

More vital than ever for States to cooperate, General Assembly President tells UN debate



Assembly President Vuk Jeremić addresses the general debate of the 67th session of the General Assembly. UN Photo/Marco Castro

25 September 2012 – At a time when the world is becoming more volatile, it is more important than ever for countries to work together to address common problems, the President of the General Assembly, Vuk Jeremić, said today, as he [opened](#) the high-level debate of the sixty-seventh session.

“Rarely has it been more necessary for the world to draw closer together. It is to this endeavour that I believe we should devote the full scope of our resources,” Mr. Jeremić told the gathering of world leaders.

During the so-called General Debate, Heads of State or Government and other representatives of national governments present their views and comment on issues of individual national and international relevance.

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Chosen by the Assembly’s President, the theme for this year’s Debate, which runs until 1 October, is ‘adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means.’

“Those who drafted the UN Charter understood that when nations feel secure, they are much more likely to unclench their fists and give the process of peacefully settling disputes a genuine chance to succeed,” said Mr. Jeremić.

“In order to do so, it will be critically important to reinforce the universal adherence to accepted principles and rules, implemented without partiality or favour.

“Lack of clarity or selective enforcement, on the other hand, can quickly erode the basis for trust. This can easily lead to a situation in which nothing more than lip service is paid to the principles, and the rules lose virtually all meaning.”

He added that when parties do commit to a settlement, the General Assembly, coming together in consensus, can act as a “moral guarantor” of what has been agreed.

The President noted that today’s geopolitical landscape is unlike any the world has ever seen, one of truly global interdependence. “We are beset by a series of ruptures that seem to be building in intensity. Their effects can barely be kept in check,” he said.

Stating that the international system is at once becoming more volatile and more unpredictable, he highlighted three “variables in the increasingly complex global equation” that require heightened attention.

“The first is across-the-board repositioning. A growing number of States are determined to enhance their external engagement, aspiring to play greater roles in their respective regions and beyond. As a result, power and influence in the international arena are becoming more diffuse.

“Virtually no one’s position is the same today as it was just a generation ago, making it more difficult for a meaningful and enduring consensus to be reached on significant items on our shared agenda,” he noted.

“Secondly, in our era, capabilities once thought to be exclusively in the hands of States – such as the ability to inflict harm on a massive scale – could become more easily accessible to non-State actors. As the world becomes de facto smaller, countries have come to feel more exposed. We

must find a way to act in concert, so the legitimate needs and concerns of Member States can be adequately met.

“A third variable in the new global equation is the quest for empowerment. Whatever the specifics of their circumstances and grievances, populations across the world seek to have a greater say in how their destiny will be shaped.”

This is today perhaps most evident in the Middle East, the President added, noting that “the Arab Spring advanced democratic aspirations in a number of countries. The fate of some others still hangs in the balance.”

Mr. Jeremić also called on States to bring to bear a renewed spirit of cooperation, a tenacity of purpose, and a will to overcome differences to the problems currently faced.

“Let us have faith in our ability to come together in the full understanding of our common destiny, so that this Assembly may go down in history as an Assembly of peace,” he said.

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