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Official Records

President: Mr. Muhammad-Bande (Nigeria)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 110 (continued)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/74/1)

Mr. Ten-Pow (Guyana): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing this morning on his priorities for 2020 (see A/74/PV.54). The Group of 77 and China would like to reassure him of our support and cooperation in the execution of the work of the United Nations. We consider this an important opportunity to share some of our own priorities for the coming year, many of which coincide with those contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/74/1).

It is important to recall that the Group of 77 and China was born out of a need by developing countries to join forces with the international community to address common development challenges in the economic, social and environmental arenas. Today, with a membership of 135 States, the Group is firmly committed to eradicating poverty in all its forms, recognizing that goal as a global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. In this respect, the Group wishes to reiterate the need for the United Nations to place sustainable development front and centre of its work.

Consistent with the priority we place on sustainable development, the Group of 77 and China will be looking to the United Nations for the requisite support and resources as the Secretary-General pursues the development pillar of organizational reform. We will support the Secretary-General and the Secretariat in continuing to promote the repositioning of the United Nations development system, in particular the consultations for the regional review and multi-country office review, a situation disproportionately affecting small island developing States.

It bears restating that the Group of 77 and China remains firmly committed to its founding principles of unity, complementarity, cooperation and solidarity. In the course of this year, we will continue to push for action for the advancement of all humankind and the protection of our planet. As expressed in the joint declaration adopted by our Group on the occasion of its fifty-fifth anniversary, we

“[s]tand together for the betterment of the lives of our peoples and of all humanity, embodying the principle of the sovereign equality of States, the recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family, the determination to protect the planet and the life it is home to, and the pledge to leave no one behind.”

As we observe the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, we are also cognizant that this marks the final decade of action for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

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Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We should step up our commitment to multilateralism and to upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, fighting against unilateralism and protectionism, strengthening solidarity and cooperation in response to major challenges, jointly safeguarding world peace and promoting common development. Our Group recognizes that, for countries in special situations in particular, specifically least developed countries, land-locked developing countries, small island developing States and African countries, and for many middle-income countries, conflict and post-conflict countries, as well as countries and peoples living under foreign occupation, which face specific challenges, securing financing for the Sustainable Development Goals is essential for attaining them.

Even as we address issues of financing for development, we will amplify our own efforts towards making South-South and triangular cooperation a more active element of our SDG-implementation mechanisms. In a matter of weeks, we will gather at the Third South Summit to set out the priorities and strategies that will guide the future work of our Group. I extend heartfelt thanks to the Government of Uganda for undertaking to host this important meeting.

The importance of preserving our oceans cannot be overemphasized, as it is linked to our very existence as a people and to the health of our planet. In addition, the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction remain a priority for our Group. We therefore pledge our full engagement during the upcoming second United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 and negotiations on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Scientists and most Governments agree that the world is facing an unprecedented environmental crisis, with huge numbers of species on the brink of extinction. Global temperatures continue to rise. We therefore look forward to these issues being given the attention that their urgency demands, especially in the forthcoming processes.

The Group of 77 and China believes that development has to be achieved in tandem with peace and security. Issues of youth, migration, science, technology and innovation are all of paramount importance for our

Group. We look forward to joining forces with our partners under the United Nations umbrella in order to make progress on our common objectives in 2020. Our discussions this year under the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, as well as the review of the work of the Economic and Social Council and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development will, in our view, provide ample opportunity to address these priorities.

Ms. Lindo (Belize): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

We align ourselves with the statement just delivered by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The year 2019 was a critical one for climate change, as it presented perhaps the last political opportunity to press for increased ambition and urgent action to get on track to maintaining global temperatures at 1.5°C. However, there continues to be a gaping disconnect between the climate-change process and the demands of science, civil society and the priorities of the Alliance of Small Island States.

Significant efforts to drive momentum for ambition will be needed ahead of the 2020 United Nations Climate Change Conference. We remain fully supportive of the efforts of the Secretary-General to advance this objective, including through the high-level stock-taking on climate ambition. AOSIS will continue to advocate the taking into account of the particular circumstances of small island developing States (SIDS) in the climate change process. AOSIS will also advance a SIDS-lead campaign, which will demonstrate SIDS leadership on climate change issues. Finally, AOSIS will identify opportunities to put SIDS in the forefront of accelerating action through mobilizing new and additional sources of finance, particularly for adaptation, and also to address loss and damage.

Following the mid-term review of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway last year, AOSIS successfully persuaded the international community to acknowledge that financing mechanisms for SIDS must be assessed differently. In resolution 74/217, on the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, the United Nations requested the World Bank to revive the high-level working group of development banks to review the rules governing access for SIDS to concessional financing and called on the Committee

for Development Policy to give due consideration to the unique and particular vulnerabilities of SIDS. The resolution also highlighted the need to address the financing available to SIDS for ex ante and ex post disaster situations, as many more SIDS are adversely impacted by the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters, as well as by the irreversible slow onset events, which keep them — which keeps us — in a cycle of recurring, almost crippling debt. It is in this context that the resolution requests the Secretary-General to conduct an examination of the environment for disaster-related funding and support with a view to the development of a targeted voluntary disaster-fund mechanism or financial instrument coordinated with and complementary to existing mechanisms designed to assist SIDS in managing disaster risk and building back better.

Another major issue taken up in the resolution is that of insufficient data in certain action areas owing to a lack of alignment with existing frameworks and policies or to the lack of data in those areas due to capacity constraints in data collection and analysis. In this vein, a request was again made to the Secretary-General to initiate, along with relevant entities of the United Nations development system and in consultation with Member States, the identification of the SAMOA Pathway priority areas not covered by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in order to strengthen monitoring and evaluation. We look forward to making progress on these issues in the year ahead, as well as to the recommendation to have a funding round for SIDS through the Joint SDG Fund.

AOSIS would also like to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of oceans for SIDS and looks forward to the 2020 United Nations Ocean Conference to take place in Portugal in June. We will engage actively with the objective of delivering a strong Conference outcome that expedites the implementation of SDG 14. There is an added urgency to concluding an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction at the fourth session of the intergovernmental conference.

In addition to a climate crisis, a biodiversity crisis is unfolding before us. The science is unequivocal. If we do not take immediate, coordinated global action, one of the greatest resources of our planet and life system

will itself be irreversibly compromised. Improving our ocean governance and our understanding of the ecological value of the oceans in order to truly conserve and sustainably use the Earth's vast resources cannot be delayed any longer. We need collective political will to conclude the agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

The year 2020 is the year in which we must act, and we must do so with the highest ambition.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Skoog (European Union): We greatly appreciated hearing the priorities of the Secretary-General this morning (see A/74/PV.54), and I can say, on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States, that we very much share the priorities that he has underlined and believe that they are crucial to tackling the very sombre global outlook he put to us.

North Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

As we embark on the celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, we see an Organization that, for three-quarters of a century, has been the cornerstone of multilateralism and the rules-based international system. For the EU and its member States, working closely with the United Nations in all our actions deeply permeates our own DNA. Looking at the increasingly complex challenges we are facing today, the world requires even more, not less, global cooperation, as well as a greater number of solutions, and a strong United Nations has to be at their core. I think our colleague from Singapore very aptly commented about our individual and indeed collective responsibility in moving forward in that direction.

We stand ready to work closely not only with all partners in this Hall but also with civil society, which represents the peoples of the United Nations, and to use this anniversary to build an Organization that delivers for all. We count on the guidance and leadership of the Secretary-General in making sure that all voices are being heard. For that, we need the broadest possible participation by civil society, including our youth, to hear from them how they see the United Nations we need delivering even better. The United Nations at 75 should

send a strong signal that the United Nations listens and is open to all. We welcome the appointment of Qatar and Sweden as facilitators for the United Nations 75 declaration and look forward to working very closely with them and all partners.

We will continue to support the Secretary-General in ensuring that the United Nations is managed in the most effective and efficient way, which means implementing the different reform strands, and we commend the Secretary-General for the progress already made. The benchmarks of success are clear: less bureaucracy, better outputs and a stronger delivery of mandates. However, we also need to make sure that the Secretary-General has the necessary resources to run this Organization and that all mandates are adequately financed, which starts with all Member States paying their contributions on time, in full and without conditions. We believe the first annual United Nations budget since 1973, as approved in late December, will allow the Secretary-General to deliver. At the same time, we need to continue to seriously reflect on and draw lessons from the United Nations liquidity crisis.

The year 2020 will also be a pivotal one for delivering on key policy priorities. The United Nations agenda provides many opportunities to demonstrate the political will that is needed to give life to what the Secretary-General has called an ambitious decade for action, notably on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which continue to serve as an umbrella for many of our key priorities. The SDG Summit last September provided fresh political momentum, but more action is needed at all levels.

The World Economic Forum just ranked the top five global risks for 2020. All of them are linked to climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental disasters. The year 2020 must be the year of action to address those challenges, starting with climate change, the defining issue of our time. Last September's Climate Action Summit showed that all actors, Governments and citizen and industry leaders alike have finally understood the urgency and are ready to change course. This determination must now be mirrored in ambitious action, beginning with the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in November. With the European Green Deal, as proposed by the European Commission last December, the EU has shown its readiness to play its part in becoming the first climate neutral continent

by 2050. Our contribution to the United Nations Green Climate Fund, mentioned in the debate this morning, is substantial.

The year 2020 is also the year for the world to agree on an ambitious global biodiversity framework. The United Nations Ocean Conference in Lisbon and the United Nations biodiversity summit, which should take place during high-level week, will play a key role in providing the necessary political momentum and commitment from all stakeholders. We will also continue to work on strengthening international ocean governance and on stepping up efforts to adopt an international legally-binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The defence and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms will also remain a cornerstone of our work. The year 2020 will be a particularly important year for the advancement of gender equality, women's empowerment and, more broadly, the rights of women and girls. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) are opportunities for all of us to reflect on the challenges ahead and to pave the way for more ambitious reforms in the years to come. We must also continue to speak up loud and clear against those who trample human rights. We must better protect human rights defenders and ensure that their voices are being heard, including through the full and meaningful participation in this Hall of civil society, non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples.

Last but not least, the EU and its member States remain strongly committed to further strengthening the conflict prevention and mediation capacity of the United Nations. Dialogue remains the best and least costly tool for preventing and resolving conflicts. For example, with regard to Libya, last Sunday's Berlin conference, hosted by Germany under United Nations auspices, was an important first step in relaunching the political process. The EU and its member States will make every effort to support the full implementation of the commitments undertaken at the conference.

In the case of Iran, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action remains a significant achievement of sustained multilateral diplomacy, following years of negotiations. In the light of the ongoing dangerous escalations in the Middle East, preserving this agreement is now more important than ever.

In Syria, nine years of devastating conflict illustrate that military means cannot substitute for dialogue and mediation. Ultimately, as the Secretary-General said, only a United Nations-facilitated political solution, agreed by all parties on the basis of Security Council resolution 2254 (2015) can end the suffering.

As for Ukraine, the EU welcomes the recent Normandy Four summit and encourages further progress on detainee exchanges. Implementation of the Minsk agreements remains the only way to reach a sustainable and peaceful solution while upholding Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Furthermore, the EU and its member States attach great importance to the 2020 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, which comes at an important juncture and provides a unique opportunity to demonstrate our ambition towards strengthening United Nations peacebuilding efforts. To get it right, we need a cross-pillar approach in line with the sustaining peace agenda, but also increased financial support, including to the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office, which has already shown clear added value.

In conclusion, Mr. President, you may rest assured that you and the Secretary-General can count on our full support in turning the priorities that we heard this morning — and which we very much share — into concrete action and results.

Mr. Tiare (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the member States of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), which comprises Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger.

The G-5 Sahel takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/74/1) and congratulates him on this report and on his work at the head of our Organization since he took office. The G-5 Sahel also congratulates him on this morning's rich briefing and the priorities he has set out for 2020, which marks the start of the 10-year countdown for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and assures him its full support in all the initiatives undertaken to meet the various challenges.

Among the concerns raised by the Secretary-General, peace and security and a volatile security situation in certain regions of the world in general and in the Sahel in particular figure prominently. The year

2019 was a very trying one for the G-5 Sahel countries and their partners, as reflected in, inter alia, the loss of numerous human lives, the continued destruction of basic social infrastructure and State symbols, the massive flows of people within the region, and the expansion of the terrorist threat beyond the G-5 Sahel. The terrorist attacks have exacerbated the security and humanitarian crisis in the Sahel.

The year 2020 also promises to be a very trying year for the G-5 Sahel countries, as the attacks recorded in recent days against the defence and security forces in the Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso and against innocent civilian populations in certain localities in the Sahel illustrate so well. The situation is therefore very serious and very sad. In the face of the deteriorating situation, the G-5 Sahel countries once again call on the United Nations and the international community to be more engaged in the Sahel. The Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel, which is the tool for fighting terrorism but is still not operational, must be given all the necessary support because stability in the West African subregion depends to a large extent on its success. We welcome the action of the United Nations alongside the Sahel countries in the areas of security and development.

With regard to cooperation with partners and friendly countries, the Heads of State of the G-5 Sahel member countries and the President of France met on 13 January in Pau, France, to reflect on how to better coordinate the fight against terrorism. It is apposite for the G-5 Sahel to reiterate the plea of the Heads of State for a stronger international presence by their side, including the idea of an international coalition for the Sahel. In the same vein, the G-5 Sahel calls for a prompt and lasting solution to the Libyan crisis, which continues to fuel instability in the Sahel. The United Nations must play its role in this regard, complementing the efforts made at various conferences, in particular the Berlin conference of 19 January, whose outcomes we welcome. We hope that the commitments made in Berlin can be implemented as soon as possible with the support of the United Nations in order to restore stability and security in Libya.

Since security and development issues are closely linked, the implementation of the G-5 Sahel priority investment programme will make it possible to meet the urgent needs of the people of the Sahel and to provide them with enormous opportunities. To this end, the implementation of the draft resolution of the Economic and Social Council contained in (E/2020/L.3) and

adopted on 10 December 2019, entitled “Support to the Sahel region”, will allow for better coordination of the development assistance provided by the various United Nations agencies and partners working in the Sahel. In addition, the G-5 Sahel calls on them to increase their support for the management of internally displaced persons and refugees and the rebuilding of educational and health infrastructure.

I cannot conclude my statement without reiterating the thanks of the G-5 Sahel countries to the Secretary-General and the entire United Nations system, as well as to all multilateral and bilateral partners for their constant support in the difficult management of the crisis in the Sahel. The G-5 Sahel reiterates its call for the Sahel to remain at the heart of United Nations concerns because, as we continuously say, there is a fear that the Sahel could sink, with incalculable consequences beyond the region.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me first extend our congratulations to the President on his successful leadership of the General Assembly in its work at the current session.

We thank the Secretary-General for briefing, in accordance with his mandate, of his priorities for 2020 (see A/74/PV.54). Cuba will constructively support his work to achieve a stronger multilateral organization committed to peace and development. We recognize the timely presentation of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the organization (A/74/1), which reflects the relevance of the United Nations as a multilateral forum and the validity of the purposes and principles endorsed in its founding Charter. In this regard, we support his statement that,

“[o]n the eve of the Organization’s seventy-fifth anniversary, the Charter of the United Nations points the way, with its hope for a future in which people and countries live together as good neighbours, defending universal values and shaping our common future. Commitment to this vision is needed now more than ever” (A/74/1, para. 27).

It is a shared duty to preserve the Organization and thereby peace and development for present and future generations. This is the message of our peoples, conveyed by our leaders during the high-level general debate of the seventy-fourth session, to which we dedicate ourselves.

As the Secretary-General reflects in his report, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, its implementation and follow-up remain the road map to foster the equitable, sustained socioeconomic growth of States. However, despite the willingness and efforts of developing countries to implement the 2030 Agenda, they face many challenges. That is evident every year in the voluntary national reviews submitted to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. In that regard, we reiterate the importance of fulfilling commitments in the areas of financing for development, official development assistance, international cooperation, technology transfer and capacity-building as a complement to the efforts of developing countries to implement this important agenda.

As the Secretary-General also outlines in his report, encouraging advances have been made globally in the area of social development, including the decline in maternal and child mortality rates and the significant increase in women’s political representation. I can say with pride that Cuba is represented in those achievements, being the first country in the world to eliminate the mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS and syphilis, as certified by the World Health Organization. In 2018, our country achieved the lowest infant mortality rate in its history, at 4.0 per 1,000 live births. Cuba has the second highest number of women in parliament in the world, at a total of 322, which represents 53.22 per cent of the parliamentarians. Also noteworthy are the initiatives to study and mitigate climate change on the island, particularly Project Life, which is the State plan to address climate change — a phenomenon that continues to demonstrate its intensity.

With regard to the maintenance of international peace and security, we reaffirm that that will be possible only by fully respecting the Charter of the United Nations, in particular with regard to the sovereignty and political independence of States. We reiterate that establishing and deploying peacekeeping operations must be carried out in strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, particularly respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States and non-intervention in their internal affairs. It is more important than ever to respect those precepts, as well as the basic principles laid down for the conduct of such operations, such as the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in legitimate defence.

In the area of human rights, we reject approaching them with politicization, selectivity, punitive focuses or double standards. Cuba will remain committed to the enjoyment, by all individuals and all peoples, of all human rights, in particular those to peace, life, development and self-determination. We must prevent the imposition of a single, authoritarian and dominating cultural model that destroys national cultures, identities, history, traditions, symbols and individuality.

Full respect for the political, economic and social system chosen by peoples in the exercise of their sovereignty and right to self-determination is a principle of the Organization. The implementation of unilateral coercive measures not only undermines peace and stability but also seriously threatens the well-being of peoples.

That is why we once again denounce the criminal, genocidal and illegal economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States against Cuba, whose primary purpose is to destroy the economic, political and social order freely chosen by the Cuban people. It is a flagrant violation of their human rights, including the right to development. The blockade continues to be the main obstacle to the development of our country and to the process of updating the socialist model of economic and social development that our people has charted. Despite the criminal blockade, Cuba continues to advance. The unity and determination of its people are increasing in the face of the obstacles and difficulties, as demonstrated by the undeniable results and progress made in fulfilling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

I conclude by reiterating our support for your work, Mr. President, particularly in defending multilateralism, diplomacy for peace, development and respect among nations.

Ms. Bailey (Jamaica): Jamaica aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Saint Lucia, on behalf of the Caribbean Community (see A/74/PV.54), Guyana, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Belize, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States.

My delegation welcomes the opportunity to reflect on the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/74/1. We commend the Secretary-General for the quality of the report and the clarity with which the information is

provided. Allow me to make some brief observations on a number of key points.

First, it is significant that the Organization is able to point to tangible results over the past year. They provide a useful barometer for gauging the extent to which we have all been able to live up to the mandate ascribed to us by the Charter of the United Nations, namely, to work in pursuit of the well-being of all peoples. That reflects multilateralism at work and at its best. It is proof that the work of the Organization remains relevant and present in people's daily lives, while bearing testimony to the urgency with which further work must be undertaken so as to build on the achievements registered to date.

That is especially evident as we reflect on the challenges that persist in combating extreme poverty, tackling violence, particularly against women and children, responding to humanitarian crises, addressing conflicts and advancing the promotion of human rights. It is disconcerting that, as noted in the Secretary-General's report, more than 731 million people — 10 per cent of the world's population — still live in extreme poverty and struggle to meet their most essential needs, that nearly 71 million people remained forcibly displaced because of conflict, violence and human rights violations — the highest figure ever recorded — and that in 2018, more than 60 million people were directly affected by natural disasters.

In the first instance, we commend the efforts of the Secretary-General to tackle such issues, including through the reforms introduced both at Headquarters and throughout the United Nations system. The objective is to ensure that the Organization is nimble enough to provide the quality and quantity of support that Member States require to ensure meaningful results on the ground at the national level. The reforms introduced to the United Nations development system and the process of management reform, as well as the reforms of the peace and security architecture, underscore the need for continuous assessment so that appropriate adjustments can be made to maximize the impact throughout the course of implementation. Ensuring the alignment of these new reform measures will allow clarity of direction and their harmonization. It will also provide for the effectiveness of strategic interventions made by the various United Nations bodies working in our countries. As such, we concur with the Secretary-General that actions must be rooted in transparency, coordination and accountability.

Secondly, it is clear from the Secretary-General's report that there are no quick fixes to the challenges that we face as an international community, nor is there a singular approach that needs to be brought to bear to address such challenges. Responses must take account of the dynamics on the ground and the multifaceted nature of the problems. We encourage such an approach with respect to the security challenges that continue to manifest themselves, including as they relate to the complex web of transnational organized crime. Such illicit activities provide a lucrative market for those eager to benefit from its ill-gotten gains. To successfully combat the ongoing threat posed by that monster will require cooperation at all levels. The United Nations system must therefore constantly enhance its capabilities in order to remain a viable partner in that regard.

My third point relates to the means of implementation. That remains a priority for all concerned, not just developing countries. There can be no real progress without adequate, predictable and sustainable resources. That holds true not only for the implementation of policies by Member States but also for the ability of the Organization to effectively discharge its mandate. We therefore share the Secretary-General's deep concern about the severe cash shortfalls and deficits facing the Organization and hope that positive action will be taken to avert this crisis.

Fourthly, my delegation shares the Secretary-General's sobering conclusion regarding the paramount threat posed by climate change. Indeed, it is startling. As the Secretary-General notes, climate change-related disasters affect an average of 350 million people every year, and every day global warming is reversing hard-won development gains and exacerbating poverty. That has become the new reality for many of us, especially small island developing States. Jamaica therefore strongly supports efforts aimed at developing strategies to adapt and build resilience to climate change, and takes this opportunity to applaud the Secretary-General's personal commitment to addressing climate change, as evidenced by the recently concluded Climate Action Summit.

My fifth point concerns new, emerging threats that have manifested with the onset of technological advances. The figures speak for themselves. The Secretary-General's report points to cybercrime, which generates an estimated \$1.5 trillion in revenue every year. That is directly related to my earlier reference

to transnational organized crime, as transnational criminal groups have incorporated cyber techniques into their illicit activities. Of equal concern are the threats posed by the possible weaponization of artificial intelligence, cyberspace and outer space. We must work together to confront these issues, as the development of autonomous weapons systems and the weaponization of artificial intelligence is progressing rapidly. To that end, we will carefully study the report of the independent High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation to see how we can harness new technologies for the greater good, in support of the Sustainable Development Goals.

I close by registering Jamaica's strong support for the efforts to promote greater gender parity at the United Nations. We are pleased to note that gender parity in the Senior Management Group and among resident coordinators has been achieved and that there is near parity among the senior leadership ranks across the Organization. We are also heartened by the fact that the focus remains on preventing sexual harassment and exploitation, as well as on creating an inclusive workforce.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): Let me start by commending you, Mr. President, on your leadership in convening this meeting and on your presence here during the discussions earlier this morning (see A/74/PV.54) and this afternoon. I also acknowledge the presence of the Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General, which is critical because this is a very important debate for all of us. My delegation was among those that suggested that we reschedule the debate to earlier in the year in order to make it productive as well as interactive. I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having taken heed of our request.

The Secretary-General's annual report (A/74/1) is an important mechanism for transparency and accountability, and to keep Member States informed of what the Organization has done over the past year to deliver on its mandate and to assess the impact that has had on the ground. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his very comprehensive briefing this morning (see A/74/PV.54) and for his written report, which has been submitted for consideration. We welcome the updated format of the report, which very clearly sets out the Organization's key priorities for the year, as well as the context, key objectives, outcomes and outlook for the various areas under consideration.

Please allow me to make several points in addition to those I made this morning (see A/74/PV.54). First, as the Secretary-General notes in the report's introduction, it is clear that the purposes and principles of the United Nations remain as important now as when the Organization was first created. We are, unfortunately, witnessing a retreat from multilateralism even as the world faces grave and growing transnational challenges that no single Member State can tackle alone. A universal, rules-based multilateral system is essential if we are to address the complex problems of our time. The United Nations plays a critical role as a platform for global engagement and cooperation based on the principles of mutual respect, mutual benefit and international law. That message came through loud and clear in the statements made by our leaders during the high-level week in September 2019.

As we prepare to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations this year and as we all get ready to reaffirm our collective commitment to multilateralism, it is fundamental that every Member of the United Nations uphold its responsibility to uphold international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Each one of us has the responsibility to support the work of the United Nations so that we can collectively and individually support the work of the Secretary-General.

The second point that I wanted to make is that we welcome the steps that the Secretary-General has taken to reform the Organization and to make it more fit for purpose. The repositioning of the United Nations development system, with its objective of empowering resident coordinators and creating a new generation of United Nations country teams, was a key part of this reform exercise. We commend the progressive strengthening of the United Nations response to country needs in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and we note the ongoing dialogue with national partners to develop a new set of United Nations sustainable development cooperative frameworks.

We know that there are some outstanding mandates that require expeditious completion. In that regard, we look forward to the completion, as soon as possible, of the reform of the regional economic commissions and the review of the multi-country offices. Those reforms will ensure stronger coordination across the system at all levels and better support and assist country-level

efforts led and owned by national Governments to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

At the same time, it is important to ensure that the Organization continues to make adjustments, improvements and course corrections, if necessary, during the implementation phase. Ultimately, the reform exercise must be able to deliver on its mandate and deliver results for the people.

The third point that I wanted to make is that my delegation continues to be concerned about the financial situation of the Organization, which last year faced its worst liquidity crisis in more than a decade. We appreciate the Secretary-General's efforts to minimize negative impacts on mandate delivery amid the difficult financial environment, including through the imposition of temporary austerity measures. While those measures were painful, we recognize that they were necessary to ensure the continued operations of the Organization.

However, we must also recognize that the root cause of the crisis lies in the fact that contributions continue to be withheld, and no amount of austerity measures and flexibility in managing the budget will solve a basic lack of resources. All Member States have the legal and financial obligation to pay their dues in full, on time and without conditions. Indeed, that is the foundation of the multilateral system that we have all agreed to support and create, right from the beginning. Singapore remains committed to supporting the Secretary-General's efforts to secure sufficient and predictable financial contributions, and we urge all Member States to fulfil their financial obligations to the Organization — in full, on time and without conditions.

The fourth point that I wanted to make is that we welcome the Secretary-General's continued focus on promoting international cooperation and inclusive processes in order to take advantage of the opportunities presented by new technologies. Yet it is clear that even as we strive to maximize the benefits of technology in order to support and strengthen efforts towards the achievement of international peace and security, sustainable development and human rights, we must also minimize and mitigate its negative impacts. That requires better coordination and cooperation among the various stakeholders. We welcome the report of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation and look forward to further discussions and follow-up on its recommendations. We believe that the report

will supplement the work that is being undertaken in the various United Nations processes, including the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security and the open-ended working group on cybersecurity. We believe that the United Nations has a critical role to play in the creation of a new global architecture for digital cooperation and in helping to broaden consensus on norms of responsible behaviour in cyberspace.

The last point that I wanted to make is that we welcome the Secretary-General's launch of the UN75 initiative to kick off a global conversation across borders, sectors and generations about people's experiences and their expectations and vision for the future. In that regard, we are especially pleased that the Secretary-General has placed an emphasis on engaging young people on the issues that they see as most important to them — on the future that they want and their expectations of how international cooperation can help achieve them. We look forward to the report of the Secretary-General on the views and ideas generated during the UN75 dialogues at the high-level event in September to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations.

I would like to conclude by reiterating Singapore's support for your work, Mr. President, as well as that of the Secretary-General, as all of us collectively work to deliver the mandates that Member States have set for the United Nations. Singapore is fully committed to working together with all Member States to achieve our common objective of delivering a better future for all our peoples.

Ms. Bassols Delgado (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you very much, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting, and I also would ask the Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General to convey to him our heartfelt thanks for ably and personally sharing earlier his vision of the Organization's priorities for 2020.

Spain aligns itself with the detailed statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. In the interest of time, I will therefore refrain from discussing some of the topics already covered by that statement.

As the President of the Spanish Government said at the general debate in September 2019, multilateralism is the only tool that offers a solution to current challenges (see A/74/PV.4). It also embodies the collective

commitment that unites us and that we have undertaken without exception under the Charter of the United Nations and before the entire international community.

A number of colleagues pointed out earlier in their statements the need to translate words of support for multilateralism into deeds. We could not agree more with that assertion, to which I would add the need — and even the urgent need, as it were — to be able to share with our societies and taxpayers the success stories and unquestionably positive outcomes resulting from the kind of multilateralism to which I am referring. Sharing such success stories must be done with a focus on young people, to whom we must every day explain the reasons for learning, appreciating and accepting the importance of dialogue and multilateral cooperation.

Spain values and supports the programme of reforms undertaken by the Secretary-General. In our opinion, the launch year of those reforms — 2019 — saw positive results. The year 2020 must see their consolidation, as we are all in urgent need of an Organization better adapted to current major challenges with which we can strengthen multilateralism and the rules-based international order that underpins it. In our view, that task is primarily a matter of being able to achieve the better part of the Sustainable Development Goals during their Decade of Action, upon which we are embarking, and, in particular, involves addressing a range of issues that I will list by no means exhaustively and that are priorities for Spain.

First of all, with respect to addressing climate action and a just transition, the Secretary-General was very eloquent earlier today (see A/74/PV.54). Spain is not only firmly convinced of its urgency but is also firmly committed to addressing the task that lies before all of us. Spain's commitment was clearly articulated before and during the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in Madrid, and will continue in 2020 at the Ocean Conference, the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in Glasgow. In Spain, we must urgently accelerate the ecological transition of our economy and unambiguously commit to accomplishing it in an equitable manner. We must all live up to the responsibilities related to our own countries, as well as to the peoples and countries most

vulnerable to climate change, which are the victims of its most destructive effects.

Secondly, with regard to gender equality, as we all know, 2020 will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing Plus 25). We have the golden opportunity to reaffirm and strengthen the centrality of and reaffirm our commitment to gender equality. We agree with those who spoke earlier that we must re-examine where we stand in relation to this issue and move forward, but today's times compel us above all to strive to avoid undoing the hard-won gains of past years. There can and must be no going back.

Increasing the level of women's economic and political empowerment, making visible their role as social actors, developing and enhancing zero-tolerance policies on sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation, ensuring girls' access to education and safeguarding sexual and reproductive rights are just some of the issues that our work will actively focus on in 2020.

Thirdly, with regard to conflict prevention, we agree with the Secretary-General on the need to expand the capacity and work of the Organization in that area, not only because it makes sense to avoid the social, human, economic and psychological costs of conflict, but also because conflict prevention demonstrates that multilateralism is not only valuable but can also have tangible results. In that area, women's participation must be meaningful and visible. We will remain fully committed to the women and peace and security agenda, as set out in the Spanish-Finnish initiative, Commitment 2025, with which everyone here is familiar.

We support the work of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and look forward to the 2020 review of the peacebuilding and security architecture to be held in April, which, in our view, will be important and will be able to highlight the successes achieved so far. In the context of conflict prevention, I would be remiss if I failed to mention, even briefly, the great impact that the work of the Organization has on countering hate speech and protecting places of worship.

Lastly, before concluding, I would like to briefly mention two other priorities — brevity that is no reflection of their importance.

First, at a time when human rights and the rule of law are under attack in many spheres, defending them

and their universality must be an integral part of the work of the United Nations and the beacon that guides our multilateral work.

Secondly, preventing and combating the scourge of terrorism remains a key issue for Spain in the maintenance of international peace and security, including, of course, support for the victims of terrorism. We will focus our efforts in this direction throughout 2020.

In conclusion, starting on 26 June, the exact date of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations in San Francisco, we will begin commemorating its seventy-fifth anniversary in earnest, which is of deep significance, given the current international environment. Let us make it meaningful for all of us and above all for the young people who are watching and listening to us and who will be the ones to take up the torch that we leave to them in this area.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): I wish to thank the President of the General Assembly for responding to the calls from the membership to reschedule this debate. The beginning of the year is indeed an opportune moment to look ahead, listen to the Secretary-General and share our thoughts on priorities and challenges. We hope that this will be a new fixture in the calendar of the General Assembly.

Seventy-five years is a proud number for a birthday for the United Nations, but, as we enter this year of celebration, high expectations clash with concern and frustration. Never before has the United Nations seemed more indispensable as an organization, but hardly ever before have doubts about its ability to tackle global challenges been more pronounced. The task of the United Nations is, of course, enormous. But a challenge that would be arduous under any conditions can easily become nearly impossible when States reduce, or end, their political and financial investment in the Organization.

With the urgency of the present dangers — climate change being the most prominent among them — there could be no worse time for States to turn away from global solutions for which the United Nations is the natural home, in particular those problems to which everyone knows the solution must be the result of joint global cooperation. For the vast majority of States, the only response can be increasing their engagement and continuing dialogue with those turning away from

multilateralism. The Liechtenstein Government is certainly committed to this course of action.

The maintenance of international peace and security was the core objective of the States that took the initiative to create the United Nations. To this day, the perception of the Organization, as well as the majority of media coverage, is strongly shaped by the work of the Security Council. It is therefore all the more regrettable that the Council is less and less effective in carrying out its functions.

The most obvious expression of the political paralysis in the Council is the increase of the use of veto over past years. But the use of veto, when it occurs, illustrates only a fraction of the problem because often proposals are not even put forward for consideration, owing to the threat of the use of veto or the fact that a situation is not discussed in the first place. From outside the Council, we can make our expectations known, for example, in situations of mass atrocities, which is why 121 States have signed the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency code of conduct.

However, we also have to think about alternative courses of action in situations where the Council persists in failing to carry out its functions. We believe that the General Assembly should always be convened whenever one of the permanent Security Council members casts a veto. This should happen as a matter of course within a defined and tight time frame and with an open-ended outcome, which means that action by the General Assembly is possible, not a necessity. Such a procedure can significantly strengthen both the role of the Assembly and the Organization, as a whole.

The Assembly has successfully worked together to overcome Council inaction in the past. In December 2016, following the veto of Security Council draft resolution S/2011/612 on the Syrian Arab Republic (see S/PV.6627), the Assembly created, with the overwhelming support of Member States, the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 (resolution 71/248). The Mechanism, which was quickly made operational, has done very effective work to ensure accountability for the crimes committed by all parties to the Syrian conflict and is widely regarded as an accountability mechanism that should be replicated in other situations; that has

already happened in Myanmar. The work begun in 2016 was brought to a successful end at the end of last year.

The Assembly, once again with an overwhelming majority, decided that the Mechanism should be fully funded from the United Nations regular budget (resolution 74/262). We wish to take this opportunity to thank all those who voted in support not only of the Mechanism, but also of the effective accountability work carried out in the Assembly. Those who have tried to undermine the legitimacy of this initiative with a false narrative and arguments that have long been refuted have shown that they are not only opposed to a United Nations-supported process to bring justice to the victims of the Syrian conflict, but that they also seek to undermine the authority of the Assembly.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development may well be the greatest achievement of the United Nations in recent years — a comprehensive and interconnected blueprint for action for the decade to come. With one third of its implementation phase elapsed, there has been important progress on a number of goals and targets, for example, significant declines in the prevalence of female genital mutilation and early marriage and the continued reduction in the incidence of extreme poverty. More importantly, perhaps, in many countries, there is a growing awareness of the essential importance of the 2030 Agenda, in terms of how every person is affected individually and collectively, as well as how much agency the Agenda creates for all of us.

We are gratified to see the areas in which the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have amplified the actions taken by young people, notably in holding Governments accountable for their efforts to take meaningful climate action. But, of course, the overall picture is mixed. Progress in the implementation of some crucial goals, such as SDG 16, is insufficient, and risks slowing or preventing progress in other areas. We will focus on boosting efforts to achieve SDG 16 and its related goals and targets as a catalyst for the fulfilment of all the SDGs. We will engage in preparations of the first-ever General Assembly special session on corruption in 2021, in particular, as well as the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and other key processes in the months to come.

Together with our partners from Australia and the Netherlands, we have also undertaken to help tackle modern slavery and human trafficking, the persistence of which constitutes major obstacles to achieving three

of the SDGs. Our mobilizing finance against slavery and trafficking initiative offers a blueprint for the global financial sector to play its part in the areas of compliance, responsible investment and financial innovation in order to end slavery and trafficking. We will work with the United Nations membership to translate this blueprint into action in the coming months.

Mr. Aidid (Malaysia): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization (A/74/1). Allow me to share Malaysia's views on the report.

The seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations provides us with the opportunity to strengthen our belief in and resolve with regard to the purposes and principles of the Organization. As the Secretary-General put it, we start the year with fresh turmoil and long-standing suffering, while unilateral actions continue to test the norms of international cooperation (see A/74/PV.54). However, Malaysia believes that seeking common ground is the only sustainable path for addressing global challenges in moving towards a more peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

To that end, the Secretary-General's efforts in reforming the United Nations to be fit for purpose should continue to be supported. In that regard, it is disappointing to note that in 2019, fewer Member States paid their assessments than in 2018. That situation will most certainly undermine the ability to implement mandates and approved programmes. Malaysia calls on all Member States to honour their financial obligations in full, on time and without conditions. At the same time, we should avoid introducing changes that essentially make the United Nations less effective, accountable and responsive.

The report states that more than 700 million people still live in extreme poverty. Enhanced international cooperation, through private-public partnerships, adequate financing and innovative solutions, is therefore needed now more than ever as we enter the decade for action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). My Government and the United Nations country team convened the Malaysia SDG Summit 2019 in Kuala Lumpur from 6 to 7 November 2019. Malaysia will continue to work with international partners to ensure the effective implementation of the SDGs towards making the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development a success.

Malaysia also supports the call by the Secretary-General to boost all sources of financing for development, particularly through the commitment of developed countries, including to official development assistance, in accordance with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

With regard to climate change, Malaysia shares the disappointment following the twenty-fifth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Madrid. The lack of a strong outcome to reinforce the Paris Agreement raises the stakes for the next climate summit, to be held in Glasgow this year. We believe that the outcome document should reflect, and be guided by, the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities.

Regarding peace and security, Malaysia will continue to support efforts towards resolving conflicts through peaceful means. As one of the 154 countries that have endorsed the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations under the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, we remain fully committed to its implementation.

Malaysia has also been at the forefront of fighting extremism. We look forward to the seventh biennial review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, to take place this June. We hope to work with the international community in addressing the current challenges towards realizing the goal of building institutional and social resilience against hate speech, extremism and terrorism.

On disarmament, Malaysia continues to attach the utmost importance to the goal of general and complete disarmament, particularly regarding the existential threat posed by nuclear weapons. Taking into account the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and twenty-fifth anniversary of its indefinite extension, Malaysia will work closely with all stakeholders towards averting nuclear war and in realizing the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Pérez Ayestarán (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow us to thank the Secretary-General for the presentation of his report on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/74/1 (see A/74/PV.54). At the same time, we express our appreciation for his work in implementation of his mandate.

Allow us also to commend the President for the scheduling of this meeting and for the format chosen for the consideration of this agenda item during the current session, which has made it possible to have a genuine interactive dialogue with the Secretary-General to discuss his priorities and main proposals for work in the current year.

The report before us reflects the significant progress made by the Organization in various areas, namely, peace and security, sustainable development, human rights, peacekeeping operations, disarmament, migration and refugees, as well as the many challenges that remain, including climate change, widespread poverty, growing inequalities, terrorism and the spread of hate speech and xenophobia, among others.

Today, we are concerned about the re-emerging and growing trends towards unilateralism, as well as supremacist ideologies, undermining the equality and diversity of humankind, by a State that believes itself to be above international law and that expounds its military power and its “exceptionalism” ideology in order to impose its national sovereignty on the sovereignty of all the peoples of the world. That is a return to the darkest moments of the previous century, when national domestic interests, together with the ambition of world domination, led to the use of armed force without international legal control and endless war as a method of oppression and expansion. It is a world without the Charter of the United Nations.

That is why, although we would have preferred to take the floor on this occasion to discuss in detail the content of the report presented to us by the Secretary-General with his summary of the work of the Organization, the truth is that the current international situation forces us to focus on a fundamental element, based precisely on one of the assertions contained in that document: “There is no other way to address global challenges but to act collectively.” (*A/74/I, para. 27*)

We would add that there is no other way than through multilateralism, on the basis of dialogue and cooperation and within the framework of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. We have therefore decided to focus our statement today on the need to ensure both the validity and the effective application of that code of conduct which, almost 75 years ago, expressly and categorically prohibited war as an instrument of foreign policy. If we do not manage to make progress in that regard, it will be very

difficult to achieve the effective implementation of the international agreements that we negotiate here in order to address the many challenges facing us.

We must remember that our Organization is founded on the purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter. Among those is the principle of the sovereign equality of States, which obliges all of us, without exception, to respect its letter and spirit. There is no difference between large and small or between the weak and the powerful. There is no space for a State to declare itself exceptional and to decide when it complies with the Charter and when it disregards it at its convenience. Similarly, we are obliged to comply with the document in its entirety and there is no possibility of deciding which part of the document we accept and which we reject.

Today, precisely as a result of those trends towards unilateralism, our delegation, as is well known, does not have the right to vote in the General Assembly. Despite having not only the necessary political will but also the financial capacity to do so, our country has been unable to meet its commitments to the Organization in a timely manner owing to the illegal economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on us in practice by the Government of the United States of America in order to overthrow the constitutionally and democratically elected Government of President Nicolás Maduro Moros. The so-called sanctions not only constitute an inhuman collective punishment against all our people but now seem to be a tool to prevent us from being able to fully and effectively exercise our responsibilities at the United Nations, as even the Headquarters Agreement itself requires. All that is as a result of the extraterritorial implications of the host country’s policy to suffocate and economically terrorize Venezuela. The unilateral coercive measures are therefore a tool not only to satisfy the neocolonial desire for domination of the United States of America but also to undermine the rights and privileges of States Members of the United Nations that do not yield to its blackmail and threats.

Nevertheless, today the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela can only renew its firm commitment to respecting, promoting, preserving and strengthening that act of faith in the best of humankind, namely, the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the norms of international law, multilateralism and all efforts to save future generations from the scourge of war and to realize the right of our peoples to live in peace.

Lastly, we call on the responsible members of the international community to make progress in three very specific areas. At the same time, through the Chef de Cabinet, who is here with us at this meeting, we extend our full support to the Secretary-General in his efforts to move forward in this direction.

The first area is the conduct of international relations in strict accordance with the principles of the political independence and sovereign equality of States, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States, the peaceful settlement of conflicts and the right to self-determination of peoples.

Second is the strengthening of the role of the United Nations and all the values that it represents in order to make progress in achieving a peaceful and prosperous world. In that regard, we emphasize the need to prevent the United Nations system, including its funds, programmes and specialized agencies, being used as a weapon of war against its Member States or as a tool to support destabilization activities, including through disinformation campaigns contrary to the realities of our countries, as well as coups d'état against legitimate constitutional Governments or interference in affairs that essentially fall under the national jurisdiction of States.

In that context, we wish to highlight that Venezuela, for example, despite the multifaceted campaign of aggression against it, is a nation that today lives in peace. There is no armed conflict whatsoever in Venezuela and any political differences within my country will be settled by Venezuelans, without intervention or guidance, through dialogue and in accordance with our national Constitution.

The third area is the promotion of multilateralism and the defence of the Charter of the United Nations, including by relaunching a group of friends in support of the United Nations Charter to ensure that we always walk together on the path of peace and to prevent the forced disappearance of the most important legal, moral and intellectual instrument developed by humankind.

Mr. Mavroyiannis (Cyprus): At the outset, let me welcome the timing of this debate, which allows us more time to better prepare and follows the main session of the General Assembly, giving us the opportunity to dwell on our recent performance and learn from our experiences in order to better chart our future course. We welcome the presentation by the Secretary-General of his priorities for 2020 in this framework

(see A/74/PV.54), and we see merit in having, at the beginning of each year, a debate on the state of the Organization. I will try to be as practical as possible in this intervention.

Driven by the need to rationalize our cycle of work more broadly, I see merit in the proposal to adjust it to the calendar year. Annual reports could be presented in January and the term of the President of the General Assembly could also begin in January. The high-level week and the work of the Main Committees would remain as they are, with possible adjustments to the resumed sessions, thus taking place at the end of each General Assembly session as the pinnacle of our work during the session. That would allow the President of the General Assembly to better prepare for the high-level week and our leaders to take stock of the work done during the year.

Turning to the report (A/74/1), I would like to stress that, while it was meant as a tool for our leaders to assess the state of the United Nations during the general debate, that is sadly not the case. The general debate has become less and less about the issues that we face collectively and resembles less and less what it should be: a single global conversation among those who lead our nations, from which should emerge an operational understanding on actions that we need to take in order to ensure the United Nations we want and the world we want.

The diminishing audience of the general debate is one aspect of its dwindling relevance. The extremely high number of events during the high-level week, both high-level meetings and side events, not only diverts our attention from the general debate but also makes it impossible to follow the substance of any event. We must introduce limitations to the number of events during the high-level week if we want to preserve the quality and effectiveness of the General Assembly as one of the most significant tools of multilateralism.

Turning now to the state of the Organization, I will address three points: peace and security, the climate crisis and the financial situation of the United Nations.

With regard to peace and security, however central the mitigation of the rule of might is to the *raison d'être* of the United Nations, the prevalence of the rule of law in international relations is still an uphill battle. We should not be under the illusion that the primacy of international law and rules-based conduct by States is a reality. There are still far too many violations of the rules and far too

little accountability. The United Nations does not lack the legal basis or the tools to enforce compliance with international law; yet it fails to do so more often than not. Bridging the gap between principles and actions is key to the Organization's credibility.

On climate crisis, I would like to stress that, as a conflict State with part of its territory under occupation and a country that has been experiencing the consequences of climate change for years, Cyprus is extremely concerned about the threat posed to peace and security by the climate crisis. We have failed not only to halt the relentless increase in greenhouse gas emissions but also to have a serious discussion about the consequences of climate change that we know are imminent.

Are we ready to deal with an increased number of conflicts that are wholly or partly the result of climate change? Can we deal with climate change as a complicating factor of existing conflicts? What happens to the development agenda when a single natural disaster can destroy an entire country's gross domestic product? How do we deal with countries becoming partly or wholly uninhabitable due to climate change? What happens to the borders, sovereignty, maritime zones and populations of countries that become wholly or partly submerged in water as a result of sea level rise? How will we respond to the fact that tens of millions of people are expected to be displaced as a result of climate change in the next decade, lose their livelihoods or find themselves without life-sustaining resources?

We need to remind ourselves that in recent years, we have proved unable to share the burden of existing flows of migrants and refugees. It would also be remiss if I did not recall that recently, the Human Rights Committee ruled in favour of the applicability of the legal principle of non-refoulement to individuals whose life is threatened by the climate crisis. We must all commit to such human rights obligations before States become uninhabitable. We urgently need a comprehensive strategy that goes beyond mitigation, adaptation and curbs on fossil fuels. Such a strategy must entail answers with regard to the human dimension of the consequences of climate change and be in line with full respect for all human rights of all human beings.

Regarding the financial situation of the United Nations, we remain convinced that it is always appropriate to invest in the United Nations in order to keep it strong and relevant and to ensure its continued

effectiveness through reform. To that end, we continue to actively support the Secretary-General's ambitious reform package. We also share the Secretary-General's concerns over the dire liquidity problems of the Organization, which are regrettably hampering its ability to function properly. We believe that we should seriously reflect on the experience of, and the lessons learned from, the liquidity crisis.

An honest assessment and a more rational, cost-effective and results-oriented approach that is in tune with today's challenges and draws on the best practices all around the world is required now more than ever. Increased synergy, complementarity, coordination and cost-effectiveness are more than ever necessary.

Mr. Margaryan (Armenia): I would like to extend our thanks to the Secretary-General for presenting the report on the work of the United Nations (A/74/1) and for outlining his priorities for the year 2020 (see A/74/PV.54). We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his efforts to advance the work of the Organization amid a growing range of complex challenges in the world.

Armenia supports the vision of a stronger United Nations that is fit for purpose and able to adapt to the evolving realities so as to better respond to the existing and emerging threats and to ensure sustainable and inclusive development for all. We support the Secretary-General in accelerating the reform of the Organization, aimed at increasing its transparency, accountability and better implementation of mandates, while avoiding redundancies and duplication of efforts. We firmly believe that upholding and protecting human rights is an essential prerequisite for promoting peace, settling conflicts and crises and ensuring sustainable development.

We also wish to underline the importance of strong collaboration with regional arrangements and internationally mandated formats for sustaining peace and resolving conflicts. In that respect, we highly appreciate the Secretary-General's continued, committed and unequivocal support to the co-Chairs of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe for the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

As a long-standing advocate for the prevention agenda, Armenia supports the Secretary-General's approach in further investing in prevention efforts. The efforts in that area should seek to enhance coordination of the work carried out across the United Nations system

for the prevention of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, as well as more effective integration of such activities in the work of the Organization. The timely detection and identification of early warning signs of intolerance, xenophobia and hate crimes remain a crucial priority in identifying potential challenges and threats to peace and security and delivering an adequate response.

Efficient and results-oriented cooperation among Member States on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is an important test of the power of multilateralism and requires concerted and coordinated efforts on the part of all stakeholders. Armenia is committed to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and we continue to actively work with all our partners to that end. The ambitious reform agenda set out by the Government of Armenia aims to promote smart development and innovation, having embraced the important priorities of building an environmentally resilient economy and gender-sensitive policies for the economic and social empowerment of women and young people.

As demonstrated in the report of the Secretary-General, a renewed pushback against women's rights and gender equality as well as violence against women and girls continue to remain pervasive challenges and require adequate responses. The landmark anniversaries of key international documents on women's rights and gender equality, such as the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, provide important momentum for strengthening collective efforts to fight discrimination and ensure gender equality.

The upcoming sixty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is a landmark occasion to step up efforts to further advance gender-responsive policies and the inclusive participation of women in political and public life. As Chair of the CSW, I would like to commend the Secretary-General's for championing women's rights and for advancing the role of women in leadership positions across the Organization.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development remains a key global framework for development cooperation. We are encouraged by the commitment of the United Nations development system to strengthening

coherence and coordination in support of the implementation of the SDGs. We welcome discussions to that end, including throughout the deliberative sessions of the Economic and Social Council. Having assumed the vice-presidency of the Economic and Social Council, Armenia looks forward to an open and active dialogue with the membership, particularly by making best use of the interactive exchange platforms provided by the integration segment ahead of the High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development to be held later this year.

The seventy-fifth anniversary of the Organization and the decade of action for the implementation of the SDGs should provide further impetus to consolidate and accelerate efforts in support of the reform process, ensuring the improved performance of the United Nations and elevating its irreplaceable role as the bedrock of multilateralism.

Mr. Warraich (Pakistan): We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization (A/74/1). We also listened carefully this morning to his priorities for 2020 (see A/74/PV.54). They reflect a breadth of ambition that is both realistic as well as lofty.

The Secretary-General's report is a call for action to strengthen the multilateral order of which the United Nations is the indispensable core. We fully endorse that call. Pakistan agrees with the Secretary-General that,

"it is not enough to proclaim the virtue of multilateralism; we must prove its added value" (A/74/1, para. 27).

We must reform and rebuild the United Nations in order to address the prominent challenges of our era and to represent and reflect the interests not only of the powerful but of all Member States, small, medium and large, and of all peoples.

The Secretary-General's report outlines the invaluable contributions of the Organization to managing proliferating conflicts and their consequences. Yet, all too often, the United Nations, including the Security Council, remains preoccupied with internal conflicts rather than with existential threats posed by inter-State disputes and rivalries. The United Nations interventions, in particular its peacekeeping operations, have proved indispensable in restoring peace in numerous cases. It is therefore short-sighted for the major Powers to restrict financing for United Nations peacekeeping, ask the

United Nations to do more with less and limit United Nations peacekeeping to tasks that they themselves are unwilling to perform.

The whole purpose and architecture of United Nations peacekeeping and the contributions that United Nations can make in promoting peace and security and rebuilding broken societies and States require another strategic review. It is even more important to build the United Nations capacity to address threats to peace before they erupt into war, prevent disputes from escalating into conflict and work more boldly and actively to resolve conflicts. The Secretary-General's call for a surge in diplomacy is therefore apt as well as essential.

No other situation reflects the abdication of the United Nations duty to discharge its responsibilities more than the 70-year-old Jammu and Kashmir dispute. This is one of the longest-standing items on the agenda of the Security Council. Several resolutions of the Security Council have decided that

“the final disposition of the State of Jammu and Kashmir will be made in accordance with the will of the people expressed through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations” (*resolution 122 (1957), second preambular paragraph*).

No amount of oppression and obfuscation by the occupying Power, India, can extinguish that inalienable right of the Kashmiri people. Today, that long-neglected dispute poses a grave threat to peace and security. The international community cannot succeed in its efforts to strengthen conflict prevention and promote the peaceful settlement of disputes if the Security Council's own resolutions are defied by States, no matter how large or powerful. The United Nations and the Security Council cannot play a central role in preserving peace in the world if its own resolutions, including those on Jammu and Kashmir, continue to be challenged by outlaw States.

The Secretary-General has also rightly identified hate speech, xenophobia and other divisive narratives as serious challenges to our collective well-being. Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and fascism are all manifestations of these hate-filled ideologies. We have seen in our neighbourhood how communal politics is being utilized as a weapon to marginalize the Muslim minority. Concerted global action is required to effectively push back against these fascist and

totalitarian ideologies and terrorist groups that have emerged in several countries.

As the Secretary-General notes in his report, we are not on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. While the international community has declared a decade of action, we are not yet clear about what that action entails. On the contrary, the world trade and financial system is under threat of collapse from the weight of trade and technological wars. Climate change poses another existential threat to our planet and to global development and peace.

To realize these objectives, we must make progress to revive the central role of the General Assembly, reform the Security Council to make it more representative, equitable and responsive to the entire membership, and articulate the full potential of the Economic and Social Council as the central coordinator of the global economic cooperation system. Pakistan will actively work to advance these objectives at this session and in preparation for the seventy-fifth anniversary session.

Ms. Yáñez Loza (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for briefing the General Assembly on his report on the work of the Organization (A/74/1), whose content leads us to reflect on the relevance of multilateralism and to reiterate, once again, our common purposes and principles, especially this year, when we are celebrating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for the lucidity of his briefing this morning, for the clarity of his responses and for the information he provided on the progress made on his priorities, which, as he said, are not his own but those that we have entrusted to him.

Multilateralism represents the hope of millions of people throughout the world, for many of the threats facing humanity can only be addressed together. Climate change-related disasters affect 350 million people, armed conflict and violence persist, poverty and inequalities mean millions of people continue to face an uncertain and bleak future. Displacement, human rights violations, violence against women and girls — indeed, all the challenges I have mentioned — compel us to uphold multilateralism as the best mechanism for ensuring both international peace and security and sustainable development. Ecuador renews its commitment to multilateralism and attaches great importance to a world order based on respect for international law. There is no doubt that there is still

much room for improvement within our Organization, as well as space to make those reforms, but that is natural in a constantly evolving organization.

The work of the Organization and the road maps we have drawn are linked to all the world's efforts to tackle global challenges in order to achieve international peace and security, sustainable development and human rights as well as to generate well-being for people and the planet. The implementation of our agendas is essential which is why resource mobilization is fundamental, but even more important is political will. In this regard, the Government of Ecuador is making great efforts to achieve the objectives and goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda. Just last week, Ecuador issued a sovereign social housing bond, which will enable the national financial system to provide more than 24,000 mortgage loans under the Government's "A House for Everyone" programme. The bond is the first in the world intended for housing.

My country supports programmes that contribute to the development of Africa so that its countries can achieve sustained and inclusive economic growth. We also support measures to prevent conflict and sustain peace. In this regard, my delegation would like to emphasize that 2020 is crucial for the international peace and security agenda in this new decade and beyond, given that the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will be held this year. I believe that we must be more ambitious and make progress in the universalization of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The year 2020 also provides us with the opportunity to review the architecture of the peacebuilding system, the United Nations and therefore the whole world. As has been said, 2020 will also mark the beginning of the decade of action for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the preparatory processes for the 2020 diversity summit, the new review cycle of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the fourth World Conference on Women. In this year 2020, collaboration and dialogue will be key to overcoming complex challenges and consolidating a fair and equitable global order.

I would like to conclude by reiterating my country's commitment to multilateralism and to the Organization. As President Lenin Moreno Garcés said,

"[w]ithout dialogue and a shared spirit of democracy, we cannot understand each other; neither can we understand each other with imposed unilateralism" (A/74/PV.6, p. 2).

Mr. Carazo (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica commends the Secretary-General for his timely, detailed and interactive briefing on his report (A/74/1). We thank him and his worthy representative, Madam Chef de Cabinet, for the courtesy and respect they showed the members this morning by listening carefully to their statements and by responding fully to their questions. We recognize the constructive and critical decision of the President of the General Assembly to structure this debate in the way that he did precisely in order to facilitate interactivity. Costa Rica hopes that this timeliness, tone and respect for the membership will prevail when the report of the Security Council is presented to the General Assembly in the second quarter this year.

The report points out that almost 75 years after the creation of the Organization, the standards and principles enabling humankind to advance and develop through the Organization require renewed reflection. Moreover, all of our cooperation is needed to ensure that the objectives of peace, justice and dignity continue to reflect our action and our common undertakings regardless of the diversity of our societies. At present, these instruments and spaces for consultation are facing dual pressures: on the one hand, the exacerbation of nationalism and geopolitical conflicts, the manipulation of reality for political ends and the spread of hateful and discriminatory speech; and, on the other hand, peoples' emphatic demand for genuine social, economic and environmental justice, as clearly expressed in the numerous civic demonstrations, mostly of young people, that we have witnessed in recent months and from which we can safely say that no country in the world is escaping.

To address those dual pressures, which have been exacerbated by rising inequality, persistent poverty and the reality of what the Secretary-General today called the climate catastrophe, as well as by the technological and labour explosion of the fourth industrial revolution and the threats to peace and security, we need effective, fundamentally humane and tangible solutions — twenty-first century solutions, as the Secretary-General rightly said this morning.

Accordingly, Costa Rica wishes to express its firmest possible commitment to the objectives and priorities of the Organization. As the Secretary-General has rightly said, and the representative of Ecuador echoed moments ago, these are priorities for the Secretary-General because the Member States have made that determination. The imperatives include, *inter alia*, protecting the environment, strengthening the rule of law and democratic institutions, protecting and upholding human rights, building partnerships and promoting South-South and triangular cooperation.

Faced with the reality of the climate catastrophe, biodiversity loss and the degradation of land and marine ecosystems, we must act urgently while we still have a window of opportunity, as has been pointed out. Costa Rica appreciates the Secretary-General's response and efforts seeking to raise political ambition and facilitate alliances through the Climate Action Summit in September. In 2020, we will have at least four opportunities to translate that ambition into effective commitments: the second United Nations Ocean Conference, in Lisbon; the Biodiversity Summit, whose modalities Costa Rica had the honour, together with the Italian Republic, to facilitate; the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, in Kunming, China; and the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in Glasgow. The preparatory session for Conference of the Parties will be organized and hosted by Italy, whose permanent representative will organize the meeting as a youth conclave — nothing could be more appropriate.

With regard to growing geopolitical conflicts, Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations assigns to the Security Council the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. It is in such complex contexts that this fundamental organ of the Organization, the Security Council, must increase its effectiveness in reaching viable and sustainable political solutions. We stress the importance of granting women more leading roles in safeguarding peace.

If we want to live up to the challenges of the twenty-first century, we need a strong and revitalized Organization. Costa Rica strongly supports the reforms promoted by the Secretary-General to achieve more effective and efficient implementation of mandates.

We have followed with particular interest the proposals for strengthening peace and security

structures. We recall in this context that the University for Peace, based in Costa Rica, remains available, among many other relevant resources, for peacebuilding through education and training. We have been close to the process of establishing of new country teams with resident coordinators in the United Nations development system. We saw the management reform unfold through a gradual process that recently culminated in the transition from a biennial to an annual budgetary system.

Finally, the United Nations must reflect the world we want. It must reflect the aspirations of humankind. It is therefore crucial to continue strengthening transparency and accountability in the Organization, as well as mainstreaming gender and inclusive approaches, to achieve an equitable Organization that is inclusive of humankind's great diversity.

Mr. Kakanur (India): I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization (A/74/1) and for his briefing today on his priorities for 2020 (see A/74/PV.54). We are also grateful to the President of the General Assembly for his innovation in engaging an interactive question-and-answer format in this session, thus moving this debate beyond an annual ritual to a real opportunity for reflection and exchange of views.

The Secretary-General's report presents us with a sobering account of a complex global landscape in constant flux and highlights the unfinished agenda of development and reform. We welcome the Secretary-General's initiatives to modernize and reform the Secretariat and to make the United Nations fit for purpose, including by streamlining the peace and security architecture, achieving gender parity and addressing the financial sustainability of the Organization. India will continue to support the Secretary-General in the implementation of these initiatives, including through voluntary contributions, as appropriate.

We have heard today about the common threats we face: the proliferation of armed conflict, terrorism and destructive extremist ideologies; the existential menace of environmental degradation; and endemic poverty, virulent pandemics, mass human displacement, and the as-yet-unknown implications of unbridled technological change. We all acknowledge that we operate in a world that is more interconnected and interdependent. Yet the spirit of global partnership is today showing clear

signs of strain battered by a steadily rising tide of protectionism and unilateralism.

We share the Secretary-General's conviction that a vibrant, credible and effective United Nations is a critical bulwark against the pressures being faced by the global order. The agreement on a work programme to implement the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and the report of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation are examples of some of the modest gains that we have made through multilateral efforts.

We also welcome the efforts to strengthen the United Nations partnership with troop- and police-contributing countries through the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. As one of the leading contributors of troops, we appreciate the prioritizing of efforts aimed at increasing the number of female uniformed personnel, as well as promoting women's meaningful inclusion in peace processes. We honour the service of those peacekeepers and humanitarian workers who gave their lives in the past year serving the United Nations and trying to better the lives of others.

The report shows that some tentative winds of hope have begun to blow, against the expectations of many. Electoral processes unfolded in Madagascar, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, most recently, Afghanistan, leading to hope for stability and renewal in these regions. Political dialogue in the Sudan and the peace process in the Central African Republic have also brought some promise. Yet despite these pockets of hope, fires continue to blaze on our horizon, demanding from us collaboration and innovation, not competition and inertia.

Our inability to address terrorism, the most dangerous of scourges being faced by States and societies since the Second World War, casts doubt on the relevance of this Organization to the very people whom the Charter obliges us to protect. The United Nations has yet to agree on a common definition of terrorism, let alone craft a coherent and well-coordinated policy to tackle it and dismantle its enabling networks. We have failed each other by continuing to procrastinate on concluding a comprehensive convention against international terrorism.

Just as fish take to water, one delegation has again taken to hate speech. Every time this delegation speaks, it spews venom and false narratives of monumental

proportions. Instead of putting an end to the bellicose and vitriolic diatribe and taking steps to restore normal ties, this delegation indulges in confabulations and obfuscates the truth to the detriment of the international community. It is very surprising that a country that has completely decimated its minority populations should talk about protecting minorities. Pakistan's practice of using false pretences to escape addressing the malaise afflicting it has run its course. Pakistan needs to reflect that there are no takers for its false rhetoric and that it should get down to the normal business of diplomacy.

In an increasingly contested world, the credibility of the United Nations will hinge on its ability to navigate the fault lines and shape the rules of the game for a secure and prosperous future. This requires continuous attention and active engagement, not just a one-time push forced by the latest crisis of the day. From the oceans to outer space and cyberspace, our global commons require ethical and normative principles to guide their equitable, responsible and sustainable use.

What holds the United Nations back from truly invigorating action on issues of pressing global concern? The answer lies in something that is unfortunately not mentioned in the report. The effectiveness, relevance and longevity of any institution lies in the dynamism of its character and in its ability to adapt to the changing times. As long as the key organs of this Organization remain anchored in a governance architecture frozen in a bygone era, the crisis of legitimacy and performance will persist. Four decades have gone by since the reform of the Security Council was inscribed on the agenda of the General Assembly. As we mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, let us strive to ensure that this milestone year that is the one where some concrete progress towards a Council that reflects the realities of the contemporary world is finally delivered.

At the very start of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General called on us to "restore trust, rebuild hope and move ahead together" (*A/74/PV.3, p. 4*). These words echoed those of Martin Luther King, Jr., whom we all remembered earlier this week. He taught us that we must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.

As we look forward to another year of work, we cannot rest on our laurels in the light of what still needs to be done. We owe it to the millions around the world

who continue to look to the United Nations for succour and hope.

Mr. Hinton (Canada): We thank the Secretary-General for presenting his priorities for 2020 earlier today (see A/74/PV.54). We thank the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General for having rescheduled this debate to early in the year. We believe that this is a much better and more appropriate time for this type of discussion.

As we approach the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, we agree that to address the multiple complex challenges facing our world, greater investment in multilateralism is needed from all Member States. During this morning's question-and-answer session, the Ambassador of Singapore challenged all of us to think about what we can do to strengthen and empower the United Nations so that we have the system we need for the future we want. Canada is committed to doing its part.

Building and sustaining peace in an environment of increased geostrategic tensions will require enhanced engagement with regional partners. This is particularly the case in our efforts to advance peace, security and development in Africa. We welcome the United Nations-African Union Joint Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security as a robust framework for strengthening these partnerships.

The challenges presented by climate change continue to mount even as we struggle to implement effective responses. The impacts are disproportionately felt by people in countries who have contributed the least to global emissions; this is particularly the case for small island developing States. We recognize that climate change must be met with new, innovative and ambitious action to improve adaptation and mitigation. We know that financing the necessary changes will be key to success and we welcome the appointment of Canadian Mark Carney as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Climate Action and Finance. Together, we can work to address the grave security risks posed by climate change.

We recognize that for peace to be sustainable, economic security and environmental protection are crucial. We therefore welcome the launch of a decade for action for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs provide a road map for building the future we want, including the economic security to underpin peace. We know that Governments

alone cannot achieve these goals, which is why we are working to align public and private capital with the SDGs. We need to mobilize private capital at scale in developing countries to help achieve these goals.

We are encouraged by the progress the Secretary-General has made towards gender parity within the senior management of the United Nations, as well as progress in combating sexual harassment and abuse. Women's rights are human rights, and the empowerment of women produces dividends across our societies. As we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for advancing women's rights, the United Nations itself must be a model for gender equality.

We welcome the implementation phase of the Secretary-General's ambitious reform agenda. We urge all Member States to provide the financial and political support needed as the management-, peace-and-security- and development-system reforms are implemented. We do not want to see the implementation of crucial reforms hamstrung by cash shortages, and, in this regard, remind all Member States of our collective obligation to provide the funding necessary to implement the mandates we have agreed by paying our assessments in full, on time and without conditions.

Mr. Takht Ravanchi (Islamic Republic of Iran): The Secretary-General's report correctly highlights various aspects of the challenges we face (A/74/1). I would like to briefly touch on some of the issues reflected therein.

We join the Secretary-General in underscoring the importance of multilateralism and wish to reiterate our support for the mindset that when we work together we can accomplish anything. On the eve of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, as the international order faces such daunting challenges as unilateral and confrontational hegemonic tendencies, nothing is more urgent than the critical assessment of the Organization's accomplishments. The recent debate in the Security Council on the role of the Charter of the United Nations in promoting international peace and security indicated that, despite our success in averting a world war over the past 75 years, the threats to peace are still too many, too risky and too sophisticated (see S/PV.8699).

As the Secretary-General said in that meeting, geopolitical tensions have reached dangerous levels, and, unfortunately, the new year has begun with fresh

turmoil. This situation is mainly the result of the tendency of a small group of the States to, in pursuit of their own national interests, either completely disregard the basic norms and principles of international law or apply them selectively, based on their own arbitrary interpretations. This can be seen most pointedly in the work of the Security Council, where the sense of responsibility, morality and, above all, rule of law is declining on an almost-daily basis. This trend puts the very basic foundations of multilateral instruments and institutions at risk, at a time when multilateralism is needed most. To reverse this alarming trend, a unilateral and confrontational approach must be rejected, and a collaborative and win-win approach must be promoted. Above, all the Organization's work and the conduct of all States must be guided by the rule of law alone, not the rule of power.

We are of the firm belief that increasingly weak approaches to multilateralism and the rule of law, inter alia, are an imminent and growing challenge, not only to the credibility of the United Nations, but also to a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. These weakened approaches have been rigorously pursued through unilateralism and aggressiveness. In this regard, the United States Administration's current and ongoing provocative and malicious actions at the international level have been and continue to be exemplars of such an atrocious approach. Notably, the withdrawal of the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and its imposition of sanctions are a serious breach of its legal obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. It is this kind of clear rejection of diplomacy and multilateralism that has led to increasing tensions in the Middle East.

As we address this year's annual report on the work of the Organization, we note that the report indicates sluggish progress in many areas and that it underlines that, as the world faces mounting challenges, including protracted conflict, inequality, persistent pockets of poverty and hunger, and the fast-changing climate, international cooperation is essential if no one is to be left behind. We agree with the Secretary-General that pervasive poverty and rising inequality across and within countries are of significant concern. We believe that this is not a sustainable development, nor is it fair and inclusive. Failure so far can be attributed to the developed world reneging on its side of the bargain, including aspects relating to technology transfer, capacity-building and financial assistance.

Accordingly, renewed commitment to multilateralism and global solidarity is urgently needed, which should also entail, inter alia, the developed world revisiting its commitment to helping create an enabling environment for sustained economic growth and sustainable development for all countries of all regions and ultimately the planet as a whole.

In section G of chapter II of document A/74/1, which is devoted to the issue of disarmament, the report rightly points out that, in the year ahead, the disarmament solution that carries wide and consensual support will likely remain difficult to find. The current stalemate in the field of disarmament and arms control is also one of the challenges of our time. The new nuclear-arms race and nuclear-arms modernization race are among the alarming trends that need to be addressed and reversed. This cannot be done without the nuclear-weapon States exhibiting the genuine political needed to fulfil their explicit legal obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as well as their unequivocal undertakings pursuant to the final documents of the various NPT Review Conferences.

Mr. Lauber (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): We thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization (A/74/1), for presenting his priorities for 2020 (see A/74/PV.54) and for launching the decade of action for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. I should like to take up a few specific points of particular importance to Switzerland in the report on the work of the Organization.

First of all, Switzerland fully supports the call of the Secretary-General to uphold multilateralism. As he rightly pointed out, today's challenges know no borders. This is why, in plain English, multilateralism matters, and it is truer today than it has ever been. Switzerland is committed to an international system based on law, not on the logic of force. Respect for international law, the prohibition of the use of force and the peaceful resolution of disputes are essential to ensuring international peace and security as well as to the well-being of all people. This is also why, after almost 75 years, the Charter of the United Nations remains as relevant as ever. As the Secretary-General says in his report, the Charter of United Nations shows the way ahead. We therefore call on all States to respect the Charter in its entirety in good faith.

Secondly, as the Secretary-General has reminded us, encouraging progress has also been made in the promotion and protection of human rights as a result of the tireless efforts of the United Nations. But despite this progress, human rights violations continue. We are particularly concerned about shrinking democratic and civic space. Often, the first to suffer from this shrinking are human rights defenders and journalists, male and female alike, who nevertheless play a crucial role in the protection and promotion of human rights and the rule of law. Therefore, their safety and freedom to exercise their rights, especially the freedoms of expression, assembly and association, remain priorities for us. Accordingly, we welcome the Secretary-General's announcement this morning of the appeal he intends to launch in Geneva later this year calling for better protection of human rights and human dignity.

Furthermore, the fight against terrorism and national security considerations must not be used to justify human rights violations. Measures adopted in the fight against terrorism must not stand in the way of humanitarian action and medical assistance. Switzerland is also committed to the protection of medical missions, their transportation and their personnel, especially in conflict zones.

Moreover, in the face of continuing violence against women and girls, Switzerland recalls the importance of continuous international commitment to ensuring full respect for their rights, as well as to the promotion of gender equality. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) this year will be high points in this regard.

Thirdly, Switzerland continues to support the Secretary-General's reform agenda. Switzerland is committed to a strong United Nations system, adequately funded and able to meet the demands and challenges of the twenty-first century. We understand that the ambitious transformation required by this agenda will take some time to be fully implemented. But we are also of the view that we should maintain a brisk pace in making the necessary transformations a reality. Let us also keep in mind that the real test for gauging satisfactory implementation of the reforms will not be done here in New York, but based on the effectiveness of the work of the United Nations on the ground.

Fourthly, Switzerland welcomes the efforts of the Secretary-General to prevent conflict and address the root causes of vulnerability. Switzerland is therefore committed to ensuring that human rights are better taken into account in discussions on security policy. We are convinced of the importance of promoting an integrated approach to peacebuilding as reflected in the sustaining peace model.

Finally, allow me to add a comment on what we call scientific diplomacy or, more broadly, the multiple points of convergence between science, technological innovation and our multilateral domains. Today's challenges require innovative solutions. That is why interconnectivity and the search for synergies between science, politics and diplomacy are increasingly important and necessary. The Secretary-General's report provides us with examples, such as the global sustainable development report or the report of the High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation. Switzerland has actively supported both of those processes and will be monitoring them closely.

Recognizing that interconnectivity is in the interests of the international community as a whole. Although the latest developments in science and technology pose risks, as the Secretary-General pointed out this morning (see A/74/PV.54) — risks that we must jointly address — they also provide real opportunities for individuals and society.

It is also with a view to strengthening the role of scientific facts and statistics that Switzerland will attend the next United Nations World Data Forum, to be held in Bern in October. The goal of the Forum is to strengthen efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through solid statistical facts. In fact, we will only be able to assess progress and identify areas where more work is needed if we can take stock of the current situation.

We commend the Secretary-General for the achievements of the Organization under his leadership. Like him, we are, nevertheless, aware that much remains to be done. We assure the Secretary-General and his team of our full support and constructive engagement in the course of the coming year.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this general meeting to consider the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/74/1). We

are grateful to the Secretary-General for submitting the report and sharing his priorities for 2020.

The United Nations is a critical pillar of multilateralism. As the world faces protracted conflicts, forced population displacement, persistent terrorism and extremism, inequality, poverty, hunger and climate change, no single Member State or organization can address those global challenges alone.

Azerbaijan commends the Secretary-General's strong commitment to reform and fully supports his efforts to make the United Nations more integrated, effective and efficient. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a clear and universal road map for building a fair globalization and transforming economies and societies to ensure that no one is left behind. We note the progress achieved and recognize the need for much greater urgency and ambition to reach our targets.

Important steps taken to that end include the transformation of the United Nations development system, the strengthening and streamlining of the peace and security architecture, the creation of new management structures at Headquarters and the decentralization of decision-making authority. We concur with the Secretary-General that solving climate change is fundamental to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and realizing the 2030 Agenda.

Our top priorities must continue to include the implementation of national commitments and the fulfilment pledges under the Paris Agreement, the achievement of our collective climate goals as soon as possible and the strengthening of international cooperation in support of the countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change.

Azerbaijan supports the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative and endorses its Declaration of Shared Commitments. We acknowledge clear improvements in the key areas of that multi-year initiative, which now constitutes the core agenda of the United Nations for fostering peacekeeping as one of the most effective tools for maintaining international peace and security.

The deployment of Azerbaijani officers to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan in 2019 was my country's first contribution of military personnel to a peacekeeping operation under the United Nations flag,

thereby demonstrating Azerbaijan's strong support of the peacekeeping efforts of the United Nations and its commitment to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Coherence between peacekeeping, peacemaking, peacebuilding and development is of paramount importance. That interconnection was explicitly acknowledged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture. In the 2030 Agenda, the Heads of State and Government and high representatives stated, in particular, that there could be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development. In his report, the Secretary-General refers to concrete examples of progress in addressing volatile situations, resolving conflicts and restoring hope to those affected by years of war, violence and instability.

However, serious challenges remain, including the continued resurgence of conflict, increased levels of displacement, acts of hate-driven violence and the proliferation of actors in conflicts. Protracted conflicts and their political, military and humanitarian consequences must not be forgotten. Peoples throughout the world continue to suffer from prolonged foreign occupation, ethnic cleansing and the lack of accountability for crimes of atrocity. Most conflicts are regional. Therefore, cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, is essential to the promotion of the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Important progress has been achieved in recent years in enhancing such cooperation across a wide range of areas — from the maintenance of international peace and security and humanitarian assistance to the development and promotion of the protection of human rights.

However, while regional and subregional organizations are normally well positioned to understand and address the causes and consequences of armed conflict and crisis in their regions, not all of them are capable of ensuring the compliance of Member States with their statutory commitments. In some instances, regional arrangements are evidently misused by violators of international law as a shield for consolidating military gains and undermining efforts

to achieve solutions to regional conflicts and other security challenges.

Coherent global responses and common efforts, with the United Nations at the core, are the most effective ways to address conflicts, fight climate change and global terrorism, manage forced displacement and migratory flows, and achieve the goals of peace — including sustainable development and human rights for all. Support for that role of the United Nations and for safeguarding its collective security, political and humanitarian mechanisms is crucial to maintaining peace, stability and sustainable development.

The powers and responsibilities of the main organs of the United Nations and the decisions adopted by them cannot be substituted, conditioned or limited by regional and subregional organizations or their conflict settlement or mediation formats and mechanisms. The purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations are fundamental elements of the common rules-based international order. They are universally binding and apply to all crises and conflicts — whatever their distinct root causes and nature.

It is unacceptable that armed aggression against sovereign States and the resulting military occupation and ethnic cleansing of their territories continue, Security Council resolutions notwithstanding. No solution that is inconsistent with international law can be reached, particularly where fundamental norms are concerned, such as those relating to the obligation of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States.

The implementation of Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993) on the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict must be among the top priorities of the United Nations.

We concur with the Secretary-General that in the year of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the world's leading instrument of shared progress, our common purposes and principles remain as important as ever. Strict compliance with those purposes and principles and the fulfilment, in good faith, of the obligations assumed by States under the Charter of the United Nations are of the greatest importance for the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of sustained economic growth, sustainable development, human rights, justice and international law.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the presentation of his report on the work of the Organization (A/74/1) and to convey the Argentine Republic's appreciation for the work of the United Nations over the past year. We will soon celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of its creation, which will provide a great opportunity to highlight the achievements of the Organization, strengthen and renew the commitment of the international community to multilateralism and assess the challenges ahead.

The report presented by the Secretary-General highlights many of the current challenges, such as climate change, terrorism and poverty, while listing the actions taken by the United Nations to advance the implementation of the Organization's three pillars. Today, more than ever, it is essential to consolidate multilateralism. The development of a global framework for managing tensions is not feasible without a United Nations that can provide answers to the international community. Argentina therefore welcomes the efforts of the Secretary-General to develop capacities and provide support to Member States in order to strengthen the rule of law.

Argentina echoes the report in highlighting the role of the International Court of Justice in the promotion of justice, international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes through its dispute and advisory jurisdictions. I would also like to highlight the efforts of the Secretary-General to mediate between the parties to a dispute, exercise his good offices and facilitate the search for peaceful solutions. In that regard, Argentina reaffirms the need for those efforts to continue until parties can definitively settle their differences, particularly when there is a General Assembly or Security Council mandate to do so.

Argentina is currently a member of the Human Rights Council and we intend to continue strengthening the universal system for the promotion and protection of human rights. The activities linked to the universalization of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance are a core pillar of our country's foreign policy, as are the efforts made in the General Assembly to promote the rights of older persons. In that regard, I note that this year will mark the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, which, for the first time,

will negotiate a set of recommendations, in accordance with resolution 74/125.

Argentina is also committed to achieving the full realization and recognition of the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people at the international level with the urgent aim of eliminating all forms of violence and discrimination. We are confident that the Secretariat, agencies, bodies and programmes will support the efforts of Member States to protect and promote the rights of all people, including the elderly and LGBTI people.

My delegation has paid special attention to the gender section of the Secretary-General's report and agrees that achieving full equality is not simply a matter of numbers, but of creating truly inclusive public and private spheres. In the framework of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in particular during the upcoming meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women, it is crucial to renew the Organization's commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, while maintaining a realistic focus on the challenges that we face and the obligation of multilateralism to bring about a more equitable and just world.

Argentina shares the assessment made in the Secretary-General's 2019 report — that we are facing difficulties in the area of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. In May, Argentina will chair the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, during which we will commemorate its fiftieth anniversary. That will be a unique opportunity for the States Parties to renew our commitment to the three pillars of the Treaty: disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

On the issue of conventional weapons, Argentina shares the approach of the Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament and welcomes the actions identified and carried out for its implementation. In particular, Argentina has supported Action 23 and, more recently, Action 25 of the agenda with regard to lethal autonomous weapons systems. In addition, this year Argentina will chair the sixth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty in which it will focus on the prevention of arms diversion.

In March, Argentina had the honour of hosting the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40) and thanks all countries

for their participation and contribution to its success. We are currently facing a formidable challenge — the follow-up and implementation of the outcome document of BAPA+40, contained in resolution 73/291, by operationalizing the consensus reached.

The year 2021 will be the International Year for the Eradication of Child Labour. To that end, the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly will allow us to start organizing various activities to raise awareness and to coordinate the necessary actions to put an end to this scourge.

In conclusion, I would like to address the issue of the Organization's budgetary crisis and thank the Secretary-General for trying to ensure that activities related to the priority mandates would not be disrupted. However, I would like to point out that it is important to reach a consensus that will enable us to overcome the Organization's financial crisis and provide it with a solid economic basis for its normal functioning, without affecting the daily work of the representatives and experts, who are often the ones spending the most hours working to build the necessary consensus for the effective functioning of the United Nations.

Argentina once again reiterates its firm support for any debate that might enhance the role of the Organization in facing new challenges, since it will be vitally important to redouble our efforts to ensure an inclusive world that can respond to the needs of the future without leaving anyone behind.

Ms. Beckles (Trinidad and Tobago): At the outset, allow me to first express Trinidad and Tobago's gratitude to you, Mr. President, and your Office, for its steadfast efforts thus far in leading the General Assembly's programme of work for the seventy-fourth session. Under your able leadership and wisdom, this organ has carried out a number of important processes and decisions, and you can count on my delegation's continued support.

Similarly, I also take this opportunity to express Trinidad and Tobago's appreciation for the efforts and diligent work of Secretary-General António Guterres, and to convey our gratitude for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization (A/74/1) and his briefing this morning (see A/74/PV.54) on his priorities for 2020.

We note that progress has been made across the four pillars of the work of the United Nations and

remain cognizant of the wide range of challenges that we continue to face. As part of the international community, my delegation recognizes our responsibility to collectively address those challenges in order to realize a peaceful and sustainable future for all.

I also wish to align this statement with the statements delivered earlier by the representatives of Saint Lucia, on the behalf of the Caribbean Community; of Guyana, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; and of Belize, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States.

As the bastion of international peace and security, human rights, sustainable development and the rule of international law, the United Nations, as an institution, remains indispensable to addressing the myriad of multidimensional threats that litter the global landscape and hinder our efforts to achieve universal sustainable development and the proliferation of peaceful and resilient societies.

This year marks a significant juncture in the history of the United Nations as we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. As we reflect on how far we, the international community, have come over the last seven and half decades, we must also recommit to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and strengthen our resolve to undertake ambitious action to achieve the change that humankind desperately needs.

As outlined in the Secretary-General's report, the effective and efficient work of the Secretary-General, the Secretariat, and the funds, programmes and agencies of the entire United Nations system is critical to our goals and objectives. Since 2020 marks the beginning of a decade of action, more robust support will be required to better assist developing countries to make progress towards the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Indeed, my delegation underscores its support for the implementation of the reform agenda, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions, as a means to transform the Organization into a dynamic body that is capable of better responding to the needs and challenges reflecting our diverse membership.

Management reform, the reform of the peace and security pillar, system-wide realignments and the repositioning of the development system must make the Organization more fit for purpose, while ensuring

transparency, accountability and effectiveness in the implementation of the specific development agendas, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

Trinidad and Tobago once more stresses the importance of ensuring that the development system, in particular the resident coordinator system and the multi-country offices, is sufficiently resourced with the necessary skill sets and capacities to effectively provide better-tailored support to Member States in their implementation of the various development agendas and their national priorities, while building on national ownership and leadership. We look forward to the Secretariat's continued support and cooperation as we assess the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and impact of the system's operational activities for development as we embark on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review this year.

My delegation also recognizes the support provided by the United Nations Secretariat to small island developing States (SIDS) in the preparations for the high-level mid-term review of the SAMOA Pathway, which took place in September. Since the adoption of the declaration of the mid-term review, the international community has made a number of commitments recognizing the special development needs of SIDS and the importance of the support of the United Nations as a partner in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the objectives of the SAMOA Pathway.

Given our collective reaffirmation of the SAMOA Pathway, it is imperative that the United Nations be capable of effectively responding to the needs and challenges of SIDS, including through the adequate allocation of core resources to the work of the SIDS Units in both the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the Department of Social and Economic Affairs.

This year, the United Nations will embark on a number of landmark processes and events, including its seventy-fifth anniversary. Trinidad and Tobago therefore strongly encourages the continued support of the Secretariat in those events, including the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, the new cycle of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, the Global Biodiversity Summit, the quadrennial comprehensive

policy review, the 2020 United Nations Climate Change Conference and the conclusion of an international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction.

In closing, Trinidad and Tobago recognizes and applauds the Secretary-General's tireless efforts to ensure the fulfilment of mandates within a resource-constrained environment. The varied and multifaceted challenges confronting the global community have also signalled the need for the United Nations to scale up its efforts in this decade of action through the promotion of its principles and its advancement of the implementation of the global development goals. Now, more than ever, the voice of the United Nations must be heard, its work seen and its presence felt by all people across the globe.

Mr. Ahmed (Egypt): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting. I would also like to commend the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing on his priorities for 2020 (see A/74/PV.54), which will enable us to better understand the key issues on the Secretary-General's agenda for the year and, more importantly, to objectively assess progress made over the year and better contribute to its realization. We particularly appreciate the frank manner in which he has outlined the challenges that beset the United Nations, as well as the opportunities to better respond to those challenges. Egypt is committed to supporting the Secretary-General's endeavours in that regard.

The Secretary-General's briefing represents mixed fortunes. It not only provides a reminder of the multiple and multifaceted challenges facing the United Nations, but also highlights the important role that the United Nations is playing to address those challenges. We welcome the fact that millions of people have been lifted out of poverty, more children are achieving greater levels of education and more women are assuming leading roles.

However, those encouraging signs have been met with equally despairing developments, especially with regard to the increasing number of terrorist attacks that place our achievements at risk. Those challenges affect us as an international community and threaten our commitment to leaving no one behind. It is imperative that we galvanize our collective commitment to combatting terrorism in all of its forms and

manifestations with all available means. It is equally important that all States refrain from any explicit or implicit support for terrorist groups, including the provision of safe haven — which, unfortunately, is not the case today.

Egypt is honoured to be entrusted, together with Spain, with the co-facilitation of the seventh biennial review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy this year. We are looking forward to cooperating with all Members States in the development of an international counter-terrorism framework in a manner that addresses modern challenges and creates a safer, more secure world for citizens everywhere.

Inclusive and sustainable development requires an integrated and coherent approach. We therefore applaud the Secretary-General for his efforts to advance this objective, and look forward to future updates on how that goal is being realized. This year, we commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. This unique event represents an overarching umbrella for our activities this year. It is very pertinent to renew our commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and to reaffirm the relevance of multilateralism and the United Nations.

We join the Secretary-General in his global conversation campaign to identify how the United Nations can address the current and future needs of the world. In that regard, we commend the Secretary-General's robust engagement in addressing climate change. Egypt supported the Climate Action Summit and was honoured to co-lead the resilience and adaptation track, together with the United Kingdom. We congratulate the Secretary-General on the success of the Summit and we attach great importance to its follow-up.

This year will witness milestone events in the area of peace and security. Next month, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations will convene its 2020 session after adopting a new report structure aligned with the Action for Peacekeeping thematic pillars. Additionally, we are heading towards the 2020 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, hoping to take stock of the implementation of the 2016 twin resolutions (General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016)) at the field level, and exploring ways to further advance their implementation. Being a long-standing and committed partner of the United Nations, Egypt reiterates its

unwavering resolve to work with other Member States to make the United Nations peace and security architecture coherent and effective in responding to crises.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for all his work and efforts and reiterate Egypt's strong support for the work of the United Nations, which has made a significant difference in the lives of people all around the world. We need to safeguard and strengthen our multilateral, rules-based system. Egypt reiterates its support for the Secretary-General and will work constructively towards a better future for all.

Mr. Ishikane (Japan): This year, 2020, marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, and, as a proud member of the Organization, Japan is ready to commit to and participate in the global dialogue to discuss the future we want and the United Nations we need.

As the Secretary-General has stated, an anniversary is not just for celebration; we need to make it a year of action. We therefore welcome the launch of the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Based on strong political leadership, Japan is committed to contributing to the promotion of the SDGs, both domestically and internationally. This year, Japan will host the fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, in Kyoto, the Asia-Pacific Water Forum and the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit, as well as the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. These events and conferences will focus on various aspects of the SDGs, from the environment and climate change to clean energy, health, peace and justice. We will take full advantage of these opportunities to enhance international cooperation with a view to advancing the SDGs. Furthermore, Japan will accelerate its commitment to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women in this important year for the women's agenda. For this purpose, Japan will host the sixth World Assembly for Women this year, to which we invite leaders, representatives of Member States and international organizations, including the United Nations.

Japan also emphasizes the critical importance of a successful outcome of the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons this year. We cannot afford to see it fail. I call upon all the States concerned to be united and work towards

upholding the Treaty, thereby maintaining international peace and security.

As the world governing body, the United Nations has reshaped and restructured itself over the past 75 years to keep up with a changing world. Japan expects to see the initiative led by the Secretary-General to reform the United Nations achieve its goal of improving the Organization's effectiveness and efficiency. Moreover, to reflect the realities of the contemporary world, the Security Council has to be reformed. Today, an increased number of Member States now have the capacity and willingness to contribute to maintaining international peace and security; Security Council membership should be expanded to include them. We must not delay the reform of the Council any longer.

The year 2020 will be a year that provides us with many opportunities for great achievement. As stated in the report of the Secretary-General (A/74/1), it is the duty of the United Nations to ensure that all people can enjoy safety, prosperity and dignity. As we commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Organization, we must reaffirm our commitment to that duty, which we owe to the people of the world. Japan is ready to continue supporting and engaging with the work of the United Nations in all its main pillars, namely, peace and security development and human rights. We are also ready to contribute to galvanizing the work of the Organization in order to fulfil our responsibilities towards the next generation.

Mr. Mahmaminov (Tajikistan): I thank the President of General Assembly for convening this meeting and the Secretary-General for his valuable remarks and proposals on the work of our Organization.

Having listened to the Secretary-General, we realize that we live in an era of ever-increasing globalization, with major political, economic, financial and environmental changes coming down the road. Tajikistan considers the United Nations as a unique international institution that for 75 years has provided a venue for discussing and resolving urgent issues. As we commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations this coming September, we believe that the occasion will provide an opportunity to reaffirm our collective commitment to multilateralism and to the United Nations. We also look forward to adopting a unifying declaration that captures the Member States' shared vision for a common future.

Growing international tensions, international terrorism, drug trafficking, transnational organized crime and climate change are among some of the most pressing challenges that the international community faces now and will most probably continue to face in the future. We consider it essential to make more effective use of the tools the Organization has at its disposal and to improve our joint activities to address those challenges. There is also a need to strengthen the commitment to maintaining the rules-based order, with an efficiently functioning United Nations as a key entity.

Acknowledging the seriousness of the aforementioned threats, the Government of Tajikistan has taken decisive, comprehensive measures on the climate and water tracks. We would like to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for hosting the Climate Summit in September 2019. As our contribution, Tajikistan, together with other delegations and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, organized a high-level event on transformative water action to accelerate the achievement of global climate-change-related goals, in which the Member States had the opportunity to discuss the risks generated by climate change.

As water plays a pivotal role in how the world mitigates and adapts to the effects of climate change, the high-level event in the framework of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028 highlighted the existing and potential interlinkages between water and climate action. In this regard, as a part of its related efforts and in implementation of the Water Action Decade, my Government is convening the second high-level international conference on the implementation of the Water Action Decade, in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, from 18 to 20 June. The conference will focus on the ways Governments and other stakeholders can accelerate action in partnership in order to contribute to the implementation of the water-related goals and targets contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk

Reduction 2015-2030, Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the New Urban Agenda at all levels.

In addition, the conference will lead to the midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the Water Action Decade, to be held in New York in 2023, in keeping with resolution 73/226. Several regional preparatory meetings will be organized across different regions, which we consider of utmost importance to the identification of obstacles and solutions for the successful implementation of the water-related goals and targets. We welcome the relevant activities undertaken by Member States, the Secretariat and the groups of friends affiliated with various entities in the United Nations system, as well as the contributions by major groups to the observance and implementation of the Water Action Decade. In this regard, we thank the Government of Portugal for its willingness to organize the first preparatory meeting in Lisbon at the margins of the Ocean Conference this coming June.

Today we are facing serious danger arising from the dramatic increase in international terrorism. The threats that we must address are real. In this regard, we welcome the major institutional reform undertaken by the Secretary-General, in particular the creation of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. It is great to observe that, such a short time after the Office's establishment, we are already seeing concrete results. Together with the United Nations, my Government conducted two high-level conferences on counter-terrorism, in 2018 and 2019, respectively, and we are planning another conference in Tajikistan at the end of this year, also with the United Nations.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore that, as an advocate of broad-based cooperation, my Government believes that only collective and coordinated efforts and effective regional and international cooperation can serve as the foundation for our shared success in addressing the challenges I mentioned.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.