



United Nations



Sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly

To convene on
18 September 2012

Statement

H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić

Acceptance speech upon his election as President

New York, 8 June 2012

Let me express my deep respect to you, Mr. President, for the tireless efforts you have made as the leader of the General Assembly. I look forward to working with you, Sir, to ensure a seamless transition between our terms.

It is a great honour to stand before members as President-elect of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. At the outset, allow me to extend my sincere gratitude to the States that supported the candidature of the Republic of Serbia. We are a small developing country that belongs to no military alliance or political union. It is therefore truly an honour, through the confidence entrusted in me by so many nations from all over the world, to have been elected to preside over the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations.

I look forward to working with everyone, beginning with His Excellency Ambassador Dalius Čekuolis of the Republic of Lithuania. I wish to thank him for his gracious conduct throughout the campaign. I hope to be able to draw on his wisdom and experience during my time in office.

I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to the many diplomats of Serbia for their diligent efforts to advance my candidature. Let me extend my special appreciation to the most senior and experienced among them, our Permanent Representative to the United Nations, His Excellency Ambassador Feodor Starčević.

I consider my election as President of the General Assembly to be primarily a tribute to the Serbian people, whom I have had the honour to serve as Minister for Foreign Affairs for more than five years. Like many other nations, mine has travelled through periods of tragedy and periods of glory. At the close of the twentieth century, one of the proud victors over fascism and a founding

member of the United Nations descended into ferocious internal strife. The ensuing devastation and fratricide left deep wounds in their wake. In the past few years, under the courageous leadership of Boris Tadić, Serbia has reached out to its neighbours, offering a hand of friendship and reconciliation. We have also reached out to other members of the global community, including those with whom we have had bitter disagreements. A painful era has now come to an end. Today, our nation can proudly stand before the world again, less than two decades after having been excluded from this Hall.

We are a country in which the transfer of power is accomplished peacefully and in accordance with the rule of law. Serbia is a democracy that, beyond working to ensure its own sovereignty and territorial integrity and the well-being of its citizens, has no ambition other than to advance the common interest of humankind. We therefore remain steadfastly committed to the maintenance of international peace and security, the first stated purpose of the United Nations. Working to accomplish that task, second to none in importance, is a most solemn undertaking.

The theme I am proposing for the high-level debate at the opening of the sixty-seventh session of the Assembly is "Bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means". Given our experience, we believe that we can facilitate the implementation of any resulting proposals, including those related specifically to conflict prevention. In taking up this critical issue in September and beyond, let us not forget that peace is not merely the absence of war. As was once remarked by Spinoza, the first philosopher to argue that democracy is the best form of government, peace is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence and justice.

I pledge to fulfil my duty as President to the very best of my ability, in order to try to justify the confidence that members have bestowed upon me. I will exercise my authority in a forthright and even-handed manner, with the utmost respect for the equal rights and dignity of each Member State. I hope that our joint endeavours may help to bring

us closer to the day when humankind shall have assuaged its hurts and abolished its fears; and, in so doing, to further the aspirations of the peoples of the United Nations to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. May it be the will of God that the next session of the General Assembly goes down in history as one of peace.