



S L O V A K I A

STATEMENT BY

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**MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF SLOVAKIA**

IN THE GENERAL DEBATE

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OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great privilege and honour for me to address this assembly to which people of the world look up with high hopes and expectations for finding effective solutions to the multitude of challenges and threats that spare no one.

Mr. President,

First, let me congratulate you on the assumption of your duties as President of the 64th session of the General Assembly and also express my delegation's appreciation to your predecessor, H.E. Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann for his work done during the 63rd session.

Slovakia fully associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the Prime Minister of Sweden on behalf of European Union and would like to contribute to this debate with some additional remarks.

1. *(Opening)* Slovakia is a keen believer in effective multilateralism and the central role of the United Nations in it. We therefore very much welcome the main theme of our deliberations during this general debate in order to achieve tangible results in the three pillars of the UN work: peace and security, human rights and development.
2. *(Climate change, financial and economic crisis and development)* We welcome the attention that the organisation has paid to the issue of climate change, as well as to increasing food security and eliminating negative effects of financial and economic crisis, especially on the most vulnerable states and populations. Slovakia calls for reaching an ambitious, balanced and comprehensive agreement on climate change in Copenhagen at the end of 2009 that will replace the Kyoto Protocol. Also, we need to elaborate and strengthen global strategies and action plan for food security in the world. It is essential not to lose sight of the Millennium Development Goals and to maintain our efforts to reach them by the year 2015. We have, in recent years, invested considerable efforts into elaborating and implementing our own concept of official development assistance, through a number of bilateral and multilateral projects. Western Balkans, Central Asia, Afghanistan and Africa have been among our priority geographical areas in that regard.

Mr. President,

3. *(Slovakia into ECOSOC)* Slovakia's commitment to the issues of economic and social development prompted us to present the candidature for membership in the UN Economic and Social Council at the elections to be held in the General Assembly later this year. We appreciate the endorsement of this candidature by the Eastern European Group of States and we will do our best to get the trust and support of all UN Member States. Slovakia is committed to serving as an active and engaged member of the

ECOSOC and would like to contribute tangibly into making this important UN organ as relevant and as effective as possible.

4. *(Peace and Security)* The United Nations has achieved remarkable results in peacekeeping over the past decades. We recognize the continuous efforts in adapting peacekeeping to respond better to current and future challenges. More emphasis should be put on ensuring that the UN peacekeepers and other UN actors on the ground are properly equipped and trained, including in the area of so-called critical capabilities. It is my belief, that preventive diplomacy should be used whenever possible to avoid conflicts in the first place.
5. *(Crisis management)* Slovakia continues to be actively engaged in numerous peace and security endeavours of the international community. We participate in international operations of crisis management under UN command or with UN Security Council mandate, currently in Afghanistan (ISAF), Cyprus (UNFICYP), Kosovo (KFOR), Bosnia and Herzegovina (ALTHEA) and the Middle East (UNTSO). Given the size of the country and of its military forces, we are doing our best to contribute to peacekeeping, peacebuilding, stabilisation and reconstruction efforts in those parts of the world and will continue doing so also in the future.
6. *(SSR)* In addition, Slovakia remains actively engaged in the area of security sector reform (SSR), an issue that we have started promoting within the UN during our non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council in 2006 and 2007. Slovakia, as the initiator and chair of the UN Group of Friends of SSR, will continue working to ensure that the UN system is able to react in an adequate, timely and systematic manner to SSR-related needs of UN Member States. After a useful African regional workshop, which was held in Cape Town, South Africa in November 2007 as a joint South African and Slovak project, we have now teamed up with key partners in two other important regions: Latin America and South-East Asia, namely with Argentina and Indonesia. The Buenos Aires workshop will be held just a few days from now.

Mr. President,

7. *(Conflict prevention)* As I have already mentioned, we are glad to see that significant progress has been achieved as far as preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and mediation support is concerned. This has recently been demonstrated, for example, on the role played by UN mediation teams in helping to find peaceful and negotiated solutions to crises in Kenya, Zimbabwe, Madagascar and elsewhere. Slovakia will contribute further to this work. We are, in that regard, very pleased that the first UN regional centre of preventive diplomacy located in Central Asia and led by Slovak representative has achieved good results so far and has fully proven its existence as a meaningful and necessary project.
8. *(Human rights, protection of civilians)* We are convinced that issues such as conflict prevention cannot be seen in isolation. They are connected with the respect for human rights, protection of civilians, gender equality, protection of children in armed conflict, etc. As a serving member of the UN Human Rights Council, Slovakia works on promoting universal respect for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, both at national and international level.

9. (*Responsibility to protect*) Among the key tools that the United Nations has at its disposal for protecting the most endangered and the most vulnerable is the concept of responsibility to protect, which is one of the most important achievements of the 2005 World Summit. We believe the international community should focus more on the protection of civilian population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We also can not forget our obligation to prevent the incitement of those most serious crimes under international law and that this could be referred to the International Criminal Court, established for ending impunity for perpetrators of them.
10. (*Security Council Reform*) A lot about how the United Nations is able to deal with the current threats and challenges depends also on the existing institutional framework. The UN Security Council is at the centre of that framework. Slovakia is a long-term advocate of enlargement of the Security Council in both categories of membership. The composition of the enlarged Security Council needs to better reflect the new global realities. Appropriate attention needs to be paid also to Security Council working methods. We are pleased that the intergovernmental negotiations have commenced and believe that the things will move forward in the interest of making the Security Council a truly relevant and efficient body.

Mr. President,

11. (*Disarmament and non-proliferation*) The old saying “Si vis pacem, para bellum - if you seek peace, prepare for war” has resulted in an unprecedented arms race, which, in itself, has turned to be a source of fear and insecurity. Slovakia is, particularly, very concerned over the risk of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery falling into the hands of non-state actors, especially terrorist groups. In this connection, Slovakia is ready to work with all partners towards a successful outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference that should result in an enhanced international nuclear non-proliferation regime. It is our priority to outlaw nuclear testing and see the CTBT enter into force as well. Slovakia also calls for early start of substantive negotiations on the Arms Trade Treaty, which is essential for reducing the unacceptable human cost resulting from the proliferation of conventional arms.
12. (*Iran, DPRK*) Slovakia, together with the other members of the European Union, is gravely concerned at Iran's continued defiance of its international obligations, including Security Council's demands to suspend its nuclear activities. We take note of Iran accepting the P5+1 talks and we call on Iran to commit to the diplomatic negotiations in order to restore international community's trust and make real and urgent progress. The deteriorating human rights situation and the violent suppression of popular protests that erupted in Iran after the elections in June 2009 is a cause of much concern to Slovakia. Also, we repeatedly strongly condemned the nuclear test carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its launches of missiles. We call on the DPRK to revoke its position on Non-proliferation Treaty and to join the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Mr. President,

Let me now turn to some regional issues that Slovakia pays particularly close attention to.

13. (*Western Balkans*) As a matter of priority, Slovakia has been closely following the developments in the Western Balkans. We continue to promote full respect to international law, including sovereignty and territorial integrity of States in their internationally recognised borders. At the same time, we welcome and support peaceful and constructive approaches in seeking solutions to disputes. We believe the future of the entire region and its people lies in the European perspective and that there is no meaningful alternative to it.
14. (*Georgia*) Promotion of full respect to international law, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States in their internationally recognised borders is the principle that guides us also in the case of Georgia. Earlier this year Slovakia has been very disappointed that the Security Council was unable to agree on the extension of the mandate of the UN mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). The termination of the mission complicates the already instable situation in the region and the security conditions for civilians in the conflict zone. We firmly support a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Georgia and hope that the Geneva talks will yield positive results.
15. (*Cyprus*) In addition to participating in the UNFICYP operation on a long-term basis, Slovakia has been actively engaged in the process of “rapprochement” between the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot political party leaders for over 20 years. In this context, we are prepared to continue with our active engagement.
16. (*Afghanistan*) A combination of our military and development aid presence characterises our long-term active engagement in Afghanistan. Slovakia as a member of the ISAF operation with 245 military personnel is assisting in establishing a secure and stable environment in Afghanistan.

Mr. President,

17. (*Conclusion*) In conclusion, Slovakia hopes that the last year of the first decade of this millennium will bring all the States of the international community closer together in order to overcome especially the negative consequences of the financial and economic crisis. This is a basic step directed to the possible settlement of many other conflicts and problems which the international community is facing. We think that, in this regard, we have to intensify our efforts and to adopt appropriate measures on the local, regional and global level in the spirit of solidarity and common responsibility. We strongly believe that the United Nations and its specialized organizations have to be directly engaged in this process and to steer our globe to its welfare for this generation and the future ones. I would like to once again reaffirm Slovakia's support to your work in achieving the priorities of the 64th session of the General Assembly, which address the main sores that cause pain to the international community today.

Thank you, Mr. President.