



General Assembly

Sixty-ninth session

Official Records

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Monday, 29 September 2014, 6 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa (Uganda)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Gata Mavita wa Lufuta (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 6.15 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

General debate

The Acting President (spoke in French): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Jamal Abdullah Al-Sallal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Sallal (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, on behalf of the people and the Government of Yemen, I would like to congratulate the President of the General Assembly and his brotherly country, Uganda, on his election to lead the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. We fully trust that, thanks to his able leadership, the work of the Assembly during this session will come to a fruitful conclusion, and we wish him every success in that endeavour. We would also like to express our appreciation for the skilful manner in which his predecessor, Mr. John Ashe, led the work of the Assembly at its previous session. In addition, I would like to welcome the tireless and mighty efforts being undertaken by the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to manage this Organization in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which focuses on the maintenance of international peace and security. We thank him for his commendable and special efforts to support the political process in Yemen.

I would like to highlight a happy coincidence. This general debate is taking place at a time when Yemen is observing the anniversary of its two glorious revolutions of September and October. Those events were very important occasions for us, and I would like, therefore, to congratulate, from this rostrum, the valiant people of Yemen and commend them on their resolve and the sacrifices that they have made to achieve freedom and to put an end to oppression, injustice and despotism. In addition, I would commend our people on the efforts for change that they have been undertaking wisely and patiently for 50 years now.

Since the beginning of 2011, Yemen has taken measures to effect change and address the successive political and economic crises that arose owing to a lack of political prospects. Those crises all but ravaged our country and led it to the brink of civil war and chaos. They have also had very negative repercussions at the political, economic, security and humanitarian levels in Yemen. The Yemeni people realized that the best way to put an end to those crises was through national dialogue.

I would like, therefore, once again to thank all of those who provided their support to the people of Yemen and to a political settlement of the situation in Yemen, in particular through the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Initiative and the Implementation Mechanism. I would like to thank Saudi Arabia, in particular the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. I thank the GCC and its Secretary General, Mr. Al Zayani. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his Special

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Adviser on Yemen, Mr. Benomar. In addition, I thank the members of the Security Council for their support for the righteous political process in Yemen. I thank the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the European Union and all the countries and international organizations and institutions that have supported my country.

In that regard, I would like to mention the exceptional and historic visit of the Security Council to Sana'a on 27 January 2013. That visit was a strong signal of support from the international community to Yemen and to its extraordinary peaceful transition of power through political dialogue and on the basis of the GCC Initiative, the Implementation Mechanism and the road map seeking to put an end to the crisis and steer Yemen in the safe and right direction. We must also not forget the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, namely resolutions 2014 (2011), 2051 (2012) and 2140 (2014). They have lent political weight to the work of the United Nations on the political process in Yemen.

Nor should we forget the periodic reports of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Benomar, on the progress in the political situation and the challenges that Yemen has been facing. Those reports have played a very important role, because they have sent a message to all political parties in Yemen that are trying to stall the political process; it is a message that says that we will not let anybody threaten the unity, security and stability of Yemen, with all of the resulting implications for international peace and security.

I would also like to commend President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, who has shown great perseverance in rebuilding a new federal Yemen on the basis of Yemen's inclusive National Dialogue Conference. Yemen signed the Gulf Initiative for Yemen and thereby began the transition process. We were able to achieve the goals set for the first stage of transition. A Government of National Reconciliation was formed, a military affairs committee was established, and early presidential elections were organized.

We then began the second stage of the transitional process. Among the most important achievements of that phase was the National Dialogue Conference, which took place on 28 January 2014. In addition, we have set up a drafting committee for a constitution. That committee is about to submit its first draft of the new constitution. After the draft's adoption, there will be a referendum on it. Furthermore, the Supreme

Commission for Elections and Referendum has created an electronic register for the purpose of registering voters.

We have made notable progress in the political process. However, Yemen still faces great challenges that have nearly destroyed the country and are trying to bring it back to square one. We would cite, inter alia, the many dangerous events that occurred in Yemen as a result of the recent political and military escalation provoked by the Ansar Allah group, which besieged the capital, Sana'a, despite the decision taken by the Yemeni people at the inclusive National Dialogue Conference no longer to use weapons or violence to settle their political differences.

The Government undertook to deal with the issue of escalation wisely and patiently, because our nation can no longer bear to put up with conflict. Indeed, the citizens of Yemen are buckling under the burden resulting from successive financial crises. All of our people aspire to peace and stability. A great many political efforts have been undertaken to end the crisis, which led to the signing of the Peace and National Partnership Agreement. However, the Ansar Allah group chose military means, attacking institutions of the State, looting and pillaging them as well as private homes.

The militia entered our capital, Sana'a, where it remains. The success of the terrorist groups is the result of political support and logistical coordination provided by members of the former regime. But we took a political approach based on conciliation and made further political efforts leading to the signing a few days ago of a new security annex to the Agreement in order to maintain social cohesion, so that our people can devote their efforts to the political process and to implementing the final stages of a critical turning point in our national life.

All political parties in Yemen need to undertake to uphold the commitments in the Agreement. In addition, the international community needs to continue to provide its political support and economic assistance to Yemen. We also need for strong and firm positions to be taken by the Security Council, condemning all parties that seek to undermine the political process. The international community has condemned the events referred to and has called on the Yemeni parties to respect the commitments and pledges made during the National Dialogue Conference.

It should be noted that Yemen is also dealing with major economic challenges, including a scarcity of resources, an increase in unemployment and poverty and growing budgetary deficits. In addition, Yemen is experiencing a humanitarian crisis that cannot be overlooked, because half of our population, namely, 14.7 million people, need some form of humanitarian assistance. Moreover, Yemen is currently hosting around a million refugees from countries of the Horn of Africa.

We have an annual humanitarian response plan in Yemen, but the plan has not mobilized the necessary support. The international community knows, however, that, if the humanitarian situation worsens further, that will have an impact on the political process. In the face of the very difficult economic and humanitarian context that has nearly destroyed our national economy, the Government of national reconciliation took the decision to amend the price of oil derivatives, adopted a set of austerity measures and fiscal and tax reforms, and agreed to provide social security coverage to more 250,000 people. We have also put the final touches on an electronic human-resources management system for police and army personnel. We are also working progressively in the area of agriculture and fisheries.

Undoubtedly, Yemen expects a great deal from its fraternal and friendly neighbouring countries at this very difficult time. We need economic support commensurate with the challenges that we are facing. That support could reduce the costs associated with the economic reforms that we will be launching in the future.

Yemen has seen an improvement in the security situation in our country. We have taken steps to restructure our armed forces and police. However, the security situation in Yemen is still rather fragile and is an obstacle preventing the success of our political processes and economic growth. Yemen has been affected by the scourge of terrorism, which has spared no nationality, sect or religion. That terrorism is not only threatening Yemen currently but the region and the entire world. We have played a pioneering role in striving to thwart a scourge that has embedded itself into the lives and traditions of our people and of the people of all the countries of our region and the world. The number of non-Yemenite elements in those terrorist groups is 70 per cent.

The international community needs to tighten its ranks to help Yemen to combat the scourge. We need

support from the international community to combat terrorism in the Pacific region and the Arabian Gulf, which is a window open to the entire world. We are seeking to continue our efforts very actively, and we will spare no effort to ensure that our countries continue to go in the right direction and to put an end to all bastions of terrorism, to polarization and hegemony, because all peoples aspire to a safe, stable life, within a climate marked by justice and partnership, legality and freedom. In order to combat the security challenges, we need support from friendly countries as part of efforts to combat terrorism. We also need cooperation in logistics, training and capacity-building, because Yemen's stability will have a positive impact on the region and the entire world.

Despite the challenges that Yemen is facing economically and politically and in terms of security, we have not been sheltered from the other crises that the world is facing. We have closely followed all of the suffering the world over, but particularly that of the Palestinian people, who have been killed and mutilated, with the infrastructure in their country being destroyed and new lethal weapons being used to commit new, barbarous crimes that have cost the lives of thousands of martyrs and caused thousands of injuries.

The international community must therefore condemn the war crimes and crimes against humanity being committed against innocent civilians. It should make the occupying Power resume the peace process with the goal of achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace that respects the decisions of international law and the Arab Peace Initiative. We would like to reaffirm our full solidarity with the Palestinian people in their efforts to see the restoration of the rights that have been stolen from them, including their independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital.

The ongoing cycle of violence in sisterly Syria is a source of concern, since it continues to destabilize and damage the entire region. Furthermore, some armed terrorist groups are exploiting the serious situation there. That is a large-scale challenge that demands that we all work together to find solutions, as fast as possible, in order to promote the aspirations of the Syrian people in peace and stability, while maintaining Syria's unity and territorial integrity.

In Iraq, we are seeing the activities of Daesh, which is perpetrating crimes against the population irrespective of their religious and ethnic backgrounds. That is extremely worrying, because such groups and

organizations are simply interested in acquiring greater power. They have nothing to do with the tolerant Islamic religion or the values of the Muslim community as a whole, which respects all the rights of others.

The events and conflicts we are seeing around the world highlight the challenges facing the United Nations. We must work to reform it so that it is able to settle conflicts and maintain international peace and security. I therefore urge that the Arab States be given a permanent seat on the Security Council, since the region figures so prominently in the work of international peace and security.

The issue of the control of nuclear weapons is urgent, since nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction are a huge threat to the peace and security of the whole world. We therefore deplore the fact that the conference on establishing the Middle East as a nuclear-weapon-free zone has been repeatedly delayed, despite the efforts and flexibility shown by Arab countries to convene it. We call on the great Powers to assume their responsibility to put pressure on Israel and the other parties that are preventing the convening of a conference, whereby they are creating obstacles to the restoration of peace and security in the Middle East and laying the ground for an alarming arms race, which will undoubtedly have negative effects.

In conclusion, I would once again like to thank the President and the Secretary-General. We hope that the work of this session will be successful and will help to meet the hopes and aspirations of our peoples to live in peace and stability and lead a decent life.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Mohlabi Kenneth Tsekoa, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Relations of the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Mr. Tsekoa (Lesotho): I would first like to congratulate President Kutesa on his well-deserved election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. His distinguished career as a diplomat and leader assures us of a successful session. I would also like to commend his predecessor, Ambassador John Ashe, for his remarkable leadership during the previous session.

Over the 69 years of its existence, the United Nations has witnessed several changes in the configuration of international relations. Some were traumatic, others benign. The survival of the Organization through all those tribulations testifies to its resilience and

the enduring validity of its mission. Today it is still confronted by serious challenges. The continuous eruption of armed conflicts throughout the world, terrorism, climate change, disease and the lingering effects of the economic and financial crises are only some of the challenges that have remained in the foreground of international relations and preoccupied the international community.

From the Horn of Africa and across the Sahel region, to the Republic of Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the continent of Africa is facing a rise in terrorism. The Nigeria-based Boko Haram, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and Al-Shabaab in Somalia continue to pose serious threats to the peace and security of the continent. The emergence in the Middle East and elsewhere of new extremist groups and terrorist entities, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, has not only further compounded the problem but is a stark reminder that we must act collectively to discharge the moral responsibility resting on us to ensure that people everywhere enjoy the right to peace, development and the sanctity of life.

The use of military force alone as a strategy for combating terrorism is no longer a panacea for that menace. Terrorism requires a holistic approach that addresses the root causes of the scourge. The resolution of international disputes based on dialogue, justice and the equality of all States must be at the heart of that strategy if it is to succeed.

The recurring bloody conflict between Israel and Palestine continues to weigh heavily on the conscience of all humankind. Recent developments in that region have cast a shadow on the future that had seemed to hold out the promise of a negotiated settlement. Unprecedented impunity and the disproportionate use of force by the parties involved call into question our very claim to be a civilization. Turning United Nations shelters into combat zones and killing the innocent children, men and women who take refuge in them is a shameful act that must be condemned in the strongest terms possible. Lesotho endorses the recent Human Rights Council resolution S-21/1, demanding that the massacres of innocent Palestinian civilians be investigated by an independent commission and that those responsible be held accountable.

Let us not forget that in 2005 we unanimously adopted the principle of the responsibility to protect (see resolution 60/1, paragraphs 138-140) in order to safeguard innocent civilians from war crimes,

genocide, mass atrocities and ethnic cleansing. Indeed, the Security Council has reaffirmed that principle in several conflicts around the world and in some instances has authorized military intervention.

Unfortunately, in the case of the slaughter of thousands of Palestinian civilians, the Council has shied away from invoking the principle of responsibility to protect. Instead, it took comfort in issuing a presidential statement that glaringly fails to reiterate accountability for the war crimes committed. Civilians in Gaza deserve the protection that Israelis in Tel Aviv are afforded under international law. We call on Israel — as we have always done in the past — to fully comply with its obligations under the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. That is the only plausible route to lasting peace.

The world has long come to terms with the dangers to humanity posed by the possession of weapons of mass destruction. That is why Lesotho continues to advocate for total abolition and destruction of all nuclear weapons. Those weapons have no place in modern-day civilized society, hence the call for a convention to ban them all. While working towards that goal, we must emphasize that full compliance with the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is critical. By the same token, we call for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons, in accordance with the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

It is unacceptable that the United Nations of today still reflects the 1945 architecture of the world as seen by the victors of the Second World War. The reform of the United Nations, including the Security Council, can no longer be delayed. A reformed, transparent and more democratic United Nations is necessary for preserving international peace and security and for confronting the challenges of development. All Member States need to garner the necessary political will to advance the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. Let us make the sixth-ninth session one for decisive action.

The representatives who gathered in San Francisco to finalize the Charter of the United Nations dreamed of a world of peace and shared prosperity. They renounced a vision of a world in which some unilaterally imposed economic sanctions and financial blockades against others, or one in which peoples were denied their right to self-determination or were subjected to occupation,

as is the case in Cuba, Palestine and Western Sahara. We have to remove those dark spots on the history of our time by allowing the letter and spirit of the Charter to guide our actions.

The theme chosen for our general debate, “Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda”, could not be more relevant at the current international juncture. The road towards the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has been rough, with some countries reporting relative success in reducing poverty and hunger, markedly increasing school enrolment, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS. However, the challenges remain most daunting in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, some small island developing States and countries in, or emerging from, conflict.

For our part, in Lesotho we have made some progress towards achieving at least two of the eight MDGs, namely, universal primary education, and promoting gender equality and empowering women. We still face a long and uphill journey to reach a life of dignity for all. HIV and AIDS still pose a serious threat to us. The untold miseries brought about by that scourge are known to all of us. Africa is more vulnerable to that threat because of the worsening poverty and unemployment. Sadly, new, incurable pandemics such as Ebola have emerged, wreaking havoc in sister African countries and overwhelming their health systems. The world must mobilize resources and energy to help the affected countries of West Africa fight the pandemic and to abolish it in the long term.

Our quest to pursue a sustainable future for all must never wane as we step into the new era and embark on the road map of the post-2015 development agenda. We need to formulate a new set of universal sustainable development goals that are concise and strong with regard to the means of implementation. It is important to emphasize national ownership and respect for national conditions in each Member State and to take advantage of global diversity so that we can attain our development aspirations.

As we continue with intergovernmental discussions leading up to the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which will be held in Addis Ababa in July 2015, we must be guided by the spirit of frankness and mutual understanding, without the acrimony that often characterizes

our intergovernmental deliberations. It is equally important to emphasize that advancing the rule of law at the national and international levels is essential for realizing sustainable development, eradicating poverty and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms. Lesotho is by no means an exception in that regard.

A few days ago, the Climate Summit provided us with an opportunity once again to reaffirm our collective resolve to implement measures that can significantly address climate change. We disagreed for far too long, until we were confronted by the glaring and compelling scientific evidence that the link between global warming and human activity is indisputable. Sadly, catastrophes have begun to hit, mostly affecting the poorest and most vulnerable countries.

My country is one of the worst affected by climate change. In recent years, Lesotho has faced unsettling development challenges due to the effects of climate change. The effects of increasing extreme weather patterns such as early frost, droughts, desertification and degradation of arable land compound the challenges that we are already facing. Livelihoods of societies are stifled, and economies and ways of life are negatively affected.

While we appreciate that there are resources aimed at helping developing countries to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, we are concerned that such funds are difficult to access. The global climate-finance architecture is complex, with variable structures of governance and modalities. Some finance is channelled through multilateral agencies, sometimes even outside the funding mechanisms of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and some flows through bilateral development-assistance institutions, thereby making coordination very difficult. Lesotho calls on the international community and our development partners to simplify the accessibility of funds earmarked for climate change initiatives if we are to make an impact on the ground.

In conclusion, let me point out that the regime of the Charter of the United Nations has so far done its part in preventing a third world war, thereby fulfilling one of the dreams of the architects of our beloved Organization. The continued success and the relevance of the United Nations in the new millennium will depend, in large measure, on its capacity for self-renewal in readiness to meet modern-day challenges.

We, the United Nations, should continue to be the voice of the voiceless and the best hope for all humankind. Now is the time for leaders everywhere to join the race for transformative action that can drive peace, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, human dignity, economic competitiveness and sustainable prosperity for all. Lesotho will and must continue to be a persistent and resilient part of that initiative.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Jean-Paul Adam, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Seychelles.

Mr. Adam (Seychelles): It gives me great pleasure to begin this address with warm congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. I also wish to congratulate His Excellency Mr. John Ashe on his inspiring leadership of the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

This year, we marked the 100th anniversary of the First World War. Our forefathers in 1918 called that War the war to end all wars, because they knew, as we know today, that no society can aspire to development and a better way of life without peace. At that time, many Seychellois people gave their lives to defend that ideal. Despite being one of the smallest nations in the world, geographically far removed from the centres of power and of conflict, our people have always known that we cannot be at peace if the world is not at peace. I take this opportunity to salute those who made the ultimate sacrifice in those turbulent times of 1914 and those islanders who showed that no matter how small we may be, we can make a meaningful contribution.

However, the turbulent events that have unfolded before our eyes during the course of 2014 have shown very clearly that the world is not at peace. The heinous and murderous acts of global terrorist activities in recent weeks remind us of the increasing threat posed by terrorism and of the pain that it brings to innocent victims. That is coupled with a multiplication of regional conflicts and instability within States.

In order to build peace, we must reinforce our commitment to multilateralism through the United Nations, while also ensuring that we accord the highest priority to more inclusive and effective development. In that context, I commend the President for placing the discussion in this year's general debate under the banner of "Delivering on and implementing a transformative

post-2015 development agenda". Seychelles takes pride in having achieved most of the Millennium Development Goals and continues to impart greater impetus to ensure that the remaining challenges are effectively dealt with by 2015.

For small island developing States (SIDS), the sustainable development goals are essential to allow for the implementation of development transformation. We must recognize that the current development framework of the majority of development institutions is still not favourable to the development of SIDS. Most development gains are still assessed ultimately through gross domestic product (GDP) per capita measurements, which do not adequately identify the threats to human development or the opportunities that exist, especially for small island States.

Seychelles warmly welcomes the outcomes of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in Apia, and would particularly like to thank the Government and people of Samoa for their leadership in establishing a platform for action to support the development of SIDS.

Seychelles has championed three priorities that are outcomes of that conference. The first is the need for a vulnerability index to be used as a more effective tool for addressing the development needs of SIDS than GDP per capita. The second is the need to address the debilitating debt of SIDS through innovations, such as debt for climate change adaptation swaps. The third priority is the need to build opportunities for SIDS on the basis of their strengths, not their weaknesses; hence, the need to support a blue economy approach, whereby SIDS can better utilize their oceanic potential and whereby we can be large-ocean nations.

Those three priorities are not specific only to SIDS. The development challenges of SIDS highlight the deficiencies of the development framework for all developing nations. A vulnerability index allows us to target those areas that place our societies at risk. An effective vulnerability index adopted by the United Nations will allow us to better target the diverse needs of SIDS, least developed countries and landlocked countries, as well as States threatened by desertification or those most prone to natural disasters. It is an inclusive view of development.

Ownership of the blue economy also widens development perspectives for our whole planet. It is high time that we realize the immense potential of

our oceans. We cannot apply the principles of a green economy and of sustainable development without recognizing that we are applying them in a blue world, for over 70 per cent of our planet is covered by oceans and seas. For developing nations, the ocean is a shared opportunity. It is therefore essential that we address our oceans, and the challenges therein appropriately, through a stand-alone sustainable development goal on oceans.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libya), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The right to development belongs to us all. True development is therefore not only about economic growth or the total wealth that a country can create. It is about the constant improvement that we need for the well-being of people. It is about being able to build a future for our children based on shared opportunity. In that vein, I reiterate the call that the international community not spare any effort in helping the nations of West Africa to overcome the Ebola pandemic, which is a health issue of international concern. Ensuring that the affected communities have access to the right medical support will save lives not only in West Africa but across the world. Ebola is not just an African problem. It is a global problem.

We also remain preoccupied by the conclusions of the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. That is why SIDS have continuously underlined the scientific research being conducted on climate change, which shows that a warming of even 1.5°C will have a negative impact on all countries, even if islands are on the front line. However, the science also tells us that we still have a window where we can act decisively and effectively.

A legally binding agreement that sets a course for increases of no more than 2°C is achievable, but all countries, large or small, must make it happen. It is not a subject that we can leave aside to take up later, to debate at a later date. We call on all partners to ensure that the upcoming Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which will meet in Lima, sets the stage for concluding a meaningful and legally binding agreement in Paris in 2015.

I would also like to reiterate the importance of fulfilling commitments to jointly mobilize over \$100 billion annually by 2020 for the full operationalization of the Green Climate Fund, which

should be capitalized as soon as possible. I also underline the importance of ensuring that the most vulnerable, in particular SIDS and African nations, have access to the appropriate resources as quickly as possible. Further, we call for SIDS to be part of the decision-makers on issues of climate change and to be allocated a permanent seat on the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts.

Seychelles will also continue to advocate for a solution to the debt trap in which many of us, especially SIDS, find ourselves. A solution that Seychelles has brought forward in partnership with the Nature Conservancy, an international non-governmental organization, is proposals for debt-for-adaptation swaps. SIDS are often constrained in their development because of large debt-to-GDP ratios. Transferring that debt into climate change adaptation projects will address the SIDS need for greater flexibility in addressing their development challenges while also making a real impact in terms of building climate change resilience by creating marine protected areas, not only locally, but globally. That concept will also allow for the application of climate change funding in order to achieve leverage for adaptation projects while reducing financial barriers for small island developing States.

(spoke in French)

Faced with the challenges of security, transnational crime and extremism, the United Nations requires significant reform and must rise above its divisions to help build a world in which human beings can live, wherever they are, in dignity and free from want and fear. More than ever, it is necessary to encourage the search for collective solutions to address all sorts of phenomenon that undermine the balance of our world.

That is the sense that guides every action of my country. Seychelles is indeed ready to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century in a spirit of openness and dialogue with all peoples, for a world of peace and human brotherhood. We are working in Africa, particularly in the Indian Ocean, with a view to the region becoming one of shared peaceful, democratic and prosperous development.

The Indian Ocean region is grateful to the United Nations, and the Seychelles once again thanks its specialized agencies, as well as our various partners, for the invaluable role each one has played and still plays in

the fight against maritime piracy, which has already had a deep impact on our development plans. Statistics show that today maritime piracy has declined, but that hardly indicates that that threat has disappeared. Therefore, we must remain vigilant, and we still need the support of all to help dispel the profound aftereffects it has left for our economy. Over the years, maritime piracy has had serious repercussions on fishing, tourism, shipping and port services. Seychelles continues to work in harmony with all its partners, since any slackening in the face of that unpredictable phenomenon could have consequences.

The Seychelles is actively involved with partners in our region and beyond to better target organizers of cross-border trafficking in the Indian Ocean zone. We have established a regional information centre that allows better coordination between our region's forces and also aims to better manage the monitoring and protecting of our shared maritime space against the shared threats, whether piracy, narcotics trafficking or illegal fishing.

In the same vein, the Seychelles will continue to support the Security Council decision to strengthen the United Nations-African Union partnership in Somalia. It is a difficult task, for which I wish to affirm our solidarity with the African and United Nations staff involved. I take the opportunity to urge the international community to continue supporting efforts to restore peace and reconciliation in Somalia. The international community must not lose patience in view of the mixed results achieved so far. For our part, we have taken action bilaterally and with regional and multilateral partners to help Somalia strengthen its capacities in areas such as fisheries management and development. The United Nations must always show the way and inspire the necessary efforts to bring together the means necessary in the struggle and to coordinate them with the States concerned.

Seychelles also expresses solidarity with all African countries affected by conflict or instability. We are committed to working together so that we can build together, in the African Union, the transformative Africa that we foresee through our 2063 strategy.

Seychelles, like all African countries, also expresses solidarity with the Palestinian people, given the challenges of the continuing conflict in the Middle East, and we reiterate our wish for peace between the two neighbouring States based on the 1967 borders.

We also take the opportunity to recall the importance of lifting the economic embargo against Cuba, an island country that depends on trade access to better support its development, as all island States do.

All those problems and challenges justify the United Nations remaining the leaven of international peace and security, but also and especially the conscience of humanity. Here I commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his remarkable work at the head of our Organization at a time when human history is facing enormous challenges. Indeed, much remains to be done, but optimism remains, for the helm is in good hands. The United Nations will effectively discharge its mission if all the nations that gave rise to it, large and small, provide it with the necessary means and entrust it with the responsibility for carrying out actions in the service of humanity. Seychelles, for its part, remains ready to play its role to its full capacity, in this noble and exciting mission.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Patrice Nisbett, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Homeland Security, Labour, Justice and Legal Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Mr. Nisbett (Saint Kitts and Nevis): It is indeed an honour for me to address this body for the first time since assuming the portfolio of Minister for Foreign Affairs a little over one year ago. I take pleasure in sharing the perspectives of the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis on matters before the General Assembly during its sixty-ninth session.

Allow me to start by congratulating Mr. Kutesa on his election to the office of President of the General Assembly, to steer the course of the Assembly during this session. Indeed, his sterling contribution in his native Uganda, where he serves as Minister for Foreign Affairs, and his efforts at strengthening the African Union have prepared him for the challenging task of finalizing the development of the post-2015 development agenda.

My delegation wishes to commend his predecessor, Mr. John Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda, for his leadership in presiding over the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. His focus on the development of the sustainable development goals and other issues of importance to small island developing States (SIDS) and developing countries in particular is worthy of high commendation.

The theme of the sixty-ninth session, “Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda”, is quite timely as we enter a new dispensation that reflects global priorities that were not contemplated at the time the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were conceptualized leading up to the year 2000. As we work on implementing the post-2015 development agenda, we must ensure that the 17 sustainable development goals recently formulated are effective in building on the foundation laid by the Millennium Development Goals. It is my delegation’s hope that the agenda as developed will be transformative in nature, with a high degree of success in its overarching objectives — the eradication of poverty and hunger, and the promotion of sustained and inclusive economic growth.

We are mindful that MDG 8, which calls for the strengthening of global partnerships, remains part of the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals established at the Millennium Summit in 2000. It is therefore highly important that we take great care in ensuring that the first 16 sustainable development goals are buttressed by a robust suite of implementation tools that will effectively serve as the catalyst for achieving success in the post-2015 development agenda.

My delegation can never overemphasize the importance of rendering effective and operational Goal 17, which calls for the strengthening of the means of implementation and the revitalization of the global partnership for sustainable development. We are therefore heartened by the President’s expressed plan to convene three high-level thematic debates and one high-level event geared towards, *inter alia*, strengthening the means of implementation in order to achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions.

We pay keen attention to the first event, the debate on the means of implementation. We are of the view that achieving sustainable development will require mobilization and the effective use of financial resources and technology development and transfer, in addition to capacity-building at all levels. It will also entail increased investment in the social sectors, infrastructure, community development, climate financing and the protection of global common goods.

The key question before us in relation to the means of implementation is how we mobilize the significant resources that will be needed to turn the aspirations of the post-2015 development agenda into tangible

outcomes. I wish to pledge my Government's support in advancing the basic thrust of the President's tenure. A strengthened global partnership should foster close collaboration between and among Governments, provide for an increased role of the private sector, ensure a fair international trading regime, and foster national and foreign direct investments.

My Government wishes to reiterate its firm commitment to doing its part to ensure that we achieve the goals developed to sustain economic and social development in a manner that will preserve the environment and ensure stable, safe and peaceful societies. Since our last address to this body, Saint Kitts and Nevis has solidified its position as a leader in the Caribbean in attracting foreign direct investment, specifically in its tourism infrastructure, and building its industrial base in the light manufacturing sector—electronics and electrical components. We have also successfully forged public-private partnerships in renewable-energy ventures providing sustained growth for our economy.

One of the peculiar vulnerabilities of small island developing States such as Saint Kitts and Nevis is our susceptibility to economic and external shocks, which results in a state of high indebtedness. It is no secret that high public debt affects the ability of Governments to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions. In the area of economic sustainability, we developed in 2011 and successfully implemented a comprehensive approach to the management of our national debt. Our plan included debt restructuring with international financial institutions, an exchange offer for government bonds, the curtailment of public borrowing to sustainable levels and a creative land-for-debt swap initiative.

I am pleased to report that by the end of June, we had successfully reduced the ratio of our debt to gross domestic product (GDP) by 50 percentage points, from over 145 per cent pre-restructuring to 95 per cent now. I am even more pleased to report that our debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to decline further, to 85 per cent by the end of 2014. In spite of our fiscal discipline, however, it is important for us to be mindful of the fact that one severe climate event can erase the gains achieved, effectively sending us into a vicious cycle that makes it difficult if not impossible to achieve sustainable development on the economic front.

At this juncture, I would be remiss if I failed to echo the call for a new paradigm for the assessment

used in the policy of graduation, which currently uses the narrow policy of per capita gross national income to confer middle-income and high-income status on developing countries. Saint Kitts and Nevis is of the view that that measure is grossly inadequate and needs to take into account the peculiar vulnerabilities of SIDS. We commend the Commonwealth secretariat for the innovative work it has been spearheading to encourage leading international financial institutions to accept a broader matrix, including the vulnerability index, to correctly assess the true economic situation of SIDS such as Saint Kitts and Nevis.

I must emphasize that graduation to a higher income category makes it difficult to access resources to sustain our economic, social and environmental policy objectives. Borrowing funds at a high rate on the international market serves only to perpetuate the vicious cycle of debt and threatens our sustainable development. That runs contrary to the goals and objectives of the post-2015 development agenda. In that connection, I call on the international community, including the leading international financial institutions, to broaden the scope of the assessment of SIDS in order to avoid creating scenarios where debt sustainability measures undertaken at the national level are undermined by the policies of international institutions. Saint Kitts and Nevis stands ready to work with the international community by contributing its ideas to the debate in order to ensure a most favourable outcome.

My delegation is convinced that a nation's wealth lies in the health of its people—its productive sector. We continue to wrestle with the high incidence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in our country and region. We wish to reiterate our call for a strong global response to combating the high incidence of non-communicable diseases, in particular in developing countries. In our last statement to this very body (see A/68/PV.15), our Prime Minister stressed the need for this international body to keep on the front burner a practical strategy to address the high incidence of NCDs within our region and throughout the world. In that connection, I wish to commend the outgoing President of the General Assembly, Ambassador John Ashe, for convening a number of events focusing on that matter of great importance to my delegation.

It is our hope that the final report on the informal interactive hearings with non-governmental organizations, civil-society organizations, the private

sector and academia on the prevention and control of NCDs, which was held in June 2014, will serve to build on the outcome of the initiatives resulting from the High-level Meeting on Non-communicable Diseases, held in September 2011 during the Assembly's sixty-sixth session, and the work conducted during the following session.

My delegation is indeed pleased to see the inclusion of non-communicable diseases in the goals and targets for sustainable development as part of the post-2015 development agenda. We support the goal to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. We also support the target to reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment, and to promote mental health and well-being by 2030. We look to the various specialized bodies of this international Organization for guidance and support as we seek to meet the targets and indicators under that and all goals developed as part of the post-2015 development agenda. We reiterate the call for the strengthening of the means of implementation of the goals and targets and for the revitalization of the global partnership for sustainable development.

Climate change remains more than an environmental concern for small island developing States such as Saint Kitts and Nevis. We regard it more as a threat to our existence. The adverse effects of climate change are well known: persistent adverse weather conditions, floods, extended droughts and rising sea levels. My delegation is convinced of the need to preserve our planet Earth for ourselves and generations yet unborn. We have an obligation to combat climate change through mitigation and adaptation measures.

Climate change financing and technology transfer will be pivotal to the success of that objective. We urge widespread acceptance by the international community of creative initiatives such as debt swap for climate adaptation and mitigation. My Government is convinced that such proposals, developed with assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat, provide SIDS with a greater degree of flexibility as we try to achieve sustainable development. We welcome the commitment of the President of the General Assembly to provide appropriate impetus and momentum to the ongoing process under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to reach a global agreement on climate change by 2015.

Maintaining peace and security remains one of the main priorities of the United Nations. That ideal is captured in the post-2015 development agenda as sustainable development goal 16, to achieve peaceful and inclusive societies and the rule of law and to build effective and capable institutions. I am pleased to report that at the national level we have implemented strategies that have brought a reduction in violent crime and strengthened institutions that sustain peaceful and inclusive societies. We are grateful to our development partners — the Governments of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Mexico and Canada, the European Union, and the Republic of China on Taiwan — for their invaluable assistance in that regard.

Thirty-one years ago, our new nation forged a strategic and mutually beneficial relationship with the Republic of China on Taiwan. That relationship has grown by leaps and bounds, and it touches all three dimensions of sustainable development. As the dialogue continues on the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, Saint Kitts and Nevis regards itself suitably qualified to speak on the valuable contribution which the Republic of China on Taiwan can make to the international community.

At the recent SIDS Conference in Samoa, our Prime Minister had the privilege to speak of the value of the partnership established with the Government and private sector of Taiwan in implementing a number of projects in renewable energy, specifically the establishment of a solar panel manufacturing plant and the outfitting of Government buildings and street lights with solar panels. The latter project will assist us in Saint Kitts and Nevis to achieve the goal of ensuring access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services for all.

For many years, our Government has called for the international community to allow the Republic of China on Taiwan to participate in the work of the organs of the United Nations system. That call is by no means arbitrary in nature. It has resulted from our partnership in numerous development initiatives across the sustainable development spectrum. Saint Kitts and Nevis is therefore pleased to note that Taiwan was recently invited to attend the Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization for the first time since 1971. We are equally pleased to note the participation of Taiwan in the World Health Assembly and to offer our commendation to the Government and

people of Taiwan for sharing their expertise in the fields of medicine and civil aviation safety.

At this juncture, we are convinced that the time is right for that spirit of understanding and inclusion to extend to the area of the ongoing negotiations in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Environment Assembly. My Government is equally convinced that the experiences gained by Taiwan in its strategy for building environmental and economic resilience can be shared with the international community through the UNFCCC.

While the international community is focused on maintaining peace and security, we are pleased to underscore the active role played by the Government of the Republic of China on Taiwan in promoting peace and security across the Taiwan Strait and for proposing the East China Sea Peace Initiative, thus demonstrating its commitment to international peace and security.

The Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis remains concerned by the decades-old unilateral trade embargo imposed on Cuba. That relic of the Cold War runs counter to the principles of international law, principles which undergird the United Nations system. We stand by our sister nations in the Caribbean Community and the Group of 77 and China and reiterate our call for creative ways to resolve that perennial issue, which adversely affects the tenor of hemispheric relations.

My delegation recognizes the challenging weeks and months ahead as we prepare in earnest to implement the post-2015 development agenda. We offer our fullest support in that regard. Such support is critical to the successful implementation of the development agenda. May we, as an international community, redouble our efforts in a manner that will redound to the benefit of developed and developing countries alike.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Robert Dussey, Minister of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Togolese Republic.

Mr. Dussey (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I would like to extend to the President, on behalf of the people and Government of Togo, as well as on my own behalf, our warmest congratulations on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. I would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, my country's

sincere congratulations on and encouragement for his efforts to enable our Organization to meet the challenges facing our world.

By giving the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly the theme "Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda", the President wished to remind Member States of their responsibility to spare no effort in defining, as we look ahead in the context of the post-2015 period, a development agenda commensurate with the challenges facing the world. Indeed, it is undeniable that defining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has been beneficial to humankind. While not all of those goals will be achieved by all our States, our commitment to working together to attain them has enabled us to make notable progress towards each of the Goals throughout the world. The new development agenda should therefore provide States with an appropriate road map that takes into account the diversity and complexity of situations and developments resulting from the experience gained in implementing the MDGs.

For its part, the Togolese Government remains determined and mobilized to continue and to scale up the necessary efforts in the context of a new post-2015 development programme with a view to a more tangible reduction in the level of poverty in our country. In recent years, the incidence of poverty has in fact been reduced by three points in Togo. That trend is supported by an improvement in the business climate that provides good prospects for increasing the success of the job creation programmes being implemented in the country for the benefit of young people.

In that regard, we note, among other elements, the positive impact as a result of conducting several job creation and grass-roots development programmes. In the same spirit, we have established the National Fund for Inclusive Finance, whose goal is to make financial services accessible to the most vulnerable people, in particular women, who are generally excluded from access to credit from traditional financial institutions.

In the field of agriculture, Togo continues to develop the National Agricultural Investment and Food Security Programme. Its implementation has led not only to satisfactory results in the context of food self-sufficiency but also to agricultural surpluses for several crop years, particularly that of 2013/14.

In terms of health, encouraging results have been achieved in reducing the maternal and infant mortality

rates and in combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

With regard to the preservation of the environment and improvement in living conditions, robust actions have significantly increased the level of access to sanitation and clean water. Moreover, the Government has stepped up its adaptation efforts to curb the impact of climate change, in particular, with regard to disasters caused by economic imbalance, which undermines the well-being of our citizens. Our country is actively strengthening the institutional mechanism for disaster management. Togo has increased its contribution to the protection of world heritage and to international security through significant efforts in its resolute fight against the trafficking of protected species, as evidenced by the neutralization of several networks and the seizure of large quantities of ivory.

The forward-looking vision of Togo as a country able to ensure and take ownership of its development in all respects has led the Government to initiate Vision Togo 2030. Launched in April, that initiative is based on a participatory approach. It should ultimately, with the accelerated growth and job creation strategy, allow my country to better ensure its achievement of the MDGs and the post-2015 development agenda, which we wholeheartedly desire. I would like to thank the entire United Nations system and all the countries that have helped us to achieve the progress made.

The situation of chronic instability prevailing in Africa today, in particular in the Sahel-Sahara region, is of concern. With its experience as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, on which it served in 2012 and 2013, my country, Togo, is now more certain than ever that our agenda for peace and the new architecture for international security must reflect the new situation of the regionalization of conflicts.

Unfortunately, another factor that further threatens the survival of States and their development efforts is terrorism. In Africa, for example, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab frequently carry out acts that destabilize brother countries, such as Nigeria, Cameroon, Somalia and Kenya. Nevertheless, my country welcomes the joint efforts of the international community, which helped to thwart the armed terrorist groups, in particular in Somalia and Mali. We truly appreciate the efforts of the French Government to remain engaged in the Sahel region so as to continue the fight against terrorists alongside African countries in Operation Barkhane.

However, it is important that such efforts continue and strengthen and that the international community spare no effort in supporting the affected African countries, just as it has mobilized to counter the spread of terrorism in Iraq, Syria and elsewhere in the world.

Beyond the effective control of borders, in vast geographical areas such as the Sahel, which in recent years has mobilized the international community to fight against terrorism, it is, in our view, equally essential to further secure our coasts in order to eradicate, with the same determination, maritime piracy.

In that spirit, mindful of the stakes involved, Togo took the initiative to host an international conference on maritime security and economic development in Africa in Lomé in 2015 under the auspices of the African Union. Togo seeks to play a leading role in providing, with the support of all like-minded partners, a framework to implement measures that have been recommended on various occasions to make the African coast a key space for international trade, free of organized predators, who instil fear along our coasts.

With regard to the promotion of peace, stability and security in our countries, the deteriorating situation in the Central African Republic, Libya, South Sudan, Syria, Palestine, Ukraine and elsewhere in the world is of the gravest concern to us owing to the harmful consequences. Such repercussions are likely to call into question the very existence of those countries and to destroy their precious development efforts.

My country, Togo, has recovered stability. It is moving forward towards a new horizon with renewed confidence. The daughters and sons of Togo have now chosen to build the future in a climate of peace and national harmony. Election after election, Togolese democracy is being built and strengthened through dialogue and consultation. It is being established with functioning institutions, with the support and vigilance of a determined civil society and all citizens, who are more aware than ever of the remaining challenges to overcome in terms of democracy.

The plan for our society, which is mobilizing Togo, seeks above all to make the country an active and responsible member of the international community, determined to work hand in hand with other nations, so as to systematically thwart the conduits of tension, break the cycle of violence everywhere and prevent entrenched insecurity. Those are prerequisites not only for social peace but also for economic development.

I cannot conclude my statement without reminding the Assembly of the great peril to human survival threatening the entire African continent, and West Africa in particular, with the outbreak of the Ebola virus. In that regard, I would like to welcome the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2177 (2014), which describes the disease as a threat to international peace and security.

Recognizing the importance of human capital in development work, my country welcomes efforts by multilateral and bilateral actors to stem the epidemic. We launch an urgent appeal to the bodies of the United Nations system and to States to be more concerned about the fate of our populations, in particular, those in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, by supporting our efforts to save the infected and prevent the spread of the disease, which knows no boundaries.

I hope that the common values that we share and affirm resonate well beyond the confines of diplomatic negotiations and that daily find direct and clear expression in places where peace, security and shared prosperity are tangibly enjoyed.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Mr. Grunditz (Sweden): Let me first warmly congratulate His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. My commendations go to His Excellency Mr. John Ashe for his remarkable leadership of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

Over the past few months, we have been reminded of the challenges that we collectively face in the Middle East, with the brutality of a terrorist organization that has forced entire populations to flee and sent shock waves around the globe, in Africa, with the spread of the Ebola virus disease, and, in Europe, with the continued aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. It was in order to deal with challenges such as those that the United Nations was created. It is because challenges such as those continue to exist that we need strong international cooperation with a strong United Nations at its core.

We welcome the fact that the international community has come together to deal with the challenge posed by the terrorist group that calls itself the Islamic State and to take joint action to address the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters. Sweden is

part of that common effort. When the Iraqi Government requested assistance in halting that terrorist group and in providing relief for its victims, Sweden was one of the countries that responded by offering additional humanitarian support.

At the same time, we must remember that neither here nor elsewhere in the region can crises be resolved by humanitarian or military means alone. Political engagement is, and will remain, indispensable.

We must support the new Iraqi Government, just as we must pursue a political solution to the conflict in Syria. We must do our utmost, on both sides, to reach an agreement with Iran on its nuclear dossier. Furthermore, we must seek a lifting of the closure regime on Gaza, as well as a restart of negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, with the aim of ending the occupation and, at last, achieving a viable two-State solution.

We welcome the readiness displayed this week here at the United Nations to take strong collective action in support of the countries affected by the devastating Ebola outbreak in West Africa. Sweden, together with others, has provided substantial support. We are currently considering further steps to help those who are affected.

For decades, Sweden has been a close partner to Africa and will continue working with the growing, democratic and economically successful Africa that we see emerging, as well as with the parts of that continent that are still struggling with poverty, conflict and disease. True to that ambition, in the conviction that security and development belong together, our engagement in peacebuilding and our contribution to the implementation of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States with regard to Somalia and Liberia will continue.

Russian acts of aggression and the illegal annexation of Ukrainian territory constitute serious breaches of international law and have created a security crisis in Europe, entailing significant risks to global stability. When a permanent member of the Security Council, the body entrusted with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, attacks a sovereign country without any justification whatsoever, the world must react resolutely. If aggression is tolerated, there is no telling who the next victim will be. If we accept the changing of borders by force, we also accept reopening the most painful chapters of our history.

Defending the principles of international law, including the inviolability of borders, must be a responsibility and an interest of all States. The Security Council should have formed the first line of defence for those principles. Too many Governments around the world have stayed silent when they should have spoken.

While a great deal has been accomplished since the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we cannot accept the fact that hundreds of millions of people are still lagging behind — many of them in conflict-affected and fragile States. It is therefore important to accelerate efforts to address the unfinished business of the MDGs.

The United Nations has successfully presided over a post-2015 consultation process with a near-global reach. All actors involved should be commended for that. Sweden will now actively contribute to the intergovernmental deliberations in 2015 on the new universal development framework. With that in mind, we look forward to the Secretary-General's synthesis report as a further guide for our work.

The world needs a transformative and universal new framework for sustainable development. The new goals will need to be accompanied by a strong monitoring and accountability framework, allowing us to measure progress and ensure accountability at all levels, thereby ensuring that the global goals are translated into actions that makes a real difference for real people. To achieve the new goals, the agenda must be accompanied by a broad international consensus on financing for development and effective partnerships for sustainable development. The United Nations, for its part, must be fit for that purpose so as to take on the post-2015 development challenges in an effective way.

The time leading up to the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda will be filled with challenging negotiations. However, Sweden is confident that, one year from now, we can arrive at a package that provides a solid basis for a future that is more prosperous, more gender-equal, more peaceful, more democratic, more respectful of human rights and more sustainable for us and our children.

Neither development nor peace is possible without a strong focus on the role of women. By empowering women, we simultaneously promote both peace and development. Gender equality is not only just economics but also smart economics. A fundamental step towards gender equality is to ensure for women their sexual and

reproductive health and rights, including freedom from violence. We have the normative frameworks in place, including Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. The time has come to translate those norms into action.

One of the most serious global challenges is that of climate change. The impact is hardest on the world's poorest and most vulnerable populations. Even if we manage to limit the increase in temperature, the world will experience significant adverse effects, especially in low-lying vulnerable island States. Sweden has successfully demonstrated that it is possible to separate greenhouse gas emissions and economic growth. Since 1990, we have reduced our emissions by more than 20 per cent while experiencing economic growth of 60 per cent. For several years, Sweden has been a top contributor to climate financing, not least through our development cooperation, with a focus on adaptation in the least developed and most vulnerable countries.

Together with Colombia, Ethiopia, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Norway and the United Kingdom, Sweden initiated the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate. The Commission's recent report brings good news. Its recommendations will bring net economic benefits to countries at all income levels, including new jobs, cleaner air, better health, lower poverty and more energy security. The report, "Better Growth, Better Climate", points to a new and better direction for our future.

In Paris in 2015, we will have a common responsibility to reach a global and legally binding agreement that keeps us below the 2°C target. We must redouble our efforts to ensure that the Paris summit is a success.

Throughout history, people have moved between countries, regions and continents in pursuit of a better life. Today, numerous crises and conflicts have forced more people from their homes worldwide than at any time since the Second World War. The responsibility for giving shelter and protection is most often borne by neighbouring countries. The international community is called upon to increase its solidarity and to strengthen international protection for those who need it. Sweden is heeding that call through its refugee policy and its tradition of being a place of refuge for people fleeing persecution and oppression. Last year, Sweden was the fifth largest donor to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. In recent years,

Sweden has been one of the top resettlement countries in the world.

The debate on migration often revolves around problems and challenges. The fact is that migration offers huge opportunities and is a powerful enabler of development. Migration contributes to development and reduces poverty for migrant households. It also helps to fill needs in the labour market and to encourage trade and investment. Coordinated action and strong global cooperation are needed to maximize the positive effects of migration. Sweden is actively engaged in such global efforts, including, recently, through our chairmanship of the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

Sweden is currently the second largest recipient of asylum-seekers in the European Union and by far the largest on a per capita basis. The makeup of migration flows to our country has varied over time, but those who have come to our country have in common that they have all enriched our society. They have further opened our eyes to other peoples' suffering and created closeness to the outside world.

Sweden's commitment to disbursing 1 per cent of its gross national income in development assistance, including our substantial contributions to the different parts of the United Nations system, enjoys strong popular support. The same goes for the public backing of our participation in United Nations peacekeeping. Some 80,000 Swedes have served in United Nations peacekeeping missions over the years, with our latest deployment being our contribution of forces to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, which is currently under way.

Sweden is a candidate for a seat on the Security Council in 2017-2018, with the support of the Nordic countries. We strongly believe that global challenges require multilateral governance structures that are effective and legitimate. A strong and well-functioning United Nations is at the heart of that system. Continued United Nations reform aimed at improving our ability to promote peace and security, reduce poverty, contribute to sustainable development, alleviate suffering and increase respect for human rights is a work in progress, to which we all must contribute. Sweden is prepared to do its part.

I will make one final point. It is now 53 years since Dag Hammarskjöld lost his life while on mission in Africa. Sweden welcomes the report of the

Hammarskjöld Commission on the death of Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld (A/68/800, annex) and the request by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly to consider it. We join the Secretary-General in encouraging Member States to declassify any relevant records that may bring new evidence with regard to the crash of his plane. We welcome all that can be done to achieve further clarification of that matter. Such actions should be carried out with due regard for the integrity of Dag Hammarskjöld and the other individuals who were killed, their families and their memory.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran has requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind him that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Safaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have asked for the floor to reply to the senseless rhetorical statement made by the representative of the Israeli regime this morning in the General Assembly Hall (see A/69/PV.17) — a statement imbued with baseless allegations and distorted passages against my Government and which was basically designed to defend the atrocities that that regime recently committed against a whole civilian population by attacking others. The speaker tried in vain to wash his hands of the most recent bloodbath in Gaza, perpetrated before the eyes of the whole world. He rushed to the General Assembly to hopelessly wage another war, this time against the whole Islamic world and civilization, by associating them baselessly with the terrorist group of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) and propagating Iranophobia and Islamophobia. He was applauded for that by a crowd brought in from outside the United Nations.

It is, indeed, very ironic that a regime that is famous for its atrocities, apartheid policies and war crimes — facts that are well documented by different United Nations organs and agencies; a regime that is non-compliant with many United Nations resolutions; a regime that has been occupying the lands of other peoples for many decades can allow itself to accuse other countries in such a sinister way. It is also preposterous that the same regime, with a widely known record of developing, producing and stockpiling various kinds

of inhumane weapons, including nuclear weapons, ventures to falsely accuse others of trying to acquire similar weapons.

It is laughable for many to hear such a person speak of the atrocities committed by the ISIS terrorist group. It is under the command of that person that, in the most recent aggression against and invasion of Gaza, all international norms and laws were blatantly flouted, which led to the killing of more than 2,000 Palestinian civilians, mostly women, children and the elderly, and the injury of many more and the destruction of basic civilian infrastructure, which rendered more than half a million people homeless, people who had already been under an inhumane and suffocating Israeli blockade for more than eight years.

Against that backdrop and while he claimed to be concerned over the Iranian nuclear programme, which is an entirely peaceful one under international supervision, we in the region and across the globe are completely right to worry about nuclear weapons in the hands of a regime that has showed time and again its capacity and propensity to kill, with the latest example being its rampage in July and August against the defenceless Palestinians. Therefore, can we or any other people believe that that speaker meant to do anything other than seek to divert international attention away from the crimes that his regime is committing in its neighbourhood?

The statement by the Israeli representative this morning was a continuation of the well-known Israeli policy of sabotaging and disrupting the earnest and

serious negotiations that my Government has been engaged in during the past year to address any genuine concern that any country may have about the Iranian peaceful nuclear programme. We have no doubt that any progress in those negotiations is a cause of severe anxiety and distress for Israel, as it has always sought to muddy the waters and make excuses for maintaining and advancing its policy of aggression and invasion.

Based on all this, what we heard today from the said speaker was not a torch of truth, but rather a bunch of lies. While I have the floor, allow me also to refer very briefly to the statement made by the Foreign Minister of Bahrain (see A/69/PV.17), in which reference was made to the three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf. I would just like to remind the General Assembly of the statement that my delegation delivered on 27 September (see A/69/PV.16) in reply to a similar baseless claim by the Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates. Therefore, I do not want to take the Assembly's time to repeat our well-founded position on the matter.

Regarding the same statement, let me also recall that the term Persian Gulf is and has always been the historical and time-honoured toponym for the stretch of water situated between Iran and the Arabian peninsula. Considering that historical evidence bears testimony to that fact and that the term is also internationally recognized, as has been repeatedly asserted by the United Nations, it is unwarranted that the wrong label be used for that geographical feature in the Assembly.

The meeting rose at 8.05 p.m.