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Address of the President of the Republic of Poland at the general debate of the 72nd Session of UN General Assembly

Topic of the debate: Focusing on people: striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet.

New York, September 19, 2017

Excellency, Mr Chairman,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

I wish to congratulate Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, the Chairman of the 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly, on his election to this honourable function. I wish to assure you, Sir, about my country's full support for the measures you will take. We are very pleased to welcome your election, Sir, for you represent Poland's befriended country, you represent our neighbouring country. At the same time, I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Peter Thomson for his active chairmanship over the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly.



Ladies and Gentlemen!

The basic goals pursued by the international community, and by the same token, the foundations of the United Nations system, are sustainable development, ensuring peace and security as well as protection of human

rights.

I was therefore truly satisfied to learn that the guiding motto of this year`s session is the focus on human needs. Too often in global politics have we devoted too much time and attention to big models and economic or social systems, forgetting at the same time that politics and economy are, as a matter of fact, human matters. The loss of human focus automatically results in the loss of the goal underpinning our common actions, which should consist in providing peace and well-being to every individual, to every family in our states.

The policy aimed at serving people and their needs is founded on the notion of human dignity, which is an inherent feature of every human life. Talking about human-focused policy, a policy concentrated on the human need to live in peace and in decent conditions, we must think, first and foremost, about the need to defend human life.

Agenda 2030, which we jointly adopted, defines the model of sustainable development at the global level. Following its recommendations, we should concentrate our efforts on the elimination of poverty in all its representations, through the implementation of a series of economic, social and environmental goals. At the same time, it is incumbent on us to bear in mind that this process should take place with respect for all the related rights: the economic, social, political, civic, cultural ones, as well as the right to develop. By adopting Agenda 2030, we have demonstrated our ability to act as a community. Still, the implementation of its goals remains to be a formidable challenge which requires our close international cooperation.

Being a reliable and responsible partner, Poland is committed to full implementation of the goals, as specified in the Agenda for Sustainable Development. We believe that only by means of an effective implementation, will we be able to ensure relevant socio-economic conditions for everyone. This involves coordination and comprehensive actions across many sectors and at all levels of governance, starting from the local, to the national, to regional, to international one.

Domestically, Poland takes concrete steps to implement the vision of development, in the spirit of Agenda 2030, to make sure that none of our citizens is excluded. The Strategy for Responsible Development, adopted by the Polish Government this February, is aimed at ensuring, both to Poland and the Polish people, a sustainable, stable, and, most importantly, a responsible kind of development. A development which will unfold before our eyes, and will embrace also, or shall I say: in the first place, the needs of the future generations.

In the international arena, Poland supports the countries who strive to develop economically and socially, among others by carrying out development cooperation. We want to ensure that our actions are as effective as possible. Therefore, using the experience of Polish administration and Polish NGOs, we address the states whom we are able to support in the most efficient way.

We are also watching with great concern and worry the growing number of people suffering as a result of protracted conflicts, especially those in Syria and Ukraine. Led by the sense of solidarity we are consistently increasing our humanitarian aid. Furthermore, we attach big importance to ensuring cohesion and complementarity between humanitarian and development aid.

What we consider to be of key importance is to eliminate the reasons of humanitarian crises. This is our common duty since the future of the world order and that of the international community depends on how we deliver. Moreover, we should permanently keep on our radar the issue of respect for and strengthening of the International Humanitarian Law.

One of the goals stipulated in Agenda 2030 is to stop changes taking place in our natural environment, the changes which are perceivable in every country, on all continents. Such changes have a negative impact on national economies and on the living standards of entire communities. For a number of years now, Poland has continued to be part of global efforts to protect the environment and to fight climate change, and it has fulfilled all of its obligations in this respect. We have been able to surpass the reduction target as defined for us under the Kyoto Protocol. Along with the UE, we have been making the most ambitious global contribution to the Paris Agreement. We will continue our actions on the path to the low-carbon development, serving to protect the climate.

In the year to come Poland will have the honour to host, for the third time, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The COP24 Climate Summit in Katowice will be of key importance due to the planned adoption of the implementation package for the Paris Agreement. As COP presidency, Poland will do its best in order to achieve the prospective ambitious results of the Summit. We will continue the leadership in climate negotiations in the spirit of the Paris Agreement, ensuring the participation of all states and the transparency of discussions. We will also respect differing domestic conditions of the respective Parties and their choices of the path leading to reduction in emissions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Choosing Poland as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the period 2018-2019 reflects the growing potential and involvement of my country for the sake of ensuring international peace and security. Let me use this opportunity and express my heartfelt gratitude for all the 190 votes cast for Poland. This is one of the best results in the history of elections to the Security Council. We perceive this choice and the result obtained both as an honour and an obligation.

I wish to thank the community of the United Nations for placing such a considerable confidence in us. We view our membership in the UN Security Council as a commitment to represent all UN member states, regardless of their affiliation with regional groups.

We accede the Security Council with the values which are particularly important to my nation. First and foremost, they include our strongest attachment to the right to sovereignty and freedom, inalienably vested in each nation. We accede the Security Council with the conviction that international law is the only effective mechanism to preserve peaceful relations among nations. Freedom is synonymous with peace. Whereas enslavement is a source of war.

Currently, what has particular bearing on security are such aspects of freedom as the freedom of speech, and the freedom of self-determination in sovereign nation states. The reason I am mentioning that fact is that the previous year in particular featured intensified instances of manipulation of political processes in many states through hybrid measures: by means of propaganda or direct interference in the democratic processes. Such phenomena, such attempts taken by third countries to influence democratic policies pursued by free nations, should also come into the focus of deep concern of the international community.

The above fact, as much as the analysis of international relations in their current shape, do corroborate the thesis that security of the modern world should be viewed on many platforms. It is not only military strength of a given state that predetermines the sense of security of its citizens. The latter also embraces the areas which often transcend the regular framework of Security Council's works. What undermines the sense of security are also

changes in natural environment, economic disparities, conflicts centered on natural resources, as well as all problems related to inadequate health protection. I do believe that also the above-mentioned phenomena should be included to permanently feature in the works of the Security Council.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The respect and the absolute primacy of international law in interstate relations safeguard our effectiveness in delivering security and international peace among states. As a Security Council non-permanent member, Poland shall strive to make sure that all disputes and conflicts should be resolved in line with the fundamental principle of peaceful resolution.

In this context, we fully identify ourselves with the priority treatment given to mediation and conflict prevention, as advocated by the Secretary General. We are assisted in this respect by our conviction that preventive measures targeting the primary sources of problems, taken in the location concerned, shall produce the best, the quickest and the most tangible results. During my visit in the headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa this year, I noted that an important capability of the international community is its ability to prevent conflicts. Conflicts without reasons do not exist, and by the same token, there are no such conflicts which could not be simply brought to an end.

Such an approach should first and foremost, though not exclusively, be applied to issues related to mass migrations and refugees. Nowadays, these problems are shared by many regions and continents. Continued internal fighting and risks of terrorist attacks in the Middle East and in North Africa, as well as all challenges entailed, call for a common response from the whole international community.

This is why it is our obligation to eliminate the primary reasons behind the refugee problem, and to restore every man's right to live in his or her own home country. Humanitarian operations and development aid must be aimed at achieving the most fundamental goal of supporting the refugees to bring them back to their homes.

Operations targeting the building of resilience of states and societies are particularly important in the context of limiting the reason behind such phenomena as structural poverty, unemployment, lack of access to education and other.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Poland has always been attaching immense importance to the effectiveness of international law. What underpins international law regulations is the principle of cooperation and of carrying out international obligations in good faith. Precisely this principle guarantees that international disputes shall be resolved by way of dialogue and not through aggression and armed violence. When confronted with a situation where states apply aggression as an instrument of their foreign policy, Poland is urging the international community not to recognize the accomplished facts which result from such an aggressive policy. Poland also wishes to contribute to the building of international order founded on the principles of political sovereignty and territorial integrity. Any attempt, be it successful or not, of violating these principles, will weaken mutual trust. For almost ten years in Georgia, and for the third year in Ukraine, have we been witnessing obvious violation of fundamental principles of UN Charter, including the principle of inviolability of borders, respect of sovereignty, renouncing the use of military force in resolution of disputes. In our view, absolute respect of international law lays down the foundation for a stable, foreseeable and peaceful setting of relations among states, and through it, the assurance of a genuine sustainable growth.

The flagrant attempt to distort the world order prevailing nowadays is the situation in the Korean Peninsula, and

the growing risk of its escalation. The development of the nuclear and missile program by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and especially the most recent test of nuclear weapons constitute a flagrant violation of international law, and of the UN Security Council resolution. We do hope that intensified efforts undertaken by the international community, including the respective UN Security Council resolutions, will allow us to close the spiral of tension and will bring about the stabilization of the situation in the region.

Poland sets great store by disarmament and the idea of the world free of nuclear weapons. The only real instrument at hand which could bring us closer to the achievement of this vision in the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The Treaty is subject to review every five years in order to take stock of its realization and to reinforce its commitments. Poland has now taken the lead in the preparation process for the upcoming review of the Treaty in 2020; an evidence of our long-standing commitment to non-proliferation, ban on nuclear tests and peaceful use of atomic energy.

Honorable Delegates,

The third pillar of the United Nations system, is the protection of human rights, the rights whose source is the supreme right to live. Most regrettably, there are all too many spots in the world where this right, as much as the dignity of a human person, personal freedom, or freedom of conscience and of religion, are taken away. A particularly visible problem is that of persecution of persons belonging to religious minorities, including Christians. Poland condemns in the strongest terms all instances of persecution and discrimination based on religion, and insists on the states' commitment to ensure protection to all members of religious minorities, in the spirit of the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The right to live in dignity should also embrace the right to uphold one's native traditions and the traditional family model, if these are compatible with fundamental rights of an individual.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Distinguished Delegates,

In her campaign for the membership of the UN Security Council, Poland has chosen the motto: "Solidarity- Responsibility- Engagement". These are the values that we unceasingly seek to promote in the international arena. It is only the joint and several responsibility paired with harmonious engagement and cooperation among all states that will be able to produce sustainable development, security and peace not only for now, but also for future generations to come.

Thank you very much for your attention.

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