



General Assembly

Sixty-ninth session

Official Records

16th plenary meeting
Saturday, 27 September 2014, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa (Uganda)

In the absence of the President, Ms. Gunnarsdóttir (Iceland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

General debate

Address by Mr. Antoni Martí Petit, Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra.

Mr. Antoni Martí Petit, Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Antoni Martí Petit, Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Martí Petit (Andorra) (spoke in Catalan; Spanish text provided by the delegation): It is an honour for me to represent my country, the Principality of Andorra, in the Assembly, which for almost seven decades has been meeting annually to speak of peace, development and justice, and particularly this year, in which we are marking two historic events that are closely linked to the birth of the United Nations.

The year 2014 will mark 100 years since the beginning of the First World War and 70 years since

the landing of the Allies in Normandy, which was the beginning of the end of the Second World War. Those two armed conflicts caused humanity to open its eyes to a new reality: the old balances among European Powers no longer served to maintain peace in the world. The policy of blocs was ineffectual in preventing conflicts with enormous destructive capacity. Further, the foreign activities of countries, focusing solely and exclusively on their national interests, proved in some cases to be the cause of the conflicts.

The two World Wars raised humankind's awareness in that the world needed a global order that would ensure peace and security and promote development and justice. Those functions could no longer be provided by a single country, however powerful and large, or even by a bloc of countries; rather, there had to be multilateral action. That was the *raison d'être* of the United Nations, of which the highest expression is this General Assembly.

I wanted to begin with a brief historical reference, because I believe that the challenges of peace and security in the world of today are not very different from the challenges of peace and security of the world of yesterday, of 1914 or 1944. Certainly there is a variety of challenges, but they have a very significant common denominator: they can be resolved only with a vision that is global, multilateral, effective and, above all, respectful of the principles that inspire this General Assembly.

The conflicts in Syria, Palestine or Ukraine, which threaten peace and security and stability, will not be

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resolved optimally or effectively with a partial or short-term vision. Any solution that veers away from the founding principles of the United Nations is condemned to be unstable, not lasting and, unfortunately, quite often a solution that leads to new conflicts.

Therefore Andorra has always championed and will continue to champion the discussion of and solutions to those conflicts under United Nations auspices. We did so when we co-sponsored the draft resolution in the Security Council that would have requested that the case of Syria be referred to the International Criminal Court (ICC), because without justice there can be no lasting peace — neither in Syria nor anywhere else.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Also, in the same spirit we have been unflagging in our defence of a solution to the Palestinian conflict that obtains peaceful coexistence for two States, in compliance with United Nations resolutions. A solution must be based on mutual recognition and mutual respect, because the aspirations of the Palestinian people to have their own State are noble and respectable, but also noble and respectable are the aspirations of the Government of Israel to ensure life and security for its citizens. Along the same lines, we do not believe that any solution to the Ukrainian conflict can be stable unless it respects the principles of international law and unless it comes as the fruit of a sincere dialogue — neither in Ukraine nor anywhere else.

The risk and threat to international peace and security arising from the emergence of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq require a clear response from the international community vis-à-vis the extremists. There can be no excuse or mitigating factor for the criminal acts of barbarism, sectarianism and — let us be clear — terrorism to which the Islamic State resorts as a strategy for its action and communication. There can be no double-standard discourse. The Islamic State murders innocent people in cold blood. We all feel as if we are British, American or French citizens when watching the recent savage executions. We must also all feel as if we were Syrian or Iraqi citizens — true victims of those extremists, though not always so visible in the media. There can be no room for inaction or for impunity.

New threats, also global in nature, have appeared, such as the phenomenon of foreign combatants. In that connection, Andorra co-sponsored the recent

Security Council resolution 2178 (2014). We must have a response to rechannel efforts to tackle the challenges and immediate threats. In the long run we must be able to persevere in the fight against sectarian discourse, extremist discourse, and discourses of hate. On that point, education must play an essential role, together with the other values of the United Nations, now and in the future.

The actions taken by my country in the United Nations over the past year have focused primarily on education. That matter requires, perhaps more than any other, a vision that integrates long-term thinking. Promoting access to quality education for all the citizens of our planet has always been a priority of the United Nations, because when we speak of education we are speaking also of fundamental rights and of development. But I would go further. Education is also an instrument for creating awareness of a global citizenry. If there is not a broad majority of citizens of the world who believe in the principles and values of the United Nations, our actions will always be in vain.

I am convinced that the only way to create global awareness is through education. Education is the best weapon in the fight against hatred and violence of all kinds. Andorra therefore welcomes and has participated from the beginning in the Global Education First Initiative promoted by the Secretary-General, because it brings a universal vision together with local action. It also shows that diversity is strengthened in a global focus, and with diversity we can strengthen democracy.

Andorrans, because of our historical and geographical circumstances, have understood for some time that education must have a twofold focus, local and global. We have also long understood that cooperation among the different States strengthens the quality of our educational systems and opens new opportunities for our citizens. I say “educational systems” because the citizens of Andorra can have access on an equal footing, and without cost, to French, Spanish and Andorran education. Those three public education systems are complemented by the offer in Andorra of a Catholic religious education, accessible also to a great part of our population.

Perhaps without being fully aware of it, or perhaps because fortune has placed us between two great European nations, it is true that for decades now we Andorrans have educated ourselves in diversity and in being multicultural. That has not caused us to lose

our identity; on the contrary, our identity has been reinforced. Sometimes we are not even aware ourselves of the educational richness of our country and of the great asset that that is. For that reason the Government of Andorra has focused a great deal of its policy and action abroad on education. In 2012 and 2013, during the Andorran presidency of the Council of Europe, that is how we acted. It is also what we have shown through participating in the Global Education First Initiative, together with 15 other countries from all continents. That was an honour for Andorra.

That activity abroad is also reflected coherently in internal policies in Andorra. We have suffered the effects of the international economic crisis for years. We have had austerity in our public spending, but that has not undermined our educational system. It will never affect our educational system, or undermine it, because education is the best passport to the opportunity for a future that is better for all.

The need for multilateral action is clear not only in the matter of education but also, and perhaps even more intensely, in the fight against global warming. What we each can do unilaterally will not accomplish much if there is no global commitment. It is in the fight against climate change that we can see most clearly that unilateral actions have a limited reach. Andorrans are very aware of that, given that our primary economic sector is winter and mountain tourism — a tourism threatened by global warming. The Pyrenees are heating up at 0.2°C each decade, and precipitation has dropped by 2 litres per square metre each year.

It is clear that a programme of local action is required. We are working, together with the population through education and awareness, on policies to reduce our impact on the environment. We are preparing studies to seek ways to mitigate the effects of climate change and also to seek alternative and complementary systems. Over the years ahead, we will deploy great efforts to bring about alternative energy sources.

But all that is not enough, nor are the many actions being implemented by Governments in countries represented enough. National domestic environmental policies are important, but if we are to limit carbon dioxide emissions we must have a global commitment. Without effective implementation of such a commitment, the fight against climate change will not bear the hoped-for fruits. We have a year to prepare for the Paris Conference, a year to mobilize our efforts.

It is also time for the international community to mobilize to fight the Ebola virus that so seriously affects Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. It also affects us; let us not deceive ourselves. It is the time to show solidarity, to help. Now is the time, in the weeks and months ahead, when we must tackle that disease, which, unfortunately, does not recognize — nor will it recognize — borders. It is urgent. Beyond that it is, in my opinion, a global emergency.

Three years ago, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Andorra came to this Assembly and spoke, among other things, of an ambitious reform programme for restructuring our economic model (see A/66/PV.27). The programme hinged on transparency, economic openness and a homogenization that would respect certain Andorran specifics. Today, three years down the road, we can make a very satisfactory assessment of the implementation of that policy. Our country has implemented a fiscal model that works with our European neighbours, a moderate system that taxes all income and promotes economic productivity.

We have also opened 100 per cent of the Andorran economy to foreign investment, as we believe that a more open world is a more transparent world, one with more opportunities for all, and in particular for those who deserve it the most. A country such as ours, which for many years has been open to immigration, cannot continue to allow our citizens to have different levels of rights economically. They must all have the same economic rights. In that process we have broadened all economic rights to all foreign residents, who represent more than half of our population, because a more open economy is also a fairer and more democratic society.

At the same time, along with its domestic reforms, Andorra has negotiated double-taxation agreements with France and Luxembourg and is negotiating one with Spain that I am convinced will be concluded soon. We think we can have a similar agreement with other European and other countries. Those agreements show that there is a commitment in Andorra to a more open and transparent global economy. That is a firm commitment on the part of our Government with regard to generating more opportunities for our business sector. We are also firmly determined to move towards greater integration of our economy in the single European market. For us, going global begins in Europe.

I wanted to sum up some of our principal domestic reforms because I understand that a spirit

of multilateralism and a global spirit must prevail. The efforts of a country working for transparency and economic cooperation make sense and will be effective only if they are accompanied by equal efforts by all countries — again, by all countries. Andorrans are committed to moving in that direction, and to do so together with the international community, because we know that it is only thus, only by working globally, that progress will be effective, equitable and stable.

The statement of the Head of Government of a country of 468 square kilometres and 70,000 inhabitants will never make the headlines or be discussed in prime time on the world's big international television channels. But representing a small country gives us some advantages, including one that I believe we should underscore today. No one is as aware as we are of the importance of multilateral forums when it comes to resolving conflicts, strengthening international law and finding global solutions. No one is as aware as we are that to preserve individual identities and diversities we must have a collective resolve and joint action.

History has accustomed Andorrans to being affected by the geostrategic decisions of bigger countries and to suffering indirectly the effects of instability occurring beyond our borders. We know that in the great causes of humanity such as the fight against climate change, our individual actions will not have much influence if not accompanied by collective action. I could say the same of building a global economy that is more equitable and more transparent. I have always said that the reality for Andorra is also the reality for all, that for the great questions we address, the solutions all hinge on consensus — otherwise they are not solutions. We must have broad consensus based on individual convictions.

The convictions of Andorra are clear: they are the principles and values that almost 70 years ago inspired the birth of the United Nations. Let us never forget the reason for this great Organization. If we forget, we are not worthy of being here.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Antoni Martí Petit, Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Pham Binh Minh, Deputy Prime Minister and

Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

Mr. Pham Binh Minh (Viet Nam): At the outset, I should like to extend my warmest congratulations to Mr. Sam Kutesa on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. I am confident that under his able leadership this session will enjoy great success. My appreciation also goes to Mr. John William Ashe, President at the sixty-eighth session, and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for their important contributions to the work of our Organization over the past year.

This session of the General Assembly takes place as we approach the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. It gives us the opportunity to look back on the past almost 70 years of the United Nations implementing its mandate to assist nations to build a world of peace, security and sustainable development, a world where fundamental rights and freedoms are respected and promoted. It is also an opportunity for in-depth discussions on the formulation and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

This year's Assembly session is also convened against the backdrop of a world landscape that features numerous turning points and contrasts. On the bright side, increasingly the United Nations is playing better its central role in the promotion of the system of rules and norms of international law, thus facilitating solutions to global challenges, and of the interests of peace and development for all nations. Globalization and multilayered economic cooperation and linkages continue to evolve strongly. Our efforts to realize the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have brought encouraging results in most regions.

We see also a more sombre part, one that paints the many daunting challenges the world is facing. The trend of cooperation contains risks, while global economic recovery is yet to be sustainable. International peace and security are being challenged by the negative factor of competition and intervention and especially by the potential escalation of territorial and sovereignty disputes. Ongoing crises and conflicts in the Middle East and a number of African countries have inflicted major human and material losses and threaten regional and international peace and security.

Global challenges remain high on the agenda of the international community. Terrorism, the proliferation

of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear security and safety, environmental pollution, depletion of natural resources, climate change, natural calamities, epidemics and the lack of food and water security are issues of primary concern to the international community. They require enhanced joint efforts.

Peace and security are prerequisites for sustainable development. The United Nations and its Member States must live up to their responsibility to strengthen international peace and security, prevent potential conflicts and find solutions to ongoing hostilities. That is an urgent task, but it also requires long-term engagement. History has taught us that the paths that lead to wars and conflicts lie in obsolete doctrines of power politics, of ambitions of domination and imposition, and of the threat of force in settling international disputes, including territorial and sovereignty disputes.

Viet Nam believes that respect for international law is the foundation of peace, security and stability for sustainable development. More than ever, Member States, big or small, rich or poor, must all respect and seriously observe the principles, rules and norms of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. All nations must renounce the use of force as an option in their international relations and instead settle all disputes by peaceful means. That is a crucial area in which the United Nations represents a powerful advance from the League of Nations, and it commands greater commitment and effort from Member States.

In that spirit, Viet Nam looks forward to substantive progress in the negotiations for a comprehensive, fair and long-term solution for peace in the Middle East that will ensure the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people and the legitimate interests of all parties. We are deeply concerned about the escalating violence in Iraq, and we support the efforts of the Iraqi Government and the international community to stabilize the situation. We call for an end to unilateral economic sanctions against developing countries and support General Assembly resolutions on ending the economic embargo against Cuba.

Viet Nam strongly condemns all acts of terror in any form, especially the targeting of civilians. We support all international efforts and initiatives to combat that menace in accordance with international law and the United Nations Charter. In addition, we all have a stake in economic restructuring, job creation, achieving a balanced, inclusive and sustained growth,

and in maintaining a peaceful and stable environment conducive to development.

It is therefore our primary task to complete the MDGs and formulate the post-2015 development agenda to create added momentum for sustainable development in each country and for international economic linkages. In that process, the United Nations should focus more actions and resources on addressing social injustices and inequalities. It should provide stronger support to regional and subregional programmes for connectivity, poverty reduction, narrowing the development gap and building the green economy. That will lay a firm and long-term foundation for peace, security and development. In so doing, and to adapt itself to a constantly changing world, the United Nations must accelerate its reform process in a comprehensive, balanced, transparent and equal manner in the interests of all Member States. The Security Council must be reformed in both membership and working methods to better respond to global challenges to peace and security.

In its national socioeconomic development and in its international integration, Viet Nam has always attached importance to the roles of multilateral institutions and forums, especially that of the United Nations, in the areas of international and regional security and development. Viet Nam is proud to be an active and responsible member of important regional and global organizations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Non-Aligned Movement, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Asia-Europe Meeting. Viet Nam is doubling its efforts to achieve all MDGs and is actively participating in the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda.

It is our consistent, principled position to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States and to settle international disputes and conflicts, including the issue of the East Sea, or South China Sea, by peaceful means in accordance with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Viet Nam abides by the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and works to ensure an early adoption of the code of conduct for parties in the South China Sea.

We support efforts to strengthen the multilateral trade system to create fresh momentum for the world economy in order to regain sustained growth. Viet Nam is willing to join global efforts to enhance economic

linkages and reform the global economic and trade governance towards greater equality, democracy, transparency and efficiency.

Viet Nam and other ASEAN member States are working hard to establish the ASEAN Community in 2015 with three pillars: political-security cooperation, economic cooperation and social-cultural cooperation. That, we believe, will help to build a South-East Asian region of peace, stability, cooperation and prosperity and to form a regional architecture with ASEAN at the centre, founded upon international law and aimed at developing common rules and norms for the region.

To contribute to international efforts to enhance principles and norms for peace, sustainable development and human rights, Viet Nam is playing an active and constructive role as a member of the Human Rights Council. For the very first time, Viet Nam has dispatched its military officers to the United Nations peacekeeping mission in South Sudan. Looking forward, Viet Nam has presented its candidature for the Economic and Social Council for the 2016-2018 term and for the Security Council for the 2020-2021 term. We count on the valuable support of members.

Peace and development are inseparable companions. They complement each other on the path towards a prosperous world. We are confident that with political will, mutual trust and equality based on international law and responsible joint actions, we can build stronger partnerships for peace, cooperation and sustainable development for all.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Evangelos Venizelos, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic.

Mr. Venizelos (Greece) (*spoke in French*): This sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly is taking place in a global context full of challenges, testing the efficiency of the current international system. Greece remains fully engaged with the objectives of the United Nations, whose universal ideals have never failed to inspire us.

I should like to take this opportunity to emphasize my country's alignment with the positions of the European Union presented by the President of the European Council in his statement (see A/69/PV.9).

We reiterate our support for efforts to reform the Organization, including the Security Council, so that the United Nations can better adapt to the ongoing

changes of our age and strengthen its operational nature and effectiveness in the exercise of preventive diplomacy.

Among the challenges at the global level is obviously that of climate change, which is an absolute priority. A new universal agreement, legally binding on all, is essential. Transition towards a new model of green economy with a low carbon footprint must be accelerated. Greece believes that the Climate Summit held this week offered a unique opportunity to intensify the efforts to achieve such a universal agreement.

The Greek presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU), during the first half of 2014, sought to stress the importance of sustainable development. A significant joint statement was adopted in the framework of the ministerial meeting of the European Union with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries that was held in Nairobi last June.

The Ebola virus epidemic has become a genuine threat to global peace and security with its serious social, economic and humanitarian repercussions. An international strategy is necessary to contain the virus and to avoid an unprecedented humanitarian crisis that would precipitate the collapse of the health-care system and, eventually, of the social fabric of the States affected. Therefore we welcome the decision of the Secretary-General to establish the new mission, the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response, and we pledge that Greece will offer its full support to any initiative taken in order to combat the epidemic.

The current complex security challenges require us to unite our forces, both internationally and regionally. Greece supports the strengthening of cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations in crisis management, particularly by implementing the action plan on United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The world is facing a series of unprecedented crises in the Middle East and in North Africa, as well as the eastern area of the European Union. Of course, in the face of such multiple crises, a consistent and global comprehensive strategy is required. Certainly, from this standpoint the role of the United Nations, especially the Security Council, is the deciding factor. That is the only way that we will be able to deal with the critical dilemma confronting us now, the dilemma between democracy and security. But if there is to be democracy, there must be a State that is functioning

and does not dissolve, as well as minimal security conditions.

The Ukrainian crisis seriously affects security and stability in Europe. We are concerned by the deteriorating humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine, and we support the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of Ukraine.

(spoke in English)

We support the 5 September Minsk agreement, the full implementation of which can contribute to the resolution of the crisis through diplomatic and political means. The key is the achievement of an inclusive solution.

Regarding security concerns in our neighbourhood, we welcome the adoption in Egypt of the 26 August Israeli-Palestinian ceasefire agreement, which we hope will pave the way to relaunching the political process aimed at establishing a durable peace, which is obviously a prerequisite for a comprehensive solution allowing two States, Israel and Palestine, to coexist in security.

The Secretary-General's newly appointed Special Envoy for Syria must continue efforts to ensure the effective relaunching of the Geneva II political process. That is all the more imperative given the barbaric actions of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) and other jihadist groups in Syria and the Iraqi-Syrian border regions. Foreign fighters joining jihadist terrorist organizations are a serious threat to regional and global security. As a member of the international alliance against ISIS and extreme jihadists, Greece fully supports the new Security Council resolution 2178 (2014), on how the international community must act against ISIS and potential foreign fighters. In that regard, I wish to make special reference to the grave humanitarian situation and increasing refugee pressure on countries of the region, including Greece.

Military means alone cannot eliminate the jihadist threat. We must also promote an inclusive process of reconciliation and national dialogue in Iraq to counter that threat to the country's national unity and territorial integrity. We remain seriously concerned at the displacement of civilians, and we strongly condemn the systematic persecution of Christians and other religious communities.

The region's stability is also under threat from the ongoing violence in Libya. We strongly support the

United Nations coordination of relevant international efforts. We therefore welcome the appointment of the Secretary-General's new Special Representative.

Deeply concerned at the life-threatening conditions journalists are increasingly confronting and the censorship and persecution the media are facing, Greece co-sponsored last year's resolution 68/163, on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity. We are now co-sponsoring this year's draft resolution on the protection of journalists.

During its European presidency in the first half of 2014, Greece emphasized Western Balkan integration into the European Union. That objective requires implementation of internal reforms in accordance with EU standards and the promotion of good-neighbourly relations through regional cooperation, reconciliation and effective confrontation of the sources of nationalism. We welcome the significant progress so far in the EU-facilitated Belgrade-Pristina talks. We hope that the two sides will continue their constructive discussions in a spirit of compromise.

With respect to the issue of the name of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece fully respects the process directed by the Secretary-General through his Personal Envoy, Mr. Matthew Nimetz, and always participates constructively and with goodwill. Greece has already taken considerable steps. We are awaiting corresponding steps from the other side. We propose a mutually acceptable compound name, with a geographical qualifier before the word "Macedonia", for all uses and purposes, internally and internationally, *erga omnes*.

Greece supports the European and Euro-Atlantic perspective of that neighbouring country and has long been among the top foreign direct investors there. Its European and Euro-Atlantic perspective hinges not on the name or on Greece, but on respect for the general criteria in place for all accession-candidate countries. It hinges on issues of democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights, harmonious inter-ethnic relations and freedom of the press. As the relevant European Council conclusions say, tangible steps need to be taken on those issues.

This past summer marked the fortieth anniversary of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, and the international community continues to confront the ongoing illegal military occupation of the territory of a United Nations and European Union member State. Greece fully

supports the dialogue between the leaders of the two communities within the framework of the February 2014 joint communiqué and the initiatives of President Anastasiades for confidence-building measures that can create new momentum on the island.

A just and viable solution to the Cyprus problem must be in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, the high-level agreements, the February 2014 joint communiqué and the European acquis. The Cypriot people must express their agreement to such a solution through a referendum. We also attach great importance to maintaining the mandate, level and concept of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus and to the Secretary-General's good offices mission. We welcome the appointment of Mr. Eide as his new Special Adviser on Cyprus.

A just and viable solution to the Cyprus issue and respect for international law, especially the international law of the sea, are two critical factors on which the full development of Greek-Turkish relations depends. These relations have great potential, and are critical to the stability of the wider region as they are relations between two NATO member States, while Greece also supports Turkey's European perspective.

Challenging times require demanding choices. The United Nations is in a position to tackle the new challenges, as it has so often done in the past, provided we all share the same vision and, most importantly, the necessary political will.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Ri Su Yong, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Ri Su Yong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (*spoke in Korean; English text provided by the delegation*): On behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I should first like to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea fully endorses the main theme of this session, "Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda". Development is one of the core missions of the United Nations. With peace, it constitutes one of the two pillars for the sustainable development of humankind. During the first 15 years of the new millennium, the world has seen the poverty rate reduced by half. It is proof of success, illustrating

the correctness of the Millennium Development Goals, adopted at the Millennium Summit, with the elimination of poverty as the main target.

It has been a particularly difficult time for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. However, we too have overcome severe hardships. Despite an unprecedentedly persistent economic blockade, military threat and political obstruction, we have firmly safeguarded national dignity, effectively deterred war and put the stagnant economy on an upward track under the leadership of the great General Kim Jong Il. Today we have at last secured a reliable springboard to leap into a powerful nation, following the guidance of respected Marshal Kim Jong Un.

In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea today, a grand construction boom is in full swing, and modern factories and enterprises befitting the era of the knowledge economy are being built and founded at record-breaking speed in many parts of the country. We have observed a great leap in our fishing industry and livestock farming, as well as a blooming new twenty-first century civilization in the living environment and cultural and welfare spheres for future generations and the working masses.

The climate change Summit held just a few days ago was a successful gathering that constituted part of the active measures being taken across the United Nations system to ensure the survival of humankind and sustainable development by protecting the global ecosystem and addressing climate change.

The United Nations and international relations should be democratized further. The principle of sovereign equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations is exactly same as the principle of respect for sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations. However, acts of high-handedness and arbitrariness — veiled under various disguises such as democracy, humanitarian crises, counter-terrorism, human rights protection and non-proliferation — are committed brazenly in the form of sanctions, blockade, military threat and armed intervention. That is the stern reality we witness today.

Proceeding from its consistent position of opposing interference and sanctions in all their manifestations against sovereign States, our delegation holds that the unilateral economic, trade and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba should be immediately dismantled.

With respect to the issue of enhancing the central role of the United Nations, we see its functions and role regarding peace and security lagging far behind others. As stipulated in the Charter, Member States entrusted the Security Council with the maintenance of international peace and security as its first and foremost responsibility. Present reality shows that in lieu of the Security Council — which is still mired in the paralysis of the Cold War — a permanent member seeks to act as the military police of the world through military blocs or bilateral military alliances that have nothing to do with the United Nations.

The anachronistic stereotypes and prejudices of the Security Council find their most extreme expression in the prevailing situation on the Korean peninsula. The world remembers that the situation on the Korean peninsula reached the touch-and-go brink of war last year. It started with the United States-South Korea joint military exercises aimed at occupying the capital city of Pyongyang of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

In January, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea made a proposal to stop hostile military acts on the Korean peninsula, but provocative joint military exercises against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were forcibly conducted in March, April and August. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic officially referred to the Security Council the issue of suspending such war exercises, which seriously endanger the peace and security of the Korean peninsula and the region as a whole. However, the Council turned its back. As the joint military exercises were led by one of its permanent members, the Council was bound to close its eyes, block its ears and shut its mouth, no matter how enormous in scale, aggressive in purpose and dangerous in nature they were.

Even in the Cold War period, measures were in place between the East and the West to restrict the number of military exercises in which more than 40,000 troops took part. We are obliged to ask why such war exercises, with the participation of more than 500,000 troops at a time, are needed annually only on the Korean peninsula, nearly a quarter of a century after the Cold War ended.

At present, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has set economic construction and improvement of the people's living standards as its major task. Accordingly, a peaceful

environment is vital in allowing us to lead the recently improving trend of the national economy to sustainable development. A peaceful environment and the reduction of tensions are more precious to us now than at any time. The tense situation on the Korean peninsula does not help us. On the contrary, it presents a serious obstacle to our efforts to achieve economic development and an improved living standard.

War exercises focused on landing, long-range nuclear bombing and commando operations aimed at occupying the capital city of another country can never be viewed as defensive. The claim that they are annual in nature is just a veiled attempt to succeed in a surprise attack after creating chronic immunity to them.

The reform of the Security Council should no longer be delayed. The Council's current structure and method of work have long been out of date, as confirmed by the expressed general will of Member States reflected in resolution 47/62, adopted in 1992. The Security Council should no longer be an exhibition showcase for the extreme manifestation of the double standard. We must put an end to the unjust practice whereby the military exercises waged by a permanent member of the Council are covered up with no regard to their serious threat to peace and security, whereas those conducted by a Member State in response are called into question, although they are inevitable and self-defensive in nature.

Likewise, the Security Council simply ignores the killing of Palestinian civilians by Israel under the patronage of a permanent member, yet selectively takes issue with the actions of the Syrian Government in defence of the sovereignty and stability of its country. This unjust practice cannot be tolerated. In particular, no act should be allowed to encroach on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria under the guise of counter-terrorism.

The Security Council should no longer serve as a forum for the spreading of lies. Eleven years ago, we heard with our own ears the accusation made at a Security Council meeting by a permanent member that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq (see S/PV.4701). A military invasion followed, and tragic bloodshed resulted. Only then did the world come to realize that it had heard the big lie of the century. However, because the big lie had come from a permanent member, the Security Council kept silent again. As a result, the bloodshed continues even today, after 11 years.

The Security Council should not be abused as a tool to justify high-handedness and arbitrariness. The United Nations Charter stipulates that the Security Council should act in conformity with the principles of justice and international law. The Security Council has no authority to adopt a resolution that prohibits the peaceful launch of a satellite by a Member State, as that is in contravention of international law, in particular the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina), Vice-President, took the Chair

The reform of the Security Council would, in essence, democratize the United Nations and international relations. The United Nations is not a monarchy and the Security Council is not a senate. The reform of the Security Council will not be possible unless its members decide in good faith to give up their prerogatives in the interests of democracy. Given the changing times and the demands of the majority of Member States, the permanent member that is most vociferous about the export of democracy should reflect on whether or not its preaching is just hypocrisy. Should the Security Council fail to reform itself and remain out of step with the times, Member States may well opt for a United Nations without such an anachronistic and undemocratic Council.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea maintains that all problems pertaining to international relations should be resolved not by high-handedness and arbitrariness, but in strict accordance with the principles of sovereign equality enshrined in the United Nations Charter. The nuclear issue is a matter of the sovereignty and the right to exist of a Member State and must take precedence over peace and security. The hostile policy, nuclear threat and stifling strategy pursued by the United States for more than half a century inevitably prompted the decision of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to become a nuclear-weapon State.

The nuclear deterrent of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is neither intended to threaten or attack others, nor a bargaining chip to be exchanged for something else. The nuclear issue will be resolved if and when the substance of the threat to our sovereignty and right to life is removed through the termination of the hostile policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Politicization, selectivity and double standards are out of place when dealing with human rights issues. The abuse of human rights for political purposes is in itself the biggest human rights violation. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is firmly opposed to all attempts and actions to force regime change on specific countries by alleging abuse of human rights. The United States does not recognize the national sovereignty that safeguards the human rights of our people. That being the case, it is hypocritical of it to find fault with our human rights issues. It is all the more preposterous that the United States should talk about a human rights dialogue when it adamantly prevents the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — the party directly involved — from participating in the meeting on the latter's own human rights situation.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is always open to dialogue and cooperation in the case of genuine human rights issues that are devoid of any form of political motivation or hypocrisy. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is willing to promote human rights dialogue and cooperation on an equal footing with other countries that are not hostile to it. It is also willing to facilitate technical cooperation, contact and communication with the United Nations and other international organizations in the human rights field.

The reunification of the fatherland is the supreme desire of the entire Korean nation. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea maintains that national reunification should be achieved not through a confrontation of systems but by a confederation formula whereby two systems coexist in a single country. It is the only way to prevent war and safeguard peace. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is sincerely striving by both word and deed to develop inter-Korean relations and to orient them towards reunification through confederation.

As South Korea has relinquished its military prerogatives to the United States in their entirety, it has no idea how many weapons of mass destruction of various kinds — capable of destroying the Korean nation more than hundreds of times over — are now deployed and hidden on its own soil. It should therefore refrain from prattling and dreaming about the unrealistic and fictitious proposal for reunification copied from the formula of other countries.

I should like to assure members that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will constructively

participate in delivering on the post-2015 development agenda at the current session and thus make an active contribution to the work for the successful adoption of the development agenda next year on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Independence, peace and friendship are the foreign policy ideals of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As in the past, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will fulfil its responsibilities and discharge its role as an independent Member State by steadfastly adhering to these ideals in United Nations activities.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

Mr. Lamamra (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to express my satisfaction at seeing Mr. Sam Kutesa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uganda, an African neighbour, brother and friend, presiding over this important session of the General Assembly and to assure him of our full cooperation. I should also like to hail his predecessor the outgoing President of the General Assembly, Mr. John Ashe, and to pay homage to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his work in driving forward the role and missions of the United Nations.

The theme of the general debate focuses on the future and the prospects for future generations. This reminds us, on the eve of the global summit on the post-2015 development agenda and of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, of the urgency of making a renewed commitment to multilateralism founded on international law.

Given the persistence and varied manifestations of the current crisis, we must have a comprehensive vision in order to make the United Nations a builder of lasting solutions to modern global problems. We are banking on the hope that the new sustainable development goals (SDGs) will contribute to bringing about a world that makes it possible for us effectively to protect human rights, guarantee the inclusive participation of all, and ensure that everyone — particularly those living in the forlorn regions in which 40 per cent of the poorest people live — shares in prosperity.

That was the formulation expressed by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) at the seventeenth Ministerial Conference hosted by Algeria in May, in

reaffirming the relevance and importance of the right to development and the pressing need to eradicate poverty, which has been identified as a global challenge and a central objective of the post-2015 development agenda. Algeria is pursuing its efforts to reach a comprehensive and ambitious agreement on the SDGs and on climate, to include, in the case of the latter, desertification and access to genetic resources. Furthermore, we must see the implementation of commitments, whether they are commitments made as official development assistance or within the Monterrey Consensus, in the Doha Declaration or at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

At the United Nations, Algeria coordinates the NAM working group on the revitalization of the General Assembly. In that role, Algeria will continue its efforts to ensure that the NAM working group, which is the most representative in the international system, assumes its full role. At the same time, Algeria will continue to work with its partners in the African Union Committee of Ten towards Security Council reform, aimed at putting an end to the historical injustices vis-à-vis the African continent, which wants, more than anything, representation and legitimacy in the Security Council. In that context, the strengthening of cooperation and the multiform partnerships between the African Union and the United Nations should be encouraged, in particular in the context of the many conflicts and crises that continue to afflict Africa and to slow down the conclusion of its decolonization process.

From that perspective, the global review that Mr. Ban Ki-moon is called upon to present in April 2015 on the question of Western Sahara, which pits the Kingdom of Morocco against the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro, must honour the United Nations doctrine in the matter of decolonization, as well as stress the importance of the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. Algeria supports the inalienable right of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination, as has been well established, and in that regard Algeria encourages the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, Ambassador Christopher Ross, to intensify their efforts to ensure the success of that effort to move towards peace.

Algeria is a stakeholder in the common destiny of the peoples of the Maghreb. Algeria's own development has been conceived and guided by the desire to achieve the integration of the vast geopolitical space

of which it is at the very centre. The policy platform on which President Bouteflika was re-elected and the five-year plan of action of his Administration hinge on a deepening of participative democracy, the modernization of the judiciary, equal opportunities for men and women, and good governance. The economic effort has allocated significant public investment in the sectors of agriculture, industry, energy, the environment and tourism, and into the diversification and modernization of the economy, all based on objectives tied to competitiveness and a substantial relaunching of growth. At the same time, Algeria is working to promote development with mutually beneficial strategic partners, based on respect for sovereignty and a balance of interests, in order to bring about opportunities for cooperation and the means of tackling the challenges and threats of a transnational nature. That cooperation excludes unilateral measures such as the embargo imposed on Cuba.

The worrisome spread of the Ebola virus has been declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) to be a global health emergency, and that reminds us tragically of the structural precariousness of human security systems, as well as of the responsibility of the international community in the treatment of health problems that affect the poor, who have no means or role in decision-making. Algeria adds its voice to that of the Secretary-General in urging the United Nations agencies and other donors, as well as non-governmental organizations, quickly to provide the international assistance needed by the African countries that have been hit by that scourge.

That existential threat is yet another that Africa must collectively take on in order to ensure its rebirth, and brings with it challenges in the area of peace and security. At the behest of the stakeholders in Mali, Algeria is undertaking large-scale mediation between the Malian Government and the movements in the north of that country, working with a team that is representative of Africa and the international community as a whole. The adoption of a road map for negotiations in the Algiers process and the declaration of a cessation of hostilities have marked the effort towards the launching of substantial negotiations since 1 September, with the aim of achieving a comprehensive and definitive peace accord. The launching of those negotiations has been a source of satisfaction and coincides with the freeing of two Algerian diplomats who had been held hostage for nearly three years by a terrorist organization. I should

like to avail myself of this opportunity to pay homage to the memory of our Consul in Gao and his assistant, Tahar Touati, who lost their lives during their period of captivity.

The situation in Libya, a sister nation, has continued to deteriorate over the past three years. The twofold Algerian initiative to implement a common plan of action for all of the countries neighbouring Libya and for launching an inclusive dialogue towards national reconciliation, which would also seek to strengthen State institutions, has made a valuable contribution towards a collective, healthy step towards peace for the Libyan people, which we very much wish for them.

The difficult state of affairs in our region requires a stepping up of efforts in the fight against terrorist groups in the Sahel and their established links to drug trafficking networks and transnational organized crime. In the global forum of the fight against terrorism, Algeria will continue to cooperate, including in its work as co-Chair of the Working Group on the Sahel, and will focus on securing borders and on preventing ransom-seeking abductions by terrorist organizations, bearing in mind the recommendations from the Algiers workshop in September 2013 and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and Security Council.

In that spirit, Algeria notes with interest the results of the high-level Security Council meeting on terrorism and foreign combatants, convened on the initiative of President Obama (S/PV.7272). We also take note of the international mobilization against transborder terrorism on a large scale, which is relevant to Iraq and Syria. The execution of French citizen Hervé Gourdel in Algeria underscores the need to strengthen the fight against terrorism in all its forms.

The earth-shattering developments that affect the lives of people in the Middle East add new questions with regard to the uninterrupted role played by the international community vis-à-vis the tragedy inflicted upon the brotherly Palestinian people. The history of humankind shows that armed conflicts give rise to other conflicts and that only by working towards justice within law and morality can we find lasting solutions. The Palestinian question and the Syrian crisis must be approached along those lines. I should also like to avail myself of this opportunity to pay homage to the efforts of my compatriot, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, and to reiterate our support to his successor, Mr. Staffan de Mistura.

The ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Weapons should focus on the close, complementary nature of the objectives of disarmament, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the promotion of the peaceful uses of the atom. Let there be no doubt that much remains to be done when it comes to freeing the world of weapons of mass destruction.

Algeria, as a member of the Human Rights Council, is motivated by a strong sense of responsibility to participate actively in the promotion of the universal and interdependent nature of human rights. The President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr. Bouteflika, and the Algerian authorities are working hard to improve the living conditions of Algerian citizens in many different areas. We have laws that criminalize violence against women and children, and we are strengthening the protection of the rights of divorced women and other legislative efforts that add to our political and institutional success in supporting Algerian women. We have been addressing such matters in our elected bodies and our central Government.

The celebration in 2015 of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations should be an opportunity to renew the commitment of all Member States to bring new and stronger vigour, efficacy and credibility to multilateralism. We have the joint responsibility to work to establish a world that is safer and fairer and shows more solidarity. This powerful juncture, at which we bring together all of our peoples within the fold of our founding values, should also be confirmed by action. There are apprehensions, uncertainties and challenges tied to fear and need, but if we face up to them the United Nations will certainly live up to its role as the last haven for the hope of humankind in a better future.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Oldemiro Marques Balói, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Mozambique.

Mr. Balói (Mozambique): It is a great honour for me to address the General Assembly on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Armando Emilio Guebuza, President of the Republic of Mozambique, who could not attend this gathering owing to national commitments. However, he wishes the General Assembly successful deliberations at this session.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Sam Kutesa, a distinguished son of our sisterly country, Uganda, on his unanimous election to preside over this session of the General Assembly. We firmly believe that his vision, wisdom and leadership will guide us to a comprehensive and results-oriented transformative development agenda. I assure him of the full support and collaboration of the delegation of Mozambique in the fulfilment of his noble mission.

I also wish to pay tribute to Ambassador John William Ashe for his devotion and for the pragmatic manner in which he presided over the sixty-eighth session of this body, and for his relentless efforts constructively to guide the ongoing debate on the architecture of the next development agenda.

The year 2015 will be a historic one, since the United Nations will reach the landmark celebration of its seventieth anniversary. That celebration will be enriched by the goal set in the year 2000 to halve poverty rates in the world by the year 2015, the conclusion of the next development agenda, and the adoption of a new framework for climate change. In that regard, we welcome the theme for this session, “Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda”, as it will enhance the ongoing deliberations under the United Nations umbrella on the next development agenda, galvanized by regional and subregional visions on that important topic.

In our deliberations, the results and challenges experienced in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will undoubtedly be referenced in shaping the next development agenda. We recognize that much has been done in the framework of the MDGs. However, apart from accelerating the achievement of all goals, it is important to guarantee the sustainability of those that were achieved and accelerate the implementation of those that are still lagging behind. It is our strong belief that the principle of inclusiveness must also be taken into consideration in order to build a common vision and to ensure global commitments and shared responsibilities in the implementation of the next development agenda.

To that end, Mozambique undertook a national consultation process on the post-2015 development agenda, a process that echoes our vision that sustainable development can be achieved only with a shared responsibility between Governments, civil society and the private sector. Mozambique’s national

consultation process resulted in a robust call for the next development agenda to list the eradication of poverty as its overarching objective. To achieve that, it should ensure the promotion of equitable, sustainable and inclusive economic growth, focusing on women and youth.

The consultation also emphasized the need for the eradication of poverty and hunger, translated into the improvement of living standards through access to better social services such as education, health, social welfare, safe drinking water, sanitation and energy; the preservation of peace and political stability, the promotion of democracy and the protection of human rights; economic diversification and transformation to speed up technological modernization in sectors such as agriculture, industry, tourism and infrastructures; the protection of marine and land biodiversity, including the sustainable use of natural resources; effective partnership for development, particularly for access to science, technology and innovation; further enhancement of North-South cooperation, in the framework of global partnership in order to commit the developed countries to meeting their internationally agreed development goals obligations; the strengthening of South-South cooperation; and, finally, agreement on a common methodology to monitor and evaluate national progress.

In addition, the experiences and challenges we faced in the implementation of the MDGs — particularly in the accomplishment of Goal 8, “A global partnership for development” — underline the need for a greater commitment on the part of our development partners to increase their official development assistance, and for funding climate resilience and disaster-prevention efforts in developing countries. A transformative post-2015 development agenda should include the need to strengthen its financing mechanisms, concomitant with the need to raise the contribution for domestic financing. Those expectations coincide with the emerging common vision at the subregional, regional and global levels. Therefore, we have a premonition that the agenda will be adequately inclusive and bring the much-needed transformation to deliver a world that is truly fit for all.

At this critical juncture, the successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round is a matter of urgency. Its contribution to the materialization of the development agenda as a whole cannot be overemphasized. In that regard, we are encouraged by the attempts of the World

Trade Organization to restore the Doha negotiations and by the adoption of the Bali package, which are fundamental steps in the architecture of the Doha Round.

We are also encouraged by the positive trends in the development of Africa. As the Secretary-General states in his report on the work of the Organization (A/69/1), Africa continues to make steady development gains. Economic growth reached 4 per cent in 2013 and is projected to reach 5.3 per cent in 2014. Foreign direct investment increased, and substantial progress has been made towards the attainment of the MDGs.

If those positive developments are to be sustained, a transformative development agenda should reflect Africa’s priorities and special needs, as expressed in its Common Position on the post-2015 development agenda. In addition, that encouraging environment can be possible only in the context of peace, political stability, democracy and respect for human rights. Therefore, we regret that conflict prevention, peacekeeping and the rebuilding of war-torn States remain among the most complex challenges facing the United Nations and the international community at large.

Indeed, this session takes place in the context of grave instability and conflicts in the world, with enormous economic costs and severe humanitarian consequences that are unacceptable. Additionally, the complexity of some conflicts poses a challenge to the authority of the United Nations and consequently undermines the founding principles of the Organization as well as the role of multilateralism in addressing global concerns.

We have been challenged by the dramatic evolution in the strands of terrorism threats, which spare no part of the world. Therefore, Mozambique welcomes the adoption, at the 7272nd meeting of the Security Council, held on 24 September, of resolution 2178 (2014), which calls for an urgent boost in international cooperation to prevent the support and flow of terrorist fighters to and from conflict zones.

As we craft our collective strategy to deal with all forms and manifestation of that human scourge, we should not lose sight of the following elements. First is the need to strengthen multilateral approaches in full compliance with the Charter of the United Nations. Secondly, the root causes of terrorism must be addressed, as that scourge cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality or civilization.

Thirdly, it is necessary to address the underlying conditions, such as poverty, injustice, social exclusion and marginalization, that serve as fertile ground for extremist ideologies to breed and thrive.

In an interdependent and globalized world, multilateralism refers to the collective and cooperative actions needed to address global challenges in a transparent, inclusive and effective manner, thereby contributing to order, stability and predictability. In that context, the United Nations must be strengthened in order to continue effectively to play its role as the epicentre of multilateralism. Today more than ever before, we must take concrete actions to reinforce the strategic role of the United Nations in the architecture of the global world.

Notwithstanding the prevailing challenges to the maintenance of international peace and security, we are encouraged by the efforts in place for the restoration of peace and stability in Mali, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, the Sudan and South Sudan. We are also encouraged by the latest developments in Guinea-Bissau as a result of the general elections that prompted the promising first steps towards much-needed political stability — a precondition for that sisterly country to progress towards socioeconomic development. These achievements call our attention to the importance of cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the African Union and with the subregional bodies in effectively addressing the range of conflict-management problems through preventive diplomacy and mediation initiatives that allow for rapid responses to regional and subregional crises.

The principle of the right to self-determination continues to be central to the full enjoyment of human rights. In that context, the United Nations ought to continue to be engaged in the fulfilment of those rights by the peoples of Palestine and Western Sahara. Mozambique reiterates its full support for a just and lasting solution to the problem of Palestine through peaceful means, in accordance with international law and all the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

With regard to Western Sahara, we are encouraged to note the initiative taken by the Chairperson of the African Union in appointing His Excellency Mr. Joaquim Alberto Chissano, former President of the Republic of Mozambique, as a special envoy to the five permanent members of the Security Council plus Spain, in an effort to step up the search for a solution that will

ensure the fulfilment of the right of the Saharan people to self-determination, for which Mozambique reaffirms its unconditional support.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my statement, the advent of 2015 represents a historic opportunity for the United Nations to reshape global commitments in many ways. As we celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the Organization, we must use the momentum to take concrete steps to accelerate, in a sustained manner, the ongoing process of reforms in the Organization, in particular the reform of the Security Council.

The inability of the United Nations to solve conflict situations and political instability in the Middle East and Eastern Europe poses a challenge to its authority as the universal entity and multilateral political forum for fostering dialogue in a multilateral framework. The situation is worsened by the lack of substantive progress in the reform of the Security Council, almost 15 years after the international community recommitted itself to that important endeavour. It is our hope that at its sixty-ninth session the General Assembly will deliver the much-awaited reform to democratize its representation and working methods and to strengthen its role in conflict prevention and the promotion of international peace and security.

Freedom of choice with regard to political systems and to trade is an inalienable right of all States, irrespective of their size. In that connection, the need to bring to an end the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba continues to be a matter of concern, for it is politically motivated and hinders the socioeconomic development of Cuba. For those reasons, Mozambique joins all those countries that demand the immediate termination of that unfair unilateral measure.

Mozambique is fully committed to the global agenda for peace and security, democracy and sustainable development. At the national level that commitment is translated into our political will to strengthen democracy in the country and to adopt a poverty-reduction strategy that is people-centred and promotes sustainable development. The regularity with which elections at different levels are held shows our unquestionable determination to consolidate the democratic system and defend its underlying values. As a result, on 15 October Mozambique will hold its fifth multiparty general elections to elect the President and the Parliament, and its second elections for provincial parliaments.

In the economic sphere, Mozambique has enjoyed steady economic growth for more than a decade. Coupled with the support of our development partners, including the United Nations, that has allowed for an improvement in social services delivery and enabled us to be on track to attain the majority the MDGs. In addition, recently discovered natural resources represent a challenge and an opportunity to further advance national socioeconomic progress. The development of new sources of clean and renewable energy such as bio-fuels is a priority for the Government, and due attention is being paid to prevent competition with food-production initiatives.

Therefore, we are emphasizing the following areas: the improvement of agriculture production and productivity in a sector that will continue to play a key role in our development efforts; human capital development to address the new emerging economic challenges; and the promotion of a strong private sector to take advantage of the opportunities brought about by the discovery and exploitation of natural resources. It is our firm conviction that, with peace and stability, we will continue successfully to address the development challenges facing Mozambique, which have poverty eradication and sustainable development at their epicentre.

Finally, as part of our commitment to peace and stability, in June Mozambique hosted the third Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, also known as the Ottawa Convention. I should like to take this opportunity to thank all participants as well as all partners that contributed to making that event a success, because it was. We are engaged in continuing our efforts to declare the country free of landmines and thus to contribute to the fulfilment of one of the most important steps in our obligations under the Convention.

To conclude, I wish to reiterate Mozambique's commitment to continue to be engaged in international efforts to address current global problems.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Rui Machete, Minister of State and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Portugal.

Mr. Machete (Portugal) (*spoke in Portuguese: English text provided by the delegation*): At the outset, I should like to congratulate the President on his election,

which testifies to the strong commitment of Africa to the United Nations and to multilateralism. I also wish to express my appreciation for the dedication to the Assembly of his predecessor Ambassador John Ashe. I reiterate my gratitude to the Secretary-General for his leadership at the helm of our Organization and for his relentless efforts in favour of peace in such a difficult and complex time in international life. I commend him also for convening the Climate Summit, which has renewed political support for the achievement in 2015 of a fair, universal and legally binding climate agreement. Portugal, and the European Union as a whole, will continue to work tirelessly and in an inclusive manner towards the achievement of that goal.

During this session, we face the enormous challenge of renewing and building upon the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with a view to adopting the post-2015 development agenda. The President may count on the support and commitment of Portugal on that and other issues and in the ongoing work of the General Assembly, which is the first home of multilateralism and of legitimate international collective action. The commitment of Portugal to the United Nations, to the Charter and to its principles and values is firm, resolute and enduring.

At this Assembly session, Portugal is a candidate for the Human Rights Council for the 2015-2017 term. We hope to have the support of all members in the upcoming election. If elected, Portugal will be serving for the first time as a member of such an important body.

Last April Portugal underwent its second Universal Periodic Review by the Human Rights Council. Our positive national human rights record was widely acknowledged. Portugal has actively participated in multilateral human rights forums, in particular in the Human Rights Council, submitting annual resolutions on the right to education and on economic, social and cultural rights. We hope to be able to make an even greater contribution to the Human Rights Council over the coming three years, as we deeply believe in the Council's ability to strengthen the capacity of States to comply with their human rights obligations.

In that context, Portugal has submitted a bold set of pledges and commitments that will guide the discharge of our mandate with the purpose of promoting and protecting the universality, indivisibility, inalienability and interdependence of all human rights — civil, cultural, economic, political and social. Through our

actions during our last mandate in the Security Council, in 2011 and 2012, we demonstrated that consistently promoting and upholding human rights was a priority for us. If elected to the Human Rights Council, Portugal will engage in its work, fully committed to a strong, independent and effective multilateral human rights system. Portugal is in fact a party without reservations to eight core United Nations human rights treaties and all their optional protocols.

We continue to witness events that we expected to see eradicated in the twenty-first century — large-scale human rights violations, the deprivation of vast populations of their most elementary dignity, and a disregard for basic international principles such as the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States. Today the Charter of the United Nations remains as relevant as it was 69 years ago. In order to deal with the crises we face today we must base our search for fair, legal and lasting solutions on the generous and ambitious principles and norms of the Charter. The Charter offers the necessary institutional mechanisms, but their functioning and effectiveness depend on the political will of all Members of the Organization.

Terrorist, extremist and radical groups deserve our most vehement repudiation and condemnation. They constitute, in the first instance, a threat to States and to the populations of the territories in which they are based. They also present a risk to regional and global peace, security and stability. That menace requires concerted and firm responses from the international community. The self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is a sinister example of that kind of criminal and barbaric action. It must be fought and neutralized. The Security Council summit and resolution 2178 (2014), which it adopted on the worrying phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, were important steps in that direction.

The Middle East continues to require special attention. In Iraq we have been witnessing inhumane terrorist actions targeting defenceless populations, victimizing mainly women, children and persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities. The situation in Iraq cannot be disconnected from the prolonged conflict in Syria, where the levels of violence and suffering are, by their dimension and duration, beyond words. All parties must assume responsibility for finding a political transition to a democratic and pluralistic society.

Once again we come to the Assembly without progress in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The expectations that we all shared here a year ago have been dashed. The recurring cycle of hostilities must come to an end. The conflict we saw in Gaza this summer must not happen again. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate Egypt for brokering the ceasefire and to recognize the efforts of other regional and international partners, including the Secretary-General and United States Secretary of State John Kerry.

There will be no lasting peace or stability in the Middle East without a solution to that issue. I reiterate my country's support for a solution based on United Nations resolutions, establishing a sovereign, independent and viable Palestinian State, living side by side with the State of Israel, whose legitimate security concerns must be guaranteed.

The positive signs that we saw a year ago regarding the Iranian nuclear programme were confirmed with the signing of the Joint Plan of Action in Geneva. A new political impetus is now needed. Portugal supports and encourages the ongoing negotiations with a view to a comprehensive agreement.

The events of 2010 and 2011 in Northern Africa had an unprecedented political, economic and social impact. The countries there are now confronted with significant challenges with regard to the consolidation of political reforms, sustainable economic growth and security. Portugal is currently co-chairing the Western Mediterranean Forum, also known as the 5+5 Dialogue, which brings together 10 countries from the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. We wish to strengthen the contribution of that platform to the enhancement of cooperation and confidence-building among its countries.

Libya is an important partner in that Forum, and it is with great concern that we see the deterioration of the situation in that country. The international community must give its assistance to the political transition process, but it is paramount that all Libyan stakeholders commit to an inclusive, genuine and fruitful national dialogue.

In Europe, the Ukrainian crisis and the illegal annexation of Crimea brought back tensions that we thought were outdated. We welcome the ceasefire agreement and appeal for its full implementation. Portugal encourages the parties actively to seek a

lasting political solution that respects the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and democracy in Ukraine.

Africa is a significant partner for Portugal. African States are not only political partners but also, increasingly, business and investment partners in a relationship based on parity and mutual benefits, which drive job creation and economic development. While fully respecting Africa's ownership, we also seek to contribute to international efforts, notably those of the United Nations, aimed at stabilizing conflicts or preventing security risks in Africa. Therefore, Portugal is participating in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. We also stand ready to engage in multinational efforts to strengthen security in the Gulf of Guinea, and we are willing to cooperate in the reinforcement of the maritime capacities of the countries of the region.

In recent months we have received good news from the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, a friendly country and member of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP). The restoration of constitutional order, the holding of free elections and the inauguration of legitimate democratic institutions, two years after the April 2012 coup d'état, are surely praiseworthy signs of hope. The enormous socioeconomic difficulties and the recurrent and severe political instability that Guinea-Bissau has been suffering for a decade and a half did not prevent the people from electing their new leaders through free, transparent and orderly elections.

The opportunity to turn the page of history must now be seized. The people of Guinea-Bissau and the authorities are taking the right steps. Consolidating the progress achieved requires support from the international community. International partners can and must play a decisive role in areas such as financial assistance and building technical capacity, underpinning the priorities identified by Guinea-Bissau. Further, we believe that a stabilization force based on the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Mission in Guinea-Bissau, possibly enlarged to incorporate new African partners and mandated by the United Nations, would be appropriate. Therefore we welcome the initiatives supporting Guinea-Bissau undertaken by the United Nations, together with, in particular, the African Union, the CPLP, ECOWAS and the European Union.

At the Millennium Summit, Heads of State and Government made the historic and inspiring decision to adopt the Millennium Development Goals. We now have the responsibility to accelerate the achievement

of those Goals while at the same time preparing a new development agenda. Portugal is strongly committed to the definition of that new agenda. We need a transformative new global partnership that mainstreams human rights and combats inequalities. It should also promote peaceful, stable and just societies, advancing also the important issues of population and development. Universality and shared responsibility are key concepts in that regard. But the universality of the post-2015 agenda should not be synonymous with insensitivity to the specificities of the least developed and most vulnerable countries, such as small island developing States.

New challenges such as climate change, illicit trafficking, piracy and pandemics are major threats in today's world. The outbreak of Ebola in Western African countries demands strong, combined efforts by the international community to contain and eradicate that plague. Portugal is participating in the current urgent global effort, notably in Guinea and in the framework of the United Nations operation.

Despite the efforts of previous Presidents, the reform of the Security Council has not yet happened. Portugal's position on that subject is well known. In spite of persistent differences of approach among the membership, we must not give up. Together we must find a solution, making the Security Council a body more representative of today's world. The seventieth anniversary of the United Nations is an opportunity to bring about Security Council reform.

Portugal is by tradition a seafaring nation and has recently adopted a new national maritime strategy focusing on blue growth. We actively support United Nations efforts for the sustainable management of the oceans and their resources, and we co-chair the working group that will complete the first global report of the marine environment. We advocate the adoption of an international instrument, in the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. In June 2015 Portugal will organize a major international event on oceans, the "Blue Week", to promote debate on maritime issues in all their dimensions. We look forward to broad participation in that event.

The Portuguese language is the principal link that brings together the States belonging to the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries. It is a vehicle for global communication spoken by about 250 million

people in their everyday lives, in commerce, trade, business, culture and social networks. It is also an official or working language in various international organizations, including specialized agencies of the United Nations. The CPLP has the ambition of having Portuguese as an official language of the United Nations. The summit in Dili last July confirmed the vitality of the CPLP. On that occasion Timor-Leste assumed the presidency of the Community, thus lending a whole new dimension and scope to the CPLP by having its presidency located for the first time in Asia.

I would be remiss not to refer to the fact that on 20 November we will be celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Portugal is a party to that instrument without reservations, as well as to its three Optional Protocols. I take this opportunity to call for the universal ratification of the Convention and its Optional Protocols.

During this sixty-ninth session we will also have before us a new draft resolution on establishing a moratorium on the use of the death penalty. We hope the draft resolution continues to enjoy significant and increased support this year.

If we become a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council as we hope, we will act in accordance with the principles of cooperation and dialogue. We will engage with all States and other stakeholders in order to build bridges for the full implementation of human rights norms and standards. If we garner the trust of the Assembly, it will be a privilege to work, as a Council member, with the new United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, to whom I reiterate our full support. I also wish to pay a special tribute to the former High Commissioner, Ms. Navi Pillay, for her outstanding job, often accomplished in particularly difficult circumstances.

I conclude with a reference to the First World War, a tragic event mentioned at the very beginning of the United Nations Charter when it affirms the determination "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind". As we mark the centenary of the First World War and prepare the celebration of the seventieth anniversary of our Organization, we must bear in mind and reflect carefully on those words of the Charter. The President can count on Portugal's commitment to the purposes and principles

of the Charter in the pursuit of peace, development and respect for all human rights.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Lubomír Zaoríálek, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Zaoríálek (Czech Republic): This year marks the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the First World War. Yet in today's world we are far from having achieved global peace. It therefore remains a major task for the international community to achieve it. But that is not the only task that remains. In order to achieve global peace we also have to tackle two other equally important challenges, namely, to preserve global human dignity, and global prosperity.

I would like to start with global security. Europe is the continent that gave birth to the two most disastrous conflicts in human history. We Europeans have learned our lesson. A large part of our continent has been spared violent conflicts for almost 70 years. My country celebrates 25 years since our return to freedom and democracy in 1989.

Yet even today a part of Europe is at war. The territorial integrity of Ukraine, guaranteed by the Charter of the United Nations and the Budapest Memorandum of 1994, was violated by the Russian annexation of Crimea and the activities of Russian-backed paramilitary separatist forces in eastern Ukraine. Despite the present armistice, we believe that it is still the responsibility of the international community to seek the de-escalation of a conflict that has caused enormous suffering to the people of Ukraine and the loss of innocent lives of Ukrainians and other people, as demonstrated by the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17.

That is not all. We are alarmed at the continuing aggravation of the security situation in northern Iraq. We condemn the brutal acts of violence committed by the so-called Islamic State against local ethnic and religious minorities, as well as the murders of two innocent journalists and a humanitarian activist. Those acts constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. As we are currently seeing in Iraq, terrorism has taken on a new dimension, and we must counter it with the utmost determination. Therefore, we welcome President Obama's strategy as well as other important international activities in that regard, including the Security Council summit on foreign terrorist fighters (see S/PV.7272).

With regard to Syria, we believe that the only way to achieve a stable peace in that war-torn country and to ensure much-needed safety and legitimate rights for all Syrian people is through a negotiated political settlement between the Syrian Government and the democratic opposition. The Czech Republic, appalled by the atrocities committed by the so-called Islamic State, urges all sides of the conflict in Syria to cease violence and to start cooperating with the new United Nations Special Envoy in order to find a lasting solution.

Moreover, we must not omit the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We remain deeply concerned about the humanitarian consequences of the conflict in the Gaza Strip. We have made an effort to provide assistance to the victims through humanitarian aid. However, first and foremost, the Palestinian and Israeli leaders have to make every effort, with the help of the international community, to renew genuine and comprehensive negotiations. That is the only way to reach a lasting solution that would bring about peace, dignity, security and prosperity for both Israelis and Palestinians.

But there is also something else: the global dignity of human beings. In speaking of acts of violence — and the list I have provided is far from being exhaustive — we must keep looking for the causes behind those acts and seek to eliminate them. We often see that such acts result from despair and from a lack of the basic needs necessary to ensure human dignity, needs such as physical integrity, access to justice, political participation and basic freedoms, and also food, water, medical care, education, tolerable working conditions and protection against discrimination on various grounds. It is the responsibility of the international community, represented by the United Nations, to ensure that human dignity remains not only a declared principle of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights but is also put into practice worldwide. I am proud that my country can contribute to those efforts, building on the humanist legacy of my great compatriots, the first Czechoslovak President, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, and the first President of the Czech Republic, Václav Havel.

The first precondition for human dignity is the possibility of enjoying life without threats to one's physical integrity and physical suffering. For that reason the Czech Republic has vigorously supported the concept of the responsibility to protect, with its strong dimension of prevention and capacity-building. Yet, when a conflict cannot be prevented for various reasons, the United Nations is ultimately responsible,

through its peacekeeping role, for preventing the further deterioration of the situation, loss of life and human suffering. The Czech Republic has consistently participated in various European Union (EU) missions complementing United Nations peacekeeping efforts, namely, in the EU Training Mission in Mali and in the Multinational Force and Observers mission in Sinai. I can assure members that we will remain involved in the future.

National States and the international community share responsibility for protecting people from atrocities. However, if they fail, it is necessary to establish accountability for serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. The Czech Republic continues firmly to support international criminal justice and the International Criminal Court. Our primary task is to combat impunity and to enforce the protection of civilians and vulnerable groups in armed conflicts.

It is a sad reality that in too many parts of the world women are among the most vulnerable groups. We continue to witness horrifying cases of violence against women and girls, including sexual violence. We call on all States to adopt urgent measures to prevent such abhorrent incidents. When women are excluded from society and prevented from enjoying basic rights, participating in public life or simply exercising a profession, it has a massive impact not only on the country's development but also on its overall stability. We expect the relevant United Nations bodies to step up their efforts to ensure a peaceful and dignified life for all, including women.

In order to reinforce the prevention of various types of conflicts, we fully support the Rights Up Front initiative launched by the Secretary-General. We understand that it is an appeal to the United Nations and its bodies and to Member States to ensure respect for human rights, good governance, fair and free elections and genuine participation in decision-making without discrimination. The Czech Republic, as a member of the Human Rights Council, has for the second time presented a consensual resolution on political participation. In our view, giving everybody a chance to enjoy their civil and political rights through such participation is essential for building inclusive and truly cohesive societies.

A life of peace and dignity is unthinkable without the enjoyment of economic, social and environmental rights. That can be achieved by fighting poverty, social

exclusion and all forms of discrimination and illiteracy. I am convinced that the Czech Republic has a lot to offer in that respect. We are among the countries with the most equal distribution of wealth in the world. We are also a country with one of the lowest risks of falling into poverty in the world. We have managed to maintain a socially cohesive society, and we believe that that is one reason why our society is free of serious tensions resulting in violent conflicts. We want to contribute our experience to the efforts of the international community in order to build fair and prosperous societies across the planet.

The key to building a fair society is sustainable development. To that end, we are committed to working on a post-2015 development agenda that will formulate sustainable development goals based on the 2000 Millennium Development Goals. The goals will be global in nature, universally applicable and will address persistent inequalities and new challenges facing people and our planet. The promotion of good governance, the rule of law, human rights and the empowerment of women must remain among the stand-alone priorities, but they are also cross-cutting issues linking various agendas. In that context, we look forward to the Secretary-General's synthesis report expected by the end of the year.

The Czech Republic expects that the sustainable development goals will have a true impact on the fashioning of a development policy that will correspond to the needs of present generations and improve their quality of life, but will not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. All countries, rich and poor, should therefore be committed to creating an economically viable yet more socially and environmentally sustainable future. We hope to be able to take part in that effort through our membership in the Economic and Social Council, to which we are candidates for membership starting in 2016.

We are also actively involved in the EU and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and we are ready to support all the proposals and solutions that are considered most effective to reach the new global climate agreement, hopefully to be concluded in Paris in 2015.

I began by recalling the First World War and continued by enumerating three major challenges — global peace, global human dignity and global prosperity. They are enormous challenges. The United Nations has done impressive work in fostering peace, human dignity

and sustainable development. I am confident that next year, when we celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations, we will have an opportunity not only to reflect honestly on where we could do better, but also to appreciate the progress that we have made together.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Arnold Nicholson, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica.

Mr. Nicholson (Jamaica): I stand here today, as a representative of a nation with strong ancestral ties to the African continent, to welcome the election of Mr. Sam Kutesa to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. We are confident that the experience and skills that he brings to that high Office will be invaluable as we tackle the myriad challenges that confront us today. To his predecessor Ambassador John Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda, I also convey sincere appreciation for the leadership and vision that he showed in guiding our work, not the least of which was the success he achieved in setting the stage for the post-2015 development agenda.

The quest for peace and development has assumed an urgency we have seldom seen. We live in a time of great instability and conflict. At the same time, millions of citizens face unbearable levels of hardship and endure unconscionable levels of suffering. Far too many of our fellow men and women are being left behind. It rests within our grasp to build a better future for our peoples. This is the time to put people firmly at the centre of our development aspirations, to tackle the root causes of conflict, to create a culture of peace and to entrench the principles of justice, equity, democracy and respect for the rule of law. Recommitment to the principles of multilateralism and fidelity to the ideals enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations are central to our efforts to accomplish those goals.

In the coming months, our attention will be focused on elaborating an international development agenda for the post-2015 period. That provides an invaluable opportunity for us to address the critical challenges of poverty, inequality, global insecurity and environmental degradation. The post-2015 development agenda must have poverty eradication as its central focus. In so doing, we must give due regard to the developmental status of each country, in particular small island developing States (SIDS) and countries classified as middle-income. Implementing and delivering the post-

2015 development agenda requires a strong focus on the means of implementation.

The third International Conference on SIDS drew international attention to the unique vulnerabilities that threaten the very existence and survival of that group of countries. Our ability to withstand the ever-increasing risk of economic and environmental shocks requires that we forge effective partnerships with other members of the international community. In short, we cannot do the job alone. Jamaica therefore welcomes the support of the international community in joining forces with SIDS to negotiate the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway, which builds on the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy.

Let me say, though, that support for SIDS must continue beyond support for the International Conference. Our concerns need to be addressed in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. Among those concerns are the full and effective integration of SIDS into the multilateral trading system, an increased voice and participation in international financial institutions, the application of more relevant methods for measuring growth and representing our state of development, and increased support for efforts to enhance our resilience to natural hazards and economic shocks.

We welcome the outcome of the Climate Summit convened by the Secretary-General. The participation of business interests, civil society and a range of international institutions highlighted the importance of promoting concerted action among various stakeholders to address climate change. While the threats posed by climate change may be theoretical for some, they are very real for those of us who live in the Caribbean. In recent years we have had to deal with the increased frequency of hurricanes and their widespread impact on our land, lives and livelihoods. The financial impact of hurricanes adds to the burden of the dire economic challenges that we continue to bear. Our fellow Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries in the eastern Caribbean will no doubt share their recent experiences with floods that lasted only a few hours last Christmas but caused gross domestic product losses from which they have yet to recover.

As we prepare for the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to be held in Lima later this year, all countries must be engaged in a cooperative effort to

devise an appropriate response to climate change that will result in a steep reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions. We also need action to follow up on the additional document to be adopted by the Conference of the Parties, which may be a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change that will be applicable to all parties. In that we dare not fail. Our commitment to addressing climate change must be given effect at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties in Paris next year.

This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the most universally ratified human rights treaty. The year 2014 also marks the twentieth anniversary of the historic International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo. At the same time, we are on the cusp of the twentieth anniversary of the fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, to be celebrated in 2015. This is therefore an opportune moment to evaluate the progress made in safeguarding the rights of women and children. All children have the right to live a life free from fear and violence. That is the essential prerequisite for the development of their full range of skills and talents. Earlier this year, Jamaica was pleased to host, alongside the Secretary-General's Special Representative on Violence against Children, an interregional meeting that examined the impact of violence against children. I urge members, as we craft the post-2015 development agenda, to be seized of the importance of addressing the special needs of children and youth. We also call for special attention to be paid to achieving gender equality. Rooting out violence against women, enhancing women's economic empowerment and promoting their equal participation at all levels of decision-making should be essential tasks in that regard.

I now turn to the problem posed by the heinous activity of human trafficking, a crime of global proportions that exploits the most vulnerable among us, not the least of whom are women and children. Jamaica calls upon the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to provide a framework for Member States to develop a robust programme to help to bring an end to that affront to human dignity and freedom.

We cannot ignore the link between our efforts to spur development and the need to safeguard the health of our people. The challenges to security and sustainable development posed by threats to global

public health have been devastatingly illustrated by the recent outbreak of the Ebola epidemic. As we heard just two days ago from the Director-General of the World Health Organization, every day, every minute, counts in fighting the most severe public-health emergency seen in modern times. This is the time for courageous partnership, not inaction based on fear. An urgent and robust international response is required to marshal all the medical expertise and modern technologies that are at our disposal. The pandemic nature of global health threats such as Ebola and HIV/AIDS, including the silent killers of non-communicable diseases, require that we employ measures to combat them that are similar in intensity and urgency to those used in the fight against other global challenges.

Jamaica is concerned that the conflicts in Syria, the Gaza Strip, Iraq, Ukraine, South Sudan and Mali pose serious threats to regional and international security. Those conflicts are neither limited in scope nor confined to national borders. The instability in Libya, Yemen and the Central African Republic is equally troubling. Of even greater concern are the resulting humanitarian crises and the widespread violations of human rights. It is undeniable that those crises are fuelled by the growing propensity to funnel and transfer conventional arms to non-State actors, including rebel groups and separatist militias. The militarization of such groups often serves to further those conflicts rather than hasten their end.

Each passing day, the international community is confronted with new crises, the emergence of greater acts of barbarism, and the rise of more lethal terrorist groups. In the past few months, we have witnessed the atrocities of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and the downing of a civilian aircraft in Ukraine and a United Nations peacekeeping helicopter in South Sudan. We also dare not forget that it is now 166 days since the Boko Haram terrorist group brazenly abducted 200 schoolgirls, yet their desperate plight continues.

It is unfortunate that the number and scale of those crises not only place extraordinary demands on the international aid system, thereby hampering its capacity to respond, but also serve to desensitize the international community to the horrific levels of suffering being borne by civilian populations. Resolving those conflicts requires global and regional cooperation. It is clear also that conflict prevention must assume greater prominence. We cannot continue to operate in crisis mode only. Our vision is that of a United Nations transformed into a more effective

instrument for preventing conflict and securing just and peaceful settlements.

Recent events in Gaza demonstrate that the need for a lasting resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains as urgent as ever. Jamaica believes that the cycle of violence will continue in the absence of a negotiated political settlement based on a just, lasting and comprehensive agreement that guarantees the security of Israel and recognizes the Palestinian State within internationally recognized borders.

We reiterate our commitment to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. In the Caribbean we are acutely aware of the pernicious impact of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, fuelled by a dangerous nexus with the drug trade. That combination is the single greatest cause of fear and insecurity among our citizens. For the past two decades we have remained resolute in our call for a global partnership to fight that scourge. We are pleased that, with the fiftieth ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty earlier this week, that historic Treaty will enter into force on 25 December.

All States, whether small or large, have a role to play in the maintenance of international peace and security. Jamaica is therefore honoured to assume the chairmanship of the First Committee at this sixty-ninth session, which reflects our commitment to advancing the objectives of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Among the major milestones to be celebrated next year will be the seventieth anniversary of the International Court of Justice. Jamaica is firm in its commitment to the highest standards of respect for international justice and supports the role of the Court. Jamaica's group of States has nominated the Jamaican jurist Patrick Lipton Robinson as a candidate for election to the International Court of Justice for the term 2015-2024. His nomination demonstrates Jamaica's preparedness to contribute to the work of the Court and underscores that all States, regardless of size, can make a contribution to the development of the rules and norms of international law.

In 2015 we expect to erect a permanent memorial to honour the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. Its location outside this very Hall will serve as a place of meditation and solemn reflection on the horrors of slavery and the need to prevent its recurrence and to address its ongoing legacy. I encourage Member

States to contribute to the Trust Fund established to underwrite the cost of the memorial. Only a small shortfall remains. Let us press on to the end and meet the final goal.

Jamaica looks forward to the commencement in January 2015 of the International Decade for People of African Descent, through which the international community will undertake a range of activities to address racism, xenophobia, discrimination and prejudice, as well as systemic inequalities and underdevelopment. People of African descent must be engaged directly in the range of measures that can be taken to redress the legacy of the historic wrongs they have suffered. CARICOM countries believe that reparatory justice is an important element in that process.

Jamaica remains opposed to the unilateral application of economic sanctions and trade restrictions applied by one State against another. We reiterate our support for an end to the economic, financial and commercial embargo against Cuba, and urge all States that continue to apply such measures to repeal or invalidate such laws. We have it within our power to shape a world that is just and equitable and that embraces both peace and development with equal fervour. As we prepare to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations next year, we recommit to the lofty goals enshrined in the Charter — peace and security and the economic and social advancement of all people. Let us get on with the task.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Zazar Ahmad Osmani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan.

Mr. Osmani (Afghanistan) (*spoke in Pashto; English text provided by the delegation*): It gives me great pleasure to express my sincere congratulations to the President on his well-deserved election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. We are confident that his wisdom and experience will ensure constructive and fruitful deliberations on the very important and vital issues before the Assembly. I should like to assure him of the full cooperation of my delegation to that end. I also express my deep appreciation to his predecessor and my gratitude to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his competent and excellent leadership of the Organization.

I am delighted to report to the Assembly that Afghanistan has achieved a significant milestone with the successful conclusion of its presidential

elections, including the important task of recounting the votes. The new President, Mr. Mohammad Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, will be sworn in on 29 September. Afghanistan is witnessing the transfer of power from one elected administration to the next. While Afghanistan faces marked challenges, we are confident that the new Government, which enjoys the full backing of the vast majority of Afghans, will strive to bring about political security and socioeconomic prosperity to Afghanistan and, by extension, to the region and beyond.

It was more than a decade ago that many countries of the world joined the Afghan people in their struggle for peace and fought against the forces of extremism and terrorism. In that regard, we have collectively achieved tangible results. Unfortunately, however, the menace of terrorism and extremism continues to threaten security, socioeconomic development and peace, not only in Afghanistan but also in the region. There is an urgent need for a comprehensive response to the threats from terrorism, drugs and extremism at the regional and international levels.

Today, Afghanistan has credible political institutions, an elected Parliament, a Constitution and elected provincial councils supported by the brave Afghan National Security Forces. The people of Afghanistan have witnessed many positive achievements in the past decade, including in the fields of socioeconomic development, education — especially education for our girls — health, communications and information technology, and the promotion and protection of human rights, including particularly the rights of women. Afghanistan has one of the most dynamic media scenes in the region, propelled by the freedom of expression that the Afghan people have enjoyed for more than a decade. We should also underscore the pioneering spirit of our youth, who are behind much of the innovativeness and diversity of thought in academia and in the private sector.

The Afghan people appreciate and thank the international community for the vital support that it has given the country to build security, peace and prosperity in Afghanistan. We look forward to continued mutual cooperation with the international community to protect our achievements and ensure the sustainability of a strong partnership.

The transfer of security responsibilities from the international forces to the Afghan National Security Forces for the whole of Afghanistan, launched in the summer of 2011, will be achieved by the end of 2014.

As we speak, Afghan forces are providing security independently across the country, despite increasing acts of terrorism inside Afghanistan, which are being committed with support from terrorists from beyond our borders. The growing levels of violent extremism and the alarming developments in the Middle East and other parts of the world make international support for the NATO mission in Afghanistan even more imperative.

Parallel to our ongoing efforts to enhance the capacity and capabilities of our National Security Forces, the Afghan Government is also pursuing a dialogue to achieve peace through political means and reconciliation. We have put in place clear conditions in order for that process to be accepted by the Afghan people. For instance, we demand the renunciation of violence and respect for Afghanistan's Constitution, as it guarantees full and equal rights to Afghan men and women and is the only tool for the preservation of our collective achievements of the past decade.

Afghanistan strongly believes in comprehensive, long-term, friendly and good-neighbourly relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan in the fight against terrorism and the strengthening of peace and stability between the two nations in the region. At the same time, we would like to express our serious concern over the rocket attacks by Pakistani forces onto Afghanistan's soil. The continuation of such attacks is unacceptable to Afghanistan. We hope that the Government of Pakistan, considering our common interests in ensuring peace and stability, will put an end to any kind of acts that could endanger the prospects for good-neighbourly relations and will act to protect cooperation and trust between our two nations.

The Afghan Government is keen to reduce the negative economic impact of the security transition and to move towards sustainable economic development in at least three ways.

First, we will focus on the development of agriculture and the agribusiness sector, where more than 70 per cent of our population is directly or indirectly engaged, with enormous potential for growth and employment generation.

Secondly, Afghanistan is estimated to hold trillions of dollars worth of natural resources, including minerals and hydrocarbons, representing a guaranteed source of wealth and income for generations to come. We already have several State-owned and private companies from

China, India, the United Kingdom, Canada, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Azerbaijan and other countries, in addition to Afghan companies, expressing a keen interest in investing billions of dollars.

Thirdly, Afghanistan is now on the eve of a transformative decade, from 2015-2024, which will be a multidimensional process that will have security, political and economic ramifications. Therefore, the pledges made at the 2012 Tokyo and Chicago Conferences will maintain the Afghan Government's overall socioeconomic efforts. Afghanistan critically needs the continuation of that support from its international partners over the next few years.

Afghanistan's report on its progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), published in late 2013, shows that the progress with regard to most of the MDG targets, in particular those related to health and universal primary education, is commendable. Despite only starting in 2005, Afghanistan is committed to achieving most of the MDGs by 2020. Meanwhile, national consultations are under way to synchronize efforts towards achieving the off-track MDG targets, bearing in mind the outcome of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

As we embark on the important task of crafting the new post-2015 development agenda at this session, I am happy to inform members that that process also coincides with Afghanistan's transformation decade. Both are top priorities for Afghanistan's national development agenda. We appreciate the work of the United Nations in recognizing the need to reduce the number of sustainable development goals to an affordable, achievable and realistic number in the post-2015 development agenda. We are of the view that that agenda should leave no one behind, it should be adaptable to both global and local settings, and it should have sustainable development and poverty eradication at its centre.

Our region is blessed with vast resources and opportunities for economic cooperation. An expanded level of regional cooperation can serve both economic and security purposes. The Afghan Government's regional strategic goal for economic cooperation is to establish regional economic growth and resource corridors that connect the Silk Road through Afghanistan, the people of South and Central Asia and the Middle East and their key economic activities, including agriculture, light manufacturing and mineral extraction, with essential trade, transit and energy enablers.

Regional cooperation is one of our priorities. The Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process represents a significant step towards enhancing stability and regional cooperation between Afghanistan and the 12 participating countries, with the support of 12 other country partners and nine international organizations.

This year's General Assembly session takes place at a time when the United Nations has seen a number of conflicts continue and new ones have taken shape. My Government fully supports the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital. We strongly condemn illegal actions and violations by the occupying Power against the Palestinians as a whole, especially the ongoing disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks on innocent Palestinian civilians.

We express our grief at the killing of innocent civilians in Syria and support a political resolution, reached through a broad-based national dialogue that meets the aspirations of all Syrians. With the worsening security situation in Iraq and Libya, we strongly condemn the actions of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham and its brutality, and we call for joint efforts to defeat that evil. In that context, I call upon the United Nations to take appropriate action within its mandate to uphold international peace and security.

My delegation believes that there is an urgent need for the international community to pay attention to the resolution of the crisis in Ukraine, while taking into account the situation of civilians.

In conclusion, let me assure members that Afghanistan remains committed to its national and international responsibilities and obligations. We reaffirm our strong will for a further strengthening of democracy and good governance, including a further strengthening of the rule of law; accountability and transparency; the promotion and protection of human rights, particularly the rights of women; justice reforms; the fight against terrorism, narcotic drugs, corruption; and the eradication of poverty. The support of the international community is essential for all of that.

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

Several members have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to

10 minutes for the first statement and to five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Ansari Dogahch (Islamic Republic of Iran): I should like to exercise my right of reply in connection with the remarks in the statement made earlier today by the Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates in connection with the issue of the Iranian islands (see A/69/PV.15).

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates its full sovereignty over the Iranian islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb in the Persian Gulf and underlines that the decisions and measures undertaken in those islands by the Iranian authorities have always been conducted on the basis of the principles of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Therefore, any claim to the contrary is deemed to be interference in the internal affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran and is categorically rejected.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has always pursued a policy of friendship and good-neighbourliness with all neighbouring countries. In that context, we once again express our readiness to engage in bilateral talks with the United Arab Emirates with a view to continuing to strengthen bilateral relations and removing any misunderstanding that may exist between the two countries in that regard. In the meantime, it is obvious that the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran over the three islands is not negotiable.

Mr. Diyar Khan (Pakistan): I should like to exercise my right of reply in connection with the remarks made by The Honourable Prime Minister of India (see A/69/PV.15).

In his statement today, the Prime Minister of India referred to "Pakistan-occupied Kashmir". To set the record straight, I should like to say that the correct and historic name of that territory is Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Pakistan emphasizes the pursuit of dialogue and diplomacy, which are peaceful means for resolving issues and disputes. We believe that dialogue should not be staked by human rights violations or by any kind of terrorism.

The United Nations is the most appropriate forum in which to raise the issue of Jammu and Kashmir. As the Prime Minister of Pakistan said yesterday, the right

to self-determination has to be exercised by the people of Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Abhishek Singh (India): I take the floor to exercise India's right of reply.

We reject in their entirety the untenable comments by the representative of Pakistan. We would like to remind the representative of Pakistan of what our honourable Prime Minister said today in this Hall:

“I want to hold bilateral talks with [Pakistan]. However, it is also Pakistan's responsibility to come forward and to genuinely establish the appropriate atmosphere for bilateral talks. In raising that issue in this forum, I do not know how successful our efforts will be.” (A/69/PV.15, p. 17).

Mr. Diyar Khan (Pakistan): I exercise my second right of reply in response to the remarks just made by the Indian representative.

With regard to the dialogue process, it is not Pakistan that has stalled the dialogue process. Indeed,

it was India that cancelled the dialogue with Pakistan at the Foreign Secretary level that was set to take place in August.

With regard to the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, let me once again reiterate that, no matter what the Indian representative says, the issue of Jammu and Kashmir has yet to be resolved in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

With regard to terrorism, I point out that Pakistan itself is the biggest victim of terrorism, which is planted on our soil. Some of it is emanating from our immediate neighbourhood. Terrorism is a common threat, and we must all work together to eliminate it.

Mr. Abhishek Singh (India): Regrettably, the Pakistani representative has once again taken the floor. We reject all the untenable and unsolicited remarks from the representative of Pakistan.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.