



BELARUS

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STATEMENT

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Mankind has only one past, but many options for the future. History is such thing that we know only the consequences of those actions that have actually happened, but not of those that have failed to materialize.

What our world would have looked like today, if that memorable shot in Sarajevo a century ago that has irrevocably changed the course of history had not been fired?

The shot set in motion some still fully unexplained dynamic. The question of "honor" there for some key European countries overrode both common sense and all other considerations. Millions paid with their lives for that hypocritical honor.

Regrettably, the tragedy has not ended there, because the lessons of the First World War have not been internalized. The result was another global bloody butchery that has taken a far greater toll on human lives.

Thus, the shot in Sarajevo marked nothing less than the onset of the bloodiest period in human history.

This period has also been the bloodiest in the history of the people of Belarus. Located in the center of Europe, in the very crucible of geopolitical interests, Belarus has lost a third of its population during WW II. Even today, when the country has lived through the last 20 years of unusually successful and stable development, we cannot recover from that immense loss, either physically, psychologically, or emotionally.

This year, in which the Republic of Belarus celebrates the 70th anniversary of its liberation from the fascist occupiers, is very important and symbolic for the country. Belarus is remembering all the victims that paid with their lives for the nation's freedom.

Against this background, we do not understand and decisively condemn certain attempts at revising the outcome of WWII, belittling the significance of the Great Victory, or defiling the memory of the fallen heroes. The international community must not permit this. After all, the verdict of history is unequivocal – if mankind fails to draw the lessons from past tragedies, it is bound to repeat them in the future.

So, let us think about the future – both distant and not so distant – exactly today, when we mark the centenary of the beginning of the First World War.

I wonder what current global trends tell us about the future?

To be sure, a multitude of factors determine the dynamics of contemporary global politics.

From our perspective, as one of the key factors we would like single out the resistance on the part of the world's majority population to the imposition on them of something external. Indeed, very much like in the past, the "mighty of the world" persist in believing that only their vision and their development model stand as universal. Therefore, they do not ask others whether the latter like or dislike, for instance, so-called "liberal democracy" or the "Washington consensus". Others are just forced to confront a choice – either you accept our "recipes" or be ready to deal with the consequences like threats, sanctions, and "color revolutions".

To be honest, we, that is, the majority, have already got used to the situation when alien political and economic models are being foisted upon us. We clearly understand what stands behind that. Someone wants our nations to feed transnational corporate capital rather than ourselves. If we resist – we come under punishment. The pretext is always far-fetched – alleged violation of human rights by "unruly" states.

Having been subjected to external attacks for many years, countries like Belarus, Cuba, Iran, and Venezuela surely feel such pressure much more than others.

No less dangerous, however, is something else. Similar attempts at imposing something have been made recently against our identity. Indeed, some have been doing their best to impose on us extraneous cultural preferences.

For example, we are being forced to renounce the values of a traditional family, and recognize instead the diversity of this institution's forms. In other words, some strive to deprive us of our own "soul". This may be just another way to subdue the resisters to the capital by turning them into soulless slaves.

We are absolutely convinced that nothing will come out of that. The reason why the world is developing is that because it is diverse. It is precisely diversity that gives rise to sound competition and creativity, which in turn, drive human progress. Do we need uniformity and the ensuing trivial "soulless" world? Of course, we do not.

In this regard, I would like to appeal to those who still persist in compelling others to do something that the latter find alien and unpleasant. Just give up your meaningless and vain policy! This is a path to nowhere. Your efforts only divide us. We have too many problems on our hands, which require us to be united.

Today, two approaches determine international relations – the ability to implement change and the ability to stand in its way.

Indeed, on the one hand, even one or several countries can easily paralyze the international community in its activities. On the other hand, no state and no group of states, however powerful, cannot alter the status-quo without cooperating with the rest of the world.

This is the paradox of globalization. We have become too intertwined and too interdependent.

Unfortunately, the same holds true for global challenges – they have become intertwined, too. It is impossible in today's world to succeed in one area without making headway in others. There is, for instance, no simple solution to the threat of human trafficking unless we effectively resolve the problem of poverty.

In short, strategies and policies against all contemporary threats will be effective only if they are comprehensive in scope and attention. Let us be realistic and acknowledge that it is hardly possible to do away with any global challenge once and for all. Hence, our collective goal must be to reduce the extent of threat they pose to society through our constant and unremitting attention.

It is precisely such an attitude that must underlie our collective effort at developing the post-2015 United Nations development agenda. The agenda should be both comprehensive and realistic.

Its main objective is to make globalization more even and equitable than it has been up to now. When people in different countries take to the streets to protest against globalization, they do not call for a return to parochial nationalism. They rather demand more globalization, that is, they want to make it sustainable and they want it to result in a win-win situation.

Rising inequality in the world is the biggest scourge. We face a paradox – having recently made significant advances in strengthening various forms of equality like gender, race and ethnic, we witness a stubborn rise of economic inequality.

The international community must do whatever it takes to reverse the trend. Otherwise, we will fail to eradicate poverty.

Climate change is another paramount challenge. It is inextricably linked to such issues like energy consumption, food security, and water resources. We need to fully reflect this complex issue in the future agenda.

To be sure, many other areas must also be present in this comprehensive document. In this context, Belarus attaches great and particular importance to the fight against human trafficking and the strengthening of the traditional family. In light of significant and recognized advances we have made at the national level, we can propose for the consideration of our partners specific effective ways to long-term solutions to these vital issues at the global level.

Already now, we need to think how we will be implementing the future agenda. We are certain that it should be realized through the tool thematic global partnerships. In the current world of multiple actors and multiple threats only effective partnerships among states, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector can deliver success in addressing any global problem.

The state, of course, must remain the central pillar among all other partners. Besides, what is needed is a “powerful” and responsible state. Only such a state can realize long-term complex tasks stemming from the post-2015 UN development agenda.

A “powerful” state often scares many on the ground that it could allegedly abuse its power and harm people. But, let us take us a look at the other side of this coin. What do people feel when they lack a “powerful” state, namely, when there is no one to protect them from resulting chaos, lawlessness and impunity? I believe that both the people of Belarus and their neighbors can soberly assess the arguments like these and draw the right conclusions.

It is no wonder, then, that the world community selects precisely stable and internally coherent states like Belarus to serve as a stage for addressing acute international crises.

The people of Belarus very much value stability and successful development. We are convinced that these factors make us a fully responsible stakeholder when it comes to implementing the future development agenda.

The United Nations should play a particular role in implementing the agenda. It is at this universal stage where governments and their partners will be doing their best to realize it. We are convinced that the Organization will be able to cope with the task at hand if it successfully adjusts to constantly emerging realities of life. The issue of reforming and renewing the UN is as acute as ever – not just in its traditional institutional dimension, but also in conceptual terms.

As far as the latter is concerned, we deem it necessary to give a serious thought to two problems. First, we need to look for practical solutions to multiple situations when some UN principles contradict others.

Second, there is the problem of negative consequences stemming from purportedly benign international activities that are often undertaken under a UN mandate. Far too often, however, these activities aim at accommodating someone's political goals. The sponsors bother little about the consequences, like chaos, lawlessness, and refugee inflows. The Iraqi Kurdistan, for instance, stands as a typical example of such egotistical policy in the context of refugees.

Trying to discern the future, we would all be well advised to take to heart the words of the great internationalist who lived during the First World War – American President Woodrow Wilson, who said: "The interests of all nations are our own also. We are partners with the rest. What affects mankind is inevitably our affair".