

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. MIROSLAV LAJČÁK, PRESIDENT OF THE  
72<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AT THE GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY PLENARY MEETING ON THE QUESTION OF EQUITABLE  
REPRESENTATION ON AND INCREASE IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE  
SECURITY COUNCIL  
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*Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,*

Thank you all for being here today, to discuss the important issue of Security Council reform. I want to express my gratitude to Ambassador Imnadze of Georgia and Ambassador Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates, for agreeing to serve as co-chairs of the intergovernmental negotiation process. They have both taken on an important responsibility, and I am confident that you will all give them your support – in both your words and your actions.

I would also like to sincerely thank the former co-chairs, Ambassador Jinga and Ambassador Khiari, for their diligent and valuable work.

*Excellencies,*

I want to make three points today to frame our discussion.

The first point is that reform of the UN Security Council will not just affect the work that takes place a few doors down from us, in the Council chamber. Rather, it will impact the future of the entire UN system.

More and more, we are hearing calls for the UN to change and evolve at a faster pace. These calls have come from people all over the world. They have come also from you – the Member States of the United Nations. In fact, in September, your high-level representatives stood on this podium and stressed the need for the UN to adapt to a changing world. Many of them even made direct calls for Security Council reform.

We must remember that the UN Security Council is the body charged with maintaining international peace and security. Its decisions can mean the difference between life or death. This is why the Security Council often makes international headlines.

And this is why its work is seen as one of the major indicators of the UN's role in the world.

Moreover, this is why we must answer these calls for change – particularly in relation to the UN Security Council. If we don't, the continued relevance and, frankly, the very survival of the United Nations is at stake.

My second point is that, in answering these calls, we don't need to look further than this hall.

All of us sitting here today hold the keys to change.

The Council was designed in 1945, when the world looked very different to how it does today. However, there has only been one change to the Council's set-up since then. This came through the expansion of non-permanent members in 1965 – more than half a century ago! But it is not for a lack of trying. Next year, the Open-ended Working Group will mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its establishment. We are also approaching our 10<sup>th</sup> year of intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. However, the time for trying is up. Now is the time for action.

And, for our purposes, action means dialogue. Real dialogue. Real listening. And real interaction. Without these elements, this process will become nothing but a statement-reading exercise. And it will feature nothing but the repetition of well-known and static positions.

In this case, what is the incentive for compromise? Where can convergences emerge from? And how can we ever move forward?

This brings me to my third point, which is that we must look to the process ahead. It must be credible. Member States must believe in it, and they must trust in it.

This is why I am committed to transparency and inclusivity. After consultation with Co-Chairs and Member States, we shall start as early as possible. A full calendar will be circulated in advance to Member States, to allow for forward planning. I hope this will both enhance the quality of our discussions and facilitate engagement by all delegations.

This session, the IGN process must lead to meaningful progress. It is our collective duty. But how this happens, and the pace at which it happens, is up to you. My team and I are here to support in any way we can.

*Excellencies,*

I cannot skirt around the issue today. I am compelled to address it head-on. And, in doing that, I need to admit that not all of us see eye to eye on the issue of Security Council reform. In fact, some of us are standing on opposite ends of the spectrum.

However, some of the most difficult negotiations throughout history started out the same way. In many cases, parties couldn't even meet in the same room. This means we are already a step ahead. And we too can come closer to the middle. We too can, day by day, make what may seem like an impossible agreement become possible. We too can make history.

We can start through dialogue – and we can start today.

*I thank you all again for your attention.*