Draft Statement
by
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Prime Minister of the Republic of North Macedonia

74th Session of the
United Nations General Assembly
Plenary Meeting

Dear Secretary General,
Dear President,
Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, Excellencies and Colleagues,

My country has been a member of the United Nations since 1993. Yet, today it is for the first time that I am addressing you as the representative of the Republic of North Macedonia. The Prespa Agreement has entered into force this year, settling thus a 27 year old difference with Greece. This bilateral difference had serious negative implications, both in the regional and in the multilateral settings, becoming regretfully infamous as a difficult and irresolvable problem.

However, today we can see nothing but benefits from settling the difference. We finally have a complete identity profile at the UN. The name of our country, Republic of North Macedonia, is followed by the name of our Macedonian language, while the nationality section reads: Macedonian/citizen of the Republic of North Macedonia. Now we have exceptionally good relations with Greece. Our bilateral cooperation has advanced. We have thus contributed to the regional stability and to encouraging the Western Balkans’ development.

The Prespa Agreement, along with the Treaty of Friendship with Bulgaria, has accelerated our NATO integration and has helped eliminate the greatest obstacles on the way to our EU accession.

Here, I should like to underscore our appreciation to the UN for the support throughout the settlement process, embodied in the 20 year dedicated and unselfish work and efforts by the Personal Envoy of UN Secretary-General, Matthew Nimetz, who worked closely with us to find a resolution. We
believe that the Prespa Agreement is a demonstration of the power of diplomacy and dialogue. It is an instrumental example for the settlement of many other open issues. All problems throughout the world are different and have their specific features, yet dialogue and diplomacy are still the best approaches to their settlement. As leaders of our countries we owe it to our citizens to work on the resolution of problems, to maintain the peace and to create conditions for development and better life for all.

Dear Colleagues,

I have the honour to address this important body at the time when it is of great importance to reunite in confronting the present and emerging challenges and to recommit to our common values – peace, democracy, human rights, the rule of law and sustainable development. The world is at the crossroads and therefore we are in need of stronger United Nations to stand for and deliver for all. And leave no one behind. International order based on rules, effective multilateralism, with the central role of the strong and action-oriented United Nations, is necessary in a world of everyday uncertainties.

Responsible governance, whether at home or in the international organizations, requires new skills, multifaceted and diverse, but also bold approaches and solutions, established on the strong observance of the principles and norms we agreed upon.

The world continues to struggle with phenomena that transcend borders, which are evidently out of the zone of our individual control. This August for the first time in its history, Iceland lost a glacier to climate change. A bronze plaque was placed on a rock in Iceland to commemorate a once seemingly eternal glacier and its vanishing as a result of global warming. This should be a GLOBAL WARNING for all of us.

Early this week we discussed that it is urgent to fully implement our commitments to mitigate climate change. The Climate Summit organized by the Secretary General under the motto “A Race We Can Win. A Race We Must Win” has provided us with the opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the Paris Agreement, to raise our ambitions, to recognize the impact of climate change on the security and stability in the world and
its devastating consequences for human beings. It also provided an opportunity to mobilize energy of different stakeholders in the climate change arena and recognize that our undertaking is of global nature. But what we all do at home is crucial for the success. Therefore, the Nationally Determined Contributions are key to accelerated climate action. The Republic of North Macedonia increased national contributions to the Paris Agreement, which have been incorporated as targets in national laws and policies.

On a related issue, we have also debated and implemented the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, which are essential for genuine change and sustainable future for all. Elimination of poverty, inequalities, negative impact of climate change and environmental degradation and all other important goals and targets, all cross-cutting and intertwined, provide vast opportunities for countries and international organizations to act and secure their implementation by 2030. The Government of North Macedonia is fully committed to implementation of the Agenda 2030 and works on the integration of SDGs into national strategic documents and local plans.

Mr. President,

The Secretary General’s report on the work of the Organization presents the state of affairs in the world and the UN efforts in that context. It provides a clear picture of the successes and failures, of the priority concerns and the way forward.

Among those bright spots of the past period the Secretary General rightly mentioned the Prespa Agreement concluded between my country, now North Macedonia and Greece.

Two years ago, before this Assembly I declared our determination to find a solution with Greece over the so-called name issue. In June last year we signed the agreement, and this year on 14th February, the agreement entered into force.

Reaching this milestone required good faith and above all vision. It also required diplomacy, resilience and mutual trust. The Agreement aims to overcome a history of distrust and difficult relationship by establishing
foundations of a new era, the one of friendship and future partnership. We decided to abandon the trenches of the past and turn to new bright perspectives and progress through partnership and collaborative solutions.

We did not have guaranteed success. We made it happen together with our Greek colleagues. This is a milestone that should serve as a catalyst for the transformative processes in the Balkans. It can also serve as an example for overcoming difficult deadlocks worldwide.

The compromise opened the gates for my country and people to reach its long-time goals for the membership in EU and NATO. On the issue of NATO membership, we expect to become its 30th member in a very near future. I remain confident that the substantial progress made on the reforms at home, in addition to the resolving of the outstanding issues with our neighbours, are strong arguments for opening accession negotiations with the EU.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My country is an active partner to the international anti-terrorist coalitions and will continue contributing to the multilateral efforts aiming at combating terrorism and all related ills.

We commend the Secretary General’s work and commitment in this area. He deserves our full support.

In this context, the serious situations in Syria, Yemen, Libya, Afghanistan, the complexities of the Middle East, and the grave situations in parts of Africa deserve our full attention and effective diplomacy.

Yet another challenge is today’s mass migration. We have been on its frontlines for years now and experienced its impacts first-hand. The migration crisis is also an alarming signal that we cannot operate in a vacuum. Its duration shows that we cannot rely on the snooze button. Through the UN and other regional organizations, we should join our efforts and through strategic vision, cooperation mechanisms and initiatives, address the underlying causes, filter out the positives of migration flows and
turn the crisis into an opportunity. As in the past, we are going to be an active collaborator in this process.

Mr. President,

Misinformation and disinformation, along with other targeted campaigns continue to challenge and damage global democratic governance and test the resilience of the democracies worldwide. Hybrid threats are a danger for the future of our democracies. We need to pull resources, streamline joint efforts and apply multi-stakeholder approach to combat these challenges. We should also build on some of the few examples of dealing with these challenges.

Promotion and protection of human rights, democracy and the rule of law remain one of the core pillars of UN values and action. Notwithstanding the robust human rights architecture, the gross human rights violations around the globe, widespread impunity and lack of accountability, remind us that there is much to be done. Nationally, regionally and globally.

Mr. President,

North Macedonia continues to support all actions aimed at countering proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and illegal arms trade, as well as to support disarmament efforts in all aspects.

I also wish you, Mr. President, much success in galvanizing positive energy and debates on a wide array of challenging and divisive issues. You may count on the full support of North Macedonia in your endeavour.

The Republic of North Macedonia remains a strong supporter of multilateralism. In today’s fragmented world, we will continue to work with all stakeholders. This is our common world. We call UN members to reinforce efforts to maintain international peace and security. The commitments that we make in the United Nations General Assembly echo across the globe. However, it is our actions at home that secure protection of human rights and well being of individuals. Let our actions be true to our commitments for a better world for all of us.

I thank you.