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President Vassiliou,

Minister Maigri,

Ambassador Bassiouny,

Deputy Prime Minister Dacic,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Republic of Serbia, I would like to welcome you all to Belgrade on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ninth Summit of the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement.

I am particularly pleased to acknowledge the attendance of representatives from all the former Yugoslav republics. As one of the six successor states, Serbia shares its NAM bequest with them equally. It is a source of commonality and shared experience that we should proudly celebrate.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have gathered to remember and reflect on that first week of September of the year 1989 in Belgrade.

The Ninth Summit heralded the ultimate vindication of Non-Aligned principles, and announced to the world the Movement's readiness to meet head-on the emerging situation its founders helped to conceive: the end of the Cold War.

By the end of the Summit, all the participants fully acknowledged the fundamental changes they were witnessing. They realized that 1989 was turning out to be one of those transformative moments in the history of the world. A global paradigm shift was underway, for the first time since 1945.

In the Summit's conclusions, there was no talk of triumph of one bloc or the defeat of another—only of a shared victory over the divisions that had threatened mankind with total annihilation.

As the Belgrade Declaration made clear, the Movement staked out a position as the vanguard of change, and as an important actor in the relaxation of tensions and the standing down of killing arsenals. Lastly, the Movement asserted its readiness to work with other global players in constructing the pre-conditions for stable peace and lasting security in an increasingly interdependent world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an irony of history that at the peak of its strategic capacity to influence the future course of the global currents it worked so hard to bring about, the Movement was not able to fully grasp the opportunities opened up by the release of the winds of change.

This can be explained in various ways, but I would like to touch upon one in particular.

1989 turned out to be the year when one of the founding states of the Movement began to fall apart. In a sense, one could say that Yugoslavia was victorious in foreign affairs, yet before long lost its struggle for domestic peace and stability.

The Ninth Summit was Yugoslavia's swan song on the world stage. It is almost as if, during that first week in September 1989, Yugoslavia raised up the Movement's torch of victory over bipolarity, only to collapse—soon thereafter—of exhaustion and over-exertion.

Of course, things were not as simple as that. But this is not the occasion to debate the historical legacy of Tito's Yugoslavia. It is a complex question with often contradictory answers.

What I believe is that *as Yugoslavia*, we were able to stand tall on the world stage as an actor capable of achieving global impact through the Non-Aligned Movement in particular. As a result of its breakup, none of the six successor states have been able to fully regain Yugoslavia's former international standing.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, the world is in the midst of another paradigm shift, in certain ways comparable to 1989.

No one is yet able to reliably predict how deep the change will turn out to be. What is becoming evident is that interrelated factors—the latest one being the global economic crisis—have expedited the arrival of a new set of circumstances onto the world stage. The global balance of power seems to be inching to the East and the South, and international relations are becoming

less predictable to forecast.

The Non-Aligned Movement has another opportunity to re-position itself in a time of great transformation. To do so, it should harness the effects of global changes more effectively than it did in 1989. One of the lessons to be drawn from the Ninth Summit is that the follow-through must be more concerted, and more strategic.

After 1989, Yugoslavia was unable to effectively contribute to writing a new chapter in the history of the Non-Aligned Movement, despite being a founding member. Today, twenty years later, I believe that the successor states to Yugoslavia—even though most of us are just observer countries—can usefully work with NAM as it strives to regain its place as an important player in the promotion of global peace and security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Republic of Serbia will continue to strategically pursue a carefully designed, balanced and active foreign policy that continues to view EU membership as its central strategic priority. At the same time, we will keep strengthening and deepening our ties with NAM member states.

In the interdependent world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Serbia's membership in the EU would give a new,

*more profound*

meaning to our relations with NAM member states. This would not only ensure that more than one hundred nations would have a good friend in Brussels, but it would also lead to an increase in both understanding and cooperation between the Movement and the Union. I am in no doubt that this would be advantageous to everyone concerned.

Let me underline that this is not just an issue of honoring the legacy that comes with being the largest successor state to Yugoslavia. It is not about simply reaffirming traditional friendships, either. It is also about the fact that Serbia believes international stability and prosperity cannot be consolidated without taking into account the views of the majority of the global family of nations.

In addition, re-invigorating our engagement with NAM countries is about ensuring enhanced respect for the binding principles of the international community by all. Working in concert with one another to strengthen a rules-based approach to international relations is in our common interest. And few are as basic as the fundamental respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of internationally recognized states.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This brings me to one of the most profound challenges that my country faces today—that is, the attempt by the ethnic-Albanian authorities of our southern province of Kosovo and Metohija to secede from Serbia.

Once again, I would like to express my deep appreciation for the commitment of close to eighty-five percent of Non-Aligned countries to the fundamental principles of the international system. We remain profoundly grateful to them for their solidarity on the crucial issue of not recognizing UDI—the unilateral declaration of independence by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Pristina.

As is by now well known, we chose to respond to the attempt to forcibly partition Serbia peacefully, and with maximal restraint. We decided to harness all the diplomatic resources at our disposal to counter UDI and contain its potentially destabilizing consequences.

In large part due to the principled support of a vast majority of Non-Aligned countries, the UN General Assembly last year overwhelmingly passed resolution 63/3, tasking the International Court of Justice to determine whether Kosovo's UDI is in accordance with international law.



This case will constitute a strong precedent. It marks the first time ever that the Court has been asked to consider the legality of a unilateral attempt by an ethnic minority to secede from a UN member State, in defiance of its Constitution and the will of the Security Council.

Accordingly, the Court's conclusions will have extensive consequences for the entire international community—perhaps for some NAM states most of all. It is therefore particularly important for everyone to respect the fact that the International Court of Justice is actively engaged on the issue. Its deliberations should not be pre-judged, and its work should not be obstructed. The Court's proceedings have to be allowed to run their course, unhindered by political pressures, such as further recognitions of Kosovo's UDI.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ninth Non-Aligned Summit—during which respect for international law was highlighted as a founding principle of the Movement—Serbia actively encourages all the non-recognizing countries represented in this room to stay the course. By maintaining respect for Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, together we will help ensure that international law continues to close in on UDI.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The year 2011 will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Non-Aligned Movement and the holding of its First Summit. At the time, the choice of Belgrade as NAM's original meeting-place represented an alternative to the divisions caused by the two blocks confronting each other throughout the European continent, and the rest of the world.

While those Cold War-era divisions have largely disappeared, Belgrade continues to be a strong and vibrant link between West and East, North and South.

A few months ago, during the Fifteenth NAM Summit held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Serbia's President Boris Tadic proposed that the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Non-Aligned Movement be celebrated in Belgrade with an extraordinary Commemoration Summit under the auspices of the Egyptian chairmanship.

Making Belgrade the location to mark this significant milestone would be a fitting tribute to the legacy of the Movement's founders. Five decades later, we believe we should gather in Belgrade once more, for a reunion celebration.

Here, in this city, is where a tangible stamp on history was made. And it is where the Movement's universal principles—lasting peace and security, sovereign equality of states, social justice, sustainable development, human rights, environmental protection—were first promulgated. These have passed the test of time, and continue to stand as beacons of hope and fairness for the entire world to embrace.

We remain distinctly proud of our role in this grand endeavor. Regardless of our future membership in the EU, it constitutes a part of the legacy that we will continue to honor and respect. And it will serve as a signpost in defining the framework for extending our engagement with the Movement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I leave you with the words spoken by former Foreign Minister Lončar of Yugoslavia, on the first day of the 1989 NAM meeting—as relevant today as they were twenty years ago: “This is a time of new opportunities,” he said. [...] “Whether we will make use of it, depends both on ourselves and on the world at large,” he continued. “For, despite all our diversities, we must, above all, understand and respect one another in this single and interdependent world, so as to make it a more secure and prosperous place for all. [...] Let us equip ourselves for the future,” he concluded, “so that we may be able to better influence it.”

Thank you for your attention, and for being with us here today.