



STATEMENT

BY

H.E. MR. BUJAR NISHANI,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

AT

THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 69TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

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(Please check against delivery)

**Mr. President,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great pleasure for me to address the 69th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. First, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to this post. I assure you of the full support of my country during this session. I believe that under your leadership and thanks to the previous experience, you will further advance the achievements of your predecessor, H.E. John W. Ashe, who has worked with dedication to achieve concrete results. In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General, for his vision and leadership at the helm of the United Nations and for his continuing efforts to revitalize and reform the organization.

Mr. President,

Albania is committed to an efficient and coherent United Nations, fit for purpose a multidimensional system. We support the strengthening of its role and its contribution to preserve peace and security, to eradicate poverty, inequality and disparity and achieve sustainable human and economic development, to promote, respect and protect human rights as a universal value of humankind. A more fitted United Nations, with an ability to respond swiftly to manmade or natural crises and to use efficiently the human and financial resources available, is key to achieving these objectives in an ever more torn apart and hungrier world.

Mr. President

Maintaining, restoring and strengthening peace and security constitute one of the three pillars of the work of the United Nations. With so many resources, knowledge and manpower invested to deal with different and complex crises of the world, it is simply impossible not to recognize the contribution this organization has brought to the world, year after year and decade after decades. Yet, peace, security and human values have continued to be challenged in 2014 necessitating a more responsive, coordinated and swift response of the United Nations.

We deplore the events in **South Sudan** where dramatic events have unfolded and continue to shake human conscience. Irrational fighting along ethnic lines has caused too much suffering of the innocent population. Only a political negotiated solution, where rights of all communities concerned are taken into account, protected and respected, can help rebuild trust and understanding, turning the page to a better future for the youngest country in the world -

It is hard to find the proper words to describe the situation in **Syria**. After more than three years of deadly fighting, the country is hardly a place where one can have a living. Everything in the dictionary of horrible acts has happened there. More than 170 thousand people have died, millions have become refugees, and large parts of the country are in ruins. With fighting going on and mass atrocities being committed every day, hope of putting an end to the war is still a remote dream for those still trapped in.

Albania has joined the initiative of some sixty UN Member States to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court. Unfortunately, like many other initiatives on Syria, this effort was vetoed in the Security Council. We reiterate and reaffirm, strongly and with conviction that the perpetrators of atrocities in Syria must be held accountable and the people of Syria deserve relief and justice.

Mr. President,

Most worrying events have happened in Ukraine in the course of this year. What we thought was once and for all behind us, what we believed belonged only to the history books and served as a lesson for today's and future generations, acts that violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of another country, that blatantly infringe and undermine the UN Charter were unfortunately unearthed by a member of the UN, a Permanent Member of the Security Council, the Russian Federation. Despite all the propaganda that was thrown out from Russia, the Ukraine crisis had nothing to do with protecting the rights of ethnic Russians. It was much simpler; it was since the very first moment about one country's ambition to redraw its own borders to satisfy a territory appetite of a more powerful neighbor.

Although the Security Council has been unable to take any action on this issue, the General Assembly voted overwhelmingly not to accept Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. The support to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and to the full respect for norms and principles of international law was made clear by the UN Member States, Albania included, and for the Albania reiterates that international relations must be governed by full respect of the principles and norms of international law and of the Charter of the United Nations. Ukrainian case makes no difference.

Mr. President,

With crises and disasters erupting in a frightening pattern and world spiraling into insecurities, development too has been under stress. United Nations have contributed to raising a global awareness to the challenges that development faces and to the sustainable solutions that bring economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection and put our planet into a sustainable path.

The Millennium Development Goals count for one of the most successful global anti-poverty drives in history. Ranging from poverty, hunger, maternal and child health, gender equality, education and environment MDGs have noted important progress at the national, regional and global levels and have improved the lives of millions of people. Since 2005 the number of people living in extreme poverty has been halved, but while we are just months away from the deadline, a lot more remains to be done.

Yet another ambitious long-term sustainability agenda to succeed the MDGs is on the making. Albania has actively participated in the global consultations focusing on bringing in the voice of the people into the formulation of the Post-2015 development agenda. Albania has agreed to test a proposed development goal on governance and rule of law, as a means to achieve sustainable development. We hope that our experience in monitoring governance, rule of law, effective and capable institutions will contribute to inform the upcoming post-2015 agenda of the United Nations.

The Future We Want, as outlined in Rio, in 2012, and the successful work carried out by the Open Ended Working Group on the SDGs produced a

remarkable proposal on the sustainable development goals. We have now, as the fruit of hard work for more than eighteen months, a set of transformative and inclusive Sustainable Development Goals, which will constitute the core of a post 2015 development agenda. The world needs to once and for all eradicate all forms of poverty everywhere; it needs to address seriously, the environmental degradation and promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, it needs to provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

While this new ambitious development agenda is being put in place, the UN System must be able to respond quickly, accelerate the reform process and adapt to situations and realities in order to maximize its results. We have long advocated for the benefits that Delivering as One approach bring to the efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of the United Nations at all levels. We applaud the finalization of the UNDG Standard Operating Procedures for the Delivering as One and its associated action plan to simplify and harmonize procedures around the Ones. Time has come to firmly focus on results and performance-based allocations in order to increase the predictability of funding of UN Programs in Delivering as One countries.

Mr. President,

Terrorism remains a major threat to international peace and security and the fight against terrorism remains a priority that requires a higher commitment. We are aware that this global threat can only be met by collective action through a powerful response. Albania condemns in the strongest terms all terrorist acts of attack committed by terrorist groups and organizations in Iraq and Syria, including and especially by ISIL. Aware that terrorism is a threat without borders, a threat to individual countries and regions but also to human values and principles, Albania has joined recently created international coalition in order to deter and finally defeat ISIS.

Mr. President

European integration and cooperation in the region and the geopolitical and security situation in Europe has changed significantly in recent months. Western Balkans, where my country belongs to, is a very important geostrategic European

region and a region that is fully recently committed to the path of increased political stability, economic progress and sustainable development, strengthening cooperation, good neighborly security and peace consolidation. The European perspective is the best guarantee for achieving these objectives in our region. We are committed to resolve as soon as possible bilateral issues, in the interest of our people and good neighborhood. We are fully aware that a number of measures should be enacted to eradicate corruption and organized crime. We, like all countries in the region, have expressed our willingness to conduct joint reforms that will bring increased economic stability, increased prosperity for our citizens, the opening of markets and attracting foreign investment.

From our perspective, the EU enlargement is a process and performance – driven one, which will enable the Western Balkan countries a membership and full integration into the EU. Obtaining the status of EU candidate country in June of this year, for my country constitutes a significant encouragement to intensify the reform process, which will lead to the opening of EU accession talks.

Mr. President,

The Republic of Kosova is one of the members of our Western Balkan community, the youngest state in the region. In less than six years as an Independent State Kosova has managed, through a transformative development agenda, to get wide uninterrupted international recognition and to successfully integrate into international regional and global organizations such as (WB, IFM, EBRD, European Bank for development, the Venice Commission, The South East European Cooperation Process etc). Kosova has become an important factor of peace and stability in the region and Albania fully supports the overall development of Kosova as well as its stability and territorial integrity of Kosova in its current borders.

The Kosova progress, the new atmosphere in the region and the need to have the region as a whole move towards more cooperation and prosperity have led the path to the successful European Union sponsored talks between Kosova and Serbia, as two equal partners in finding concrete solutions to technical issues of importance for their citizens. Time has shown that engaging into dialogue was a wise decision. Dialogue has produced concrete results, has brought the two countries closer to each other and has facilitated and sped up the EU integration

path for both States. Albania fully supports the process of dialogue and calls for the full implementation of agreements reached.

Kosova is recognized to date by some 108 UN Member States, way more than half of the UN membership. Recognition has, without doubt, been an important factor for Kosova's progress. This is why, as before, we call on the countries which have not yet recognized Kosova to do so, since by doing so they would not only help the people of Kosova advance in their future but would also contribute to peace and stability in the region.

We remained convinced that the quick and full implementation of the Ohrid Agreement represents an indispensable condition to the sustainable stability of Macedonia, to the consolidation of democracy and rule of law and also to fulfill and realize the rights of the Albanians.

Albania encourages the continuation of dialogue among the Belgrade authorities and Albanians of Presheva Valley to promote their rights in accordance to the international standards focusing especially on solving the economic, social, education and cultural problems.

Ladies and gentlemen,

During the last two decades, Albania is transformed from a totalitarian state to a functioning democracy. Progress is evident, above all, in the field of human rights. Protection and promotion of human rights is one of the national priority and part of Albania's foreign policy. Albania offers a valuable model of respect for diversity, tolerance and coexistence for the Balkan region and beyond. For the Albanian people, tolerance and hospitality are inherent values derived from our national tradition.

Presentation of Albania's candidacy for membership to the Human Rights Council for the period 2015 -2017 is only a logical consequence of our road towards building a society based on human rights. We are confident that Albania has accumulated valuable experience over the years in democracy to share with other member countries of the UN. Moreover, by reaffirming the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights, Albania is committed to bringing a national and regional perspective into Council's deliberations and advocacy of human rights worldwide.

We are aware that membership in the Council for the period 2015-2017, is a challenge of great responsibility to justify the confidence of member states of the UN. On the other hand, the HRC membership will serve to my country as an impetus to further democratization of the country and raise the human rights standards. Therefore, Albania, after having obtained the endorsement from the Group of Eastern European countries, welcomes and appreciates the support of all the other UN member countries for her candidacy to this Council.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I wish to confirm once more that Albania is fully determined to continue supporting the UN agenda and to strengthen the role of the United Nations globally.

Thank you!