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Statement by

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at the 71st UN General Assembly

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Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I belong to a generation which was born into a globalised world. For us globalisation is not a threat - it is a fact of life! As Kofi Annan once said: Arguing against globalization is like arguing against the laws of gravity. Let us be clear, the fact that the world has grown together has brought enormous benefits.

- It reduced international poverty
- It contributed to the spread of technology
- It reduced the distance between countries

But we also had to recognize that globalization does not only come with positive consequences - it also created new challenges! Events which take place on the other side of the globe can have a direct impact on our lives.

This includes not only the economic world but is true for all spheres of life. Especially in recent years we have seen a dramatic rise of threats to stability and security.

When I started as Foreign Minister in December 2013,

- Ukraine had full sovereignty over its eastern borders and Crimea
- the Iraqi government was still in control of Mosul and other parts of its country,
- and religious minorities such as the Yazidis still lived in peace and security in their homelands

And now,

- Today the thinking in terms of confrontational blocs returned to Europe.
- Today Da'esh threatens whole states
- And today radicalization and violent extremism is on the rise worldwide.

Given these developments I can understand that people are shocked and overburdened with all these images of violence, suffering and destruction, and I can understand that they would wish to block out these images from their living rooms.

But the truth is that while you can turn off your TV, and while you can block out the news from your home what you cannot change in a globalized world is the fact that **what happens elsewhere has a direct impact on our life.**

Mr. President,

The more our world becomes interconnected, the more all of us have a responsibility to not look away from what happens in other part of the world.

The more our world becomes globalized, the more all of us must have an interest to work for more stability and prosperity in other parts of the world. **Not only out of solidarity but also out of self-interest.** One thing is very clear today. We need to join forces. We need the United Nations, the EU or the OSCE. **And we need effective multi-lateralism in order to achieve what we want most: security and stability!**

Mr. President,

Today, threats to security and stability arise from many challenges at the same time. The destruction from military conflicts is rising, violent extremism is a growing threat within our own societies, and weapons of mass destruction are still existing and are a danger to humanity. The conflict that is closest to us in Austria is the one in **Crimea and Eastern Ukraine**. We remain very concerned because the Minsk-Agreement has still not been implemented and progress has been frustratingly slow. We need to find solutions reaching beyond ceasefires. We need a free and stable Ukraine. A Ukraine that has good relations with both the Russian Federation and the European Union.

In order to achieve more security we need to rebuild trust.

In this respect the **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe** reaching from Vancouver to Vladivostok is uniquely placed to promote stability and security not only in Europe. During **Austria's chairmanship** of the OSCE in 2017 we want to contribute to rebuild trust and to defuse conflicts in the OSCE area, such as in Eastern-Ukraine, Georgia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Transnistria. We are also faced with a ring of instability in Europe's wider neighbourhood, such as Syria, Iraq and Libya!

On Syria, we need to **reinforce diplomatic efforts** to establish a ceasefire to enable safe access for humanitarian aid deliveries and to start a political process. That is the only way to end the ongoing humanitarian crisis in this long-suffering country. We are outraged by deliberate attacks on medical facilities and aid convoys! Let me be clear: All those who committed crimes against civilians must be brought to justice!

Ladies and gentlemen,

Around the globe **radicalisation and violent extremism** are a serious threat to our societies undermining security, development, human rights and fundamental freedoms. We have to realize that acts of religious extremism do not only happen in areas of conflict, but that **there are religious extremists who radicalise our youth even in the heart of our societies.**

Tens of thousands of **foreign fighters** have joined the Islamic State in order to rape, kill and try to exterminate religious minorities in other parts of the world. They include more than 5000 people from the EU, among them 300 people from Austria.

We cannot accept that our citizens commit such crimes in other parts of the world and we have to be clear that when they return they pose a massive threat to our society. We therefore have to increase our efforts within our communities to prevent young people from being misled by those who distort and abuse religion.

And we also have to remain committed in our fight against Da'esh and other terrorist groups in countries like Syria, Iraq and Libya. Destroying Da'esh would be the most powerful measure to counter radicalisation. The more we deny radical terrorists success stories the less will they be able in attracting new fighters from other parts of the world. If we will not be successful in this fight there will be more radicalization and terrorism all around the world, and there will be no safe havens – neither in Europe nor elsewhere.

Mr President,

In a world that is less and less secure and faced with more and more tensions between big powers, **nuclear disarmament remains the number one unfinished business.** The **recent nuclear tests by DPRK** should be a warning signal! We all agree that the humanitarian consequences of the explosion of nuclear weapons would be unacceptable. Therefore, **we have to finally get rid of all nuclear weapons!** Experience shows that the first step to eliminate weapons of mass destruction is to prohibit them through legally binding norms. Together with other member states, Austria will table a draft resolution to convene negotiations on a **legally-binding comprehensive instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons** in 2017.

But this is not enough!

We also need to **put an end to the use of explosive weapons in populated areas!**

When such weapons are used in cities and other urban areas –as we have seen in Syria - more than 90 percent of the victims are civilians. The destruction of homes, hospitals, schools and other infrastructure forces people to leave. Without these weapons the world would be a safer place – especially for children, women and elderly people. We will convene a meeting early October to promote this goal and hope for your support.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The **United Nations are central** when it comes to tackling the global challenges of our time. We need an effective guardian for our shared values and principles. We **need a strong UN more than ever** to provide security, to achieve stability and to restore people's confidence. In this context, I would like to express my gratitude to **Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and his leadership** during his two terms at the UN. Your moral leadership has made it possible **to achieve the successes** of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and the **Paris Agreement on Climate Change**. Let me assure you that Austria will remain committed to support the United Nations and its goals, both as a Member State and as the host to one of its headquarters.

Thank you for your attention!