



# General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

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New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

## Address by Mr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania

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

*Mr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Kikwete:** Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your well-deserved election to steer the affairs of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. As I congratulate you, I would like to assure you of Tanzania's support and cooperation as you discharge of your responsibilities. I also wish to acknowledge and commend your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, for his outstanding leadership during the sixty-seventh session. A great deal was achieved because of his visionary and wise leadership. In the same vein, I would like to pay glowing tribute to our the Secretary-General for the excellent work he is doing for the United Nations and humankind at large.

My delegation and I find the theme of this year's General Assembly to be timely and very opportune. We should start now to set the stage for the post-2015 development agenda. Hence I find the theme, "The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage", to be a wise choice: it affords us an opportunity to know where we are with regard to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to decide what needs to be done to complete the unfinished business and enable us to make informed decisions beyond 2015.

The Millennium Development Goals framework is the best development framework ever produced to address global and national development challenges. The world has never witnessed such a coalescence of concerted efforts into a unified framework. It is heart-warming to note that progress towards attaining MDGs has been made over the past 13 years. However, that progress varies from one Goal to another, and is highly uneven across nations and continents.

Although extreme poverty has been halved at the global level, more than 1.2 billion people are still trapped in extreme poverty, which is a saddening fact. An estimated 19,000 children under the age of five and approximately 800 women die every day mostly from preventable and curable diseases. That is totally unacceptable in a world of unprecedented advances in science and technology, which could be leveraged to solve almost all the development challenges facing humankind.

In a world that has enough food to feed everybody, nobody should go hungry or be undernourished. In

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a world with so much wealth, there is no reason that poverty, hunger and deprivation should ever continue to inflict pain and cause misery to many people. It is incomprehensible, therefore, that the MDGs could not be fully attained.

Tanzania has made significant progress in implementing the MDGs. We have already achieved the targets in four of the eight MDGs, well before the deadline set of 2015. In MDG 2, we have achieved the target on universal primary education enrolment. On MDG 3, we have achieved the target of gender parity in both primary and secondary school enrolment. That is a change from the past, when there were more boys than girls in schools. As a matter of fact, the trend is now tilting towards more girls than boys in school. We are yet to meet targets with regard to the ratio of females to males in tertiary education and in decision-making positions, in particular Parliament. However, it is possible to achieve the target for parliamentarians by 2015 because we are now in the process of reviewing our Constitution.

We are on target with regard to reducing HIV/AIDS infections, which is the requirement of MDG 6. Similarly, we have attained MDG 4, on child mortality, which is a major achievement as compared to where we were in 2000. But it is depressing that we are not on track with regard to MDG 5, with regard to maternal health. We are intensifying efforts to do better in order to improve the health of women in Tanzania.

With regard to MDG 7, on environmental sustainability, we are on target with regard to drinking water for the urban population, but we are lagging behind when it comes to rural water supply and access to improved sanitation, both in rural and urban areas.

We have not relented in our pursuit of the MDG targets that we are not likely to achieve by 2015. That will be the unfinished business on which we will probably need to take action over and above what we are doing. We are lagging far behind with regard to MDG 1 in its four main indicators. There is not much chance of meeting those targets by 2015 despite the efforts we have been making.

However, we have been intensifying actions to transform and modernize our agriculture. Our aim is to increase productivity and farmers' incomes, as well as to ensure food and nutrition security for them and the nation. Agriculture employs 75 per cent of the Tanzanian population, and it is in that sector where the

majority of poor are concentrated. Therefore, improved agriculture will mean fewer poor people and fewer hungry people. Plans are also under way to expand the conditional cash-transfer programme under the Tanzania Social Action Fund supported by the World Bank. We want to increase the size of investment to benefit more vulnerable people, so as to accelerate the implementation of MDG 1 in the shortest possible time.

Generally, it remains my firm belief that despite some failures, the MDGs have been nothing short of a remarkable success. If developed countries provided financing as envisaged under MDG 8 and in keeping with the Monterrey Consensus and their own commitments in different forums of the Group of Eight and Group of 20, we would have implemented all of the MDGs to the letter and spirit. We find unrealistic any post-2015 development agenda that does not address the critical issue of ensuring adequate financing. That is also true with regard to accelerating the implementation of the MDGs in the period remaining. We will continue to look to the United Nations for guidance and leadership in steering both processes to a successful conclusion.

The fact that the United Nations needs reform is a matter of little disagreement. Our collective failure to respond to that reality creates scepticism about our common resolve to strengthen the Organization, which is meant to serve all nations and peoples. The reform we demand is long overdue. While we welcome discussions on the reform of the Economic and Social Council, Africa will not relent in demanding reform of the Security Council so that the continent with the largest membership in the United Nations has a permanent voice.

Regrettably, conflicts have continued to interfere in our development endeavours, as they linger in different parts of the world — from the Sahel to the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and from Syria to Afghanistan and other places. Conflicts have caused an enormous loss of innocent lives, as populations continue to endure suffering.

The recent use of chemical weapons in Syria, as confirmed by United Nations inspectors, is rather distressing. We condemn that flagrant and senseless killing of innocent people, including children, in Syria. We commend the Secretary-General and the Security Council for way they have handled the matter. I believe the doors for a peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis are not closed and that a military solution should be the last resort.

The United Republic of Tanzania regrets to see the suffering of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a consequence of a conflict that has continued for far too long. We hope that this time around, the initiative of the Secretary-General that resulted in the establishment of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, which was signed in February, will deliver lasting peace, security and development for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region as a whole. We highly commend the Secretary-General for his vision and leadership in that regard. We welcome the choice of Her Excellency Ms. Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland, as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region. She will surely help advance the cause of peace in the region, if supported by all of us in the region and the international community. Tanzania commits its support in that respect.

Among the enduring problems facing the Democratic Republic of the Congo is the proliferation of armed groups with varied interests. Bolder action is required to uproot those negative elements. Those groups should be neutralized and disarmed. It is in that context that we welcomed an expanded mandate for the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as per Security Council resolution 2098 (2013), which, among other things, established the Intervention Brigade. Tanzania agreed to contribute troops to the Brigade because we believe it will help to deter belligerence and create a conducive environment for a political process to take effect. Of course, any panacea for the Democratic Republic of the Congo problem will be political rather than military.

Since 2007, Tanzania has been a proactive contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations. With more than 2,500 peacekeepers — in Lebanon, Darfur and the Democratic Republic of Congo — we are the sixth-largest contributor of military and police peacekeepers in Africa, and twelfth globally. We are partaking in that noble endeavour as a faithful Member of the United Nations, ready to perform the duty of advancing and upholding the ideals of the Organization. We are satisfied that our contribution, albeit modest, is having a broader impact on those who have experienced the horrors of conflict. In discharging that historic mission, however, our peacekeepers, and therefore Tanzania, have sometimes paid the ultimate price, as was the case recently with the loss of seven

brave soldiers in Darfur and two in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Those soldiers are our national heroes, and their sacrifice is not in vain. We hold them in very high regard.

The death of our peacekeepers was a grim reminder of the dangers facing peacekeepers around the world. It is disturbing that armed groups and peace spoilers are increasingly attacking such servants of peace. We must unreservedly condemn all such attacks, as there is no cause or justification for such barbaric attacks. They constitute a crime under international law. The Security Council, whose primary role is the maintenance of international peace and security, should be in the forefront in terms of condemning such barbaric acts in good time.

At this juncture, I wish to reiterate our call for an end to the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, which has lasted for more than 50 years. Our call to end that unilateral embargo is predicated upon not only its legality but also upon humanitarian concerns, in particular the negative effects it has on the quality of life of many innocent Cubans. We are deeply encouraged by recent developments, especially the removal of restrictions on family travel, cash remittances and telecommunication services. We hope that spirit will culminate in a total cessation of the embargo in the not-too-distant future so that Cubans will be relieved of the enormous economic, social and financial hardships they have endured for far too long.

A solution to the dispute over the sovereignty of Western Sahara is also long overdue. It is high time that the United Nations took bold action to give the Saharawi people an opportunity to decide their fate. It is incomprehensible that the Security Council, which has been able to handle bigger security challenges, including in similar circumstances, has not been able to resolve the matter for nearly 40 years now. Justice delayed is justice denied.

Members will agree that the Rome Statute, which established the International Criminal Court, was a major milestone for the international criminal justice system. The Court's establishment as a mechanism for fighting impunity was possible only with the support of Africa.

However, a decade after its entry into force, a rift has grown between the Court and our continent. The Court is perceived as unresponsive to what are, in our

view, the legitimate concerns of African leaders and the peoples of Africa. It continues to ignore repeated requests and appeals by the African Union. It was sad to note that legitimate requests regarding the timing of the trials of President Uhuru Kenyatta and Deputy President William Ruto went unanswered. That attitude has become a major handicap in terms of reconciling the Court's secondary and complementary role in fighting impunity. The Court's rigidity has proved counterproductive and threatens to undermine the support it enjoys in Africa. We demand a change in that perception.

Tanzania condemns in the strongest terms possible the cowardly attack that happened last week at the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, which left more than 60 innocent people dead and hundreds more injured. I spoke and wrote to President Kenyatta to express our sadness and dismay. Yesterday, I signed the book of condolences at the Kenyan Mission to the United Nations here in New York. I reaffirmed our solidarity with President Kenyatta and the people of Kenya during these difficult moments, as well as our solidarity in the fight against terrorism.

That heinous attack is a heartbreaking reminder of the threat that terrorism poses to humankind. None of us is completely safe from terrorism, as it can happen anywhere, anytime and to anyone. We must therefore increase our vigilance, enhance regional and global cooperation and scale up the fight against terrorism. The challenge ahead of us can be neither underestimated nor understated. Success will depend upon our unity of purpose and determination. At this juncture, I would like to commend His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta for his exemplary leadership in the wake of the attack and his unshaken resolve and firm commitment to continue to support the peacebuilding efforts in Somalia and elsewhere. We are with the Kenyan people in this time of distress and grief.

In conclusion, I would like to stress once more that we are passing through a time of great opportunity despite the many challenges. We must take advantage of the current scientific and technological innovations, the current advances in information and communication technologies and the knowledge and lessons learned from the implementation of development programmes, including the MDGs, to build a world without poverty, hunger, disease and deprivation.

We must build a world that protects its environment and nature, a world without wars, conflicts or acts of

terrorism, a world where human rights are respected, the rule of law is observed, democracy reigns and civil society is regarded as an integral part of the development endeavour. With stronger multilateralism and the United Nations leading the way, and with strong political will on the part of national leaders and the people of our nations, everything is possible. We can make our world a better place for everyone to live.

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

*Mr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

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

##### **General debate**

##### **Address by Mr. Ralph E. Gonsalves, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**

**The President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

*Mr. Ralph E. Gonsalves, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, His Excellency Mr. Ralph E. Gonsalves, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Gonsalves (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines):** For the second time in my tenure as Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, I have the pleasure and honour to welcome a distinguished son of our Caribbean civilization to the presidency of the General Assembly. Even as we thank your immediate predecessor for his service as the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, we look forward to your tenure, President Ashe, with boundless pride and unbridled optimism.

Mr. President, for this year's general debate, you have chosen the theme "The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage". This is also the year in which you will lay the groundwork for the United Nations International Conference on Small Island Developing States, which will take place in Samoa next September. Your dual focus on the international development

agenda and the peculiarities of small island States make this sixty-eighth session one of the most important in my country's 33 years of membership in the United Nations.

Let me first say that the people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are deeply pained at the horrendous acts of terrorism recently committed in Kenya. I reaffirm yet again our solidarity with the Government and the people of Kenya.

William Shakespeare cautioned that what is past, is prologue. Similarly, Mr. President, your invitation to consider the future of the international development agenda requires us to first consider the ways in which our recent and long-ago steps and missteps shape our future developmental challenges and opportunities.

I begin with an unfortunate, inconvenient truth: our collective failure to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is largely rooted not in the shortcomings of earnest and hardworking developing countries, but in developed countries' abject abandonment of Goal 8, "Develop a global partnership for development". The Organization's own MDG Gap Task Force noted in its report entitled "The Global Partnership for Development: The Challenge We Face" that the quest for such a global partnership experienced significant backsliding in 2013 and that "the political momentum for advancing international development cooperation seems to have waned".

Sixteen of 25 developed countries decreased their aid budgets last year, and official development assistance (ODA) contracted for the second consecutive year, the first such contraction since the creation of the MDGs. In a time of crisis, when assistance is most needed, ODA is itself in a deep and prolonged recession. The twists and turns by so many developed countries on this issue have been most disappointing. Without predictable flows of meaningful, non-discretionary assistance, the post-2015 development programme will remain, substantially, a fleeting illusion to be pursued but rarely, if ever, attained.

At the same time, I applaud the efforts of those developed nations that take their ODA commitments seriously. I hail, too, a raft of other countries that are in a genuine developmental and functional partnership with us. These include Trinidad and Tobago, Cuba, Venezuela and Taiwan. Indeed, Taiwan, a country not washed by our Caribbean Sea, has been remarkable in its principled and practical conduct of intergovernmental

relations. Surely the time has now come for this exemplar of the magnificent Chinese civilization to be permitted to participate fully in the work of the various agencies of this world body.

Our debate on the future developmental agenda of the international community is taking place against the backdrop of the ongoing global economic and financial crisis. The global economy remains precariously poised, and for every nation that seems to have turned the corner, another plunges back into recession. The impact of the crisis on development has been palpable and has rendered the MDGs unattainable in many countries. Therefore, if we are to discuss the post-2015 development agenda, we must also discuss the reform agenda of our outmoded international financial architecture, whose failings contributed to the current crisis, and whose continued stasis is a reckless invitation to future economic turmoil.

Despite the challenges of the ongoing exogenous shocks, including natural disasters, and the encumbrances imposed by an insufficiently flexible international financial architecture, my country continues to make significant strides in our people-centred approach to development and poverty alleviation. This past June, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was one of 18 countries recognized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for having achieved the part of Millennium Development Goal 1 on halving the proportion of hungry people by 2015 — and we have reduced it to below 5 per cent — and the more stringent World Food Summit goal of halving the absolute number of hungry people by 2015.

For a small, vulnerable country to achieve this task ahead of schedule and in the midst of this debilitating global economic and financial crisis is truly outstanding. We have done so while maintaining and advancing good governance, individual liberties and democracy in accordance with global best practices.

But the ambitions of my Government are far greater than Goal 1 of the MDGs. Having more than halved hunger, we have now set our sights on the elimination of hunger altogether: to achieve zero hunger. We hope that the United Nations and the international community can partner with us effectively in fulfilling that historic ambition. Our policy goal of ensuring that no man, woman or child goes to bed hungry will have its own positive knock-on effects on poverty reduction, health and arresting the spread of chronic non-communicable

diseases — which itself should also be of central importance to our post-2015 development agenda.

As the Assembly is well aware, the roots of underdevelopment and exploitation extend much deeper than the recent abandonment of MDG Goal 8 by the bulk of developed countries. I arrived at this year's general debate from the Caribbean's first-ever regional conference on reparations for native genocide and slavery, which was held in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. That stirring and uplifting regional conference was the first step in the Caribbean's quest to address and redress a psychic, historical, socioeconomic and developmental wound that is, for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), 14 nations wide and 400 years deep.

The genocidal oppression and suffering of my country's indigenous Callinago, the Garifuna and enchained Africans have been rightly adjudged to have been a horrendous crime against humanity. Accordingly, the collective voice of our Caribbean civilization ought justly to ring out for reparations for native genocide and African slavery from the successor States of the European countries that committed organized State-sponsored native genocide and African enslavement.

The awful legacy of those crimes against humanity — a legacy that exists today in the Caribbean — ought to be repaired for the developmental benefit of our Caribbean societies and all our peoples. The historic wrongs of native genocide and African slavery and their continuing contemporary consequences must be righted and repaired, in the interests of our people's humanity.

European nations must partner in a focused, special way with us to execute that repairing. The demand for reparations is therefore the responsibility not only of the descendants, in today's Caribbean, of the Callinago, the Garifuna, the Amerindian and the African. It is undoubtedly an agenda for all of us to advance, promote, concretize and execute. The European nations that engaged in conquest, settlement, genocide and slavery in our Caribbean must provide the resources required to repair the contemporary legacy of those historic wrongs. That is undoubtedly a special pillar in the post-2015 development agenda.

That repairing of the mind, of collective memory, of our economies and of our societies is part and parcel of the rebirth, the redemption and the further ennoblement

of our Caribbean, our indigenous populations, our African descendants and, indeed, of Africa. I say to the Assembly that the struggle for reparations represents, immediately, a defining issue for our Caribbean in the twenty-first century. It promises to make both Europe and the Caribbean more free, more human and more good-neighbourly. CARICOM recently decided, quite rightly, to place the quest for reparations at the centre of its development agenda.

I am also compelled to speak today on a contemporary injustice that is entirely within the capacity of the Assembly to address. In 2010, negligent, or even reckless, United Nations peacekeepers contaminated a Haitian drinking water supply, which led to an outbreak of cholera that killed 8,000 innocent Haitians and infected 600,000 others. There is no longer any scientific dispute that the United Nations is responsible for the outbreak, as has been conclusively established in the relevant reports. Prior to the United Nations negligence, Haiti had not seen a single case of cholera in 150 years. There are more cholera-infected persons in Haiti today than in the rest of the world.

I continue to be deeply disturbed by the callous disregard of the United Nations of the suffering it has wrought in a fellow CARICOM country, and by the shameful and legalistic avoidance of what is a clear moral responsibility on the part of the United Nations. Accordingly, I call on Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to acknowledge unambiguously, and apologize for, the Organization's role in that tragedy and to take immediate steps to compensate the victims and their families. Anything less will further undermine the moral authority and credibility of this institution.

Sixty-eight years ago, our predecessors conceived of a grand experiment, a commitment to bind the world together in a collective quest for peace, justice and development. Over time, we have established a body of rules, laws and expectations that add flesh to the principles that undergird the Charter of the United Nations. Now, we are engaged — explicitly and indirectly, willingly and reluctantly — in a reassessment of that grand commitment. Today, the actions of a small subset of powerful nations shake the very foundations upon which the Assembly was built and threaten to bring the temple down upon the heads of those of us who still subscribe to the original tenets of our institution.

Properly conceived and universally adhered to, international law is the bulwark against impunity,

unilateralism, and Great Power triumphalism. Today, there are those in the Assembly who hold a curious view of international law, as something that must be imposed against others but which has limited applicability to themselves. To some in the Assembly it seems appropriate to disregard international law in the very enforcement of their distorted view of international law. Clearly, such conduct is unacceptable, for the simple reason that it threatens the continued legitimacy of our entire multilateral system.

Small, vulnerable States, by definition and necessity, are those most reliant upon an enforceable body of equitable international law within an effective system of multilateral diplomacy. It is no surprise, therefore, that small States like my own have emerged as some of the strongest defenders of multilateralism, sovereignty, diplomacy and the rule of law. We view it as our responsibility to sound the alarm when this institution threatens to depart from the founding principles that bind us together.

According to basic reason and historical experience, no nation is intrinsically superior to another and no people are innately better than others. To be sure, there are cultural and social differences, but being different does not imply a condition of being better or worse. One nation may be more powerful than another, but that circumstance should never permit the powerful to ascribe arrogantly to themselves, in laughable vanity, the doctrine of exceptionalism. Inevitably, that vain ascription swiftly degenerates into an embrace of the damning path of the rightness of unilateral force, rather than an uplifting multilateral force of rightness.

Flagrant examples of a continuing disregard for international law abound. Surely, it diminishes a great nation such as the United States of America to continue with what I consider to be a myopic vendetta against Cuba by way of an illegal, outdated and hurtful economic blockade and the absurd declaration that Cuba is a sponsor of terrorism. All right-thinking persons across the world justly demand that the United States end the economic blockade against Cuba and remove its name from the unilaterally drawn up list of States that allegedly sponsor terrorism. It makes no sense whatsoever for international law to become a prisoner of domestic politics and the vain glories of a Great Power.

Similarly, the plight of the Palestinian people is being sacrificed on the altar of political expediency, with a disregard for the opinions of almost all of humankind.

The issue certainly entails enormous complexities but, unless it is resolved satisfactorily, sustainable peace in the Middle East will remain unattainable. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines hopes that current moves towards serious negotiations will bear fruit in line with the principles and mandates that have been spelled out repeatedly in various United Nations resolutions.

At the same time, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is very impressed by the efforts of the President of the United States to embrace diplomacy rather than military intervention in pursuit of a political settlement in Syria. The Syrian community in my country, rightly and anxiously, looks forward to peace in its troubled homeland. Only the extremists will benefit from a prolonged civil war. Still, peace cannot be sought reasonably when a precondition of regime change is advanced. All sides in the conflict must make real compromises in the interests of the Syrian people as a whole.

There is one emerging issue of consequence that needs to be addressed. It concerns the deeply disturbing recent reports of the widespread and unrestrained spying that has allegedly been conducted by the United States of America against a number of countries, including its staunchest allies. Indeed, there are reports that the practice of such electronic espionage is rife, even within the halls and offices of the United Nations. We strongly reject such activity as illegal, a violation of diplomatic conventions and an affront to the comity of nations. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines believes the agenda for appropriate corrective action in that regard, as outlined earlier this week by the President of Brazil, to be fair, reasonable and achievable by the international community.

As we continue our collective journey in the quest for greater and lasting global peace, we are reminded that wars do not erupt only between countries, but also within them. We also know that some of the highest numbers of violent deaths occur in countries that are apparently at peace.

This year, the international community has recognized that genuine and lasting peace between and within nations, cities and villages cannot occur in an environment that allows an unregulated trade in small arms and light weapons. The Arms Trade Treaty, which Saint Vincent and the Grenadines signed on the very first day that it opened for signature, is far weaker than we would have liked. Nonetheless, we consider it to be an important first step in regulating the illicit flow of

small arms and light weapons worldwide, particularly into the Caribbean region, where the tide of guns is often accompanied by torrents of narcotics as they make their way to markets in other countries.

I am deeply disappointed at the international community's endless, rudderless and seemingly vacuous negotiations on climate change. Our failure to achieve meaningful progress on this matter of existential urgency is inexcusable. Vulnerable countries like Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are on the front line of climate change and are already bearing the brunt of the increasing fallout of global warming. Meanwhile, the major emitters and historical polluters pay callously insincere lip service to our plight. For them, combating climate change is a question of dollars and cents, not life and death. They are only too happy to see the multilateral process fail, so that they can retreat into ineffectual and painless national commitments. But those stubborn obstacles to progress must no longer be allowed to stand in the way of the survival and development of vast swaths of our planet.

I applaud the initiative of the Secretary-General to convene a high-level event on climate change in the hope that such a meeting will give our meandering negotiations impetus and direction. The post-2015 development agenda will not survive global warming if it goes unchecked. It is also high time for genuine negotiations in good faith and for meaningful resources to assist in mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change.

In conclusion, I would like to recall that the Charter of the United Nations begins with the phrase "We the peoples of the United Nations." It is not "We the rich peoples", nor "We the militarily powerful peoples" nor "We the peoples of large countries"; but "We the peoples" — of the entire world, the whole membership of this institution. The United Nations does not exist to confer benefits to select groups, but to secure peace and development for all. If we are to set the stage for the future of development, that stage must be inclusive so that all nations and peoples have a significant part to play and a stake in the outcomes. Let us make ourselves worthy successors of the ennobling, humanizing vision of our venerated founding fathers and mothers.

I shall be saying this ages and ages hence: two roads diverge in the woods, and I have chosen the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference.

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

*Mr. Ralph E. Gonsalves, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi,  
Prime Minister of the Independent State  
of Samoa**

**The President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Independent State of Samoa.

*Mr. Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Independent State of Samoa, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Independent State of Samoa, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Malielegaoi (Samoa):** I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly. I also wish also to thank you for your continued strong support for small island developing States (SIDS) issues, which you have championed for many years and have once again demonstrated, this week, in the process and lead-up to the United Nations Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to be held in the Pacific next year.

From economic woes to outright poverty, from social instability to acts of violence and ethnic or religious conflict, and from the devastation of natural disasters to deadly acts of terrorism, no country is spared or completely shielded. The events in Kenya, Iraq, Pakistan and here in the United States over the past week demonstrate the multiple risks we face in today's world. Our sympathies go to the Governments and people of those countries, and our deepest condolences to the people who lost family and friends in those tragic events.

While the Organization continues to grapple with various serious problems that require collective, United Nations-led action for their resolution, perhaps the greatest threat we face today is climate change. Climate change is a security risk of far greater proportions than



many people are prepared to admit. For some low-lying Pacific island countries, climate change may well lead to their eventual extinction as sovereign States.

The singular importance and urgency of climate change to our region was given added prominence today when Pacific Forum leaders met with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Our Chair, the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, presented to the Secretary-General the Majuro Declaration for Climate Leadership, which is an effort by our region — the most likely to be first and worst affected by climate change — to launch a new wave of more determined leadership across the globe, aimed at accelerating the reduction and phasing down of the world's greenhouse-gas pollution before it is too late.

*Mr. Touré (Guinea), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

The root causes of climate change and the means for addressing them are widely known. We in the Pacific know already from bitter and harsh experience, as will many other parts of the world, what the consequences of climate change are, and they will only become more severe if not enough is done.

Sadly, what is evident to us in the climate change negotiations is the continued triumph of vested interests in preventing and delaying the action that should be taken. In a diverse world of different capacities and capabilities, those least able to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change look to Member States in leadership roles to rise to the challenge and lead by example, to ensure that the post-2020 climate change convention currently being negotiated will effectively address the mounting fears of countries like mine of the catastrophic effects of climate change if it is not tackled collectively and with determination. As world leaders, we have the responsibility for fashioning a new agreement that will reassure low-lying islands that we have their interests and priorities at heart. Let us rise to the occasion and be part of the solution.

In June, during the historic event of the signing of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), Samoa announced that it would sign the Treaty at the highest political level during the Treaty event at the General Assembly's current session. We kept that promise, and I signed for Samoa in a special ceremony two days ago. We welcome the fact that more than 100 nations, including the United States, have now signed the Treaty.

For small island countries like Samoa, it takes only a few small arms and light weapons in the wrong

hands to cause instability. Indeed, within our own Pacific region, such so-called small arms have fuelled conflicts, disrupted the lives of communities and impeded countries' development. The Arms Trade Treaty, when fully implemented, will greatly help small island States like mine in their efforts to sustain our communities' security and stability. Our signing of the ATT is also further testimony to our firm commitment to general and complete disarmament, since it will contribute significantly to saving lives, stopping human rights abuses and avoiding crises, and is an important step in reducing and eventually eliminating altogether the human cost of conventional arms.

Samoa remains fully committed to the peacekeeping work of the United Nations, one of the Organization's most effective and successful mandates. For more than 10 years, Samoa has been contributing civilian police officers to peacekeeping operations in countries such as South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Liberia, the Sudan and, in the Pacific, the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands. We will be in a better position to increase our contribution to peacekeeping missions after a United Nations selection, assistance and assessment team has completed its evaluation, which is planned to take place before the end of 2013, of eligible officers from our police force.

Samoa looks forward to next week's High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. International migration poses both challenges and opportunities for countries of origin, transit and destination. Its contribution to sustainable development will therefore ultimately depend upon the willingness of source and destination countries to work out imaginative and humane arrangements that benefit both those countries and migrants. Samoa is working closely with New Zealand and Australia, through their seasonal-worker schemes, to ensure that those important initiatives result in mutual benefit for both the sending and receiving parties in the arrangements.

Yesterday's High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (A/68/PV.11) highlighted yet again the urgent need for a treaty banning nuclear weapons, given the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of such weapons. Such weapons represent the great paradox of our time. While nations desire peace and talk of peace, far more of the national wealth goes towards the development and acquisition of ever more sophisticated and destructive weapons of mass destruction. Our Pacific region was the scene of a great

deal of nuclear testing, with some islands still bearing the scars of those tests. Our regional response was the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, the Rarotonga Treaty, to ensure that nuclear testing in the Pacific would be a thing of the past.

Samoa reaffirms its continued support for a nuclear-test-free world. Early agreement must be reached to ban nuclear testing and to cease the creation and manufacture of more nuclear weapons.

We place great faith in the rule of law and the vital protection it offers to all States, especially to weak and small countries such as mine, with no armed force and not affiliated with any military grouping. The International Criminal Court (ICC) is an important part of the architecture of world peace based on the rule of law, and we are pleased to have been the second State party to ratify the two Kampala amendments to the Rome Statute last year. With the deposit yesterday of the ninth instrument of ratification, we hope that the Kampala amendments will come into force soon and that the ICC will become the first court since the international military tribunals in Nuremberg and Tokyo to hold individuals responsible for crimes of aggression.

The United Nations needs to adapt to the changing contemporary international environment or risk being bypassed in favour of institutions and groupings that are more responsive to the needs of Member States. The High-level Political Forum is one such welcome reform, and Samoa is very pleased to have participated in its inaugural meeting this week.

Still more fundamental reform is required to address the existing imbalances in the current power structure of the Security Council through the enlargement of both categories of membership and improvements to its working methods, so as to reflect the realities of the present time and to enhance the Council's role and effectiveness.

The renewed efforts made and great courage shown in the process of restarting the stalled Middle East peace plan for the Israeli and Palestinian peoples has our strongest endorsement. It gives rise to hope that the two-State solution, which is the only option with realistic prospects for lasting peace, can still be achieved.

The number of areas of tension and trouble spots around the globe is increasing, and they are getting deadlier. The availability of weapons of mass

destruction and, now, their use in Syria is unnerving. The untold suffering brought about by the Syrian crisis has touched many hearts, and the latest episode, where we watched in utter disbelief the use of chemical weapons to kill indiscriminately defenceless victims and even children, is incomprehensible.

We therefore welcome the joint proposal by the United States and Russia and the willingness of Syria to have its chemical weapons destroyed under the competent United Nations authority. We expect total compliance, which is required for this initiative to succeed. As long as weapons of mass destruction such as chemical weapons continue to exist, some megalomaniac will sooner or later resort to their use, with deadly consequences for the world. The ultimate safeguard is, of course, the destruction of all such weapons, whether chemical, biological or nuclear.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development called for the convening in 2014 of a Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to remind the international community that small island developing States (SIDS) face unique challenges and vulnerabilities requiring dedicated support and to help build their resilience.

Samoa is honoured to host that Conference in September 2014, on behalf of the Pacific small island developing countries. The Barbados interregional meeting endorsed "The sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships" as the overarching theme of the Conference. A renewed global partnership will help SIDS to manage a multitude of risks, so that they can pursue inclusive economic growth, social development and environmental sustainability.

Samoa has also proposed to utilize the Conference as a platform to launch specific, concrete SIDS partnerships as the most effective means to implement some of the group's challenges and as a legacy of the Conference.

In advancing the SIDS development agenda, the Samoa Conference strategically provides a window for SIDS as a group to agree on their priorities and to consolidate their positions ahead of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's leaders' summit on climate change in 2014, the post-2015 United Nations development agenda now under discussion, and the negotiations for a successor climate-change treaty post-2020, which are in progress.

Let me conclude by conveying our gratitude to all our partners — developed and developing, big and small, Governments and non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector — for their dedicated support, which has helped my country to reach a new threshold in its journey as a State Member of the United Nations. Our new status as a non-least developed country beyond January 2014 can be sustained only with the support of Samoa's truly genuine and durable partners.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Independent State of Samoa for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Independent State of Samoa, was escorted from the rostrum.*

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

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

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

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

**Sheikh Hasina** (Bangladesh) (*spoke in Bangla; English text provided by the delegation*): I congratulate President Ashe very warmly on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. I congratulate also Mr. Vuk Jeremić for his able leadership as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. I admire the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his wisdom, bold initiatives and successes as head of the United Nations.

Rapid technological innovations are transforming our world. The changes involved are also creating new conflicts within and among States. The vulnerable, the deprived and the disadvantaged have been the most affected. That reminds me of my father and the Father

of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and his visionary call, in his first appearance before the General Assembly, in 1974, for a world order based on peace and justice and a global economic arrangement to free the world of poverty, hunger and aggression. As his daughter, I am proud to have been among leaders who adopted the Millennium Declaration in 2000, to have been at the review of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2010 and to be participating now in the transition from the MDGs to the post-2015 development agenda.

I hope that this year's theme — "The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage" — will help us to design a pragmatic strategy for those goals. The Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and the newly established High-level Political Forum are making good progress. Our experience also will be useful in overcoming the challenges to the MDGs by 2015 and in preparing the post-2015 development agenda.

Bangladesh has submitted to the United Nations a draft of the post-2015 development agenda that covers socioeconomic and environmental goals and the resources required for achieving them. We also held a Global Leadership Meeting on Population Dynamics in Dhaka, whose declaration placed human individuals at the centre of the entire development agenda. The declaration incorporated population growth, ageing, urbanization and migration as the priority issues. The meeting also strongly identified the need for mainstreaming migration in the post-2015 development agenda, particularly to accommodate the expected climate migrants.

Our aim is to become a middle-income country and to realize our Vision 2021 by setting goals that are in line with the MDGs. We have already met or are on track to meet Millennium Development Goals 1 through 6. Poverty has been reduced from 56.6 per cent in 1991 to below 26 per cent today. In the past four and a half years, the average gross domestic product growth rate remained at 6.4 per cent; 50 million people have joined the middle income group; export earnings rose from \$10.53 billion in 2006 to \$27.03 billion today; remittances increased from \$5 billion in 2006 to \$14.5 billion; foreign currency reserves improved from \$3.49 billion in 2006 to \$16 billion; and power production capacity also increased from 3,200 megawatts in 2006 to 9,059 megawatts today, to name a few indicators.

Bangladesh is therefore often called a model of economic development and the standard-bearer of South Asia. Our achievements received an MDG award, a South-South Award, a Global Diversity Award and a food award for 2013 from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Those recognitions were achieved largely due to the practice of the principles found in the resolution entitled “People’s empowerment and development” (resolution 67/107), which I submitted and which the General Assembly adopted at its sixty-seventh session.

Using state-of-the-art digital technology, people today are getting more than 200 services from 4,582 digitized Union Information and Service Centres. Rural women are also receiving health-care services from 15,500 digitally interconnected community health clinics and union health centres, which have extended health-care services to people’s doorsteps. Advanced cell phone technologies are also providing services to more than 100 million subscribers.

I believe that real national development is achievable only through education. Education is the main driving force for attaining the peace and prosperity of a nation and for upholding justice, the rule of law, democratic values and people’s empowerment. Real development also demands the empowerment of women and their equal participation with men in all walks of life.

Our new educational policy provides girls free education up to higher secondary school, monthly stipends for 11.9 million students of poor families, and free textbooks to all students up to the secondary level. Our policies have also helped develop women leaders from the grass roots to the topmost level. In politics, so far, 14,000 women have been elected to local Government bodies and 70 to Parliament. Five women are serving as Ministers and one as Whip. Bangladesh is possibly the only nation today with women occupying the position of Prime Minister, Speaker, Leader of the Opposition and Deputy Leader, all at the same time. The 10 per cent of posts reserved for women have helped many succeed in reaching high positions in the judicial and administrative branches, in diplomatic posts and in the armed forces and law enforcement agencies.

Our policies of empowering the people, particularly the vulnerable, include social safety-net programmes, such as vulnerable group feeding and development; housing and livelihood for the homeless; monthly pensions for senior citizens, widows, destitute women, insolvent freedom fighters and people with disabilities;

maternity allowances for a total of 4.3 million people; and food and nutrition security for more than 1 million rural people through One House, One Farm schemes, to name a few. The disadvantaged and the physically challenged are provided with education, skill development and interest-free loans for self-employment and, in the formal sector, a 1 per cent quota has been reserved for them. For those with autism and other developmental disorders, a resolution on autism spectrum disorder was introduced by Bangladesh at the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly (resolution 67/82). It was adopted, unifying us all in our quest to provide them their rightful place in the world.

However, our progress in all spheres has been sadly held back because of climate change. Fraught with increasing natural disasters, Bangladesh faces a calamitous future due to global warming and sea level rise. It is estimated that a 1° Celsius increase in temperature would lead to a 1 metre rise of the sea level, submerging one fifth of Bangladesh and forcing 30 million climate migrants to move elsewhere, thereby creating crisis of a huge magnitude within and beyond our borders. I therefore reiterate the call that I made at the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly (see A/64/PV.4) for a legal regime to ensure the social, cultural and economic rehabilitation of climate migrants. I again call for a fast-track funding mechanism for least developed countries to ensure sustained funding for the realization of our adaptation and mitigation action plans on climate change.

Bangladesh achieved independence in 1971 through monumental sacrifices. Our sacrifice began with bloodshed to preserve our mother tongue, Bangla, on 21 February 1952. At my Government’s initiative, UNESCO immortalized that sacrifice in 1999 by UNESCO by its declaration of 21 February as International Mother Language Day. The measures we have taken so far in that regard include the establishment of the International Mother Language Institute in Dhaka and asking the United Nations to declare Bangla as one of its official languages. I thank the United Nations for introducing a Bangla website and radio programme, and the United Nations Development Programme for publishing its Asian report in Bangla.

During our 1971 war of liberation, Pakistani occupation forces — in collaboration with their local cohorts — perpetrated genocide, rape, arson and crimes against humanity. More than 3 million people sacrificed their lives and a quarter of a million women

lost their honour to achieve independence. Since then, it has been the ardent hope and aspiration of the nation to bring the perpetrators to justice. Accordingly, our Government constituted two war crimes tribunals under the international crimes tribunals act of 1973 to try them. The trials are being held with the highest standards of judicial practices. The successful completion of the trials would heal the wounds of war and move Bangladesh on to the road of peace and progress. I urge the international community to support the trials process for the sake of justice, human rights and the rule of law.

The anti-liberation forces have always been working to destroy the secular nature of our nation. Under the direct patronage of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party-Jamaat alliance Government from 2001 to 2006, they coalesced to form terrorist outfits, which began with bomb and grenade attacks killing people, especially secular leaders and members of Parliament. On 21 August 2004, they made an attempt to assassinate me by lobbing 13 grenades at a public rally that I was addressing to protest the grenade attack on the British High Commissioner on 21 May 2004. In that attack, 24 people were killed and more than 500 injured. Miraculously, I survived. As members are aware, earlier a more brutal attack was carried out, on 15 August 1975, killing my father, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the Nation, and 18 members of my family. My younger sister, Sheikh Rehana, and I survived only because we were out of the country at that time. The gruesome attacks cemented my resolve to eliminate terrorism and to adopt tough anti-terrorism and anti-money-laundering acts.

At home, our Government is entrenching democracy in order to ideologically defeat terrorism and extremism. Our commissions on elections, anti-corruption, human rights and information have been strengthened. During our Government's tenure, the elections commission has conducted 5,777 elections, electing 63,995 persons to the Parliament, city corporations, municipalities and other local bodies, without receiving any complaint. The elections commission has therefore amply proven that it can hold free, fair and credible national elections.

With respect to foreign affairs, we aim to cement peace by resolving outstanding issues with our neighbours, by increasing cooperation with them through strengthening connectivity and by maintaining good relations with all countries of the world according

to the dictum of the Father of the Nation, "Friendship towards all, malice towards none".

Our commitment to global peace is proved by our role as a top troop-contributor in United Nations peacekeeping operations and as a Vice-Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission. It is also reflected by our position on disarmament and the nonproliferation agenda. During my first term as Prime Minister, from 1996 to 2001, Bangladesh became the first South Asian nation to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. In my current term, I am happy to again be the first in the region to have signed the Arms Trade Treaty, and to have acceded to the remaining instruments of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons at this year's treaty-signing event. Our role in world affairs is based on justice and democratic values, with the aim of ensuring international peace and security and supporting disarmament.

The promotion of cultural expression and interfaith and intercultural dialogue is essential for peace and development in the post-2015 era. My personal initiatives to disseminate those values at home and abroad were recognized by UNESCO in 2012, when we were awarded the Cultural Diversity Medal. Culture is integral to the identity of every State Member of the United Nations. Therefore, my country has proposed — to UNESCO and in the General Assembly's thematic debate on culture and development — including culture as a theme of the post-2015 development agenda. I reiterate that call here today and request the support of all present.

Bangladesh is hampered by resource constraints and inadequate external assistance. To achieve the MDGs by 2015 and to implement the post-2015 development goals, we need our development partners to honour their pledges to contribute 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) as official development assistance (ODA) and 0.2 per cent of GNP as ODA to the least developed countries (LDCs). I urge them to also grant LDCs duty-free and quota-free access to their markets, as well as an equal voice in the Bretton Woods and international financial institutions and the free movement of labour. The implementation of part IV of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade is also essential for the benefit of both sending and receiving countries.

The elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda is a daunting task for all States Members of the

United Nations. We must be united in agreeing on a common framework for the development agenda that would fulfil our aspiration to build a just, prosperous and sustainable world where no person or nation is left behind. Bangladesh, representing 160 million progressive and resilient people, will lead those efforts up front.

The globalized world has unique complexities that sometimes threaten peace. Justice-based policies are imperative to eradicate such threats. Justice is the panacea for peace that enables development and progress, which in turn dispel the challenges posed to freedom, democracy, human rights, the environment and the equitable sharing of transboundary resources such as water, among others, as well as the challenges posed by climate change.

Our resolution on the culture of peace, introduced at the Assembly every year, is drafted in that spirit and is always adopted by consensus. It conveys the message of mutual respect for peoples and nations in our bid for a world of peace and promise. I believe that we all aspire to such a world for our future generations.

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

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

**Address by Mr. Nikola Gruevski, Prime Minister of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

*Mr. Nikola Gruevski, Prime Minister of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Nikola Gruevski, Prime Minister of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Gruevski** (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) (*spoke in Macedonian; English text provided by the delegation*): Allow me to begin by congratulating

President Ashe on his election and wishing him great success in presiding over the General Assembly. I would also like to congratulate the outgoing President, Mr. Vuk Jeremić, on his successful presidency. I also thank the Secretary-General for his leadership in strengthening the United Nations ability to respond to today's and tomorrow's challenges.

Each year in September, world leaders gather in New York to develop joint responses to challenges. That is a great challenge for all — national Governments, international and regional organizations, civil society and the private sector. We share the primary responsibility for a peaceful and secure world that ensures the rights and interests of individuals, nations and countries within the framework of the rule of national and international law. That was also the objective when the United Nations was established following the Second World War.

We thank the President and the Secretary-General for their engagement and leadership in the work to establish the new post-2015 development framework, building upon the Millennium Development Goals to include an economic, social and ecological dimension of sustainable development. What is important for the post-2015 development agenda — an ambitious and complex project — is the building of a global partnership among Governments, the private sector, civil society and individuals, including the mobilization of institutional and human resources.

The environment must be a key building block of sustainable development: it is nature that sustains us, and its resources should be used wisely. Economic growth facilitates human growth, reduces poverty and facilitates better education and health care and is thus a crucial element of any development framework. The Republic of Macedonia will fully contribute to the achievement of all global objectives through its national agenda, in which investment in education, health, agriculture and food, the environment and infrastructure and the partnership between the Government and the business community are the highest priorities.

Peace, conflict resolution and human rights protection are United Nations goals. Today they represent an even a greater challenge, which we should respond to and overcome. The Republic of Macedonia supports the approach of the United Nations in responding to those challenges. We actively contribute to the promotion of peace on an international level,

participating in international missions that safeguard freedom and democracy.

With regard to one of the major issues — the crisis in Syria and the internal conflict that has created more than 100,000 victims and 2 million refugees — what is more troubling is that chemical weapons were used against the Syrian people while diplomatic efforts were under way, although their use is strictly prohibited under international law. That must not be tolerated. We are among the countries to have asked for an urgent investigation under the auspices of the Secretary-General's mechanism for the investigation of the alleged use of chemical and biological weapons.

Despite differing views, all member States of the Security Council and of the United Nations agree that to achieve a final resolution of the Syrian crisis, the political approach should be given a chance. It is therefore essential to focus maximum effort on revitalizing the search for a political settlement and to convene the "Geneva II" conference as soon as possible. The Syrian people deserve better days through decisive action by the international community that will end the violence and threats.

The region of South-East Europe has entered a phase of positive development, and in general the national and regional primary objectives are either fulfilled or are within reach. Regional cooperation is expanding in a number of new fields. Despite such advances, certain long-standing unresolved or partly resolved bilateral issues are clearly having a negative impact on our present and immediate future. In the case of the Republic of Macedonia, that happens to be a serious obstacle to our agenda for integration into international organizations.

The Republic of Macedonia is celebrating the twentieth anniversary of its United Nations membership with the still unresolved issues of the use of the name of my country, the Republic of Macedonia, and of the identity of my people, the Macedonian identity. Those questions emerged because of a dispute raised by our southern neighbour Greece, which opposes our name, which is our fundamental individual and collective right. The issue, which should have been promptly resolved among neighbours, partners and future allies, has lasted for 22 years. While being a very realistic problem for my people, this is an issue that I deeply believe is essentially hypothetical and does not have any basis in international law or in the United Nations acts.

It is difficult, I would say even impossible, for someone to find a legal justification for such an objection.

The fact that the overwhelming majority of countries have recognized our constitutional name — the Republic of Macedonia — with more than 135 of them being United Nations Members, clearly shows that most of countries do not believe that the dispute has a justified basis, or if it does they denounce it. I believe that this issue was a created one, a classic case of politicization and an instrument that, approximately 20 years ago, was either supposed to make someone score some political points or, by creating an atmosphere of conflict, to bring about some strategic regional shifts, as well as to slow down the spread of freedom, democracy and the introduction of market economies in the Balkans.

At the last session, the General Assembly discussed the rule of law, with all Member States unanimously agreeing that respect for internationally agreed norms and principles was a must. Unfortunately, norms are not always adhered to. The United Nations must be neither idle in that regard nor renege from its responsibility to counter any disrespect for the rule of law.

The Republic of Macedonia became a United Nations Member in 1993 with an atypical membership condition, namely, the denial of its constitutional name. It was admitted with an interim country reference — an unprecedented event in history that was contrary to the provisions of international law. But we have endured all that, although it lingers to date as a problem.

In 1995, under United Nations mediation, we signed an interim accord with Greece by which we changed our flag and parts of our Constitution, while Greece undertook not to create obstacles to our NATO accession in 2008. Not only did Greece obstruct our act of accession to the international Organization itself, it also obstructed the processes for opening the membership procedures in another organization. For four years in a row, Greece has prevented the start of negotiations for our membership in the European Union.

On the basis of our appeal concerning the obstructions of Greece with regard to our application for membership, in 2011 the International Court of Justice — a principal organ of the United Nations established by States Members and located at The Hague — issued a judgment that Greece had violated international law by not adhering to the interim accord and that the Republic of Macedonia had not violated

international law or the commitments it had agreed to. However, we were hindered again, notwithstanding the decision of the highest body of justice in the world, and that is apparent to the Assembly and its member countries.

The United Nations was established in order to protect international law. There is no regulation of international law that restricts a country from calling itself as it wishes, or restricts its citizens from being able to be called and named as they wish. Naming is one of the five prerogatives of States, as well as an undisputed right of every Member country.

Why do we need international law if we do not adhere to it? If we turn a blind eye to that injustice and obvious violation of international law, we will be directly responsible for breaking one of the principles of world peace and of the United Nations. We do not want that, nor can we allow it. If it were not for international law, anarchy would reign and the United Nations would become a debate club without any basic competencies. We do not want to participate in that, at the expense of everything, even to our own detriment.

Not respecting international law also means having no respect for the 50 million victims that fought for it 70 years ago, as well as going against the decisions of our predecessors — the founders of the Organization. International law should not be a platitude, but rather should provide a solution to every challenge.

According to international law, the Republic of Macedonia is entitled to decide on its own name and to use the word Macedonian to denote its ethnic identity. Settling our differences with our southern neighbour is our priority, but only and precisely within the United Nations resolutions that define the solution that is the subject of discussion, and by reaching a mutually acceptable solution. We should settle our differences in no other way, especially not by expanding those limits.

Sixty-six years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, this dispute, unjustly imposed on us by Greece, violates one of the fundamental rights of the individual — the right to decide one's own name. Every representative of my people is denied the right to be called as they wish, as their mothers and fathers, grandparents and all other ancestors throughout history were called: Macedonian.

In addition to disputing the constitutional name of my country — the Republic of Macedonia — Greece also disputes the identity of my citizens, that is, it

does not allow them to be called Macedonians or the language that they speak to be called the Macedonian language, despite the fact that for more than half a century there have been departments in universities throughout the world where the Macedonian language has been studied and it has been called the Macedonian language. It is the same as if somebody denied an individual the right to speak French, German, Polish, English, Dutch, Portuguese, Japanese, Hindi or any other language.

The United Nations must not overlook the violation of the basic human right to decide one's own name, and should take action to enable the exercise of that right. In this particular case, the United Nations should take action that will lead to the settlement of the outstanding issues that Greece has with us.

At the previous session, we debated preventive diplomacy and concluded that it should be an essential element of the international community. Therefore, the United Nations must not, and should not, stand aside in this process, which severely hinders Macedonia's aspirations to a better future for its citizens.

Commitment is necessary to make it possible for Greece to begin resolving this issue, because in the past two years there has been great inertness on the part of Greece. Although that is a result of objective reasons caused by its adverse economic situation, it also entails a strategic and tactical political element based on the analysis that prolonging the process of solving the dispute would contribute to the Republic of Macedonia being isolated in its positions, which are based on international law and values, and to its resignation to a kind of self-annihilation of the State and the nation by agreeing to be renamed.

According to that line of thinking, with the lack of commitment in the discussions and the blocking of European and Euro-Atlantic integration that my country faces — integration that is directly hindered by the dispute despite our having met the standards required of us by the international multilateral organizations, NATO and the European Union — we would thus be prevented from joining and face the possibility of internal misunderstandings regarding the hindrance caused by our southern neighbour, and we would drop our guard in spite of the force of the arguments, which are on our side. It is true that by putting off the solution of the dispute, more challenges in the country and the region are created, and the tension becomes greater at certain moments. But it should be



clear to everyone that such challenges should not be considered a trigger for any changes of our justified and internationally correct position that would lead to a change in our Macedonian identity.

It is not possible to change something that has existed for centuries by imposing blockages or by threats about possible misunderstandings, tensions or unrest, not even by implementing them. The Macedonian people will never accept being renamed. If it is not possible for that issue to be resolved now — although we are the ones who are most interested in its resolution and we sincerely wish for a sustainable, balanced and, most important, mutually acceptable solution to be found — then some other generation in different circumstances will be able to resolve it, but precisely on the basis of the values, positions and principles that I mentioned before, which indicate a just and fair solution, without winners and losers.

However, I personally believe that we must not leave those thorny issues to future generations. We must try to find a solution and find strength to provide prosperity for the countries and the region. It is said that actions speak solely of those who undertake them. Faced with the lack of interest by the Hellenic Republic in substantive talks for a solution to the dispute, two months ago I suggested to the Greek Prime Minister a change in the format of discussions, that is, raising them to a much higher political level. I as a Macedonian and he as a Greek Prime Minister, together with ministers from both Governments, would meet directly and talk about a solution. That would lead to greater efficiency, because we are the ones most often called upon to solve the issue. Twenty-two years is too much time to not get anywhere and is sufficient proof that there must be a change in the game.

Our mandate, entrusted to us by the citizens, should be essential to achieving a mutually acceptable solution — which I believe can be attained — a solution that will be accepted and agreed upon by the citizens of our countries. The examples of Serbia and Kosovo, as well as those of Croatia and Slovenia, where political representatives at the highest level managed to overcome challenges, are the best proof that results can be achieved in that way. I invite the Assembly to directly take part in the realization of this initiative, overcome the standstill and, through its commitment, provide intensity and forward movement, as well as greater interest on the part of Greece in a solution and progress.

Actions speak of the one who undertakes them. With our openness and with our justified initiative, we are showing that we wish for a solution to be found. However, our meetings must not be purely a formality; rather, they must have substance and must not create an alibi for not finding a solution. I am convinced that only a substantial commitment by the international community, above all by the United Nations, will lead to a solution, taking into consideration the basic documents of the United Nations on the rights of countries and individuals, the United Nations resolutions that defined the talks, agreements guaranteed by the United Nations, the decisions of United Nations bodies and international law as a whole.

However, if there is no progress, the United Nations must not remain inactive and be satisfied with the status quo, as that would mean showing further irresponsibility. Aware of this already discouraging situation, the United Nations should help via its organs, through the General Assembly and the Security Council. It is on the basis of Security Council resolution 817 (1993) that we are in discussions with our neighbour to arrive at a solution that will free the identity of my country. Otherwise, the United Nations will be faced with failure again and will bear the responsibility for not having acted in accordance with its own principles and values.

I do not want to spare anyone. We all have responsibility, including the Organization. Instead of assuming that responsibility, the Organization has accepted the comfort of remaining silent and not resolving the dispute; instead of defending itself, it has remained inactive with regard to the status quo, which is obviously creating problems and challenges for the region. It should start considering alternative scenarios and doing more to stimulate a solution to this long-standing dispute.

I am confident that we have the capacity to jointly respond to the challenges. In the name of the people that we represent, we must assume responsibility for the present and the future. Assuming such responsibility means taking decisions, changing habits and reinforcing cooperation and prosperity, but it is something that can be done. That is the responsible way to proceed.

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

*Mr. Nikola Gruevski, Prime Minister of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now call on Mr. Pasquale Valentini, Minister for Foreign and Political Affairs, Tourism and Relations with the Public Utilities State Corporation of the Republic of San Marino.

**Mr. Valentini** (San Marino) (*spoke in Italian; English text provided by the delegation*): On behalf of the Government of San Marino, I wish to congratulate His Excellency Mr. John Ashe on his election as President of the of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. His long experience as Ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda and his in-depth knowledge of the Organization are precious resources for the United Nations. The Republic of San Marino supports the essential elements of his programme, mentioned in his inaugural address (see A/68/PV.1), and ensures its full cooperation in all work of the General Assembly.

My country also wishes to express special thanks to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his energy, commitment and extraordinary determination to the benefit of the United Nations. We appreciate the sensitivity demonstrated by the Secretary-General towards all Member States, without distinction, and his constant presence in all international politically relevant and emergency situations. His visit this year to our Republic on the occasion of the Investiture Ceremony of Their Excellencies the Captains Regent marked a significant moment in the history and public life of our small State, and was an honour for the San Marino people.

The theme chosen this year's session — "The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage" — places at the heart of our debate the need to pursue the Millennium Development Goals and to comply with the obligations undertaken. It also serves to reaffirm that it is only through the determined commitment of the Organization that those Goals can be effectively achieved.

We believe that significant progress has been made in achieving many of the Goals, such as the eradication of extreme poverty, access to drinkable water, combatting HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, and the improvement of the health conditions of women and children. However, we are well aware that the full achievement of those objectives is still far off. Despite

the progress made, we are deeply concerned for regions in the world, such as sub-Saharan Africa, that require urgent and effective action, as well as for those countries experiencing conflicts and post-conflict situations where the population lives in extreme conditions.

San Marino, like many other countries, believes that in setting the fundamental objectives of the post-2015 agenda, due account must be taken of the challenges that in the course of the past years — that is, since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration — have become more urgent. Among the challenges, peace and security, the elimination of inequalities and environmental sustainability are, in our view, top priorities, not only among States but also within States, owing to their magnitude and urgent nature.

Peace is the indispensable condition for building and fully implementing a development model centred on the human individual. Therefore, dialogue and negotiation, as tools to resolve conflicts, should be pursued with greater effort and determination by the entire international community, which considers this search to be a fundamental mission of the Organization.

Similarly, when crimes against humanity are committed — crimes that the Secretary-General has recently denounced and documented, after a strong condemnation — united action to eliminate chemical and nuclear weapons is needed in order to avoid responding to violence with violence. Too many violent conflicts have recently defined the internal life of some States and the relations among them. There are far too many dead, in particular civilians, to talk of satisfactory conditions of peace. But peace can be founded only on respect for human rights, social justice and the emancipation of the weakest segments of society.

The Republic of San Marino reasserts its own commitment to the goal of a world free of any form of racism and racial discrimination, where the freedom of expression and association, and above all the freedom of religion, are guaranteed and the personal fulfilment of individuals is ensured. To that end, we shall be guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Furthermore, San Marino praises the high-level meetings marking the first part of the session of the General Assembly, because the themes discussed are not only urgent but also extremely important.

The Republic of San Marino has always paid special attention to the most vulnerable groups, such as women, children, the elderly and the disabled. Today, women are

still the victims of discrimination and violence in many parts of the world, including in the most developed countries. In the poorest regions of our planet, maternal mortality remains a challenge. Moreover, women are the most vulnerable to HIV infection. Trafficking in women is far from being resolved. Women are often subject to abuse and to humiliating and degrading treatment, including polygamy, child marriage, kidnapping and sexual violence, including domestic violence. Women living in conflict and post-conflict situations are often subject to sexual violence, mass rape, torture, summary executions.

The advancement of women's rights and the elimination of all barriers to their full participation in political, economic and social life must be top priorities for the United Nations, along with the promotion of their economic opportunities and equality in all sectors.

The United Nations has the duty to protect children, the most vulnerable victims of violence, abuse and exploitation. In the most poverty-stricken areas of the world, the infant mortality rate is still unacceptable and a very high number of children suffer from chronic malnutrition, which is the main cause of child mortality. My country hopes for the universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols and their full implementation.

The international community must strive for the full inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in the economic, social and cultural life of the community. Despite the significant steps forward taken over the last years in terms of equality and non-discrimination against disabled persons, much remains to be done for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, through the adoption of legislative measures and national and international policies. The Republic of San Marino welcomes the convening of the High-level Meeting on the Realization of the Millennium Development Goals and Other Internationally Agreed Development Goals for Persons with Disabilities (see A/68/PV.3) and fully supports its outcome document (resolution 68/3).

In particular, it must be stressed that the protection of disabled persons can be more easily achieved if the social and economic policies of individual States and international organizations pay due attention to the institution of the family as the natural environment in which human beings are born and develop their awareness of the rights and duties regulating coexistence among people.

My country's priorities include environmental sustainability and the prevention of and response to natural disasters. Over the last years, certain regions of the world have been shaken by unprecedented natural disasters. In Asia, Latin America and Africa, in particular in the Horn of Africa, local communities have suffered from extreme conditions, experiencing the tragic consequences of their vulnerability and of food and health uncertainty.

Our thanks go to the Secretary-General, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Central Emergency Response Fund for their prompt and crucial intervention in favour of populations affected by natural disasters. However, individual Member States must do more and give rapid and effective support to populations in emergency situations, both by investing in the most vulnerable regions so as to build the capacities necessary for preventive action and by providing them with the moral and financial support necessary to cope with disasters.

The Republic of San Marino attaches great importance to the issue of preventing and responding to natural disasters. Despite its small size, it ranks fifty-first on the list of donors to the Central Emergency Response Fund.

Lastly, the finalization of the post-2015 development agenda cannot be separated from a discussion on the strengthening of global governance mechanisms, since the achievement of the new development goals will be the result of cooperation among all Member States. San Marino believes that the United Nations has the duty to retain its leadership role in global governance management.

My country is a traditional sponsor of the annual draft resolution entitled "The United Nations in global governance", to be submitted in 2013 for the third time. It reiterates the need for a more inclusive, transparent and effective approach to solving the world's problems and recognizes the central role to be played by the United Nations in global governance.

Indeed, the highly democratic nature and the universal character of the United Nations grant it indisputable legitimacy and a patrimony deriving from the cultural diversities and the traditions it represents. This leads to an approach focusing on humankind and the promotion of human rights in which the needs of the entire international community are taken into account. Indeed, global problems require global solutions.

Against that background, our Organization must adapt. The political role and authority of the General Assembly, and reform of the Security Council, are the core issues of such a reform process. The demands made today by the peoples of North Africa and the Middle East require a review of working methods and the decision-making process in order to ensure that solutions are reached in the context of which the interests and positions of all parties concerned are duly taken into account.

The Republic of San Marino has always believed in the power of dialogue, democracy and respect for others. That is why, in its centuries-old history, it has never fought any war. Drawing on that experience, we believe that — and this is our contribution to the general debate — the Millennium Development Goals and the definition of the post-2015 development agenda need to be set within this perspective.

**Address by Mr. Milo Đukanović, Prime Minister of Montenegro**

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Montenegro.

*Mr. Milo Đukanović, Prime Minister of Montenegro, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Milo Đukanović, Prime Minister of Montenegro, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Đukanović** (Montenegro) (*spoke in Montenegrin; English text provided by the delegation*): It is a great honour for me to address the Assembly today on behalf of Montenegro and to reaffirm our commitment to the United Nations and its Charter.

I wish to congratulate President Ashe on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session and to express the full support of the Montenegrin delegation to him personally and for the programme he has put forward. I wish also to extend my gratitude to the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, Mr. Vuk Jeremić, our neighbour, for his energetic efforts and leadership, which contributed to dynamic and constructive discussions on various issues on the United Nations agenda. It is a special pleasure for me to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his

tireless efforts to build a safer and more prosperous world.

The numerous challenges that the United Nations is currently facing are far more complex than previous ones. Those challenges are such that all of us have to ensure, through joint efforts, coordinated and efficient action to overcome them. That is our moral, collective obligation towards the well-being of future generations.

The challenge of achieving sustainable development and integrating its three dimensions is the greatest of them all. It is encouraging that the General Assembly, bound by the Rio outcome document (resolution 66/288, annex), is successfully addressing this priority. With the establishment of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing and the High-level Political Forum, the institutional framework as a platform for substantive work has been strengthened.

In that context, the role of the United Nations and the results of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 are becoming more important than ever. I am certain that the United Nations, guided by the synergy and pragmatic approach of its Members and all stakeholders, will be able to respond to that highly complex challenge. Such an approach will contribute to our well-being and a safer future for all of us, further strengthening the central role of the United Nations in the system of global governance.

To that end, poverty eradication and the other unmet MDGs must remain at the heart of the post-2015 development agenda. We must define future sustainable development goals on the basis of the experience and lessons learned from our success or failure in accomplishing the tasks set by the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2). Montenegro is working diligently on the MDGs and is close to meeting them.

Our sustainable development goals must be clear, universal, flexible and coherent, and represent a central part of the post-2015 global development agenda. They must clearly reflect political commitment to sustainable development and promote economic development, social inclusion, the sustainable use of natural resources and protection of the environment as well peace and security. As a member of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, Montenegro is working assiduously to define those goals, taking into

consideration national characteristics and capacities and individual countries' development priorities.

After three years of strong economic growth in Montenegro, the global economic and financial crisis affected us, too, leading to a drop in investment, banks' credit activities and foreign trade. The patterns of economic growth have changed, so we have adapted our economic policy to the new circumstances. At the same time, the Government has adopted a medium-term development plan modeled on the European Union's Europe 2020 strategy. The three pillars that Montenegro will base its sustainable development on are smart growth, sustainable growth and inclusive growth. The national plan will make our structural and institutional reforms more consistent with development-oriented public measures and investments. Aware of the importance of that issue, we are setting up a centre for sustainable development in Montenegro that will become operational in early 2014. We hope that in time it will take on a regional role and become part of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, based on the outcome of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

One issue that is inseparable from the post-2015 development framework is that of climate change. Montenegro is committed to intensifying its efforts to promote the adoption by 2015 of a comprehensive and legally binding agreement that would apply to all. We call on every country, in particular the major world economies, to step up their efforts related to mitigating the impact of climate change and reaching a global climate agreement. In that regard, we emphasize our full support for the Secretary-General's initiative in convening a conference on climate change in September 2014.

The maintenance and promotion of international peace and security is a continuing challenge for the United Nations. We note that in some crisis areas, such as Mali, significant progress has been made in reducing violence and instability, while the situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, the Sudan and South Sudan still need the continued attention and efforts of the Security Council and other relevant actors.

Due to the overall consequences for the country itself and for the broader region, the crisis in Syria regrettably still monopolizes the attention of the global body politic and is at the top of the agenda of the United Nations. We are deeply concerned about the continuing

deterioration of the situation in Syria and most strongly condemn any form of violence, killing of civilians and violation of human rights. We especially condemn the use of chemical weapons confirmed by the United Nations inspection team, which Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has labeled a war crime. We urge that those responsible for crimes in Syria and for violations of international law be brought to account.

The agreement reached between the United States and the Russian Federation gives us hope for a diplomatic solution to the crisis and an end to the conflict in Syria through resolute action on the part of the Security Council. We believe that a political solution and a democratic transition are the only way to end a tragic conflict that has led to a humanitarian crisis of incalculable proportions, affecting the whole region.

The case of Syria, among others, highlights the importance of preventive measures and mediation in preserving international peace and security. Strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to achieve an early response and suppress threats before they become a source of conflict will be key to dealing with similar situations in future. Montenegro supports the promotion of the concept of the responsibility to protect and its operationalization, with prevention as an integral element. We are in favour of continuing the debate on the international community's responsibility for taking timely and decisive action to prevent mass suffering.

In the context of the situation in the Middle East, we are particularly pleased by the resumption of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations after several stalled years, and we commend the mediation efforts of the United States Secretary of State. Montenegro believes that direct negotiations are the best way to reach a comprehensive and sustainable settlement.

With the intention of taking on additional responsibilities and contributing to the promotion of global peace and security and the observance of universal values, rights and freedoms as a responsible and proactive member of the international community, Montenegro is seeking a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for 2026-2027.

Besides its strong support for improving the conception and structural development of United Nations peacebuilding and peacekeeping capacities, Montenegro recognizes the importance of the rule of

law and the protection of civilians, particularly women and children, and urges United Nations missions to consistently fulfil their mandates in that area. We condemn all forms of violence, especially sexual violence against women and girls in conflict situations, and we therefore support the implementation of the agenda on women and peace and security and, in that context, Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and other relevant resolutions.

The adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty as the first legally binding instrument in that area will undoubtedly contribute to global efforts in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. I am pleased to emphasize that Montenegro was a firm supporter of a comprehensive and strongly worded Arms Trade Treaty from the outset and was among the first 65 countries to sign it. We are conscious of how important it is that the Treaty enters into force as soon as possible and will therefore make every effort to ensure its speedy ratification.

The increased integration of human rights into every aspect of the work of the United Nations, ensuring universal respect for human rights, and the effectiveness of the United Nations system in the area of human rights constitute the guidelines for action for Montenegro, especially through the Human Rights Council, of which my country is a member. By cooperating actively with the Council and its special proceedings, as well as with Member States, we contribute to timely and efficient deliberations on issues relating to the promotion of human rights and responding adequately to cases of human rights violations.

At the national level, we are striving to strengthen a political, social and economic environment that allows for the free exercise of human rights without any form of discrimination. We focus particularly on strengthening the position and role of women in society and on preventing violence against them and other vulnerable groups, including children, disabled persons and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. As Chair of the Decade of Roma Inclusion for 2005-2010, Montenegro has also focused particularly on improving the position of Roma in our society.

Montenegro remains committed to an effective multilateral system in which the United Nations plays a central role, and we support pragmatically oriented initiatives and actions for its reform. We believe that reforming and reorganizing the Security Council, as the key actor in the maintenance of international peace,

is essential, as are revitalizing the General Assembly and reforming the Economic and Social Council. In general, such reform, particularly of the Security Council, would contribute greatly to strengthening the position, relevance and authority of the Organization as a whole and bringing it into harmony with modern geopolitical processes and challenges.

Montenegro's work within the Organization is based on the principle of multilateral cooperation and respect for the principles and values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. We are aware of the importance to our visibility and effectiveness at the international level of strong and stable neighbourly relations and of strengthening cooperation in all areas.

We are successfully implementing the internal reforms required for the achievement of our main foreign policy priorities — membership in the European Union and NATO. The accession negotiations with the European Union, after the provisional closing of two chapters, are entering a new and more demanding phase. The new approach in that phase of the process is based on reforms in the areas of the rule of law, strengthening judicial processes and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, which are of particular importance for the citizens of Montenegro.

In parallel, my country is strongly committed to Euro-Atlantic integration. As a country that will soon become a NATO member, we are working devotedly on the fourth annual national programme and reform implementation in order to be fully ready by the time our invitation for alliance membership is formalized. We believe that membership will also contribute to reinforcing security in the Balkans, where events of the recent bitter past can be attributed, in part, to a lack of strong security arrangements.

Montenegro is seen as a stability factor in our region, as confirmed by continuing advances in political, economic, social and cultural cooperation with all of its neighbours. With regional cooperation high on our agenda, Montenegro actively participates in regional organizations. We believe that the recently launched West Balkans 6+2 initiative, the modalities of which are the subject of intense discussion, will help us to focus regional activities on specific development projects of common interest to participating States that are aimed at speeding up European integration and improving the quality of life of our citizens. We believe that those efforts, together with European Union synergy, the South-East European Cooperation Process

and the Regional Cooperation Council, will draw the States of the region closer together and to the common goal of the European Union.

The international community, led by the United Nations, with the active participation and decisive contributions of all stakeholders, must continue its search for adequate responses and channel its efforts towards solving the increasingly complex issues and challenges that we are facing. Each and every country, irrespective of size, has, without any doubt, a part to play in finding such solutions, based on the mutual trust and cooperation necessary to build a better world.

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

*Mr. Milo Đukanović, Prime Minister of Montenegro, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Nguyen Tan Dung, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam**

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

*Mr. Nguyen Tan Dung, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Tan Dung, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Nguyen Tan Dung** (Viet Nam) (*spoke in Vietnamese; English text provided by the delegation*): It is a distinct honour for me to address this forum. I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to Mr. John Ashe on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. I am certain that under his leadership, the Assembly will successfully define the post-2015 development agenda at this session. I would also like to express my deepest respect to the Secretary-General for his significant contributions to the continuing work of the United Nations.

Over the past 100 years, the miraculous advances of science and technology have changed our world profoundly, making it appear smaller. People's lives

have improved. Yet along with those accomplishments have come latent dangers. The long-standing dream shared by people across the world of living a safe, peaceful, prosperous and happy life free from hunger remains far from achieved.

Humankind yearns for peace, so why is it that many regions remain under the constant threat of disputes, conflicts and wars? The global economy is growing, so how is it that billions of people still live in abject poverty? Science and technology have brought about outstanding advancement, so why have natural disasters, epidemics and pollution become increasingly severe and unpredictable? Those questions impose an enormous responsibility on all of us, as the community of nations.

Throughout history, wars have destroyed many civilizations. In only the past 100 years, two world wars and many others — including that in Viet Nam — have cost millions of lives and produced devastating consequences over generations. While peace, cooperation and development are the dominant trend, the threat of war is ever present.

Violence in the Middle East and North Africa is of grave concern. The latest instance in Syria, involving the use of chemical weapons, needs to be strongly condemned. We must give peace every possible chance and find solutions to eliminate chemical weapons, in accordance with international law and United Nations resolutions.

Unpredictable developments in the Korean peninsula persist. Territorial disputes still rage in the East China Sea and South China Sea. Just one single incident or ill-conceived act could trigger conflict, or even war.

In the East China Sea, through which over half of the world's shipping passes, maintaining maritime security and freedom of navigation is critical, not only to the region but to the world. Viet Nam consistently pursues a policy of peaceful resolution of disputes to defend its legitimate interests and fully respect those of the global community, in accordance with international law, the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, other regional agreements, and efforts to elaborate a code of conduct.

Ho Chi Minh used the words of Thomas Jefferson in Viet Nam's Declaration of Independence:

“All men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”.

All human life is precious, irrespective of race, religion or gender. Taking a single life causes heart-breaking pain to any family, be it here in Manhattan or far away in a remote corner of the Earth. Therefore, any effort to prevent conflict must be valued and supported. Any effort to preserve peace must be fully exhausted. Any act to provoke war must be condemned and stopped. A physician must do whatever is possible to cure a patient if there is but a glimpse of life left. And we must devote all of our efforts to preserving peace if there is but a feeble sign that war can be averted, for war will take the life of not only one, but many people, including many women and children.

Peace can be built and preserved only when all countries respect each other's independence, sovereignty and cultural traditions, without imposing one's own morality on another. Conflict and war can be averted only if we eliminate actions that run counter to the Charter of the United Nations and international law, dominance and power politics.

Strategic trust among nations must be constantly nurtured with honesty, sincerity and concrete actions. In the lifting of the embargo against Cuba or the recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, for example, the role of the United Nations and the Security Council should be promoted. The international community expects the major Powers to set an example for others in peacebuilding. The Security Council should be the fulcrum in building consensus for driving all nations to join hands in preserving peace. The deadly hand of war, conflict, terrorism and violence lies in wait to take the lives of hundreds, thousands or even millions of innocent people. Let us not offer war a hand or look away. Let us stop it.

I share the Secretary-General's view that the Millennium Development Goals are our most successful endeavour against hunger and poverty to date, but let us not forget that close to 40 per cent of global wealth rests in the hands of no more than 1 per cent of the world's population. The gap between rich and poor continues to widen. Over 1 billion people still live in extreme poverty. Hundreds of millions of people, especially children, continue to be hungry and food insecure,

ill and without basic medicines, and they face a grim future due to the lack of educational opportunities.

At the same time, deforestation, exhaustive exploitation of natural resources, pollution and other factors have led to global warming, rising sea levels, unpredictable weather, natural disasters and new epidemics. Those grave dangers are driving poorer nations into deeper destitution.

We must rally together to escape poverty, fight disease, protect the environment, respond to natural disasters and build a greener and more just world. Poor countries and peoples need to lift themselves out of poverty with the help of wealthier people and more developed countries. That help must arise not only from a sense of philanthropy — as we say in Viet Nam, whole leaves wrap torn ones — but above all from a sense of responsibility and understanding of our joint destiny. After all, poorer people and nations have contributed to the wealth of richer nations and people, and they deserve a more prosperous future.

I urge the global community to craft, with a sense of responsibility and humanity, an ambitious post-2015 development agenda and to redouble our efforts to promote peace, to end hunger and poverty and to protect our planet. Together we can develop a road map of actions for poorer nations to effectively participate in international agreements and institutions and to face and overcome global challenges and dangers in the spirit of the motto adopted by Alexandre Dumas's musketeers — “One for all and all for one”.

As a Vietnamese, what I have shared with the Assembly comes from experiences soaked in sweat and blood. Just a few decades ago, the very name “Viet Nam” was synonymous with war, division, blood and tears. A remote country called Viet Nam suffered 15 million tons of bombs — four times the amount used in the Second World War. Each Vietnamese bore nearly 10 times his or her weight in bombs, not to mention our population's suffering from over 70 million litres of the silent but deadly Agent Orange/dioxin compound.

According to a traditional Vietnamese expression, benevolence triumphs over brutality and virtue drives out tyranny. With courageous sacrifice and creativity and with the support of peace-loving people, nations and international organizations, Viet Nam has defended its independence, united and rebuilt from the ashes of war, and left the past behind to become an active and responsible member of the international community.



Viet Nam has integrated the Millennium Development Goals into the formulation and implementation of our development strategy, and it has balanced economic development and social security. We have received a United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization award for our outstanding achievements in poverty reduction. Because we consider people the goal and centre of development, Viet Nam pays special attention to providing health care, education and the means of communication even for people in remote, underdeveloped areas and among our ethnic minorities.

Viet Nam is working actively with other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations community to build it into a common house for all South-East Asian nations that were once deeply divided by war. That work vividly embodies our aspirations to a bright future of peace, cooperation and prosperity, to unity in diversity, and to the accomplishment of the Millennium Development Goals.

Having survived devastating wars of aggression and extreme poverty, our aspirations to peace and prosperity burn ever more brightly. We are committed to doing more to participate in peacebuilding, poverty reduction, environmental protection and other efforts. We stand ready to join United Nations peacekeeping operations. We are willing to share our resources and experience as a tribute to the international friends who have supported us in our struggle for independence, unification and poverty reduction.

Viet Nam remains and always will be a reliable partner and responsible member of the international community. In the area of food, for example, Viet Nam, a country that has traditionally suffered from hunger, has become a leading rice exporter. We have achieved national food security but consider it our responsibility to help maintain global food security. We not only export, but also help countries to become self-reliant in food production, as we have done in Cuba, Mozambique, Angola, Mali, Madagascar, Myanmar and elsewhere. We hope developed countries and international organizations will participate in supporting similar programmes as a meaningful and substantive multiparty model of cooperation.

I am deeply convinced that the post-2015 development agenda will be created and finalized for a world free from war and hunger and devoted to peace and cooperation, for sustainable development and prosperity for humankind, and for our evergreen planet. Viet Nam commits itself to that purpose.

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

*Mr. Nguyen Tan Dung, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Jiri Rusnok, Prime Minister of the Czech Republic**

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic.

*Mr. Jiri Rusnok, Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Jiri Rusnok, Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Rusnok** (Czech Republic): The Assembly is meeting at a time marked by significant challenges. Let me mention a few which I regard as the most pressing.

The state of the world economy remains fragile, but slowly we seem to be entering a path towards economic recovery and, hopefully, sustainable growth. The security situation in many parts of the world is improving, but we are witnessing many local conflicts that endanger the overall regional balance. The conflict in Syria must come to an end on the basis of a negotiated political settlement. The danger of a nuclear conflict is diminishing thanks to the decreasing number of nuclear warheads and carriers in the possession of the nuclear Powers. Yet the currently blocked negotiations with the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons should be a matter of concern. Fundamental human rights and freedoms are still at risk in many countries. The gap between the rich and the poor is ever widening despite many efforts to alleviate world hunger and poverty. At the same time, some countries have managed to reduce the gap.

International cooperation is essential if we want to address those and other challenges. The United Nations remains the most suitable body to pool the global efforts and resources needed for that task. The world is changing, and its traditional platform must adapt as well. From the start, we should formulate realistic

plans and procedures. However, their implementation will not be possible without the necessary political will.

A country's reputation depends not only on its size or economic output, but also on its readiness to actively engage in addressing and meeting the challenges of the current globalized world. The Czech Republic, a country with the historical experience of an undemocratic regime, is ready to share its experience from its democratic transition process, as well as to offer its help, resources and know-how to countries undergoing their own democratic transition.

The year 2013 will mark a turning point for European economies. The Czech economy is highly dependent on international trade, and I strongly believe that free and fair trade is one of the best tools for improving the world economic situation. The multilateral approach to trade issues should be revitalized and cooperation within the World Trade Organization (WTO) reinforced. I sincerely wish much success to the new WTO leadership.

The United Nations has always played a key role in defusing armed conflicts between and within the Member States. Its role in helping to resolve the conflict in Syria is crucial. The confirmed use of chemical weapons in Syria is deeply worrying. Any use of chemical weapons is unacceptable. Whoever gave the order to initiate the chemical attack has gravely violated the principle of responsibility to protect the civilian population. The attack constitutes a war crime and a crime against humanity, and its perpetrators should be held accountable before the International Criminal Court.

The Czech Republic welcomes the decision of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on the expeditious destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, which is now being adopted in The Hague, and looks forward to the adoption of a Security Council resolution on the issue in the coming hours.

The conflict does not have a military solution; only a negotiated political settlement will re-establish peace in Syria. The Czech Republic calls on all parties, especially on the Syrian Government, to fully implement the 2012 Geneva communiqué (S/2012/523, annex). The Czech Republic supports and will continue to support the efforts of the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross to meet the growing humanitarian needs in Syria and the neighbouring countries.

The Czech Republic acknowledges developments in the transformation process of Myanmar. I strongly encourage the country's leaders, in accordance with their public pronouncements, to actively pursue the process of amending the national Constitution in order to improve democratic standards in the country.

As I mentioned earlier, the role of the United Nations in resolving armed conflicts is indispensable. United Nations peacekeeping operations are an important tool for sustainable and durable solutions to violent conflict worldwide. Having participated in United Nations operations in recent years in relatively small numbers, my country, the Czech Republic, is ready to substantially increase the presence of its military personnel in peacekeeping operations.

The Czech Republic, a non-nuclear-weapon State, has always strongly advocated for the unfettered right to develop, research and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Nevertheless, that right should be fully exercised only in conjunction with honouring all non-proliferation obligations. The long-standing objective of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons may be achieved only if the non-proliferation regime meets all demands for its strengthening. The upcoming meeting of the group of governmental experts on a fissile material cut-off treaty will be a step in the right direction. The Czech Republic greatly appreciates that fact that the international community was finally able to complete the Arms Trade Treaty negotiations.

I should like to share my view of the role of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Czech Republic has been actively involved from the very beginning in the discussions on the formulation of a new development agenda. We are ready and committed to take part in its implementation. As formulated by the Secretary-General in his report (A/68/202), the MDGs have been the most successful global anti-poverty push in history and have made a great contribution to raising public awareness, increasing political will and mobilizing resources.

Some of the MDG targets have been met already; some are within close reach. But the results are uneven among and within countries and there is a lot of unfinished business. I can assure the Assembly that my Government remains committed to the MDGs, as reflected in both our policies and our practical actions.

The future development agenda should build on the success of the MDGs and bring together diverse

development actors. I would like to support the single overarching post-2015 framework, which will link poverty eradication in all its dimensions and the promotion of sustainable development. I therefore call for the full integration of all relevant international processes, which have been separate until now, in particular the review of the MDGs and the work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

We have to make sure that the future goals will be universal for all countries but at the same time remain realistic, taking into account the actual possibilities of each country. They must be achievable and measurable. I appreciate the fact that the report of the High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda puts emphasis on inclusive growth and considers the role of innovation, technology and the private sector actors. The proposed development goal to secure sustainable energy is a very good example and should figure among the future development priorities.

In December, the international community will commemorate the sixty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The situation of human rights has improved in some areas. New human rights challenges have emerged. A great deal of work still lies ahead of us. The Czech Republic, a member of the Human Rights Council and the country of Václav Havel, will always defend human rights wherever they are violated.

In conclusion, I should like to focus on issues related to the process of reforming the United Nations. The Czech Republic appreciates the dedicated work of the Secretary-General, which is transforming the United Nations into a more effective and accountable system. Unfortunately, there are not enough means to fund all initiatives. We all have to do more with less. I am sure that we will find internal reserves that will allow the United Nations to achieve the tasks entrusted to it with greater success. By performing well and by being responsive to its Member States, the United Nations will strengthen the political will of its Members to invest in multilateral forums and thus contribute to a safer world.

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

*Mr. Jiri Rusnok, Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Jean Asselborn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

**Mr. Asselborn** (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): The President of the General Assembly has chosen for this session and this general debate the theme “The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage”. He has thus called on the Assembly to be bold and ambitious, to work together towards the same objective, to prove to the world that we will not accept defeat, and to exert our collective responsibility in order to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development.

Luxembourg stands ready to do so. We are ready to work towards a renewed global partnership based on a common understanding of our shared humanity, on a new spirit of solidarity, cooperation and mutual accountability, and on coordinated action that embraces security, development, governance, human rights and the rule of law.

To live free from fear, conflict and violence is the most fundamental human right, and yet we witness unspeakable violations of human rights and international humanitarian law every single day. The use of missiles, bombs, cluster munitions and chemical weapons, the systematic imposition of sieges, forced displacements, torture, sexual violence, violations and abuses committed against children, more than 2 million refugees, more than 100,000 dead — these are the chilling results of two and a half years of brutal repression and conflict in Syria. The list of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed on a daily basis continues to grow.

Against such horror, I repeat once again that the situation in Syria must be referred to the International Criminal Court. Allow me to quote High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres:

“Syria has become the great tragedy of this century — a disgraceful humanitarian calamity with suffering and displacement unparalleled in recent history”.

The Syrian people need assistance now, and they have the right to such assistance under the most basic criteria codified in international humanitarian law. The Syrian authorities must urgently meet the demands of

humanitarian actors by immediately facilitating their free and unimpeded access to the affected populations. It is urgent to remove bureaucratic obstacles, to ensure the delivery of medical supplies, to institute humanitarian pauses, to open up humanitarian routes and to allow access to populations in need across borders and across conflict lines.

As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Luxembourg is working with Australia to amplify the demands of humanitarian actors to the parties to the conflict in Syria and to secure them in a unified message from the Security Council. I hope that those efforts will come to fruition very soon.

While we have been able to make progress in past few days on the issue of chemical weapons, and I hope we will adopt, a few hours from now a Security Council resolution establishing a strong and binding mechanism to ensure the control and destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons as soon as possible. Yet we cannot and must not forget the humanitarian crisis that continues to unfold in Syria and its neighbouring countries, particularly Lebanon and Jordan but also in Iraq and Turkey. For its part, Luxembourg has fulfilled the pledges it made in Kuwait City on 30 January last, and we have just decided to increase our humanitarian aid to the populations affected by the Syrian crisis to €7.6 million.

The vigorous appeal made on Tuesday by the Secretary-General should resonate with all of us. Let us break our deafening silence and live up to our collective and individual responsibilities. We all agree that a lasting solution to the conflict in Syria can only be political. Here too, let us live up to our responsibilities; let us seize the momentum created by the agreement on chemical weapons, set a date for the "Geneva II" conference, and encourage the parties to participate therein in order to start down a road, on the basis of the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012 (S/2012/523, annex), leading to a cessation of hostilities and to a necessary political transition in Syria that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.

Tragic as it may be, the situation in Syria must not lead us to forget the plight of the Palestinian people. We must not forget the urgent need to see the creation of a contiguous and viable Palestinian State, living in peace and security, side by side with the State of Israel. I welcome the commitment and resolve of the Secretary of State of the United States, John Kerry, to restart direct negotiations between the Israelis and

Palestinians. I also praise the political courage and the sense of responsibility shown by the Israeli and Palestinian authorities in accepting to return to the negotiating table. Eight rounds have been held since 14 August. We hope that the negotiations will intensify in October and lead to a result within the agreed time frame of nine months.

We all know that this initiative is probably our last opportunity to act. We must not let it slip away. If we do, it could lead to dramatic consequences. The time has come to make difficult decisions, to take the necessary historic measures in line with the long-term interests of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. The time has come to implement the two-State solution. This is no time for unilateral acts that fuel the dynamic of mistrust. Building illegal settlements and destroying Palestinian homes and infrastructure in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, must stop immediately. The attacks on Gaza must stop. All violence must stop.

With its partners in the European Union, Luxembourg stands ready to pursue its active contribution to the ongoing efforts, in close cooperation with key stakeholders, the Quartet and countries in the region. There can be no security in Israel without a viable Palestinian State. There can be no security in the region without peace in all countries of the Middle East.

We must shake up the status quo. We must break the cycle of violence. This imperative also applies to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. We dearly hope that the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, signed on 24 February in Addis Ababa, represents a turning point for consolidating peace and regional stability. The second meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, held at the level of the Heads of State and Government on Monday in New York City, led to the adoption of regional benchmarks and indicators on progress, which will facilitate the implementation of the Framework.

This is an important first step. It must be followed by concrete action at the political, security and economic levels. The parties must fulfil all their commitments diligently and in good faith, including a commitment neither to tolerate nor to provide assistance or support of any kind to armed groups, in particular the Mouvement du 23 mars, which continues to operate in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. We must tackle the root causes of recurring violence and

lay the foundation for reviving the regional economy in order to initiate a virtuous circle that will allow the people of the region to start down the path towards sustainable development.

The commitment of the international community is all the more necessary in a situation that, regrettably, has received far less attention. I am referring to the humanitarian tragedy unfolding in the Central African Republic, affecting the entire population of 4.6 million people. Law and order and the rule of law have collapsed. Human rights violations have become commonplace, as have arbitrary arrests and detention, torture, sexual violence against women and children, rape and extrajudicial executions. According to our sources, Séléka militias have also recruited and used at least 3,500 child soldiers. No one can be indifferent to those figures. The humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate. The prevailing insecurity has further reduced access to the affected populations. We must act immediately.

Restoring security and law and order must be our first priority. We strongly welcome the decision of the African Union Peace and Security Council to authorize the deployment of an international support mission to the Central African Republic. The United Nations should give its full logistical and financial support to this African-led mission. Our credibility is at stake.

We all know the disastrous effects of the unregulated trade in conventional arms — violent repression, armed conflict, crime and widespread violence. That is why the Arms Trade Treaty is so important. The General Assembly adopted the Treaty by a very large margin five months ago. Luxembourg is proud to have been among the first sponsors of that important initiative. We are proud to have signed the Treaty as soon as it was ready for signature on 3 June. The national ratification procedure has started, and members can count on our support to ensure that the Treaty comes rapidly into full force. In that regard, allow me to congratulate the homeland of the President of the General Assembly, Antigua and Barbuda, on having ratified the Treaty. I also welcome the fact that more than 110 States Members of the United Nations, including the United States of America, have already signed this new legal instrument.

The Arms Trade Treaty is a significant step forward for international law, international humanitarian law and human rights. In that context, I welcome yesterday's important Security Council debate on the impact of the

illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons on international peace and security (see S/PV.7036), as well as its adoption of resolution 2117 (2013). The Council has thereby rightly underscored the need for an integrated response from the international community that takes into account the negative effects of those illicit activities on security, governance, the rule of law and development, as well as the links between such activities and other threats to international peace and security such as terrorism, piracy and transnational organized crime.

The recent callous attack on a shopping centre in Nairobi has again demonstrated the importance of our ongoing vigilance in the fight against terrorism. This unacceptable act must encourage us to further support African efforts aimed at freeing Somalia from the threat of Al-Shabaab. During the New Deal for Somalia conference held on 16 September in Brussels, I had the opportunity to reaffirm that Luxembourg remained committed to working alongside Somalia. We are convinced that with the determined support of the international community — the African Union and the United Nations in particular, the Government and people of Somalia will be able to continue their journey towards peace, security and prosperity.

The risk of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remains just as real a threat as the threat of terrorism. Yesterday, negotiations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the E3+3 Governments, led by the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Ms. Ashton, resumed here in New York. We support those efforts. We seek solid negotiations quickly leading to concrete outcomes and a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear crisis.

Sanctions are not in and of themselves an end. They are a global response to Iran's refusal to meet its international obligations and to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency. We encourage the new Iranian leadership to engage in constructive dialogue, to take the measures necessary to prove to the international community that its nuclear programme is intended for exclusively peaceful purposes, and to turn a new leaf in its relations with the global community. I hope that the recent phone call between President Obama and President Rouhani will help move the situation in that direction.

When we talk about sustainable development and the creation of the post-2015 development agenda, we cannot ignore the devastating effects of conflicts and

violence on development. The crisis situations and threats that I have just mentioned illustrate this clearly. We must also speak firmly about governance that is conducive to development, institutions that guarantee the rule of law, freedom of expression, and transparent and accountable Governments. We must talk about justice, the fight against impunity and respect for international law.

Luxembourg fully subscribes to the Secretary-General's call for the post-2015 objectives to be based on the international norms and principles of human rights. Those objectives must apply to everybody and help address the global challenges of the twenty-first century, building on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They must contribute to eliminating poverty and promoting sustainable development, and be integrated into one coherent framework.

The special event held the day before yesterday by the General Assembly allowed us to take stock of ongoing work towards achieving the MDGs and to welcome significant progress made, but also to identify the sectors where it will be important to redouble our efforts. As the Secretary-General has reminded us, the picture before us is only half finished. We must therefore speed up the march towards attaining the MDGs. We must renew our commitment. We must keep our promises.

My country will continue to do its part. Since 2009, our official development assistance has amounted to 1 per cent of our gross national income. We are determined to maintain this effort despite the crisis.

At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in June 2012, we reaffirmed our commitment to sustainable development in its three interdependent dimensions: economic development, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. We reiterated our determination to address the threats that climate change and environmental degradation pose to humankind. With its European partners, Luxembourg has made binding commitments to reduce its carbon emissions and to mitigate the effects of climate change. We are resolved to do our all to achieve a universal climate agreement in 2015.

Last year in the Hall of the General Assembly, our Head of State, the Grand Duke, underscored Luxembourg's willingness to serve the United Nations (see A/67/PV.9). Today, I take this opportunity to thank the Assembly for having elected my country to a two-

year term on the Security Council. That tenure, the first in our history, is not only an honour but a responsibility that we do not take lightly. Each day since 1 January, Luxembourg has worked in concert with its partners to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security and to assume our common responsibility to prevent, to preserve and to protect. No task is more noble. No task is more urgent in the current context.

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

**Mr. Venizelos** (Greece) (*spoke in French*): I congratulate Mr. John Ashe on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. I convey my deep gratitude and appreciation to the Secretary-General for his work to strengthen the role and effectiveness of the United Nations, fully supporting the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

I take this opportunity to emphasize my country's alignment with the positions of the European Union, presented by the President of the European Council, Mr. Herman Van Rompuy, in his address (see A/68/PV.8).

Greece remains fully committed to the objectives of the United Nations, whose universal ideals have never ceased to inspire us. We are deeply committed to our collective work for sustainable peace, prosperity and safeguarding human dignity. In that spirit, we lend our full support to the efforts to reform and strengthen the Organization in order to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

We welcome the special event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the High-Level Political Forum that took place this week and highlighted the broad themes of international development and cooperation.

The effective management of migration can have a positive impact on the countries of origin and of destination. The High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development to be held on 3 and 4 October presents an important opportunity to develop a global agenda for the effective and inclusive management of migration and to reaffirm the necessary political will. Greece is committed to participating actively in joint efforts to that end.

Greece and the other countries of southern Europe are under great pressure with regard to the issue of illegal immigration, which weighs heavily on our financial and administrative capacities. The effective management of migration represents for our country a key political option in that it relates directly to safeguarding and respecting human rights, social cohesion and public security, and to maintaining the economic stability of our countries. On the basis of our experience of recent years, we have reviewed our national action plan to reform the system of asylum and immigration. Furthermore, migration and mobility issues will be among the priorities of the Greek presidency of the European Council in the first term of 2014.

The promotion of human rights is a priority interest. Greece will lend its full support to strengthening the Human Rights Council with a solid mandate. Greece is determined to contribute actively to the mission of the Human Rights Council and is presenting its candidature for the 2017–2019 term. Greece is strongly devoted to the decisive role of the United Nations in peace and security. In spite of financial restraints, we remain firmly committed to peacekeeping operations, to which we contribute personnel and resources, including to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. We support efforts to prevent conflicts and promote the peaceful settlement of disputes. Moreover, we attach particular importance to cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations in the field of crisis management, and we welcome the work undertaken to further strengthen that cooperation.

*(spoke in English)*

The relaunching of peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, facilitated by the United States, provides an important opportunity to reach a final settlement to this long-standing problem, to the benefit and stability in the wider region, based on a two-State solution with a secure Israel and a sovereign, contiguous and viable Palestine living side by side. Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas must be praised for their leadership and courage to engage in the peace talks. Now is the time to take bold and concrete steps towards peace.

Greece is very concerned with the ongoing crisis in Syria, which jeopardizes stability in a very fragile region. Greece and the European Union have unequivocally condemned the use of chemical weapons, and we strongly support the United States-Russian Federation initiative for the collection and destruction

of Syria's chemical arsenal. We welcome the diplomatic breakthrough expected to be achieved by the Security Council on the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. It is our fervent hope that it will be a crucial turning point in the Syrian crisis, providing vital momentum towards a "Geneva II"-type process that can take us to a viable and inclusive political resolution of the Syrian crisis.

Greece has always been a firm supporter of a European future for the Balkan region. The process of European integration means leaving behind old, divisive mentalities and moving towards an era of close cooperation, on the basis of shared values and principles. Demonstrating political courage, Belgrade and Pristina concluded an historic agreement in April, which is a major development towards consolidating peace and stability in the Western Balkans and advancing the European integration of both sides.

We seek to develop our relations with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on the basis of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and within the framework of good neighbourly relations. Greece is committed to the ongoing United Nations-led negotiation process and to finding a solution on the issue of a name. We therefore continue our efforts to reach a mutually acceptable name for all uses, *erga omnes*, that will leave no grey areas and allow for a clear distinction between our neighbouring country and the region of Macedonia in northern Greece. The solution of the name issue will enable both Greece and its neighbour to develop multidimensional and productive cooperation at the bilateral and regional levels. It will also contribute to the stability and prosperity of South-East Europe and boost the country's Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

Thirty-nine years after the Turkish military invasion of the island, the Cyprus problem remains first and foremost an issue of illegal military occupation of well over one third of the territory of a Member State of the United Nations and European Union. A comprehensive agreed settlement of that major international problem is a top priority for the foreign policy of Greece. In that context, Greece greatly values the Secretary-General's mission of good offices, in particular his ongoing efforts to successfully relaunch the intercommunal negotiating process. We also fully support President Anastasiadis' renewed constructive package proposal.

We hope that Ankara will decide at long last to pursue a new policy of normalization of its relations

with the Republic of Cyprus. Such a Turkish policy would decisively facilitate the relaunching of intercommunal negotiations on a just and viable solution to the Cyprus issue within the framework of the relevant Security Council resolutions, in line with the *acquis communautaire* and approved by the Cypriot people through a referendum. The new developments in the energy sector regarding the exploitation of hydrocarbons can serve as a factor for development, peace and stability throughout the region.

Relations with our neighbour Turkey are set on a positive course. Institutionalized cooperation at the highest governmental level, as well as increasing tourism and economic cooperation, can create further potential for the future. Nevertheless, critical factors needed to promote substantial and promising prospects for our relationship with our eastern neighbour are full respect for international law and international legality and, within this framework, a just and viable solution to the Cyprus issue.

The Greek people have succeeded in restoring the country's credibility. Greece has already achieved the highest structural primary surplus in the Eurozone — 5 per cent of gross domestic product. Greece has achieved a peacetime historical first — a fiscal adjustment of 19 per cent of gross domestic product in the four years from 2009 to 2013. We have done so in spite of six years of recession. We have carried out

necessary structural reforms in public administration, the investment sector and the labour market, and our privatization programme is already yielding results. But all of that has, of course, come through great sacrifices borne by the Greek people and at a very high social and political cost. Defending democracy and the rule of law against forms of racist, xenophobic conduct and all forms of social violence is a fundamental engagement of the Hellenic Republic.

I also wish to say a few words about the priorities of Greece's upcoming presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2014. Coming at a time of unprecedented economic challenges for the Union, our presidency will carry forward the vital debate on the future of Europe — a debate that will intensify as we approach next year's European elections.

All the issues that humankind is facing and that are being dealt with by General Assembly at this session highlight the need to enhance the role of the United Nations and to further consolidate the institutions of global economic and political governance. The hopes of the international community are oriented towards the United Nations. Our Organization has to send a strong and clear message of peace, security and prosperity to the peoples of the world, particularly the younger generation.

*The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.*