



# BELARUS

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**General Assembly**

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General Debate

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**STATEMENT**

**by His Excellency Vladimir Makei**

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Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The past few decades have been fraught with two contradictory tendencies – enhanced political fragmentation and increased economic globalization.

The first tendency has been associated with global political instability. It resulted from wars, conflicts, terrorism, xenophobia and other factors. It gives rise to the feeling of a mounting chaos and despondency.

Why have we found ourselves in this predicament?

Because we failed to put an end to the last epochal conflict – the Cold War.

It did not end up with a peace treaty as had usually been the case with all other previous major wars. Therefore, we were left without a universally accepted framework, which could have guided our subsequent behavior.

Different powers began to interpret that state of geo-political uncertainty in a different way and began to act accordingly. What was comprehensible and legitimate for some, was incomprehensible and illegitimate for others.

By and large, all the problems that have piled up since the early 1990s resulted from our inability to bring an end to the Cold War.

But it is never late to do what is right.

Last year, the President of Belarus came up with the idea to launch a new negotiating process similar to the 1970s Helsinki process.

Certainly, it should be done with those challenges and threats in mind that are relevant for all of us today. It is worth talking about such an option that foresees expanding and reconsidering this format. What we suggest is that some of the key global “players” like China, Russia, the United States of America and the European Union engage collectively in a dialogue about a strategic vision for building new constructive relations.

The Republic of Belarus, for its part, stands ready to serve as a convening place. We are willing to carry out such a task with the same high degree of responsibility that marked our efforts aimed at settling the conflict in Ukraine over the past few years. Minsk stands prepared to become a bridge that would link the old with the yet unborn.

Agreements emanating from the dialogue would, essentially, put an end to the last epochal war. The United Nations could subsequently get much involved in their implementation.

With this, we would be able to turn the tide of the rising political fragmentation in the world.

Perhaps, some people would perceive it today as something not realistic. But this is exactly how, three years ago, was perceived the proposal by the President of the Republic of Belarus to send peacekeepers to the Ukraine. And nowadays this idea is revived and is being actively discussed in the United Nations.

The second of the two world tendencies, that is, increased globalization, has undoubtedly contributed to progress and economic development worldwide.

But, it has not been without the downsides of its own, either. What appears to matter is that the majority of the world's population did not enjoy those fruits, especially over the last few decades. As a result, we have not been able to eliminate poverty, while inequality has been steadily on the rise.

Much has been said in recent years, including from this rostrum, about the underlying economic causes. If simply put, the global economy has not been guided by a "win-win" approach. Instead, it operated in the interests of corporate capital, not of ordinary people.

Consequently, the economic globalization has not become a wave that would lift all boats.

Yet, there are certain grounds for optimism.

We base it on two factors – regional integration and new creative ideas in the global economy.

Regional integration is a key feature of the contemporary world. In places where it is successful, it leaves less room for political fragmentation.

Belarus has been deeply involved in a number of integration processes in its region. For instance, this year we preside over the Central European Initiative.

Belarus has been vigorously advocating the ideas of cooperation and interconnectivity among regional processes for the last couple of years. We call such an approach "integration of integrations".

It stems from the assumption that, in terms of structural functionality, the current world is composed not just of countries, but also of regions. We are thus convinced of the need for regional integration processes to engage with each other in broad cooperation, in a manner similar to the patterns of cooperation that exist among states.

When it comes to new creative ideas, we certainly point to the initiative called "One Belt, One Road" promoted by the People's Republic of China.

This initiative stands as a new type of economic multilateralism. It is seeking to bring benefits not only to its individual participants, but to the global economy as a whole. It is a true "win-win" approach.

The Republic of Belarus both participates in and supports the initiative.

In our view, the "integration of integrations" and the "One Belt, One Road" initiative can help us shift the global economy from the path of divergence to one of convergence. Globalization must become more equitable.

How can the United Nations help in addressing the challenges posed by political fragmentation and uneven economic globalization?

One of the primary tasks for the United Nations in the century past was to keep great powers from waging major internecine wars. The UN proved to be good at that test. It furnished a convening space wherein the opposite parties could work with something positive in their minds. As a result, World War III was avoided.

Nowadays, the realities are different, which require us to reconsider both the role and the place of the Organization in the world. What is specifically at stake is how the UN fits into a world that is being increasingly dominated by various closed clubs and informal entities.

We are convinced that, as ever before, the United Nations must aim to strengthen the inter-state system. It is at the UN where its Members should successfully resolve their differences and forge acceptable solutions. Moreover, it is at the United Nations, where they can successfully tackle transboundary threats.

What is more, the UN should serve as a uniting force for the system of international relations as a whole. In other words, the entire complex set of new dimensions in these relations, like closed clubs, informal entities, alliances and others, should be anchored to the United Nations. If done so, the system will operate in a coherent, concerted and effective manner.

The new Secretary General has launched a comprehensive process of UN reform. We generally welcome this undertaking. We would like to particularly highlight the relevance and importance of the Secretary-Generals' initiatives related to the maintenance of international peace and security and to combatting terrorism.

We understand that success in the UN's transformation will determine to a large extent the role and place of the United Nations in the world for many years to come.

At the same time we are convinced that such success will be possible if all of us hold fast to the following three principled guidances.

First, the reform must be transparent, logical and result-oriented.

Second, the reform should lead neither to more red tape nor to higher burden on Member States.

Third, the reform needs to be inclusive, that is, each and every Member State's voice must be heard.

But the key reform of the UN system is not about revising its patterns of interaction or streamlining its individual elements. Reform is not about the optimization of human resources and funding either.

The most serious, that is, the far-reaching reform should occur in our attitudes towards the Organization. Today, the UN General Assembly constitutes a unique deliberative forum. This forum is essential to grasping both the fragility and the diversity of our world.

We, Member States need to regain the sense of owning our Organization, which somewhat has been lost.

Indeed, the United Nations is not only about its secretariat, field missions, programmes and funds. The United Nations, first and foremost, is about its Member States, about their will or lack of it, about dialogue and cooperation or alienation.

No ideal composition of the UN Security Council or a perfectly optimized General Assembly's agenda will matter for a world beyond the East River unless Member States demonstrate a willingness to look for ways to better understand each and come more often to agreement.

Our everyday work in the General Assembly based on our efforts to finalize multiple and lengthy resolutions constitutes neither a full-fledged dialogue nor an attempt to better understand an opponent.

Our various thematic side-events provide a platform for dozens of speakers to present their views. Yet, they rarely try to find an answer to the question of what needs to be done for us to better understand each other.

How often during our official meetings and informal consultations inconsistent arguments and unanswered questions hang in the air without reaction, or frequently simply pass on without being heard.

That is why we are deeply convinced that the key UN reform will happen only when together we decide to create the conditions – both organizational and in terms of our goal-setting – necessary to utilize the United Nations as a practical tool in search for ways to resolve contradictions and disputes among Member States without violence or war.

We want to bring home this message to both the Secretary General and the UN Member States.

Mr. President,

History shows that a world order or a system of international relations has always been born in insufferable pain, resulting from either major wars or other epochal events.

Do we need just another major war or another global calamity for the current "rudderless" world to acquire the outlines of an order?

I am convinced that no one wants to contemplate such a scenario.

Belarus has proposed ways to address the major global challenges.

We fully realize how daring and unrealistic the idea of forging a renewed architecture for Eurasian-Atlantic cooperation and security may appear to many people at this stage.

Likewise, we can admit that our initial ideas about the outlines and, perhaps, a substantive content of this process may be far from perfect.

Furthermore, not everyone is ready to embrace Belarus' idea about the importance of tighter cooperation among regional integration processes.

What, however, we are firmly convinced of is that it is high time for all of us to demonstrate urgency in action and cooperation for the sake of peace and prosperity

I would like to conclude with a very fitting quotation. Martin Luther King said: "*Over the bleached bones and jumbled residues of numerous civilizations are written the pathetic words: too late*".

It is still within our power to act lest it becomes too late.

Thank you for your kind attention.