

ADDRESS OF DORA BAKOYANNIS.  
FOREIGN MINISTER OF GREECE  
TO THE U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
ON SEPTEMBER 27, 2008

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Monsieur le Président,

Sophocle a dit «S'éloigner par erreur du bon chemin est une faute commune à tous les êtres humains.» Nous sommes ici réunis, en cette assemblée, afin de limiter l'étendue de ces erreurs et d'assurer le respect du mandat des Nations Unies. Mon gouvernement est en accord complet avec les buts et les idées exprimés par Nicolas Sarkozy, en sa qualité de président de l'Union Européenne.

Nous avons encore beaucoup à faire et bien des obstacles à surmonter : les conflits armés, la faim, la pauvreté, la dévastation environnementale, le terrorisme, le crime organisé, le trafic d'êtres humains, le non respect des droits de l'homme ainsi que les abus de pouvoir ; toutes ces choses menacent ce que nous désirons construire aux Nations Unies : une communauté d'Etats connaissant progrès, paix et prospérité.

Ajoutez à tous ces fléaux la crise économique à laquelle le monde fait face en ce moment, et il devient difficile de *ne pas voir* le futur comme étant sombre et menaçant. Nous vivons dans un monde, comme l'a décrit le poète Yeats, «Where the best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity».

En cette période critique, chaque pays doit faire un choix : soit choisir de ne regarder que l'intérêt limité de son propre pays ; promouvoir des buts nationalistes afin de distraire l'attention des gens par rapport aux dangers partout dans le monde. Ou bien, choisir de regarder vers l'extérieur, d'ouvrir son esprit et ses frontières, et de s'engager à alerter les gens au fait que la seule façon de pouvoir faire face à une menace est d'y faire face tous ensemble.

L'histoire de la Grèce et le caractère du peuple grec fait que nous avons choisi la deuxième voie. C'était dans la Grèce Antique que la société a développé pour la première fois des idéaux qui sont, aujourd'hui, chéris par les hommes libres partout dans le monde : la démocratie, l'égalité et les droits de l'individu. Plus récemment, nous avons vécu nombre de guerres, la pauvreté et la privation. Néanmoins, nous avons enduré cela et nous avons réussi à retrouver ces idéaux que nous fûmes les premiers à professer.

Nous n'avons pas oublié, cependant, ce que c'est que de ressentir la peur et le besoin. Pour cela, nous allons continuer à travailler de près avec tous les Etats et organisations ou institutions afin d'assurer que toute personne ait la possibilité de vivre en sécurité et s'épanouir en prospérité.

Les Nations Unies doivent prendre la tête dans cette entreprise ; et afin de jouer leur rôle de façon efficace, les Nations Unies ont besoin d'un soutien accru de nous tous, en particulier dans leur effort d'évolution et d'amélioration. Les discussions ayant traités aux réformes du Conseil de Sécurité et au besoin de revitaliser l'Assemblée

Générale, durent depuis trop longtemps. Nous espérons que lors de cette session, aujourd'hui, des mesures concrètes seront prises afin d'atteindre ce but.

This year, Mr. President, we celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Unfortunately gross violations of human rights persist throughout the world and Member States need to redouble our efforts to reduce them. The Human Rights Council could be a powerful force in that struggle, and Greece has decided to become a candidate for membership for the term beginning in 2012. We ask for your support and trust.

Along with protecting human rights, the United Nations must strengthen its efforts to alleviate the bitter poverty that still grips many parts of the world. We need to increase trade for development and we regret the lack of progress in the Doha round talks. In 2000 we agreed on the Millennium Development Goals, probably the most ambitious development project ever undertaken by man. Time-wise we are half-way there. Yet, a lot remains to be done. The progress achieved so far is jeopardized by higher prices – particularly of food and oil – and the global economic slow down. Our success will be judged primarily in Africa.

We believe that one way to help jump-start development in Africa is to involve women in the economy more extensively. Providing women entrepreneurial opportunities at local, national and regional levels will allow them to strengthen their role in society, increase their involvement in education, and ultimately allow them to play a more active part in decision making. As the French social theorist Charles Fourier said more than 200 years ago, "The extension of women's rights is the basic principle of all social progress."

The challenge of climate change if not addressed threatens not only the MDG but also the economic and social stability of our world. We have to achieve in 2009 a new, truly global, agreement. In this agreement we need to have ambitious binding mitigation targets, but we also need a much stronger effort on adaptation, where there is a huge deficit between the needs and the actual financing provided. A deficit exasperated by the fact that no matter what we do we are locked in for significant climate change in the next three to four decades, which is going to especially affect the least developed countries. It is an unjust reality that those that are least to blame for the creation of the problem are to suffer most. Greece, is moving to face this challenge. We have signed this week in New York agreements with the African Union and CARICOM, for the funding of adaptation projects and plan to do that also with the Alliance of Small Island States, providing a total amount of 20 million euros, for the next 4 years. One might argue that this is just a drop in the adaptation bucket. It is however a drop in an empty bucket.

Migration is a critical element in the development of neglected regions and the UN High Level Dialogue on International Migration and development has taken the lead in dramatizing the link. By hosting the third Global Forum on Migration in the fall of 2009, Greece aims to provide a platform to explore solutions and initiatives for the benefit of all countries and especially for the immigrants themselves.

As heartbreaking as the suffering of immigrants and refugees often is, nothing can compare to the misery involved in human trafficking. Young women who leave their homes in search of a better livelihood are exploited, brutalized and forced into a life of unspeakable depravity by the traffickers in human misery involved in the international

sex trade. I say it is time for the international community to say ENOUGH. I urge all the members of the United Nations to begin working together forcefully to put a end to this blight on human dignity.

Along with protecting the weak and vulnerable, the U.N. has the responsibility to act forcefully to protect the world from the kind of fanaticism and extremism that cripple any social program. Terrorism poses a major threat to the security of our countries, to the stability of our democratic societies and to the rights and freedoms of our citizens. Around the world, whether in Afghanistan or Pakistan, Iraq or Yemen, the international community must show its strong commitment to combating terrorism while protecting human rights and the rule of law.

On regional security, Greece is preparing to assume the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe next January. The OSCE, the world's largest regional security organization, can be a forum for frank and fruitful talk on security issues and can contribute effectively to such crucial concerns as early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. Finland, the current chair, has made a major effort to promote positive discussions among OSCE states, and Greece intends to continue that policy and try to resolve outstanding issues.

The crisis in South Ossetia, has created a volatile situation that affects stability in all of the South Caucasus and has exacerbated international tensions. Greece's position on this crisis is rooted in the principles that have always guided our foreign policy – peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of states. In both the EU and NATO, we supported the six-point Agreement that helped end conflict in the area, but we are anxious to see measures that will alleviate the anger and mistrust that now pervade the region.

In the broader Middle East the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is at the root of most of the problems and the region requires a comprehensive and lasting solution. I think that we all agree that the Peace Process, re-launched last year at the Annapolis Conference, has the potential to achieve tangible results and merits the strong support of all of us.

On Lebanon, we welcome the election of President, the formation of the national unity government and the resumption of the national dialogue. Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity should be respected in conformity with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Turning to our immediate neighborhood, Greece is committed to a Southeastern Europe where all countries belong to the European and Euro-Atlantic families. We were as pleased to welcome Croatia and Albania to NATO a few months ago as we were to welcome Bulgaria and Romania to the EU last year. We have been encouraged also by the recent developments in Serbia, which grows closer to Europe every day.

In the same spirit we agree with our NATO allies and EU partners that invitations to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia should be extended when a mutually acceptable solution is reached on the name issue. Greece will continue to be guided by the letter and the spirit of Security Council Resolutions 817 and 845 on the issue, and I

want to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the U.N. Secretary General and his personal envoy, Mr. Mathew Nimetz, for their commitment and tireless efforts to settle the dispute.

The new reality of Kosovo requires continued attention from the international community. UNMIK has done a good job providing security for Kosovo's population, and its successor, EULEX, should assume its responsibilities as soon as possible.

Beyond the Western Balkans, Greece continues taking fruitful initiatives in the spirit of international law and the UN Charter to broaden and strengthen cooperation with Turkey. We are convinced that modern Turkey, with a clear European orientation, will add to the stability of our region. We, therefore, support Turkey's European aspirations as it moves to meet the prerequisites set out in the negotiating framework of the European Union. But words must be matched with deeds. The principles of good neighborly relations and peaceful settlement of disputes with other nations are essential preconditions.

Yet 34 years after the 1974 invasion of Cyprus, a sovereign UN and EU member state, Turkey continues to occupy over one-third of the island's territory with nearly 40,000 troops. This unacceptable situation is a flagrant violation of international law, a threat to the security and welfare of Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots alike, and a serious obstacle to the stabilization of the region.

Greece has consistently supported Cyprus in its natural and justified desire to see the withdrawal of all occupation forces as part of a settlement for its reunification as a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with inter-communal equality, a single sovereignty, a single citizenship, and a single international persona. And relevant UN resolutions and principles exist to provide the framework for a mutually acceptable solution.

As a result we welcomed the recent decision by Cypriot President Dimitris Christofias and Turkish-Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat to resume negotiations, under the auspices of the U.N. Secretary General. We believe that a viable solution can be achieved by the Cypriots themselves through negotiations between the two communities without artificial deadlines and arbitration. We shall continue to do everything possible to facilitate a settlement and hope that Turkey will also demonstrate flexibility and good will toward that end.

Mr. President, Fellow Delegates,

As is obvious to all of us, the United Nations is once again beset by a host of troubles that will require the patience of Job to endure and the strength of Hercules to confront. As individual states, we have no hope of marshaling the strength to contemplate, let alone battle the dangers facing us. But together through the United Nations, we can find the resolve not only to confront these awesome challenges but to subdue the threat that they pose for humankind.

Thank you for your attention.