policy of cooperation.

Such cooperation paves the way for long-standing security and prosperity in South East Europe. And on that way, Croatia will continue to back the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of all its neighbors. On that way, Croatia will renew its determination to foster peace, democracy and tolerance, thus honoring our commitment to the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,

Last April, from this very floor, His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, reminded us that "The founding principles of the Organization – the desire for peace, the quest for justice, respect for the dignity of the person, humanitarian cooperation and assistance – express the just aspirations of the human spirit, and constitute ideals which should underpin international relations".

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,

We should always remember these ideals as we continue to work together on exploiting the full potential of the United Nations in creating a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic world.

Thank you