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**Statement by
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Mr. President,
Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to thank the outgoing President of the 64th Session of the General Assembly, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki of Libya for his tireless efforts in taking forward the work of the GA and to congratulate Mr. Joseph Deiss of Switzerland for his election as President of 65th Session of GA.

I am confident, Mr. President, that you are uniquely placed for the challenging tasks ahead. I can assure you of Greece's unwavering support in your efforts.

I would also like, at this point, to fully align my country's positions with those expressed in the statement by the European Union.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Given the nature of today's global challenges, I think we can safely assert that "Upon the conduct of each state depends the fate of all".

This, I believe, goes also to the substance of the key theme proposed by you, Mr. President, for this General Debate, that is, the central role of the United Nations, with emphasis being placed on the notion of global governance.

Herein lays the real issue, that is, on the need to reaffirm the necessity of global governance in order to deal effectively with the challenges that the world community faces today. If each of us can fully comprehend and thereby accept this seemingly self evident assertion, then there can be no doubt as to the central role of the United Nations in this process.

In this regard, I think that we can all agree that the United Nations is the only global entity which commands universal legitimacy and it is the organization to which we should all look and actively support in order to provide collective and, therefore, optimal solutions to the ever growing array of multifaceted issues that we are confronting.

The idea of global governance, however, is much more than this. Although it is difficult to imagine that this notion would entail the creation of Hobbes' "Leviathan" on a global scale, it nevertheless remains a fact that meeting the needs of our peoples increasingly transcends the abilities of individual nation states.

This is where the role of the United Nations comes to the fore, and this is why our discussions on the reform and revitalization of this organization are of paramount importance.

At the same time, we, the individual member states of the UN, must pool our resources, expertise and know-how, and act as a coherent whole, as this is the essence of global governance.

Our efforts in this regard must focus on two fundamental pillars:

(a) increasing the membership of the Security Council with both permanent and non-permanent members, which will better reflect today's global socio-economic and political realities, as well as enhancing the role of the General Assembly and the interaction between these two bodies, and

(b) enhancing and improving the cooperation and coordination of the UN with other major international and regional organizations, with the goal of making multilateralism work effectively to the benefit of our peoples.

In ancient Greek tragedy, there were two key concepts around which the human drama unfolded: hubris and nemesis. In today's world, as indeed in the Classical era, hubris is the disrespect towards our natural environment and nemesis constitutes the natural disasters stemming thereof.

In the past few months, we have witnessed the devastating effects of natural disasters in many places around the world stemming from Haiti to Russia and from Pakistan to Guatemala.

What clearly sets them apart from natural disasters of the past is the number of people they affect. 2010 is on track to setting a negative record in the amount of victims claimed by natural disasters.

In recent years notable progress has been made in this field, particularly by the UN and its specialized agencies, not least of which was the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). This year, we must focus our efforts on further improving the mechanisms necessary for emergency responses, including through the effective cooperation between the UN and those regional or international organizations with the necessary capabilities to support relief operations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Climate change is the world's greatest environmental challenge. We all know that it will increasingly affect all aspects of our lives including peace and security.

It is our duty to lead the world into a new "Green Era" and to guarantee to the next generations a better and more prosperous future.

The Copenhagen Accord represents a basis on which we can work further. Our aim should be an ambitious, comprehensive, balanced, and legally binding agreement, supporting adaptation efforts of the most vulnerable countries and opening the door to a future of environmentally sustainable growth. We need to focus now all our efforts in order to secure a successful outcome from the upcoming COP 16 Summit in Cancun.

We strongly believe that action must not stop. The Greek Government proposes to initiate a new Mediterranean Climate Change Initiative, in close collaboration with Mediterranean countries strongly committed to climate and energy security. A formal launch of the initiative is planned on 22 October 2010 in Athens ahead of the UNFCCC COP16 meeting in Mexico.

In the same vein, the central theme of our Chairmanship-in-Office of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation is "the Black Sea turns Green." This is not based on a narrow view of environmental sensitivity; it is a development-oriented choice based on the firm

belief that streamlining green technology, proper resource management and environmental stability, can and will be a platform for regional cooperation, business, entrepreneurship and employment creation.

Add to this that by streamlining development to environmental protection, we conserve and put to value the comparative advantages of our region, its landscapes, its sea, its freshwater, its biodiversity, the basis for its future development through tourism, agriculture, fisheries etc.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The recent global economic and financial crisis has left few countries unaffected, Greece having been no exception. Both advanced economies, as well as emerging ones, are having to adjust to the realities created by the "butterfly effect" associated with the almost indivisible interrelation of our economies, in a world for which we need to find a new term for the notion of "globalization".

It has become increasingly apparent to all of us that the current international financial system has serious disadvantages that have to be corrected. One of the goals of the recent G20 summits was to reform the global financial system in order to avoid similar unpleasant situations in the future.

These efforts are necessary not only to sustain economic growth, but also because "glitches" in the world's financial markets have far reaching adverse effects on our collective ability to move forward and meet our internationally agreed global development targets.

In this regard, I would like to welcome the results of the High Level Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals and to commend the UN Secretary General for his timely initiative.

Closely related, of course, to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, but also to the global financial crisis, is the ever growing phenomenon of international migration.

This pressing issue has a two-fold humanitarian dimension. On the one hand, what is primarily at stake is the very safety of the thousands of people who annually put their lives at risk under extreme conditions to make the journey towards what they hope will be a better future for them and their families. Countless lives are lost every year, especially at sea, victims of ruthless traffickers who profit off the misery and despair of others.

On the other hand, these migrants face particular difficulties at their destination, whether transit or final. The burden placed on host countries is such that migrants often find themselves in a state of limbo and marginalized from the host society. The socio-economic consequences of this, both for the host countries and for the migrants themselves are indeed very far reaching.

For us, this is a pressing humanitarian issue that needs to be addressed collectively in all its aspects, from examining thoroughly and addressing the reasons that have led to

the surge in this phenomenon, to tackling the networks of organized crime involved in the tragedy that is human trafficking.

It was this comprehensive approach that the Greek Presidency of the third Global Forum on Migration and Development- GFMD sought to promote. During the annual meeting that took place in Athens from 2 to 5 November 2009 under the overarching theme "*Integrating Migration Policies into Development Strategies for the Benefit of All*", a number of important issues were covered.

The Athens meeting, we believe, successfully contributed to the consolidation of the GFMD as a unique platform for governments to exchange views, ideas and experiences on migration and development issues and re-affirmed that the process should remain informal and state-led, underlying its multi-dimensional character and emphasizing the need to strengthen the importance of the development dimension.

In its third year, the GFMD has proven to be more than just another international meeting on migration and development and is already shaping the debate in important ways by building bridges between countries and regions, public and private sectors and migrants and their home and host societies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the past sixty years, the international community has made remarkable strides in the protection and promotion of Human Rights. Our United Nations has been at the forefront of an enduring campaign to place human dignity and respect for our inalienable and fundamental universal rights at the center of all our policies, both on a national, as well as on an international level. Indeed, I strongly believe that it cannot be any other way.

Respect for and further advancement of Human Rights constitutes the cornerstone of our respective democracies and signals the qualitative progress and evolution of our world's civility and civilization.

Despite progress in this field, much more needs to be done. We must identify shortcomings and concentrate on pushing forward those aspects which still lag behind.

Let us ensure, Ladies and Gentlemen, that this decade will be remembered not only as the one that will set us on an irreversible track to consolidate the universality of our fundamental rights as enshrined in the UN Charter, but also as the decade which decisively brought forward a truly comprehensive approach to human rights, given that all of the global challenges our generation is facing, whether it be climate change, natural or man-made disasters, economic and financial crises, terrorism or international migratory flows, have a profound effect on the enjoyment of these rights.

In this regard, Greece continues to support all efforts for an effective and efficient Human Rights Council, with enhanced status, mandate, structures and membership. This is of the utmost importance for the credibility, legitimacy and effectiveness of the UN human rights system as envisaged in the Charter. In this framework, Greece will actively defend the prestige of the Human Rights Council, through its candidacy for the years 2012-2015.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The common thread underpinning all of the aforementioned issues is the need to enhance the mechanisms necessary to ensure effective multilateral action to confront these common challenges coherently and comprehensively. In this, the promotion of effective interaction and coordination between the UN and regional organizations must be one of our key priorities.

What is equally clear from all of the above is that our notion of security is indivisible, comprehensive and cooperative. This is the spirit within which we approached our term as Chairman-in Office of the OSCE in 2009. The demand to review our understanding of security was present, as was the need to re-examine the security architecture of an area stemming from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

We consider the upcoming 2010 OSCE Summit as a major milestone in the European Security Dialogue, the well-known Corfu Process, launched by the Greek OSCE Chairmanship in 2009. This open-ended and wide-ranging political dialogue has established both ambitious and realistic targets in restoring confidence and trust among all 56 OSCE participating States, recapturing the spirit of partnership that brought together the founding fathers of the OSCE and enhancing solidarity and cooperation. Thanks to the commitment and engagement of our OSCE partners to the Corfu Process, the vision of the 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe, whose 20th Anniversary we commemorate this year, has finally the prospect to become reality in the European security landscape.

Within the European Union, the EU Member-States have developed an elaborate array of tools and procedures, not least in the field of its external relations, which are designed to respond effectively to today's multifaceted challenges, from early warning and conflict prevention to emergency response and crisis management, reconstruction and rehabilitation.

But what truly sets the European Union apart, particularly after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, is the degree of integration achieved between its Member-States on many levels.

Greece has always been a staunch supporter of the European ideal. It is this belief in the cumulative power of a united continent, politically, economically and socially, and supported by a robust security component, that influences and shapes our foreign policy decisions.

Our constant goal, along with our EU partners, without prejudice to particular national positions, is to actively and constructively contribute to the formulation of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, each bringing to the table our comparative advantages and individual experiences.

This is why, in my opening remarks, I expressed Greece's full alignment with the statement made by the EU. This is not mere "lip service" to a general statement, but a conscious political position, in that the statement circulated here truly reflects Greece's positions on the key international challenges. On this occasion, I would like to express my firm belief that the General Assembly will greatly benefit from arrangements that

would allow EU representatives to fulfill their responsibilities in an effective manner at formal meetings.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

What goes on in our neighborhood directly affects the way our children will grow. In Greece, we have become deeply conscious of this reality. So we have made a commitment, especially to our region and to its people.

We believe that stability in our region is the pre-requisite for security and we define stability as the practice of democracy, the strengthening of institutions that provide transparency and accountability, the reduction of economic inequalities and the rule of law in our societies and between our countries. A key factor for bringing stability and development in our region is good neighbourliness, a fundamental principle which, together with the other principles included in the Charter of the United Nations, constitutes the cornerstone of contemporary international legal order.

Greece's security lies in being member of the European Union and of NATO and we work so that countries of the region may benefit from the stabilizing influence of their future membership in these institutions.

The Balkans is still a sensitive area stability-wise. The dust from the dissolution of Yugoslavia has not settled yet.

Greece's vision for the Balkans is one of a region in which democracy finally becomes the norm; where citizens' aspirations can finally be realized through peaceful and democratic practices; where the rights of minorities are respected; where governments are accountable, economies are transparent and politics allow for the fullest participation of all elements of society.

The world has a responsibility in supporting this vision for our region. We need to empower the region that has historically been handicapped, dependent and divided by a world community of competing interests and a babble of conflicting signals.

In our view, the prospect of the integration of the entire region into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures and institutions is the way ahead that can guarantee stability and development. The heart of the European ethos lies in building the institutions and practices of inclusiveness. That is why Greece has always supported EU enlargement, as a means to build a bridge of security, co-operation and development between nations.

In order to breathe new life into the prospect of the integration of the Balkans in the EU, Greece has put forward a new initiative, the "Agenda 2014", which builds upon the "Thessaloniki Agenda", another Greek initiative for the region dating from 2003. The principal aim of this initiative is to set a political target to the EU accession process which will serve as a strong incentive for the whole region to put forward and speed up the necessary reforms and adaptations which will bring them closer to the EU.

During the critical years of Yugoslavia's dissolution, the presence of the European Union in the Balkans was not adequate, with detrimental effects on the handling of the successive crises. We all know better now. There are still open wounds in our region, Kosovo being the most pressing one, and we must make sure that this time the EU will

be present and with a strong voice. The European prospect of our entire region can boost the political process, which is about to begin on Kosovo. At the same time we need to keep an open and clear path for Serbia to begin accession negotiations with the EU.

There are several other open issues in the Balkans. One of them revolves around the name of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. This is not a bilateral, pedantic dispute about historical symbols, as some may try to portray it, but a regional question, with deep historical roots, related to good neighbourliness.

In order to reach a compromise on the name issue, the two sides must meet in the middle by taking reciprocal steps to bridge the gap and reconcile their conflicting positions. Greece has already done its part. A fair and lasting solution can only be based on a name with a geographic qualifier, to be used for all purposes, erga omnes. Macedonia is a large geographic region, most of which lies in Greece. A small part is in the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA and a smaller part in Bulgaria. The part cannot represent the whole and the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA's exclusive claims to the name "Macedonia" cannot be allowed to fuel nationalism. Any solution must be universally implemented because otherwise today's situation will simply be perpetuated.

We have intensified our efforts to reach a settlement, in the context of the established UN negotiating process, led by Mr Nimetz, in the hope that this will be possible rather sooner than later.

I chose the General Assembly, which is the natural forum to solve international disputes, to declare, once again, Greece's readiness to reach a solution even tomorrow and call upon Prime Minister Gruevski to display leadership and become our partner for progress. Progress that will result in a bright and prosperous future of our neighbours in the European Union. A future we wish to see become reality soon.

To this end, I appeal to the leadership in our neighbouring country to concentrate efforts in the central aim of finding a solution, rather than waste valuable resources and energy in practices of "buying time", of creating atmosphere of antagonism or even animosity and of avoiding taking responsibilities.

Greece is extending a hand of friendship and cooperation. The time has come for our neighbours to take this hand.

Let me now turn to the most serious flashpoint in the broader region, which is one of the most durable and sustained conflicts in our times. I am referring to the Arab-Israeli conflict, which is again at a turning point.

The resumption of the direct talks was a significant achievement and we must pay tribute to President Obama and his Administration and all others who have contributed to this end as well as to the Israeli and Palestinian leadership and the leadership of the Arab countries which have supported it.

However, this is just the beginning, not the end. The most difficult part lies ahead of us. Our number one priority now is to sustain this dialogue and make it bear fruits. Both sides have an obligation to show respect for this fragile diplomatic process. Actions that

threaten its very existence, like Israeli settlement construction, must be avoided for the negotiations not to turn into one more exercise in futility.

It is very important to reinforce the peace camps and establish a peace mindset in both sides. We must give the people hope and an optimistic perspective. We must provide them with tangible proof that the dialogue will produce concrete results which will be beneficial for all. We must convince them that the cost of the confrontation is much higher than the cost of reciprocal compromises conducive to peace. We need to persuade especially the new generations that peaceful coexistence is a viable option.

Another equally important and long-standing issue in the Eastern Mediterranean is the question of Cyprus.

I would like to thank the Secretary General and all those who labour with him towards a just solution in Cyprus: a solution based on UN Resolutions for a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with one international personality, one citizenship and one sovereignty. A solution in full conformity with the *acquis communautaire*.

UN Resolutions must be honoured. The implementation of UN Resolutions is not only important for Cyprus. It is important for the moral standing of the entire international community sharing common values, it is important for the moral standing of this all-important organization.

The island remains divided, in a shameful condition. Cyprus is a tragic example of where our shared sense of justice, our shared code of values, has gone astray.

The last "Berlin Wall" has to come down, not be strengthened. This responsibility rests with the United Nations and all those who have a saying in international developments. Cyprus is the victim of military invasion and remains occupied by foreign troops – this is the truth, this is reality and it must end. We need to go beyond this situation. It will take courage. Courage from everyone involved. A solution to the Cyprus problem can and should be seen as a win-win situation. It is vital for peace, stability and security in our region.

I truly believe that the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities can find solutions. Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots can live together peacefully and harmoniously in the reunited EU-member Cyprus. They must be allowed to decide freely on their common future, without external interference and pressure. And we can aid them in this process.

The solution of the Cyprus question is a matter of political will, resolution and determination, such as that displayed by President Christofias, in order to give a definitive end to this protracted international problem.

I extend my appeal to the Turkish Cypriots. We want you near us, in our wider European family. Participation of a reunited Cyprus in the EU means that every Cypriot enjoys safety, equality under the law, protection of their human rights, appropriate representation and the security under a European roof. In the modern European environment, relics of the past, such as "guarantor powers", seem and sound anachronistic and completely out of touch.

Cyprus, Turkey and Greece: for anyone willing to envision the future, our futures are as interwoven as our histories. A reunified federal Cyprus, member of the European Union, does not only serve the European aspiration for stability in the region but the aspirations of every citizen in every one of the countries involved.

Greece and Turkey have a responsibility to cooperate on the Cyprus problem and to facilitate the process. Greece and Turkey, through their rapprochement, share a rare opportunity to help the citizens of Cyprus rebuild their island, their homes and their dreams.

Turkey can prove its commitment to a lasting solution of the Cyprus issue by withdrawing immediately its occupation forces from the island, thus boosting both the negotiation process and its own European perspective.

I therefore appeal to the Turkish leadership to use this framework for a just solution. Let us not expand the wall that divides the two communities in Cyprus to divide Turkey from Europe. Let us instead break down this last "Berlin Wall" and help create a common future for the citizens of a free Cyprus.

Last but not least, allow me a quick reference to Greek-Turkish relations, which is an important parameter for the stability of the region. As you probably know, Greek-Turkish relations are burdened by a heavy historical past. Therefore, it is not an easy task to change their course and turn a long-standing rivalry into good-neighbourliness, free of the threat of the use of force, or unfounded territorial claims. Respect for international law is the sole basis for a healthy and peaceful relationship between the two countries.

Greece has embarked on a process with Turkey that will radically affect our lives in the coming years. We have opened a dialogue. One that is honest. And although we may and do differ on many issues, such as how we see Cyprus and how we approach our bilateral relations, this open approach can only lead to a progressive resolution of our problems. The Turkish leadership and the people of Turkey know we are honest in what we say and in our desire for a new and peaceful relation. I believe that Greece and Turkey have no choice but to explore new avenues for co-operation. I believe our mutual interests can outweigh our political differences. We can and must resolve these differences through peaceful means. And a possible way to go is the International Court of Justice.

I do not want to give the false impression that all our problems have suddenly been resolved. It is most distressing that a variety of statements and acts still undermine this very genuine and difficult effort. The long standing threat of war, the "casus belli" against my country, is unacceptable and has no place in our European and global family of values and principles.

There are those who certainly may wish that our efforts fail. It is our historical duty to overcome these difficulties and maintain the momentum in response to our peoples' mandate for peace.

"We look forward to the day when Belgrade and Pristina will be an easy bus ride away, when Jerusalem and Damascus, Athens and Ankara and, of course, the two parts of divided Nicosia, will no longer be separated by fear and suspicion, but be joined in peace." These were the words used and the vision expressed by George Papandreou,

today's Prime Minister of Greece, in his first address to the UN General Assembly as Greek Foreign Minister in 1999. May I repeat these words and vision in my first address to this body in the same capacity. A wish and vision that, I think, we all share.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to conclude with an extract of the UN Charter itself, which concisely encapsulates the central meaning and the key message of my presentation:

"We the peoples of the United Nations are determined...

...to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours,

...and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security..."

I thank you for your attention.