



General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

17th plenary meeting
Friday, 27 September 2013, 6 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda)

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

The meeting was called to order at 6.25 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

General debate

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Bazoum, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Nigeriens Abroad of the Republic of the Niger.

Mr. Bazoum (Niger) (*spoke in French*): It is a great honour for me to take the floor at the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, which is being held in the context of some rather disturbing developments in terms of peace and security — developments that, very appropriately, we have an opportunity to consider and to deal with under the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

As I begin my statement I should like to congratulate Mr. John Ashe on his election to the presidency, without forgetting the team that is helping him. I should also like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless efforts in areas such as sustainable development, peace, security and counter-terrorism, particularly in our region of the Sahel.

Ms. Picco (Monaco), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The theme of the sixty-eighth session, “The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage”, leads us to ask what measures to take, in the spirit of solidarity, once we have established that many countries will not achieve the Millennium Development Goals within the time frame, as is the case with my country, the Niger.

This session of the General Assembly gives me an opportunity to review the ongoing efforts in our country in that area. The renaissance programme established since President Mahamadou Issoufou was elected to head our country makes agriculture, health and education absolute priorities, so that we can substantially improve our human development index performance. Resources expended for that purpose have enabled our country to make significant progress. We have, in particular, reduced the proportion of the population living in extreme poverty and chronic undernourishment. I should like to welcome the significant assistance from bilateral partners and from international organizations, including non-governmental organizations, which are assisting the Government of the Niger in its policies and programmes for a harmonious socioeconomic development. It is for that purpose that the Government launched an ambitious socioeconomic development programme. A round table of donors was held last November in Paris, at which pledges totalling more than \$4.8 billion were announced. That amount exceeded the expectations of my Government.

We call for the effective mobilization of those commitments, so that we can take action in five strategic areas: namely, building the credibility and effectiveness of public institutions; establishing

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

13-48796 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



conditions for sustainable, balanced and inclusive development; food security and sustainable agricultural development; a competitive and diversified economy designed to promote accelerated and inclusive growth; and the promotion of social development.

Given the particular interest accorded to rural populations by our President, we have developed and launched the “three N’s” initiative — Nigeriens feeding Nigeriens — with the goal of promoting food security and food sovereignty, in order to end the food shortages caused by recurring droughts. The programme is intended to improve agricultural productivity by promoting irrigation through the judicious development of the substantial water potential of our country, by improving production techniques through the substantial use of inputs and machinery, by reorganizing the farming sector, by rationalizing distribution channels for agricultural products and by building roads in rural areas.

Always bearing in mind the Millennium Development Goals, our Government is paying particular attention to the vital question of education, including the construction of schools, the delivery of school supplies, the extensive recruitment of teachers and the improvement of teachers’ working conditions. It is determined, too, to pursue a bold, consciousness-raising policy aimed at controlling population growth, which is currently negating the impact of the remarkable economic growth that we have experienced in the past two years.

As I said at the beginning of my statement, this session is taking place at a time when the purpose and role of the Organization are being sorely tested, owing to an international situation characterized by persisting or new crises and conflicts. Now more than ever, we need to rise to the challenge, bearing in mind the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

We call upon the General Assembly, and in particular the Security Council, to continue to work resolutely to arrive at negotiated and lasting solutions to situations where lethal crises have the potential to cause desolation and displacement and compromise socioeconomic development.

For us in the Sahel the major concern in 2012 and 2013 has been Mali. The Niger is pleased with the positive outcome in that country and the follow-up machinery put in place by the Organization through

the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), whose establishment was possible thanks to a considerable mobilization of the international community. That mobilization was driven by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which dedicated a number of very high-level meetings to the subject of Mali, and was effectively relayed by the African Union through its Peace and Security Council. It was followed up on a regular basis by the United Nations, whose Security Council has adopted many resolutions on the subject.

But today, as we take stock of that joint action, we are duty-bound to recognize that we owe the health of Mali more especially to the far-sighted decision of President Hollande to launch Operation Serval, which was able to put an end to the terrorist coalition in early January 2013, thanks to the sizeable means put at its disposal, making it equal to the task. We must recognize also that, while ECOWAS rightly and promptly opted for a military intervention, most of the States that were supposed to mobilize troop contingents were slow to make them available and operational. The United Nations, for its part, sought to differentiate between terrorist organizations, so that, against all the evidence, it could promote a dialogue with some of them. We who were facing the threat were made very anxious by some of the debates at the United Nations, which could have been avoided if only the facts had been faced and the straightforwardness of the evidence noted. The unjustified stalling by the international community encouraged the terrorists to press their advantage by adopting a new agenda and new goals, enabling them to envisage total victory over Malian territory, and even beyond.

If I dwell on this it is, first, because I know how close we came to disaster, and, secondly, because it is my deep conviction that just because our enterprise is complex it does not necessarily mean that we are doomed to inaction at best and to mistakes at worst.

In spite of what I have just said, the action of the international community in Mali yielded very positive results, thanks to the support of all. Mali, in addition to being free, on 11 August chose its President in an election that was in every respect remarkable. I should like to extend once again my congratulations to President Keita.

The international community should continue to support Mali, adding to the troops and capacity of

MINUSMA, so that it can complete the job of eradicating the terrorist groups. These are now in difficult straits, but are far from having, as it were, uttered their final word.

It is also urgent to put in place regional and international coordination, the job of which would be to provide security for all of the Sahelo-Saharan area. Vigorous measures of a general nature need to be taken against drug trafficking and cross-border organized crime. In that regard, I wish to express my sympathy for the plight of the hostages held by terrorists in the Sahelo-Saharan area. I convey my condolences to their families and call for more efforts to achieve their prompt release.

The problems of the Sahel are not just security problems. That part of the world is among the most afflicted. It is subject to the effects of climate change, desertification and recurring droughts, as well as the resulting food shortages and malnutrition. It needs significant investment as part of a sustained global strategy, supported by the entire international community, to ensure the economic progress that is vital for its stabilization and its deliverance from the clutches of violence.

Terrorism in Africa affects not only the Sahel, but also the Horn of Africa. It struck the Kenyan people on 23 September in the form of the bloody and murderous attack on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi. I should like to take this opportunity to express my condolences to the Government of Kenya.

The populations in the Central African Republic are, tragically, experiencing an unprecedented level of violence. The Niger calls for an international intervention, as in Mali in January 2013, to put an end to the martyrdom of the people of the Central African Republic.

With respect to Palestine, it is heartbreaking to think that in today's world, so characterized by highly sophisticated technology and so imbued with modern values, a people could be deprived of its most elementary rights. The Niger is hopeful that the current initiative of the United States Government will be successful and will lead to the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian State beside and in harmonious coexistence with Israel.

What is happening in Syria is a veritable tragedy, even in this topsy-turvy world. A millennial civilization is crumbling before our eyes. We condemn the use of

chemical weapons, as occurred on 21 August, and call upon the United Nations to reach a political solution at the upcoming "Geneva II" conference.

For a number of decades now, the Cuban population has endured a trade, economic and financial embargo. We call for the lifting of that embargo.

In conclusion, I express my fervent hope that our deliberations will help advance the cause of peace, security and progress throughout the world.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I call now on His Excellency Mr. Ali Ahmed Karti, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Sudan.

Mr. Karti (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Today, I address the Assembly at a time when I feel great uncertainty about the future of the Organization and the established rules governing the relations among its Member States. It was expected that yesterday the Assembly would hear, from this rostrum, a statement from President Al-Bashir, the elected President of the Republic of the Sudan. However, with deep regret I must report the refusal by the authorities of the United States, the host Government, to give entry visas to President Al-Bashir and his delegation, thus rendering him unable to participate in the work of the Assembly at this session.

The fact that the authorities of the host country did not grant a visa to our President is a serious violation of the principles and purposes set forth in the Charter of the United Nations. Specifically, it is a violation of the Headquarters Agreement signed in December 1946 with the host country.

President Al-Bashir is known throughout Africa. He is known by all those who hold peace dear. He is known by everybody for what he has done — putting an end to the longest bloodthirsty civil war in Africa, inherited from the days of colonialism. The birth of the Republic of South Sudan is clear proof of his commitment to the implementation of the provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Despite the tremendous sacrifice made by giving up a valuable part of the territory, one rich in natural and human resources, President Al-Bashir has been prevented from participating in the work of the General Assembly. However, the meeting of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union has highlighted the part that he has played in supporting peace between the Sudan and South Sudan and throughout our region.

My delegation would like to say that this unjustified and unacceptable action sets a very serious precedent in the history of the United Nations. It requires that the whole membership take a firm position on this matter. This denial of the legitimate right of a Member State leads us to call on the Secretary-General to exercise his duty and responsibility to protect the rights of Member States under the Headquarters Agreement. If the matter were left up to the Sudan, then the same kind of thing could happen to any other Member State, and we would not like those rights to be violated.

I should like to warmly congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. I take this opportunity to extend my country's thanks to his predecessor, Mr. Vuk Jeremić, for the excellent manner in which he guided the work at the last session. We also thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his team in the Secretariat for the sincere and diligent work that they have done for us.

It is our hope that discussions during this session will be successful. The theme chosen, "The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage", is important. The Sudan believes that the Organization and its specialized agencies will indeed devote the importance that is appropriate to such a crucial issue because development is essential to international peace and security, particularly in developing countries. As everyone knows, poverty, underdevelopment, climate change and a shortage of resources are some of the main causes of conflict in the world.

The Sudan has made great strategic progress regarding peace, stability and prosperity for its people and has begun a political process that will lead to the adoption of a final constitution. After the peace efforts proved successful vis-à-vis the independence of South Sudan, we accepted the choice of its people. Today we are working to develop a solid economic system, even though we have to deal with the after-effects of economic sanctions that the United States unilaterally imposed on us. We have begun to take economic steps necessary to strengthen our economy and prevent it from collapsing.

On the matter of human rights, I should like to share the opinion expressed by the Special Rapporteur on the Sudan. He recognized that progress had been made in various areas of human rights. These matters have been dealt with very seriously, and the recommendations

will be dealt with in our policy. We are committed to the principles of human rights, and we have set up an independent national human rights commission in the Sudan, founded in accordance with the Paris principles, that cooperates with the relevant United Nations agencies.

To promote and strengthen human rights, we signed a national law to combat trafficking in human beings. We have many specialized institutions and mechanisms that work to defend women's rights as well, so that women can participate fully in our society and in our State. That can be seen very clearly in the positive discrimination we have been pursuing vis-à-vis women, which has led to greater political participation by women at the legislative, executive and other decision-making levels.

In 2010 we adopted a law on the rights of the child that is in accordance with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, so that we can promote the rights of children and protect them against any kind of violence or exploitation. Our various national institutions coordinate among themselves, and we have set up a national board for children. We have police who deal especially with the issues of youth and children, and we have a public prosecutor who specializes in this area.

Once South Sudan was established, we immediately began to engage in neighbourly and fruitful cooperation with it. We have blood ties with it and a common border more than 2,100 kilometres long. About two thirds of the inhabitants of both countries live along the borders.

The period following the independence of South Sudan was a period of some tension because of certain matters that had been left pending, so the two countries entered into very intensive negotiations. On 27 September 2012, exactly one year ago, in Addis Ababa the two countries were able to sign nine agreements covering all matters of cooperation between our two countries. We included mechanisms for implementing the agreements in an accompanying document. We also set forth deadlines for reaching further agreements.

At the most recent negotiating session between the two Presidents, in Khartoum on 3 September, and in the presence of Mr. Mbeki, the two Presidents came to an agreement on how to deal with all pending matters. They also appealed to the international community to cancel the Sudan's debt and to lift the sanctions imposed on it.

Turning now to the matter of unilateral sanctions, it is our hope that we will have strong and healthy relations with South Sudan, and we will spare no effort to achieve that. We trust the international community will be supportive of our efforts. We would like to extend our thanks to the African high-level mechanism and the Prime Minister of Ethiopia in this connection.

I am happy to be able to report that the efforts of the Government of the Sudan and the international community vis-à-vis Darfur have made possible real and continuous progress in terms of stability and security. There has been a sharp drop in the violence there because those that signed the Doha peace agreement have lived up to their promises. Many of the armed groups joined the agreement later. The voluntary return of people who had left is also being organized and services are being provided.

I should like to say that relations between the Government of the Sudan and United Nations bodies with regard to the humanitarian situation are now stable, so that humanitarian needs can be met. We reached an agreement with UNICEF on vaccinations against poliomyelitis and other diseases, and an agreement was reached as part of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Regarding non-governmental organizations, the Sudan, like other Member States, is committed to the implementation of the development goals, including combating poverty. We have adopted policies on reducing poverty and on providing more jobs for young graduates. We are also developing a microfinance system for low- and middle-income people. Unfortunately, however, unemployment is not as low as we had hoped, and the unilateral economic sanctions have been a real obstacle to our making progress in development and in strengthening our economy. It has been particularly difficult for young people in the Sudan, who account for about 60 per cent of our population.

The Sudan calls on the international community to live up to its promise to cancel the debt and to lift unilateral economic sanctions. The matter of the debt is one of the important goals of the post-2015 development agenda. Debt is a real burden for so many countries in the world.

The Sudan is a prominent member of many international bodies dealing with the environment. As a victim of climate change, the Sudan believes that great attention should be paid to environmental issues and goals in the post-2015 development agenda. We would

like to work with others through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The situation is deteriorating every year. We have suffered from climate change since the mid-1980s. We have suffered from recurrent cycles of drought in much of our territory, and that has also been a factor in slowing down our development goals. It has also created instability in many parts of our country because of conflict over pasture land and water supplies. That applies also in Darfur, where historically there have been tribal disputes and disputes over pastureland because of long periods of drought. The Darfur conflict became a political issue only in the last decade because of external interference. There is a very close relationship between climate change and armed conflict in that respect.

My country attaches paramount importance to the rule of law at the national and international levels. We make sure that our national laws and our legislature are in accordance with international instruments, laws and treaties to which we are a party. So from this rostrum, and based on our own experience, we reiterate our rejection of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Over the past decade or so it has been violating the principles of international law and justice. The ICC has been used as a political tool by certain parties in the international arena. Many of those that signed the Rome Statute have now become aware of the negative impact of the ICC and its destructive impact on stability and peace. The last African Union Summit showed that very clearly.

Regarding the crisis in Syria, our position has always been clear. We call for peaceful dialogue among the Syrians themselves towards identifying a peaceful and permanent solution. We have always rejected violence and foreign interference. We condemn the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian conflict, and we support the Russian approach to resolving this matter.

The question of Palestine — how to achieve justice and restore the rights of the Palestinian people and stop the illegal aggression by the Israeli authorities in that territory — is still a real challenge in the international arena. The prisoners must be released. The matter must be resolved within the context of international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative, but Israel has simply turned a deaf ear to proposals from the Arab sides.

There has been a constant call for respect for international law. The reform of the United Nations and its principal and subsidiary organs is a matter of some urgency and importance. It is time for a practical process to start, with a clear work programme, so that the international system can act in a manner that is fair, transparent and effective, so that it can take up the challenges it faces. But no progress will be made in reform until the General Assembly can play its full part and exercise all of its powers without any intimidation from the Security Council.

The matter of reform of the Security Council is also of some importance for the Sudan, because that will mean that there is real reform in the United Nations. The Security Council today does not reflect the realities of the world. It adopts resolutions and takes decisions but not in a democratic and transparent way. It is therefore essential that there be comprehensive reform. Partial or transitional reforms are not possible. We support the African Union position on reform of the international system. We want a balanced, pluralistic and fairer system that will be able to deal with the challenges of the world of today, ensure respect for international law and for the noble principles of the Organization and attain the purposes and principles of the Charter — respect for the sovereignty of States and non-interference in domestic issues under any pretext whatsoever; the non-use of force; and the non-use of the threat of force against others.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Erlan Idrissov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Idrissov (Kazakhstan): On behalf of the Republic of Kazakhstan, I should like first to congratulate His Excellency Mr. John Ashe on his election as the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session and to wish him every success in his important functions. I should also like to take this opportunity to express our profound gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, for his able stewardship, energy and dedication in finding solutions to critical international challenges.

Since we met here at the United Nations a year ago the world situation has not improved but, on the contrary, has deteriorated, becoming more fragile and vulnerable to new risks and threats. A growing number of States in the Middle East and Africa, which were making steady progress, both economically and socially,

are now witnessing regression. Some Asian States are facing similar risks of destabilization. The number of post-conflict countries is also on the rise, inevitably affecting global development in an interconnected world. Never before has the need been more compelling for equal partnership and the participation of all Member States, based on mutual respect and norms as embodied in the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The United Nations, by the power invested in it by its Member States, stands out as our unquestioned leading entity on the world stage.

Kazakhstan strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons in Syria, as confirmed by the findings of an independent investigation by the United Nations mission, and regards it as a crime against humanity. We support the adoption of a Security Council resolution on Syria that would stipulate strict compliance with a concerted decision on the elimination of chemical weapons in that country and the conduct of regular inspections of that process.

We express our hope that the accession of Syria to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, as well as the placement of such weapons under international control, will preclude the possibility of their repeated use and will contribute towards the end of the long-standing and bloody conflict in Syria. We call for the earliest possible convening of an international conference on the settlement of that conflict, with the aim of ending the violence and determining Syria's political future through dialogue and reconciliation.

The current situation in the nuclear disarmament process also does not encourage confidence in a more peaceful future. While we participated actively in yesterday's High-level Meeting, we stress once again now from the rostrum of the General Assembly that our country has a special moral authority to champion the cause of nuclear abolition. By closing the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site soon after our independence in 1991 and renouncing the fourth-largest nuclear arsenal, Kazakhstan made a unique contribution in the multilateral effort to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

We believe that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which remains the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime, must reach full universalization, with the strict implementation of national obligations in accordance with the three

fundamental pillars of the Treaty — non-proliferation, the peaceful use of nuclear energy and disarmament — in a balanced way. We call on all non-NPT countries possessing nuclear weapons to sign the Treaty and on all States parties not to withdraw. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) should become an important catalyst in the non-proliferation process, promoting the effective implementation of the NPT. We urge those countries that have not yet done so to sign and ratify that important document. The General Assembly resolution initiated by Kazakhstan establishing 29 August as the International Day against Nuclear Tests (resolution 64/35) matches the goals and objectives for the entry into force of the CTBT.

The Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, which came into force in March 2009, represents an important contribution by the Central Asian countries to international and regional security. It is the first nuclear-weapon-free zone established in the northern hemisphere and shares common borders with two major nuclear Powers. It is also the first such zone where previously nuclear weapons had existed. Kazakhstan welcomes the willingness of the five permanent members of the Security Council to hold a dialogue on the Additional Protocol with the five countries in the zone and to provide negative assurances as soon as possible.

Kazakhstan supports the early convening of the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction under the auspices of the United Nations and calls upon all States in the region actively to cooperate to make that important undertaking possible.

In order to take further decisive actions to eliminate the nuclear threat, President Nursultan Nazarbaev of the Republic of Kazakhstan has proposed the adoption of a universal declaration for a nuclear-weapon-free world, which would be an important step towards a nuclear-weapons prohibition convention, and thereby achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. We count on Member States to finalize and submit a draft resolution on the universal declaration of the General Assembly at this session.

We support an immediate political and diplomatic settlement of the situation concerning the Iranian nuclear programme on the basis of strict compliance with the provisions of the NPT and the International Atomic Energy Agency regulations. In order to

ensure progress in the dialogue between the group of international mediators and Iran, Kazakhstan hosted two rounds of negotiations in Almaty this year. Specific agreements have yet to be reached, but we are confident that a mutually acceptable outcome is possible. We believe that concrete actions by Iran to ensure the transparency and peaceful nature of its nuclear programme, along with reciprocal constructive steps on the part of the group of six, will advance the settlement of the problem, rather than relying on sanctions alone. We all witnessed the latest positive signs of understanding on that issue during the current session and wholeheartedly welcomed them, remaining fully available to contribute to a productive negotiation process.

We express our grave concern about North Korea's nuclear programme. Attempts to engage in the secret development of nuclear weapons in violation of international obligations cannot be justified under any circumstances. At the same time, Kazakhstan is against a military solution to the problem, since we are convinced that only the peaceful settlement of that crisis, within the framework of the Six-Party Talks, can ensure peace and stability in North-East Asia.

Kazakhstan is genuinely interested in the sustainable and stable development of Afghanistan through its transformation into a politically stable and economically viable State in keeping with the decisions of the ministerial conference of the Istanbul Process held in Almaty last April. We support the rapid integration of Afghanistan into the regional framework so as to promote its speedy social and economic recovery.

The Asian continent is transforming itself into a global powerhouse for the twenty-first century, with its production of more than 57 per cent of global gross domestic product — a trend that is expected to increase. However, that growth could be jeopardized by an aggravation of existing conflicts, illegal migration, drug trafficking, territorial claims, separatism, religious extremism and terrorism. To cope with those challenges, Asia needs a regional security architecture. Kazakhstan, as the host of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia, is striving to maximize opportunities for joint decision-making on security and cooperation in Asia.

Kazakhstan is committed to the fundamental principles of international law, among which respect for human rights and freedom, based on impartiality and non-politicization, is deemed pivotal for a

sustainable, universal and effective global architecture for protecting human rights. That, among other things, requires appropriate budgeting and the strengthening of the Human Rights Council and its special procedures, in particular the universal periodic review and the institution of special rapporteurs, as well as supporting the capacity and authority of United Nations human rights mechanisms.

We need to implement civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights at the national, regional and global levels while paying particular attention to vulnerable groups. Kazakhstan, as a multiethnic and multi-confessional country, can facilitate a comprehensive dialogue among civilizations within the United Nations and various international and regional organizations. The Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, which Kazakhstan convenes every three years, contributes to global and regional security by mobilizing the spiritual and moral potential of world religions to mitigate international conflicts so as to prevent confrontations between faiths and cultures.

Additionally, at the initiative of Kazakhstan, the General Assembly proclaimed the period between 2013 and 2022 as the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures. Its official inauguration was held in Astana last month, thereby paving the way for cultural diversity and tolerance. Kazakhstan calls on Member States actively to participate in the events of the Decade and to support synergy between the Alliance of Civilizations and the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

The consequences of the global financial and economic crisis have led to the conclusion that the world needs a common policy of global governance. Kazakhstan therefore welcomes the adoption of the resolution on the United Nations in global economic governance (resolution 67/289), which recognizes the value of cooperation and interaction between the United Nations and various regional and subregional groups.

Over the years, Kazakhstan has hosted the Astana Economic Forum, which is now a reputed international platform that covers the most pressing and ever-expanding issues of the world economy. The first World Anti-Crisis Conference was held as part of the Forum last May in Astana. The Astana Declaration, the recommendations of the Astana Economic Forum to the Group of 20 leaders and the road map of the World Anti-Crisis Plan were adopted as outcome documents.

The second World Anti-Crisis Conference, which is to be held next May in Kazakhstan, will draft the world anti-crisis plan to combat the financial and economic crisis so as to ensure long-term sustainable economic growth.

We are pleased to note the commendable work of the United Nations in implementing the agreements reached at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro (Rio+20), and Kazakhstan is actively contributing to that work. A national plan for transitioning to a green economy has been developed, with programmes in key sectors of the economy — energy, water, utilities, agriculture, industry and biodiversity. Kazakhstan has also initiated the transition to a green economy in Central Asia within the framework of the regional Intergovernmental Commission on Sustainable Development. The Rio+20 Conference supported the Kazakhstan-sponsored Green Bridge Partnership Programme as a voluntary framework for mutually beneficial cooperation between the developed and developing world in the interests of sustainable development. Next Monday, 30 September, Kazakhstan will host the International Conference on the Green Bridge Partnership Programme in Astana with the participation of regional countries, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic Commission for Europe and other stakeholders. At that Conference the programme will be institutionalized and its secretariat established.

Kazakhstan has made voluntary commitments to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions within the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change by reducing carbon dioxide emissions and investing in low-carbon development, all of which constitute Kazakhstan's contribution to the Secretary-General's global Sustainable Energy for All initiative and other initiatives aimed at sustainable development.

I am pleased to inform members that Kazakhstan's capital, Astana, will host the international exhibition EXPO 2017, entitled "Energy for the Future", which is designed to disseminate best practices in the field of sustainable energy. On the basis of national consultations, we have developed a number of recommendations on development goals for the post-2015 agenda and submitted them to the United Nations. We believe that those Millennium Development Goals that were not reached must be included in the post-2015 agenda, in conjunction with the objectives of sustainable development. International partnerships

must be strengthened for South-South and triangular cooperation so as to complement official development assistance activities. Strengthening resilience in order to withstand external factors such as climate change and the financial and food crises will have to gain priority under the new agenda.

In that regard, Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the last and symbolic twentieth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development effected its official transition and handover to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The establishment of the High-Level Political Forum is historic as a universal platform to meet current realities, closely linked with global security, which justifies the rationale for a direct nexus between the High-Level Political Forum and the Security Council over the issues of food, the environment, energy and water security.

For the first time since its independence, Kazakhstan has announced its candidature for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the period 2017 to 2018, based on the principles of fair and equitable geographical rotation and the adequate representation of all States members of the Asia-Pacific regional group. The experience we have gained from recently chairing a number of regional and international organizations and forums, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Collective Security Treaty Organization and others, gives us unique access to a wide and diverse range of experiences and approaches to solving international security problems addressed by the Security Council.

If elected, Kazakhstan will unfailingly be united with others to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security and will support efforts to reform the Council, transforming it into a more representative and transparent body that can effectively address the full range of challenges and threats facing the world today. We therefore count on the broad support of Member States for our candidacy to the Security Council for the period 2017 to 2018.

Last year, Kazakhstan celebrated the twentieth anniversary of its accession to the United Nations, and this year the twentieth anniversary of a United Nations presence in our country. Our Government and people strongly support the United Nations in all

its programmes. Kazakhstan acts as a geographical and political bridge between North and South, Europe and Asia. For that reason, it is ideally suited to foster cooperative initiatives in that vast regional landscape. Promoting Kazakhstan to the status of a middle-income country represents both challenges and opportunities for the development agenda, shifting the focus from being a recipient country to that of a regional development partner.

Regional cooperation is critical to ensuring national and regional security. Persistent conflict and instability in Afghanistan also have an effect on Central Asia. Poverty, unemployment and growing disparities in economic and social development in the countries of Central Asia are strong factors indicating the potential for new mass population movements, instability, environmental degradation, drug trafficking, religious extremism and terrorism, all of which must be addressed through regional cooperation. Such collaboration can be facilitated through the establishment of a United Nations multi-country centre in Kazakhstan in the city of Almaty as a hub for promoting regional development, security and stability. Kazakhstan is ready to bear all the costs for the construction, equipping and maintenance of such a United Nations office bridging the gap between Vienna and Bangkok.

The 20 years of Kazakhstan's membership and cooperation with the United Nations have been characterized by the highest dedication to the ideals and principles of the world Organization. We will continue to play the role of an engaged and responsible Member State, ready to take on increased responsibilities and consistently implement them in full.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Marty Natalegawa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): Let me begin by congratulating His Excellency Ambassador John Ashe on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. May I also take this opportunity to commend His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić for his skilful stewardship of the sixty-seventh session. Our profound appreciation of course also goes to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his inspirational leadership of the Organization.

The theme of this session — “The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage” — is timely and well-chosen, for we are now making the final push

towards the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals by the 2015 deadline. Simultaneously, work has begun on framing the post-2015 global development agenda to end extreme poverty and ensure sustainable growth with equity. That agenda must be anchored by a new global partnership — a vision reflected in President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's role as one of the three co-Chairs of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and recognition of the fact that the success of the forthcoming intergovernmental process requires the capacity to forge a global consensus to identify and build upon common interests.

Indonesia has an enduring belief in the efficacy and effectiveness of diplomacy, maintaining peace and security, advancing social progress and economic prosperity and promoting democracy, human rights and tolerance.

The conflict in Syria has long demanded such a political and diplomatic solution, for amid the undoubted complexity of the situation three key points are compelling, namely, halting the violence, facilitating humanitarian relief and beginning an inclusive political process that reflects the wishes of the Syrian people. The recent breakthrough on the issue of chemical weapons in Syria is clear evidence that diplomacy works. Further diplomatic momentum must be generated. The Security Council must be one to forcefully make the case for a peaceful settlement. To get the parties to the negotiating table, the "Geneva II" conference must be convened at the earliest opportunity.

On the issue of Palestine, the full weight of diplomatic pressure must similarly be brought to bear and resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council implemented. The historic injustice that the Palestinian people have suffered for so long must be ended. We are encouraged by and welcome, therefore, the resumption of direct negotiations between Palestine and Israel, the result, no less, of painstaking and relentless diplomatic efforts. The revival of the long-stalled nuclear disarmament agenda is also key. In particular, as co-President of the Article XIV Conference on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Indonesia calls for the early entry into force of the Treaty.

The same relentless diplomatic pursuit must be applied to what is manifestly in the common interests of all, that is, the eradication of poverty, the promotion

of sustainable development and inclusive financing and overcoming the challenges of climate change. We have in ourselves the wherewithal to address the development challenges of our time — for example, to work for an early conclusion of the Doha development agenda and a new climate-change regime by 2015.

Key to that, however, must be a strong commitment to the spirit of partnership and an unshakeable belief in the power of multilateralism: cooperation and collaboration rather than discord and division. The development agenda must work for all countries, large or small, developed and developing. Each of us must share responsibility. Developed countries must take the lead, while developing countries must do more.

The pursuit of a diplomatic path becomes fraught with challenges in a complex and fast-changing world where the issues of governance, human rights violations, extremism and intolerance within countries can quickly gain inter-State dimensions. We must ensure that the institutions of the United Nations are ready to address such contemporary challenges. Therefore, as countries embark upon a process of democratization and the promotion and protection of human rights, as they draw a line against intolerance and extremism, the international community, the United Nations, must contribute towards ensuring an atmosphere that is conducive to their peaceful transformation, one that reflects the wishes of the peoples concerned.

Together with its partners in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Indonesia is steadily developing a regional architecture conducive to the peaceful promotion of human rights and democracy. It is called the ASEAN Political-Security Community. Together with the economic community and sociocultural community pillars, it makes up the ASEAN Community that we are to achieve by 2015. Through a process of sharing lessons learned derived from our respective successes and setbacks, we provide mutual encouragement and support in our promotion of the principles of democracy, the rule of law and good governance, and respect for and the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms as inscribed in the ASEAN Charter.

Beyond South-East Asia, Indonesia is pursuing the same positive and constructive approach through what is called the Bali Democracy Forum, a platform for countries in the wider region to share one another's experiences. At all levels — national, regional and

global — we remain steadfast in promoting tolerance and religious freedom, pushing back against prejudice and intolerance and building partnerships, harmony and mutual respect. Indonesia recognizes, therefore, the special responsibility incumbent upon it as host of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Global Forum in 2014, one that aims to promote unity in diversity.

The primacy of diplomacy and of the peaceful settlement of disputes over war and conflict is not more evident than in the quiet and yet fundamental transformations that have been taking place in our region, South-East Asia. Notwithstanding the continuing challenges, Indonesia believes that the dividends of peace and stability are self-evident: economic and social progress.

The continued stability and security of the region is therefore the key to securing our prosperity. Peace and development are indivisible. With other ASEAN nations, Indonesia has worked constantly to develop the region's capacity to manage and overcome any potential for conflict and to ensure that it remains a net contributor to international peace and security; to extend the arc of stability beyond South-East Asia to the Asia-Pacific region at large while promoting common security, common prosperity and common stability for all in the region; and, through commitments to the peaceful settlement of disputes and the renunciation of the use or threat of force, to ensure that the region places diplomacy at the forefront.

Indonesia will be tireless in promoting the primacy of diplomacy, and unwavering in its belief in the noble goals of the United Nations.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Zalmay Rassoul, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Mr. Rassoul (Afghanistan): I bring to all warm greetings and the good wishes of the Afghan people. I have the honour to address the General Assembly in the last year of the current elected Government of Afghanistan. I therefore think that it is useful briefly to revisit the story of Afghanistan over the past 12 years, our historic successes, the achievements that have transformed Afghanistan and, yes, the challenges we have faced continuously during that time. I should then like to share with the Assembly the vision of the Afghan people and Government for the future of freedom, dignity, prosperity and democracy that we are striving to solidify in our country and, briefly, to

address the critical importance of our relations and cooperation with countries in our region and with the broader community of nations.

To better illustrate the journey that Afghanistan and its noble people have been on over the past 12 years, I should like to share two contrasting pictures of the reality of Afghanistan — in the year 2001, at the time of the collapse of the Taliban regime, and in the year 2013, as we are going through a historic period and a process of transition.

For a little more than two decades prior to November 2001, when the Afghan people ousted the Taliban regime from power, with military backing from the United States-led international military coalition, the people of Afghanistan suffered incalculable pain, deprivation and losses through three distinct periods. Between the communist coup in 1978, followed by the invasion of our country in 1979, and the fall of the communist regime, more than 1 million Afghan men, women and children were killed, more than 2 million were made orphans or left with severe war wounds, and more than 5 million were forced out of their villages and towns into refugee camps in neighbouring countries, mainly in Pakistan and Iran, as a result of the brutality of the occupation and the communist regime and in the course of our resistance against that occupation. We fought for our freedom and independence — our holy jihad — and we won, in the process helping the national freedom and independence movements in Eastern Europe.

The international community that had supported our struggle for several years abandoned us when the defeat and withdrawal of the Red Army became apparent. Exploiting the vacuum and internal strife created during the early 1990s, the foreign-backed Taliban movement rose to power and quickly controlled more than 90 per cent of Afghan territory. Then, equally quickly, they removed their masks and revealed their true identity, holding the Afghan nation hostage and embarking on a period of particularly cruel and barbaric violence and cruelty under the guise of Islam. With their backward views, violence and brutal suppression of the rights and freedoms of the Afghan people, especially women, they turned our country against itself. The international community did not mobilize to take action against the Taliban regime until the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, including in this city.

At the end of 2001, when, with the military backing of the United States-led international coalition, we were getting ready to drive the Taliban regime from power,

Afghanistan was in near-total isolation from the region and the world community. The Afghan people were a terrorized population, without rights or freedoms and without protection from the Taliban regime's brutality. Severe poverty and disease were endemic, with little or no access to health-care services. The education system, which completely excluded women and girls and had fewer than half a million male students attending schools and universities, was a catastrophic failure. The average annual per capita income was about \$100 and the country lacked a single national currency. Our roads, bridges, irrigation networks and other components of critical national infrastructure were completely destroyed. Afghanistan was without a national army or a national police force, and all our other State institutions had been reduced to nothing. In short, Afghanistan was a failed State, ruled by a proxy militant group that provided shelter to international terrorists, thus posing a real danger to regional and international peace and security.

The situation in Afghanistan during that period was indeed bleak. The Afghan people had little hope for their own or their children's future. However, following the Al-Qaida terrorist attacks in the United States, the Afghan people came together and, with support from the United States and a multitude of other friends and allies in the international community, removed the Taliban from power and embarked upon a new era of hope, reconstruction, development and progress — a new era marked by an entirely different reality. Primarily as a result of our own sacrifices and the considerable sacrifices and support of our international friends and allies during our 12-year partnership, Afghanistan once again has become the home of all Afghans, men and women, where they enjoy equal rights and freedoms under our democratic Constitution.

Today Afghanistan is a forward-looking young democracy with functioning State institutions, an elected President, an elected Parliament and elected provincial councils in each one of our 34 provinces, backed up by a powerful civil society movement. Afghan independent media, with approximately 50 independent television channels, more than 100 community FM radio stations and hundreds of print publications, are arguably among the freest in the region. Today there are more than 20 million mobile-phone users across Afghanistan, an increasing number of them accessing information and using various platforms on the Internet. Per capita income has increased from \$100 a year to \$600 a year, our national currency has been consistently stable,

and our trade ties with the outside world are rapidly expanding.

Today in the new Afghanistan the number of children attending school stands at well over 10 million, 40 per cent of them girls, and there are hundreds of thousands of young men and women attending some 70 public and private colleges and universities. More than 70 per cent of our people today have access to basic health-care services. That, among other things, has increased average life expectancy from approximately 40 years to more the 60 years in just one decade.

We have built thousands of kilometres of roads, irrigation canals, bridges and other pieces of our country's critical physical infrastructure, thereby cutting travel time and facilitating trade and movement within the country and with neighbouring countries. Afghanistan today is a proud and active member of the international community, while managing its ever-expanding relations and cooperation with countries and organizations throughout the world, through a network of some 70 diplomatic and consular missions.

The examples of rejuvenation and development, progress and achievements that I have just described represent the true picture of today's Afghanistan. Considering that 12 years is not a very long time in the history of a country, especially a country such as Afghanistan, which has gone through more than 35 years of war and destruction, those achievements and gains are nothing short of a historic transformation.

I have drawn that clear contrast between the Afghanistan of 10 years ago and the positive reality of today for two main reasons: first, to underscore a model of collective action and international cooperation in support of one country's efforts to establish peace, security and development; and, secondly, to counter a narrative of doom and gloom for Afghanistan by those who are ignorant about our progress, or who harbour ill-will towards us. The new Afghanistan is indeed currently going through a critical period of security, economic and political transition that comes with its difficulties and challenges but that is helping us to consolidate our fledgling democratic order and strengthening our national sovereignty, independence and ownership of our own affairs.

That is the vision of the Afghan people and Government for the years leading up to the completion of the transition in 2014 and into the transformation decade of 2015 to 2024. In the security area it is our

more than 350,000 brave and professional soldiers and police officers — not foreign soldiers — who are directly responsible for the security of more than 90 per cent of the Afghan population. The transfer of security responsibilities from the international forces to Afghan national security forces, launched in the summer of 2011, will be completed throughout the country by the end of 2014. Our forces have demonstrated their courage, commitment and effectiveness in successfully taking over from their international partners. It is through the enormous and selfless sacrifices of our proud and patriotic national security forces on a daily basis that security in most cities and towns that have gone through transition has improved and the Taliban have been beaten back. We are fully confident that, with the continued financial assistance of the international community for equipment and other requirements and needs, as pledged at the Chicago NATO Summit in May 2012, Afghan national forces will be able to provide security to the Afghan people and defend the country against external threats.

Parallel to our ongoing efforts to enhance the capacity and capabilities of our national security forces, the Afghan Government is pursuing a political process of peace and reconciliation with the Taliban. The key principles and conditions for that process are clear: respect for Afghanistan's Constitution, which guarantees full and equal rights to Afghan men and women; the preservation and enhancement of the advances made over the past decade; and the renunciation of violence against the population.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan, a major neighbour, can play a key role in supporting our peace process. We have been heartened by the recent successful visit to Islamabad by President Karzai and the positive and constructive dialogue that took place between the two Governments during that visit. We look forward to further steps and progress in the weeks and months to come. Pakistan's essential role in advancing the Afghan peace process is a clear example of the support that Afghanistan's neighbours and other countries in the region, especially Muslim countries, can provide to the Afghan peace process.

As far as the economic component of transition is concerned, the presence of a large international military force over the past 10 years has generated employment and income opportunities for thousands of our citizens, so it is natural that there will be an adverse impact resulting from the withdrawal of those forces.

In addition to our best efforts to fulfil Afghanistan's role as the trade, transit and economic integration roundabout in the heart of Asia region for the benefit of all people of the region, the Afghan Government is keen to reduce the negative economic impact of the international military withdrawal and to strengthen our national economy in at least three ways.

The first is by focusing on the development of the agriculture and agribusiness sector, in which more than 70 per cent of our population is directly or indirectly engaged, and where there is enormous potential for growth and employment generation.

Secondly, Afghanistan is estimated to hold trillions of dollars of natural resources, including minerals and hydrocarbons, representing a guaranteed source of wealth and income for generations to come. We already have several State-owned and private companies — from China, India, the United Kingdom, Canada, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and other countries, in addition to Afghan companies — expressing a keen interest in investing billions of dollars in copper, iron ore, gold, rare-Earth minerals, oil and gas. We are actively seeking to attract additional foreign investment to this sector, while remaining duly diligent to make sure that our natural riches serve the goal of a strong legitimate national economy and improved prosperity and welfare for the Afghan people.

Thirdly, the Tokyo Conference last July pledged more than \$16 billion through 2015 to help the Afghan Government fill its projected fiscal gap. Conference participants also committed to providing additional financial assistance to Afghanistan beyond 2016 at or near the levels of the past decade. That generous financial support will be critical in tiding us over the next few years.

In addition to the security and economic transitions, we have a crucial political transition coming up next year, namely, the presidential and provincial council elections. Next year's presidential elections will mark the first time in our history that one elected President will transfer power to another elected President through a peaceful democratic process. The Afghan Government is doing everything possible to ensure free, fair and credible elections, so that the Afghan people can choose who the next President will be. A successful presidential election will entrench our democratic process and greatly contribute to our efforts towards lasting peace, security and prosperity.

As we go forward in implementing the transition agenda and preparing for the transformation decade, another key foundation of our long-term success will be the strategic partnerships we have forged with some of our closest friends and allies over the past few years. Since October 2011, when we signed our first long-term strategic partnership agreement with the Republic of India, we have entered into similar partnerships with the United States, Germany, Australia, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Poland. We have also concluded or are currently negotiating similar partnerships with the European Union, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. In that regard, I should like to reiterate the Afghan Government and people's appreciation for the solid and broad-based expression of long-term political support for a peaceful, prosperous, democratic Afghanistan by more than 100 countries and organizations at the historic international Bonn Conference, kindly hosted by the German Government in December 2011.

With the United States, we are negotiating a separate bilateral security agreement that will define the parameters of the long-term security and defence cooperation between our two countries. I should like to reiterate our long-standing principled position that any bilateral security agreements that Afghanistan signs with other countries, including the United States, will be purely for the purpose of ensuring peace, security, development and the consolidation of our young democracy, and not directed at our neighbours or any countries in the region. Afghanistan belongs to its region. As recent history has clearly demonstrated, the peace, security and stability of Afghanistan, as the centre of the heart of Asia region, has a direct impact on the peace, security and stability of the entire region, and vice versa. We want Afghanistan to serve its rightful role as a key land bridge in our vital region for the flow of people, goods and investments. In that context, the Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan, which we launched together with our Turkish friends and all other participating and supporting States in November 2011, is of vital importance for confidence-building and promoting results-oriented cooperation.

Two follow-on ministerial meetings, in Kabul in June 2012 and in Almaty in April of this year, have taken the Process to the level of maturity. It has now developed into a meaningful forum for discussion on specific confidence-building measures and enjoys considerable momentum. As the permanent co-Chair

of the Process, the Afghan Government is particularly grateful to the People's Republic of China for hosting the next ministerial meeting next summer.

In addition to improving cooperation and confidence on a whole range of other issues, all countries in our region, and our allies and friends in the international community, must continue decisively to confront the single biggest challenge that still endangers our collective peace and security and undermines the welfare of our people, namely, the continuing menace of terrorism and extremism and their sanctuaries and support systems in the region. We will not achieve the full potential of our citizens or realize true and lasting peace and security in Afghanistan or the wider region until we have dealt decisively with the brutality and evilness of the terrorists who try to harm us every day. Fortunately, we are more hopeful now than in the past about a gathering common approach against terrorism and extremism in our region.

This year's General Assembly session is taking place at a time in which the United Nations has seen a number of conflicts continue, while new ones have taken shape. In Syria, we watch the ongoing immeasurable suffering of the great people of that country. Afghanistan calls for an immediate halt to the violence there, which has taken the lives of more than 100,000 people, forced more than 2 million Syrians to become refugees and left 6.8 million people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. We strongly support a political solution, reached through a broad-based national dialogue that meets the aspirations of all Syrians. Moreover, the international community must provide the support necessary to address the humanitarian needs of those affected by the conflict, including the millions who have sought refuge in neighbouring countries.

Speaking of long-standing conflicts, none is more evident than the decades-long strife between Palestine and Israel. Following years of deadlock and impasse, we see that renewed efforts for a peaceful settlement have emerged with the resumption of direct negotiations between the two sides. That is an important development, which we hope will result in durable peace, enabled by the establishment of an independent Palestinian State. We also hope to witness the inclusion of the State of Palestine as a full Member of the Organization.

In conclusion, as I stand before the Assembly, I feel more strongly than ever that our shared vision of a world free from violence, conflict and destitution will be achieved only if we put our differences aside and act

as one. If we adhere to the principles of understanding, solidarity and cooperation, we will be able to secure our collective future, as evidenced in the historic successes we have achieved in Afghanistan over the past 12 years.

The United Nations has been a reliable partner in helping us come this far. As we prepare to embark upon the transformation decade, we expect the Organization to continue its support through a renewed approach that reinforces Afghanistan's leadership and ownership. Let me also assure the Assembly that, as we in Afghanistan work to preserve our gains and consolidate our young democracy in the crucial years ahead, we will remain an active Member of the United Nations.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

Mr. Tuomioja (Finland): We have convened here in New York at a time that poses enormous challenges to the authority and credibility of the United Nations. First, we are at a crossroads where we have to decide the future course to attain sustainable development. Speaking for Finland at the Rio de Janeiro Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), I stressed that, faced with advancing climate change and the accelerating loss of biodiversity, we might, at best, have only a few decades in which to reach ecologically, socially and economically sustainable development. Decisive action based on a sense of urgency is needed to turn the tide globally before it is too late. Either we succeed in that together or we are going to perish together.

This week, we have taken stock of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. They have been a powerful tool to direct our action. In the near future, we are expected to agree on a new development agenda, a new set of goals that, in my view, could be called sustainable development goals. A green economy is not a luxury, but a prerequisite, for poverty reduction and sustainability. In short, the new agenda must be even bolder and more ambitious than the previous one. Its implementation will require action in all countries.

Secondly, we are facing a failure of the United Nations to act in its core domain, that is, in maintaining peace and security. One hundred and ten thousand people have been killed and 2 million people have been forced to leave their homes in Syria, where a tragic civil war has been going on for more than two years. The United Nations has been unable to act to end

that appalling bloodshed. That is another of the major challenges for the credibility of the United Nations. Let me elaborate on those challenges.

With more than a threefold increase in the world's population since the founding of the United Nations and with unprecedented technological progress and the ever-increasing exploitation of natural resources, the world has changed irrevocably. We must now arrange our existence with our natural environment in a new way. As the Secretary-General has said, sustainable development is the pathway to the future. Ecological sustainability — respecting the planetary boundaries — is the foundation for all development. The alarming trend in climate change underlines the urgent need to heed those limits. We must work together towards a comprehensive climate agreement by 2015. The consequences of climate change are already to be seen worldwide. The impacts are predicted to intensify in the coming years and decades. For instance, billions of people lack access to safe water sources and sanitation. Without radical reforms, that number is expected to rise dramatically. There is also significant potential for conflicts over water and other natural resources in the coming years.

Considerable progress has been made in reducing extreme poverty. Millions of people have had a chance to lift themselves out of poverty. However, inequality still persists, and in many cases is increasing both within countries and between them. In several countries not a single Millennium Development Goal will be attained. More than 1 billion people still live in extreme poverty, and they are falling behind. Poverty can be eradicated only within the context of sustainable development. Development must be ecologically, economically and socially sustainable. It must be firmly anchored in human rights and the values encapsulated in the Millennium Declaration. Peace and security are a precondition for sustainable development.

The post-2015 process must also include a financing strategy for sustainable development. We are honoured, together with Nigeria, to be co-chairing the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing, mandated by the Rio+20 Summit. We will work hard to achieve a strategy proposal that is action-oriented and inclusive and covers a broad range of different aspects of development financing.

I am convinced that sustainable development financing must be based on national resource

mobilization and management. Nations should mobilize their own resources through inclusive economic action and through responsible international trade and investments. Developing national taxation systems and tax-revenue collection, as well as addressing unregulated capital flight and putting an end to illegal tax evasion and tax havens, should be central elements in sustainable development financing. Our own national experience shows that taxation is an effective means of addressing inequality.

Direct foreign investment can be a driver for growth and development. Investment should be sustainable, accountable and adhere to norms of corporate social responsibility in creating economic and social development. The current proliferation of bilateral investment agreements, already numbering in the thousands, is not the best way to manage investment flows or set the rules they should follow. As part of our efforts to promote sustainable and fair financial governance, Finland supports efforts to create an international investment regime that is transparent, balanced and equitable.

The sustainable development goals must be universal, and they must integrate different dimensions of development. Fears that sustainable development would challenge the traditional development agenda are unfounded. These agendas are not competing, but complement each other. We must do our utmost to agree on a new way to sustainable development in the very near future. Our planet and its citizens cannot wait. We, the States Members of the United Nations, are shouldering a great responsibility in that respect. We must be able to deliver as the United Nations.

We also have more traditional security challenges at hand. The conflict in Syria has seriously undermined the authority and credibility of the United Nations. The United Nations has not been able to act in its core domain in maintaining peace and security. Both the Syrian Government and the international community have failed to implement their responsibility to protect.

The situation in Syria started as a peaceful and justified call for reforms. The Government's response then turned it into an increasingly violent conflict and a breeding ground for terrorist extremism. That has led to humanitarian suffering, which has already reached historic proportions. The use of chemical weapons on 21 August near Damascus can be a turning point in the conflict: the universal condemnation of their use as a

war crime for which those responsible must be brought to justice through referral to the International Criminal Court. Finland welcomes the agreement reached on a strongly worded Security Council resolution to collect and destroy chemical weapons in Syria under international control. There can be no impunity for the perpetrators of war crimes and other atrocities.

The agreement has to be followed through with a political solution to the conflict. That is the only way to stop the violence. That means negotiations. The international community, the parties to the conflict and especially the Security Council must take responsibility for working towards political negotiations. We continue to support the initiative of the United States and Russia of proposing the "Geneva II" conference, as well as the mediation by the United Nations and Arab League Joint Special Representative, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi. All permanent members of the Security Council must shoulder their responsibility.

The humanitarian suffering of the Syrian people continues. We all must intensify our work to help the refugees and support the neighbouring countries bearing the heaviest burdens. The United Nations will also need to have a strong presence in Syria after the arms have fallen silent. Finland stands ready to contribute to a possible United Nations peacekeeping operation to be established in Syria.

The resumption of direct final status negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis is long-awaited and most welcome news. Since the Oslo agreement 20 years ago, it has been clear that the best outcome for all the parties is a two-State solution, which can accomplish a reign of peace and security for the two peoples. We may still have at hand perhaps the last chance for such a resolution of the conflict. When I say "perhaps the last chance", it is not because I think there may be more chances later, but rather it is because, at worst, the last chance may already have been missed. But it is our duty to make the effort to achieve a negotiated two-State solution.

Finland commends Secretary Kerry's dedication and the personal commitment demonstrated by the parties. The entire international community must lend all its support for the negotiations to succeed. That must be concrete and effective support. The role of regional partners is crucial, and I welcome the efforts made by the League of Arab States in reviewing the Arab Peace Initiative.

The situations in both Syria and the Middle East and between Israel and the Palestinians have been the subject of important mediation efforts. I call for stronger political will and determination to resolve those conflicts. The parties must work harder and the Security Council, especially its permanent members, must shoulder their responsibility. While those efforts have yet to meet with success, I believe that we also have ample evidence to show that mediation works. Measures under Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations deserve more attention, although sometimes action under Chapter VII is also needed. Finland and Turkey continue to co-Chair the Group of Friends of Mediation and to work to strengthen preventive diplomacy, including mediation in the United Nations.

Mediation can succeed only with political will from the parties and the international community. Successful mediation also calls for the full and equal participation of women at all stages. Women are certainly most often the victims of conflicts, but we should also understand that they are essential participants for any mediation efforts to bear long-lasting success.

Efforts to promote peace and security in the Middle East should go in parallel with the pursuit of the long-time goal of the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in that region. I encourage all regional parties to continue to engage constructively with the facilitator and the four conveners, as well as with one another, to pave the way for a conference on the establishment of such a zone.

All our failures and disappointments notwithstanding, there has also been one true success story for the United Nations this year. I am referring to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which was adopted in April after decades of effort. It was a success not only for the United Nations system but for the whole international community and the arms control regime. The importance of the Treaty has been confirmed by the growing number of signatories after 3 June, when the ATT was opened for signature. We hope and expect that the signing of the ATT by the United States will be followed by the signing of all other permanent members of the Security Council as well. I should also like to congratulate those countries that have already ratified the Treaty, thereby paving the way for its early entry into force. My own country, Finland, is well on its way to ratifying the ATT as soon as possible.

Only when the Treaty enters into force and is implemented will it make a real difference in saving lives, minimizing human suffering and lessening criminality and threats to civilian populations by providing the highest common standards for the trade in arms, ammunition and components. Once again, I should like to thank and congratulate the non-governmental organization community for its dedication and tireless efforts in favour of the ATT. They never lost their faith and pushed Governments hard to achieve that result. But our work is not yet done. Together we must continue to secure the 50 ratifications needed and ensure more to support for the ATT. We must also persuade those countries that abstained in the voting to support a regulated arms trade and the Treaty so as to make it universal.

Finland, as one of the seven co-authors, has from the beginning been and will in future be very much involved with the Arms Trade Treaty. This week, the co-authors organized a high-level event to promote the signing of the Treaty. We are also prepared to assist countries that have difficulties in ratifying and implementing the Treaty. When implemented, the Treaty should also have a major impact on development, particularly in the least developed countries, where conflicts are a major obstacle to development.

The success or failure of the United Nations ultimately depends upon us, the Member States. There is no alternative to the United Nations. Let us give it a chance. That is what our peoples expect from us.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Elías Jaua Milano, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Jaua Milano (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, on behalf of the people and the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, I would like to convey to General Assembly President John Ashe our congratulations on his recent election to lead this organ of the United Nations.

As is known, President Maduro Moros is not here at this session of the General Assembly because of a whole range of delays, obstacles, conditions imposed and lack of guarantees for him and members of his delegation, imposed by the Government of the United States in flagrant violation of the obligations incumbent upon it under the Headquarters Agreement. Despite

that, we have come here on behalf of the people of the liberator, Simón Bolívar, to speak the truth and to ask some questions, firmly but respectfully, as we learned from our leader, Hugo Chávez Frías, who passed away in March. In that regard, on behalf of my people, I should like to express our gratitude for the heartfelt tribute paid to President Chávez Frías last March (see A/67/PV.67).

How happy we would be to be here if we were really in a place where we realized the noble ideals enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The Charter talks about saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war, but the truth is that various military interventions have been decided upon or have been allowed here that have engulfed countries and whole regions of the world in long wars and instability. The Security Council has been taken hostage by the hawks of war, and when they can, they justify their attacks from there; when they cannot, they simply bang on the table and still do whatever they want, which is what they are doing when they declare that there will be future bombings in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Charter also states that the purpose of the Organization is to preserve international peace and security. But let me ask: How do some members of the Security Council think we can achieve that purpose by arming and protecting terrorist groups such as Jabhat Al-Nusra and Al-Qaida, which are obscurantist forces? Many of those groups are linked to horrible acts such as the destruction of the Twin Towers in this very city. They deny the existence of anybody who thinks differently from them — whether they be Christians, Muslims or Jews — and profess special hatred and rejection of women. Why are such groups supported? Why do some members of the Security Council sponsor such terrorist groups, window-dressing them as political opposition and even allowing them to give press conferences at this venue? What would representatives of Governments with ongoing internal armed conflicts say if the violent groups they faced were to be given space and a voice here at Headquarters to justify their downfall?

The Preamble of the Charter also sets out another noble goal: to promote social progress and raise the standard of living in a broader concept of freedom. In reality, however, poverty, hunger and injustice are continuing to grow and the standard of living and the standard of freedoms are falling lower and lower. That is because what is imposed on us is a model of excluding others — a neo-fascist model — a neo-liberal model.

In the meantime, countries such as Venezuela have chosen the path to consolidate real democracy with a socialist system, including the people, and that has enabled us to reach the Millennium Development Goals. Yet we are constantly attacked and demonized and our political and social stability is being disrupted. That is what is happening at this very moment with the anti-democratic opposition in our country, which is being supported by media corporations in the region and from the whole world.

Paragraph 4, Article 2, of the Charter of the United Nations emphatically states that

“All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state”.

Yet the President of the United States — and there is the additional irritant that he is a Nobel Peace Prize laureate — is threatening to bomb this or that country if it does not comply with his country’s unilateral demands, which can even include removing a Government that the United States Government does not like. Perhaps that could explain why, despite the fact that the Charter talks about the equality of large and small nations, the President of the United States said just a couple of days ago that the United States was “exceptional”. Does that mean that they are not equal with the other 192 States Member States represented here?

The gap today between the noble ideals of the Charter and what is happening by act or omission here in the Organization is truly alarming. Why does nobody in the General Assembly venture to propose that sanctions be imposed for open violations of the Charter on the Government that has an illegal detention centre in the military base at Guantánamo, in occupied Cuban territory, where torture and cruel and degrading and inhuman treatment is being meted out to persons?

Why does nobody discuss sanctions against the President who has admitted to illegal espionage activities against Heads of State and Government represented here? That was a point courageously made by the President of Brazil, Dilma Rousseff (see A/68/PV.5).

Why do we not consider the use of unpiloted planes — so-called drones — which have taken the lives of tens of thousands of innocent victims, including

children and old people, in North Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia to be crimes against humanity?

Why do we not impose sanctions against a Government that for more than 50 years has maintained an illegal and criminal economic blockade against the worthy Cuban people, and flouted decisions adopted by overwhelming majorities in the Assembly in favour of ending the embargo?

Why do we not implement the resolutions adopted by the plenary so that the State of Palestine can be established as a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict?

Why does the United Kingdom not agree to start negotiations with Argentina to resolve in a peaceful way demands over the Malvinas Islands? Might it perchance be because the elite of the United States and some of its allies are exceptional?

We raise those questions for consideration when it comes to the future of humankind, on behalf of the people of Simón Bolívar — the people of Venezuela — who love peace, equality and freedom.

Venezuela has come before the General Assembly today to condemn a kidnapping. The Organization has been kidnapped. The peace and dignity of the world are being held hostage in New York. The kidnapper has many faces. It changes names and sometimes even flags, but it continues to be the same old imperialism. Eight years ago, Commander Hugo Chávez Frías — a tireless defender of genuine peace, not the peace imposed by bombs, and of participatory democracy and a leader for unity among peoples — called here for a genuine transformation of the United Nations. Seven years ago, he said that there was a whiff of sulphur here (see A/61/PV.12). Today, alas, I have to say once again that there is still a whiff of sulphur coming from those who consider themselves exceptional.

Those words are truer now than ever before. The courageous revelations of one young man offered a great service to humankind — let us call it a wake-up call. As a result, he is now being persecuted politically and cannot walk freely in the streets of Manhattan. We hope that Edward Snowden will one day be able to walk freely among a future generation of Americans who have taken back their civil rights and helped to ensure peace in the world. That young man has shown us how the privacy of every human being has been violated by

the most complex and sophisticated spying system that humankind has ever been able to come up with.

Thanks to those revelations this year, we have woken up to discover that George Orwell's 1984 is now here. And what is the United Nations doing about that? Who is setting limits on so much arbitrariness and running roughshod? Those are yet more questions that find no answers from the General Assembly or the Security Council of the Organization, which is now almost 68 years old.

We would like to suggest that the Secretary-General set up a body within the United Nations to ensure for every inhabitant in the world the right to privacy and the right to communicate without interception. Much has been said here calling for peace, but that has often fallen on deaf ears. Let us hope that we will all learn how important it is to listen to the calls of the people for peace, and employ that in tirelessly seeking to elevate human dignity as our guiding star.

President John Kennedy spoke from this rostrum 50 years ago, the last time he would do so at the United Nations before being assassinated. How good it would be if his current successor, and many people here, were to re-read just some of what he said. Whatever differences we may have had with that historic figure, ensuring peace requires that we seek out areas of agreement such as this:

“For the value of this body's work is not dependent on the existence of emergencies — nor can the winning of peace consist only of dramatic victories. Peace is a daily, a weekly, a monthly process, gradually changing opinions, slowly eroding old barriers, quietly building new structures. And, however undramatic the pursuit of peace, that pursuit must go on.” (*A/PV.1209, p. 5*)

Let us hope that the leaders of the United States and those that follow them blindly will think deeply about the meaning of what Kennedy said and realize that if they really want to be exceptional, they have to find exceptional ways of bringing about lasting peace in the world.

In Latin America and the Caribbean we are showing that with exceptional decisions and actions we can build a world of peace. Unity in diversity is what we have in our regional organizations: the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States,

the Union of South American Nations, the Common Market of the South and Petrocaribe. All those are tools for democratizing our societies that promote socially inclusive economic development and ensure political stability. Despite various internal disputes and conflicts between fraternal countries, we have been able to find mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of conflict. We have demonstrated that without military intervention, drones or economic blockades, we can build and preserve genuine democracy and move forward in combating hunger, poverty and inequality.

The Venezuelan nation is proud of being part of a region that is free of weapons of mass destruction. We reaffirm our commitment to encouraging the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and chemical and bacteriological weapons as a way of ensuring that life can continue on planet Earth.

In his various statements before the Assembly, Commander Chávez Frías called for improving the means for addressing problems and resolving conflicts in a transparent manner. He also pointed out that, in the face of today's reality, there was a crucial need to consider whether the Headquarters of the United Nations should be here in this country where the Government does not respect the Organization, much less the sovereignty of each and every State Member. The United Nations should be in a place where there is respect for all Members; where the political will flourishes, without pressure or fear, to end conflict in the world through dialogue; where the path forward is genuine social development and the elimination of hunger and poverty; and where what matters is how to stop war, not how to justify it.

Let us take the United Nations to the South, where the antithesis to exclusion — solidarity — has often taught us that we are in fact all equal. For now, we welcome the proposal of President Evo Morales Ayma that we should meet in the Organization's various other headquarters in different parts of the world. Beyond the shadows that seem to darken the future of the human race, from Latin America and the Caribbean we are saying and showing that another world is possible where all of us can, in peace and dignity and with justice, enjoy lives worth living.

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

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Ri Tong Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): We all heard the reference to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea made this morning by the representative of South Korea (see A/68/PV.15). On behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I should like to totally reject that reference as misleading of the reality prevailing on the Korean peninsula and as a distortion of the truth. I should like to clarify the position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

First, South Korea made a reference to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — the seriousness of its weapons of mass destruction programme. That is one part of the story of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula; he missed the other part of the story.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its people have been living with nuclear weapons and bombs over their heads for decades. In 1957, they brought into South Korea the first nuclear weapon, marking the beginning of the presence of nuclear weapons and of the largest nuclear-weapon threat. In the 1970s, it had reached more than 1,000 nuclear weapons coming into South Korea, again by the United States. In 2002, the United States Administration of that time proclaimed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to be part of the "axis of evil", which means it should be eliminated. It was listed as a nuclear pre-emptive strike. That blackmailing and hostile policy of the United States is continuing and increasing. The international community has witnessed the opening of the largest-ever joint military exercises between the United States and South Korea — twice this year alone, in March and August, involving, respectively, 500,000 and 200,000 troops and a massive build-up of whatsoever they have as nuclear weapons and their means of delivery.

In that situation, for self-defence, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been compelled to defend its sovereignty and prevent nuclear weapons from dropping onto the heads of its people. We have been compelled to have a nuclear deterrent.

Secondly, with regard to the reference about a nuclear test this year and what he called a ballistic

missile launch, I want to correct him when he said that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had launched a ballistic missile. It was a satellite launch and it was not this year, but in December 2012. Again, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to clarify its position that this was a satellite launch carried out in full exercise of its sovereignty — its equal sovereignty under the Charter of the United Nations — and as a State party to the Outer Space Treaty. However, against that fundamental principle of the Charter concerning respect for sovereignty, the United States took the issue of the satellite launch to the Security Council, which adopted resolution 2087 (2013), and misled the world by saying that it was a ballistic missile. That was in flagrant violation of sovereignty and an abuse of power by a so-called “permanent” member of the Security Council: the United States. That has undermined greatly the credibility of the Security Council.

Thirdly, with regard to the reference concerning the obligation to implement Security Council resolutions by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, taking the issue of the satellite launch to the Security Council has demonstrated a double standard. The Council has never taken issue with other satellite launches: the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been the only country. Again, as I said earlier, that is a double standard and an abuse of power. Therefore, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea totally rejected that Security Council resolution as illegal and has never recognized such resolutions.

Fourthly, with regard to giving up the simultaneous carrying out of economic development and the build-up of nuclear armed forces, that is again a provocation against the strategic policy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It can never be a political bargaining chip. It is a policy within the security sphere of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to safeguard peace and security, and thereby ensure the environment for peaceful economic development. That is an absolute guarantee for economic development.

Fifthly, he referred to the unilateral cancelling of separated-family reunions. I want to correct his use of the word “cancelled”. We did not cancel. We officially announced that they would be postponed until an appropriate climate were established. What do we mean by that? There has been a very positive development with the restarting of the Kaesong Industrial Complex in the spirit of the 15 June joint declaration, which was the outcome document of the inter-Korean summit in 2000.

We showed maximum generosity in pushing ahead with the declaration, thereby contributing to an easing of tension and moving towards a relaxation of tension on the Korean peninsula. Afterwards, South Korea returned to a confrontational approach by destroying and undermining that climate. In such a situation, we have no other option but to establish a climate that would be conducive to separated family reunions. The 15 June joint declaration is the fundamental key to confidence-building, reconciliation, cooperation, unification and prosperity for the entire Korean nation, including both the north and south of Korea. That is the only way forward to ease tension and for unification.

I want to kindly recommend to South Korea that nothing can take the place of the joint declaration, which was unanimously welcomed by the General Assembly resolution in the year 2000 (resolution 55/11).

Mr. Shin Dong-Ik (Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to respond to the remarks made by the delegation of North Korea on several issues that were covered by my delegation during the general debate.

First, on the issue of the nuclear programme, or missile launch, North Korea claimed that there is another part to the story on developing their nuclear programme. It has been made clear that there exist no nuclear weapons on our territory and that it remains our unchanged policy to observe and implement the 1992 Joint Declaration on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, to which North Korea is also a party. Needless to say, tension in the region has its roots in North Korea's continued missile launch and nuclear test. North Korea's argument is nothing more than an irresponsible and ridiculous pretext for developing a nuclear programme.

On the claim that North Korea launched a satellite in December 2012, we would like to make it clear that the United Nations Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009), 2087 (2013) and 2094 (2013), as well as its relevant presidential statements, clearly demand that North Korea not conduct any launch using ballistic-missile technology. Given the track record of North Korea's repeated nuclear tests and missile launches, North Korea has no justification for claiming any peaceful use of outer space.

Furthermore, the argument of the North Korean representative demonstrated that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has no intention of abiding

by international norms. Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations provides that Member States agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council. Article 103 clearly states that in the event of a conflict between the obligations under the Charter and obligations under any other international agreement, the obligations under the Charter prevail. North Korea is thus bound by its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions.

On the parallel policy of economic development and nuclear armament, the North Korean delegation provided the rationale for their policy. But let me point out that the pursuit of a nuclear-weapons programme is a violation of the international norm. Given that North Korea receives assistance of more than \$10 million annually from the United Nations alone, it is a great pity that the North Korean authorities squander scarce resources on nuclear and missile development. We believe that North Korea should use its limited resources to improve the lives of its people, rather than waste them on proscribed activities of developing nuclear weapons and missile programmes.

Lastly, on the issue of the family reunions, I must say that it is very regrettable that North Korea unilaterally cancelled the scheduled family reunions just four days before the event, which had been planned with purely humanitarian intentions to help heal our people's pain of separation. North Korea's cancellation of the reunion of separated families has shattered hopes, in particular of 200 separated families that were especially selected for the occasion among 10 million divided people in Korea. Those families were eagerly anticipating meeting their estranged kin. We strongly urge North Korea to reverse its inhumane decision and proceed with the reunion of the families, in order to help heal the wounds inflicted on our people and soothe their anguish.

Mr. Ri Tong Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I shall do my best not to go beyond the five minutes.

The South Korea representative has again made misleading remarks. He talked of the nuclear weapons of somebody else. South Korea is under the nuclear umbrella of the United States. It allowed nuclear weapons into the Korean peninsula. That has been undermining the peace and security of the Korean peninsula for six decades. Concerning nuclear weapons, he did not say how long they have been there. He just said they were not there. He is not the owner of the nuclear weapons of

the United States. I kindly ask the United States what is the status of the nuclear weapons in South Korea in case they are not there. The international norm is to get the verification of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The United States has a commitment, a legal obligation.

Secondly, with regard to the resolution, again I want to tell a story. South Korea launched a satellite immediately after the launch of that of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. But since it is the so-called ally of the United States, the United States did not take the issue to the Security Council. The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in its first intervention in exercise of the right of reply, said that that was a double standard. In the history of the Security Council, how can a satellite launch be a threat to peace and security? The mandate of the Council is not to take up the issue of a peaceful satellite launch. South Korea launched, the international community quietly observed, and the Security Council kept silent.

Thirdly, with regard to the parallel policy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, again he made the provocation and, again, this cannot be a political bargaining chip. I make that very clear.

Fourthly, on family reunions, on the Korean peninsula, while the dialogue was going on, they opened a joint military exercise in August for almost one month against the climate of the dialogue that had been going on. We showed our maximum restraint and patience, but they went ahead with the provocation of arresting the political figures who favour unification in South Korea. They brought them to court, to so-called justice, saying they were pro-North Korea factors.

Once again, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea delegation would like to make clear that the 15 June joint declaration should be given priority as the foremost political document and the only way and the fundamental key. South Korea should answer before the international community.

Mr. Shin Dong-Ik (Republic of Korea): I will try not to exceed the five-minute limit. Perhaps I will not need that much time, as I do not feel any need to get entangled with his endless claims based on force and absurd reasoning.

North Korea again denied being bound by any of the obligations by which the rest of the Member States

abide in a faithful and consistent manner. I must again repeat that, according to Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations, all Member States should accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council.

It is highly regrettable that the North Korean delegation has again repeated its irrational, false and arbitrary allegations.

The meeting rose at 8.45 p.m.