



CROATIA

Statement by

H.E. Ms. Marija Pejčinović Burić
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs

at the

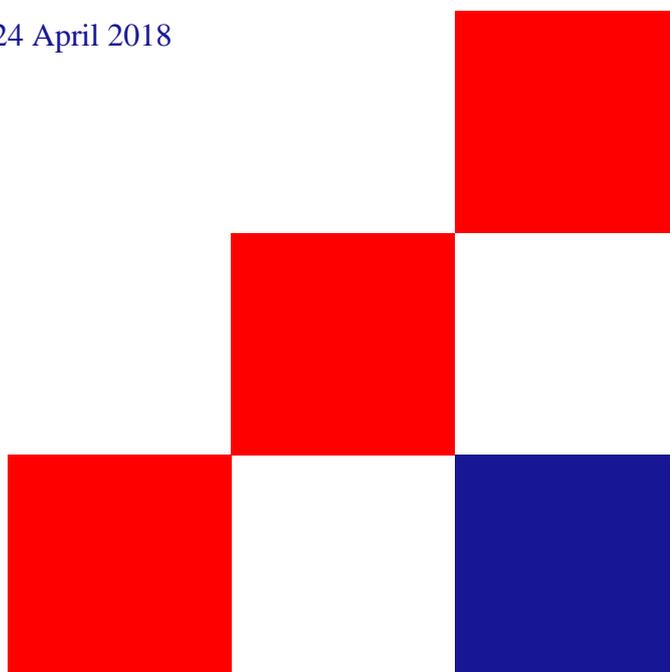
High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly

on

Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

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Thank you, Mr. President.

Allow me to extend my deep appreciation to you, Mr. President, for convening this important and well-timed High-level Meeting. I would also like to use this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his Report on Peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Croatia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the European Union. In addition, I would like to add several remarks from our national point of view.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Peacebuilding is undoubtedly one of the most important and complex challenges in contemporary international relations that are plagued by increasing instability, regional conflicts, civil wars and the suffering of millions of civilians. To address them properly, a parallel focus on political, security, developmental, environmental and human rights aspects is required. No country or international organization can meet these challenges alone, but only through concerted efforts of all stakeholders.

In this context, we highly appreciate and welcome the Secretary-General's reform proposals in the field of peace and security, with a goal to achieve more efficiency on the ground and a higher synergy between the three UN pillars. With this in mind, the review process of the peacebuilding architecture on a regular basis serves as a very useful platform. We encourage the Secretary-General to continue his work regarding the UN reform processes. It is our task to enable and empower his efforts with concrete support, as well as to keep this subject high on our collective agenda in the future.

As a victim of aggression in the last decade of the 20th century, Croatia has gained in-depth understanding and first-hand knowledge in peacebuilding and post-war recovery, and we stand ready to share this valuable experience. Within the United Nations agenda, today's topic remains a central tenet of Croatia. Our presidency of the Peacebuilding Commission in 2013 is just one among many examples of Croatia's active engagement.

Mr. President,

Sustaining peace is often as difficult as achieving it. We all know too well that the absence of a conflict does not always mean that peace is achieved. In this highly complex process, usually unfolding against unforgiving social, economic and legal challenges, there are no "one size fits all" solutions. Flexible, tailor-made approaches based on the expertise and thorough understanding of the given situation is the productive way forward. Against this background, we strongly support improved data gathering and analysis capacities within the UN Secretariat.

Development, humanitarian, human rights and justice actors should achieve equal attention in performing their roles. In addition, an active engagement of regional and sub-regional organizations is often indispensable. Above all stands a need to secure a proper financial framework, in particular in the fragile transitional period between war and a lasting peace. We must never lose out of sight that, as stated in the Secretary-General's report, nearly half of all people living in extreme poverty reside in countries affected by conflict and fragility. Prospects that this figure will rise are, unfortunately, discouragingly high.

Croatia welcomes the approach suggested by the Peacebuilding Review in putting emphasis on prevention. Peacebuilding should aim at preventing sliding into conflict and the reinstatement of the

armed conflict. A solid prevention system could save all of us many resources that could in turn be invested in improving life conditions of the world's population, in line with the Agenda 2030.

Indeed, the Sustainable Development Goals represent building blocks for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Here, I am particularly referring to the *Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions*. If we use it not only as a set of specific targets, but also as an inspiration to add a new dimension to other sustainable development goals, we just may find more clarity and a pathway towards eliminating root causes of conflicts and securing lasting peace.

Mr. President,

Too often have we seen the horrific consequences of the lack of timely and proper (re)action of international community to certain crises. Our own national experience testifies to that as well. Deep understanding of the roots of the crisis, ability to read early-warning signs and readiness to act preventively without hesitation are of the essence.

Prolongation of resolution of disagreements and grievances that pose a serious threat to peace and security can often lead to new sufferings and injustice, eventually even to reemergence or even greater violence. True burying of hatchets cannot be achieved by just burying problems. Conflicting sides need to address their differences heads on and in an open manner, while half-solutions are not solutions but excuses for postponing or avoiding difficult decisions.

At the end of the day, it is commonalities and everyday peoples' needs that must be first put in focus, as they are often key ingredients for success in post-conflict rebuilding and even more so for regional reconciliation processes. This means finding ways to build bridges and not walls, including and not excluding, integrating instead of separating, sharing and investing, versus dividing and exploiting.

Mr. President,

The globalization process continues to rapidly reshape the world we live in. Along with many benefits, it has also created many new challenges and divisions between as well as within nations. However, Croatia believes that the importance of national ownership and primary country responsibility can never be emphasized enough.

Providing people with health security, a clean and safe environment, a chance for a decent employment, education, modern infrastructure and interconnectivity, forging public-private partnerships - all of these policies have additional value of significantly reducing the risk of violent tendencies within and between societies and states. Furthermore, we also feel that all segments of society need to be involved in their development. The role of women and young people in political and decision-making processes is also of paramount importance.

Mr. President,

On a global level, the United Nations have a crucial, leading role across its three pillars. In more than seven decades of its existence, the United Nations has proved its ability to reform and meet new challenges. We are in the midst of a new comprehensive cycle of reforms that are essential to make the United Nations fit for the 21st century. These reforms include not only the field of peace and security, including peacekeeping operations, and I hereby use the opportunity to commend the Secretary General for his A4P proposals, but also essential reforms such as development mechanisms and

Management. The task in front of us is huge, as these processes are highly complex and require the broadest possible support by Member States, but there is no other way.

Finally, as stated in the General Assembly resolution to be adopted tomorrow, we appreciate the Secretary-General's recommendations and stand ready to discuss them further. We hope that we shall be able to achieve considerable progress during the 73rd session of the General Assembly and we are looking forward to an in-depth discussion on the Peacebuilding Architecture Review in 2020. In this vein, let us not waver in our resolve to improve our peacebuilding and sustaining peace capabilities, in order for them to withstand old and new challenges across the globe.

Thank you.