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UKRAINE

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STATEMENT

BY

H.E. MR. VIKTOR YANUKOVYCH

PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE

AT

THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SIXTY-SIXTH SESSION

OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

New York, September 21, 2011

**Mr. President,
Dear colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

Let me sincerely congratulate His Excellency Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser with election for the post of the President of the sixty-sixth session of the UN General Assembly.

Mr. President, I am convinced that your considerable experience will be beneficial for achieving significant results for the sake of UN Member States and the whole Organization.

This year the great family of UN Member States was enriched with a new, one hundred ninety third Member.

On behalf of Ukraine I would like to express support to the Government and People of South Sudan in the process of state-building and to assure in readiness of Ukraine for development of equal and mutually beneficial cooperation with a new member of international community.

Mr. President,

Current session is special taking into account the number of High-level meetings devoted to issues of global scale – nuclear security, prevention of non-communicable diseases, desertification and land degradation, racism and discrimination.

The Delegation of Ukraine during this session actively participates in discussions on most topical for our State issues - on nuclear security and control of diseases.

As for the theme of the general debates – the role of mediation in peaceful settlement of conflicts – I can point out that the issue of preventing armed conflicts, loss of human lives and suffering triggered by them was one of the cornerstones of the first membership of Ukraine as an independent state in the UN Security Council in 2000-2001.

Preventive diplomacy and mediation in regional and international dimensions - from the "frozen" conflicts in the Post-soviet space to the Middle East crisis and restoring stability in North Africa – remains an integral part of Ukraine's foreign policy.

We implement this policy in the UN Peacebuilding Commission, and will consistently do so during the presidency of Ukraine in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2013.

Unfortunately, efforts aimed at conflict prevention often are not sufficiently effective, and processes of conflict settlement last too long.

Our main duty in these cases is to save lives and alleviate the fate of civilians who find themselves in danger.

Ukraine will always render help to those who suffer.

In addition to humanitarian efforts, we are ready to support all constructive international peace initiatives and preventive measures.

We believe that during armed confrontations, top priority must be given to respect for human rights, first of all ensuring safety of civilians.

Being guided by this principle, Ukraine was among the first to carry out a humanitarian mission in Libya at the beginning of this year.

Ukrainian landing ship "Konstantin Olshansky" evacuated from the zone of conflict almost two hundred citizens of twenty nationalities, more than half of them being women and children.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ukraine has just celebrated the twentieth anniversary of its Independence. Today, we are assessing the road traveled, rethinking some important moments of our modern history in order to find effective solutions to those issues that remained unanswered for many years

It is exactly for this purpose that I have initiated sweeping reforms in the country.

They are aimed both at social and economic transformations and further strengthening of democratic system and rule of law in Ukraine.

The foundation of all reform processes in Ukraine are fundamental democratic values that Ukrainians, together with other Europeans, adhere to.

That is why the directions of modernization of the country that we determined are directly related to those ambitious objectives which are contained in the future Agreement on Association between Ukraine and the European Union.

The twentieth anniversary of our independence - it is only a moment in historical terms, yet our statehood' roots are thousand years long.

Since ancient times Ukraine is developing a European spirit and culture, cherishing the traditions of tolerance and interethnic and intercultural harmony in our society.

We believe that straightforward and frank dialogue based on universal values is the only way to finding a common language both within each country and in the international relations.

Ukraine's position on the need to always and everywhere defend human rights as the highest value is crystal clear.

One of the testimonies to this is the activity of Ukraine during the two terms of membership in the United Nations Human Rights Council – from June 2006 to June 2011.

We will not lower attention to this subject and are planning to re-join the Council in 2018.

Chairing the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in May-November this year, Ukraine focuses on children's rights, developing local self-governance and the rule of law.

We are convinced that the rule of law and respect for human rights as the basis of building a society are needed to counter many current threats, including complex challenges of terrorism.

Recently, the world shuddered from the attack on the UN building in Nigeria.

We have got one more proof of that the ugly face of terrorism is becoming more repulsive and brazen.

The direct blow was inflicted to our Organization, which is of particular concern and requires strengthening the security of the United Nations premises. As a state-initiator of the Convention on the Safety of the United Nations and Associated Personnel, and a party to all universal anti-terrorist conventions in force Ukraine resolutely condemns any manifestations of terrorism.

We believe that all terrorist acts, regardless of who, where and in what name committed, violate fundamental human right – the right to life, and therefore constitute a crime against humanity.

I pay tribute to the memory of those killed ten years ago September 11, as well as to all other victims of terrorist attacks.

Mr. President,

I am sincerely proud of the significant contribution of Ukraine to the peaceful coexistence of mankind.

I mean not only the examples of voluntarily abandoning nuclear arms and large stockpiles of highly enriched uranium.

The awareness of the global scale of the Chernobyl disaster effects had been the impetus for my initiative to convene the Kyiv Summit on safe and innovative use of nuclear energy this April.

The summit allowed us to boost international cooperation in strengthening nuclear safety and properly responding to accidents and emergencies.

I should like to express my sincere gratitude to all of the participants of the Kyiv summit and all of the donor countries who announced their contributions to the Chernobyl projects.

We also welcome holding of the High Level Meeting on nuclear safety and security scheduled for tomorrow.

We are committed to jointly working further on this issue.

Our country has unique experience in rehabilitation of the area and population victimized by the Chernobyl disaster.

We are ready to share this experience.

Ukraine consistently supports ensuring gradual and irreversible nuclear disarmament for the purpose of complete elimination of nuclear weapons in the world.

We continue to insist that the security assurances for non-nuclear and non-aligned states should be enshrined in a legally binding international instrument.

I urge the leaders of other states to consciously follow the example of Ukraine and its real actions to promote disarmament and nonproliferation.

Ukraine is actively participating in the United Nations efforts aimed at maintaining international peace and security.

All through the twenty years of independence, over 34 thousand Ukrainian soldiers and police have carried out peacekeeping missions within more than twenty operations under the United Nations mandate.

Ukraine is a dedicated supporter of the United Nations peacekeeping reform aimed at strengthening its capacity and eliminating existing shortcomings.

Foremost attention should be paid to ensuring the mobility of the UN peacekeeping aviation, as well as to enhancing the legal protection of "blue helmets".

We are grateful to United Nations Member States for their support of Ukraine's initiatives in this field and we hope for effective joint work in this direction.

Distinguished Colleagues,

A year ago we had a successful summit on the overview of the Millennium Development Goals.

Ukraine is committed to its obligations in achieving national development goals.

Among our main priorities are poverty reduction, ensuring quality education, environmental protection, improving health and reducing child mortality, curbing HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, ensuring gender equality.

Working on today's immediate tasks, we believe it is necessary to pay more attention to the increasingly acute issue of climate change and environmental preservation.

We consider relevant the idea of creating an effective international mechanism for the environmental protection of Earth as our common planet.

A global environmental organization with universal membership functioning on a permanent basis should become such a mechanism.

We also call upon Member States to study the idea of developing a new universal instrument which could serve as a so-called "Environmental Constitution" and give all countries

clear guidelines from the civilizational prospective, as well as identify compulsory principles of sustainable development of the global “green” economy, and environmental safety of the planet.

We consider necessary to work on the improvement of global energy security, and encourage elaborating, under the coordination of the United Nations, an effective mechanism of multilateral cooperation aimed at achieving development goals in the energy field.

Overcoming the impacts of the global economic crisis, we must prevent new challenges to the global financial sector, affecting trade and investment. It is our belief that economic and social development should be facilitated by the further liberalization of trade.

In the recent years we have realized the vulnerability of any single nation towards various security threats, natural and man-made disasters.

Those examples have shown us a need for effective international mechanisms of countering such phenomena. It is time for the United Nations and its special agencies to seriously strengthen their role in coordinating international efforts aimed at preventing, responding and overcoming the impacts of catastrophes and severe humanitarian crises.

We look forward to strengthening the competent specialized UN agencies and improving their efficiency.

Ukraine stands ready to continue its active involvement in practical humanitarian efforts of the United Nations World Food Programme.

A few days ago, Ukraine took the decision to provide, through the United Nations, humanitarian assistance of wheat for the purpose of overcoming hunger in the Horn of Africa.

Distinguished Colleagues,

Ukraine favors greater involvement of the United Nations General Assembly in international life and strengthening its “voice” in addressing a wide range of global issues.

The modern world puts before the United Nations new, complex and increasingly difficult objectives.

Improving the effectiveness of our joint work is, however, not possible without a comprehensive reform of the Organization and of its principal organs, including the modernization of the Security Council.

Ukraine is open for discussions on all the progressive concepts of the reform, which could bring United Nations Member States to the broadest possible agreement.

The consideration of interests of all regional groups represents an indispensable component of the process of reforming the Security Council.

Ukraine deems necessary to grant at least one additional non-permanent seat of the expanded UN Security Council to the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am confident that the 66th session of the General Assembly will consolidate the United Nations in the face of global challenges and threats.

Reliable guarantee of this is our strong political commitment and a clear vision of common goals. I believe in our common success.

Thank you.