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PERMANENT MISSION  
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320 EAST 79 STREET NEW YORK N.Y. 10021. TEL 212 249-2059 56545631. FAX 212 535291 7

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Address by H. E. Mr. Fatos Nano  
Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania  
to the General Debate of the 59th Session of the  
United Nations General Assembly

New York, 21 September 2004

Mr. President,  
Mr. Secretary General,  
Excellencies,

It is my special pleasure to address the 59<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. This universal forum has served the peoples of the world to coordinate and harmonize their efforts in preserving peace and security, in achieving prosperity and upholding the values of human civilisation.

I would like Mr. President, to congratulate you for your election to this august body and express my confidence in your successful deliberation of it. At the same time, I salute Mr. Julian Robert Hunte for the competent leadership in the deliberations of the 58<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly.

I would also like to convey to the Secretary General, on behalf of my country, the highest appreciation for his leading contribution to the fulfilment of the United Nation's historical mission and to the aspirations of our peoples for a better world in which reign only peace, democracy and economic prosperity.

Mr. President,

This Session of the General Assembly takes place in a marked *year* for Europe. Only a few months ago an historic event vitalised the dream for a more united and stronger Europe. Ten European countries, sharing a common aspiration for integration, were admitted into the European Union. Albania, too, has embraced and is pursuing the realisation of the same aspiration.

The Albanian Government and society are engaged into an all-round European integration process, being fully committed to carrying out the necessary reforms. Progress in this regard will be the main impetus and assessment of Albania's performance in the Stabilisation and Association Process we are in. We have the political will and drive to carry out these reforms.

In this process Albania is working to strengthen the institutions and capacities of the central and local government, to bring the Albanian legislation closer to EU standards, to enhance the efficiency of the reforms and to consolidate the management and monitoring of the process and its progress on the basis of concrete and measurable results well-defined in advance. Albania has committed itself to all the obligations related to this process and is following with high priority their implementation in all respects.

Determined to give its contribution to the regional and global security, the Albanian Government has considered the country's integration into NATO as one of its major objectives. The Istanbul Summit last June hailed the progress made by Albania on the path to the implementation of its national program and encouraged the deepening of reforms. It welcomes the country's contribution to the regional stability and cooperation and expressed its commitment to assess the further progress of the country at the next NATO summit, in which we hope to start negotiations for becoming a full member of the Alliance. We believe that the commitments set up in the framework of the Adriatic Charter are also contributing to meet the NATO standards and to the regional stability.

We truly convinced that the respect and protection of human rights and freedoms are the main pillars of a pluralist democratic society. The Government of the Republic of Albania has constantly demonstrated that it fully implements the standards enshrined in the United Nations and Council of Europe Conventions, as well as the relevant documents of regional organisations, such as the OSCE, in which is playing a very active role. It will continue to do so in the future as well. By adopting a contemporary legislation and by becoming a party to other recently adopted international instruments on human rights, such as the Additional Protocol of the United Nations Convention for the Prevention of Torture, Albania has associated itself with the countries that are implementing a number of national strategies and programmes that focus on specific population groups such as women, children, persons in need, minorities, etc.

The Albanian Government has in recent years started to periodically submit reports to the Committees of the six main UN Conventions on human rights and is taking their recommendations into consideration. It is our belief that these international mechanisms should play a significant and important role as guardians of the common human values we have together adopted as representatives of our peoples.

Albania, as one of the 191 countries signatories of the Millennium Declaration, is fully committed to implement the Millennium Development Goals, which have been properly reflected in the National Strategy for Social and Economic Development adopted by the Albanian Government. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the United Nations specialised Agencies for their valuable assistance in support of the implementation of these objectives on a central and local level.

Mr. President,

The Albanian government is pleased to note that an ever healthier climate of confidence and relations of bilateral and multilateral cooperation are prevailing in the South East European region. The countries of the region are fully engaged in a process that will lead them dearly toward Euro-Atlantic integration and at the same time constantly away from extremist and ultra nationalist tendencies that caused a number of conflicts in the last decade. The regional policy of the government I chair is guided by the motto: " more integrated in the region, the more integrated in Europe". In implementing this policy, Albania is cooperating, as never before, with all the countries of the region.

In this context, the Albanian Government is also encouraging the opening up of markets among countries of the region and beyond; we are a constructive partner for the "globalisation" of the region with the European Union; we are signing the free trade agreements; we are working together to improve and modernise the free movement corridors; we are concentrating on attracting the foreign investors in the country and the region. Similarly, the Albanian Government is coordinating, ever more effectively with the neighbouring countries, its fight against organised crime and all kinds of illegal trafficking. At the same time Albania is enforcing its border management and control guided by the EU and other international standards.

In the context of strengthening the regional cooperation, Albania is committed to extend its cooperation also by participating actively in all regional organisations and initiatives, convinced that this serves the promotion of good neighbourly relations, strengthening of the regional peace, security and stability, ensuring political support in terms of achieving common aspirations for integration into the Euro -

Atlantic structures, as well as attracting financing for national and regional projects in priority fields such as energy, transportation and telecommunication.

Mr President,

In its European integration road, our region, still is facing with such pending challenges as the future of Kosovo. Albania greatly appreciates the recent democratic and integrated developments in Kosovo, thanks to the efforts of the people of Kosova, its self-governing institutions and the activity of the UNMIK: Allow me at this point, Mr President, to congratulate Mr. Soren Jessen Petersen, Special Representative for Kosovo of the UN Secretary General, in assuming this very important post.

The Albanian Government shares the view that the time has come for a rapid and coherent implementation of policy of standards and status. This would be the *key* to the solution of a number of other issues. We really hope that the question of the final status of Kosovo will find its final solution soon for the sake of the Kosovo people and for the whole region as well. In the meantime, we are convinced on the need to build a democratic, multiethnic and multicultural society in Kosovo governed by the rule of law, mutual tolerance and understanding. Particularly helpful in this regard would be the transfer of further competences of UNMIK onto the legitimate self-governing institutions of Kosovo. We believe in transferring of responsibilities and accountability before requesting their delivery. We believe that in the next parliamentary elections, to be held during next October, the Albanian people of Kosovo would demonstrate their best values and will take a major step toward the consolidation of the democratic society in Kosovo, something that we believe, would have a positive impact all over Western Balkans. We also hope that the Serb minority in Kosovo will take up its responsibilities and through their free vote will make their contribution to the European future of Kosovo. Their participation in all levels of the self-governing institutions of Kosovo would further contribute to the consolidation of peace, stability and the coexistence in the region.

The Albanian Government supports the dialogue between Prishtina and Belgrade both on the political and technical level. There is no *other* alternative except the dialogue and negotiations between them in the presence of the international community. They are fundamental in resolving the pending issues between them in the spirit of regional and European integrating processes. This would *serve* ultimately to the improvement of relations between Pristina and Belgrade, to a better and more constructive climate between their peoples and will positively affect the region wide.

Excellencies,

The tragic terrorist attack one year ago in Baghdad, which took the lives of 22 people, including the UN Under-Secretary General, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, are still fresh in our memories. Such hideous punishable acts continued in the later days and months there and in other countries of the world, such as Turkey, Spain, Russia, Indonesia, etc. Terrorism is today the biggest threat to international peace and security, to stability, the values of world democracy and civilisation.

In the global efforts to combat terrorism, our countries have already understood that firstly, terrorism cannot be identified with a people, religion, race or certain groups of society. Secondly, it has no face, it is invisible, but it has known elements

that directly or indirectly impact on carrying out terrorism activities. Thirdly, no country can be successful alone in the fight against terrorism. In this context, it is of very important to strengthen the international cooperation both among states and between the latter and global or regional international organisations, among which the United Nations plays an irreplaceable role.

The Albanian Government has been constantly committed to making its contribution as an active member of the international coalition against terrorism. It has its peace keeping troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. It has signed and ratified, and now is implementing the 12 United Nations Conventions and Protocols against terrorism. It is doing the same with the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council, cooperating closely with the structures established under these resolutions and presenting regular reports to them. The Albanian Government salutes the decision of the Security Council to play an active role in the fight against threats coming from possession and trafficking of weapons of mass destruction. It supports the UN Security Council Resolution 1540 of 2004. Albania has, on the other hand, taken all measures for the implementation of the Code of Conduct on Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources of the IAEA, convinced that this international instrument is extremely important to prevent threats stemming from misuse of radioactive materials. Albania has already taken the decision and in the coming weeks will sign the Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreement of the IAEA.

This year Albania also joined the Proliferation Security Initiative whose aim is to identify, through a set of principles, concrete steps to prevent trafficking of WMD, their launching systems and materials used to produce them.

Mr. President,

Peace and stability have not been fully established in certain regions of the world. The United Nations and the Security Council are the organs mandated by the Charter to preserve peace and security in the world. It is only natural that high in their agenda are still settlement of crisis situations in hot spots in the globe, such as Iraq, the Middle East, Afghanistan, Sudan, etc. This requires the full engagement of the international community in finding most suitable and lasting solutions for these situations as well as the further enhancement of the role and effectiveness of the United Nations structures.

The Albanian Government has welcomed the unanimous adoption of the Security Council Resolution 1546 of 8 June on Iraq, approving the provisional government of Iraq and transferring over to it the authority and sovereignty, the independence and territorial integrity of Iraq, the control of the Iraqi Government of the armed forces and the holding of democratic elections in January 2005. The progress made in Iraq is due to the cooperation between the Iraqi government forces and those of the coalition. We would wish however to see a lowering of tensions and stop to violence, increased security to bring about stability and establish a democratic society. We condemn the strategy of violence and hostage taking to achieve political goals sometime cloaked under a religious veil, and join the voice of the international community to immediately stop these acts. The Albanian Government supports the efforts of the United Nations in providing the assistance necessary to build national democratic institutions in Iraq and the holding of free and democratic elections early next year.

The Albanian Government follows with great concern the developments in the Middle East. Like the whole international community, we too, do hope in putting an end to the deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories where violence towards the civilian population has increased with taking a heavy toll of innocent lives, including women and children. On the other hand, we condemn any terrorist act against the civilian population irrespective in whose name they are committed. The Albanian Government strongly believes that peace can and should be achieved only through negotiation. It is convinced that the Security Council, the Quartet and the international community do have the possibility to establish a stable peace in Palestine and the whole of the Middle East region based on the Security Council Resolutions and the Road Map. The international community should continue to monitor closely the implementation of the Road Map in order to avoid deviation, change, misinterpretations and blocking of it by the parties in the conflict.

Current developments and realities on the international arena, the acute problems and challenges our society is faced with in a number of aspects, such as preserving peace and security, facing threats from terrorism, the fight against poverty and fatal diseases, the effects of globalisation and environment degradation have put before us the need to revitalise our organisation. The Albanian Government is supportive of the efforts of the Secretary General to reform the organisation, in particular to the initiatives taken regarding the reform of the Security Council. We join the voices that call for a stronger UN, more efficient organs and mechanisms that are engaged in monitoring the implementation of obligations by UN member states, in particular those concerning the global security. Among these organs is the Security Council. We think times are different today, and time has therefore come to have a more representative, more transparent and more flexible Security Council which could better reflect the current realities. Its enlargement with permanent and non-permanent members would increase the possibilities for all member states of the United Nations to contribute to the preservation of international peace and stability. It would be a significant step toward the completion of the UN reform.

Mr. President,

My country is willing in giving its contribution to the activity of United Nations and in the global and regional developments related to the sustainable economic and social development, protection of fundamental freedoms and human rights throughout the world. To this aim, Albania has presented for the first time its candidacy to become member of ECOSOC for the period 2005-2007. Albania by showing its aspiration to become a member of the ECOSOC, wishes to intensify its activity within the ECOSOC and takes all responsibilities that derive from this membership. By expressing its will to candidate Albania is seeking to enhance its direct contribution in global and regional international developments, particularly to those related to the financial, economic and social ones.

Mr. President,

A few weeks ago the world witnessed the successful conclusion of the Olympic Games in Athena Gathered around the Olympic torch, sportsmen and women demonstrated how close nations can stand with one another and how we can get rid of hatred and conflict from our midst. Let the symbol of Olympic peace and fraternity help us to build a better, more secure world for us and for the generations to come.

I thank you.