



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
THE PRESIDENT

**REMARKS
OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
ALBANIA, H.E. MR. ILIR META, AT THE 73
SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE UNITED NATIONS**

*“Making the United Nations relevant to all people:
Global leadership and shared responsibilities for
peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies”*

New York, on 28th September 2018

Madam President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first join you all in congratulating and wishing success to Madam President Espinosa Garcés, and assuring her Excellency of Albania's full support in her tasks and mission.

The topic of this General Debate "Making the United Nations relevant to all people" takes us to the heart of multilateralism; the kind that our nations have built, through global leadership and shared responsibilities to the benefit of peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies.

While sharing the need for constant pursuit of reform, we remain faithful to the fundamental principles of this organization.

We continue to see the United Nations as a multilateral instrument through which peaceful international order is safeguarded.

The UN was created in a concert of sovereign wills that have produced a corpus of rules and good practices as global solution to global problems.

The UN neither has a life of its own, outside the will of its members, nor is it immune of occurring changes and developments.

The UN has grown as the world has gone more global.

Democracy, human rights, security, development issues, technological advancement and the World Wide Web, environmental issues, and much more, are increasingly present in the UN agenda, just as they dominate our domestic policies.

Albania shares its responsibility to be active in this debate, adding relevance to our part of the world.

It is in this spirit that we fully support Secretary General Guterres's vision for reform and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at national, regional and international level.

We strongly believe that Agenda 2030 is universal, as it is relevant to and applicable in all countries of the world.

We have taken a clear stance through a unanimous resolution adopted by the Albanian Parliament expressing our firm commitment to implementing and achieving these goals.

Albania presented its National Voluntary Report this July, incorporating a combination of its European Agenda objectives with those of Sustainable Development.

I would like to emphasize that these strategic documents are fully compatible and coherent with our national strategic project of European Integration.

Albania's National Strategy for Development and Integration enshrines the same strategic vision and objectives for development: that of good governance, rule of law, a competitive and sustainable economy, promotion and respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

As we look forward to a future decision to open accession negotiation with the EU, we remain committed to progress with domestic reforms in key areas.

We also consider the EU prerogative of open regional cooperation as an indispensable policy.

With on-going peace and integration processes in the Balkans, we believe that every bilateral achievement among our countries contributes directly to the greater peace, security, stability and economic development.

We consider that the recently reached Agreement between Greece and Macedonia, has the opportunity to becoming a historic achievement.

We have called on all political actors in Macedonia, including upon local Albanian leaders to be actively engaged in ensuring the success of the 30 September referendum, supporting a vote in favour of this Agreement.

NATO's open door policy towards the Western Balkans remains as vital and decisive to anchoring the region to its security umbrella and for responsible local ownership.

In this context, I strongly welcome the recent messages that our strategic partners sent to the Macedonian people.

These messages echo their determination to uphold the immense investment to establishing stability and security in the last two decades in the Balkans.

The combined commitment of both NATO and EU are the best guarantor for all the countries and citizens of our region.

This positive momentum can also nurture further progress in the EU-led dialogue between Kosova and Serbia.

The Dialogue has entered in its final stage, expected to be concluded with a legally binding Agreement on the comprehensive normalization of relations between the two states.

It is of paramount importance that this expected Agreement embodies positive energy, fostering European values of interethnic co-existence and harmony.

It is extremely important that this Agreement marks a breakaway from history and the past, and improves the daily lives of the peoples in both states.

Let us bear in mind that the historic past of the Balkans is notoriously linked to border changes, ethnic cleansing and violent massive displacements.

Yet, in the last two decades, the Balkans has undergone a tremendous transformation, thanks to UN support and involvement, and the serious political, social and economic investments of the USA and the EU.

We call on and welcome every effort of the UN-Member States in continuing Kosova's international recognition, and further supporting its membership to the regional and international organizations.

Based on the stability and the positive developments in Kosova, Albania supports the reduction of the sessions held in UN-Security Council on the UNMIK reports.

Distinguished delegates,

Albania fully supports a more effective UN agenda through a more integrated peace and security architecture, with Peacekeeping operations being vital instruments and a flagship activity of the United Nations.

We support the recent initiative of the Secretary General - Action for Peacekeeping (A4P), and we have endorsed the Declaration on this initiative.

Albanian fully supports the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2242, and the substantively similar resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, adopted by the UN General Assembly and the Security Council.

We remain confident that UN Secretary General Guterres will keep up the momentum for a revitalized role of the UN, with special focus on prevention of peace and security in the world.

His platform on the revitalization of the UN is promising and we support it.

Let me note that more than 6500 members of the Albanian Armed Forces and civilians have participated in international peacekeeping operation since 1996.

They have contributed to operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Chad, South Sudan, Afghanistan, etc.

We have pledged to continue our modest but firm contribution.

Albania has been aligned with all the UN initiatives fighting terrorism, ratifying 12 out of 19 UN related Conventions and Protocols.

Albania joined the immediate response of the Global Coalition against violent extremism, and notably in the fight against ISIS/Da'esh.

As a NATO member, last year we have tripled our troop contribution to Afghanistan.

Our contribution to the collective efforts in fighting illegal migration in the Mediterranean is significant.

We are part of NATO's maritime mission in the Aegean assisting FRONTEX to stop migration smuggling.

Albania believes that the protection of civilians, women and children are of a crucial importance in peacekeeping operations, because the life of every person is precious.

We welcome the growing attention on the role of regional organizations in security issues.

In this frame, we highly appreciate and welcome the close cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union, on the platform of the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP).

In order to have a safer and more peaceful planet, concrete steps have to be undertaken.

In this regard, Albania hails the progress under the leadership of the United States of America on denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, considering it as very positive step forward, not only for that region, but for entire planet as well.

Another issue of serious concern threatening peace and security, is the ongoing conflict in Syria.

We support all the actions taken by the international actors to end the conflict and stop the use of chemical weapons.

Humanitarian situation has been further worsened and this tragedy has produced millions of displaced and war refugees, threatening also the security of neighboring countries and of the European continent.

The situation in Libya also, is still concerning us seriously, and we reconfirm our strong commitment to the unity and territorial integrity of Libya and emphasize the need to de-escalate the violence in the country, as well as the spread of terrorism.

We have supported the international community's efforts to develop an inclusive political dialogue between the parties on the future of Libya, as the only way to stopping the conflict and resolving the Libyan crisis, which is seriously threatening, not only direct neighbors.

The conflict between Israel and Palestine is still harming the peace and stability in the Middle East.

A two-State solution will realistically allow both sides to fulfil their aspirations, put an end to the conflict, and achieve the just and lasting peace for Israelis and Palestinians.

We have always welcomed and supported efforts from all sides and those of the international community to find a solution through negotiations.

Few days ago, I expressed on behalf of Albania the full support for the principles and implementation of the Declaration on Global Call for Drug Problem in the World, initiated by the United States.

We all need to take bold actions and act together to uproot drugs from the life of our youths and children and save our societies, our national security and public health.

For this reason, we have to strengthen the international cooperation and build a common basis of understanding of the problem and take effective measures against it.

In this context, I would also like to underline that Albania has an excellent cooperation with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

As a country, with valuable contributions in enforcing peace, stability, progress, in respecting and protecting the universal human rights, and strongly believing into multilateralism, Albania seeks to serve as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the term 2022-2023.

To this goal we stand ready to engage constructively in conflict preventions and various peace operations, in the UN and other security regional organizations, in implementing sustainable development policies and contributing to the universal respect of the human rights.

Albania is committed to protect and promote all human rights and supports the integration of the human rights dimension in the agenda of United Nations.

Finally, I would like to address the issue of the climate change, affecting every country in each continent.

It is disrupting national economies and affecting lives, costing dearly to the people, communities and countries.

The historical Paris Agreement of 2015, based on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and Kyoto Protocol, provided the legally binding international commitment to engage with concrete action.

Albania has adopted relevant strategies and action plans, and is taking necessary measures to protect environment and reduce gas emission.

It is quite clear that the consequences of climate changes are moving faster than we do.

We have to prevent it and save the existence of the planet and of next generations.

Collective efforts to address collective challenges.

Thank you !