

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Dear Friends,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am exceptionally honored to welcome you all to this Commemorative Meeting to mark the Fiftieth Anniversary of the First Non-Aligned Summit in Belgrade.

Serbia is one of the six successor states to a co-founder of NAM, the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. This bequest remains a source of our commonality and shared experience.

We should all proudly celebrate that we each had a hand in ensuring Yugoslavia played an important role on the world stage, as one of the lynchpins of the Non-Aligned Movement. I am glad that we are all represented here this morning, alongside around one hundred other delegations.

We have come here to pay tribute to the vision of the leaders who represented the vanguard of progressive efforts to transform the world.

In 1961, the Movement's five Founders-Nasser, Nehru, Nkrumah, Soekarno, and Tito-together with statesmen from twenty other countries, were joined in Belgrade by representatives of forty national-liberation movements, and a tangible stamp on world history was made. It is here that we formally promulgated the Movement's universal principles: lasting peace and security, sovereign equality of states, social justice, sustainable development, human rights, and environmental protection. These have passed the test of time, and continue to stand as beacons of hope and fairness for all of us to embrace.

Dear Friends,

Exactly fifty years ago today, on September 6th, 1961, the Belgrade Declaration was adopted, bringing the Inaugural NAM Summit to a close. This document represented a turning point in the annals of world affairs, symbolizing the moment when the empowerment and emancipation of the majority of the human race became irreversible.

It called for the abolishment of the "old order based on the domination [...] of colonial-imperialism and neo-colonialism in all their manifestations." Doing so would establish a "new order based on cooperation between nations, founded on freedom, equality, and social justice for the promotion of prosperity."

By the end of the first decade of NAM's existence, the scourge of colonialism had been largely eradicated. In the 1970s and 1980s, a more equitable form of multilateralism began to be practiced at the United Nations, while the superpowers embraced the logic of arms control and détente. Bridging the North-South gap became a pressing issue across the world, as did environmental protection and human rights.

The year 1989 heralded the ultimate vindication of the founding principles of Non-Alignment. There is no doubt that the Movement's capacity to influence the course of global currents made a significant contribution to ending the Cold War.

For the Non-Aligned, this was not seen as the triumph of one Block and the defeat of another. Instead, it was interpreted as the shared victory of mankind over the ideological divisions that had threatened its total annihilation.

The global strategic consequences symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall are many, but I would like to emphasize what I believe is amongst the most significant. Just about every nation represented in this chamber now exercises more influence in international relations than it did in 1989.

What was articulated as an aspiration in 1961 has become the preponderant reality of 2011. The world at present is a more equitable place than it has ever been, and the era of domination by the few over the many is breathing its last grasps.

What has come in its stead-multipolar interdependence-is no panacea, of course, as political, economic and social injustice remain ever-present. But we should always keep in mind the innumerable gains made possible, in part, by the Movement's engagement in the world over the past five decades. This constitutes real and tangible progress for mankind.

Dear Friends,

My country will continue to honor and respect the role Belgrade played in fostering solidarity and cooperation within the Movement.

For decades we actively and consistently supported the anti-colonial, national liberation struggles of many NAM member states. Although a developing country with scarce resources and rising domestic needs, we also provided several billions of dollars worth of aid and other forms of assistance to our Non-Aligned friends. Today, we again enable hundreds of young people to study at the University of Belgrade each year, as part of our "World in Serbia" Scholarship Fund.

Our great historical legacy delineates the contours of our lasting engagement with the Movement. Let me be clear, however: nostalgia is not why Serbia is re-invigorating its ties to NAM. Rather, it is because we firmly believe that international stability and prosperity cannot be consolidated without taking into account the views of the majority of the global family of nations.

As part of the strategic pursuit of our carefully designed, balanced and active foreign policy, Serbia will keep reaching out to our Non-Aligned friends. This is our choice as a sovereign country determined to play a dignified role on the world stage.

We will continue to work with all progressive forces to ensure the enhanced respect for the binding principles of the international system by all. Working in concert to strengthen a

rules-based approach to world affairs is in our common interest, beginning with the fundamental respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of UN member-States.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

It is my sincere hope that all of us will come away from this meeting armed with greater confidence and a renewed sense of purpose.

In that spirit, allow me to recall the words of one of the greatest diplomats in the history of the Non-Aligned Movement, Koča Popović, after whom the Serbian Foreign Affairs Ministry has named its Diplomatic Academy:

"we are far from discounting the role played by the great powers in determining the course of human events, especially on the question of securing the peace. But we wholeheartedly believe that the participation of smaller, less powerful states on the basis of the sovereign equality principle is an absolutely necessary condition for this peace to be not only a peace of the great powers, but an equitable, sustainable peace where each state feels it has assured its security as much as its dignity."

Thank you very much for your attention.