



# General Assembly

Seventy-third session

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Official Records

*President:* Ms. Espinosa Garcés. . . . . (Ecuador)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

## Agenda item 112 (continued)

### Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/73/1)

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Members will recall that the Secretary-General presented his annual report (A/73/1) to the General Assembly at its 6th plenary meeting, on 25 September, in accordance with decision 73/502 of 21 September.

**Mr. Akbaruddin** (India): The general debate always provides an unparalleled opportunity to hear our leaders' views on the state of the world and the ability of the Organization to deal with the challenges we are facing. Hence, I begin by drawing upon what we heard.

In countless forms, we heard that armed conflicts and terrorism are continuing to expand alarmingly; large movements of people fleeing conflicts are increasingly straining societies; humanitarian nightmares are playing out with alarming repetition; climate change events are becoming more regular; environmental challenges are becoming more urgent; multiple ailments are hamstringing efforts to improve global health; technological innovation is driving economies, societies and individual responses into uncharted territories in a networked world, even while development concerns remain paramount for the vast majority of the world's population. We also heard clearly that the uneven impact of those cataclysmic changes is causing enormous discontent, and all that shake-up is testing multilateralism as never before.

We acknowledge that the Secretary-General has embarked upon reshaping the organizational structures of the Secretariat to improve its ability to better deliver in times of change. We welcome his personal engagement in guiding that process. India will support the Secretary-General in the implementation of those proposals for change, including through voluntary contributions, as appropriate.

However, those changes address but a small aspect of the need for change in the broader firmament. We face a much larger set of issues that need to be tackled if we are to remain relevant. As the Secretary-General said, twenty-first-century challenges outpace twentieth-century institutions and mindsets. To his credit, in his address to the General Assembly last month (see A/73/PV.6), the Secretary-General also candidly accepted that all seven challenges he had outlined at the start of the seventy-second session in 2017 (see A/72/PV.3) remained unresolved to date, even as we have moved into the seventy-third session. Their lack of resolution is symbolic of the need for changed mindsets.

It is obvious that the world is awash in challenges that the current institutional arrangements are ill-equipped to deal with. For example, new technologies are increasingly changing the nature and dynamics of international conflict. Cyberwarfare, unmanned aerial drones and combat robots are just three instances of technological change that shape the future of warfare and raise profound ethical and normative questions.

Similarly, there is no global approach to dealing with basic issues regarding frontier technologies. For

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example, as the Internet becomes nearly ubiquitous, what rights do individuals have to privacy? How should tensions between individual liberties and collective security be mitigated? The General Assembly is not addressing the development and normative aspects nor is the Security Council addressing the peace and security implications. That is but one of the many new areas where international mechanisms for cooperation and collaboration are either weak, incomplete or non-existent. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's initiative to establish the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation. We hope that the outcome of the Panel will help us better understand and respond to exponential technologies.

With regard to frontier technologies and other issues such as climate change, debt sustainability, counter-terrorism, illicit financial flows and tackling pandemics, to name but a few, we should be considering scenarios, preparing plans to prevent upheavals and taking stronger steps to mitigate risks. Many of those problems require continuous attention rather than one-off solutions. To counter terrorism, for example, we need to establish a reliable and efficient set of controls for monitoring borders and financial flows. Such efforts will work only if appropriate standards are widely adopted and cooperation in implementing them becomes routine.

Global cooperation and collaboration have been critical to achieving vastly greater well-being over the past 70 years. However, proliferating global problems demand new narratives and new forms of cooperation. For example, we will need international cooperation of an unprecedented nature and kind to promote climate action, as specified in the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report released earlier today.

We cannot merely focus on exterminating bugs while allowing life-threatening wild beasts to roam free. We cannot spend our time clearing the weeds, oblivious to the growth of the jungle all around us. If we do so, we will be nursing an establishment that has declined almost to the vanishing point with respect to the overarching challenges that States acting on their own cannot hope to overcome.

Updating the current architecture of international institutions that are so out of tune with the modern world is imperative if the new global challenges are to be met. Nowhere is that need for common purpose

required more than in reforming the Security Council. Today, we have a Council that is all about primacy but has little purpose. We need to fix the flaws. We need to do it before it is too late. We need to do so before the technologies of the future sharpen the conflicts of the past, while the Council remains nursing its self-inflicted wounds of diminishing relevance.

We cannot pose as guardians of a status quo that no longer exists. To use a pretty metaphor, the state of our times is one great blooming, buzzing confusion, akin to the world of a newborn. We need to undertake a new journey towards a reformed and reinvigorated multilateral system. Whether we do so or not will determine the destiny of this Organization. It is a decision that all of us who see the benefits of multilateralism will need to take if we desire to stem the tide against it.

**Mrs. Rodríguez Camejo (Cuba)** (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Secretary-General for presenting his report on the work of the Organization (A/73/1) (see A/73/PV.6), and we convey to him our appreciation for the work he has done during his term.

During the high-level general debate of the seventy-third session, the General Assembly became the focus of global attention not only because our leaders were present and set forth guidelines but also because of the strongest commitment of our peoples and the vast majority of our Governments to the United Nations and multilateralism, which was reaffirmed in their statements. As the Secretary-General states in his report, it is clear that multilateralism is more important than ever in these difficult times, when problems are becoming increasingly global. Genuine political will, together with solidarity and international cooperation, is the only solution to the current challenges, which include 3,460 million people living in poverty, 821 million suffering from hunger, 758 million who are illiterate and 844 million human beings who lack basic drinking water services, all of which is exacerbated by the adverse effects of climate change.

Although we have important commitments that make up the road map to achieve sustainable development, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, challenges with regard to their implementation persist both nationally and internationally. The fact that developing countries

lack the new, additional and predictable financial resources, as well as the infrastructure and technology needed to implement those agendas at the national level, is worrisome. In that context, the fulfilment of development commitments, including the 0.7 per cent of the gross domestic product of rich countries as official development assistance, becomes even more important.

We commend the Secretary-General's efforts to reform the Organization. If the United Nations is to be more democratic and effective, the General Assembly must be revitalized and strengthened and able to fully exercise the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations, without interference by the Security Council in its work or in the work of its organs. In order to make it more democratic and representative, the reform of the Security Council requires changing its composition and working methods. We must not continue to postpone that objective.

The best way to prevent conflicts is to eradicate their root causes. In that regard, Cuba calls on the international community to redouble its efforts to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including inequality, hunger and social exclusion.

Cuba reaffirms that unwavering respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and for international law remains a basic pillar of international security. That implies full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, the non-use or threat of use of force in international relations, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means.

We must change the current unjust and profoundly unequal international order, stop the application of unilateral coercive measures against developing countries and put an end to colonialism and foreign occupation. We reaffirm that respect for the political, economic, social and cultural systems that nations have freely chosen for themselves contributes not only to sustainable development but also to the maintenance of international peace and security.

We strongly condemn and reject the unjust economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against my country for more than 50 years. With the force of justice, morality and truth and the support of the international community, we demand once again the lifting of that cruel policy, which constitutes a violation of international law and

of the human rights of all Cubans, including their right to development.

The Cuban people have a great deal to be proud of with regard to what they have achieved in the past six decades. To cite only a few recent examples, we were the first territory in Latin America to be free of illiteracy; Cuba was the first country in the world to be validated by the World Health Organization as having eliminated mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis; and UNICEF declared our small island a country free of child malnutrition. We are also proud to belong to a zone of peace, which was declared at the second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Havana in January 2014. Cuba reiterates that the rules of coexistence based on friendship, cooperation and respect, without interference in the internal affairs of other nations, are indispensable in relations among States.

In conclusion, I would like to express to you, Madam President, and to the Secretary-General Cuba's commitment to multilateralism and to the defence of a prosperous and peaceful world for present and future generations.

**Mrs. Mills** (Jamaica): My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization (A/73/1), which we commend for both its quality and contents. It provides useful summaries and data, as well as insightful information on the achievements of the United Nations over the past year. We appreciate its level of detail, and we wish to take this opportunity to highlight some points that are of particular interest to us.

First, we find the report to be particularly useful given its cross-cutting focus on several key issues, most notably the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As we look to the 2019 high-level review by the General Assembly of the implementation of the SDGs and continue to share national experiences through the voluntary national reviews, it is imperative that we pay greater attention to the interlinkages across the work of the Organization. Those systemic connections support the implementation of the SDGs, promote sustained economic growth and policy coherence, and advance our efforts to achieve sustainable development. As the mobilization of financing for the SDGs will be at the core of ensuring the success of our collective endeavour, we laud the establishment of the Joint Fund

for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and will continue to support, including through the Group of Friends of SDG Financing, efforts aimed at advancing that objective.

Secondly, it is commendable that the report highlights the particular challenges associated with climate change. We share the Secretary-General's frank but grim assessment that climate change is moving faster than we are and that countries need to turn pledges into national climate action. We join him in his quest to ensure that climate change remains at the forefront of our deliberations, with the convening in 2019 of a special summit on climate change.

Thirdly, we are pleased to hear of the progress that the Secretary-General has made in addressing gender equality across the United Nations system. This bodes well for the Organization and we recommend even greater efforts in that regard.

Fourthly, my delegation has paid keen attention to the section of the Secretary-General's report devoted to the maintenance of international peace and security. The report cites some pointed and tangible results of which the Organization can be proud, most notably related to the successful conclusions of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the United Nations Mission in Liberia, as well as the transition to the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti. Like the Secretary-General, however, we share the concern that despite successes, peacekeeping missions are operating amid worsening security conditions and risks. It is for that reason that we are especially supportive of the Secretary-General's focus on conflict prevention and look forward to further updates on the tools being adapted to address new types of conflicts, characterized by asymmetric threats within complex environments.

Fifthly, we are optimistic about the Secretary-General's efforts to re-energize the disarmament discourse. We consider it both fitting and timely that as an international community we should focus on how we can ensure that our actions inspire hope and peace rather than fuelling strife and discontent. Jamaica therefore stands ready to play its part in supporting the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda.

Sixthly, and particularly in view of the link this represents to the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, my delegation will continue to be engaged in the discussions on drug control and

crime prevention, as evidenced by our active interest in the work of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

Finally, we had hoped that as it did last year, the report would make a specific reference to the challenges facing middle-income countries. It is our expectation that this will be seriously addressed in the high-level meeting on middle-income countries scheduled to be held at United Nations Headquarters in early December.

As we look forward to another year of work, we take comfort in our achievements to date, but we will not rest on our laurels in terms of what still needs to be done. We owe it not only to ourselves but to the countless peoples around the world who continue to look to the United Nations for support and hope. We cannot afford to let them down.

**Mr. Rybakov** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): We have studied the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Organization (A/73/1), and we are pleased to see that a tremendous amount of work has been undertaken during the reporting period to make the United Nations more fit for purpose. We support the Secretary-General's efforts to expand the Organization's mediation capacities and promote preventive action.

We agree that there have been some successes, but there is still a significant number of crises that have proved resistant to settlement. We consider one initiative of President Alyaksandr Lukashenko of Belarus to be extremely relevant in that regard. The proposal is that the world needs a new, major international dialogue on security issues, which could help all of us overcome the deep crisis of distrust that exists in international relations and could help to achieve sustainable development.

Today we are all working on our ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, but no State can possibly succeed in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) alone. Today partnership and global collaboration are increasingly important. In that connection, we need strong partnership ties at every level, while the measures we take must be able to rely on consistent and long-term funding, including through international cooperation. Belarus is willing to share its experience in achieving the SDGs, which is why we took the initiative to form a partnership network of national SDG coordinators in the United Nations, which was backed by States and international



organizations during the Regional SDG Coordination Leaders Forum, held in Minsk in February. The network will help us to establish full-fledged contacts with the various State entities that are involved in the achievement of the SDGs and to share best practices and experiences. We hope that the high-level forum on sustainable development, to be held in 2019 under the auspices of the General Assembly, will give impetus to the launch of this initiative.

An entire group of States, the middle-income countries, remains outside the process of the coordination of assistance, and unfortunately their cooperation is essentially conducted on an ad hoc basis. Regrettably, the Secretary-General's report does not give the topic the attention it deserves. We are pinning our hopes on the high-level meeting on the issue of middle-income countries to be held in the General Assembly on 4 December. We believe that the decision to convene represents a breakthrough in the promotion of the interests of this category of countries within the United Nations, and we hope that it will contribute to the development of a comprehensive, long-term strategy in the United Nations system for middle-income countries. It will be impossible to achieve the 2030 Agenda without taking their interests into account. We welcome the Secretary-General's appointment as Chief Economist of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of Mr. Eliot Harris, who will be in charge of issues related to middle-income countries at the United Nations. We hope his professional assistance will advance the middle-income-country strategy at the United Nations.

We also commend the Secretary-General for his efforts to counter the global threat of terrorism. We welcomed the High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, held in New York in June at the initiative of the Secretary-General. In our view, holding such a conference every two years would enable the United Nations to effectively define and respond to new challenges associated with the changing face of terrorism. Belarus is contributing to the fight against that global evil, and quite literally tomorrow, together with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Minsk will be hosting a high-level international conference on preventing and combating terrorism in the digital age, in which Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov is participating. Member States should pay greater attention to preventing terrorists from using information and communication

technologies for radicalization and recruitment, and that issue will be a focus of the conference.

Owing to the rapid development of the digital technology industry, such new industries as robotization, artificial intelligence and bioengineering are opening up tremendous opportunities and giving a strong impetus to sustainable development. However, they also carry risks, such as the potential to undermine the functioning of labour markets or to be used for criminal purposes. Despite those risks, however, we should recognize that we have entered an era of major dependence on the benefits that our recent technological advances can bring, and there is already no possibility that we can abandon them. We believe that it is therefore essential to increase our peoples' technological literacy and adapt professions to the rapidly changing world of information. In that connection, we would like to highlight Belarus's proposal to the United Nations on establishing international cooperation in the areas of digitization and technological forecasting for the purposes of sustainable development. We look forward eagerly to the report of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation initiated by the Secretary-General, and hope that the Panel will take Belarus's proposal into consideration.

We also commend the Secretary-General's work on repositioning our Organization, the United Nations. His reform initiatives have been broadly supported by Member States. However, the efforts to reposition the United Nations development system have clearly exposed the Achilles heel inherent in any large bureaucratic machine, including the United Nations, which is that to a certain degree its decisions can be divorced from people's real lives. We believe firmly that the litmus test for assessing any initiative should be the achievement of real, tangible improvements through its implementation on the ground. We want to see a renewed United Nations development system capable of giving more effective, targeted support to countries in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. In that connection, we hope that the reorganization of the development system will result in effective United Nations country teams that can assist States with sustainable development.

Despite some progress in the Secretary-General's reform initiatives aimed at addressing the Organization's crisis with regard to the prevention of international conflicts, there is still a great deal to be done in order to reach the goals he has outlined in that area. But the

main thing is that reform should not be used to hide attempts to replace the genuine peacebuilding aims of United Nations missions — which are supporting law and order, neutrality and non-interference in internal affairs — with tasks related to the political settlement of conflicts, since we believe that is the prerogative of States.

The procedural side of the reforms of our peace and security structure is no less important. It is essential that we all obtain guarantees that the process of the internal reconfiguration of the Secretariat will be transparent and inclusive, and that it will not permit the redistribution of funding sources, which creates an excessive burden on Member States, or blur the mandates of the key United Nations organs.

We also fully support the Secretary-General's recently announced Action for Peacekeeping initiative, together with the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, but we call for a considered, balanced interpretation and consequent implementation of a number of its provisions, particularly those on issues not directly related to peacekeeping, such as the protection of human rights, the involvement of civil society in peacekeeping activities and others.

The reporting year is coming to a close, but some important events of historic significance are still to come, in particular the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In our view, the various initiatives marking the date should preserve the Declaration's true foundation so as not to substitute political provocations and major Powers' efforts to realize their economic ambitions for genuine human rights. The unfortunate and needy should not simply become objects to be manipulated.

Before concluding, I would like to touch on a seemingly technical issue but one that we nonetheless believe has serious significance for ensuring general trust in the United Nations hierarchy. Belarus continues to advocate for the importance of complying with the format for considering agenda items in the General Assembly. We believe that today's agenda item is central to the activities of the Organization and the Secretary-General. In that connection, we hope that next year, despite our argument that this practice has been going on for years, the Secretary-General will submit his report to us under the agenda item "Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization",

and that his statement at the opening of the general debate of the Assembly's next session will be on the theme for the session designated by the President of the Assembly, as the corresponding agenda item, "General debate", requires.

In conclusion, I would like to express our agreement with the Secretary-General that today there are no alternatives to multilateralism in the United Nations. In that connection, we must see to it that the United Nations is truly an organization where every voice matters.

**Mr. Gafoor** (Singapore): I thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization (A/73/1), and I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate him on his excellent statement at the beginning of the high-level general debate (see A/73/PV.6). Today I would like to touch on several points concerning his report.

First, we note that it begins with the assessment that "[a]s today's problems grow ever more global, multilateralism is more important than ever". I have to say that Singapore agrees wholeheartedly with the Secretary-General's assessment. We are concerned about the growing retreat from multilateralism, especially in a context where no nation can solve transboundary problems single-handedly. We also agree with the Secretary-General's statement in the general debate in which he said that the world was suffering from a bad case of trust deficit disorder. We clearly need to rebuild trust among nations, especially among the major world Powers. In particular, the permanent members of the Security Council have a special responsibility to work together and build consensus, especially in the context of their work in the Council. We also call on the major Powers to avoid selective multilateralism, or multilateralism à la carte. In other words, the major Powers cannot support multilateralism when it suits their objectives and choose to abandon it when it does not. That is selective multilateralism and it is not what we need.

For a small country like Singapore, the multilateral rules-based system is fundamental to its survival and existence. Small countries do not have the luxury of pursuing selective multilateralism. We are completely committed to upholding the rules-based multilateral system, because it ensures our survival as small States. We have therefore been very encouraged by the strong and consistent support expressed during the general

debate by almost every country and every leader from this very rostrum in support of multilateralism, the rules-based system and the work of the United Nations. As the ultimate bastion of multilateralism, the United Nations remains indispensable to addressing the complex transboundary issues facing the international community.

The second point that I want to make is that we deeply appreciate the Secretary-General's energetic efforts to reform the United Nations. To keep the United Nations continually relevant, it has to become more nimble. In fact, the very process of reform should be conducted nimbly and efficiently. The worst thing we can do is to introduce more bureaucracy and complexity in the name of reform and efficiency. That is not what the United Nations needs. Even as the Secretary-General's reforms proceed in earnest, there should be opportunities for improvement, course correction or calibration as the reforms are implemented. That would entail and require regular reporting, consultation and briefings by the Secretary-General and his team in the Secretariat. Ultimately, the underlying objective of reform should be to make the United Nations more effective, accountable and responsive to the needs of all Member States and all people worldwide.

Thirdly, Singapore welcomes the Secretary-General's focus on technology and frontier issues. We support the establishment of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation. In our view, technology is crucial to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and we must redouble our efforts to reap the benefits of technology. At the same time, it is essential that we strengthen our defences so as to protect societies from the risks posed by technology, such as cyberattacks and cybercrime.

We believe that the United Nations can and must play a critical role in broadening consensus on the norms of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. We are pleased that the Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament affirms his commitment to fostering a culture of accountability and adherence to emerging norms, rules and principles on responsible behaviour in cyberspace. Singapore strongly supports continued work on cybersecurity at the United Nations, including the reconvening of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security.

Finally, Singapore notes that the Secretary-General has consistently emphasized the growing need to strengthen partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations. The work of regional organizations is of paramount importance, not least because they provide valuable perspectives on the particular context of their region. We welcome the interactive dialogue session between the Secretary-General and heads of regional organizations as a concrete means of promoting understanding of each region's unique circumstances.

As this year's Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Singapore was pleased to chair the annual ASEAN Foreign Ministers meeting with the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly just two weeks ago. The meeting was a very useful opportunity to take stock of the wide-ranging cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations, as well as to chart the way forward in areas of potential future collaboration, including emerging issues such as cybersecurity. Let me conclude with two suggestions.

First, we propose that future reports of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization contain a concise list of the Secretary-General's priorities and objectives for the coming year. We understand that the priorities of the United Nations may evolve over the year to keep up with developments — and indeed they must evolve to ensure that we respond to global crises promptly. However, we believe that a list of broad priorities will set a clear tone and direction for the upcoming year and allow Member States to work more productively with the Secretary-General. Moreover, effectively communicating the Secretary-General's priorities and objectives for the year would also facilitate greater transparency and build confidence in the work of the United Nations and the Secretariat.

Secondly, we note that this year's report was presented by the Secretary-General on 25 September, right at the start of the general debate nearly two weeks ago (see A/73/PV.6). During the high-level week, we heard the views of many leaders on multilateralism and on the work of the United Nations. Therefore, we are not sure whether it is truly productive to have another formal debate like today's, especially so soon after the high-level week. It seems to me that everyone, including the Secretary-General, is treating the debate on the report of the work of the Organization as a ritual and formality to tick off boxes.

My delegation is of the view that we should carefully consider how we can improve the quality of this debate, including by shifting its timing. The debate could serve as an important platform for the Secretary-General to communicate priorities and proposals or to provide an interim progress update on key initiatives. I know that we have always conducted the debate in this manner, but that is not a good reason to continue doing so as if it were a ritual. We would therefore suggest that the Secretary-General consider convening an informal dialogue with Member States so as to allow them to have an interactive discussion with the Secretary-General himself and with each other. That would be in addition to the formal ritual of the debate we are having today, which, judging by the speakers' list, has not attracted too much interest or engagement.

I wish to conclude by emphasizing Singapore's support for the Secretary-General. We look forward to continuing to work constructively with him so that collectively, as the United Nations, we can build a better future for our peoples.

**Mr. Said** (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for opening debate on the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/73/1). My delegation also wishes to convey its thanks and gratitude to Secretary-General António Guterres for his valuable report. We appreciate his tireless efforts and serious determination, reflected therein, to reform the United Nations, its structures and its management, and to strengthen the Organization's role in the areas of international peace and security and sustainable development in a manner that is commensurate with the changes and challenges it is facing.

We welcome the references in the report to the challenges faced by the United Nations, including those related to fulfilling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, climate change, equality and transparency in the Organization, United Nations reform, multilateralism and the culture of early prevention. We emphasize the role of Member States in achieving those objectives, keeping in mind that the United Nations is an international organization whose States Members are the decision-makers.

We support collective action aimed at promoting respect for human rights, improving living standards and respecting the rules of international law with a view to achieving the three primary pillars of the

United Nations: peace and security, human rights and development. We believe that those objectives and purposes need to be unified and coordinated, as their achievement will benefit all of humankind.

My delegation welcomes the report's reference to the maintenance of international peace and security. We commend the Secretary-General's efforts aimed at making the special political missions work flexibly and multifunctionally so that they and their partners can ensure the achievement of sustainable peace. Accordingly, we highly appreciate the ongoing efforts of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) to bring together the different Libyan factions and find solutions to my country's many difficulties and problems. We look forward to the full return of UNSMIL to Libya in 2019.

The United Nations must play a more active and direct role in solving the Libyan crisis, including in terms of the security situation, which has caused great suffering. That is no secret to anyone. Solving the security problem must be a priority, as should solving the political conflicts in the country. Indeed, any proper diagnosis of the Libyan situation cannot separate the political and security tracks.

**Ms. Lodhi** (Pakistan): Let me start by thanking the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization (A/73/1). The report offers a holistic overview of the complex and fraught global landscape. It also makes a compelling case for collective action to effectively address those challenges. From the goal of achieving inclusive and sustainable development, as set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to addressing the existential threat posed by climate change to lives and livelihoods, and from the maintenance of international peace and security to upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms, international cooperation is not just needed — it is an imperative of the interconnected world in which we live. The United Nations remains indispensable for that. A vibrant and functional United Nations is also the best bulwark against the rising tide of populism, protectionism and unilateralism, threatening to unravel the very foundations of the international order.

For the United Nations to remain fit for purpose, it must keep pace with the rapid pace of change surrounding it — an Organization that works in consonance with its environment, not out of tune with it. To that end,



Pakistan welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative to revitalize the United Nations capabilities with regard to the peace and security, development and management sectors. We are confident that those measures will ensure that issues of overlap and fragmentation are addressed, service delivery standards are enhanced and a more holistic and integrated approach to conflict prevention and sustaining peace is adopted. In short, the Organization will endeavour to become more than the sum of its constituent parts. At its core, the effort is meant to transform the United Nations into a more effective, transparent, accountable and efficient body.

Those ideals have also guided Pakistan and other like-minded States in advocating a comprehensive reform of the Security Council to become a Council that is not only consistent with the democratic spirit of our time but also representative of the aspirations of all Member States — small, medium and large. Anything less would be regression, not reform — an outcome that we do not seek and are not prepared to support.

The quests for peace, inclusive development and human rights are intrinsically linked and mutually reinforcing. They cannot be compartmentalized or pursued in isolation. As the Secretary-General's report affirms, our collective pursuit of those objectives remains far from accomplished. Instability continues to afflict many parts of the globe at a time when old divisions have been compounded and new conflicts have emerged.

On the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the inalienable right to freedom and dignity remains elusive for millions of people across the world. As the international community traverses the ambitious pathway of the 2030 Agenda, there are already troubling signs that progress has not been rapid enough.

It is time to arrest the slide; it is time to put our words to action. We must ensure that the prevention-focused agenda of the Secretary-General is not merely aspirational but also firmly embedded as the cornerstone of global peace and security. We must ensure that the United Nations development system support is fully aligned with national priorities and policies on poverty eradication, economic growth and sustainable development so that no one is left behind in our pursuit to fight poverty, hunger and lack of opportunity. We must ensure that the fundamental

human rights of all individuals are respected, without selectivity or bias.

Through enhanced triangular cooperation, we must also ensure that peacekeeping, the United Nations flagship and arguably its most successful enterprise, retains its pivotal role in bringing hope to the lives of countless millions affected by conflict. As a major contributor to United Nations peacekeeping, it is both gratifying and humbling to note that the commitment of Pakistani peacekeepers contributed to the successful completion of peace missions in Côte d'Ivoire and in Liberia. As part of our abiding commitment to that cause, Pakistan was also the first country to endorse the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

Pakistan considers the establishment of the Secretary-General's High-level Advisory Board on Mediation as a welcome step. It rightfully accords centrality to an often neglected but central postulate of the Charter of the United Nations — the pacific settlement of disputes under Chapter VI. The Jammu and Kashmir dispute remains among the oldest issues on the agenda of the Security Council. It was also one of the earliest applications of Chapter VI of the Charter.

Through several resolutions, the Security Council has provided the Kashmiris their inalienable right to self-determination through a free and impartial plebiscite. Regrettably, those resolutions remain unimplemented. Meanwhile, the Indian occupation continues to commit, with impunity, gross violations of the fundamental human rights of the Kashmiri people.

Those excesses were documented in detail in the 14 June report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which sets out a litany of systematic violations of fundamental human rights of the people in occupied Kashmir and Jammu. While Pakistan seeks a negotiated settlement of all issues, including the Kashmir dispute, India declines to even enter into negotiations with my country. The international community must take concrete and meaningful action to alleviate the suffering of the Kashmiri people. As a party to the Kashmir dispute, the United Nations has long-standing obligations in that regard.

Pakistan has been on the front lines in the fight against terrorism. Our military campaign — the largest counter-terrorism campaign in the world, involving over 200,000 troops — has crushed and eliminated terrorist groups from our territory. We have paid a heavy price; tens of thousands of civilians and soldiers

have been martyred and many more have been injured. But our commitment to that fight, based on our national resolve, is firm and unwavering.

Terrorism is now a global phenomenon that must be addressed comprehensively and in all its forms, including State terrorism. It is equally important to address its underlying or root causes. As the Secretary-General reminded us recently:

“No one is born a terrorist, and nothing justifies terrorism, but ... factors such as prolonged unresolved conflicts, lack of the rule of law and socioeconomic marginalization can all play a role in transforming grievances into destructive action.”

Let me conclude by quoting one of the greatest United Nations figures, Dag Hammarskjöld, who famously said: “We are not permitted to choose the frame of our destiny, but what we put into it is ours.” Our destiny is inevitably tied to a rules-based international order and rules-based multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core.

**Mr. Escalante Hasbún** (El Salvador) (*spoken in Spanish*): I would first of all like to say that I fully agree with what my colleague the Permanent Representative of Singapore said from this rostrum with regard to the usefulness of this discussion. We note with some disappointment the absence of senior officials of the Secretariat at this debate on the annual report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. We believe that this debate should be one of the most substantive and reflective of the entire session. As was pointed out, and we fully agree, we should either make better use of it or simply remove it from the schedule.

However, on this occasion, I would like to begin by emphasizing the fact that no country in the world can deal with the global challenges alone. We therefore reiterate that a multilateral system, with the United Nations at its core, is a key element in continuing to build a global consensus for the benefit of all. In that regard, I would like to highlight nine elements from my country's point of view related to the content of the report.

First, with regard to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, at the international level unfortunately there is already a trend that indicates that the goal of eradicating poverty in all its dimensions by 2030 cannot be reached unless specific measures are taken immediately. At the national level, we firmly

believe that the future national council for sustainable development in my country will be key to ensuring the governance of the implementation process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the long term, that is to say, beyond political changes and the focuses of future Governments.

We agree with the report of the Secretary-General (A/73/1) that the voluntary national reviews presented at the high-level political forum are an effective means to exchange lessons and experiences on the implementation of the Goals and, even more important, processes that lead to internal discussions and evaluations on the implementation of the Agenda on the ground, which is where it matters. In that regard, I would like to highlight that my country will present its second voluntary national review in 2019, and we would like to thank the President of the Economic and Social Council for accommodating the high number of requests received in that regard.

Second, we wish to acknowledge and commend the work of the Secretary-General and his team in promoting the repositioning of the United Nations system to ensure that the country teams are prepared to support our national implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The negotiation process that was concluded this year is only a first phase. As a country that believes that it can improve the coordination and effectiveness of the system on the ground, El Salvador will continue to participate to ensure that we have effective and complementary country teams, where the regional dimension is strengthened and where we as States rightly have leadership of our national development policies and in determining the support that we receive from the system. We thank Ms. Amina Mohammed and her team for their commitment and interest, and we look forward to the prompt implementation of the new resident coordinator system.

Third, with regard to climate change, it is undeniable that the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved without taking into account its impact and the urgent need for disaster risk reduction, both of which are very important issues in my country and in the Central American region. In that regard, with a view to providing a framework to support the commitments already made at the international level, and in line with paragraphs 13, 29 and 52 of the report, El Salvador proposes that we declare 2021-2030 the United Nations decade of ecosystem restoration. We call on all Members of the Organization to support

that initiative. We also wish to emphasize the need for United Nations Headquarters to make a greater effort to incorporate and mainstream the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Africa into our work in the area of sustainable development. It is not possible for the significant work carried out from Geneva in that area, with the considerable support of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, not to be reflected as it should be in our policy agendas in New York.

Fourth, we believe that it is important to mention paragraph 32 of the report, on graduation from the least developed country category. However, it is necessary to recall that, according to the report, a significant increase in the total number of least developed country graduates should lead to greater reflection on the support that continues to be necessary. The United Nations and the international community must recognize not only the contributions but also the specific challenges of the so-called middle-income countries, and we hope that the United Nations will assume its due role in implementing an index that measures development based on multidimensional criteria that go beyond the per capita income used by the World Bank. Concepts such as multidimensional poverty and gradual development are terms that the United Nations should already include in its vocabulary, in line with the new development paradigm that we adopted in 2015. We recognize the pioneering role of the United Nations Development Programme in making breakthroughs in that area, and we call on the other agencies and bodies of the system to follow that example.

Fifth, with respect to the issue of human mobility, my country welcomes the prompt adoption of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, as well as the global compact on refugees, as clear examples of the United Nations reaching new global agreements on issues of interest to all and as two of the most important sustained processes this year. We already anticipate the success of the meeting in Marrakech in December, and we urge all countries to recognize that the topic of migration, like many others, is a global and fundamental issue relating to the human condition and narrative, which therefore requires a global understanding.

Sixth, in terms of the commitment to strengthening mediation, prevention and sustainable peace, we emphasize our support for the Secretary-General's vision of repositioning prevention as the focus of

action and alignment of the three pillars of work. As a country that has enjoyed the support of the United Nations in bringing an end to our armed conflict, establishing our democratic institutions and, currently, fostering dialogue among political actors, El Salvador knows first-hand that the promotion of human rights, the building of democracy and the pursuit of inclusive sustainable development contribute to sustainable peace and the ongoing prevention of conflicts. The role of the Peacebuilding Commission is part of that process. However, that concept should permeate efforts across all pillars of the Organization.

Seventh, with regard to disarmament, we share the vision in paragraph 122 of the report on the situation of the Conference on Disarmament. El Salvador regrets that the Conference, the only supposed multilateral negotiating body in that area, has not been able to fulfil its mandate in more than two decades, and we reiterate that, as has already been the case on several occasions, it is incumbent on the General Assembly to take over the issue when the Conference on Disarmament is unable to fulfil its function. We emphasize, as does the report, the role of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as a new element in the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. However, it is also necessary to recall the important role of the United Nations in the limitation and regulation of small arms and light weapons. We highlight the achievements of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which for the first time included the issue of ammunition, without which the Programme of Action lacked real impact.

Eighth, regarding the humanitarian aspect, we recall that neither the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs nor the system as a whole should neglect the impacts and humanitarian assistance in the case of natural disasters, including over the longer term. At the same time, we recall the need for the Secretariat and the entire system to heed the lessons learned at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, which, although it was not mandated intergovernmentally, scrutinized bad practices and lessons that must be implemented. We also reiterate that respect for international humanitarian law must be constant and cross-cutting in the Organization and its organs.

Ninth and finally, having held the presidency of the Human Rights Council in 2017, my country can only emphasize the work of the Organization in that area and again welcome Ms. Michelle Bachelet as the new High Commissioner. For the better functioning of that pillar, States must recognize and reduce the high level of duplication between the Council and the Third Committee, whereby each body should focus on its comparative advantages.

We emphasize that cooperation, constructive dialogue and the strengthening of the role of the Organization are crucial to addressing the current common challenges. My country's support can be counted on in all efforts made towards the good functioning of the United Nations.

**Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of my country, Syria, took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/73/1). We welcome in principle the information contained in the report with regard to the challenges facing our Organization and the proposed solutions to those challenges, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, climate change, migration, gender equality and the empowerment of women, transparency, reform of the United Nations and multilateralism, among others.

I would like to clarify the position of my country in relation to some of the information contained in the report. My delegation welcomes the report and the information it contains on counter-terrorism, which should help us to achieve our goals and aspirations and step up our efforts aimed at addressing the root causes of the recruitment of terrorists and the spread of terrorism in general. However, we had hoped that the authors of the report, when referring to Da'esh, would refer not just to Iraq but also to Syria, because, as is well known by everybody, Da'esh and other terrorist groups are also present in Syria.

We expected that the war we have fought alongside our allies against terrorism would be supported by the entire international community, in line with international legitimacy and United Nations resolutions on counter-terrorism. That support should have come through the use of the tools necessary to deter the Governments of States known to do so from supporting, funding and arming terrorists and sending them to Syria. In that context, some refer to those terrorists as the "moderate opposition", the "armed opposition",

"jihadists", or "non-State groups", and deliberately avoid calling them terrorists. Regrettably, Syria has been transformed by others into a terrorist destination without borders, in the same vein as such notorious organizations as Doctors without Borders, Criminals without Borders, Murderers without Borders, and so on. What is important to note is that terrorism transcends borders, which makes it difficult to control.

Syria's experience in fighting terrorism in cooperation with its allies is worthy of mention in the Secretary-General's report. Unfortunately, however, the authors failed to mention it. The authors also failed to mention the aggression and foreign presence taking place on the territories of certain States Members of the United Nations without their consent. The pretexts for such behaviour have now been exposed, for example, in the alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction that, in the end, never existed, the need to protect civilians from threats that turn out to be non-existent or the intention to establish false democracies in States.

We had hoped that the authors of the report would at the very least have referred to this foreign presence as being an illegal presence, a grave breach of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, an act of aggression against the State's sovereignty and a threat to international peace and security. We are naturally referring in that regard to the illegal military presence of the United States on Syrian territories, as well as the presence of France, the United Kingdom and other States that claim to be part of a coalition that is imposing itself on a State Member of the United Nations that has not even sought the help of that coalition.

The report of the Secretary-General also fails to mention the Israeli occupation of Palestine, the Syrian Golan and other occupied Arab territories. We had hoped that the authors would have used the word "occupation" and not the term "Israeli-Palestinian conflict". Indeed, the word "occupation" is the correct and legal United Nations term to be used, in accordance with resolutions and documents of the Security Council, and those of the General Assembly, ever since the establishment of the Organization. All General Assembly resolutions speak of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories — occupation, not conflict.

My country's Government once again condemns the use of weapons of mass destruction. We had hoped that the authors of the report would not have overlooked the Israeli arsenal of nuclear, biological and chemical



weapons, due, in particular, to the fact that Israel is the only party that possesses nuclear weapons in the Middle East. It is also the only party that refuses to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to submit its facilities to the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Despite all the Israeli scandals that have arisen within the United Nations, the report of the Secretary-General fails to mention the Israeli arsenal of weapons of mass destruction.

The authors also fail to mention the unilateral coercive measures imposed by the United States and the European Union, *inter alia*, on a number of Member States, including my country, Syria. We had hoped that the authors would have touched upon the importance of lifting those measures, whose very imposition contravenes the provisions of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, resolutions of the General Assembly and calls to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. How can we call for achieving the development and welfare of all peoples — including the people of Syria — when some Member States are imposing sanctions on other Member States, thereby contributing to the continued suffering of those peoples, in essence leaving them behind?

My delegation strongly rejects the content of paragraph 112 in the report on the so-called 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, which is of course neither a mechanism, international, impartial nor independent. Our position *vis-à-vis* the Mechanism is well known. We reject the Mechanism, which was established by virtue of an illegitimate and non-consensual resolution full of political and legal flaws. We have enumerated them in detail in many letters, the most recent of which was addressed to the President of the General Assembly, and is contained in document A/72/106, wherein we stressed that our writing to the President of the General Assembly did not constitute recognition of the Mechanism or acceptance of the Mechanism's work or mandate, in view of the fact that the politicized and biased resolution 71/248, which established the Mechanism, was put forward by States with an anti-Syrian agenda. Furthermore, the establishment of the Mechanism set a serious precedent in the history of the General Assembly, as the Assembly does not

have a mandate to establish such a Mechanism, as everyone knows. The Mechanism constitutes flagrant interference in the internal affairs of my country by certain Member States that have exported terrorism to Syria for eight years. As such, it is a serious violation of principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, particularly Article 12, as well as the provisions of international law.

Does anyone doubt today that there are 100 States Members of the United Nations that have exported terrorism to my country? According to a Security Council report — and not my own words — these States have done so for eight years. Does anyone believe that the actions of those 100 Member States that have exported terrorism to my country for eight years are impartial, independent and objective? I will leave it to the Assembly and to the conscience of those present in this Hall to answer that.

In conclusion, the Government of my country, Syria, stresses once again that it will make every effort to cooperate with the Secretary-General in terms of respecting the Charter, international legitimacy and international law. We have known and worked with the Secretary-General since he was the High Commissioner for Refugees. Our cooperation produced positive results at the time, particularly during and after the joint invasion of Iraq by the United States and Britain in 2003. We hope that our cooperation with the Secretary-General will continue throughout his tenure as Head of the Organization.

**Mr. Skoknic Tapia** (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile welcomes the presentation of the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization (A/73/1), which gives us a comprehensive overview of the achievements that have been made this year and the challenges that we face during the current session. The achievements cited in the report represent the fundamental progress that Chile has supported in the various working bodies of the Organization. For instance, we would mention the historic adoption of the Secretary-General's ambitious reform agenda in the areas of development, peace and security and management. We would mention the negotiation of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. We would mention the establishment of the High-level Advisory Board on Mediation, the progress made in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the gender parity achieved in the Senior Management Group and

among Resident Coordinators, to name just a few of the initiatives in the report.

Each of those examples should prompt us to strengthen our commitment to the work of the United Nations and to continuing to support the Secretary-General in the implementation phase of the various changes. That is why we join those who have already made statements in highlighting the relevance of this item on our agenda and the greater relevance that it should occupy in the debate on the work of the Organization. Above and beyond the truly fundamental impact of each of the initiatives that I have listed, Chile believes that the report delivered today by the Secretary-General demonstrates the importance of the daily work of our Organization and reminds us, at a time when everything is being questioned, of the need for and power of change, which is embodied by multilateralism. As the Secretary-General indicates in his report, global challenges require global strategies today more than ever, and in order to achieve that “[w]orking together multilaterally is not optional; it is the only answer” (*A/73/1, para. 148*).

For that reason, allow me to thank the Secretary-General for his vision on the reform of the Organization and the efforts that we all know he has made, together with the Deputy Secretary-General and the entire team, in supporting and adapting the Organization to face the current challenges. The Assembly can rest assured that it can continue to count on Chile’s full support in its tireless work towards a better Organization.

**Mr. Al Habib** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Let me start by conveying my delegation’s gratitude to the Secretary-General for his annual report on the work of the Organization (*A/73/1*). I also wish to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for his insightful statement delivered at the sixth meeting of the current session of the General Assembly, which in many ways reflected his written report to this body and depicted the existing international landscape. We share the Secretary-General’s assessment that

“[t]oday, the world order is increasingly chaotic. Power relations are less clear and universal values are being eroded. Democratic principles are under siege and the rule of law is being undermined” (*A/73/PV.6, p. 1*)

to the extent that twenty-first century challenges outpace twentieth century institutions and mindsets.

Undoubtedly, the convening of a meeting of the General Assembly to consider the report on the work of the Organization provides us with an unparalleled opportunity to consider and appraise how efficiently the United Nations is addressing the urgent challenges and detecting emerging trends that have a far-reaching direct and indirect impact on the lives of people around the world. We are of the view that one of the major challenges and threats is a growing tendency to resort to unilateralism. The world today is suffering from the disregard of some States for international values and institutions through the trampling of global norms and the undermining of international organizations. It is an illusion that confronting multilateralism is a sign of strength; in fact, it is a symptom of weakness of intellect, demonstrating, as it does, an inability to understand a complex and interconnected world.

To be more specific, I would like to give some salient and vivid examples of unilateralism in our world today. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was the outcome of more than a decade of diplomatic efforts and a period of intensive negotiations to resolve an artificial crisis. The document was unanimously approved by Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), and thereby codified into an international obligation. According to the resolution, all countries and international and regional organizations were called upon to support the implementation of the JCPOA and refrain from any actions that undermine the implementation of commitments made under the JCPOA.

According to 12 consecutive reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Iran has thus far complied with all of its commitments. However, a certain State, which was one of the principal parties to the negotiations from the outset, has not remained faithful to its obligations, resorting to flimsy excuses, and, in open violation of its commitments, finally withdrew from the accord and pressured other countries to violate the nuclear agreement, threatening all countries and international organizations with punishment should they comply with resolution 2231 (2015). Furthermore, that country’s withdrawal from international organizations, in particular UNESCO and the Human Rights Council, and from international agreements, such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, together with the imposition of unlawful unilateral sanctions and the decision to transfer its Embassy in Israel to Al-Quds Al-Sharif and Beit

Al-Maqdis, are among samples of its me-first, self-centred, arrogant and disastrous policy that flows from fanatical unilateralism.

The rising threat of terrorism and violent extremism across the globe, in particular in the Middle East, is one of the concrete effects of the unilateralism coupled with the interventionist, flawed and short-sighted policy of a certain Power. Specifically, the struggle to legitimize the occupation of Palestinian land by rejecting the historical realities that are the root cause of every crisis in the region is gravely undermining peace. The creation of Al-Qaida, the unilateral military invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, and support for extremist terrorist groups fighting the Syrian Government using irrational justifications — all of which led to the emergence and strengthening of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham — are among the threats and crucial challenges that must be dealt with urgently through the United Nations and other international mechanisms.

Under such circumstances, the negligence or inefficacy of international institutions can endanger world peace. We can rise to such daunting challenges only through the collective contribution and cooperation of States on an equal footing. But there is a prerequisite in that connection, namely, a pressing need for the recognition of a multilateral world that had already come into being more than two decades ago. Although that reality on the ground is blatantly and deliberately ignored by a certain Power, we all have the right and responsibility to strengthen multilateralism through inclusive multilateral decision-making processes, which are indispensable to promoting and preserving peace and security in the world on the basis of high ethical standards and cooperation.

In that regard, my delegation calls on the Secretary-General to organize and convene a high-level conference on unilateralism and its devastating effects on worldwide security, on the fight against terrorism and infectious diseases, and on efforts to address other environmental and humanitarian issues. As the Secretary-General rightly points out in his report, terrorism is a worldwide scourge and requires a globally coordinated response. We welcome his efforts aimed at convening the first-ever United Nations High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States to advance multilateral cooperation and establish within the Secretariat the Office of Counter-Terrorism to enhance the United Nations focus on this challenge. We hope that initiative continues.

We call on States to abide by their commitment to resolution 2231 (2015) and respect international instruments and institutions. We warmly welcome the continued efforts for the realization of Iran's proposal to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In fact, the security of the region is threatened by the nuclear weapons of the Israeli regime. We were expecting that the report would cite the urgent need for Israel's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The regime should place all its nuclear activities under the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We strongly support the Secretary-General in embarking upon wide-ranging reform efforts to strengthen the capacity of the Organization to meet today's increasingly complex challenges. My delegation takes this opportunity to emphasize that the Islamic Republic of Iran, as the initiator of the concept of a world against violence and extremism and as one of the leading opponents of unilateralism, is fully prepared to play an active part in promoting and defending multilateralism as the appropriate framework for finding a sustainable method to resolve existing challenges and provide, through dialogue and cooperation, reliable means for collective contribution and collaboration in favour of securing durable peace around the world.

**Mr. Hattrem** (Norway): First, let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his report on the activities of the United Nations in 2017 (A/73/1). We congratulate the United Nations on its progress and substantial achievements in 2017.

When we established the United Nations, we pledged to save future generations from the scourge of war, work together to promote economic and social advancement, uphold respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all and deliver security, jobs, education, health care and a better future for all. Today we see the multilateral system under pressure. At the same time, the major challenges confronting us, such as climate change, migration, sustainable development and clean oceans, demand cooperation and common solutions.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognize that global challenges are national challenges and that they are closely interlinked. The Goals require us to take both national and international action. Over the past 73 years, the United Nations has taught us that we can achieve far more by working together

than by working alone. Together we have achieved impressive results because international cooperation works. Extreme poverty is steadily decreasing, people live longer, child mortality rates are falling and more children than ever attend school. Global political cooperation, a system of global legal order and a fair global trading system have been crucial to that progress.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, demonstrates the unique value of the United Nations. We have agreed on a universal development agenda — a road map to the world we want. Norway stands ready to support our bilateral, regional and multilateral partners so as to accelerate implementation of the SDGs.

For seven decades, Norway has consistently supported the United Nations in its mission to establish a rules-based multilateral order. We are one of the largest financial contributors to the United Nations. We consistently allocate 1 per cent of our gross national income to development aid. There is broad support across the Norwegian political spectrum for the United Nations and for our engagement in sustainable development and peace. Norway will continue to be a consistent partner with the United Nations, and together with the nations of the world we will continue to seek common solutions to the challenges that arise in our future.

Finally, we hail the Secretary-General's wise leadership and appeal to him and his staff to carry on with the task to make the Organization better equipped to face the common challenges that lie ahead.

**Mr. Favre** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland commends Secretary-General António Guterres for his report on the work of the Organization (A/73/1). Although I hardly claim that I will be exhaustive in my comments, let me underscore several projects and themes that the Secretary-General has given priority to over the past 12 months.

First of all, there are the various calls for reform mentioned in chapter III of the report, which are the logical culmination of the contents in the preceding chapters. Since taking office, the Secretary-General has insisted on the fact that the United Nations must be able to adapt to changes and renew itself to be more effective. Switzerland has always supported his ambitious plans in that regard. If the United Nations is to achieve maximum results using the means at its disposal and thereby make a real difference on

the ground, it must adapt to a constantly changing environment and continuously review its working methods. The past year has enabled the United Nations to initiate such processes, both within the Organization itself and its Member States. As mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General, the reforms will lead the United Nations to become

“more nimble, effective, transparent, accountable, efficient, pragmatic and decentralized to better support its normative and operational activities” (A/73/1, para. 136).

We welcome that and commend the Secretary-General.

Second, the Secretary-General has placed the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the heart of the work of the United Nations. The pages in his report underscore the importance of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by the deadline set, identifying innovative financing models to do so and strengthening partnerships between the United Nations and other actors in the region, especially in the private sector. Those are also priorities for Switzerland.

Third, the year was a good one for migration. Switzerland is mobilizing for the adoption in December of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, which was first called for by the Secretary-General several years ago. We support the objectives of that comprehensive framework to make global migration safer, more orderly and more regular. We also support the adoption of the global compact on refugees, a second reference document that was negotiated during the previous year.

Fourth, another area that the United Nations needed to address — and did so — in 2018 was digital governance. In that regard as well, we congratulate the Secretary-General on having set up a high-level panel dedicated to this matter.

Fifth, with regard to peace and security, the Secretary-General has urged us to take an integrated and coordinated approach to prevention, making it a top priority. Switzerland welcomes that approach and will support the Organization's efforts in the area of prevention, including addressing past crimes and preventing atrocities and violent extremism.

Sixth, in the field of human rights, the report of the Secretary-General rightly emphasizes that the protection of human rights cannot be taken for granted



anywhere in the world today. It is essential to support the activities of the Organization in promoting and defending human rights. Recalling the importance of abolishing the death penalty, implementing the prohibition on torture, respecting the rights of women, children and migrants, strengthening civil actors, protecting those who defend human rights and fighting impunity and corruption are also priorities for Switzerland. Moreover, it is important to strengthen the Human Rights Council and engage in discussions in Geneva aimed at improving its working methods.

Seventh, with regard to humanitarian aid, the report highlights the number of humanitarian responses carried out by various United Nations entities. Sadly, there are still far too many and the humanitarian challenges we all face are also increasing. The Organization can count on Switzerland's continued support in the provision of humanitarian aid, including protection for civilian populations, humanitarian access to populations in distress and protection for missions and medical infrastructure, as well as respect for international humanitarian law in general.

Finally, the report stresses the importance of promoting a modern management culture at all levels of the United Nations. Switzerland aligns itself with the steps taken in that direction to increase transparency and accountability in the Organization. We are committed to ensuring that the United Nations has adequate funding so that it can fulfil its mandates. Through our support for Genève Internationale as a centre of global governance, we are also committed to making greater use of it to meet the increasingly complex global challenges.

In the area of human resources, Switzerland employs a zero-tolerance policy on exploitation and sexual abuse in the context of United Nations field missions and sexual harassment in the workplace. Switzerland appreciates the efforts that the Organization has undertaken in that area, as described towards the end of the report.

Switzerland thanks the Secretary-General and congratulates him on the achievements that the Organization has made throughout his leadership. We are also grateful for the statements delivered by other speakers this morning on the holding of this plenary meeting; we share their views.

Before concluding, we also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his statement delivered at the

opening of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session (see A/73/PV.6). It bodes well for the coming year to be as compelling — if not more so — than the year before.

**Mr. Yao Shaojun** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/73/1).

In the face of the current complex international situation and global challenges, the United Nations continues to advocate multilateralism and promote pragmatic cooperation. In the areas of peace and security, peacekeeping, counter-terrorism, sustainable development, the reform of the United Nations system, humanitarian assistance, refugees and migration, and so on, the United Nations has achieved positive results. The Secretary-General has proposed and successfully implemented quite a number of reform measures to promote enhanced performance at the United Nations. China appreciates the work undertaken by the Secretary-General and the Secretariat.

The world today is undergoing complex and profound changes, experiencing deep-seated multipolarization and economic globalization. The fate of the peoples of all countries has never been as closely connected as it is today. At the same time, we are also facing unprecedented challenges that impact international rules and challenge our multilateral mechanisms. The constant rise in protectionism and unilateralism, intertwining traditional and non-traditional security threats and the omnipresent instability and uncertainty of the international situation are but a few examples. As for the current session of the General Assembly, the international community should proceed from a forward-looking vision of building a community of common destiny and promote multilateralism in order to jointly address the global challenges before us.

First, we should firmly uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and maintain a rules-based international order. The Charter is the cornerstone of the normal operation of the United Nations. Member States should promote the spirit of the Charter, advocate a common, integrated, cooperative and sustainable new security concept and encourage the building of a global partnership marked by dialogue without confrontation, while partnering without alliances. All countries should abide by the basic norms of international law and international relations, remain

committed to mutually agreed international agreements, safeguard and uphold the international system and the multilateral trading system, with the United Nations and the World Trade Organization at their respective cores, and bring positive and stabilizing factors into the current international situation.

Secondly, we should adhere to the notion of win-win cooperation, safeguard equity interests and promote common development. The international community should adhere to the principle of consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, while replacing confrontation with cooperation and coercion with consultation, pursuing common development, as well as win-win, multi-win and all-win results. We must respect not only each other's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, but also the development path chosen by each country, and uphold the right of all countries to pursue a better life and space for development.

Developed countries should earnestly live up to their official development assistance commitments and actively help developing countries improve their livelihoods and accelerate their development. Developing countries should further promote South-South cooperation and strive to achieve unity and self-improvement. The United Nations should promote the concerted efforts of Member States to fully implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Thirdly, it is important to continue to promote multilateralism and support the United Nations in playing a central role in multilateral efforts. Secretary-General Guterres states in his report that the current situation and practice prove that adherence to multilateralism is the only viable way to deal with the various global challenges, with which China agrees. Multilateralism requires a strong United Nations, which must keep pace with the new developments of our time and further enhance its ability, through reforms, to coordinate the efforts of all countries in tackling global changes and better responding to the expectations of the international community.

The Secretary-General's reforms in the three areas of peace and security, international development and internal management have provided an opportunity to enhance the role of the United Nations. The reforms should adhere to the principle of leadership by the Member States, with specific importance attached to the concerns of developing countries, and attempt to

improve the efficiency of United Nations operations by strengthening supervision and accountability. All countries should fulfil their due obligations under the United Nations framework and strengthen dialogue and cooperation in promoting the resolution of global and regional issues.

China has always been a builder of world peace, a practitioner of multilateralism and a contributor to global development. Three years ago, China's President, Xi Jinping, attended the series of summits to mark the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations and comprehensively expounded the idea of building a new type of international relations with win-win cooperation as the goal and developing a community of shared human destiny. China has contributed to the well-being of the peoples of the world through solid actions and actively provided public goods to the international community.

China has proposed the Belt and Road Initiative, while adhering to openness, transparency and inclusion and promoting complementary advantages in aiming to achieve common development and prosperity. The Initiative has become the largest international cooperation platform. Not long ago, the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation was successfully held, at which China launched initiatives and measures to strengthen the future cooperation between China and Africa. China and Africa agreed to build a closer community with a shared destiny. The Beijing Summit will certainly help Africa's development and revitalization, expand new and broader space to deepen South-South cooperation and inject strong and positive energy into world peace, stability and development.

China welcomes the seven key work areas proposed by the President of the General Assembly. As the largest developing country in the world, China is willing to work with Member States to firmly support and practice multilateralism, jointly safeguard the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the basic norms of international relations, further increase support for the work of the United Nations, more actively participate in the United Nations in various fields and make greater contributions to building a community of shared human destiny and creating a better future for human society.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization contained in document A/73/1?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Before giving the floor to speakers in exercise of the right of reply, I would like to remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Ms. Gambhir** (India): We have heard the delegation of Pakistan yet again make unwarranted remarks about an integral part of India. I take the floor to exercise India's right of reply to those references.

Our position on those grossly misleading and cynical attempts is well known. We reiterated during the recent general debate at the commencement of the current session of the General Assembly that terror and talks do not go together (see A/73/PV.14). As much as we make efforts to come together to deal with the challenges of tomorrow, there will still be some, such as Pakistan, that will be driven by an archaic world view and long-expired doctrines. The good thing is that those with a focus on the past are not finding any resonance

in today's world. We hope that the spirit of cooperation and collaboration will convince them to abandon their destructive world view and become a constructive and responsible member of the community of nations.

**Mr. Chatha** (Pakistan): We are obliged to exercise our right of reply to the statement made by the representative of India.

It is regrettable that the Indian delegation has yet again chosen to make fabricated claims that have no basis either in fact or in law. May I remind the Indian representative that no amount of obfuscation, diversion or deceit can justify its illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir or help cover the tracks of its grave human rights violation in the occupied territory. The report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights rightly lifts the veil from the cage of obfuscation and chronicles the massive ongoing violations of human rights in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The truth is that Jammu and Kashmir is not a part of India; it never was and never will be.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 112?

*It was so decided.*

*The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.*