



Ukraine Addresses the United Nation's 50th Anniversary

Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko

Extracts from Minister Hennadiy Udovenko's Address in the General Debate of the 50th Session of the General Assembly, Sept. 28, 1995

The course of historical development has vividly demonstrated the interconnection and interdependence between safeguarding peace and security and economic and social development. In spite of significant achievements in this field, the present-day picture of the world is far from being ideal. Problems of unemployment, underdevelopment, poverty, social disintegration and isolation require urgent solutions. These problems are especially acute for economies in transition that are carrying out fundamental reforms. Ukraine, which inherited a heavy burden of problems from the former USSR, is undergoing a painful period of radical political and economic transformation. Having laid the basic foundations of a democratic political system and civil society during the past four years, Ukraine entered a new stage of development. Last October President Leonid Kuchma proclaimed a new economic policy which is based on the implementation of fundamental economic reform. Now, main efforts are aimed at further strengthening of democratic foundations, creating of a socially oriented market economy, implementing of open, predictable and consistent foreign policy. Reforming the state system of division of powers is being continued. In contrast to most post-Soviet countries we managed, without violent collisions, to find a way out of the constitutional impasse. The important stage is ahead - completion of drafting and adoption of a new Constitution of Ukraine. A diversified system of external economic relations is being gradually established. The process of integrating national economy into the world economic space is being intensified. At the same time, Ukrainian economy continues to suffer crisis phenomena. Having proclaimed the course toward market reform and its fast implementation, Ukraine has to look for its own national model of market

transformations. Today the establishment of an effective system of social protection is the principle and most topical task of the Government. The most important priority for President Kuchma and the Government of Ukraine continues to be the preservation of civil peace and inter-ethnic harmony in the country. During four years of independence Ukraine has managed to settle confrontational situations by peaceful political means. Ukraine's achievements in the field of securing rights of national minorities are especially evident against the background of numerous conflicts which unfortunately continue to be a reality in the territory of the former USSR.

In its international activity Ukraine proceeds from the premise that stable



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development is a guarantor of lasting peace. At present, when economic reforms in Ukraine are gaining momentum, we are especially interested in the deepening of activities of the UN and its specialized agencies in the social and economic field aimed at establishing conditions for the integration of Ukrainian economy and other economies in transition into the world economic space. The United Nations is an important instrument for promoting this process and we appreciate the fact that the Members of this Organization show deeper understanding of the problems of countries in transition.

We believe that creating internal preconditions for a steady gradual development of Ukraine has also an international dimension. The geopolitical situation of Ukraine transforms our efforts to build an economically viable state into an important factor of promoting guaranteed peace, stability and security, including in the

field of ecology, on the European continent. It is this deep understanding of the global interdependence that dictated, in particular, the political decision of President Kuchma on the decommissioning of the Chornobyl nuclear power plant by the year 2000. Next year marks the 10th Anniversary of the Chornobyl catastrophe which left not only a deep scar in the fates of the present generation of Ukrainians, Belarussians and Russians but also has a global perspective. We propose to declare 1996 the Year of Chornobyl Commemoration and to organize special activities under the aegis of the United Nations. On the eve of this tragic anniversary, I would like to once again emphasize that the nuclear safety problems as well as decommissioning of malfunctioning and outdated industrial nuclear facilities are critical not only for Ukraine. We are convinced that the time has come for a practical solution on the whole set of issues related to the accident, especially in view of the long-term nature of its aftermath. The earlier we invest money to this problem, the sooner, and with less negative consequences for the whole of humanity we shall be able to overcome it.

We expect that the support of Ukraine's efforts by the international community will be directed not only to the Chornobyl power plant decommissioning but also to solving the whole cluster of associated economic, social and ecological problems. In particular, we would welcome wide international participation in establishing an international scientific-technological center in Chornobyl.

At the same time, I would like to emphasize that the sense of realism with regard to possibilities of the United Nations in the solution of our national problems has not left Ukraine. We do not aim to compete with the less developed countries for the limited resources of the UN development system. We are ready and willing to cooperate with all interested partners, and we rely on the purposeful activity of the international community aimed at creating favorable conditions for expanding access of Ukrainian exports to the world market. We expect that the World Trade Organization, which Ukraine is ready to join, will play an important role in expansion and diversification of international trade and economic relations...

We need a strong and effective United Nations. Its renovation should envelop both the structure itself and the character of activities in accordance with the requirements of the new epoch.