

Mr. President,
UN Secretary-General,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me **congratulate** you, Mr. President, on your **election** as President of the 65th Session of the UN General Assembly (UN GA). May the United Nations, under your leadership, confirm its central role in global events. Slovakia stands prepared to support you. I also appreciate the work done by your predecessor at the previous session of the UN GA.

The Slovak Republic fully aligns itself with the European Union's statements. We are pleased that **27 EU Member States**, plus other associated countries, **speak in one voice** at this universal international forum. This is a good pre-requisite to clear the way for a widely anticipated effective cooperation between the EU and the UN. Let me now share with you several remarks on certain global and regional issues from the perspective of the Slovak foreign-policy priorities.

Mr. President,

The foreign policy of Slovakia, as UN member, is based on respect for the core democratic values, international law and effective multilateralism. We therefore welcome and support the main theme of the 65th Session of the UN GA "**Reaffirming the Central Role of the United Nations in Global Governance**". This topic is all the more important, since we often witness failure to respect binding decisions taken by UN bodies, and from time to time even among the various UN institutions.

One of the most important missions of the UN is to act as a guarantor of the formulation, protection and implementation of the principle of collective security of States. Hence, the **preservation of international peace and security at a global level and within the bounds of international law** must remain at the core of UN activities. For peace and security become particularly vulnerable in times of global financial and economic crises. They require increased attention on our part in order to remain under the control of States and the international community.

The process of **arms control and disarmament** represents the most important instrument for the prevention of war conflicts. The progress achieved in the area of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction gives us a reason for cautious optimism. Our duty is to continue the effort and strengthen the global system of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Yet, the risk of such weapons falling in the hands of terrorists remains high. We are also prepared to cooperate with our partners on a number of priorities, such as the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty.

We appreciate the new post-START treaty between the Russian Federation and the U.S. We believe that the treaty will invigorate the process of disarmament, which is getting off the ground, and increase pressure on certain states to desist from their ambitions to own nuclear weapons. In particular, I wish to underscore the important role played by the Conference on Disarmament, which is referred to as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

In the area of conventional weapons, it is necessary to continue negotiations leading to the adoption of an effective arms trade treaty. Adequate attention must also be paid to small arms whose uncontrolled spreading may have devastating consequences for the maintenance of peace and security, particularly in conflict areas.

UN peacekeeping operations represent one of the most visible activities of the UN in its effort to preserve peace and security in the world. Slovakia, as an active contributor to UN missions and other international crisis management operations based on a UN mandate, welcomes the steps towards reviving the reform of peacekeeping operations as described in the document “*A New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping*”. I believe that the new *Global Field Support Strategy* will contribute, in real terms, towards a more rapid deployment of peacekeeping missions and, at the same time, ensure a more efficient utilisation of human and financial resources. A proper coordination between the UN and regional organisations plays an important role. There is room for improvement, for example, when it comes to cooperation between the EU and NATO at operational level, but also a more effective coordination at strategic level.

The UN must also play a key role in the **prevention of conflicts**. Slovakia supports the prevention and mediation role of the UN and its capacity building. It is, however, necessary to exert synergic effort taking due account of the interests of all stakeholders at the local, regional and global levels in order to eliminate sources of conflict and proceed directly with establishing peace. The establishment of the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, which is headed by a Slovak diplomat, was a step in the right direction. The recent events in Kyrgyzstan confirmed the usefulness of this instrument and underscored the need to support it further.

Slovakia takes an active part in peace processes. Since our non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council in 2006 and 2007, we have continued our involvement in the **security sector reform**. We are glad that, since then, several strategic papers have been produced and progress has been made in building the requisite capacities, particularly in cooperation with African countries. As the chair of the Group of Friends of SSR, we continue to actively work towards strengthening the relations in this matter between UN Member States and the UN Secretariat. In the course of the 64th session of the UN General Assembly, we teamed up with our partners from Argentina and Indonesia to hold regional workshops dealing with the security sector reform in the broader context of preserving and building peace and, at the same time, establishing a link between its global and regional aspects. We are determined to uphold this effort in cooperation with the UN Inter-agency Task Force for SSR, as well as with other UN Member States and sub-regional organizations.

According to the Charter of the United Nations, the primary responsibility for international peace and security lies with the UN Security Council. The process of its reform could almost be called a „never ending story“. We are therefore pleased that the intergovernmental negotiations on the UN Security Council reform were given a clearer shape. It must stand on the following pillars: representativeness, effectiveness in fulfilling its mission and transparency of its working methods, while allowing for possible enforcement of its decisions by sanctions.

The global financial and economic crisis laid bare the weak spots in the existing structures of the world economic order. The key role of the UN and its Member States must also be confirmed **in this financial and economic dimension at global level**.

At the High-Level Plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly devoted to the **Millennium Development Goals**, we shared the view that since our efforts in achieving these Goals started some ten years ago, they did not become less topical or less important. Eradicating poverty and hunger, improving the quality of education, adequate employment, improving health care services and housing, improving maternal health, gender equality and environmental sustainability remain among the central concerns of UN programmes, funds and specialized agencies.

Everyday life also shows us that creating conditions for **equitable and sustainable development** must go hand in hand with respect for nature and its rules. There is an inherent link between the two and both have an impact on the life of individuals, who are part of the universal system. The people of Slovakia had the misfortune to witness nature's power as floods of an unprecedented scale ravaged our country earlier this summer. A proper balance must be struck between development and respect for nature, based on well-reasoned arguments supported by proper analysis, and without giving way to the influence sought by certain narrowly focused transnational organizations that call themselves environmentalists.

For the first time this year, Slovakia took part in the UN Economic and Social Council meetings as member. Our experience shows that we need to strengthen the links between the Economic and Social Council and other organizations of the UN system and beyond, provided they work towards the same objectives.

Slovakia welcomes the establishment of **UN Women – the UN Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women**. We believe that this entity will help curb all forms of violence against women. We also extend our good wishes for a successful mandate to UN Secretary General's Special Representative on sexual violence in conflict.

Slovakia rejects any and all forms of intolerance, xenophobia, discrimination, racism and extreme nationalism. We are devoted to the **protection of and support for human rights** at both, national and international level. We play a leading role in the inter-regional initiative aimed at the adoption of a new Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Slovakia fully supports the fight to end impunity against the perpetrators of the most serious crimes under international law, such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. As a facilitator for the universality and implementation of the Rome Statute of the **International Criminal Court**, we actively work towards increasing the number of State Parties to the Rome Statute and its proper implementation.

Slovakia closely watches the situation and problems in the individual regions of the world.

The long-term effort aimed at **reaching lasting peace in the Middle East** has failed to yield the expected results. At this stage, we appreciate the contributions of the facilitators involved in reconciling the demands of both sides by way of direct Israeli-Palestinian talks that were launched recently. We are hopeful that the Palestinian and Israeli leaders will find a way of coming to an agreement that will lay down the final arrangement of their mutual relations. This is necessary for world peace.

Africa, as the most troubled continent, continues to call for special attention by the international community. We need to address the origin and the essence of the problems, not only their consequences. On the other hand, we are pleased to see the progress made in the stabilization and development of countries such as **Ghana, Benin, Togo, Mauritius** and others.

As members of the UN, we all have to support the respect for the binding nature of UN SC Resolutions – particularly when it comes to preserving peace around the globe. For this reason, we support diplomatic negotiations on the Iran issue, as well as on the situation on the Korean Peninsula, which is a matter of concern.

Slovakia welcomed the conclusions of the Kabul International Conference on **Afghanistan**. The conference marked a new phase of partnership between the Afghan government and the international community. It is based on the principle of a gradual “Afghanization” of the country, that is, the transition to full Afghan leadership and responsibility to be achieved in the „Kabul Process“. Slovakia will continue to participate in the stabilization and development of Afghanistan by contributing to NATO- and EU-led stabilization and training operations and by implementing humanitarian and development aid projects.

Slovakia remains a staunch supporter of a peaceful and just settlement of the **Cyprus issue** under the auspices of the UN Secretary General. More than 20 years of our support for negotiations and the continued involvement, since 2001, of the largest contingent of the Slovak Armed Forces in the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) within the UN crisis management operations, bear witness to our engagement in this respect.

As far as the **Western Balkans** is concerned, we are looking to strengthen stability and support democratic processes. We wish for the European integration processes of the Western Balkan countries to move forward. We also wish for the Balkans to see peace, agreements and not imposed solutions.

Dear Mr. President,

The UN must be able to **effectively respond to the current challenges** of the 21st century. This calls for synergies across all UN bodies, programmes, funds and specialized agencies. But more importantly, since UN Member States determine their activities and their direction, we need to build synergies among us. The people of our countries are looking to see positive results.

I am confident that, under your leadership, the UN will make great strides in advancing its cause.

Thank you for your attention.