



Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to be participating in today's meeting of the Security Council, convened to discuss the maintenance of international peace and security, specifically the settlement of conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa and the struggle against terrorism in the region. The importance of this meeting is amplified by the consideration of some of the most challenging issues of the present-day world that are closely connected with the migrant wave that we are currently being faced with. I take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to the Russian Federation and Foreign Minister Lavrov, in particular, for organizing this important meeting, the holding of which highlights the need for the continued attention and commitment by the United Nations Member States to the questions of regional and global security in a world of rising global interdependence.

The current situation in the Middle East and North Africa, Mr. President, makes it incumbent upon us to intensify our common efforts to solve this crisis and bring about a long-term stabilization of the region.

For some time now, the region of the Middle East and North Africa has been the epicentre of instability, characterized by political, social, economic, inter-ethnic and ideological tensions. Many of its countries are increasingly becoming breeding grounds for terrorist groups that practice violent extremism. Evidently, these developments present a challenge not only for the region, but also for the entire international community, both with respect to peace and arms and weapons proliferation and in the humanitarian field. The lack of serious dialogue, based on genuine readiness to compromise, serves only to exacerbate and radicalize the situation and increase tensions and intensify extremisms of each and every stripe.

Serbia is firmly committed to addressing present-day security challenges. Aware of the complexity and interrelatedness of internal crises and their effect on, and potential to spawn terrorism, we coordinate our efforts internationally in an effort to find a comprehensive response. Serbia has friends of many decades in the Middle East and North Africa; no small reason for our determination to make a constructive contribution, alongside our partners the world over, to the suppression of terrorist threats and all types of extremism and to dialogue

aimed at finding political, sustainable solutions for the current crises in the Middle East and North Africa. We strongly support concerted actions to be taken through the institutions of the United Nations system, the indisputable world leader in this regard.

We are all experiencing the consequences of these crises. The migrant wave from the conflict-ridden areas, flooding many European countries, has not by-passed my country, either, which found itself on the main path of the wave. The migrant crisis, bursting through and over the political, culturological and administrative borders of States, speaks tellingly of the interrelatedness of faraway countries and peoples and highlights the consequent need for a responsible and energetic approach to the quest for a lasting and comprehensive solution to this burning issue. Partial and limited local steps are not a solution; cooperation and coordination of our efforts internationally and stabilization of crisis areas, the Middle East and North Africa, in particular, are.

Mr. President,

Independent of the new wave, Serbia has been home to 44 000 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia for two decades now, as well as to 204 000 internally displaced persons from Kosovo and Metohija; yet, it demonstrated its readiness to address, within its powers and possibilities, the situation and do, responsibly, what it should and could do every step of the way. We have received recognition and acclaim from all over the world for the manner in which we treated these men and women; however, Serbia cannot bear the burden all by itself: we are short of capacities - accommodation, human and financial. Since the beginning of the year until 22 August, more than 170 000 registered migrants entered Serbia and somewhat more than 500 submitted a request for asylum.

I agree with those who qualify these developments as yet another mass migration of peoples; they leave States weakened by protracted political instabilities, conflicts, bad economies and activities of terrorist groups. There are, evidently, systemic problems that cause people to leave their homes in these numbers and in this way. In the process of solving these problems, the support of all of us, the Member States of the most important multilateral global Organization, is of paramount importance.

Excellencies,

We ought to use our meeting today to exchange views and define next steps in our efforts to render full support to the stabilization of the conditions in the region in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law. Also, the meeting provides yet another opportunity for all of us to underscore our commitment to helping the countries of this region find ways and means to respond to the current security and other challenges and arrive at a solution jointly and by building mutual confidence. In that context, it is clear that we need concerted international efforts, especially the efforts aimed at encouraging dialogue and solving political and security crises. Without the dialogue and the support of the international community, we cannot expect to find a proper answer to the deepening and complex crisis that we are being face with.

Stepping up activities to promote the culture of peace, mutual understanding and confidence in the region must be done alongside the efforts to encourage readiness to concessions and compromise. By its own example, my country has demonstrated very clearly what results can be achieved with hard work and dedication to strengthening regional confidence and tolerance and is ready to render a contribution in that regard on a broader, international plan.

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Peace cannot be achieved by force. For it, we need mutual understanding and agreements. Talk alone, though, won't suffice; belief and joint work will.

Thank you.