



The following is the statement by His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dacic, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, at the 17th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Venezuela:

"Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Excellencies,

Allow me to express particular pleasure for the fact that I am attending this esteemed gathering, and to thank our hosts for their warm hospitality.

As a successor state to Yugoslavia, one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Republic of Serbia attaches huge importance to its activities, which is also reaffirmed by its regular participation in summits and meetings of the Movement. We consider as very important the Movement's role in overcoming bloc and Cold-War divisions and in creating a different world, based on universal, noble goals of lasting peace and security, sovereign equality of states, social justice, sustainable development and respect of human rights. These principles, incorporated in the foundations of the Non-Aligned Movement, have stood the test of time and it seems that they have never been more topical than they are today, as a result of the complexity of problems and challenges the world is faced with. Emerging security threats and risks, exceeding state borders and, as such, requiring a coordinated approach and solutions, make the approach based on productive multilateralism an imperative. This approach implies readiness for joint engagement in the spirit of cooperation, compromise and flexibility. By promoting this form of multilateralism precisely, the Non-Aligned Movement has left an indelible mark in the history of the world, and today, against the changed international backdrop, it continues to contribute to establishing a more equitable international order, characterized by greater solidarity.

The Republic of Serbia remains truly committed to the promotion of good bilateral relations with our traditional friends world-wide. Our commitment to developing friendly relations and economic and other forms of cooperation with partners from the Non-Aligned Movement is by

no means in disharmony with Serbia's commitment to form part of the EU, but is a complementary dimension of our foreign-policy engagement. Our friendships forged in the East and the West are our fortune and our tower of strength. Serbia is proud of the fact that it belongs to the European family of nations, but also of the fact that it used to be and still is part of the past and the present of the Non-Aligned Movement. In the context of the 21st century international relations, and guided by the principles of the UN Charter, we will continue to support the continuous efforts aimed at making steps towards the revitalization of the Movement's role as an advocate of developing countries and an instrument in the fulfilment of their interests at the international level.

Allow me to recall that the Republic of Serbia had the honour, in September 2011, to host the Commemorative Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of its First Non-Aligned Conference, which was also held in Belgrade. This was another opportunity to re-affirm the traditional friendship that links Serbia with the members of the Movement, as well as our commitment to further develop cooperation in areas of mutual interest, particularly in the economic, military, cultural and educational areas.

Members of the Non-Aligned Movement will always be able to count on cooperation on the part of the Republic of Serbia, in the implementation of its strategic vision of a better world for all of us, which also goes for the implementation of the last year's historic agreement on the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, which we are approaching responsibly and committedly. We have taken an active part in the process of defining Sustainable Development Goals, as well as in the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing sustainable development. We believe that the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, ensuring inclusive health system and education for all, settlement of issues of the growing disparity within and between states, enabling a universal approach to tap water and sanitary facilities, sustainable energy and infrastructure, are the crucial elements of a true global transformation and of closing the existing gap between the North and the South. At the same time, we are aware that development is impossible without peace and stability and vice versa, and that neither international stability nor prosperity can be secured, should the interests and views of the major portion of the humanity and states embodied in the Non-Aligned Movement, be sidestepped at the same time.

As a special contribution, the Government of the Republic of Serbia has been successfully implementing the "World in Serbia" project, ever since 2010, whereby scholarships are being granted to the nationals of the member states and of the countries with an observer status in the Non-Aligned Movement, which is a strong impetus to cementing our ties in numerous areas.

The Republic of Serbia is strongly committed to the fundamental principles and goals of the UN Charter and to international law - maintenance of peace and security in the world, solidarity, peaceful settlement of disputes and crises, respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the UN Member States, as well as the consolidation of cooperation with the aim of finding answers to numerous political, economic, social, humanitarian and other challenges of the modern-day world. With the aim of strengthening international security and stability, we support initiatives aimed at the prevention of conflicts and advocating peaceful mediation in the settlement of disputes within the UN and regional organizations. Serbia, as a regional leader when it comes to the scale of participation in UN peacekeeping operations, and a significant contributor in the

European framework, is also making its concrete contribution to safeguarding international peace and security through active participation in UN and EU-mandated peace missions and operations, particularly in Africa.

Dear friends,

I avail myself of this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to numerous members of the Movement that remained committed to the principles of the rule of law in the international framework, by not recognizing the unilaterally declared independence of Kosovo, which took place in contravention of the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and UNSC Resolution 1244 (1999), which guarantees the territorial integrity of the Republic of Serbia. By defending its sovereignty and territorial integrity, Serbia is adhering to principles when defending international law and the overarching authority of the Security Council in safeguarding international peace and security. We are aware that those who are today standing by Serbia in its just struggle for the preservation of its territorial unity and in its defence of the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, in the same way Serbia stood, for decades, by many of you in your struggle for national liberation and emancipation from colonial rule, are having their work cut out for them.

We are also aware that many of you are exposed to various pressures to recognize the independence of "Kosovo".

Regardless of that, we urge you to stay consistent in the defence of the norms of the international legal order when it comes to the non-recognition of the unilaterally declared independence of our southern Province and its unilateral attempts to join international organizations, such as the last year's UNESCO membership bid which, owing to our friends from across the world, from Africa to Latin America, had been refused.

I underscore that the support of the international community is of key importance to the success of the dialogue conducted between Belgrade and Pristina, with the EU mediation. Any change in the position of states that have not recognized the unilaterally declared independence of Kosovo, would negatively affect the constructiveness and the readiness of the parties to reach a compromise, including the implementation of the already achieved agreements. Our readiness and commitment to the resolution of the issue of Kosovo and Metohija by peaceful means is the reflection of our strength, rather than weakness. The dialogue facilitated by the EU primarily aims to secure the conditions and to improve the everyday life of the people in the Province, and especially to find the response to the problems facing the Serbs and other non-Albanians. In no way does this imply the recognition, on the part of Serbia, of the illegally declared independence of Kosovo. We believe in a lasting, compromise-based solution to the issue of Kosovo and Metohija, along with full observance of the legitimate interests of the Albanian, Serbian and other population in the Province, and full respect of UNSC Resolution 1244 (1999), in the interest of regional peace, stability and prosperity. And we count on you, our friends and fellow-campaigners in the international quest against the policy of unilateralism and change of borders of internationally recognized states by force.

Dear colleagues,

The world of today is not the same as the one into which the Non-Aligned Movement was born. The very Movement is not the same, but the topicality of the principle of the sovereign equality of states and solidarity, underlying the foundations of the Movement, have not been called into question in parallel with the changes at the international level, brought by the 21st century. You can always count on Serbia's unstinting support and partnership, throughout the promotion of these principles.

Thank you for your attention and for your understanding."