



Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to thank the Argentine Republic for the warm welcome and excellent organisation of this important event. It is my great pleasure to have the opportunity to once again visit the country with which the Republic of Serbia has traditionally fostered and maintained excellent relations, with full understanding and mutual support on issues of vital importance.

It is my honour to address this important UN Conference on South-South Cooperation, a segment which has over the past 40 years, following the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action in 1978, continuously promoted cooperation and constantly engaged new stakeholders, thus establishing itself as an important factor in the process of promoting political and economic relations, as well as a successful model for international cooperation on sustainable development. Today, more than ever before, the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals on a global level is intertwined with the role and impact of fast-growing economies and developing countries. I would like to underline that convening of this Second High-Level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation is a testimony to the contribution made by the South-South cooperation in terms of the exchange of experiences, expertise and technologies among developing countries, as well as the triangular cooperation including developed countries.

The Republic of Serbia has an interest to develop all-round cooperation with the countries participating in the South-South cooperation process. As a country currently in the process of European integration, but also as one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement, we are particularly heartened by the development of triangular cooperation and the joint work being done by partners from both developed and developing countries.

The Republic of Serbia will continue to strongly advocate for strengthening multilateralism, the UN system and international solidarity while respecting, at the same time, sovereign equality of all Member States of the United Nations.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank once again many countries which have not

recognized the unilateral declaration of independence of so called "Kosovo", in support of the preservation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Serbia. By doing so, they have demonstrated their commitment to the principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). The Republic of Serbia is consistent in its position that contentious issues must be resolved only by full compliance with these principles and documents and through dialogue aimed at reaching compromise and durable solutions. I am deeply convinced that only consistent and principled positions are a guarantee that the rights of small and less developed countries will be observed in similar circumstances in the future.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is of particular importance that the attention of this Conference is focused on the implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a strategic document, the implementation of which should make the world more just and more humane for all. This will once again reaffirm the indispensable role of the UN system, as a global forum for dealing with matters and challenges of universal significance, such as Sustainable Development Goals to which both the developed and developing countries aspire equally.

The Republic of Serbia is committed to the implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals, in particular among the young, regarding economic growth, enjoyment of full gender equality and empowerment of women and young girls.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our country is currently undergoing a process of economic reforms aimed at creating durable political and economic stability. A dynamic work on bringing the Agenda in line with our priorities as well as with the chapters in our pre-accession negotiations with the European Union are extremely important in this process. The Republic of Serbia is ready to join all partners, including the organizations and agencies of the UN system, civil society and private sector, in searching for best answers to issues facing the region of South East Europe and the international community at large. We are committed to finding solutions to common challenges in our region through cooperation in the protection of the environment, sustainable uses of water and energy, promotion of transport infrastructure, agriculture, transfer of technology, trade and investment, innovation, science and information and communication technologies. The Republic of Serbia considers that only on the basis of joint action and peaceful cooperation, which are the fundamental principles characterizing South-South cooperation, the Republic of Serbia and other countries of our region can achieve their common goal of creating a peaceful, stable, sustainable and prosperous environment. I am confident that this Conference will give an important impulse in this direction and I wish you all success in your further deliberations.

Thank you.

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