



Address by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic at the opening of an exhibition on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations:

“Madame Miculescu and Madame Bojackova Sollorano,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to address you on this occasion and congratulate you on the up-coming United Nations Day observed on the 24th of October.

At today’s event, we are marking seventy years since the inception of the United Nations in San Francisco in 1945. Our Organization has been created on the rubble of the Second World War with the aim of protecting mankind from the horrors of war and destruction, and of creating conditions for a prosperous economic and social development and respect of the human rights of all. We are celebrating the 70th UN anniversary in the year when the international community is faced with serious, unprecedented new challenges like the current migrant crisis. The magnitude of the crisis facing Europe, including Serbia, today is witnessed by the fact that, since the beginning of the year, some 230,000 migrants have entered Serbia. The ongoing situation results from the inability of the international community to find sustainable solutions to crisis situations in Middle East and Northern Africa regions, while fully adhering to the principles of the United Nations Charter. At the same time, the United Nations is also faced with new possibilities and opportunities like eradicating poverty and ensuring sustainable development.

The United Nations was founded by 51 states, one of them being Yugoslavia. Today, the United Nations has 193 Member States, making it a truly universal organization.

The second UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold stated that the United Nations had not been created to take mankind to the Garden of Eden, but to save it from hell. Rightfully so, over the past seven decades, though it failed to prevent many wars and armed conflicts, the United Nations has been able to prevent the outbreak of a global conflagration. Furthermore, significant results have been achieved in the elimination of poverty and hunger, and the emancipation of peoples who have undergone the decolonization process.

UNICEF, as an agency with a mission to provide assistance to children, for example, has

ensured education and the road to a better and healthier life of millions of children world-wide. Despite all the weaknesses, the United Nations has proved to be longer-lasting than its predecessor, the League of Nations which had not been able to prevent the outbreak of World War Two. Since the world would have truly been a different place had the United Nations not been in existence, its exceptional role and merits are beyond any doubt.

The changes and the situations prevailing in the international arena over the past seventy years have reflected themselves indeed on the functioning of the United Nations. The United Nations is particularly important as a forum where the voice of all countries of the world, even the smallest ones, can be heard on an equal footing with the others. The sovereign equality of all the Member States is the core value of our Organization.

The Republic of Serbia attaches exceptional importance to the work of the United Nations, fully respecting and supporting its principles. It is quite clear that violation of the United Nations Charter cannot bring about any positive results. Unfortunately, over the past seventy years, there have been situations when the principles of the Charter were not respected, of which our own experience is an example. Violation of international law is causing enormous problems for the international community and mankind, leading to the setting of new precedents.

We are witness these days to another example of an absolutely unacceptable violation of international law and the UN Charter. It is the recommendation of the UNESCO's Executive Board regarding the request of the so-called Republic of Kosovo for admission to UNESCO membership. Serbia has taken all necessary diplomatic steps to combat this type of abuse of an organization within the UN system as a political instrument to affirm the illegal and unilateral declaration of independence of a part of the territory of a UN Member State, whose sovereignty and territorial integrity are guaranteed by the still valid and legally binding UNSC Resolution 1244. In opposing this, Serbia defends international law, the UN Charter and the supreme authority of the Security Council to safeguard international peace and security, but also the moral integrity and responsibility of UNESCO towards the cultural heritage. These principles must be fully respected because only in this way, can the existing system of international relations based on the UN Charter, be preserved, and the international law can save its universal value. The fact that the absolute majority of Member States of the Executive Board demonstrated, at yesterday's voting, their disagreement with this decision gives hope to Serbia that it can count on the support of many other countries around the world, in its struggle for respecting international law.

Today, here in the Palace of Serbia, we are opening, in cooperation with the Institute of International Politics and Economics, which acts as depositary of UN documents, an exhibition testifying to the rich history of relations between our country and the UN in the last seventy years. There is a photograph of Ambassador Stanoje Simic signing the UN Charter in San Francisco in 1945. On display are also the photos of peacekeeping forces of the then Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) in the Sinai in the 1950s and the Serbian Army in the peacekeeping missions in Cyprus, Lebanon and Africa at present. Multiple photos of meetings of UN Secretaries-General with our officials, as well as their visits to our country are also exhibited. The history of relations between our country and the UN is extremely rich and meaningful. As the country named Yugoslavia, we were twice Security Council members and active members

of the Economic and Social Council. At the time of the Cold War, Belgrade was one of the leading centres of the Non-Aligned Movement which opposed the bloc division of the world in the framework of the UN.

Today the Republic of Serbia continues to contribute, within the limits of its capabilities, to safeguarding international peace and stability and is the leading country in the region by the size of its contributing troops to the UN peacekeeping operations. Our army and police personnel are now deployed in eight UN peacekeeping missions. While Serbia served as President of the 67th UN General Assembly Session, the process of formulating a new Sustainable Development Agenda of the planet in the period until 2030 was initiated and adopted by UN leaders last month in New York, aiming to eradicate extreme poverty and ensure a sustainable global development. The Republic of Serbia has actively contributed to this process as a member of the Open Working Group to formulate sustainable development goals and the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts for the financing of sustainable development. Serbia will also make its full contribution to joint efforts aimed at stopping the dangerous warming of the planet at the upcoming Summit on Climate Change in Paris. This year we will sign a new five-year Framework Development Partnership between the Republic of Serbia and the UN, which will be aligned with our efforts to realize the adopted sustainable development goals and accelerate our EU accession. We look forward to the fact that in the spring, all UN agencies based in Belgrade will be located at the same building which, I hope, we will open together with UN Secretary- General Ban Ki-moon.

The predictions of the American political scientist Fukuyama that history has come to an end did not come true. Every day we are witnessing new challenges and threats to peace, stability and development. The very survival of our planet and civilization will be in danger, if we do not seriously confront the threat of climate change. The international community must collectively address these problems. We do not have a better organization than the United Nations for multilateral action. It is the duty of all Member States to strengthen and revitalize the United Nations in the years that follow, and make it more effective and more efficient, so as to be able to rise to the challenges before us. In this way, you can count on the support of Serbia and its active involvement and contribution.

Thank you!"