



# General Assembly

Seventieth session

**19<sup>th</sup>** plenary meeting  
Wednesday, 30 September 2015, 9 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Lykketoft . . . . . (Denmark)

*The meeting was called to order at 9.05 a.m.*

## Address by Mr. Rosen Plevneliev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria

**The President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Bulgaria.

*Mr. Rosen Plevneliev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Rosen Plevneliev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Plevneliev:** Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. I also wish to extend my sincere gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa for his work as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.

Today, we celebrate the seventieth anniversary of our unique Organization. We reflect on what we have accomplished, but also on what we have fallen short of achieving. It is also a time to map the way ahead. The Secretary-General has announced “Strong United Nations. Better World.” as the slogan for this year’s anniversary. But are we stronger as a community? Are we shaping a better world for our children? We are living in turbulent times. The number of crises around the world is at a record high with failing States, frozen

conflicts, wars and terrorism creating insecurity around Europe. Our citizens feel that instability. They expect politicians to act boldly, to solve and not to deepen the crises.

The ongoing conflicts in Syria, the Middle East and North Africa are threatening the lives of millions. The rising extremism that no borders can contain is a serious challenge to the international community. The degrading humanitarian situation in several conflict zones has forced millions of people to leave their homes, pack their whole lives into a suitcase and embark on a perilous, sometimes even deadly journey to safety. Hundreds of thousands of people are at Europe’s doorstep, reaching out for a helping hand, struggling and fighting for the right to live. As a result, nationalistic parties that feed on people’s fears have seized the day and are gaining momentum. Hate speech, racism, xenophobia, populism and aggressive nationalism are again on the rise.

All of those challenges transcend national borders and call upon us to act with resolve on a global scale. Robert Schuman, called “the Father of Europe” as one of the founding fathers of the European Union and the greatest peace projects the world has ever seen, stated in the Schuman Declaration of 9 May 1950: “World peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it.” We should not wait for the crises to appear on our television screens to prompt us to act. It is high time that we acted together to address the causes, not the consequences.

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Peace is not just the absence of war. Peace is human rights. Peace is the rule of law. Peace is rules that apply to everyone, including global and regional Powers. Security, development, human rights and the rule of law are interdependent and mutually reinforcing universal values. They are the pillars of the United Nations. Every crisis can be traced back to an initial phase when someone violated the law and human rights. To prevent future crises, a United Nations early-warning crisis detection system needs to be set up to safeguard the rule of law and human rights.

Poverty, inequalities and environmental degradation are issues that require our attention. Bulgaria welcomes the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and is fully committed to its implementation. For the first time in the history of humankind, people are at the very heart of a development agenda that leaves no one behind. This truly transformative Agenda reflects the complexity of the challenges we face today. It takes into consideration the right of every individual to live in dignity and prosperity and ensures the equal participation of all sections of society.

Climate change is a serious problem. Its impact continues to cause more disparities and conflicts. Climate change negotiations have entered a critical stage. 2015 is a landmark year — we have an opportunity to end two decades of intense climate negotiations and begin a new era through the adoption of a global, legally binding protocol in Paris in December. My country will contribute to the successful finalization of that process.

Women's participation in all aspects of social and political life still remains a major challenge in many parts of the world. Development will never be truly sustainable and lasting peace will never be achieved, if half of the world's population is excluded. Gender equality is an absolute necessity for the full realization of human rights and the functioning of democracy.

Today, the international community faces a deteriorating global security environment, characterized by a rising number of civil wars, growing extremism and an increased number of humanitarian crises. A renewed focus on conflict prevention is needed. In the five years since its beginning, the conflict in Syria has come to represent a major threat to international peace and security. The presence of Daesh in the region has become a key obstacle to a political settlement in Syria and a serious risk to the stability and the territorial

integrity of Iraq. The most recent terrorist attacks in Egypt, Tunisia, Kuwait and Turkey have shown that violent extremism and radicalization transcend national borders.

Joint action by the international community in the fight against violent extremism is crucial. The United Nations is the best platform for managing and coordinating international efforts. We need Governments and law enforcement institutions to cooperate closely with regional organizations, civil society, local communities, media and the private sector in order to ensure durable and viable solutions. On a national level, we should adopt policies and measures that can prevent the radicalization of marginalized groups and ensure their better integration in society.

As long as the conflict in Syria continues, the refugee crisis will not subside. The efforts of the entire international community should focus on ending hostilities in conflict zones and supporting institution building, the rule of law and respect for human rights. The role of neighbouring States is also of great importance.

Europe is currently focused on the establishment of a solidarity scheme that will allow the fair relocation and resettlement of refugees among all Member States. We need to establish an appropriate mechanism that can distinguish those in need from those just looking for a better life. The migrant crisis is a security concern. Apart from the fear of infiltration by extremists on European soil, the issue of illegal human trafficking, which requires our urgent attention and concerted action, has again been raised.

Given the unprecedented migratory flow towards Europe, the European Union (EU) has to demonstrate solidarity and responsibility. In the EU, we need not just to address the crisis but to solve it in a manner guided by European unity and our common desire for a peaceful and free Europe. The European Union represents the largest area of human rights, peace and democracy in the world. It is a family that stands together.

The international community was deeply shocked by the deliberate destruction of world cultural heritage sites in Syria and Iraq by terrorists. That is not only a cultural tragedy, but a severe blow to human civilization. Societies without ethics and values, without morals and culture, have no future. In that respect, I would like to underline UNESCO's important role in the protection

of cultural heritage sites in armed conflicts and in the prevention of illegal trafficking in cultural artefacts.

There is a clear need to revitalize the Middle East peace process. Bulgaria fully supports the Secretary-General's Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, in his challenging mission. My country reaffirms its position that the United States-led formula, the two-State solution, is the realistic, just and lasting way to settle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Bulgaria has consistently supported diplomacy as the only way to resolve the issue of the Iranian nuclear programme. We welcome the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and hope that all the measures agreed therein will be fully implemented in a timely fashion.

This year we celebrate 70 years since the end of the Second World War. We remember all the innocent lives that perished in the death camps of the Holocaust. There will always be people who will try to justify the killing of innocents in the name of a cause they consider worthy. We should never forget that we are all born equal, born in peace to live in peace and strive for peace. I remember the words of the young Muslim man from Mali, Lassana Bathily, who saved several innocent lives during the hostage crisis earlier this year in Paris:

“We are brothers. It is not a question of Jews, Christians or Muslims. We are all in the same boat and we have to help one another.”

Today we need active citizens who care for human rights. As President, I stand behind Bulgarian civil society in their demands that State institutions be transparent and efficient. I am proud of the example Bulgarian civil society set in 1943 by saving all 48,000 Bulgarian Jews from the Nazi camps. Unfortunately, Bulgaria was not in a position to do the same for the Jewish people from northern Greece and parts of Yugoslavia, as they were not Bulgarian citizens. We deeply mourn the loss of their lives, as well as all the victims of the Holocaust, whom we will always remember.

Temples of different religions — an Orthodox church, a mosque, a synagogue and a Catholic cathedral — are located just across from my office, in the very heart of the Bulgarian capital, Sofia. They have coexisted peacefully, some of them for centuries. That is a great example of tolerance, wisdom and respect for

diversity. And it is up to all of us to shape the world we live in with tolerance and humanism.

The annexation of Crimea was a blatant violation of international law and its principles. Bulgaria stands firmly behind Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. For us, Crimea is Ukraine and Ukraine is Europe. My country condemns any attempts to further destabilize Ukraine. The full implementation of the Minsk Agreements is essential. We call on all stakeholders to engage constructively in a political dialogue in order to reach a just political solution.

The Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office of the South-East European Cooperation Process will work for the adoption of a Joint Declaration to reaffirm the principle of the inviolability of national borders in the Balkans. We want borders not to be moved, but to fall. Enhanced regional cooperation and the European integration of all the countries in the region is our ultimate goal.

Among the eight Secretary-Generals of the United Nations, all of them men, a national from the Group of Eastern European States has never been appointed. The recently adopted resolution 69/321 (2015) stresses the need to ensure equal and fair distribution based on gender and geographical balance, while meeting the highest possible requirements for the appointment of the Secretary-General. The time has come for a woman from Eastern Europe to be entrusted with the highest position in the Secretariat. Once a joint letter by the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council, as envisaged in the resolution, starts the formal process for soliciting candidates for Secretary-General, Bulgaria stands ready to nominate the candidate who will be the best fit for the post. That will be a person of excellence, with extensive experience in international relations, with great interpersonal skills, an efficient manager and communicator, a true leader.

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Bulgaria for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Rosen Plevneliev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Juan Carlos Varela Rodríguez,  
President of the Republic of Panama**

**The President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Panama.

*Mr. Juan Carlos Varela Rodríguez, President of the Republic of Panama, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Juan Carlos Varela Rodríguez, President of the Republic of Panama, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Varela Rodríguez** (*spoke in Spanish*): This is the second year that I have come to the General Assembly as President of Panama, representing a peaceful, healthy and noble people, to whom I send my greetings from this rostrum, as I also greet the rest of the world's people.

Like the illustrious Panamanian Ricardo J. Alfaro, who took part in the international conference in San Francisco when the Charter of the United Nations was drafted there in 1945, I stand here today to reaffirm our commitment to human rights and international peace and security. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the efforts of the thousands of men and women of this Organization, in particular those who have given their lives to achieve the objectives of the United Nations.

I preside over a Government whose foreign policy is based on dialogue and consensus, as well as on the continuing search for social peace and the common good. That was in evidence during the historic Summit of the Americas that was held in Panama in April, which became the stage for the recent rapprochement between Cuba and the United States of America, both of whose people and Governments we congratulate on taking that important step. We hope that the process of normalizing relations between them will culminate in a fair and just end to the economic blockade of Cuba. It will be a major challenge for Latin America to maintain the spirit of fraternity that prevailed in Panama during the Summit, but we are determined to do so.

I congratulate the Governments of Colombia and Venezuela on the progress achieved in Quito with respect to normalizing relations between them in order to guarantee the well-being of their peoples and to strengthen the unity between them as part of the great

family to which we all belong and within which we are all eager to overcome any differences through dialogue. I reiterate our support for the Colombian peace process and to welcome the agreements recently reached there. We call for that same resolve and determination that the Government of Colombia brought to bear in its peace efforts, which we all supported, to be applied to dismantling the structures for producing drugs, which have introduced such violence to that country and to the countries that serve as conduits for transporting narcotics to the main consumer markets.

In order to ensure the well-being and prosperity of all nations, armed conflicts and territorial disputes must end. We strongly condemn terrorism. It is unacceptable in the twenty-first century for human beings to be burned alive or decapitated on the basis of their faith. The international community needs to close ranks to protect humankind and to promote dialogue and tolerance as the only mechanism for achieving peace. Panama will stand firm in the belief that, together, we can meet such challenges. We call on the great Powers that united more than 70 years ago to bring an end to the Second World War to continue to work with all Member States on a road map to defeat terrorism and to bring lasting peace to all the countries of the world.

Peace depends on recognizing the legitimate aspirations of all peoples. In that regard, in recognizing the hope of the people of Palestine to become a State, Panama calls on the State of Israel and on Palestine to reach an agreement that will permit the coexistence of the Jewish State of Israel and the State of Palestine. The future of humankind depends on the structural capacity of each nation to address its people's problems so that people do not attack each other.

The world today is facing two different kinds of war: armed conflicts and the ongoing wars that are being waged against poverty, inequality, the lack of opportunities and organized crime, which engender insecurity and violence, leading many young people to feel excluded and to fall prey to organized crime and terrorism. The best tool for addressing those scourges is to design State policies that offer our young people a better education, more opportunities and decent jobs and that permit them to grow up in safe neighbourhoods and communities with adequate public infrastructure. That is a task that requires the participation of Government, the private sector and civil society.



In this era of telecommunication and social networks, Panama recognizes that the exchange of information and intelligence among Governments is crucial. With the development of air and maritime connectivity, Governments and their security agencies must be able to distinguish between a tourist or business traveler and elements of organized crime. Panama is aware of its responsibility as a transit country and is moving to develop a regional security centre to combat crime in a more coordinated fashion and to support other countries of the region in that effort.

Our country is not immune from the illegal flow of migrants escaping war and seeking a better future. We reiterate our commitment to treating them with dignity and to offering them humanitarian assistance. We are taking the relevant measures in that regard and are building the necessary infrastructure in our country. Hundreds of migrants, including Africans, Latin Americans and others, pass through Panama each month, leaving their families and children behind on journeys that can take upwards of two years. When I recently asked one migrant why he had left his country, he replied that he was simply seeking a place where there was peace. We all have an obligation toward migrants. Just as we joined forces to fight the Ebola virus and HIV/AIDS, we need to continue our joint struggle to solve the problems that lead our brothers and sisters to migrate from their countries.

I am convinced that the most effective way to combat inequality and seek better days for humankind is through the honest management of our countries' resources for the benefit of our people. In a world of such conspicuous wealth, there is no justification for the poverty that afflicts millions of its citizens. Heads of State and their collaborators must understand that politics is a form of service and that we are the temporary custodians of resources that belong to our people and for which we are accountable.

In today's world, women suffer disproportionately from the effects of inequality, poverty, war, forced displacement during conflict, human trafficking and unequal opportunities. Therefore, Heads of State and Government and the United Nations have a critical role to play in defending and promoting the rights and freedoms of women. I reiterate the call that I made during the Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment to the effect that countries must provide more resources to combat

femicide, trafficking in persons and all acts of violence against women.

We are facing major challenges, but we also have enormous opportunities to change course and ensure a better planet for future generations. In the light of the upcoming summit on climate change in Paris, we call on all countries to reach a definitive, universal and inclusive agreement that will enable us to jointly address the damage caused to our planet, which has been so severely affected by our unsustainable practices.

The Coalition for Rainforest Nations consists of some 52 member countries and is co-chaired by Panama. The Coalition proposes to include a commitment to reducing emissions, which have been exacerbated by deforestation and forest degradation, and to strengthen mechanisms for financing. Those mechanisms also include climate change mitigation and adaptation measures. We all have the right to have access to safe drinking water, and that is one of the main challenges for our Governments. Protecting our water resources and our oceans, recovering our forests, expanding the production and distribution of safe drinking water for everyone in our countries and providing appropriate solid-waste treatment are also priorities on our agenda.

Our citizens need access to decent housing and a modern and efficient public-transport system, which are essential for improving the quality of life, and family life in particular. All States are obligated to ensure that their people have access to education and public-health systems. In our country, we have invested heavily in building, remodelling and equipping schools and hospitals, and in providing appropriate human-resources training. We are therefore taking very positive and decisive steps to reach those goals. Our economy continues to grow, and we are making progress with our social and public infrastructure plans. Those large infrastructure projects, together with a robust international financial system, will enable our service-based economy to grow and will help produce new and better employment for our young people.

In 2016, Panama will conclude our canal expansion. That and the expansion of our ports, airports and financial system are the two most important pillars of our service-based economy. Protecting our financial and logistical systems in order to ensure that they are used only for legitimate purposes is our responsibility. That is why we have strengthened our security and intelligence cooperation with other Governments. We

have enacted important laws and undertaken reforms that protect our financial system from any negative practices. In accordance with the conclusions reached at the third International Conference on Financing For Development, held recently in Addis Ababa, I am very pleased to announce that Panama is making a commitment to increasing its international cooperation in the area of fiscal transparency.

We also announce our commitment to making further progress in automatically exchanging data and information on tax matters at the bilateral level, as our main trading partners have done. That exchange must be contingent on the right of each country to take measures that are commensurate with its capacities, national circumstances and international geopolitical realities. Each country has the right to take the necessary measures in the area of the automatic exchange of data and information that should be used for the common good. Those measures should ensure that such information will not be utilized for any purposes that would harm the competitiveness of some countries or be a detriment to others. We propose that the discussion of those particular issues be incorporated into the regular agenda of the United Nations, so that such initiatives can be discussed by countries on an equal footing. Our privileged geographical location contributes significantly to the development of our economy and our citizens. We also have a global vision of development that reflects our country's motto, which is "Pro Mundi Beneficio" or "For the Benefit of the World".

Strengthening the United Nations system is also our responsibility. We must review the governance structure of the United Nations, and in particular the Security Council, in order to achieve greater transparency and geographical representation. That is why Panama is actively participating in the current reform process of the Security Council and is working to bring about a rapprochement in country positions. Since the birth of the Organization, we have always reaffirmed our commitment to working together with all countries as we seek to establish the common good and to build a better world. That is why, at this very rostrum from which His Holiness Pope Francis made a call for millions of Catholics to support the United Nations on the seventieth anniversary of this noble Organization, I, as a Head of State, reaffirm Panama's commitment to ensuring that our capacities are at the service of the international community and to working hand-in-hand

with all nations, so that we can move forward towards a world that is more just and more equitable and in which peace and dialogue will always prevail.

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank the President of the Republic of Panama for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Juan Carlos Varela Rodríguez, President of the Republic of Panama, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

#### **Address by Mr. Maithripala Sirisena, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka**

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Maithripala Sirisena, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Sirisena** (*spoke in Sinhala; English text provided by the delegation*): My country is a long-standing Member of the United Nations, and it is indeed an honour and a pleasure for me, as the newly elected President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, to address the General Assembly at its annual general debate. On behalf of the Government and people of Sri Lanka, I wish to heartily congratulate His Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. Let me also convey my gratitude to the former President, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, who contributed immensely to the achievements of the previous session.

The United Nations now has a distinguished track record of 70 years. We at the United Nations have consistently engaged in the responsible and challenging task of working to ensure global peace, security and development during these past 70 years. However, I realize that similar challenges still lie ahead of us. When leaving office at the height of the Korean crisis in 1953, Mr. Trygve Lie, the first Secretary-General, described the position of Secretary-General as "the most impossible job in the world". It is no secret that all Secretaries-General, during their terms of office, have contributed substantively to promoting the universality of the United Nations and to making it an Organization that can serve humankind well in to the future. The incumbent Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, has also made a remarkable contribution to the Organization. I would ask Secretary-General Ban

Ki-moon to accept my respectful gratitude and that of my people for the service he has rendered.

Sri Lanka has been a Member of the United Nations for 60 years. As a Member State, we have played a very active and responsible role in the Organization. Sri Lanka is a nation that respects the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international conventions and treaties. A main objective of the United Nations is to recognize, safeguard and promote human rights. Sri Lanka remains committed to fulfilling that responsibility. In that respect, we intend to implement a new programme and plan of action in Sri Lanka to advance human rights.

Sri Lanka has played a multifaceted role in the United Nations. Our contribution to United Nations peacekeeping missions, which began in the 1960s, continues. Sri Lanka looks forward to further enhancing our committed contribution to United Nations peacekeeping in the future.

A new era of democracy dawned in Sri Lanka on 8 January, ushering in justice, freedom and equality. Our social and human development approach is founded on pluralism, reconciliation and sustainable development. The development vision of my Government for the next five years is based on the same principles. The theme of this session — “The United Nations at 70: the road ahead for peace, security and human rights” — is therefore very much in consonance with the vision of my Government. Moreover, my Government is committed to developing a proactive and practical programme in Sri Lanka to further ensure peace, security and human rights.

In the past eight months, in two consecutive elections, the people of Sri Lanka elected a new president and a new Government. In its first six months in power, my Government has introduced essential amendments to the Constitution in order to strengthen democracy in Sri Lanka. Those amendments have reinforced the foundations of good governance through institutional reforms that strengthen pluralism and democracy. With my personal involvement and facilitation, some of the executive powers vested in the presidency were transferred to the Parliament and other independent institutions.

Following the general elections in August, I was able to unite the two major political parties in Sri Lanka so as to create an alliance for governance by consensus in the country, changing the confrontational political

culture that had prevailed there for six decades. Our new vision for the country involves achieving the twin objectives of sustainable development and reconciliation. A fundamental requirement in that context is dealing with the past honestly and building a modern Sri Lankan nation. In dealing with the past, we will follow a process of truth-seeking, justice, reparation and non-recurrence.

It is imperative that Sri Lanka adopt a new social, economic and political approach, so that it can rise to the challenges of the twenty-first century. In that regard, reconciliation has received priority attention in my country. The new Government of consensus has, under my leadership, already taken several steps to introduce and operationalize the constitutional and institutional reforms required to accelerate the achievement of those goals. Sri Lanka is a country that has suffered from conflict. While conflict brings destruction to a society, it is possible for many lessons to be learned during and after a conflict.

All forms of war and terrorism are a disgrace to humankind. The Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights refers to the disregard and contempt for human rights, which results in barbarous acts and ultimately rebellion. Whatever its root causes are, the challenge of this era is to find ways and means to defeat brutality against humankind. Problems can arise from resorting to terrorism as a means of solving grievances, as well as from actions taken to eliminate terrorism. Sri Lanka has succeeded in eliminating the terrorism that continues to disturb other developing countries from Asia to Africa and Latin America.

We defeated one of the world's most ruthless terror enterprises. In addition, our post-conflict experiences have also been meaningful. We believe that all those experiences can be shared fruitfully with other developing countries affected by terrorism. Sri Lanka remains prepared to engage in a more active dialogue with such countries and will continue to speak and advocate against terrorism.

It is in that context that I wish to address the theme of this session. We all know that the United Nations was established with the objective of preventing the recurrence of the human tragedies that took place in the first half of the twentieth century and which had a negative impact on humankind. At the heart of this year's theme is “peace, security and human rights”. That theme motivates us to review whether, during

the past seven decades, we have lived up to the initial expectations of the United Nations. I believe that, if global development is to succeed, it is important to have a dialogue within the South as much as between the North and the South. My country, which lies in the South, can contribute immensely to nurturing such South-South dialogue.

Sri Lanka is in the forefront of the oldest representative democracies in the South Asian region. We have been fortunate in being able to preserve the democratic ethos in our country despite the prolonged conflict. Despite several factors militating against maintaining a high economic growth rate, we have succeeded in sustaining the State social-welfare policies carried over from independence. We have never compromised on those policies, which include universal free education, free health care and the eradication of poverty. Following a path of social democracy, Sri Lanka has succeeded in achieving high scores in the *Human Development Index*, even during the years of conflict. That success is testimony to our commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Development should help to empower women and young people and ensure security for children. Frustration among the young usually leads to conflict. Yet young people are the driving force for sustainable development, and we should therefore work to transform them into a highly skilled workforce that can succeed in the knowledge-based world of the twenty-first century. That should be a major component of the post-2015 development agenda adopted in the form of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1).

Similarly, we should launch a national programme to empower women and thereby enhance their contribution to development. Special programmes to protect children and safeguard their rights are also an essential factor in developing an effective and humane society. My understanding of sustainable development is that we should aim not for a development model that is isolated and confined to particular sectors or groups, but one that is inclusive and capable of lifting development standards and levels globally. To that end, I would like to stress the need for a fresh, universal approach.

As we learn from the Buddhist ethos that is ingrained in Sri Lankan culture, there are three kinds of human conflict. The first is the conflict between humans and nature, in which we constantly engage in

order to enjoy material comforts in life. In that context human beings today attempt to exploit natural resources extensively in the name of development. The second is the conflict among humans. Such conflicts occur among individuals, communities and nations, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that they occur when human rights are not protected by the rule of law. The third type of conflict is that within the human being. The first two kinds occur when we lose the battle within us as human beings, and the third type is therefore the root cause of all conflicts.

Extremism, overconsumption, the arbitrary exploitation of the environment, violations of human rights and vicious disparities in income are all results of our inability to overcome our cravings. Among other problems, they cause insecurity, conflict, violations of rights and exploitation. The edifice of sustainable development should, therefore, be built on a foundation of self-discipline and equity. If we could practise that at the personal, community, national and global levels, it would be a giant leap forward for humankind. I propose that we, as national leaders, take such a self-disciplined, equity-based approach into consideration when drawing up relevant action plans for the future.

In conclusion, I would like to express my firm commitment and dedication to elevating my beloved motherland of Sri Lanka and its people to the level of one of the greatest and noblest nations of the world, and contributing to the liberation of all humankind.

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Maithripala Sirisena, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Ms. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović,  
President of the Republic of Croatia**

**The President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Croatia.

*Ms. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, President of the Republic of Croatia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Ms. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, President of



the Republic of Croatia, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

**President Grabar-Kitarović:** Allow me to congratulate you on your election, Mr. President, and to thank His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa for his leadership throughout the previous session. We have great expectations for this session, recognizing that there is an urgent need for action on so many issues and in so many areas of the globe. While acknowledging the challenges that lie ahead, we sincerely hope that by working together we can turn those challenges into opportunities and make significant progress in achieving some of our common goals.

As we celebrate the 70 years of the United Nations, I find myself reflecting on the past 23 years, beginning in 1992, when Croatia joined the United Nations and has since gone on to contribute to the Organization's legacy and achievements for almost a third of its existence. During those 23 years, Croatia has transformed itself from a recipient of United Nations assistance and an item on the Security Council's agenda into an active member supporting the work of our Organization in many areas. Croatia has served on the Security Council and has held the presidency of the Economic and Social Council, and has actively and substantively contributed to our common cause, whether in peacekeeping missions, peacebuilding efforts, arms control, economic and social development, gender equality, strengthening the international legal architecture, or reforming the General Assembly. The United Nations can rest assured that Croatia will continue its efforts and contributions.

Can we truly say that we are doing enough to ensure peace, security and human rights? Are we doing enough to protect our planet, the only one we have? Member States, all 193 of us, should not forget how important membership is, nor how important are the commitments that we have made to ensuring global peace and security. Strengthening the role of the United Nations and promoting international relations and economic order is in the interest of all nations. That is not an empty phrase, but a reality that we must constantly be mindful of.

We must ask ourselves whether we are currently meeting the expectations that people around the globe have of the United Nations and of us as Members. The answer is obvious, and not flattering. Too many armed conflicts persist, too many people are denied basic human rights, too many children go to sleep

hungry every night, and too many women and girls are left behind. We are witnessing a breakdown in basic governance and increasing economic despair in too many parts of the world, with more than 1 billion children worldwide living in poverty. It is heartbreaking just to read the number of children who, according to UNICEF, die each day as the result of poverty — 22,000. This is where a commitment to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (resolution 70/1) is not just necessary, but perhaps overdue. I was inspired by the spirit of our Summit last week and hope that it will materialize swiftly and purposefully into actions and accomplishments.

We live in a world so rich with potential and beauty, natural and man-made alike, and yet we have witnessed one atrocity after another. This year marks numerous tragic anniversaries, among which we note the one hundredth anniversary of the unspeakable Armenian tragedy, the seventieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, and the twentieth anniversary of the genocide at Srebrenica. With regard to anniversaries, we should ask ourselves whether they are personal events intended only for the victims and the survivors, or whether they are general reminders designed to alert all of us to how much we have forgotten since our initial attempt to maintain world peace.

Accountability should always be at the centre of our actions. The fight against impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide is not only a matter of justice. It is an equally important element of conflict prevention. No crime should go unpunished, and the effective prosecution of those responsible has to be ensured. We should spare no effort to put an end to the culture of impunity. Croatia is a strong supporter of the International Criminal Court. As the victim of aggression in the 1990s, we are proud to be the thirteenth State to ratify the Kampala amendments on the crime of aggression.

Nearly everything can be prevented. Time will, as always, determine who was right and who was wrong, but is that the only alternative to hindsight? Too often, we have to deal with the consequences of our inaction. Too often, instead of solving problems at their source and addressing the root causes at an early stage, we are required to spend more time and resources on the crises after allowing them to spin out of control. That is because we ignored the early signs or we just did not have the time or the courage to get involved. We must change that approach. We must act in time, with

determination and adequate resources. That is not only the right thing to do. It is smart thing to do. The migrant crisis, which has flooded numerous European States, is a textbook case of paying too high a price as a consequence of inaction.

The challenge of migration is nothing new. It has been a part of human existence since the dawn of humankind. However, with 60 million people on the move worldwide, what is new is the lack of clear guidelines and comprehensive policies. We need sound legal, social, economic, humanitarian and logistical solutions. The current migrant and refugee problem has national, regional and global aspects. It cannot be addressed — yet alone solved — by one State alone. It is a multidimensional problem that requires multilateral solutions, in terms of protection against terrorism, preventive diplomacy and sound development. Whoever wants to avoid that issue, or pretend that it does not exist, will simply not be able to help solve it.

Since mid-September, with almost 80,000 people having entered Croatia, my country has joined a list of European Union and neighbouring South-East European countries that have been heavily burdened by the current crisis. Croatia has to look at that issue from its own perspective, while keeping in mind historical, current and future global policy trends. And finding the right balance of national, regional and global considerations is the hardest task. We must focus on both micro and macro levels at the same time, while keeping in mind what is really at stake: human lives and the future of so many individuals and their families. Here, I ask for consensus within the European Union. Here, I ask for a global response. Here, I ask that we focus on the rule of law and the conventions that we signed at the end of the Second World War.

The solution to the migrant crisis in Europe will have to be addressed at the highest global level in several ways. It is an issue that involves ways of defending against terrorism, which, together with extremism in all its forms, must be prevented and defeated at its core. But it is also an issue that involves providing sufficient financial and material aid to refugee camps in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and elsewhere in that part of the world. And equally important, it is an issue of efficiently policing and administering international borders. Last but not least, it is an issue that involves combating those who profit from human trafficking and eliminating their networks.

The first thing that always comes to mind is educating our children, our future generations, working harder at achieving global citizenship and building on the United Nations idea of a global classroom, such as the Global Education Initiative, in which Croatia is proud to serve as a champion country. It is important to establish a curriculum on common standards for global citizenship, a curriculum that should become compulsory for all children in their formative years. We need to deliver on the promise of the right to education.

It seems clear that legislation is not enough. We need a change of mindset and behaviour, and that is only possible through education. We must promote education that instils tolerance, trust, compassion, integrity, truth and respect for the dignity of the individual and gender equality. Children are not born with hatred, intolerance, racism, sexism, prejudice or stereotypes in their hearts and minds. They have much to teach us.

The rostrum in front of me bears the logo which 70 years ago became a symbol, not just of the United Nations, but of the better world that we then envisioned for ourselves. Since that time, progress has been achieved in some areas, while there have been alarming developments in others. I am hopeful that our quest for a better, safer and more prosperous world is far from over.

To take one example of the dangers we face, the impact of climate change and global warming on the economy, development, security, political stability and human rights of all countries can no longer be ignored. As we can see for ourselves, the United Nations logo shows the world from the perspective of the Arctic Circle and, sadly, last year's winter was one of the warmest ever. As the Arctic ice melts and the oceans grow warmer, do we truly grasp the full impact that that has already had on our planet?

We cannot predict the final impact that those changes will have. All over the world, and in Croatia as well, we are recording changes in sea temperature and have witnessed unprecedented changes in the ecosystem. In Croatia's beautiful Adriatic Sea, we have begun documenting the arrival of new species of fish from tropical waters. That represents a trend that many other countries are witnessing, and there has to be a joint solution on that front. With sea levels rising, many coastal States, like Croatia, will be seriously affected, while the even greater impact that some of our fellow

Member States may face will be detrimental to their very existence.

It is vital that our actions deal with the interrelationship between climate change, natural resources, prosperity and security. We have to fully understand how those interactions will affect our future prosperity, stability and development. In that regard, we must realize how fragile life is on this planet and that the damage that we have done may not be reversible. We must learn how to change our behaviour and to show more respect for our planet.

The twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is a chance that we cannot afford to miss. We should collectively take pride in the fact that we did not miss the chance presented by the Third International Conference on Financing for Development at Addis Ababa. We must remain committed to finding and executing the effective means of implementation for our ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and follow the Addis Ababa Action Agenda to the fullest extent.

Unfortunately, the world continues to be appalled by the brutality of a multitude of violent acts and to face increasingly complex security threats involving non-State actors. In this context of evolving security challenges, the rise of terrorism presents a threat to all of us and calls for a well-coordinated response. Croatia welcomes the work of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and its review of United Nations peacekeeping operations. We hope that its report will provide future guidance for increasing the effectiveness of United Nations peace operations as one of the key mechanisms for ensuring global peace and stability.

In implementing the mandates of peace operations, we stress the importance of giving the highest priority to the protection of civilians, the prevention of atrocities, especially sexual and gender-based violence, and the protection of children. In addition, I would like to welcome efforts made in other review processes, namely the review of the peacebuilding architecture and the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). I am truly confident that all expert recommendations will find a way to be implemented.

We are witnessing fragile peace and security situations in many parts of the world. Under such circumstances, our dedication to security agreements is becoming increasingly important. This is why we

regret that the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons did not produce the much-needed results. Croatia believes that this Treaty continues to be the most effective multilateral instrument for preventing nuclear proliferation and achieving nuclear disarmament. We should therefore spare no effort to uphold and enhance the Treaty in the future.

The uncontrolled spread of conventional weapons represents another significant threat to security and stability. In that respect, Croatia was proud to preside over the first Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which is among the most insidious types of weapons because they continue to be a threat long after a conflict ends. It is no coincidence that the Conference took place in Dubrovnik, a city that suffered attacks from these kinds of weapons in the Homeland War.

As a country with a rich historical heritage with seven UNESCO world heritage sites, Croatia strongly condemns the deliberate destruction of the world's cultural history and urges the United Nations and everyone to do more to protect and safeguard heritage in areas where it is threatened by conflicts and extremists.

In terms of diplomacy and foreign relations, this year could mark a turning point in bilateral relations and a shift towards global policy. In this regard, I cannot overemphasize the importance of trust, not just trust among Member States and international institutions, but trust and truth at every level.

On the positive side, we are pleased to note the positive outcome of the negotiations on the Iranian nuclear programme. We congratulate the parties to the talks on their determination and political will to resolve an issue that has been burdening international relations for so long. This is a major victory for diplomacy. We expect in the coming months to see to what extent the removal of the nuclear threat is contributing to the vitally important question of the stabilization of the Middle East and beyond.

Another milestone in international security has been achieved with the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty. This legally binding instrument establishes for the first time minimum standards in the trade of conventional arms at a global level. Croatia is proud to be among the countries that have ratified and put into effect this milestone treaty.

Croatia is fully committed to promoting peace and stability globally, but even more so regionally. We host the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre, an organization with the important mission of fostering dialogue and cooperation on security matters in South-East Europe, with a focus on harmonizing norms and standards, thus facilitating rapprochement with the European Union and NATO.

The issue of most pressing concern is related to the challenges in Europe, in particular its southern neighbourhood. The challenge of the migrant crisis has somehow triggered a connection between geography and peoples' destinies and has brought to the fore the tragic consequences of unresolved conflicts. As to Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen and the other crisis areas of the Middle East and North Africa, we share a grave concern about the continuing and growing trend of violence, religious intolerance and terrorist actions. In those countries, we see unspeakable acts of barbarism and terror with such appalling forms of killing as beheadings, we see sexual violence against women and girls and other extremely heinous crimes — against humanity, culture, religion, dignity and, most appalling of all, human life. It is shocking and sickening. It has nothing to do with Islam, a religion of peace, tolerance and understanding.

We urgently need to stand together, face this huge challenge and mobilize all our efforts to fight the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and all forms of intolerance and discrimination. At the same time, we have to find prospects for a peaceful resolution of these conflicts and pave the way for a better life. It is not enough to end human suffering; it is just as important to provide hope and opportunities.

We need to build safe, tolerant and flexible communities that are resistant to radicalization and the marginalization of certain social groups, particularly the most vulnerable ones. To that end, we must expand economic, educational and other opportunities. By so doing, we will eliminate the preconditions for radicalization and violent extremism, which may lead to terrorism. In this regard, we call for the timely implementation of the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals.

There is no development without security. And there is no real security without justice, human rights, rule of law and good governance. Sustainable development

rests upon economic, social and environmental pillars and the positive synergy between them. There are few straight lines leading to the final goal; rather, it is a meticulous task that requires connecting all the dots, big and small. The complexity of the 2030 Agenda is testimony to that fact. However, it is the only way forward if we are truly committed to leaving no one behind.

On the European continent, in Ukraine, the implementation and the viability of the peace process have to be ensured. The ceasefire must be respected and the Minsk peace plan adhered to by all parties. Croatia, together with its partners in the European Union, remains committed to Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, as well as to assisting and supporting Ukraine on its reformist path towards a peaceful and prosperous future.

We emphasize the importance of the stability of South-East Europe and its prosperity. Croatia remains strongly committed to doing its utmost to support the processes of the Euro-Atlantic integration of its south-eastern neighbourhood. We strongly believe that this is the most efficient and constructive way to secure peace, stability and prosperity for this part of Europe. In particular, as we approach the twentieth anniversary of the Dayton Peace Accords, we all should support Bosnia and Herzegovina, a politically emancipated State in which decisions are taken for the equal benefit and prosperity of its three constituent peoples and other communities and individuals.

History is more often than not the real litmus test for leadership. The attribute that all great leaders have had in common is the ability to see past the boundaries of their own timidity. That has often been called vision, or perhaps foresight. In any case, I believe that we all of us fail when we are forced to make a distinction between friends or allies and adversaries. Drawing those distinctions and picking sides creates another wall in terms of global policy. It not only blocks vision, but it confines reason. And once that line is crossed, history teaches us that conflict is inevitable. In terms of all the current crises, I have to say that the traditional bilateral diplomacy should be reevaluated in the light of shifting global policy.

Never judge a country, person or problem by its size. Do not look at numbers and do not be limited by vocabulary, legal terms, boundaries or borders. In terms of size, Croatia ranks 124th in the world, but



we are determined that our international presence and relevance will be far greater than our size. Our geographical location keeps us at the global table, sometimes against our will, but mostly by choice. I, for one, am not going anywhere and will continue to ask real questions. More and more leaders must realize, as I have from the start, that we should, all of us, look on solidarity and membership in multilateral and international organizations as a privilege for our citizens. When we leave New York and return home, we need to evaluate our national and international interests and values. We should talk to friendly States and to adversaries. We should engage in dialogue, ask real questions, build trust and keep our perspective. We, the peoples of the United Nations, have the tools and the means. Now is the time to find the will to use them.

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Croatia for the statement she has just made.

*Ms. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, President of the Republic of Croatia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera,  
President of the Republic of Costa Rica**

**The President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

*Mr. Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Solís Rivera** (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. I reiterate my country's commitment to work with you, as we do with all Member States, to achieve the goals that we have set for this session and to strengthen global governance and multilateralism. You have demonstrated excellent judgement in focusing this debate on the celebration of the seventieth anniversary of the Organization, especially the interrelationship between peace, security and human rights.

The intensity and gravity of events leading up to this session make our discussion both timely and urgent. Millions of human beings are living through a black, starless night. Their pain, their despair and their anguish are testing us to the core of our humanity. Caught in the perilous grip of circumstances from which no one can escape, let us demonstrate that a new era is dawning for our civilization and that we are not witnessing its decline.

Costa Rica urges, therefore, that we in the General Assembly, instead of going in for the same rhetorical exercise we engage in every year and every decade, repeating what we already know, take action and translate into deeds what until now have been merely words. What we say and what we do must be consistent. We are not prisoners of fate, but rather, the shapers of destiny. Our actions matter.

*Mr. Tesfay (Eritrea), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

This must be the time for the General Assembly to trigger long-awaited processes, to shake off indifference and to embrace solidarity with renewed passion and commitment. This must be the time for the General Assembly to show that, while we are a community of nations, we are also much more than the sum of our individual interests. This must be the time for the General Assembly to consolidate the leadership of the United Nations as the centre of global governance and to continue to engage in reforms that will make it more effective, efficient, robust, proactive and dynamic.

To that end, let us begin by electing in the most democratic way possible the person who will hold the position of Secretary-General. Since 1946, the selection process for the person to hold the most important position in the international community has been characterized by its lack of transparency. Costa Rica is determined to change that. Along with Estonia, my country is leading the efforts of nearly 30 States to establish a process that is transparent, democratic, equitable, inclusive and that, unlike its predecessor, will be consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and similar high-level international processes.

Costa Rica is proud to have included, in resolution 69/321, adopted just a few weeks ago, an invitation to Member States to suggest female candidates for the position of Secretary-General. The time has come for that position to be held by a woman. Let us acknowledge the ability, competence and commitment

of women in all spheres, and let us send an unequivocal political signal that, as we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Organization is practising what it preaches in terms of equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

In order to consolidate the position of the United Nations at the centre of global governance, the Security Council should assume its responsibilities in its response to the maintenance of international peace and security, taking into account human rights in its actions and improving its work in the prevention of conflicts. The Council's focus on conflict prevention is inadequate, and when it does take action, that action often comes too late. That has been true in the case of Libya, Mali, the Central African Republic, Somalia, the Sudan, South Sudan and Yemen. I say that because of the acts of sexual violence and gender-based violence that have been perpetrated against girls and boys, women and men in Iraq, Syria and north-eastern Nigeria. I would also refer to the genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica and to the tolerance that has been shown for violations constantly committed against many peoples, including the people of Palestine, and against racial, ethnic or sexual minorities in other parts of the world, including in the West. I also say that because of the millions of Syrians who have been displaced in historic proportions, and the thousands more who continue to risk their lives at sea to escape death inflicted by chemical weapons, barrel bombs and cluster munitions, weapons whose use Costa Rica categorically condemns.

None of those crises erupted without prior warning. They developed over years, and sometimes decades, of offences against human dignity and human rights. They were caused by deficient or corrupt Governments and institutions, which engaged in acts of repression, discrimination and exclusion, acts that eventually restricted fundamental freedoms; deprived people of their economic, social and cultural rights; exacerbated disparities in development; and failed to uphold the right of the peoples of the world, including the right of the people of Israel, to live within secure borders.

The primary responsibility for promoting, protecting and fulfilling peoples' rights and fundamental freedoms rests with the States. However, when Governments fail to meet their responsibility to protect, because they lack either the will or the ability to safeguard the rights of their own people, then it is up to the international community, and in particular the Security Council, to

intervene and to deploy the wide range of resources and tools at its disposal to resolve conflict. Despite those resources, we did not do enough to prevent the current human tragedy. We did not do what was necessary to prevent thousands from venturing out to sea with their children.

If the United Nations is to consolidate its position as the centre of global governance, it must ensure that respect for and the promotion of human rights are not subject to manipulation. We must be particularly wary of the attempts by some States to manipulate the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in an effort to prevent the United Nations from tackling the global challenges for which it was set up and from effectively defending the rights of individuals. Some try to distort the purposes and principles of the Charter by affirming, for example, that human rights violations are not related in any way to the maintenance of international peace and security, or that sovereignty precludes the commitment of this Organization to such issues.

Sovereignty, a concept associated with the birth of the nation State, should no longer be used as an excuse for the international community to sit back and be a silent witness to a bloody theatre of war. The less we consider sovereignty as a wall or a shield, the more likely it is that we shall be able to fulfil our responsibility to protect the civilian population. In the words of the Secretary-General,

“Early action to prevent conflict and protect human rights helps to strengthen sovereignty, rather than challenge or restrict it” (*S/PV.7389, p. 3*).

Thus, no single country — none — can hide behind the wall of sovereignty and silence when serious violations of human rights are perpetrated. No crime against humanity should go unpunished. For its part, Costa Rica reaffirms its support for the Secretary-General's “Rights Up Front” initiative, which places human rights issues at the heart of efforts by the United Nations. It is an attempt to correct the systemic failures of the past, as the initiative recognizes that the violations of those rights indeed constitute early warning signs of coming crises.

Because human lives are at stake, Costa Rica supports the French proposal to restrict the veto in cases of mass atrocities. That proposal dates back to our membership in the Small Five Group and also to efforts spearheaded by Liechtenstein in the Accountability,

Coherence and Transparency group. The latter Group has made efforts to adopt a code of conduct that would require the permanent members of the Security Council to refrain from using the veto in situations of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity and to be politically committed to acting promptly and decisively in such situations.

The opinion of a single permanent member cannot continue to bear more weight than the necessity to save lives. When a permanent member uses, or threatens to use, the veto, in those circumstances, it publicly abandons and disregards the right of victims to justice and peace and undermines international efforts to put an end to impunity. The veto breaches the trust that millions of people have vested in the United Nations as their last hope in such cases as those mentioned. We all agree on the importance of strengthening the rule of law to consolidate the institutions that protect the civilian population to address the root causes of conflicts, to promote accountability and to combat impunity, both nationally and internationally.

It is no coincidence, then, that the rule of law has a key place in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). However, only one permanent member of the Security Council acknowledges the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, and only two have ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Costa Rica calls upon all States to adhere to and implement international instruments for the protection of human rights and the fight against impunity in the face of atrocious crimes. Once again, we call on all States to ratify the Rome Statute, including the 2010 Kampala amendments. The more multipolar our world, the stronger will be our confidence in the rule of international law throughout the world.

The commitment to maintaining international peace and security is also reaffirmed by all permanent members of the Security Council. However, at the same time, they are the largest producers and exporters of conventional weapons in the world. Moreover, despite the explicit prohibitions in the Arms Trade Treaty, those countries continue to conduct international arms transfers, including transfers of small and light weapons, and including to conflict areas in the world. The explicit prohibitions on transfers of conventional arms contained in the treaty exist to prevent human suffering and to save lives. They are not there to be ignored. Costa Rica calls on the States that have signed

the Arms Trade Treaty to ratify it, and on those who have ratified it, to set to work without delay, enthusiastically, energetically and with dedication, on securing its full and effective implementation.

Furthermore, States possessing nuclear weapons, including the permanent members of the Security Council, have violated their unequivocal commitment to nuclear disarmament pursuant to article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. They argue that the current security climate is not conducive to nuclear disarmament, and they cling to the traditional paradigm of State security that keeps 16,000 nuclear warheads in the world, many on high-alert status and even susceptible to cyberattacks.

Compliance with article VI is not conditional or optional; it is mandatory. Nuclear disarmament cannot be postponed any longer. The fact that 115 States have signed the humanitarian pledge for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons demonstrates that the international community is convinced of the need to place nuclear weapons on an equal footing with other weapons of mass destruction, weapons that are prohibited under specific treaties. Costa Rica calls for more States to endorse the humanitarian pledge and to fill the legal vacuum by prohibiting and eliminating the nuclear threat once and for all.

Placing the United Nations at the centre of global governance is not limited exclusively to improving the work of the Security Council or strengthening its role in conflict prevention. It also implies a greater strengthening of the General Assembly and the Organization as a whole. Thus our efforts must go further. Let us focus not only our attention, but also additional resources, on building up the third pillar, that of human rights.

In terms of human rights, the United Nations has fostered a significant policy development, even extending border protection to cover an increasing number of vulnerable groups, such as children, people with disabilities, the elderly, migrants and indigenous peoples. But while the principles and obligations are clear, and an institutional structure of deliberative and executive bodies exists, the situation on the ground in many parts of the world is far from what it should be, and the distribution of resources does not match the statements and declarations.

The promotion and defence of human rights cannot continue to be limited to rhetoric. In a year that marks

the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, gender equality and the empowerment of women in many regions of the world must cease to be mere words and become commitments aligned with and following from the Declaration, incorporating public policies at the national level that bring us genuinely closer to the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a cross-cutting focus on gender that is realized in every Goal, target and indicator we have committed to.

The major challenges facing multilateralism therefore require a more effective and efficient governance structure if we are to achieve respect for human rights and their observance and progressive development. It is crucial to create opportunities for effective participation by non-State actors and to enhance regional structures for implementing the global agenda, but above all, it is essential to make increased budgetary provision for strengthening institutional frameworks, given that at the moment the third pillar of the United Nations receives only 3 per cent of its regular institutional budget.

We should adjust our regulatory framework and institutional efforts in the area of human rights so that the Human Rights Council, the system of human rights treaties and the Security Council, among others, can better synchronize their efforts. The challenge is to ensure that we act as a single Organization, effectively and coherently, not clumsily, not fragmented, so that we can protect and promote people's rights, including the right to development. We showed that we could do that throughout the negotiating process that led to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in which Costa Rica shared its experience on the issues of conservation, environmental protection, unilateral disarmament and leadership in creating a model for sustainable development. And we will show it again in Paris at the end of this year when we reach a landmark agreement on climate change, because climate change constitutes such a serious threat to human development.

Costa Rica firmly believes that, where Paris is concerned, we need serious, binding, people-centred commitments that respect our rights and involve comprehensive action on climate issues not only on the part of Governments but also from the various economic and social sectors. In that regard, I would like to especially commend the leadership of President François Hollande and the support that President Barack

Obama has given to the process through his clean energy plan. We must also take advantage of the opportunities that international cooperation offers by way of means of implementation in order to facilitate every country's participation in global efforts, and particularly that of middle-income countries. Our country has launched the Geneva Pledge for Human Rights in Climate Action, a voluntary initiative based on recognition of the relationship between the enjoyment of human rights and the impact and consequences of climate change, and we call on all States to commit to it.

The gap between words and deeds only increases mistrust and erodes multilateralism. Costa Rica refuses to accept a situation that undermines the authority of the United Nations, puts us in a very vulnerable position in the face of threats old and new, and damages our much-needed Organization's legitimacy in the minds of its Member States and the international community as a whole. That is why it should be here in the General Assembly that we say that we, the people, wish to be able to live in peace, freedom, equality, justice and democracy and to have the opportunity, in the words of that apostle of Cuban independence, José Martí, to create, believe and grow. Those words resonate today more than ever.

Terrorism, organized crime, drug-trafficking and worldwide pandemics are proof that threats to a nation's security are no longer confined within its borders. Collective threats must be addressed collectively. The violations of the most basic human rights, above all the right to life, committed by terrorists and other so-called non-State actors, as well as the dreadful acts that have been perpetrated in areas affected by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant against women and girls and other vulnerable groups, pose a serious threat to international peace and security.

Costa Rica strongly and unequivocally condemns terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, regardless of the perpetrators or their purposes. In the face of the human tragedy of still uncertain proportions caused by the displacement of civilians fleeing violence, Costa Rica emphasizes the importance of seeking a global, collaborative and integrated approach that can enable us to speedily address this critical situation in a sustained manner. History shows that we get better results when we place cooperation above confrontation, tolerance above terrorism and ideas above radical ideologies.



Regarding the fight against terrorism, Costa Rica is concerned about the use of sexual violence as a tactic of terror and the links between violent extremism and control over women's autonomy and its effects on and restrictions of their rights. We are also worried about the growing use of armed drones outside conflict zones and about various Governments' reinterpretations of human rights and humanitarian principles. My country believes it is urgent that we take action to better understand this issue and address all of its implications. It is here at the United Nations, through our disarmament bodies, that we should begin to adopt measures that increase transparency and ensure accountability regarding their use.

To mark its seventieth anniversary, let us make the United Nations a more robust, dynamic and energetic organization that, rather than debating abstract concepts, seeks practical and specific solutions. Let us start by electing the first woman to occupy the post of Secretary-General and ensuring that the process is an inclusive, transparent and equitable one that will give us a visionary, independent, strong leader who will be the first to react, lead and act on humankind's most urgent challenges and crises.

Let us demand coherence and consistency from the permanent members of the Security Council regarding the rule of law and international law, arms control and nuclear disarmament, to cite three examples. The Council is a key part of global governance, and its legitimacy depends on the consistency of its actions. Let us also work to strengthen the General Assembly and its bodies with the aim of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the entire Organization.

Let us protect the innocent civilians who are the deliberately targeted victims of unspeakable crimes of sexual violence and attacks by chemical weapons, cluster munitions, armed drones and barrel bombs. Sovereignty does not and should not protect Governments that commit atrocities against their own people. Let us end impunity and back efforts to commit to and adopt a code of conduct that prevents the use of the veto in cases of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Let us together combat terrorism, which is spreading like wildfire and is an increasing threat to international peace and security, human rights, universal culture and sustainable development. And let us do so in strict observance of international law,

including standards of human rights, international humanitarian and international refugee law. We cannot overstate the danger of self-serving reinterpretations of such standards, especially when they are used to justify unilateral action for solutions that should always be reached multilaterally.

Let us work without ceasing and without excuses for a culture of peace. As the seat of the University for Peace, now in its thirty-fifth year, Costa Rica calls on all States for their support in providing it with the resources it needs to fulfil its important task of educating the leaders that our world needs if it is to prevent and resolve conflicts and promote lasting peace.

In commemorating our Organization's seventieth anniversary, let us remember the importance of keeping our doors open to new realities; to civil society and non-governmental organizations; to women; to young people, with whom we should engage in promoting reconciliation and sustainable peace; to groups with suggestions, such as the Elders; to collaboration between United Nations system agencies so as to provide holistic responses to the challenges we face; to the regional and subregional organizations that also play a crucial role in conflict prevention and management; to all peoples and individuals and their ideas, dreams, beliefs and aspirations; and to change and readiness to act.

The Costa Rican poet Jorge Debravo once said that over the ages, humankind has continued to ascend an unending upward path to progress. It appears that sometimes we have regressed. We have only stopped along the way for self-affirmation. Seventy years in human history seems of no longer duration than a gust of wind. However, when we measure those years in terms of the lives that have been saved, the agreements reached and the progress made in finding common solutions to the gravest crises that humankind has confronted, the passage of seventy years begins to feel monumental. It is extraordinary what we can accomplish when we stand together and act as one.

In closing, I cite the optimistic words of my teacher poet Debravo:

"The world is moving towards an era of love and brotherhood. Misery shall disappear from the face of the Earth. Equal rights and opportunities shall prevail despite those who struggle to enslave them. Join me in the fight, brothers! For what must come will come sooner if our arms turn the windmills of history together!"

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Costa Rica for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Ghana.

*Mr. John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Mahama:** Let me congratulate the Secretary-General, the staff of the United Nations and, indeed, all Member States, on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of this all-important international Organization.

“Study history, study history”, Winston Churchill, the famous British Prime Minister once said, for “in history lies all the secrets of statecraft”. And so we study history. In millions of schools throughout the world, there are untold numbers of students studying history and learning about the events of our past. And in the pages of the books they use to study, history is compressed and reduced to its barest essentials. The immensity of a whole era is whittled down and conveyed in mere paragraphs, with significant events carefully packaged into simple sentences. Nevertheless, within those pages are indeed the secrets of statecraft. From those pages, we come to understand what our world once was and the process by which it evolved to become what the world is today. Reading them, we learn from the mistakes that were made.

The world, into which the United Nations was born 70 years ago, seems like such a faraway reality. In 1945, the names that filled newspapers were those of Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Dresden and even that of the Red Army. In 1945, Ecuador declared war on Germany and Japan. Syria

also declared war on Germany and Japan. The Soviet Union was victorious in the Battle of Königsberg, as well as the Vienna Offensive. Spain broke off diplomatic relations with Japan. And the historically neutral country of Switzerland closed its borders with Germany. Those are just a few of the events that took place before the watershed San Francisco Conference in April of that year, when 50 nations convened to declare their commitment to peace.

My country, Ghana, was not among those nations. It would take another 22 years for the then Gold Coast colony to gain its independence and become Ghana. In fact, a great many of the countries represented here in this Hall — particularly those from the so-called developing world — did not exist as sovereign nations. Nevertheless, here we are today, very much a part of this Organization, aptly called the United Nations, and very much a part of this world. That is why I wish to state, quite emphatically, at the start of my address, that it is time for there to be greater inclusivity at the United Nations. Truth be told, it is long past time. The world that was in 1945 does not exist now in 2015. Therefore, the visionary Organization that was formed to meet the needs of that world must now be reformed to meet the needs of today’s world. And those needs are many.

The names that fill today’s newspapers are those of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, Boko Haram and Al-Qaida. The hashtags that circulate on the social media now refer to Sandra Bland, who died under suspicious circumstances while in police custody in Texas; Aylan Kurdi, a young Syrian boy who, along with his family, washed up on the shores of a beach in Turkey; and Madau Gach Dut, one of the thousands who have died in the conflict in South Sudan. I could continue, because the names are many and the lists are long.

Thousands have died in Syria, Pakistan, Nigeria, Mexico, Afghanistan and Somalia, and thousands more, the majority of whom are from African nations, have died in the Mediterranean Sea, while attempting to flee poverty, hunger, disease, political strife or persecution. Then, too, there are those who did not die while seeking refuge and whose perilous journeys brought them safely to the borders of other nations. While some of those nations welcomed their arrival, others subjected them to further alienation and degradation.

The numbers are staggering. That is not the history that is being taught in schools — at least, not yet. Those

are not events that lend themselves to being written down in a book and condensed into nicely worded paragraphs and sentences. Those are not events that once happened a long time ago. Those are events that are happening today. They are events that are happening in our time. And as we gather here today to discuss the road ahead, I wish to quote a few words from the speech that Franklin Roosevelt, before his untimely death, had been writing and preparing to deliver at that fateful San Francisco Conference. Mr. Roosevelt wrote, "The work, my friends, is peace".

Despite all the changes that have occurred in the world over the course of the last 70 years, that singular truth remains the same. But peace, as so many great men and women have reminded us, is not just the absence of war. Peace is also the presence of dignity in one's life, the achievement of equality in one's endeavours and the respect of one's humanity and its attendant rights. If we are to discuss the road ahead, we must do so with new language, with ideas and solutions that do not exist in the annals of history. And we must begin with an examination of our most basic institutions — governmental, cultural, societal and personal.

Some of the institutions that were set in place to protect and promote peace are the very ones violating their mandates and engendering fear in the public. When one race of citizens feels as though their lives do not matter, when refugees successfully escape the horrors of war only to be further brutalized on foreign soil, when the already-traumatized victims of conflict are violated by international peacekeepers who were sent there to ensure their safety and well-being, then we, as leaders and as the world community, must stop being silent and start taking action. We must create change, because fear serves as fuel for disillusionment and apathy, for hatred and xenophobia, all of which form the seed that, if allowed to take root, will ultimately grow and bear the rotten fruit of war.

What we learned 70 years ago, with the formation of the United Nations, is that we must each be our brother's keeper; we must allow ourselves, as people and, even more, as nations, to belong to one another. In Ghana we are also reviewing our rules of engagement to maintain a balance between the maintenance of law and order and the basic rights of our people to free speech and free expression.

Since the beginning of time, cultural and societal traditions have been used as markers of identity. Kente cloth is as defining to Ghana as kimono is to Japan, as quinceañeras are to Latin America, and as bar mitzvahs are to Judaism. Yet some practices and beliefs, although considered traditional, have no place in our world today, and they should not be permitted a place in the world that we are planning for the future. Among those traditions are those that deny individuals, particularly women and children, their basic rights and force them into situations that relegate them to a life vulnerable to poverty, disease and other unbearable hardships.

Most of the world's poorest people are women. Currently, we create programmes and policies to address that imbalance; yet, regardless how successful they may be, they are not permanent solutions. They do not solve the ultimate problem, that is, the vast inequality between men and women that so many traditions have inculcated over the years.

In Ghana, through the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty programme, we have provided cash grants to a total of 77,000 households throughout the nation. That programme, which is aimed at poverty alleviation, also entitles its recipients to the provision of free health care through the national health insurance scheme. In order to address the issue of child mortality and malnutrition, preparatory work is under way to earmark disbursements for pregnant women and mothers of children under the age of one year.

It is not a secret that when it comes to gender equality, education is the key to change. Gender inequality is a problem that must be addressed at its root. We speak often of ability and access, and those are honourable concepts, but the actuality is that being able to get an education and having access to an education is not the same as actually getting an education.

In Ghana, we have made tremendous progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target on universal basic education. We have instituted the Girl Child Programme, which encourages parents to send girls to school, and at the primary level we have achieved gender parity between boys and girls. But what happens beyond the primary level is another matter altogether. Young girls are often taken out of school and married off. Africa has the highest rates of child marriage in the world, following only Asia. It was the intention of the 1964 United Nations Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage

and Registration of Marriages to abolish the practice of child marriage. Yet in West Africa, two out of five girls will be married before the age of 18. Those young girls will face increased maternal mortality rates and increased rates of sexually transmitted diseases; they are subject to the sort of poverty that is nearly insurmountable. However, research shows that 64 per cent fewer girls will become child brides if allowed to complete secondary school.

Recognizing the significant difference that that change could make in our nation, Ghana has launched a campaign, under the auspices of UNICEF, to end child marriage in our country by focusing not only on young girls' access to school, but also on their completing their education. That is being achieved through enhanced access to secondary education and beyond, without compromising quality.

Thus far this year we have had a fruitful General Assembly. We adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (resolution 70/1), we have discussed how to establish resilient health systems, and we have held a summit on peacekeeping and strategies to deal with religious extremism. We will take many memories back with us, but one remarkable image that made a huge impression on me in the early days of this gathering was the Pope's car. It was breathtaking to watch the pontiff as he greeted massive crowds and moved even Government officials to tears in an open gallery; but nothing was more breathtaking than watching him entering and being driven through the streets of New York in a tiny Fiat 500. It was a great metaphor for the times in which we are living, and a powerful lesson about some of the changes we must make to confront our rapidly changing future.

I felt a strange sense of solidarity with that small vehicle as I watched it cruise down the streets of New York, dwarfed by the humongous sport-utility vehicles surrounding it. It reminded me of the plight of the so-called developing nations in our relationships with the wealthier, larger, more established nations of the world. There is a sense of being protected, yet also of being overpowered; of being guided, yet intimidated to stay the course they are navigating. However, more than any of that, what struck me was the modernity of the moment. The survival of our planet depends on us coming to terms with such modernity. It requires us to redefine our relationship with nature and to realize that we are just one part of a larger ecosystem. We must

finally realize that we are dependent upon nature, and not the other way around.

In recent years, signs of transformation in Africa have generated great hope and very high expectations. Many African nations have embraced democracy, and free and fair elections have become a regular occurrence on the continent's calendar. Several African nations are seeing accelerated economic growth, and a more than modest amount of success is being achieved in reducing hunger and poverty on the continent.

My own country, Ghana, has benefited greatly in working to achieve the MDG targets. Ghana is considered one of the bright lights of Africa, that place that was once derisively referred to as the dark continent. Our nation boasts a strong, stable democracy, with an economy that has been growing positively for more than two decades. While we are exposed to the current uncertainty in the international markets, strong cooperation with our multilateral and bilateral partners has led to positive movement towards fiscal consolidation. Moreover, our current agenda for transformation is aimed at diversifying our economy and accelerating growth. My Government is committed to maintaining strict fiscal discipline in order to stabilize the macroeconomy and stimulate growth and business activity.

All of that notwithstanding, one of the major constraints facing all of Africa is a shortage of electric power, and there Ghana is no exception. In many African nations, power outages resulting from shortfalls in power generation are even considered normal. In Ghana, two decades of consistent, positive growth has resulted in the demand for power outstripping supply. The resulting load management programme has, unfortunately, slowed growth, while taking a steep toll on economic and social life. Small and medium-sized enterprises, which can least afford the high cost of purchasing and operating generators to back up their power supply, are being severely affected by that. We are pursuing a programme to introduce emergency generation so as to balance demand and supply. Looking forward, we plan to put an additional 3,500 megawatts of power into our transmission grid, utilizing the significant gas reserves that we have discovered in our offshore concessions. That will be supplemented by renewable power, mainly from solar, biomass and wind sources.

The road ahead, not only for so-called developing nations like Ghana but for all nations, demands that we



achieve energy sufficiency in a sustainable manner that does not further worsen the fragile environment of our planet. In December, representatives from around the world will meet in Paris to discuss issues of climate change, the effects of which have become undeniable. The changes to our planet as a result of global warming are apparent for all to see: the receding glaciers in temperate climates, the reduction in rainfall and the advancing deserts in Africa, and the lakes that are virtually disappearing in the Middle East and Asia. All those things should serve as a wake-up call for us to take drastic and immediate action to save our planet and save humankind. We must curb our consumerism, not just out of respect for the environment but also in the exercise of tolerance and the mindful practice of coexistence.

Recently, the United States and Cuba have taken significant measures to normalize relations between their two countries. That is an important first step towards discarding the relics of the Cold War represented by the economic blockade of Cuba. I am also encouraged by the historic agreement between the United States and partners, on the one hand, and Iran, on the other, to curtail the development of nuclear weapons in that country and encourage the peaceful use of nuclear technology. That gives me hope that, with dedication and focus, we can also resolve the seeming intractable issue of Palestine. Ghana supports a two-State solution to that conflict, with a peaceful and stable Israel in coexistence with a sovereign Palestinian State. To that end, we call for the immediate cessation of settlement construction in the Palestinian territories.

Seventy years from now, I wonder what those looking back at this era will think of it. I wonder what they will think of us. When those millions and millions of girls and boys study our era and the events that are now shaping our world and lives, what will our actions or inactions say to them? What secrets of statecraft will they learn? And most important, what sort of world will the work that we are doing here today — the work of peace — produce for them to inherit? It is, after all, their history that we are holding right now in our hands. We cannot fail them.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of Ghana for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé,  
President of the Togolese Republic**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Togolese Republic,

*Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, President of the Togolese Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, President of the Togolese Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Gnassingbé** (*spoke in French*): Before I begin, Sir, allow me to express my warmest congratulations to my friend John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana, for his excellent statement.

I am pleased to address the Assembly as we embark upon a new phase in our long search for peace, security, development and shared prosperity. At the outset, allow me to express my warm congratulations to Mr. Mogens Lykketoft on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. I would also like to reiterate our full appreciation for the positive efforts that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has undertaken since assuming his post.

Ever since its founding, our Organization has fully engaged with States, regional organizations and citizens to promote peace and security and to progressively raise standards of living. I therefore salute the long path we have traveled together.

Since becoming a Member of the Organization, on 20 September 1960, my country has made the values and priorities at the heart of the United Nations its own. Togo has striven with great determination to contribute to the triumph of the noble ideals of our Organization. In return, Togo has also received a great deal from the family of the United Nations. The most recent example of that fruitful cooperation goes back to the presidential election of 25 April. We will not forget that, throughout the electoral process, Togo benefited from the multidimensional support and attentive interest of its friends and partners, in particular the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations

Office for West Africa. That solidarity was a source of encouragement to us and provided added impetus for us to make the extra effort that the Togolese people expected of us in order to succeed in the holding of the election. I would like to take this opportunity to express the deep gratitude of the Togolese people for that support.

Today, the Togolese people intend to build fully on that success, thanks in particular to our political reforms, which seek to further strengthen democracy and our ability to work together in the pursuit of progress. In that regard, fully aware of the stakes involved in ensuring peace and security in a just and fair society, Togo plans to make economic and social inclusion the priority in its strategy of national unity. The priority of priorities for Togo is to advance in consolidating the well-being of all its citizens, and thereby be able to play a more active role in the realization of our new post-2015 development agenda.

Our national priorities for the coming years essentially dovetail with our new commitments under the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its SDGs (resolution 70/1) requires us to do a much better job than we were able to do in the past with the Millennium Development Goals. Even if we did not succeed in achieving all of those Goals within the agreed timetable, today we at least have the benefit of the experience, mistakes and successes of the past, which represent a huge capital on which to draw in order to better address the challenges before us.

At a time when we are deliberating the future of international cooperation, I think that it is crucial for us not to forget the high price that we have just paid in tackling the Ebola virus. Since I was supervising the fight against that disease in the Economic Community of West African States — the epicentre of the outbreaks of that virus — I would like to take this opportunity to express our profound gratitude to the States, regional organizations, bilateral and multilateral partners and non-governmental organizations that mobilized significant resources and assisted the countries most affected in various ways to stem the epidemic. I would also like to salute the heroism of the health-care personnel of various nationalities and communities who never abdicated their responsibilities, even when their lives were in danger. They saved lives and demonstrated our capacity to respond to extreme situations.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere condolences for all of those who gave their lives in attempting to save the lives of others. Ebola has claimed lives, destroyed communities and weakened economies. It is responsible for losses of approximately \$2 billion in gross domestic product in the three countries affected. Today, Ebola has been weakened but has not been completely conquered. We must all remain vigilant, not only to eradicate the residual hotbeds of that disease but also to rebuild systems that are more resilient to the vulnerabilities and shocks to which we remain exposed. Such crises must not, however, prevent us from staying the course or from keeping our promises to achieve economic growth and social progress. I urge all of our partners to remain active and committed, including those in countries that have so far been spared.

While we can be pleased with the fact that economic growth in Africa has been among the highest in the world in recent years, we must nevertheless note that, at the current pace, Africa will not be able to provide a massive number of jobs for its young people, nor to significantly reduce poverty. The need for accelerated, inclusive economic growth requires structured actions and financing that go far beyond our traditional, financial architecture. For that reason, Togo hopes that, following the Addis Ababa Conference on Financing for Development, the community of donors will spare no effort to assist African countries, more constructively and with fewer restrictions, in their quest to diversify sources of financing and to expand their domestic budgetary space.

In the same vein, at a time when we are seeking more appropriate mechanisms for financing development in Africa, it would be regrettable if cultural values that form the bedrock of African societies were sacrificed. That could jeopardize the results that have already been achieved. In that regard, pressure should no longer be brought to bear on our States to force them to adopt programmes and initiatives that would lead to cultural shocks. As the bishops of Africa said in their common declaration in June, we are concerned by the fact that aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals that are linked to sexual and reproductive health could be made the conditionalities for the granting of resources, as the endorsement of such issues continues to be highly controversial in African societies.

The long and rich experience of the United Nations teaches us that peace and security are at the same time preconditions and elements of development.

That dual requirement must be fully taken into account in the strategies that we will have to develop to effectively implement the SDGs. Togo, whose economy is largely dependent upon the West African hinterland, knows the true value of security in the African subregion. Combating the terrorist group Boko Haram and all forms of extremism and racism must continue relentlessly, with the help of the international community and in line with the values promoted by the United Nations. The shifts in power in that regard that we have been seeing throughout Africa in recent years do not correspond to any of the fundamental values of our continent. Togo expects to capitalize on what has been achieved through the reform of its defence and security system in order to better tackle new challenges and threats. We can never stress enough how crucial it is to align our policies in the areas of security, the defence of human rights and environmental protection. The environmental dimension of crises and conflicts, the impact of climate change in exacerbating poverty and the repeated threats to human rights during times of war are realities that we cannot conceal if we want to preserve stability in our States over the long term. That is why the Climate Change Conference to be held in Paris in December will be the first test of whether or not the sustainable commitments we have just made are sound.

Given the importance of what is at stake, it falls to us to adopt a binding international agreement at that Conference that will improve the lives of millions of people throughout the world by taking the necessary measures to keep climate change below the threshold of a 2°C rise in temperature. In Togo, unfortunately, we are already experiencing the effects of climate change every day, including coastal erosion, which amounts to a 10 to 12 metres annual advance of the sea, threatening our coastal populations. There are therefore immediate risks for the survival of those populations that require more urgent responses and significant investments. It is therefore crucial that future international financing aimed at combating the effects of climate change, and specifically financing that will make its way into the Green Fund, not come through a reduction in traditional official development assistance.

I would like to take this opportunity to recall that the economic, security and environmental challenges connected with the seas and oceans will be addressed during the African Union Extraordinary Summit on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in

Africa, which Togo will have the privilege of hosting next year. At that Summit, we hope to be able to adopt effective measures and make decisions that will enable us to work together so that the oceans and seas remain a major asset for the development of Africa.

After 70 years of peacekeeping operations, we must acknowledge that such operations are no longer sufficient to ensure the effectiveness of our actions when faced with the changing nature of crises and conflicts. It is for that reason that we must constantly innovate in order to adapt our responses to the current security challenges. In that regard, my country, which has always participated in peacekeeping missions, welcomes the report (A/70/95) of the High-level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, which was established by the Secretary-General to assess peacekeeping operations. Its recommendations should receive our full attention. My country also welcomes the holding, two days ago, of the summit meeting on peacekeeping operations, organized by a group of States at the initiative of the United States of America. That meeting sought to make more resources available for peacekeeping operations.

The magnitude of the challenges we are facing today requires that we constantly renew our commitment to the original purposes of the United Nations. It is our duty to preserve, in times of war and in times of peace, human dignity and to build a world based on the promotion and protection of human rights.

In that regard, I would like to pay well-deserved tribute to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which recently closed its office in Togo after having helped the Government, national institutions and civil society strengthen their capacities in the area of the protection and promotion of human rights. The eight years of cooperation that have just come to an end enabled Togo to make significant progress in the area of human rights. We intend to relentlessly pursue our efforts in that area, because we are firmly convinced that a society in which the rights of the individual are protected and guaranteed has all the cards it needs to achieve its promises of development and prosperity. It is my strong desire that the multifaceted cooperation that has mobilized us in the great United Nations family can continue to be strengthened in all the areas in which it can enable human beings to progress more easily in solidarity and in sharing.

With that, I wish a happy birthday to the United Nations, our common Organization, and renew my wishes for success in its future actions. Above all, I express the hope that the years to come can give us an opportunity to preserve and strengthen our collective commitment to the ideals of peace, security and sustainable development.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Togolese Republic for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, President of the Togolese Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by His Majesty Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan of Negara Brunei Darussalam**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan of Negara Brunei Darussalam.

*His Majesty Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan of Negara Brunei Darussalam, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Majesty Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan of Negara Brunei Darussalam, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah:** First of all, I would like to congratulate His Excellency Mogens Lykketoft on his election as the President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session and wish him much success. I also extend my thanks to the outgoing President, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, for his valuable contribution to the work of the Organization, as well as my best wishes for his future endeavours. I would also like to commend Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his able leadership, as well as the United Nations agencies for their active engagement with Member States.

It gives me great pleasure to be here as we commemorate together the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the Organization. This is indeed a historic occasion to celebrate our achievements, as well as to reflect on matters that require our urgent action.

The existence of the United Nations for the past 70 years is a testament to its relevance. It has become the world body that we look up to, our point of reference on all aspects of humankind, and it has no equal. It was established in 1945 in the wake of the mass destruction brought about by the Second World War, and the need to restore peace and security was its main focus. Today, its mandate has grown hugely to include emerging challenges and evolving threats, such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, climate change, pandemic diseases and terrorism and violent extremism. As part of a comprehensive global mandate, it has also been tasked with addressing multidimensional socioeconomic matters.

We recognize that the United Nations is not a panacea for all of the world's woes, but that has not diminished its overall success. On that note, we commend the role played by all of the United Nations agencies and the Organization's development work aimed at improving people's lives around the world.

One profound achievement is in the containment of pandemic diseases, which pose serious threats to the world's population. In 1980, the World Health Organization succeeded in completely eradicating smallpox and, more recently, it worked with affected countries to contain the breakout of the Middle East respiratory syndrome and Ebola.

Over the years, we have seen how our humanitarian workers and peacekeepers risk their lives to carry out the work of the United Nations, with some losing their lives in the course of their noble work. Those brave individuals will always deserve our highest respect for their commitment and sacrifice to make our world a safer place.

With a membership of 193 States, the expectations will inevitably be high for the effectiveness of the Organization in addressing the ever-increasing issues that affect the lives of the people we represent. I am therefore pleased that our new post-2015 development agenda, contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (see resolution 70/1), embraces most, if not all, of those concerns. Its inclusiveness signifies the trust and faith that we have in our Organization. It is therefore important that we fulfil our national and collective responsibilities to implement the new Agenda and realize our peoples' hopes and dreams for a better life.



In 1984, Brunei Darussalam's admission into the United Nations signified a global endorsement of its sovereignty and territorial integrity as a fully independent nation. Since then, we have benefited extensively from that membership. The United Nations has provided us with a platform for enhancing our bilateral and multilateral relations with our friends and partners. Through the United Nations, we have also been able to demonstrate our unwavering commitment to the maintenance of peace, stability and development. Brunei Darussalam firmly believes that tolerance, compassion and social harmony have been essential for the lasting peace and security that our close-knit community has been enjoying to this day. Such values have been the foundation of our country's stability and prosperity, which has provided an enabling environment for development.

In our region, the shared principles of the member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely, territorial integrity, non-interference, consensus, the rule of law and good governance, guide our efforts to achieve closer cooperation for peace, stability and prosperity. That national and regional experience represents our contribution to the United Nations as part of the multilateral process. And it is through the United Nations that I envision the creation of a caring global community with similar values and principles that can unleash our potential to work and achieve greater things together. In order to bring us closer together and foster greater understanding and empathy with one another, we should nurture more cultural exchanges, which would enable us to live as a family of nations. In that way, we might be able to avert new conflicts and better utilize the resources of socioeconomic development.

According to the World Bank, the average cost of civil war is equivalent to more than 30 years of gross domestic product growth for a medium-size developing country. The cost of peacekeeping during and after a civil war is also extremely high and, above all, there is the loss of lives, which cannot be measured. Preventive diplomacy is therefore a cost-effective means of addressing conflicts, and certainly an integral part of conflict prevention efforts. It is a long-term process and a worthwhile investment, in which the United Nations has made some headway. We highly value the important work of the good offices of the Secretary-General, the Special Envoys and the resident political missions as

some of the key tools of preventive diplomacy. However, more can be done to enhance conflict prevention.

If we wish to move forward, the Secretary-General's view — and I agree — is that we have to strengthen the partnerships between the United Nations and regional or subregional organizations. Such organizations have a unique influence and easy access to crisis situations in their respective regions, and the United Nations should be able to leverage that strength to defuse tension before it escalates into conflicts. Through the ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN member States, along with other member participants, have long worked together to create an atmosphere of trust and confidence. Two years ago, they adopted a workplan on preventive diplomacy, and its implementation has made significant progress and contributed towards the maintenance of peace and security in the region. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the United Nations for providing coaching and training programmes to help ASEAN implement that plan. I believe that our Organization is in the best position to promote the necessary cooperation and partnerships based on mutual respect, understanding and tolerance, which can prevent wars and conflicts, religious persecution, violent ideological confrontation and terrorism.

Since our last gathering, we have witnessed the tragic loss of life caused by inhumane terrorist acts in various parts of the world. Such acts are unacceptable, and we join others in condemning terrorism and in totally rejecting extremism and radicalism. We reiterate our support for all efforts by the international community to prevent and eliminate all forms of terrorism. In that regard, we also support intercultural dialogue among peoples of different religions, cultures and initiatives, such as the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, the Global Movement of Moderates, the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, World against Violence and Violent Extremism, and the Summit on Countering Violent Extremism.

It is crucial that we address the root causes of terrorism and extremism in a comprehensive manner. We need to ensure that irresponsible parties do not exploit the despair and suffering of others to fuel their own extremist agendas. That is why we need to resolve the plight of our Palestinian brothers and sisters, an issue that remains at the core of the conflict in the Middle East. For over 60 years, Palestinians have struggled to achieve self-determination. A lasting

peaceful solution is long overdue. In that regard, I am pleased to see that Palestine has been accepted as a member in various international bodies. That has been reflected in the General Assembly's historic decision to allow the flag of Palestine to fly proudly with the flags of other sovereign and independent nations of this world body. Those are all positive developments that should contribute to obtaining the recognition of Palestinian statehood.

I wish to reiterate our commitment to continuing to work with others to ensure that the United Nations remains a strong force for peace, security and human rights. After all, the success of our Organization lies in our own collective efforts, which constitute the true strength of this Organization.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan of Negara of Brunei Darussalam for the statement he has just made.

*His Majesty Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan of Negara Brunei Darussalam, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

#### **Address by Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the State of Palestine.

*Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Abbas** (*spoke in Arabic*): I come before the General Assembly today from Palestine to sound the alarm concerning the grave dangers of what is happening in Jerusalem, where extremist Israeli groups continue with their systematic and repeated incursions into the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Those incursions are aimed at imposing a new reality and at temporarily dividing Haram Al-Sharif by allowing extremists — under the protection of Israeli occupying forces, Ministers and Knesset members — to enter the Mosque. In so doing at specified times, they prevent the access of Muslim

worshippers from freely exercising their religious rights. The Israeli Government is pursuing that plan in direct violation of the status quo of 1967. The occupying Power is thus committing a grave mistake, because we will not accept such actions. The Palestinian people refuses to accept the implementation of an illegal plan that is an affront to the sensitivities of Palestinians and Muslims throughout the world. I call on the Israeli Government, before it is too late, to end the use of brutal force aimed at desecrating the Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, and, in particular, to halt its actions directed against the Al-Aqsa Mosque, for such actions will transform the conflict from a political to a religious one and create an explosive situation in Jerusalem, as well as in the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory.

It is my honour to come to speak on behalf of the State of Palestine in the General Assembly at its seventieth session, which coincides with the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, which has made the promotion and protection of international peace and security and the preservation of human rights its primary goals.

The question of Palestine was one of the first just causes brought before the United Nations, dating from the time of its inception. Yet, to date, regrettably, it remains unresolved. The Organization and its Members remain unable to end the injustice inflicted upon our people or to assist it in exercising its right to self-determination and freedom in its own independent and sovereign State.

I ask the Assembly to reconsider the history of the question of Palestine and the relevant United Nations resolutions in order to realize a self-evident truth. A historic injustice was inflicted upon a people who had lived peacefully in their land and made genuine intellectual, cultural and humanitarian contributions to humankind and their homeland. That people does not deserve to be deprived of its homeland, to die in exile, to be swallowed by the sea or to spend its life fleeing from one refugee camp to another. Yet, regrettably, its just cause remains at a standstill after these many years.

Our people have placed their hopes in the countries of this Organization to help them to gain their freedom, independence and sovereignty, so that their wish and their right to their own State, which is the aspiration of all peoples of the Earth, can be achieved. That entails a just solution for the Palestine refugee issue

in accordance with resolution 194 (III) and the Arab Peace Initiative. Is that too much to ask?

We are calling for justice, peace and what is right. Palestine was partitioned into two States, and Israel was established 67 years ago. But the second part of resolution 181 (II), of 29 November 1947, still awaits implementation. Palestine, which is an observer State in the United Nations, deserves full recognition and full membership. In the light of all the enormous sacrifices that we have made, our years of patience in exile and suffering, and our acceptance of peace in accordance with the two-State solution, which should be based on international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map, it is unconscionable that the question of Palestine has remained unresolved for all these decades.

The continuation of the impasse is unacceptable, because it means yielding to the logic of the brute force that is being inflicted upon us by the Israeli Government. That Government continues its illegal settlement expansion in the West Bank, especially in occupied East Jerusalem. It continues its blockade of the Gaza Strip, deepening the immense suffering of our people there, in defiance of United Nations resolutions and the agreements signed by both sides under international auspices. In that regard, we recall the words of the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1976, when he stated that Israel would become an apartheid State if it continued its occupation of Palestinian territory. He described the Israeli settlements on Palestinian land as a cancer. That is what Yitzhak Rabin said. Why do they do that to us?

The persistence of the issue forces us to ask the following questions. Do the votes of democratic countries against Palestine-related resolutions and the legitimate rights of our people serve peace and the interests of those who believe in the two-State solution? Or do they serve and encourage extremists, thereby fanning their hatred and racism and making them believe that they are above the law, to the point that they committed the crime of burning a Palestinian family in the town of Duma in the West Bank, a crime which claimed the lives of an infant, Ali Dawabsheh, his father and mother? What is left of this family is an orphan child, Ahmed, a 4-year-old, who teeters between life and death in hospital as a result of his burns, while the killers remain free because they have not yet been arrested. Where is justice? Where is fairness? Where

is democracy? Where is the democratic State that lays claim to democracy and the rule of law?

This was not the first crime of this type. On previous occasions, they had burned alive and killed a Palestinian child, Mohammed Abu Khdeir, in Jerusalem, and another, Mohammed Al-Dura, in Gaza, and before them thousands had been killed in Gaza and the West Bank. We still remember the Deir Yassin massacre of 1948 and all other crimes committed against our people. All of these crimes have gone unpunished. Until when will Israel remain above international law and without accountability?

Owing to time constraints, I shall not be able to discuss in detail how many Israeli violations have been committed against our people and how many repressive laws have been issued by successive Israeli Governments, the latest of which is the official governmental instructions given to fire live ammunition at and arrest and repress peaceful Palestinian demonstrators. Why is this happening?

We do not respond to the hatred and brutality of the Israeli occupation with hatred and brutality. Instead, we are working to spread the culture of peace and coexistence between our peoples and in our region. We are eager to see the day when our people and all peoples in our region will enjoy peace, security, stability and prosperity. This cannot be achieved with continued occupation, settlement, colonization, the wall, the burning of people, places of worship and homes, the killing of youth, children and infants, the burning of crops, and the arrest and detention of people without charge or trial.

How can a State claim that it is an oasis of democracy and that its courts and security apparatus function according to the law and yet also accept the existence of so-called price-tag gangs and other known terrorist organizations that terrorize and intimidate our people, confiscate their property and insult their holy sites? All of this occurs under the watch of the Israeli army and police, who do not deter or punish the gangs, but rather provide them with protection.

Is it not time to end these injustices? Is it not time to stop this suffering? Is it not time for the racist annexation wall to be torn down? Is it not time for the humiliating and degrading checkpoints and barriers set up by the Israeli occupying forces in our land to be removed? Is it not time for the Israeli blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip to be lifted so that our people can

move in freedom and dignity in their own homeland and beyond? Is it not time to end the racist, terrorist, colonial settlement of our land, which is undermining the two-State solution? Is it not time for the 6,000 Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli jails to see the light of freedom and live among their families and communities? Is it not time for the longest occupation in history, which is suffocating our people, to come to an end? These are the questions we ask the international community.

Despite all the obstacles imposed by the occupation, since the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority and until this moment, we have worked tirelessly to build the foundations of our State, its infrastructure and sovereign national institutions. We have made real progress on the ground, as has been affirmed by several international bodies, in particular the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. With the support of our brothers and friends, we will continue our efforts and work together to strengthen our State, which is committed to upholding international standards, the rule of law and transparency as a democratic and modern State. In this context, we highly value the efforts of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, under Norway's chairmanship, and urge donor countries to continue to support a better life for our people and our efforts to develop our State institutions.

Our membership in international organizations and our accession to treaties and conventions are not directed against anyone; rather, they are a measure aimed at safeguarding our rights, protecting our people, harmonizing the laws and regulations of our country with international standards, and strengthening its international legal status and identity. Is this a mistake?

With respect to the internal Palestinian situation, we are determined to preserve the unity of our land and our people. We will not accept temporary solutions or a fragmented State. We will not allow this to happen, and we will not let those who are trying to make us do this prevail. We will instead seek to form a Government of national unity that functions according to the programme of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and we will proceed to hold presidential and legislative elections.

Palestine is a country of holiness and peace. It is the birthplace of Christ, the messenger of love and peace, and the home of the Isra and Mi'raj, the ascension to

heaven and night journey of Mohammed, peace be upon him, who was sent as a gift of mercy to the world. Palestine is still looking for peace, and its people want to live in their homeland in safety, security, harmony, stability and good neighbourliness with all peoples and countries of the region. This is attested to by their cultural, humanitarian and spiritual contributions to humankind all along, from the start.

Just recently, on 17 May, two nuns from Palestine, Marie-Alphonsine Ghattas and Mariam Baouardy, were canonized as saints by His Holiness Pope Francis at the Vatican in the presence of tens of thousands of the faithful from around the globe. On that occasion, the flag of Palestine was raised at the Vatican, whose recognition of the State of Palestine is documented in the agreement signed between the Holy See and the State of Palestine. It is our hope that those that have not yet recognized us as a State will do so as soon as possible. We look forward to seeing the independent State of Palestine take its rightful place among the community of nations. We are confident that it will actively contribute to achieving the economic, cultural and humanitarian progress of civilization, with positive results for our people, the region and the entire world.

Peace will be achieved by and through Palestine. Those who wish to seek and promote peace, I repeat, those who wish to seek and promote peace and to fight terrorism, should start by resolving the question of Palestine. That is the beginning and the end of it.

I take the opportunity to express, on behalf of my people, our thanks to all those who, on 10 September, voted in favour of resolution 69/320. Its adoption has enabled us to raise the Palestinian flag at United Nations Headquarters. The day is not far off when, God willing, we will raise the Palestinian flag in East Jerusalem, the capital of the State of Palestine.

I wish also to pay tribute to various recent decisions in European parliaments. Some of these have clearly condemned Israel's settlement activities and affirmed the right of the Palestinian people to sovereignty and independence in their own State, side by side with the State of Israel — which we recognize even though Israel does not recognize our existence — and some have established a committee on relations with Palestine. A number of European countries have also affirmed their recognition of the State of Palestine, thereby endorsing our natural right to independence. In that regard, we wish to thank the Kingdom of Sweden for having the



courage of its convictions and recognizing the State of Palestine.

All who say they support the two-State solution must recognize both States, not just one. If one supports the two-State solution, how can one not recognize the other State? Today I call on those countries that have not yet recognized the State of Palestine to do so. We are fully confident that they will do so out of conviction that our people and cause are deserving of justice. From this rostrum at United Nations Headquarters and against the backdrop of the religious holidays, I extend a sincere call on the people of Israel for peace based on justice, security and stability for all. I also call on the Security Council and the General Assembly to shoulder their responsibilities before it is too late. I sincerely hope that they will fulfil their responsibilities before it is too late.

All those present are well aware that Israel has undermined the efforts of the Administration of President Barack Obama, and mostly recently the efforts undertaken by Secretary of State Kerry, to reach a peace agreement by means of negotiation. The policies and practices of the Israeli Government and the stances adopted by its Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers lead to a clear conclusion, namely, that they are doing their utmost to sabotage the two-State solution that we have been seeking based on resolutions of international legitimacy. There can be no other explanation.

We welcome the international and European efforts, including the French initiative calling for the formation of an international support group on achieving peace. The Arab States, at their recent summit, confirmed their support for a Security Council resolution to reaffirm the key parameters for a peaceful two-State solution, based on the pre-1967 borders, with a time frame for ending the occupation.

As it is pointless to waste time negotiating just for the sake of it, what we require now is to mobilize international efforts and establish a framework to oversee an end to the occupation, in line with the resolutions of international legitimacy. Until that is done, I appeal to the United Nations, and particularly the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly, to provide international protection for the Palestinian people in accordance with international humanitarian law. We need protection — we need international protection. We cannot maintain the status quo. We are being assailed on all sides. Acts of

aggression are being committed against us on all sides. We have no protector. Our last resort is the United Nations. We are therefore appealing to the Assembly, we are begging the Assembly, to provide us with international protection.

We have tried to bring pressure to bear on Israel to implement the signed agreements and to negotiate in conformity with the two-State solution through direct contact with the Israeli Government. Yes, we do maintain direct contact with the Israeli Government, as well as indirect contact through the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the European Union and the United Nations, the Quartet members and other parties. However, the Israeli Government persists in undermining the two-State solution and in entrenching two regimes on the ground: the current apartheid regime imposed on the State of Palestine and against the Palestinian people, on the one hand, and another regime of extensive privileges and protection for Israeli settlers, on the other hand. Our occupied Palestinian territory reflects two systems: the apartheid system and the other system that extends extensive privileges to the Israeli settlers. How is that possible? In what way is it admissible? That is the question that we pose to the United Nations.

The transitional Oslo accords and annexes and the subsequent accords signed with Israel stipulated that the agreements should be implemented within a time frame of five years, which ended in 1999. What was the outcome to be? It was to be full independence for the State of Palestine and the end of the Israeli occupation. But Israel stopped withdrawing its forces from the areas classified as “B” and “C”, which represent more than 60 per cent of the West Bank territory, including East Jerusalem. Instead, Israel intensified its settlement activities everywhere, in breach of all of the signed accords, some of which were signed by the current Israeli Prime Minister.

In 2009, in his speech in Cairo, President Obama called for the cessation of the settlement activities. What was the response on the part of Israel? The Government increased its settlement activities by at least 20 per cent in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, thus violating its obligation not to undertake any illegal or unilateral action that could be considered permanent. Moreover, the occupying Power has repeatedly encroached on the area classified as “A”, which is supposed to be under full Palestinian security jurisdiction and in which we have

established the institutions of the Palestinian State. Let me repeat that, yes, Israel has also violated that area.

At the same time, Israel refuses to review the economic agreements that control the ability of the Palestinian economy to develop and become independent. It is determined to impose dominance on the Palestinian economy, similar to its military and security dominance, and it rejects the right of the Palestinian people to development and to the exploitation of their natural resources. In so doing, Israel has undermined the foundations on which the political and security agreements are based. Those agreements have also been eroded by the measures taken by successive Israeli Governments, measures that have negated the transitional phase leading to the independence of our State. All these gross violations of the agreements have made the situation intolerable.

Given that background, we declare that as long as Israel refuses to commit to the agreements it signed with us, thereby ensuring that we are a pro forma authority without real powers, and as long as Israel refuses to cease its settlement activities and to release the fourth group of Palestinian prisoners in accordance with our agreements, Israel leaves us no choice but to assert that we will not remain the only ones committed to the implementation of those agreements, while Israel continuously violates them.

We therefore declare that we cannot continue to be bound by those agreements and that Israel must fully assume all its responsibilities as an occupying Power, because the status quo cannot continue and the decisions of the Palestinian Central Council last March are specific and binding. As long as Israel does not commit to the signed agreements and instead undermines them all, we, for our part, renounce our commitment to those agreements, and Israel must bear full responsibility for the situation. This is a decision taken by the Palestinian Parliament, and I affirm it right here and now. Our patience has run out. It seems that Israel is deaf to the truth. Israel will have to resume its role as an occupying Power and bear its responsibilities accordingly.

The State of Palestine, based on the 4 June 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, is a State under occupation. Yes, we are under occupation, just as many countries were during the Second World War. It should be noted that our State is recognized by 137 States, which is four times the number of States that recognized Israel at its foundation, and the right of our

people to self-determination, freedom and independence is recognized globally as being inalienable and indisputable. I further recall resolution 67/19 of 2012, which accorded to Palestine observer State status and reaffirmed that the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization would be the interim Government of the State of Palestine and that the Palestine National Council would be the Palestinian Parliament of the State of Palestine. Given all that, why does Israel not recognize the State of Palestine?

I must reiterate that the current situation is unsustainable. We shall start implementing the declaration I have just announced by legal means. We shall not resort to violence; we shall use peaceful and legal means to implement it. Either the Palestine National Authority will be a transitional power and move the Palestinian people from occupation to independence, or Israel must fully bear its responsibilities as the occupying Power.

At the same time, and based on our commitment to the principles of international law, the State of Palestine will continue to accede to international conventions and to join organizations — all international organizations. That is our right and is fully in line with our status under international law. Palestine will move forward in the defence of its people under occupation through all available legal and peaceful means, including as a High Contracting Party to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and a State party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Yes, Palestine is a State party to the International Criminal Court. Those who fear international law and international courts should stop committing crimes. We do not like having to seek justice from the International Criminal Court, but aggression forces us to do so. We will seek support from all international organizations, including the International Criminal Court.

All that notwithstanding, my hand remains outstretched for the just peace that will guarantee my people's rights, freedom and human dignity. I say to our neighbours, the sons and daughters of the Israeli people, that peace is in their interest and in our interest and in the interest of their future generations and our future generations. Maintaining a narrow viewpoint is unhelpful and destructive. Focusing only on oneself is unhelpful and destructive. It is my sincere hope that those neighbours will consider the dangerous reality on the ground and look to the future and accept for the Palestinian people what they accept for themselves.

Then, they will find that the achievement of peace will be possible, and they will enjoy security, safety, peace and stability. These values are the aspirations that we also seek to realize for our Palestinian people.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the State of Palestine for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

#### **Agenda item 8 (continued)**

##### **General debate**

##### **Address by Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey.

*Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Davutoğlu (Turkey):** I bring warm greetings and hope that the seventieth session of the General Assembly will prove most fruitful.

I would like to congratulate Mr. Mogen Lykkesøft on his assumption of the presidency. I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to Mr. Sam Kutesa for his time and efforts as President of the General Assembly at the sixty-ninth session.

Seventy years ago, our Organization was created — in the words of former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld — “not to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell”. Looking back, the United Nations has been instrumental in averting another and even deadlier world war. But it has failed to prevent people from suffering the pains of hell in many regional conflicts, including those of Bosnia, Rwanda and, over the past four years, Syria.

The tragic story of 3-year-old Aylan should serve as a reminder of what the United Nations should stand for. Just earlier this month, Aylan’s tiny, lifeless body washed ashore after the boat he was on capsized

in the Aegean. His family was trying to escape the indiscriminate barrel bombs in his town somewhere in Syria, to an imagined land of hope anywhere in Europe. The Turkish policeman who found Aylan said that he felt not like an officer on duty, but like the little boy’s father, helplessly holding his beloved son. Indeed, Aylan was our baby; he belonged to each and every one of us and to all humankind. From the moment that we found him, washed ashore and lifeless, we were each plunged into the misery of our own conscience.

We human beings are not merely blank pages in the book of history. We are all capable of both the best and the worst. This is a simple but powerful fact of our existence that can make us bring our best to the fore. We must join our efforts, no later than today, to effectively deal with the increasingly complex and tragic facts facing humanity. For its part, Turkey has assumed more than its fair share of the burden. Providing protection to more than 2 million Syrians and 200,000 Iraqis, Turkey now shelters the largest number of refugees in the world. Our doors will remain open. We embrace those fleeing war and persecution. So far, we have invested almost \$8 billion, of which international contributions account for a mere \$417 million. To date, 66,000 Syrian babies have been born in Turkey. Some 9 million medical consultations and 280,000 surgical operations have been provided to our Syrian refugee population. Currently, 230,000 school-age Syrian children are receiving a formal education and 460,000 more will be integrated into our education system by the end of the year.

The number of would-be illegal migrants who have drowned in the Mediterranean Sea has reached a staggering 6,000. Meanwhile, 55,000 seaborne migrants have been rescued by the Turkish Coast Guard, while 235,000 illegal entrants have been intercepted by Turkish law enforcement agencies since 2011. More than 4 million Syrians have fled chemical weapons, missiles and indiscriminate aerial bombardment by the Assad regime and ground assaults by the terrorist organization Daesh. And more than 12 million internally displaced persons, almost half of them children, are in desperate need of help.

This tragedy will not end before the people of Syria have a legitimate Government that truly represents their will and enjoys their full consent. Until then, the international community must act swiftly to protect them in their homeland, including by creating a safe zone beyond the reach of aerial bombardment by the

regime and ground assault by Daesh and other terrorist organizations. Anyone hoping to solve the Syrian crisis must think of a Syria without Assad, a vicious tyrant who indiscriminately kills his own people with chemical weapons and barrel bombs. Every minute he remains in power adds to the shame of those who support him. As the world must realize, a diplomatic solution to the crisis should be based on a transition that will lead to political change. Turkey will continue to work towards that end.

People may no longer hear the voices of the 300,000 who have lost their lives so far. But last week I met with representatives of the thousands who dared to walk hundreds of miles to Edirne, Turkey, the last stop on their journey to their imagined land of hope in Europe. I promised to bring their voice to the world community. I have fulfilled my promise, yet our responsibility remains.

Indeed, it was with that sense of responsibility that we proposed the inclusion of item 130, "Global awareness of the tragedies of irregular migrants in the Mediterranean basin with specific emphasis on Syrian asylum-seekers", in the agenda of the seventieth session. Our proposal was accepted by the General Assembly on 18 September. We will therefore have the chance to look at viable responses to the migrant tragedy in the form of partnerships between countries of origin, destination and transit. That is now a priority matter for all humankind.

The people of Syria are not the only ones to suffer. The Palestinian tragedy continues unabated. In my address to this body on 29 November 2012 (see A/67/PV.44), I called on the international community to stand in solidarity with the Palestinians in their bid for their own independent State, for which they have been calling for more than 60 years. Today, we finally witness and salute the Palestinian flag flying at full mast at the United Nations alongside those of all other States. That constitutes another significant step towards enabling the parties to come together on an equal footing at the negotiating table in a process aimed at achieving an equitable and sustainable peace.

The State of Palestine will be independent today or tomorrow, and East Jerusalem, Al-Quds Al-Sharif, will be its capital, As President Mahmoud Abbas just said, the Palestinian flag will be raised in Al-Quds Al-Sharif soon, and we will be there to celebrate that event together. All Muslims and Christians and all nations

will freely gather there. The city of Al-Quds matters for the whole of humankind. It is a city that is sacred to Islam, Judaism and Christianity, and should be treated accordingly. The expansion of illegal settlements and the violations targeting the holy sites, Al-Haram Al-Sharif and the Al-Aqsa Mosque in particular, must immediately and unconditionally stop, if we are to talk about a peace process. The holiness of Al-Haram Al-Sharif must be respected. We strongly reject and condemn attempts to establish a temporal and spatial division of Al-Haram Al-Sharif, which is in clear violation of international law.

Members have just heard the statement of His Excellency President Abbas. For us too, Palestine is an indivisible whole, consisting of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza. The right of Palestinians to live together as one must be recognized. As an integral part of the State of Palestine, Gaza should be freed from the illegal and inhumane blockade of the past eight years. Turkey's commitment to providing the necessary political and economic support for the Palestinians to lead a dignified life will continue.

The current vacuum created on our southern borders as a result of the crisis in Syria has played into the hands of terrorists, who also target Turkey. This is a threat that has the potential to spread to the whole region and beyond. Terrorism has no justification. It should be condemned unconditionally. Any attempt to affiliate terrorism with any religion or ethnic group is patently misguided and serves only to strengthen the terrorist threat. Today, as in the past, Turkey is combating terrorism of all kinds, Daesh and the Kurdish Workers Party included. Our counter-terrorism efforts and our contribution to international cooperation to that end are well known to our partners. Daesh is a product of the vacuum created by the crisis in Syria. Fighting Daesh therefore means removing the conditions that created it. Hence, we will never succeed until Al-Assad goes. We dream of a new democratic multicultural Syria, both without Al-Assad and without Daesh. We expect our allies, partners and friends to continue to clearly and publicly display their support for and solidarity with Turkey in its fight against all types of terrorism.

The issue of foreign terrorist fighters is of utmost concern. According to United Nations figures, 25,000 foreign terrorist fighters are believed to be coming from over 100 countries. This threat needs to be addressed at its source. Enhancing international cooperation in terms of information exchange is crucial, but deficiencies in



this regard unfortunately continue. For our part, we have included more than 20,000 individuals in our no-entry list since 2011 and have deported more than 2,000 who are intending to reach conflict regions beyond our borders or are returning from them.

From Libya and Yemen to Ukraine, from South to North and from East to West, the global security environment is fragile. At a time of such volatility, particularly in our region, Turkey resolutely assumes responsibility in global issues, to the best of its abilities and within its means. Turkey has become a leading actor and a trustworthy partner with \$3.5 billion dollars of official development assistance. We see a clear link between sustainable economic development and global stability. One way to ensure this is through inclusive economic growth where no one in our societies, including women and the vulnerable, is left behind. Today, half of the world's population lives on a daily income of under \$2.50, and close to 20,000 children die every day of hunger and poverty. Turkey, as the current President of the Group of 20 (G-20) since December 2014, has highlighted the importance of international cooperation, coordination and solidarity in addressing global uncertainties and risks. We have placed inclusiveness and overcoming inequality at the top of the G-20 agenda.

Our generation has witnessed the highest number of refugees and internally displaced persons since the Second World War. The great majority of today's humanitarian crises are conflict-related. The global humanitarian system is running out of funds and affected people are running out of time. While Turkey hosts currently the largest number of refugees in the world, it also holds the Chair of the Global Forum on Migration and Development. Our overarching theme is: "Strengthening Partnerships: Human Mobility for Sustainable Development". Our key priorities include promoting the positive linkages between migration and development. It is high time that we addressed the complex humanitarian agenda in a holistic manner, with a special emphasis on the humanitarian-development nexus. We therefore look forward to hosting the first ever World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul from 23 to 24 May next year.

Cultural divides will rob us of our future if we allow them to. The current conflicts around the world demonstrate the spread of hatred, discrimination and extremism. These crises result in the segregation of people with specific ethnic or religious backgrounds,

and they also hinder tolerance, coexistence and harmony among civilizations. We must avoid alienation, exclusion and the vilification of certain communities and religions if we want to bring down the walls that divide us. We must act together against all forms of racism and xenophobia, including Islamophobia, without exception. Only then can we collectively fight against extremism, radicalization and terrorism in an effective manner. We must encourage inclusiveness and democratic legitimacy, and must respect the people's will and consent.

We cannot condone the prioritization of oppressive security vis-à-vis universal rights and freedoms that we have collectively undersigned at the United Nations. Our differences may remain, yet our collective abilities to overcome the divides must be strengthened. The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, a project initiated nearly 10 years ago jointly by Turkey and Spain, aims to provide lasting solutions in that respect. There are many ways to respond to unfounded fear, mistrust and hatred in societies and among nations. Conflict is one. But there is a peaceful means of preventing and resolving conflicts: mediation. Turkey, together with Finland, launched the Mediation for Peace initiative at the United Nations five years ago. It has attracted considerable interest and yielded tangible results in heightening awareness of the importance of the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

We wish to see a political solution to the crisis in Ukraine based on Ukraine's territorial integrity and the principles of the Minsk agreements. Any solution to this conflict should also ensure the rights and security of the Crimean Tatars.

In terms of peace, security and prosperity in our entire neighbourhood, the South Caucasus has a prominent place. That region, regrettably, continues to be destabilized and weakened by three major unresolved conflicts in the greater area of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. We are determined to continue our efforts to facilitate a peaceful resolution to these conflicts on the basis of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the inviolability of its internationally recognized borders. The same applies to Georgia, where we support unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty. We welcome the recent steps towards normalization and permanent stability in the Balkans. We therefore appreciate the progress made so far in the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue.

Turkey is a part of Europe, historically and currently. On the basis of shared universal values, it continues to work towards its strategic objective of becoming a member of the European Union. We believe that today Europe needs Turkey more than ever to strengthen its security and prosperity.

Expanding relations and cooperation with Africa has become an important pillar of Turkey's multifaceted foreign policy, which puts special emphasis on humanitarian diplomacy. We will continue to share our experience and knowledge with our African partners and friends on the basis of mutual benefit and in accordance with the principle of African solutions to African challenges.

In Asia, Turkey has been an integral part of the international efforts aimed at achieving a lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan. We firmly believe that the international community must continue its support to Afghanistan.

As I near the end of my remarks, I wish to draw the Assembly's attention to our continuing commitment to a just, comprehensive and lasting solution in Cyprus. It must be based on the political equality of the two peoples and their equal ownership of the island. We expect a lasting settlement to be reached as soon as possible. And we support the efficient and constructive efforts of the Turkish Cypriot side to that end.

As the world population grows and is expected to reach 10 billion, the international community stands at the threshold of a critical period. Despite our many achievements, our need for a free, peaceful, stable, prosperous and just world continues. The road ahead for peace security and human rights will be paved with our good intentions. But most likely, our best intentions will not be sufficient to respond to the mounting challenges before us. We need a paradigm shift. The United Nations, as the ultimate global institution representing the vision of peace, must remain relevant and effective in coping with all the major challenges. Some of those challenges have already brought new tragedies upon us. Over the past 70 years, both the world and the United Nations have changed and evolved. However the change in the United Nations is not yet comprehensive enough to make it fully fit for purpose. Despite the major steps taken so far to adapt the Organization to the new global realities, any reform will remain incomplete unless it includes the Security Council.

Seventy years ago, the founders of the Organization entrusted it with the task of protecting the dignity, security and prosperity of all humankind. That task today requires the ability to take firm and decisive action against atrocities committed everywhere by aggressors and oppressors. The inability to do so not only will jeopardize the lives of millions affected by ongoing crises, it will threaten all future generations by calling into question the credibility of the United Nations system. The responsibility to reach the broadest possible consensus on comprehensive reform to render the Security Council more democratic, representative, inclusive, transparent, effective and accountable falls upon us all. We owe it not only to future generations but to the visionary founders of the Organization.

So, to add to Secretary-General Hammarskjöld's vision of the United Nations as saving humankind, what now befalls this institution is the task of salvaging our shared future.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey for his statement.

*Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey, was escorted from the rostrum.*

#### **Address by Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

*Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and inviting her to address the General Assembly.

**Sheikh Hasina (Bangladesh)** (*spoke in Bangla; English text provided by the delegation*): Let me extend my heartiest felicitations to Mr. Lykketoft on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. I also commend His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa for his excellent leadership of the Assembly during its previous session.

This year is a transformative one for the United Nations and the world at large; it marks the seventieth

anniversary of the founding of the global body. Our forefathers were inspired to establish the Organization based on the clear recognition that we share a common destiny. Since its inception, the United Nations has made remarkable strides in advancing peace and security, human rights and development. Seventy years on, it continues to inspire the shared dreams and aspirations of all humankind.

This is a critical year for sustainable development. The third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa and the recently concluded United Nations Summit on the post-2015 development agenda here in New York have ushered in new hope for the peoples of the world. With our drive to achieve a meaningful climate change agreement in Paris this year, we hope to transform our future by ending poverty, limiting climate change and preserving our planet.

Two global challenges pose the greatest threat to the sustainability of human civilization. First, terrorism and violent extremism remain major impediments to global peace and development. Terrorists do not subscribe to any religion. Terrorism and violent extremism are global challenges. All countries should unite to effectively address those challenges.

I, myself, am a victim of terrorism and violent extremism. My father, the father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and my mother, Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib, and three brothers, as well as other close relatives, were brutally assassinated on 15 August 1975. I, myself, have been subjected to terrorist attacks at least 19 times. My Government, therefore, maintains a zero-tolerance policy for all forms of terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization. We remain steadfast in tackling the extremist and anti-liberation forces that remain active in their aim to destroy the democratic, progressive and secular ethos of our nation.

Secondly, climate change poses formidable development challenges. We will be unable to sustain our development endeavours without effectively addressing climate change. The new 2030 development agenda makes it clear that all our actions need to be underpinned by a strong commitment to protecting and preserving our planet, biodiversity and climate. With only a small window of opportunity, we must succeed in setting the world on a safer, greener and more prosperous course.

We realize that regional cooperation is critical in fostering sustainable development and achieving peaceful, stable societies. Bangladesh has taken the lead in building regional cooperation processes such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor. We have also taken the initiative of developing infrastructure to enhance trade and people-to-people contacts in relations among Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal.

Today we are witnessing unprecedented migration and human mobility that is reshaping history and geography. Migration has been recognized as a key enabler of development in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). Cooperation among our countries is essential if we are to harness the full potential of migration. With that objective, we have decided to lead the Global Forum on Migration and Development in 2016.

Over the years, peacekeeping and peacebuilding have emerged as United Nations flagship activities. Bangladesh is proud to be associated with those endeavours as a leading troop-contributing country. Our valiant peacekeepers have so far made their mark in 54 peacekeeping missions in 40 countries. We have the distinction of having the highest number of female police personnel participating in United Nations peacekeeping missions. Our contribution to United Nations peace operations has made us a reliable partner in United Nations peace initiatives.

Development efforts in many of our countries over the past 15 years have been largely guided by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The overall progress made in implementing the MDGs inspired us to adopt a bigger, bolder and more ambitious set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Given the ambition reflected in the SDGs, we surely will need to scale up the mobilization of resources from public, private, domestic and international spheres. It is essential that developed countries fulfil their official development assistance commitment of 0.7 per cent of gross national income to developing countries, and 0.2 per cent to the least developed countries. We also need to address the challenges faced by developing countries in accessing environmentally sound technology. Without such technology transfers and capacity-building, I am afraid that many development goals and targets will never be achieved.

Over four decades ago, the father of our nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in his maiden speech before the General Assembly, envisioned “the building of a world order in which the aspiration of all men for peace and justice will be realized” (A/PV.2243, para. 2) and freedom from poverty, hunger, exploitation and aggression. That clarion call continues to guide our development pursuits and engagement in global affairs. We continue to transform Bangladesh into a land where the rule of law and social justice prevail over poverty, inequality, impunity and exclusion. I have presented the Vision 2021 initiative, towards a middle-income, knowledge-driven economy in what we are calling a “digital Bangladesh”. With our steady progress so far, I am confident that we will soon realize the dream of the father of the nation of building *sonar Bangla*, or “golden Bangladesh”.

Bangladesh is widely recognized today as a role model for the developing world. We have one of the fastest poverty reduction rates in the world, despite a modest resource base; our poverty rate has fallen from 56.7 per cent in 1991 to 22.4 per cent today. Bangladesh has already met or is on track to meet MDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. During the past six years, our average gross domestic product growth has remained at about 6.2 per cent, despite the global recession; from 2005 to 2015, our export earnings have increased more than threefold; during the same period, foreign currency reserves have jumped by a factor of 7.5, from \$3.5 billion to \$26 billion. Moreover, during the same period, Bangladesh has graduated from the United Nations Development Programme low human development category to the medium category, and from the World Bank’s lower-income country status to lower-middle income.

We realize that investments in human capital that target our large youth population would pay rich dividends. That is why our Government has placed particular emphasis on education and health care for all. We now offer stipends to 13.4 million poor students enrolled in sixth grade to the undergraduate level and free education for girls up to the higher secondary level in order to address the challenge of student drop-outs. On the first day of this year, we distributed over 326.35 million free text books throughout the country. Since 2010, nearly 1.59 billion text books have been distributed. This is perhaps the biggest such undertaking anywhere in the world. Our people living in rural areas receive over 200 services from over 5,275

digital centres. They have access to health-care services through more than 16,500 technology-connected health complexes.

We have seen the visible results of women’s economic and political empowerment by promoting their greater access to productive resources and representation at the national and local levels. Likewise, we attach priority to addressing the needs and challenges of the various vulnerable segments of our population. Our lead role in the United Nations promotion of the rights and well-being of persons affected by autism and other neuro-developmental disabilities arose from our efforts to build an inclusive society.

As we did during the MDG era, we would like to lead by example in implementing the SDGs in Bangladesh. Attaching due importance to the SDG framework, we are currently developing the next five-year plan for 2016-2020. My Government is determined to ensure that no one is left behind in our aspiration to build a resilient, peaceful and prosperous society. We believe that sustainable development cannot be achieved in the absence of durable peace and security. We remain committed, as ever, to upholding peace and the rule of law and to putting an end to the culture of impunity. In that spirit, we are pursuing the perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity, rape and genocide committed during our 1971 Liberation War.

*Mr. Cardi (Italy), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Our Government attaches the utmost importance to preserving the religious harmony and tolerance that have nurtured our social fabric throughout the ages. We have recently settled maritime and land boundary demarcations and related issues with our neighbours India and Myanmar. At the stroke of midnight on 31 July, we exchanged 162 enclaves with India, whereby more than 50,000 stateless enclave residents obtained their much-cherished citizenship. That brought to a peaceful end the lingering humanitarian situation of the enclave residents. By so doing, jointly with India, we have set a unique precedent for the rest of the world.

In that spirit, I urge the comity of nations to renew our collective resolve to achieve a peaceful, stable and prosperous world free from poverty and inequality, violence and extremism, climate change and conflict, and oppression and injustice. Let us demonstrate foresight, moral courage and political leadership in building a better life and brighter future for all of our



children. May Bangladesh live forever! Long live the United Nations!

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for the statement she has just made.

*Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Stefan Löfven, Prime Minister of Sweden**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden.

*Mr. Stefan Löfven, Prime Minister of Sweden, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Stefan Löfven, Prime Minister of Sweden, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Löfven (Sweden):** Sixty years ago, Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld said these simple words, which summarize our task here today:

“The United Nations is an expression of our will to find a synthesis between the nation and the world ... to serve the world by serving our nation, and to serve our nation by serving the world.”

We will never forget Dag Hammarskjöld's life, and we welcome the new resolution 69/246, investigating his death, but now more than ever, we need to ensure that his idea of international solidarity lives on.

The current refugee situation is a global crisis, a global responsibility and now also a global crisis of responsibility. The United Nations system and all the world's leaders need to come together to ensure that those fleeing war and repression are treated in a safe, orderly and dignified way. We should dramatically increase the number of resettlement places, expand legal avenues for migration and base all our efforts on the principle of non-refoulement and the right to seek asylum. It is extremely urgent that all the countries of the European Union treat people seeking refuge in the Union with a spirit of humanity, solidarity and shared responsibility.

Sweden will do its share. We are the largest per capita receiver of asylum seekers in Europe and we are increasing our funding to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which is in dire need of more resources. But that is something no country or continent can tackle alone. It is time for us all to step up to solve this crisis. It is not simply our task. It is our duty in the service of our nations and the world.

To solve the current crisis, we also need to stop the horrors in Syria. Extrajudicial executions, sexual and gender violence, and atrocities that may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity cannot be tolerated by the international community. Sweden supports the efforts to secure humanitarian assistance for the Syrian people. We stand behind Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura and his proposal to form working groups with Syrian participation to implement the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/523, annex). To support that process, we want to see an international contact group comprising key international and regional actors. And time is of the essence. The Security Council and its major Powers must shoulder their responsibility. The bloodbath must end.

Meanwhile, other conflicts cannot be forgotten. A seven-year-old child in Gaza has already lived through three wars. Peace talks need to be resumed so that the State of Israel can live alongside a democratic, coherent and viable Palestinian State. Sweden has recognized the State of Palestine. We want to see a more equal relationship that will pave the way for the two-State solution that Israelis, Palestinians and a broad international community view as the right path to peace. Sweden will also step up its efforts to promote peacekeeping and crisis management.

We are contributing civilian personnel to missions in South Sudan, Afghanistan, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Middle East, and we have sent military personnel to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the Global Coalition to Combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. We stand ready to contribute to future United Nations missions and are continuing research on developed doctrines and methods for peacekeeping to share within the United Nations.

Working to maintain peace also means following through on our mutual promises of disarmament,

namely, to pursue legal, practical and technical solutions to fully rid our world of its remaining 16,000 nuclear weapons; to finally destroy what remains of other inhumane arms, such as biological and chemical weapons; to implement the Arms Trade Treaty; and to fight the spread of small arms and light weapons, including ammunition. If we sway from those goals, humankind will suffer for our faults.

If peace is more than the absence of war, peacebuilding is more than the direct prevention of military conflict. Lack of resources, rising sea levels and natural disasters have already wreaked havoc on women and men living in vulnerable States. Climate change can work as a conflict multiplier, threatening peace as well as our chances to achieve all our Sustainable Development Goals. We need a course of action to create a low-carbon and climate-resilient world economy. We must protect land and ocean ecosystems. That is not a choice; it is a necessity for our survival.

The world must therefore reach a fair, ambitious and legally binding agreement in Paris in December that, over time, will hold the rise in global temperature below 2°C, to the extent possible. Sweden will play its part by becoming one of the first fossil-free welfare nations in the world and having no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050. We will be strong financial supporters of the Green Climate Fund and international climate action, with a view to supporting adaptation and transfer of technology on a global scale.

The coming decade will also need to see major investments in the schooling, higher education and professional training of our youth. We need fair and equal societies, where the just contributions of those who have are used to finance the gift of knowledge and power to those who have not. That is a foundation for peace that is too precious to neglect. Moreover, it is closely connected to the potential of gender equality. Barring women from power, public debate, work and education and depriving them of their human right to decide for themselves, including control over their own bodies, reproduction and sexuality — all that is a global disgrace.

It is time once and for all to get rid of structures that discriminate against and belittle people, on whatever grounds. It is time to fully realize Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), granting women their crucial role in peace and State-building. It is time to see sexual violence as one of the most destructive weapons of all

and to fight it with the full force of the international community.

New times also demand a new mindset. As several leaders of island countries have told me: “We are not a small island nation; we are a large ocean State”. To fully grasp the potential of the new world economy, we need to remove old colonial prejudice and false conceptions of large and small, North and South, East and West. We should welcome and enhance the transformation and expansion of the global economy through free and fair trade and create a global deal for decent work, while working to free some 160 million child labourers and also to end modern slavery. Sweden is taking concrete measures to maintain political support at the highest level for our common 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), and we will continue to allocate 0.1 per cent of our gross national income to official development assistance.

For me, words that are not followed by actions are not worth being spoken, but the challenges for the international community also show the dire need for a strengthened and reformed United Nations. Sweden contributes resources, but we also want to contribute reforms. We want to make the United Nations more effective, transparent and fit-for-purpose. We will work to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, not least the African Union.

In 2017, it will have been 20 years since Sweden last held a seat on the Security Council. Over the years, we have stood by those fighting for independence and dignity and against repression, colonialism, apartheid and inequality. We now seek Members’ confidence to champion the perspective of small and medium-sized States as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. We will strive tirelessly for a Council that can respond swiftly to the security challenges of our time and that is more representative, transparent and effective. A reformed Council must reflect today’s realities, with adequate representation for Africa, Asia and Latin America. We also support efforts to limit the use of the veto.

Although we see distress, we also see hope. The agreement on the Iranian nuclear issue was indeed a victory for the idea of diplomacy. Shared efforts create shared progress. Our decision on the new Sustainable Development Goals will, if thoroughly implemented, enable us to create another landmark in human history. And the upcoming Climate Change Summit in Paris

will give us the opportunity to act — late, but hopefully not too late.

Sweden is fully committed to those tasks. We believe that international solidarity is the first and foremost foundation for shared peace and prosperity. International cooperation is the only way to transform solidarity into substantial change. This year must be the essential milestone for global development and for future generations. So let us create that milestone, serving our nations and serving our world.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Sweden for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Stefan Löfven, Prime Minister of Sweden, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif,  
Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic  
of Pakistan**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

*Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Sharif (Pakistan):** We congratulate Mr. Mogens Lykketoft on his election as President of the General Assembly at its the seventieth session. It acknowledges his distinguished career in public service. We share his commitment to building a more just and stable world. We also pay tribute to Mr. Sam Kutesa for his able stewardship of the sixty-ninth session.

Seventy years ago, the United Nations was created from the ruins of the most devastating war the world has ever witnessed. Its purpose was to build universal peace and prosperity on the basis of equitable principles, cooperation and collective action. Despite the constraints of the Cold War, the United Nations served the international community as a beacon of hope, a repository of freedom, an advocate of the oppressed and a vehicle for development and progress.

But we, the peoples of the United Nations, have not succeeded in beating arms into ploughshares or promoting universal prosperity and larger freedoms. Confrontation between major Powers has returned at a time when many parts of the world are in turmoil. Terrorism is spreading. Poverty and deprivation have yet to be overcome. Gross violations of human rights are rampant. We are witnessing human dislocation, with refugees and forced migrants on a scale not witnessed for over half a century. Our very existence is threatened by the wanton damage done to our planet's life-sustaining systems.

Yet this is also a moment of opportunity. Today, our interdependent world possesses the financial, scientific and organizational capabilities to address the diverse and interrelated challenges that pose a common threat to all Member States. At the historic Summit held over the weekend, we collectively committed ourselves to achieving 17 Sustainable Development Goals with a view to promoting equitable and inclusive development for all our peoples. The real challenge remains to mobilize the collective political will and resources to ensure the comprehensive implementation of the Agenda we have solemnly endorsed. Pakistan has already initiated action on national goals to promote the post-2015 development agenda. We are also creating a robust mechanism for the monitoring and implementation of these Goals and targets.

Later this year, in Paris, we will need to respond with common but differentiated responsibilities to the threat posed by climate change. Partisan interests must not stand in the way of an ambitious and collective commitment to halting and reversing the damage done to our planet.

On the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, we should strive to adapt the global Organization to respond effectively to the current and emerging challenges that confront us all. Pakistan supports the comprehensive reform of the United Nations, including of the Security Council. We need a Security Council that is more democratic, representative, accountable and transparent — a Council that reflects the interests of all Member States, in accordance with the principle of sovereign equality, not an expanded club of the powerful and privileged.

Peacekeeping has been one of the key responsibilities of the United Nations. Pakistan is proud of its historic and current role as a major troop-contributor. We regard

it as our obligation to uphold international peace and security.

Pakistan is the primary victim of terrorism. We have lost thousands of lives, including those of civilians and soldiers, to terrorist violence. The blood that has been shed, including that of our innocent children, has reinforced our resolve to eliminate that scourge from our society. We will fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, irrespective of its sponsors. Our Operation Zarb-e-Azb is the largest anti-terrorism campaign against terrorists anywhere, involving over 180,000 members of our security forces. It has made substantial progress in cleansing our country of all terrorists and will conclude only when our objective has been accomplished. The operation is complemented by an all-inclusive national action plan that encompasses police and security actions, political and legal measures, and social and economic policy packages aimed at countering violent extremism.

The global threat of terrorism cannot be defeated unless we address its underlying causes. Poverty and ignorance are part of the problem. Extremist ideologies must be opposed. But the narrative of the terrorists must also be countered through the just resolution of the several instances of oppression and injustice against Muslims in various parts of the world. Unfortunately, some seek to use the global campaign against terrorism to suppress the legitimate right of occupied peoples to self-determination.

The rise and spread of terrorism across the Middle East today poses unprecedented security challenges. Wracked by violence, ethnic and sectarian conflicts and the rise of Daesh, several countries of the region are today a vortex of conflict and instability. Others are being sucked into the quagmire. The tragedy of Palestine has intensified. The accepted avenue for peace between Palestine and Israel, a two-State solution, appears further away today than ever before, due to the intransigent stance of the occupying Power. Yet, as I speak, the proud Palestinian flag is being raised just outside this Hall. We hope that that is just the first step. We look forward to welcoming Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations.

Muslims are suffering across the world. Palestinians and Kashmiris are oppressed by foreign occupation; minorities are persecuted; and there is discrimination against Muslim refugees fleeing persecution or war.

The international community must redress those injustices against the Muslim people.

We welcome the comprehensive nuclear agreement reached between Iran and the P5+1, which shows what diplomatic engagement and multilateralism can achieve, and augurs well for the peace and security of our region and beyond.

Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan underwent a positive transformation after the establishment of the National Unity Government in Kabul. In response to a request from the Afghan Government, and with the support of the international community, Pakistan has made strenuous efforts to facilitate the process of Afghan reconciliation. Indeed, dialogue was opened between the Afghan Government and the Taliban, which was an unprecedented first. Unfortunately, certain developments stalled the process. Thereafter, militant attacks intensified, which we unequivocally condemn. Pakistan will persist in its endeavour to help restart the dialogue process and to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan. However, we can do so only if we receive the requisite cooperation of the Afghan Government. Tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan are in neither country's interest. We are encouraged that the international community, including the major Powers, desires the continuation of the peace process in Afghanistan.

Pakistan greatly appreciates China's proactive role in promoting peace and prosperity in Afghanistan and in our region. We welcome China's vision of "One Belt, One Road". The China-Pakistan economic corridor announced during President Xi Jinping's visit to Pakistan earlier this year will spur regional economic integration and bring prosperity to the entire region and beyond. That is an inspiring model of South-South cooperation that should be emulated. We also welcome Russia's greater focus on Asian cooperation. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which Pakistan will be joining this year as a full member, holds great promise for promoting regional connectivity.

The history of South Asia is one of missed opportunities. Among its dire consequences is the persistence of poverty and deprivation in our region. Development is my Government's first priority and has underpinned my policy to build a peaceful neighbourhood. Our peoples need peace to prosper. Peace can be achieved through dialogue, not disengagement.



In 1997, when the composite dialogue was launched with India, our two countries agreed that it would encompass two principal items — Kashmir and peace and security — along with six other issues, including terrorism. The primacy and urgency of addressing those two issues is even more compelling today. Consultations with Kashmiris, who are an integral part of the dispute, are essential to evolving a peaceful solution. Since 1947, the Kashmir dispute has remained unresolved. Relevant Security Council resolutions have remained unimplemented. Three generations of Kashmiris have known only broken promises and brutal oppression. Over 100,000 have died in their struggle for self-determination. That is the most persistent failure of the United Nations.

When I assumed office as the Prime Minister of Pakistan in June 2013 for the third time, one of my first priorities was to normalize relations with India. I reached out to the Indian leadership to emphasize that our common enemy was poverty and underdevelopment. Cooperation, not confrontation, should define our relationship. Yet today, ceasefire violations along the Line of Control and the working boundary are intensifying, causing the deaths of civilians, including women and children. Wisdom dictates that our immediate neighbour should refrain from fomenting instability in Pakistan. The two countries should address and resolve the causes of tension and take all possible measures to avert further escalation. That is why I wish to take this opportunity to propose a new peace initiative with India, starting with measures that are the simplest to implement.

First, we propose that Pakistan and India formalize and respect the 2003 understanding for a complete ceasefire on the Line of Control in Kashmir. To that end, we call for the expansion of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan in order to monitor observance of the ceasefire. Secondly, we propose that Pakistan and India reaffirm that they will not resort to the use or the threat of the use of force under any circumstances. That is a central element of the Charter of the United Nations. Thirdly, steps must be taken to demilitarize Kashmir. Fourthly, both countries should agree to an unconditional mutual withdrawal from the Siachen glacier, the world's highest battleground. Easing threat perceptions through such peace efforts will enable Pakistan and India to agree on a broad range of measures to address the peril posed by offensive and advanced weapons systems.

Pakistan neither wants, nor is engaged in, an arms race in South Asia. However, we cannot remain oblivious to the evolving security dynamics and arms build-up in our region, which obliges us to take essential steps to maintain our security. As a responsible nuclear-weapon State, Pakistan will continue to support the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We have maintained the highest standards of nuclear security and established an effective regime to ensure the safety and security of our nuclear facilities and stocks. South Asia needs strategic stability and this requires serious dialogue to achieve nuclear restraint, conventional balance and conflict resolution.

Finally, we look forward to playing our part to build a brighter era of peace and prosperity in South Asia. We owe it to our people and to succeeding generations.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Ms. Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Norway.

*Ms. Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming Her Excellency Ms. Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway, and inviting her to address the Assembly.

**Ms. Solberg (Norway):** The United Nations is now 70 years old. At the start of the meeting in San Francisco where the United Nations Charter was drafted, President Truman said “You members of this conference are to be architects of the better world. In your hands rests our future.” And he was right. The United Nations Charter has served humanity well for 70 years. Despite many challenges, there have been important milestones: decolonization, the establishment of the universal human rights system, the Millennium Development Goals, and a reduction in the number of inter-State wars.

Unfortunately, as we celebrate these 70 years, the forces of disorder, discrimination, violence and disruption are on the rise again. International law, universal norms and human rights are being violated by States and non-State actors alike. One of the consequences is the massive refugee crisis that we are seeing, with 60 million refugees and displaced people.

All States benefit from a global legal order where right prevails over might. One of the most important rules of the new world order created in 1945 is respect for internationally recognized borders. This basic principle has been blatantly violated in Europe during the last couple of years, and Europe's security landscape has been changed. We must return to a situation where all States abide by their obligations under international law.

The four most serious humanitarian crises in the world are, in fact, political crises. Power hungry politicians, armed groups and military leaders have ignored the plight of their peoples in the countries concerned: South Sudan, Yemen, Syria and Iraq. When State authorities ignore the rule of law or fail to live up to their human rights obligations, the result is often conflict and chaos. The regional and global consequences of these crises are far-reaching.

During the course of 2015, the United Nations has been carrying out three important reviews of peace operations, of the peacebuilding architecture and of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). These reviews will be important tools for improving our work on peace, security, human rights, mediation and conflict prevention. We must ensure that the United Nations has the funding and the political backing to prevent political exclusion and poor governance. Then we will be better able to prevent armed conflict and the resulting humanitarian crises.

The permanent members of the Security Council have a particular responsibility. Norway urges all States to join the proposed code of conduct to enable the Security Council to act decisively against mass atrocities. We support the French initiative to suspend the use of veto in such situations. We will also step up our efforts to support United Nations peacekeeping and the capacity of the United Nations to prevent conflict.

The flow of arms to conflict areas and the lack of protection for civilians further increase human suffering. The Arms Trade Treaty, with its humanitarian goals, gives us an important tool for addressing these

problems. The Secretary-General has called on all parties to conflict to refrain from using explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas. We support his call.

At the Oslo Conference on Safe Schools, we endorsed the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict. Some 49 countries have already endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration. They have committed themselves to protecting education from attack in conflict situations. We urge other countries to come on board.

We see progress in Iraq, and we have hope for South Sudan. Norway is committed to supporting the transitional arrangements to help South Sudan out of its self-destructive conflict. The crisis in Syria started with peaceful protests calling for freedom. These were met with a violent crackdown. Upholding human rights is one of the fundamental obligations of any Government. The exodus from Syria today is a direct consequence of the violence unleashed by the Government.

The conflict in Syria has also allowed extremist terror groups like the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) to gain a foothold. Now, both the Government and non-State groups such as ISIL and the Al-Nusra Front are committing monstrous atrocities. The spread of these extremist groups needs to be stopped.

Norway will adhere to global norms in its response to the crisis. We are receiving refugees at our borders in line with the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951 and our international human rights obligations. We have agreed to take in a high number of refugees from Syria's neighbouring countries for resettlement under United Nations quotas. We are taking part in the rescue efforts in the Mediterranean. We have already doubled our humanitarian aid to Syria and the region this year and we will increase our aid further. We will be hosting a donor conference in cooperation with Germany and the United Nations.

When leaders fail to shoulder their most basic responsibilities, the international community must make use of the tools the United Nations has at its disposal. The United Nations has established many global standards. Fifteen years ago, the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. It is a landmark resolution, but its implementation is taking too long. In several war-ravaged towns in Syria, groups of women are calling for a ceasefire and evacuation. They do this at great

personal risk. Their bravery should inspire us. We must intensify the implementation of the Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security.

Seventy years ago, we set out to eradicate extremism. The fight against extremism must be maintained, also in our countries. Extremism is once again raising its head in different shapes and forms. The ideology of disorder, discrimination, violence and disruption dominates the ideologies of ISIL, Al-Qaida and their various affiliates. International cooperation at all levels is essential. In June, Norway hosted a European conference on countering violent extremism, where a European youth network was launched. The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy will remain a cornerstone of our efforts. We also welcome the Secretary-General's initiative in developing a new United Nations plan of action for this issue, and I would like to highlight the importance of including girls and women in the planning and implementation of efforts to counter violent extremism.

The recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals are another example of the important role the United Nations continues to play. We know that health and education are fundamental to inclusive growth and jobs. Ebola was a wake-up call for us all. Education is also crucial in resolving conflicts and rebuilding societies. However, we need to address the considerable financial gap in the field of education. A first step is the International Commission on the Financing of Global Education Opportunities, announced at the recent Oslo Summit on Education for Development. Norway will double its investment in education for the period from 2014 to 2017. But sustainable development is not possible without respect for human rights. It is therefore vital to ensure that the human rights pillar of the United Nations is strong and assertive. If we do not provide adequate funding for human rights efforts, we will not be able to achieve the results we want and need.

The United Nations should not be seen as a costly burden; it provides win-win solutions for all Member States. I would like to highlight two areas where that is particularly clear. First, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea has been called the constitution of the oceans. It provides a clear framework for all activities in oceans and seas. It regulates the rights and duties of various States. And it should be used to the full in order to help to decrease tensions, prevent conflict and find peaceful solutions. Secondly, climate change is a fact. The Climate Summit to be held in

Paris later this year is our opportunity to shoulder our responsibilities and take action. We, the Member States, must grasp that opportunity for the sake of our future as nations and as a global community.

We can be the generation that defeats extreme poverty. We can be the generation that prevents political crises from becoming humanitarian crises. We are already the first generation to experience human-made climate change. Let us also be the generation that halts climate change. And we can be the generation that finally realizes the right to education for all. With the Charter of the United Nations as our starting point, we must adapt our global norms to address new challenges. The forces of disorder, discrimination, violence and disruption must be stopped. The United Nations is a crucial arena for developing shared measures to address shared threats. We must use it to the full if we are to meet the threats we are facing today, from climate change to terrorism. We can thus ensure that the United Nations continues to serve humanity well for the next 70 years. Its Member States can still be, in Truman's words, the architects of a better world.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Norway for the statement she has just made.

*Ms. Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji.

*Mr. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Bainimarama (Fiji):** I would like to add my congratulations to the President on his election to those of the leaders who have spoken before me. I wish him success in guiding the General Assembly at its seventieth session to a productive and meaningful conclusion. I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa for his outstanding leadership during the sixty-ninth session.

Last year, I addressed the Assembly on the heels of an election victory in Fiji (see A/69/PV.15). I said that Fiji was now a fairer, more just and more compassionate society, and that we would accelerate our efforts to alleviate poverty, thanks to a rapidly strengthening economy. Today I am proud to assure the Assembly that our democracy is working, our economy is growing and we are gradually lifting more people out of poverty every day. This is not an experiment. It is a very real and revolutionary change in the way we Fijians govern ourselves and treat one another.

I will not say that it has been easy, because it has not. But we have had one year of the give-and-take of parliamentary democracy based on a common and equal citizenry, under a Constitution that values every Fijian equally, regardless of ethnicity, birthright, faith, gender, social condition or geography. That is a first. In the past, we had elections; today, we have elections that do not result in the tyranny of the majority. Things have been raucous at times, as we have battled over ideas and exchanged accusations on the floor of Parliament, in the media and before the public. Democracy sometimes seems messy, chaotic and prone to petty squabbles, but it is a price that we Fijians gladly pay for the chance to enjoy its many blessings.

As is natural, our society is now also more compassionate and our economy more robust. We have carried out wide-ranging social and economic reforms designed to free the energies of our people, encourage investment, create employment and lift up the poor and marginalized in Fiji. We have introduced free schooling at the primary and secondary level for the first time and made great efforts to bring the benefits of Government programmes, technology and the modern market to people in remote and underserved areas of the country. Infrastructure development, including roads, electricity, water and health care, is our priority.

The results have been encouraging. Our economy has grown at more than 4 per cent per annum for the past three years, and the rate for 2014 was more than 5.3 per cent. National and international economic experts expect us to meet or exceed that figure this year. Investment, particularly domestic investment, is booming. Construction is up, tourism is up, we have a healthy surplus in foreign exchange reserves and job openings have increased substantially, showing that Fijians are confident. They believe in themselves, in their democracy and in their country's future. This is the most sustained period of economic growth in our

history, and it is part of a revolution of initiative and energy directly linked to our new democracy.

Dedication to basic human rights is the foundation of democracy. No democracy can survive if each individual's rights are not sacred and if the State fails to protect, or even works to undermine, the ability of all to think and believe and worship as they choose. No democracy can survive if elections only mean that the winners take all. No democracy can survive if it does not enshrine human dignity as a right and make every effort to assure the people's socioeconomic rights, as our Constitution provides for.

We have made believers out of people who once doubted and criticized us. We have overcome sanctions and isolation, imposed by other democratic nations in the mistaken belief that they would push us to democracy. In fact, we needed no push. We were already committed to that path. What we needed was engagement and support, and I am pleased to say that we have it again, at last. It is clear that we have fashioned our own democracy on dedication to the rights and dignity of each person in Fiji, and we bring that dedication to our work at the United Nations.

Since Fiji established its Mission in Geneva last year, my Government has worked energetically with the human rights community. Earlier this year, I addressed the Human Rights Council in Geneva, outlining Fiji's human rights priorities, particularly as they relate to our progressive bill of rights in the 2013 Fijian Constitution. Fijians now enjoy an unprecedented level of protection, enforced through an independent judiciary and a human rights and anti-discrimination commission. I have invited a number of special mandate holders under the Human Rights Council to visit Fiji. I am pleased that the Special Rapporteur on the right to education will visit Fiji within a year to assess and support my Government's efforts and initiatives to strengthen the right to education. Fiji has also committed to ratifying the core human rights instruments in the not so distant future. That is a solemn commitment that flows naturally from our basic belief that all Fijians have the right to live with dignity. We understand that this will carry additional obligations towards our own people, obligations we are eager to take on.

As we participate in the Human Rights Council, we find, yet again, that the voice and the unique concerns of the Pacific small island developing States have trouble being heard. We have a unique perspective



of the world to share with the international human rights community. That includes calling attention to the detrimental effect that climate change is having on our ability to extend and strengthen human rights in the region. It also includes educating others about the challenges many of us face in creating proper institutions and changing long-held cultural attitudes that can be obstacles to full respect for human rights. Those are issues that Fiji will continue to raise now, and as a member of the Human Rights Council for the term 2018-2020, if we are elected.

Like our neighbours in the South Pacific and other small island developing States, we see the bright future we have charted for ourselves dimmed by the prospect of climate change and sea-level rise. Fiji has been outspoken in insisting that all nations carry out their duty to reduce carbon emissions and control the production of greenhouse gases. Fiji is making strenuous efforts to do its part, but our part in creating the crisis is very small, practically negligible. The major developed nations and — I must say it — the major developing nations as well, must do more. It is simply not acceptable for advanced economies to build a high standard of living by degrading the Earth and the seas. It is also not acceptable for major nations that are industrialising to assert that they need to degrade the Earth, the air and the seas in order to build their economies, just as the advanced countries did years ago. The emergency is now. The solution must be now. The time for excuses is over.

Earlier this month, the Pacific leaders at the third Summit of the Pacific Island Development Forum adopted the Suva Declaration on Climate Change. This landmark declaration clearly sets out the agreed demands of the Pacific island developing States for an acceptable outcome at the United Nations Climate Conference in Paris later this year. The Suva Declaration calls for the 2015 climate change agreement to limit global average temperature increase to less than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. It calls for the Paris agreement to be legally binding on all parties, and for it to recognize loss and damage as a stand-alone element. We also call for climate change adaptation measures to be 100 per cent grant-financed.

The choices we face may be politically difficult in the short run, but the consequences we are already seeing — environmental degradation, unbearable heat, drought, powerful tropical storms and unpredictable weather patterns — are simply unacceptable. We are

elected as leaders, and leaders must be able to explain these consequences to their people and convince them to make the necessary short-term sacrifices for everyone's benefit. These consequences are real for Fiji and its neighbours. We have plans to move 45 villages to higher ground, and we have already started. We have committed to resettling people from other low-lying South Pacific island States who face the prospect of being swallowed up by the rising ocean and falling inexorably into oblivion. Should that happen, the people of those island States would be refugees, as desperate and lost as the hundreds of thousands fleeing conflict in Syria and Iraq. It is very real and it is happening now. It is time to shed our indifference.

Fiji particularly welcomes the establishment of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on the conservation and sustainable management of oceans and seas. Our destiny is shaped by the ocean in which we are set. But we also welcome this Goal as citizens of the Earth, because the health of the oceans and seas is vital for everyone. In the Pacific Ocean, for too long now, we have observed the decline in our ocean's health, as evidenced by dying coral, marine pollution, damaged coastal ecosystems, declining fish stocks, and ocean acidification. Those of us who are old enough to remember our ocean in much healthier times must do more than lament that our grandchildren may never see the ocean as it was created. We must do all we can to make sure that they know the ocean as it was when our forebearers bequeathed it to us.

As a founding member of the United Nations group of friends of oceans and seas, Fiji has been working to establish a high-level global platform to ensure that we meet SDG14. I am proud to say that we have found a strong ally in the Government of Sweden to establish the triennial United Nations conference on oceans and seas, with five international conferences spanning the 15 years of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. They will be conferences for action, not talk. Governments, international organizations, scientists, business leaders and others will gather at the five conferences to assess progress and hold all participants accountable for meeting targets. We will host the triennial conference in Fiji in June 2017, and all those dedicated to the integrity of implementation of the oceans Goal will be welcome.

We Fijians do not ask others to do what we are unwilling to do. We are a nation that stands up. We stand up for peace. We stand up for our neighbours.

And we stand up for the environment. We held our first national green growth summit in Fiji only a couple of months before I appeared before the Assembly last year. In that short time, Fiji developed and has begun implementing its own green growth framework — a master plan for an economic model that is more holistic, integrated, inclusive and, above all, sustainable. Our framework links economic growth and environmental protection and builds an economy that grows in a more intelligent way and nurtures the interests of all our citizens. No project will proceed if it is not sustainable, or if it jeopardizes our natural resources in any way. We hold our resources in trust for future generations, and we will not squander them for short-term economic gain. We will continue to grow, develop and modernize, but we will embrace a future in which our forests, our mangroves, our coral reefs and our marine life thrive. If everyone does the same with their part of the world, large or small, we may have a chance to save this planet.

I believe that Fiji's commitment to the United Nations as an institution and to the work of the United Nations is second to none. Our contributions to worldwide peacekeeping are a matter of national pride, honour and commitment. Today, Fijian military, police and correctional officers are actively engaged in United Nations peacekeeping missions in Iraq, the Golan Heights, Lebanon, Darfur and South Sudan, as well as in the Multinational Force and Observers in Sinai. We are also proud to now be serving in the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, headquartered in Jerusalem.

This national mission of ours — to work with other nations to bring peace to the world — has become a part of our national identity. It involves great sacrifice on the part of many Fijian families and, of course, it is dangerous work that has resulted in the tragic loss of life. But I bring to the General Assembly today the solemn will of the Fijian people to continue to serve the cause of peace through the United Nations wherever the Organization is called on to heal the wounds of strife and war.

Fiji has been a Member of the United Nations since its independence, in October 1970. Since that time Fiji's leaders have attended the General Assembly every year to play our part in this great global gathering. Every year we have been wisely guided by a President of the General Assembly hailing from one of our fellow Member States, but never by a President from the Pacific Islands developing States. We believe the time has

come for the Pacific Islands to provide the Assembly's President, and we have put forward a candidate for the Assembly's seventy-first session. Our candidate, duly submitted to the Asia-Pacific Group, is currently Fiji's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Peter Thomson. He is a seasoned diplomat who has demonstrated extraordinary leadership in service to the United Nations. Fiji looks to the friends of the Pacific Islands at the United Nations to give their support to our candidate for the President of the Assembly at its seventy-first Session.

Fiji is fully committed to the work of the United Nations under President Lykkesoft's stewardship at this seventieth session of the General Assembly. I pledge to him our full support and cooperation as he carries out the responsibilities that lie before him. This body holds the promise of raising human beings out of poverty and degradation to health and hope, from conflict and fear to peace, and from an effort to tame our environment to a commitment to live in harmony with it. Fiji will be with him this year, and we will be with our fellow nations until we realize that promise.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji, was escorted from the rostrum.*

#### **Address by Mr. Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta.

*Mr. Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Muscat (Malta):** As we all know, this year constitutes a landmark year for our Organization as we celebrate its seventieth anniversary. The Organization's founding fathers wanted to turn the ashes of the Second World War into a new order that would secure peace, advance global prosperity, alleviate poverty and promote human rights worldwide. They wanted to

create what they termed a strong United Nations and a better world.

As we commemorate this seventieth anniversary, let us pause and ask whether today's world is really a better one. In an era of negativity and media onslaught with respect to global problems, it would be easy to answer "no", and there are valid reasons to do so. But our duty is, as the standard bearers of optimism, to defy the logic of pessimism and answer "yes". Indeed, the problems are many, but the world has never experienced such a degree of commitment by global citizens who are looking beyond the notion of the traditional nation State and come together as a global community.

The United Nations has contributed significantly to transforming our world into a safer and more just place for humankind. It has contributed to the eradication of disease, the promotion of justice, freedom and human rights, the attainment of peace in different parts of the world, and to stemming the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Its efforts at mediation and the peacebuilding and peacekeeping successes shepherded by the United Nations have resulted in more people being able to determine their destiny. The Millennium Development Goals spurred us on in our commitment to seek a better life for the poor and the malnourished, and we have now adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (resolution 70/1). If proof were needed that the United Nations can actually make a difference, we have seen it. Indeed, if we reflect over the last 70 years, I believe there is much to be proud of.

The question that needs to be addressed, however, is not whether the United Nations has been a force for good — which it very obviously has — but whether in today's vastly different world, it is still capable of meeting the challenges it faces. The Organization is, I believe, still a work in progress. We continue to live in a vastly uneven world plagued by conflict, inequality and injustice. New and profound challenges have emerged, many of which are global in nature and which therefore require global solutions.

Last year (see A/69/PV.12), I stressed that more attention needed to be focused on the plight of migrants in the Mediterranean, the cradle of civilization that has now sadly been turned into a graveyard. My country finds itself at the crossroads between the Middle East, Europe and Africa. The tragedy that is occurring so close to home is starkly evident and of immense concern to us. We are the only country in Europe,

and probably the only country around the world, that dedicates 100 per cent of its limited military resources to saving people at sea each and every day.

Last April, we witnessed the funeral of 24 migrants who perished together with 800 others in what is probably the worst-ever-recorded capsizing of a boat laden with migrants in the Mediterranean. Those unnamed individuals were mourned by all of us. Sadly, however, that was not the last tragedy. While many have been rescued through the concerted efforts of European countries, several thousand others have continued to lose their lives on this perilous journey, a journey which they are sometimes forced to take at gunpoint by unscrupulous people smugglers.

So far, this year has broken all records in terms of desperate people attempting to flee from persecution and hopelessness in search of a better life and to attain the right to live in peace, free from anxiety, poverty and persecution. We see it happening in the Mediterranean Sea, and now we see it happening across the Balkans. This proves that it not a Mediterranean problem, nor is it European problem. It is a global phenomenon that needs global responses.

Malta has been highlighting this situation for years and years now in the General Assembly. In November, we will host a summit bringing together the leaders of the European Union and key African nations. The Valletta Summit will be an opportunity to enhance our dialogue and improve our understanding in an attempt to address this issue comprehensively, in a spirit of partnership and cooperation with all the countries involved. It is expected to build and strengthen the present frameworks of action in the field of migration in an effort to address the phenomenon in a more holistic manner and in order to take advantage of the opportunities presented while dealing with the challenge of forced displacement.

The first priority must remain the saving of lives. This is our moral duty as human beings. Europe intensified the search and rescue operations in an attempt to reduce the loss of lives. We are also providing assistance and refuge to those who qualify. Nevertheless, an important and necessary part of the European Union effort requires greater commitment to taking on the smugglers before they can put the lives of more innocent people at risk. The international community should be under no illusion. When it comes to those criminals, we are dealing with individuals

who feed on the desperation of innocent people. In the process, they are making a fortune — and the money is also being used to finance other criminal activities, probably even including terrorism. Those people must be held accountable for their crimes and brought to justice.

Efforts to combat those networks must, in the first instance, be stepped up nationally and regionally. Closer cooperation is essential, most of all among the countries of origin, transit and destination, including through better intelligence-sharing and joint criminal investigations. Improved implementation of national enforcement policies and stronger penalties to punish smugglers are also essential measures to effectively address that challenge.

We have to continue doing our best to give shelter to those fleeing from war and those qualifying for asylum. But it must also be clear that a free-for-all policy is not on the table. People who do not qualify for asylum should be returned. Safe countries of origin that do not help in returns should face sanctions. Those that collaborate should be rewarded with further aid and access to markets.

Nevertheless, tackling the root causes of migration is the only real long-term solution. There are several causes. Starting with development, 2015 is a pivotal year for global sustainable development and poverty eradication. Through the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, agreed to in July, as well as the post-2015 development agenda, which we welcomed just a few days ago, we are called upon to respond in a transformative manner to the fundamental challenges facing the world today: eradicating poverty, achieving inclusive and sustainable development for present and future generations and ensuring the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental values as the basis for peaceful and prosperous societies. However, we should all be starkly aware that that is only the first step of a process that can be successful only if we are truly fully committed to its implementation.

However, all of those efforts will be futile unless we clearly and determinedly address the long-standing conflicts in the countries of origin and transit. It is not just Malta's or Europe's problem. It is everyone's problem. The United Nations needs to act, as it is morally bound to do. Yes, we have to tackle the war in Syria. But it is a delusion to think that solving Syria will in itself solve the migration phenomenon. What

about Somalia, Eritrea and the whole list of forgotten conflicts generating the mass displacement of people? What about climate change, which is expected to displace so many people? Even in the best-case scenario, we live in a world where the mass displacement of people will be a key feature. That is because we need to recognize that not only desperation makes people move, but also aspiration. People aspire to a better life for themselves and their families. At a time when the world is getting smaller, mothers and fathers, such as ourselves, will set out, believing, rightly or wrongly, that they will secure a better future for their children. We therefore need tools and institutions to establish rules and tackle the phenomenon permanently, not simply as a humanitarian effort, but they should comprise an economic, social and environmental framework to anticipate and manage those flows.

I come from a family of nations that has been very much in the news for failing to agree unanimously on a mandatory distribution system for refugees. I was one of the most vociferous critics in Europe, indicating our failures. Nevertheless, I stand in front of the Assembly today as a proud European. Can anyone mention to me any other group of nations that has gone so far as to agreeing, albeit with considerable birth pangs and bruises, to such a system? There is none. Only Europe has done so to date. Therefore I ask, "Where is everyone else"?

We made a first step. Now the global community has to follow. The United Nations is the apposite forum. At the end of the Second World War, nation States realized that their financial system was broken, that they could no longer operate in a vacuum. The Bretton Woods Agreement laid the basis for rules and institutions to tackle the new reality. We now need a Bretton Woods of migration: rules and institutions that ensure that all the members of the international community, not just the few, share and shoulder the phenomenon of mass migration, with both legal channels and instruments to deal with crises. In other words, a European quota alone should not exist, but a global quota system for migrants, for not only this, but all crises. I urge that such a discussion begin. Let us not allow people smugglers, the criminals, decide for us. Let us read the writing on the wall and lay the foundations for that new system.

On a related subject, in our immediate neighbourhood in the Mediterranean, the escalation in Libya proceeded at such a fast pace that the United Nations responded by taking the lead role to resolve that conflict. The conflict



is providing all the necessary space for criminals to smuggle people and take control of significant parts of the country. Malta strongly supports the indefatigable efforts of the United Nations to launch a national dialogue for a reconciliation process and the formation of a national unity Government in Libya. Malta recognized and welcomed the initialling of the United Nations-led draft agreement in Morocco last July. The agreement's initialling was the result of ongoing United Nations-facilitated consultations among various Libyan rival parties.

Hopefully, we will witness an all-inclusive peace agreement. We have to acknowledge the political will and courage demonstrated by those who initialled the draft agreement, which seeks to resolve Libya's institutional and security crises. The major challenge ahead, especially in neighbouring countries such as ours, is to ensure that the implementation of the agreement is put into effect. All Libyan actors in that process must realize that it is their homeland that needs to be saved, and that all hostilities and violent disputes must cease immediately. The actors must continue to engage actively in an inclusive political dialogue for national reconciliation.

And we must be very sincere. If a complete agreement proves elusive again, it is high time that the United Nations and the global community back those people of good will on both sides of the divide who are willing to reach an agreement, and sideline those on both sides who are simply wasting their people's future.

This is an important year for my country. For the second time in 10 years, we will very soon host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. The summit, guided by the theme "The Commonwealth: Adding Global Value", will be the culmination of a number of activities and forums, namely, the people's forum, the youth forum, the business forum and, for the first time, the women's forum. In organizing the event and our assumption of the chairmanship of the Commonwealth, we plan to address issues of common concern, including global political and security challenges, the most urgent of which is the unprecedented increase in extremism and radicalization, as well as to assess the state of development in the wake of the adoption of the post-2015 agenda and related financing for the development process, with particular attention to practical steps that Commonwealth Governments might take to accelerate the implementation of the outcomes of key global processes.

Malta is confident that the Commonwealth can also provide added value to the international debate on climate change, particularly since that gathering will take place on the eve of the twenty-first Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21). Climate action will be prominently featured on the summit agenda. Noting that the Commonwealth gathers disparate countries from all continents and from vulnerable island States, as well as the Group of 20 economies, the summit will play an important role in strengthening regional and international cooperation and providing support for the successful outcome of COP21. We now look forward to the successful conclusion to the United Nations Paris summit on climate change in December. In seeking to reach an ambitious, fair, balanced and legally binding agreement, we must be principled and practical in our approach.

Malta believes that climate change is a decisive challenge, which if not urgently managed will put at risk not only the environment but also the world's economic prosperity, development and, more broadly, stability and security. In 1988, our former President, the late Mr. Vincent Tabone, proposed a resolution that called for the world's climate to be declared the common heritage of humankind (resolution 43/53). The impact of climate change requires a global and coordinated response. Malta was the first to alert the international community to the need to address the warnings on human-induced climate change by the scientific community. We now aspire to being one facilitator among others in securing an equitable deal.

I am of the firm conviction that what binds us together is stronger than what divides us. The challenges we face should unite us as we need to, and indeed we must, face them together. As standard bearers of optimism, we respond to the day's great problems with even greater resolve. Malta will play its part.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Charles Michel, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium.

*Mr. Charles Michel, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Charles Michel, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Michel (Belgium) (*spoke in French*):** A predecessor of the President of the General Assembly at its first session, in 1946, was one of my compatriots, Mr. Paul-Henri Spaak. In the midst of the Second World War, he said that we must take advantage of the exceptional circumstances to seize the opportunity to make substantial progress in the world and to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. That was the objective of the founders of the United Nations 70 years ago.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrines fundamental human rights and universal values. All human beings are born free and equal. Freedom of thought, freedom of opinion and freedom of expression are intangible. Those freedoms are the foundation of a democratic world in which each individual's dignity, no matter what his country, origin or culture, must be fully respected.

Since 1945, the world has changed and much progress has been realized. I am 40 years old. The challenges our generation faces are multiple, complex and increasingly interrelated — conflicts, poverty, climate and migration. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) should give new impetus and greater force to our joint action for development. As I said, I am 40 and was born well after the independence of the African States. My belief is that the destiny of Europe and Africa are inextricably linked. Everyone stands to gain from the success of others, but we can also lose much from failures. I have not known the period of colonization. I know only an Africa of free and independent African States, so I have no sense of nostalgia nor guilt. But I do have a feeling of responsibility. We must look clearly and optimistically to the future of the continent, to which my country is especially committed. We want a sincere and frank

relationship of equals, a partnership in which everyone is fully respected and no one teaches the other lessons.

With its more than 1 billion people, I am convinced that Africa will have an increasingly more important place in the world. We know the potential of the continent. Africa has the talent and Africa has the resources. I think first of the young Africans, who are full of vitality and ingenious and who want to take their destiny into their own hands. They have a feeling of dignity and freedom that nothing and nobody can stop.

The primary condition for development is respect for the rule of law and the guarantee of personal freedom. The years 2015 and 2016 are election years in Africa. There can be no democracy without legitimacy, and there can be no legitimacy without respect for the constitutional agreements that unite the leaders with their peoples. Certain countries, such as Nigeria and Senegal, have demonstrated wisdom. But we can only condemn the coup d'état attempts, such as that which recently occurred in Burkina Faso. Ultimately, we must call on all Heads of State to fully respect the electoral cycles as set out by their Constitutions.

The Charter of the United Nations enshrines the sovereignty of all States. Sovereignty first of all entails the primary responsibility of leading a country in the public interest. In no case can sovereignty it serve as a pretext for an oligarchy. Sovereignty involves duty to the people. Ignoring the people's will or trampling on their freedoms will succeed only for a short period of time, because the people's thirst for freedom and dignity will sooner or later win.

In Burundi, we spared no effort to ensure respect for the Constitution and the Arusha agreements. The obstinacy to remain in power at whatever cost is a certain form of blindness that upsets the balance.

Today, unfortunately, the country is deeply divided, and it is Burundian citizens, many of them now refugees, who are the main victims. We would like to once again make an urgent appeal for a political dialogue between the Government and the opposition under the auspices of the countries of the region, within the framework of the East African Community.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a great country situated in the heart of Africa. It has a young, dynamic population and abundant natural resources, but also a history of tragic conflict for which its population has paid a terrible price for many years.

Respect for the rule of law and constitutional order is the only road to stability. With elections in the offing, everyone is expecting the country's political officials to demonstrate that they have the best interests of their country and people at heart.

My country is also committed to working to improve both security and development in the Sahel region. Destabilization in Libya, explosive population growth and climate change have all resulted in serious problems, as we know. We want to continue to support peacekeeping operations in the Niger and Mali, as well as the efforts of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

Along with official development assistance, we should encourage private initiative. Economic development must create jobs and produce more revenue for States. Improving the business climate and combating corruption will promote investment. We should also encourage innovative financing for development, such as, for example, the idea of an international tax on financial transactions.

We are all dealing increasingly with the rise of terrorism, and my country has not been spared. Terrorists want to destroy our universal values, and they do it by striking down innocent victims indiscriminately. While we must mobilize all possible means against these new threats, it is the duty of democracies to fight fanatics with respect for the rule of law. It will not be easy, but we must keep a constant watch over the balance between the right to security and respect for individual liberties. We must mobilize our security forces, police and judicial authorities, but we should also, perhaps, rely more on local communities, religious and spiritual leaders and civil society. Since 2003, negotiations on an international convention on terrorism have been at a standstill. In that regard, I would like to urge that we put renewed effort into making that international convention on terrorism a reality as soon as possible, and in that way add to the means for taking action at our disposal.

Other speakers before me have also urged that we must work to resolve the conflicts in Libya, Iraq and Syria. To be clear, in Syria it is not a question for us of choosing between the fanatical barbarism of the Islamic State, on the one hand, or the tyranny and massacres of Bashar Al-Assad, on the other. We believe we must act in parallel, at once eradicating Daesh and at the same time forcing a political transition

towards free and credible elections. Syria needs strong institutions and a legitimate Government. That is the only possible path to peace and stability. We advocate a comprehensive humanitarian and political approach, with the possibility of considering a military option conducted with respect for international law. We support the extraordinary commitment of Mr. Staffan de Mistura, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, to re-starting a dialogue between all the parties.

It has to be said frankly that the situation in Libya is the result of a failure on the part of the international community, and it shows clearly that only a comprehensive approach makes sense. At present, extremist groups of all stripes are sowing terror, as the attacks attempting to undermine the democratic transition in Tunisia attest. Here, too, we fully support the United Nations efforts to promote a political dialogue.

We see that conflict and war push populations to seek safety elsewhere, far from home. Today, 60 million people around the world are displaced and often risk their lives to flee conflict. Syria, sadly, is only one of the tragic examples of such situations. We should support the countries that have to deal most directly with the consequences of those conflicts — Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey — and I welcome the fact that the European Union has decided to mobilize €1 billion to support hosting refugees in those three countries.

In the Middle East, the peace process is stalled. We believe the status quo is not an option. Raising the Palestinian flag here at the United Nations, as we hope to do, is of course a symbol, but it is not enough. More than ever, in our view, the objective should be recognition of a sovereign and independent Palestinian State, with full respect for Israel's security. We have to tell it like it is — neither rockets nor illegal settlements can pave the way to that vital goal. Europe must work harder with all its partners, and it is in that spirit that Belgium supports France's initiative to establish a contact group bringing together countries of goodwill.

The Charter of the United Nations establishes the principle of sovereign equality. The territorial integrity and sovereignty of every country must be guaranteed absolutely. In that regard, we stand by Ukraine in upholding the principles and obligations of international law. The Minsk agreements must be fully implemented by all the parties.

I would like to conclude by pointing out that while of course peace and security will always continue to be our goals, and differences between countries will continue to exist, it is the duty of humankind and of the General Assembly to resolve emerging conflicts through dialogue and mutual understanding, rather than guns and fanaticism. The peace agreement in Colombia, the Iranian nuclear agreement and the resumption of diplomatic relations with Cuba show that dialogue and respect can produce concrete results. The international order must assume that everyone, regardless of origin, culture or religion, fully endorses our basic universal values. As President Obama put it so well only days ago in this very Hall, “You can jail your opponents, but you cannot imprison ideas” (*A/70/PV.13, p. 11*).

As a Head of Government, I know the responsibility that lies on the shoulders of those who represent their people. And, like all those here, I know that everywhere in the world there are pitfalls, contradictions and tragedies. But, above all, the world is made up of women and men with dreams and hopes both for themselves and for those they love. The spirit of freedom, innovation, intelligence, ingenuity, respect and tolerance are the best weapons we have to overcome the challenges of this century together. I would like to end with the words of Paul-Henri Spaak, the first President of the General Assembly, who said during his presidency that between a perfect world and a better world, he chose the better world. We know that a perfect world is unattainable. But a better world depends only us. A better world demands courage, responsibility and solidarity. With that conviction, I wish to affirm here my country’s commitment to a better world.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Charles Michel, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Tammam Salam, President of the Council of Ministers of the Lebanese Republic**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Council of Minister of the Lebanese Republic.

*Mr. Tammam Salam, President of the Council of Ministers of the Lebanese Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Tammam Salam, President of the Council of Ministers of the Lebanese Republic, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Salam** (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure, at the outset, to congratulate the President for presiding over the work of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. I also take this opportunity to thank Mr. Sam Kutesa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uganda, for the efforts exerted throughout his presidency of the Assembly during its sixty-ninth session.

On the seventieth anniversary marking the establishment of the United Nations, in which my country had the honour of contributing by way of the drafting of the Charter of the United Nations, I would like to stress Lebanon’s commitment in fully assuming its active role as a member of the international community in order to fulfil the noble aims unanimously approved by all nations: chiefly, safeguarding international peace and security, the right of peoples to self-determination and respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all human beings.

We speak about the fundamental rights of human beings; in our region that concept is withering away, day after day, under the pressure of wars; dimming before an ever growing shadow hiding behind the veil of religion; and completely disintegrating when faced with the barbaric colonization practised by the State of Israel, while it seeks to hide under a modern and democratic cloak. Before the eyes of the entire world, nations in our region are disintegrating. Millions are leaving their homes, wandering off to the unknown.

There is Aylan: the 3-year-old child seen earlier this month by the entire world, after his body washed ashore towards his eternal resting place. His tragedy sums up the prevailing status of fundamental human rights in our region. His picture describes the story of a tormented people drifting in the sea without direction, or packed on sidewalks in cities and train stations, waiting for a permit, or a visa or simply a meal. The narrative has far outpaced any political, military or legal framework, to put forth a major question related to the present and the future of humankind.



We have all followed the efforts made on the part of some European countries to accommodate additional numbers of refugees on their territory. Those efforts are rooted in the cultural and civilizational heritage rooted in the bitter experience of devastating wars. Yet we continue to believe that the best solution to the problem, and the least expensive for Syria, the neighbouring countries and the world, is to tackle the tragedy directly and deal with its root causes.

Lebanon reiterates its call to the international community, especially all prominent world Powers, to rise above reluctance and wavering and to stop the fighting on Syrian territory, whose price is the blood of the Syrians. We urge them to end the ongoing massacre by fostering a political solution that safeguards the country's unity, independence and territorial integrity, while fulfilling the Syrian people's aspirations for a free and dignified life.

That call does not stem only from the links of neighborhood, kinship, history and common interests between the Syrian and Lebanese peoples, but also from Lebanon's firm interest in ending the Syrian crisis because of the heavy burden of the massive waves of displaced persons, dubbed by the United Nations itself as a "national disaster".

If Europe, with its sizeable capacity and generous humanity, has been confused by the sight of thousands of displaced persons suddenly appearing in its cities, Lebanon, with its limited space and scarce capacity, has been hosting, over the past four years, 1.5 million displaced Syrians, amounting to one third of its population. Lebanon's public infrastructure and host communities have been exhausted maximally at a time of steadily declining international assistance due to the so-called donor fatigue.

While upholding its international obligations, Lebanon reiterates its appeal to donor countries to fulfil their commitments, and even to increase their financial contributions, in order to provide direct assistance to Lebanese public institutions and host communities, according to the response plan launched by Lebanon last December in collaboration with the United Nations. We firmly stress the principle of shared responsibility and burden-sharing among countries, while underlining the importance of establishing safe areas or buffer zones for refugees in Syria and setting up collection centres on the border.

The problem of the displaced population is only one facet of the many negative repercussions Lebanon has endured due to the neighbouring war. Perhaps the most daunting consequence of the conflict is the terrorism, which has demanded steep sacrifices. It is no secret that for more than a year now a group of our military forces is still being held by terrorist groups, and we are still exerting tremendous efforts to free them.

Based on a firm political resolution and efficient security action, we have succeeded in addressing the scourge of terrorism. Our people has proved to the world that Lebanon is not an incubator of terrorism meddling with some countries of the region under the cover of Islam — the religion of tolerance, love and moderation. The increasing responsibilities assumed by our military and security apparatus in the fight against terrorism have heightened our determination to strengthen our forces as a main pillar of security, stability and social harmony in the country. In stressing the need to address its root causes, Lebanon renews its commitment to fight terrorism in all its forms. We reaffirm our readiness to cooperate in the framework of a joint international effort, undertaken by the Security Council, aimed at eradicating terrorism and its sources of financing.

Despite the numerous political crises that Lebanon now faces — chief among them the vacuum created by the absence of a President of the Republic — Lebanon is proud to be a paragon of diversity and an oasis of coexistence among the members of various religions and sects. That is at a time when developments in the Middle East continue to threaten the social, cultural and religious diversity of the region. We believe that safeguarding the integrity of Lebanon is tantamount to protecting a vital remnant of pluralism in the Levant. Therefore, consolidating stability in the country requires strengthening its political, security and socioeconomic components, and it entails a consensual decision on the part of our brothers and friends. That needs to be done in order to prevent regional polarization from influencing Lebanon, help the Lebanese people end the current political vacuum and paralysis and bolster the work of the constitutional institutions with the immediate election of a new President of the Republic.

We followed the recent agreement between Iran and the five permanent Security Council members and Germany with great interest. We now hope that that development will open a new chapter in international relations, marking the beginning of progress in the region and improvement in the political situation in

Lebanon. We consider that the baseline requirement for successful and normal relations among the countries in the region, which is in the best interests of their peoples, is a commitment to good-neighbourly policy, respect of States' sovereignty and non-interference in their internal affairs, security and stability.

While marking the ninth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), Lebanon reaffirms its commitment to all the provisions of that resolution, based on the belief that it will strengthen stability and security in southern Lebanon and will contribute to extending the State's authority over its entire territory. Lebanon reiterates its call to the international community to compel Israel to cease its violations of Lebanese sovereignty and cooperate with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). I take this opportunity to thank the UNIFIL command, structures, troops and all participating countries in order to demarcate the rest of the Blue Line and ensure that the Israelis withdraw immediately from the northern Ghajar area, Shaba'a farmlands and the Kfar Shouba Hills.

Lebanon denounces Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian land and its blockade of the Gaza Strip. We call upon the international community to compel it to lift that inhumane blockade and ensure decent living conditions for the Palestinians. We condemn the repeated Israeli attacks on the Al-Aqsa Mosque and warn of their serious repercussions. We hold Israel responsible for the failure to reach a peaceful settlement to the conflict based on the two-State solution. In the meantime, we call upon the Security Council to take the appropriate action to resume negotiations, aimed at ending the occupation within a specified time frame, based on resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the Madrid terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative. While Lebanon rejects the resettlement of refugees on

its territory, we also stress the right of Palestinians to return to their homeland, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

A number of crises are roiling in the Middle East region, bringing upheaval. The time has come for the world to mobilize its energies and address them seriously, rather than ignoring them and shirking its responsibility. That is not only because the Levant is the spiritual and linguistic cradle for so much of humankind, but also because our humanitarian duty commands the international community to take action. And our undeniable interest requires us to contain the wildfire that is raging now and prevent it from spreading to everyone's homes.

I call upon the countries of the world to shun their inaction and resignation and assume the responsibility of restoring security and stability in our region and ensure people's right to a better future. The countries of the world must reach out and put an end to the death toll in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen, and in the land of peace, Palestine. I beseech the international community to reach out and restore the glow of the Levantine jewel, known as Lebanon, and ensure that our children's right — which is the right of all children — to sail on the vessels of their dreams, rather than on the literal boats of humiliation and death, which are carrying them to foreign shores.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Council of Ministers of the Lebanese Republic for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Tammam Salam, President of the Council of Ministers of the Lebanese Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.*

*The meeting rose at 3.05 p.m.*