



SERBIA

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STATEMENT

by

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PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

New York, 23 September 2014

Esteemed Chairmen,
Distinguished Colleagues,

I would like to congratulate Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for convening this Summit and express my gratitude for being given the opportunity to present the positions of the Republic of Serbia on the highly important issue of climate change.

We, the present-day political leaders, are called upon to take responsibility for making joint decisions upon which the prosperity of future generations will heavily depend. Serbia may be a small country yet, through partner cooperation with others, it can confront all challenges and address problems that overcome its capabilities.

To address the question of global climate change, we need – we have known all along - comprehensive action, both at the multilateral level, i.e. the level of United Nations activities, and at regional levels. Scientists are in agreement that global temperature in the twenty first century will rise by several degrees centigrade. Extreme bad weather will become more frequent and its frequency will depend upon the intensity of global warming.

And to address this question, Serbia is ready to make a contribution of its own, all the more so as it has been a victim of disastrous floods for months already.

Some parts of my country received precipitations equal to rainfalls that happen once in a thousand years. Enormous damage, direct and indirect, has been caused to property, estimated at more than €1.5 billion. The most tragic of all is the loss of human lives.

I take this opportunity to thank representatives of States, governments, numerous organizations, associations and individuals that lent their helping hand to my country and my people selflessly in their hour of need and, in particular, those that continue to provide, even after the calamity, their support to the enormous and expensive undertaking of removing the consequences and rebuilding the destruction.

Distinguished Colleagues,

Throughout the history of our planet, the climate affected the unceasing processes causing changes on continents, in the oceans and the structure of flora and fauna. The surface of the Earth was changed by endogenous natural mechanisms, as well as exogenous factors that are entirely outside human reach.

Has climate changed and is it still changing to the detriment of mankind? Are these changes man-made and have they been brought about by the technological advancement of our civilization? Did the said extreme happenstance occur in the past and to what extent? What are we to do, how to fight, is it possible to control Nature in the way to fully protect ourselves from its whims?

Science has offered a fair number of answers to many of these questions. Consensus has been reached on some explanations; however, views and scientific truth seem to be in contradiction to some others.

Dear friends,

Consequences of climate change will further heighten the tension caused by the large gap already in evidence around the world. Doomsday scenarios in predicting the future restrict our choices. They affect, most dramatically, the most vulnerable ones or those who are yet to restart industry and secure better life to their people. The effect that developing countries exercise on global warming is insignificant and they must be given the chance to develop even if it means increased emission of deleterious gases. For development, not only moral reasons are relevant.

The goal of us as politicians should be, first and foremost, to render full support to research activities, on the one hand, and to provide a concerted and coordinated response to climate change and extreme weather conditions, on the other. Our basic and most important task is to adapt and prepare the Government and society alike to address every possible scenario, including the worst-case one.

By honouring relevant international documents, primarily the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, Serbia will continue to contribute, through its government agencies and research institutions, to the activities of the United Nations and all other organizations, including within European and regional initiatives, especially with regard to climate-monitoring and the question of downsizing the negative effects of climate change.

We have been and shall remain part of the joint team and an active participant in this undertaking in the hope that science will offer clear answers and incontrovertible evidence very soon and that policy will provide the best and fastest solutions.

It is my hope that agreement on the adoption of a long-term disaster risk reduction framework, with strong emphasis on forecasting, will be reached at the upcoming Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Japan in 2015.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We face two possibilities: Do nothing, resign and agree to the situation or take responsibility for changes and ensure progress of mankind.

Serbia is for progress as it has no alternatives.