



STATEMENT BY

H.E. Mr. LUBOMÍR ZAORÁLEK

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

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Mr. President,

Let me first congratulate you on your appointment as President of the General Assembly.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the First World War. Yet in today's world, global peace is far from being achieved. It therefore remains a major task for the international community to achieve it. But this is not the only task that remains. In order to achieve global peace, we also have to tackle two other equally important challenges, namely to preserve global human dignity and global prosperity.

Global security

Europe is the continent that gave birth to the two most disastrous conflicts in the history of mankind. We Europeans have learnt our lesson: a large part of our continent has been spared from violent conflicts for almost seventy years. My country celebrates 25 years since our return to freedom and democracy in 1989. Yet even today, a part of Europe is at war. Territorial integrity of **Ukraine**, guaranteed by the UN Charter and the Budapest memorandum of 1994, was

violated by the Russian annexation of Crimea and the activities of Russian-backed paramilitary separatist forces in Eastern Ukraine. Despite the present armistice, we believe that it is still the responsibility of the international community to seek de-escalation of the conflict that causes enormous suffering to the people of Ukraine and loss of innocent lives of Ukrainians as well as other people, as demonstrated by the downing of MH17 aircraft.

We are alarmed at the continuing aggravation of the security situation in northern **Iraq**. We condemn brutal acts of violence committed by the so-called Islamic State against local ethnic and religious minorities, as well as the murders of two innocent journalists and a humanitarian activist. These acts constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. As we currently witness in Iraq, terrorism has taken on a new dimension and we must counter it with utmost determination. Therefore, we welcome President Obama's strategy as well as other important international activities in this regard including the Security Council Summit on foreign terrorist fighters.

As regards **Syria**, we believe that the only way to achieve a stable peace in this war-torn country and to ensure much needed safety and legitimate rights for all Syrian people is through a negotiated political settlement between the Syrian government and the democratic opposition. The Czech Republic, appalled by the atrocities committed by the so-called Islamic State, urges all sides of the conflict in Syria to

cease violence and to start cooperating with the new UN Special Envoy in order to find a lasting solution.

Moreover, we must not omit the **Israeli-Palestinian conflict**. We remain deeply concerned about the humanitarian consequences of the conflict in the Gaza Strip. We have made an effort to provide assistance to the victims through humanitarian aid. However, first and foremost, the Palestinian and Israeli leaders have to make every effort, with the help of the international community, to renew genuine and comprehensive negotiations. This is the only way to reach a lasting solution, which would bring peace, dignity, security and prosperity to both Israelis and Palestinians.

Global dignity of human beings

Mr President,

Speaking of acts of violence – and the list I have provided is far from exhaustive - we have to keep looking for the causes behind these acts and seek to eliminate them. In this context, we often see that they result from despair and from lack of the basic needs necessary to ensure human dignity, such as physical integrity, access to justice, political participation and basic freedoms, but also food, water,

medical care, education, tolerable working conditions and protection against discrimination on various grounds. It is the responsibility of the international community represented by the United Nations to ensure that human dignity does not remain only a declared principle of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights but that it is put into practice worldwide. I am proud that my country can contribute to these efforts, building on the humanist legacy of my great compatriots: the first Czechoslovak president T.G. Masaryk and the first president of the Czech Republic Václav Havel.

The first precondition for human dignity is the possibility to enjoy life without threats to physical integrity and physical suffering. For this reason, the Czech Republic has vigorously supported the **Responsibility to Protect** concept with its strong dimension of prevention and capacity building. Yet when a conflict cannot be prevented for various reasons, the United Nations is ultimately responsible, through its peacekeeping role, for preventing further deterioration of the situation, loss of lives and human suffering. The Czech Republic has consistently participated in various EU missions complementing the UN peacekeeping efforts, namely in the EU Training Mission in Mali and in the Multinational Force and Observers mission in Sinai. And I can assure you that we will remain involved in the future.

National states and the international community share their responsibility for the protection of people from atrocities. However, if they fail, it is necessary to establish **accountability** for serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. The Czech Republic continues to firmly support international criminal justice and the International Criminal Court. Our primary task is to combat impunity and to enforce protection of civilians and vulnerable groups in armed conflicts.

It is a sad reality that, in too many parts of the world, **women** are among the most vulnerable groups. We continue to witness horrifying cases of **violence against women and girls**, including sexual violence. We call on all States to adopt urgent measures to prevent such abhorrent incidents. When women are excluded from the society and prevented from enjoying basic rights, participating in public life or simply exercising a profession, it has a massive impact not only on the country's development but also on its overall stability. We expect the relevant UN bodies to step up their efforts to ensure a peaceful and dignified life for all, including women.

In order to reinforce prevention of various types of conflicts, we fully support the **“Rights Up Front”** initiative launched by the Secretary General. We understand it as an appeal to the United Nations and its bodies and Member States to ensure respect for human rights, good governance, fair and free elections and genuine participation in

decision making without discrimination. The Czech Republic as a member of the Human Rights Council has presented for the second time a consensual **resolution on political participation**. In our view, giving everybody a chance to enjoy their civil and political rights through such participation is essential for building inclusive and truly cohesive societies.

Global Prosperity

Mr. President,

A life of peace and dignity is unthinkable without enjoyment of economic, social and environmental rights. This can be achieved through fighting poverty, social exclusion, all forms of discrimination and illiteracy. I am convinced that the Czech Republic has a lot to offer in this respect. We are among countries with the **most equal distribution of wealth** in the world. We are also a country with one of the **lowest risks of falling into poverty in the world**. We have managed to maintain a socially cohesive society, and we believe this is one of the reasons why our society is free of serious tensions resulting in violent conflicts. We want to contribute our experience to the efforts of the international community in order to build fair and prosperous societies across the planet.

The key to building a fair society is **sustainable development**. To this end, we are committed to working on Post-2015 Development Agenda that will formulate the Sustainable Development Goals based on the 2000 Millennium Development Goals. These will be global in nature, universally applicable and will address persistent inequalities and new challenges facing people and our planet. The promotion of good governance, rule of law, human rights and the empowerment of women must remain among self-standing priorities, but they are also cross-cutting issues linking different agendas. In this context, we are looking forward to the Secretary General's Synthesis Report, expected by the end of the year.

The Czech Republic expects that the Sustainable Development Goals will have a true impact on the making of a development policy that will correspond to the needs of present generations, improve their quality of life, but will not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Thus all countries – rich and poor – should be committed to creating an economically viable, yet more socially and environmentally sustainable future. We hope to be able to take part in this through our membership of the Economic and Social Council, where we are candidates for membership starting in 2016. We are also actively involved in the EU and the UN Framework Convention on **Climate Change** and we are ready to support all the proposals and solutions considered most effective to reach the new global climate agreement, hopefully to be concluded in Paris in 2015.

Mr. President,

I began by recalling the First World War and continued with enumerating three major challenges: global peace, global human dignity and global prosperity. These are enormous challenges. The UN has done impressive work fostering peace, human dignity and sustainable development. I am confident that next year, when we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the UN Charter, we will have an opportunity not only to reflect honestly on where we could do better, but also to appreciate the progress that we have made together.

Thank you.