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Mr. Secretary-General,

Dear Colleagues,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an exceptional honor for me to address this most distinguished gathering. We continue to be held together by a common dedication to the principles and objectives of non-alignment:

peace, sovereignty, and equality on the world stage—leading to new, more balanced international and economic relations.

Cuba's important role in coordinating preparations for this important Coordination Bureau meeting—the last conducted under this country's able chairmanship—is a great testament to the dedication of our friends in Havana.

Allow me to express therefore, on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Serbia, our gratitude to the Government and People of the Republic of Cuba, for the excellent organization and warm hospitality.

My Friends,

I come before you today representing a country that is the largest successor to a co-founder of the Movement, the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia.

Our capital, Belgrade, was the Yugoslav capital, a city generations of NAM members recall with great fondness.

Our then president, Josip Broz Tito, was also the Movement's first Secretary-General. His impact on NAM, and his encouragement of its active role in the preservation of world peace and promotion of multilateralism, will always be remembered.

As one of the founding fathers of the Movement, Tito worked hard to ease the ideological tensions created by the Cold War. He wanted a world in which divisions would become a thing of the past. Together with other leaders, he tirelessly strove to promote greater respect for international law, and the enhancement of solidarity and cooperation among NAM member states. Tito significantly contributed to the development of a more just and inter-dependent world. He helped Yugoslavia and the rest of the Non-Aligned states gain international respect and dignity—while giving a global, collective voice to the vast majority of countries across the globe.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The year 2011 will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Non-Aligned Movement and the holding of its First Conference in Belgrade.

As the capital of the only European member of the Movement, the symbolism of Belgrade represented an alternative to the divisions caused by the two blocks confronting each other throughout the European continent, and the rest of the world. That is why its visionary founders—Nasser of Egypt, Nehru of India, Sukarno of Indonesia, Nkrumah of Ghana, Tito of Yugoslavia, along with dozens of other statesmen—chose it to be the first official meeting-place of the Non-Aligned Movement.

From the beginning, attention was focused on the indispensability—as the 1961 Belgrade Declaration put it—of effecting a transition from “an old order based on domination, to a new one founded on freedom, equality, and social justice.” The principles of Non-Alignment are formulated in that historical document. In it are inscribed a vision of the future, as well as a resolve to make the policy of Non-Alignment an essential contributor to peace and stability throughout the globe.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world has changed dramatically since the Movement's First Conference in Belgrade. It is nevertheless fair to say that the parameters of the contemporary international system were largely shaped by the dedicated work of generations of this Organization's statesmen. The results of NAM's close to fifty years of work represent a rich, progressive harvest for all of humanity.

It is for this reason that my country wishes to suggest that the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Non-Aligned Movement be observed in Belgrade, in close cooperation with the Egyptian presidency.

Five decades later, we propose that the Movement comes home, for a reunion celebration.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I want to say to you that despite my country's aspiration to membership in the European Union, the values we continue to embrace are those of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Serbia strongly supports the objectives of this Organization: to build a more equitable global community that is dedicated to promote the democratization of international relations and respect for universal human rights. Such achievements require the inauguration of a process of emancipation from existing economic inequalities. This has become even more apparent in the context of the present global financial predicament.

And in that spirit allow me to recall the words of President Tito, spoken here, in Havana in 1979, his last trip abroad, during the Sixth Conference of Non-Aligned Countries—words which can be applied to the situation of today without a single modification: “The establishment of a new international economic order is the only way to cope with the pressing problems of development and the profound economic crisis into which the world has fallen,” President Tito said. “This is in the interest not only of one group of countries, but of the entire world. [...]. The major developed countries,” he continued, [...] “are increasingly attempting to solve within closed circles problems that are of vital importance to the entire international community. [...] In this situation,” President Tito concluded, “we must pursue our struggle even more consistently and perseveringly, and find the right answers to the difficulties and resistance we are confronted with.”

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Paragraph 16.8 of the Final Document of this Ministerial Meeting of the Coordination Bureau reaffirms the Movement's longstanding dedication, quote—"to achieve full respect for international law and, in this regard, commends the role of the International Court of Justice—or ICJ—in promoting the peaceful settlement of international disputes, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the UN Charter and the Statute of the ICJ"—end quote.

This is very much in line with Serbia's decision to respond in a peaceful and diplomatic way to the February 17th, 2008, unilateral declaration of independence—or UDI—by the ethnic-Albanian authorities of our southern province of Kosovo and Metohija.

We ruled out the use of force or other unilateral measures, such as the imposition of economic sanctions. Instead, Serbia reacted to the illegitimate attempt to forcefully partition our country, by turning to the International Court of Justice.

Thanks to the overwhelming support of many of the countries represented in this room today, the UN General Assembly passed resolution 63/3 last September that directed the International Court of Justice to provide a ruling on whether Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence is in accordance with international law. I would like to thank you for your support.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very grateful that an overwhelming majority of NAM members have not recognized the Kosovo's ethnically-motivated attempt at secession from my country. On behalf of the Republic of Serbia, I want to express my profound appreciation for your commitment to the principles of international law.

Questioning the UN Charter's core precepts of sovereignty and territorial integrity anywhere in the world is a dangerous game, fraught with precedent and profound consequences. The international legal order remains in great jeopardy of being fundamentally undermined. That is why your continuing support remains critical.

It is therefore my sincere hope that all UN member States will respect the fact that the International Court of Justice is now adjudicating on the legality of Kosovo's UDI. This process will come to an end sometime in 2010. While it lasts, no one should in any way pre-judge its deliberations, or interfere in its work.

Therefore, we hope that there will be no fresh recognitions of UDI. And we expect that membership in regional or multilateral institutions will not be extended to Kosovo's secessionist authorities.

By continuing to work together to ensure respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Serbia and all other UN member States, we can strengthen the values that bind us to one another. By doing so, we reaffirm the cornerstone tenets of the international system framed by the UN Charter, and reaffirmed by the adopted Principles of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My Good Friends,

Belgrade's role in the founding of the Non-Aligned Movement is well known. It constitutes a part of the legacy that my country will continue to honor and respect. And it will serve as a signpost in defining the framework for extending our engagement with the Movement, helping us achieve the undertakings to come.

The hopes and expectations of much of the globe are represented in this room. The Movement is turned towards the key challenges of the present: sustainable peace, lasting security,

equitable economic development, and general human progress.

These priorities are in the essential interest of the world as a whole. Their achievement would greatly contribute to the construction of the international system we envision.

Once again, I draw your attention back to Serbia's proposal for Belgrade as the location to celebrate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Non-Aligned Movement. It would be a fitting tribute to the legacy of its visionary founders, and to all that has been accomplished over the decades. It would also present an opportunity to bring the ideals and values of the Movement back to where it all began, in the heart of Europe.

Thank you for your attention.