



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

S T A T E M E N T

BY

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Mr. Secretary General,
Mr. President of the General Assembly,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a special pleasure for me today to extend to your Excellency, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, President of the General Assembly, my congratulations for your excellent work in chairing the 64th Session of this Assembly. I would also like to thank your predecessor, Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, for his work in chairing the 63d Session of this Assembly.

I avail of this opportunity to extend my greetings to all of you, Excellencies, present in this Hall today and also to express my deep gratitude to you, Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, for your high competence and professionalism in leading the United Nations and to acknowledge your important personal contribution to the success of this Session.

Mr. President,

We are gathered here today, after a year, during which the World has faced one of the heaviest financial and economic crisis in history. We are gathered here once again in a time when hundreds of millions of people in our world are being oppressed by tyrannical regimes or are facing extreme poverty, diseases and major health or social calamities. We are gathered here in a time when brutal conflicts continue to take away the lives of innocent people in several regions of our world.

Albania and the Albanian people continue to engage in international cooperation and are determined to offer their modest contribution in advancing peace, freedom and security and respect for human rights, fighting poverty, promoting sustainable development and prosperity, and, last but not least, protecting the environment.

Monsieur le Président,

En tant que pays européen, l'Albanie demeure entièrement engagée et totalement déterminée à mener à bien toutes les réformes et à prendre toute décision ainsi que toute autre mesure requise pour continuer dans la voie de son adhésion à l'Union européenne. Plus de 94 pour cent des Albanais soutiennent le processus d'adhésion de l'Albanie à l'Union européenne. Ceci est un encouragement fort mais représente aussi une obligation majeure pour mon gouvernement afin de procéder rapidement dans cette voie. Dans le courant de cet automne, nous nous attendons à une décision favorable du Conseil des ministres de l'Union européenne à notre demande pour obtenir le statut de pays candidat à l'Union, tout comme nous espérons d'obtenir le plus vite possible la libéralisation des visas avec l'Union européenne.

L'Albanie est une démocratie nouvelle, mais fonctionnelle. Il y a environ deux mois, l'Albanie a tenu des élections parlementaires générales. L'arbitre international, OSCE/ODIHR, a conclu que ces élections ont atteint les principaux standards de l'OSCE et méritent une évaluation générale positive. Le nouveau gouvernement sorti de ces élections a fixé les objectifs suivants comme piliers de base de son programme: premièrement, la construction de nouvelles infrastructures modernes partout dans le pays; en deuxième lieu, l'entrée de l'Albanie dans l'ère numérique; troisièmement reformer le système de santé et de l'éducation; quatrièmement, la lutte contre la pauvreté et enfin la création de nouveaux emplois pour les citoyens albanais.

L'an prochain, ici aux Nations Unies, nous analyserons le progrès accompli concernant les Objectifs du Millénaire. L'Albanie a fourni des efforts intenses afin d'obtenir un progrès considérable dans cette direction. Au cours des trois dernières années, environ 400.000 Albanais sont sortis du seuil de pauvreté alors que la pauvreté extrême a été réduite de 70 pour cent; des dizaines de milliers de nouveaux

emplois ont été créés, le nombre d'étudiants à l'université a doublé et la mortalité infantile a été réduite de manière drastique.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The years 2008 and 2009 saw the worst financial and economic crisis that the world has ever known since the Great Depression. The Albanian economy felt the consequences of this crisis. Its exports fell by 10 percent and the level of financial crediting was drastically reduced. Despite these consequences, however, Albanian GDP grew by more than 5 percent in the first six months of 2009; our revenues marked an 8 percent increase in comparison to those of last year; and, foreign direct investment were 59 percent higher than last year.

I believe the main factors that protected the Albanian economy from this crisis have been: first of all, the fact that Albania has the lowest fiscal burden in Europe and its economy is largely based on liberal standards; second, the fact that the government invested in infrastructure projects 10 percent of the country's GDP in 2009, or 20 percent of the GDP of the year 2008 invested in infrastructure during the last two years taken together; third, our profound reforms towards small government, as a result of which Albania now has one of the smallest public administration per capita in Europe and in the entire world; and last, but not least, the most favorable climate for business and investments created by my government during the past four years.

I take this opportunity to invite investors from all of your countries to consider my country in their projects that will definitely turn out to be a new success story for them and for Albania.

Mr. President,

Albania has maintained an excellent cooperation with the United Nations and its agencies. Albania is one of the pilot countries of "Delivering as One" initiative and through its experience and positive results, is making an important contribution to this UN reform.

"Delivering as One" provides for an excellent time and money saving mechanism as well as a much more efficient coordination of the work of the UN agencies in their cooperation with the member state. This project has marked an excellent track record in my country due to the coherence and better coordination of the activities of the United Nations bodies with those of the national authorities in particular with regard to aligning international projects with country's priorities.

We are happy to realize that our reform priorities and our national strategy on European integration is fully harmonized with the Millenium Development Goals and those of the "Delivering as One" initiative. The outcome has demonstrated that this project, the philosophy of which lies on the concept of national ownership, has yielded higher efficiency in the implementation of UN development programmes.

Albania is a pluri-religious society with a religious harmony par excellence. In the framework of the Alliance of Civilizations and in accordance with our National Strategy on intercultural dialogue, we bring forward our example of religious harmony and co-existence, one of the most invaluable spiritual heritages of our nation, as a contribution to the aims of this UN initiative.

This Session was preceded by the Summit on Climate Change. It gives me great pleasure to let you know that 90 percent of electricity that my country consumes comes from a renewable hydro power. Although we are open to other energy sources, including nuclear, we are working hard and have secured so far about 5 Billion Euros of new investments for new hydro power and wind and biomass energy plants. Albania intends to become a small superpower of energy in the region.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The last decade of the brutal conflicts in the Balkan region seems to have been archived in the annals of history. The countries of this region are engaged in a process of cooperation in all fields and European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

This year, Albania and Croatia became full members of NATO. Other countries in the region have made significant progress towards EU and NATO membership. I must stress at this point that the establishment of the independent state of Kosova, although only a small period of time has passed since its declaration of independence, has turned into an important factor of peace and stability in the South East European Region. In this country, which declared its independence 20 months ago, inter-ethnic tensions have significantly been reduced. Serbs are not leaving Kosova anymore, the opposite is happening, many Serbian families are coming back to Kosova to build their future there. My government is determined to help and assist the government of Kosova in its projects that facilitate the return of the displaced people in the country.

The European Union has sent its EULEX Mission, which is doing an excellent job and providing an extremely precious help to the government of Kosova and its authorities into consolidating the rule of law and functional democracy in Kosova as well as into developing the best European standards of co-existence of various ethnic communities. KFOR also has played a very positive role and the fact that its mission has been drastically reduced is a clear evidence for stability in this country.

Meanwhile, 62 country-members of the United Nations have recognized the independent Kosova, and the Republic of Kosova has become a member of the IMF and the World Bank. Nevertheless, Kosova has not yet taken the place it deserves in the family of sovereign countries of this prestigious organization.

I would like to point out in this occasion that all countries that recognize the Republic of Kosova and the international institutions that accepted it in their fora as an independent member-state did so because, above all else, they are convinced that the independence of Kosova and its international recognition bring a major contribution to peace and stability in the Balkan region.

This is why I take this opportunity and express my deepest gratitude to all the governments of the member-states of the United Nations that will consider in their agendas the review and assessment of this existing reality in the South Eastern European region and the possibility of recognizing the independence of Kosova. In my humble judgment, this would be a great contribution to the peace, stability and security in our region.

14 years ago, after condemning the coercive oppression, violence and barbarisms of the Milosevic Regime against albanians in Kosova, 137 member states of the United Nations voted in the Resolution 49/204 of 23 December 1994 to recognize and respect the will of the inhabitants of Kosova. Today, this will is turned into the reality of the independent Kosova. Today, this will is recognized by 62 countries that took that historic vote.

I hope and firmly believe that the rest of the countries that voted that historic resolution will reaffirm the will that they expressed 14 years ago, this time through the recognition of the newest European state, the Republic Kosova.

Mr. President,

With its foreign policy of peace and good relations with all other countries, its modest but important contribution in international missions of peace and human rights protection through its policy of good neighborliness as well as moderate and constructive role in the region, Albania has turned into a producer and direct contributor of stability and security in regional and global scales.

Today, Albania participates in peacekeeping missions in several international operations in the framework of the United Nations and other regional security organizations, such as in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Iraq, Chad and others. Only about 2 months ago, Albania doubled the number of troops in its ISAF Mission. My country acknowledges and supports every effort for global peace and security and will continue to support all efforts of the United Nations, NATO and other actors promoting peace, stability and security in the world.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

All country-members of the United Nations share the responsibility for the efficient functioning of this organization. No one could ignore the track record of the United Nation's activities in many fields. Whenever there is a crisis, poverty, famine disease, or a disaster, the United Nations is there to provide relief and support.

However, for a long time now, it has been evident that the world, countries and the complexity of their relations develop much faster than the United Nations is able to adjust to new realities. This is why Albania strongly supports the continuation of the reform process of this organization and the further improvement of the system of the United Nations.

A more efficient decision-making mechanism is pivotal in this respect. We support the efforts to reform the Security Council. We believe that in order to meet the challenges of the 21st Century, we need a Security Council that is efficient, transparent and legitimate in its decision-making process and, where regional and individual member-countries are adequately represented.

Thank you for you attention!