



VYSTÚPENIE PREZIDENTA SR  
v Bezpečnostnej rade OSN

New York, 25. 9. 2024

Mr Chairman, Mr Secretary-General,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak at this high-level meeting. Slovakia and Slovenia are often confused by their names. I think that I am telling the truth when I say that there is no offence taken on either side. On the contrary, our countries and peoples are friends and Allies. And there are many more similarities than differences between us. What our nations have in common and truly care about is multilateralism, rules-based order, international law and – of course – peace.

Mr Chairman, your country's Presidency and your intensive work prove my point. The world we live in isn't always nice. We see more and longer conflicts. We also see more violence, persecution and human rights violations. And – unfortunately – further backsliding of democracy.

We also see an unprecedented number of people displaced or on the run, which multiplies humanitarian needs. And all of this is happening in a world of acute climate change consequences. Sitting here in the UN Security Council brings me to an important question. How can the world's highest body for the prevention of conflicts and advancement of peace fulfil its duties under the UN Charter? How could it lead to peace?

We are sorry to see internal conflicts and vetoes instead of peace-making. Unaddressed breaches of international law instead of peacekeeping. And power politics instead of peacebuilding. The results? It becomes ever harder for member states to trust the Council's ability to address crises. Moreover, a divided Security Council means more lives lost, more damage done and more suffering caused.

In Slovakia – we see closely where it leads to. Our direct neighbour – Ukraine – has turned into a war-torn country. Although an overwhelming majority of UN members repeatedly denounced Russia's continued aggression. The consequences? I realize this war is not the world's only conflict. There are others in Gaza, Mali, Myanmar, Sudan and elsewhere. It may also seem too distant for many fellow UN member states. But the consequences extend far beyond Europe.

All principles of international cooperation are at stake. Principles on which the post war security architecture has been standing for almost 80 years. Without them, the international order – as we know it – will end and turn into chaos and acts of violence. For Slovakia – as a long-term and consistent advocate of multilateralism – this is

unacceptable. Sovereignty and territorial integrity within internationally recognised borders are supreme principles of international law. They stand at the very basics of the UN Charter.

With regret – we see some countries not respecting international organizations like the UN, WTO or others. For smaller countries – like Slovakia – it is vitally important that these pillars of international order stay in place. So bigger players can't do whatever suits them. Otherwise, such a behaviour will lead first to the erosion and eventually to the destruction of multilateralism. Painful lessons from our history teach us that a determined aggressor can be hardly appeased. Everybody fully understands that peace is much more than only the absence of war. That's the reason why the UN Charter entitles a country under armed attack to the right of individual or collective self-defence. We must get back to the basic respect for shared rules and adjust our collective security system. It's the only one that we still have. We must not destroy it by our negligence.

We can't give up on humanity's most valuable asset – the ability to adapt.

It has already been said many times before – but never enough – that peace is one of the UN's main objectives. Unless we start cultivating a culture of peace and non-violence, we will lose both. Unlike most natural disasters, all wars and conflicts are manmade and can be also stopped by people.

The UN Charter speaks clearly to us even over almost eight decades – “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.” If we truly believe in what we signed up for – our task as leaders is clear. To be able to face the rapid changes of today's world – we all need to re-commit to international cooperation and human rights.

We should pledge to get back to the very foundations of the UN. They are exactly as up-to-date, relevant and needed as they were 79 years ago. The UN deserves to enter its next year's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary stronger with an outlook of hope and a prospect of renewed will and determination for international cooperation. This is what we promised to the next generations – and must not fail to deliver. Let us remember and let us act accordingly. We won't get a second chance.

I know this is a hypothetical exercise. But still, it would be interesting to see how many parties would – with no hesitation – put their signature under a symbolically renewed UN Charter today – as opposed to almost 80 years ago. Including all standing commitments and obligations to peace, human rights and international law, of course. At least, an interesting food for thought for the next year's round anniversary of the UN, isn't it?

Thank you.