

## **Address of the President of Latvia, Egils Levits, at the High-level meeting to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations**

Mr President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations is a time for reflection and new resolve. This universal body, created out of the ashes of World War II, is the foundation of today's rules-based international system. After 75 years the UN remains the platform for addressing truly global issues.

At the time the UN was founded, Latvia was already under Soviet occupation and had been erased from the world map. Latvia could join the UN only in 1991, after regaining independence. Throughout these past 29 years, Latvia has been a staunch advocate for international law and human rights, democracy and effective multilateralism.

Today, Latvia is a modern European nation with a growing sense of responsibility and ability to contribute to international peace and security. With this in mind, Latvia has presented its candidature to the UN Security Council elections in 2025.

Smaller countries can substantively contribute to the work of the Security Council, as demonstrated currently by our northern neighbour Estonia, and recently by our southern neighbour Lithuania. Smaller countries contribute to improving transparency and working methods of the Council. They raise emerging issues and threats to global security from their unique perspective.

The working methods of the UN need to be adjusted and discussions must continue on UN reforms, including the long overdue UN Security Council reform, so that a more effective organization that can deliver on the ground.

In Latvia, this anniversary will be marked with public events during the so-called UN Month.

To raise awareness about the UN, we will focus on the meaningful involvement of young people. In the framework of the 'World's Largest Lesson', an initiative supported by UNESCO, Latvian schoolchildren will learn how the UN works and why multilateralism matters.

We must empower young people. Youth perspectives and their demand for a more accountable UN are essential to form the response to global challenges. Young people today will have to live with the consequences of our action or inaction.

The UN at 100 will be in their hands.

Thank you!