



General Assembly

Sixty-ninth session

Official Records

15th plenary meeting
Saturday, 27 September 2014, 9 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 9 a.m.

Address by His Majesty King Tupou VI, King of the Kingdom of Tonga

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the King of the Kingdom of Tonga.

His Majesty King Tupou VI, King of the Kingdom of Tonga, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Majesty King Tupou VI, King of the Kingdom of Tonga, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

King Tupou VI: I would like to congratulate you warmly, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session, and to assure you that the Tongan delegation will fully support the crucial work ahead under your able leadership. I would also like to thank your predecessor, Mr. John Ashe, for his sterling conduct of the previous session, especially his championing of issues relating to small island developing States (SIDS). And I pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his exemplary stewardship in advancing the commitment of the United Nations to building a more peaceful and prosperous world amid the diverse and complex issues it faces today.

My delegation and I welcome the theme of this year's general debate, "Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda",

and we look forward to the three high-level thematic debates and the high-level event to be held next year. As we work together to formulate a historic post-2015 development agenda, we are cognizant that we must be ambitious and transformative in our approach in order to ensure tangible benefits for our people. Responsive access to financial resources is essential if we are to cement the adoption of a meaningful development agenda and its full implementation.

Tonga supports the consensus that the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals should be integrated into the post-2015 development agenda, with a global commitment to eradicating poverty by 2030. The proposed sustainable development goals on oceans, seas and marine resources and climate change are woven intimately and intricately into the fabric of the very survival of Pacific small island developing States. Without them, our joint aspirations for sustainable development and economic growth will not be achieved, and we will be left behind. The Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway, known as the Samoa Pathway outcome document, was endorsed by SIDS leaders and their partners earlier this month. It is a blueprint for the sustainable development of small island developing States for the next decade and should therefore be integrated into the form and substance of the post-2015 development agenda.

In order to guarantee harmony in our implementation of the development agenda, Tonga agrees that each country should take primary responsibility for its own economic growth, social development and

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environmental sustainability. However, that can be fulfilled only with the active engagement of all relevant stakeholders through genuine and durable partnerships. We look forward to working together towards the summit in September 2015 when Heads of State and Government will adopt a post-2015 development agenda that will be inclusive and people-centred. It will be a historic event, adding further meaning to the celebration of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations.

This year, the Pacific island leaders endorsed the Palau Declaration on “The Ocean: Life & Future”, which is concerned with charting a course to sustainability. Tonga is a joint custodian of the Pacific Ocean, whose natural resources form the bedrock of economic, social and environmental development in the Pacific islands. The well-being of the Tongan people is therefore premised on the sustainable development, management and conservation of the ocean and its resources. The management of seabed exploration and exploitation is an important facet of Tonga’s interests in the oceans, and we have worked diligently through the relevant institutions established under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to ensure that activity within the area located in the Pacific Ocean is managed appropriately for the benefit of humankind.

For the first time, Tonga sought election to a seat on the relevant body established under UNCLOS, the Council of the International Seabed Authority, and was elected by acclamation by its member States. This year, Tonga passed legislation related to seabed mining activities within Tonga’s jurisdiction and under the provisions of UNCLOS. We joined our Pacific Island neighbours in supporting the call for launching negotiations by September 2015 on an international agreement under UNCLOS on the management and conservation of the ocean and its resources, both within our national jurisdiction and in areas beyond.

Tonga commends the Secretary-General’s initiative in convening the recent Climate Summit as a forum for world leaders to deliver bold announcements on climate change mitigation and adaptation. In the spirit of sustaining international cooperation, we support the urgent call for States to address the adverse impacts of climate change. The collective response will depend on the outcome of the ongoing negotiations being conducted through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Nevertheless, it should

be based on the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibility, as enshrined in the Convention. The principles and overall objective espoused by the Convention must be fully observed if the threat of climate change is to be effectively addressed and overcome for our common benefit.

The Global Risks Report 2013 ranked Tonga as the second most vulnerable country in the world to natural disasters. That vulnerability was demonstrated by our first category-5 cyclone earlier this year, which devastated our central island group, displacing thousands and resulting in millions of dollars’ worth of damage. However, and fortunately, it caused only one fatality. Today, that same central island group is experiencing an unseasonable drought. Tonga has used a whole-of-country approach — through its joint national action plan on climate-change adaptation and disaster-risk management — to establish a base from which to move forward with adaptation measures. In terms of mitigation, we are gradually reducing our fossil-fuel consumption.

Tonga applauds the convening of the high-level event on combating climate change, and it would like to recall here that Pacific island countries were among the first to raise the alarm on the implications of climate change for security, both regionally and generally. In that regard, we support the call to the Security Council to reconsider its stance and to recognize the links between climate change and international peace and security. We also support the call to the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative on climate and security to research those links and report back to Member States.

Tonga associates itself with those Member States that have appealed for a meaningful approach, going beyond the rhetoric, to reforming the Security Council through an intergovernmental process in order to make it more representative and inclusive. We also support the request of Heads of State and Government in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 55/2) that its goals include the important work of revitalizing the General Assembly. That general reform process must continue if we are to ensure greater efficiency, representativeness and transparency throughout the United Nations system as a whole, thereby enabling this great institution to be better prepared to respond to the realities we live with today.

Finally, for future generations to live in a better world, we must work harmoniously to fulfil our

responsibilities and ask the Almighty to guide us through our growing challenges.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank His Majesty the King of the Kingdom of Tonga for the statement he has just made.

His Majesty King Tupou VI, King of the Kingdom of Tonga, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, President of the Republic of Mali

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

Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, President of the Republic of Mali, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, President of the Republic of Mali, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Keita (*spoke in French*): It is my great pleasure, Mr. President, to convey to you warm congratulations from the delegation of Mali on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. The unanimous vote that you received on 11 June is an honour for your country, Uganda, and is a source of legitimate pride for all of Africa. I assure you of our fullest support for success in your new position. At the same time, I wish to congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador John William Ashe, who so ably led the Assembly during his tenure as President at the sixty-eighth session. I should also like to pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless commitment to resolving the crisis in Mali and for the laudable efforts he continues to make to promote peace, security and development throughout the world.

Mr. President, you have established a useful agenda and opted for continuity in selecting the central theme of the sixty-ninth session, "Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda". I commend your choice. Indeed, since the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, our Organization has been engaged in various intergovernmental processes to implement the slogan "The future we want."

In Rio de Janeiro, States Members of the United Nations took up the challenge to provide a better world for current and future generations. To deliver on that undertaking, we will require noble, ambitious, legitimate and strong leadership, strong political will, constant determination and insight so as to ensure a balanced integration of the three essential pillars of sustainable development, namely, social, economic and environmental. What we have heard over the past few days leads us to believe that it is feasible.

However, as we prepare to embark on the design phase of the transformative post-2015 programme, we must first complete a vital task. My delegation wishes to emphasize the need to ensure the full implementation of the substantial prior commitments we undertook. Accordingly, we want to make a heartfelt plea in favour of expediting the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In sum, I would reiterate that Mali subscribes to the core theme of this session, which is relevant, thanks to its inclusive, universal, ambitious and transformative aspects. The theme not only includes all the essential components of the outstanding MDGs, but it also focuses on the sustainable development goals (SDGs), which will be based on a transparent intergovernmental process.

Like other delegations, African and non-African alike, that have spoken before me, I remain convinced that the eradication of poverty by 2030 should be a priority target of commitments relating to the post-2015 development agenda that we are to adopt. Fortunately, the contribution of Africa to the current process is already formalized in the Common African Position on Post-2015 Development, adopted at the African Union Summit in Malabo in June. That joint position makes social, economic and environmental sustainability the keystone of our continent's development policy.

But the policy is also built on essential pillars, such as the transformation of economic structures, inclusive growth, science, technology, innovation, human-centred development, environmental sustainability, and natural resource and natural disaster risk management, as well as peace and security. Naturally, we strongly support the African position, the relevance and rightness of which goes without saying. I also urge the international community to diligently review the Common African Position. The concerns of the continent listed in that position statement were identified through a process conducted with care and precision.

As we approach the 2015 deadline, Africa is again faced with a terrible epidemic of the Ebola virus, which has run rampant, this time in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and other countries of West Africa. The rapid onset and the scale of that new challenge have sorely tested all the public-health systems already in place. The individual capacities of our States, which are fragile and in the process of being strengthened, will not be sufficient to cope with the crisis. We must pool our resources and redouble our efforts. We must attack the new epicentres. Today more than ever, it is important to adopt a common strategy to deal with this epidemic, which brings grief to numerous homes every day.

I want to express our appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his efforts, and, in these times of hardship, to assure our brother countries of our support and active solidarity. I also wish to commend and thank various nations, including France, the United States of America, China and Cuba, which immediately responded with short-, medium- and long-term assistance, provided swiftly and in a balanced manner. The pledges made have laid a foundation that will be instrumental, if not in completely overcoming the challenge immediately, at least in mitigating the panic that has begun to spread in the affected countries.

A year ago from this rostrum (see A/68/PV.15), I announced that my country, Mali, had rejoined the community of free and democratic nations, with the firm determination to write a new page in its history. I also announced the commencement of the dialogue process for peace and national reconciliation, which we initiated in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions and the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement, signed on 18 June 2013, between the Government and armed groups in northern Mali.

Since that date, there have been significant developments of a political and security nature relating to the restoration of the authority of the State, the protection of human rights, the development of humanitarian action, the execution of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and the coordination of development activities and partnership with the international community. In that context, the Government of Mali has undertaken a wide range of actions, covering decentralization — that is to say, an even more radical devolution of powers previously held by the central Government — the promotion of national

reconciliation and peaceful coexistence, development effectiveness in northern Mali, good governance and combating corruption and impunity.

The momentum was strengthened by the Government's organization of a series of meetings and opportunities for dialogue, including the Open Forum on Decentralization and the National Conference on Northern Mali. Those meetings enabled all the national stakeholders to come together, in an inclusive and participatory manner, and to identify structural weaknesses in our political and institutional systems, as well as to lay the foundations for new democratic governance. That will take into account the profound realities of our society, such as its ethnic and cultural diversity and the strengths that have enabled the people of Mali to ensure and maintain, throughout the centuries and despite all the vagaries of nature and recurring political uncertainties, their social cohesion, customary resilience and basic aspiration to a continuous improvement of their economic and social conditions.

Today, in Algiers, with the support of the international community, Algeria is facilitating a process that weaves the threads of an inclusive inter-Malian dialogue into a comprehensive and permanent peace. We thank Algeria for all its efforts to help Mali. We hope that peace will be sustainable and lasting and thus respond to the deepest aspirations of our people. A first round of talks, held in Algiers from 16 to 24 July, has led to the joint signing of a road map on the basis of consensus and a declaration of cessation of hostilities in the northern regions of Mali. The Government and the armed groups in northern Mali have since then continued their discussions on what is called the second phase. Those discussions should lead to deeper negotiations on a common vision for the future, to gradually provide lasting solutions to all the points of disagreement and start the final phase, before ending with a peace agreement that will finally be reached by the Malians themselves.

I would like to once again thank the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the United Nations, the European Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria, France, Switzerland and others, which I will not name but which deserve to be thanked for their tireless efforts for peace in Mali.

There are also other challenges to which we, as the international community, must collectively respond,

especially in the Sahel region, which includes Mali. The terrorist attacks carried out in Libya, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Tunisia and the Middle East, although geographically spread out, in fact represent the same serious threat to international peace and security. Here I would like to pay a special tribute to the memory of the French hostage, Hervé Gourdel, who was recently murdered in such a cowardly and brutal manner in Algeria. The very same day, that same barbarity was illustrated in Mali, with the discovery of a decapitated head hung up in a village marketplace. It belonged to a former Malian soldier whose only crime was loyalty to Mali and its Government.

We condemn terrorism, particularly when it is carried out under the banner of religion. Islam has been present in Mali since the eleventh century, and it has been a tolerant and moderate Islam that is based on humanism, the acceptance of others and the right to differences. That has nothing to do with the Islam we are seeing today.

We reiterate our profound gratitude to all those who have worked for a return to peace and stability in our country. On behalf of the grateful nation of Mali, we honour the memory of all the brave soldiers and civilians, from Mali and other friendly countries, who have sacrificed their lives fighting against obscurantism, terrorism and violent extremism.

The 2012 political and security crises in Mali highlighted the complex and multiple challenges facing all countries of the Sahel in terms of security, governance, the protection of human rights and development. Those challenges require concerted and diligent efforts by the international community. They should be met with a comprehensive approach and targeted mechanisms. In that regard, I welcome the adoption of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, which offers a comprehensive and coherent approach to finding lasting solutions to the threats and challenges that beset the Sahel.

The first ministerial meeting to establish a platform for coordinating the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, held in Bamako on 5 November 2013, is part of that approach. After the meeting, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs charged with coordinating the Sahel countries agreed to hold meetings every six months with a rotating chairmanship, which has been entrusted, for the first two years, to my country, Mali. The second meeting, also held in Bamako, on 16 May 2014, resulted in the adoption of the Malian chair's road map, which

focused in particular on coordinating the efforts of partners and the national and regional ownership of the various initiatives and strategies for the Sahel.

As a final note on this subject, I thank the bilateral and multilateral partners and the financial institutions committed to supporting the implementation of the targeted projects and programmes within the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. We also thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, Ms. Hiroute Guebre Selassie, and Mr. Romano Prodi for his efforts to reconcile the various points of view and to support Mali at the international level.

Mali remains firmly committed to the ideals of peace and stability, both within and outside its borders. I therefore welcome the progress achieved in terms of reconstruction and national reconciliation in the brotherly country of Guinea-Bissau. The successful holding of presidential and parliamentary elections bolsters the restoration of constitutional order in that brotherly country.

Regarding the Central African Republic, Mali is deeply concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation there, and expresses its support for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic. We hope its rapid deployment will put an end to the escalating violence and thus protect civilian populations in that brotherly country.

With respect to the Middle East, we are following with great concern the developments in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq, where the offensives of the terrorist group called the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant threaten the sovereignty of that country and the stability of the entire region. To the Palestinian people, we express our solidarity in action and continue to work for the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions.

Mali remains firmly committed to the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the eradication of the illicit trade in such weapons. To be effective, that fight must be make use of the relevant synergies. The consultation and cooperation framework at the regional and international levels offers such an opportunity. Similarly, the Government of Mali deplores the erosion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament, in particular the prolonged paralysis in the United Nations Disarmament Commission. However, we welcome the adoption by the General

Assembly, on 2 April 2013, of the Arms Trade Treaty (resolution 67/234), as it represents true progress in that area.

We note that the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council have been ongoing for two decades already. The main issues seem to be the categories of membership, the question of the veto, regional representation, enlargement of the membership, the Council's working methods and its relations with the General Assembly. It seems to us that all Member States are now convinced of the need for a reform of the institutional framework of the United Nations in order to strengthen its legitimacy and ensure its effectiveness.

However, no significant progress has been made in the specific case of the Security Council, despite repeated calls from this same rostrum and multiple meetings on the issue. Africa, despite the fact that it represents 53 of the 193 States Members of the United Nations today, remains the only continent that does not have a permanent seat on the Security Council. This situation is at odds with the values of equality and justice that are the ideals espoused by our Organization.

Africa came up with and submitted a Common Position that was agreed on at Ezulwini, reaffirmed in Sirte and subsequently confirmed during several other summits. This proposal, a fair and realistic solution, calls for granting the African continent two permanent seats with the right of veto and five other non-permanent seats. It seems to us that the Council, thus reformed, would better reflect the geopolitical realities of today's world, and the historic injustice done to Africa would be repaired.

In conclusion, I would like recall that we are all gathered here at the United Nations for the sake of an ideal and because of a universal desire for peace, justice and freedom. Millions of people around the globe expect the United Nations to deliver peace, security, development and international solidarity. We have no right to disappoint them. As a community of nations, we have the duty and the means to succeed through collective awareness and the preservation of our common values. That is the price of guaranteeing future generations a sustainable development that would protect them from the scourge of war and deprivation.

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

Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, President of the Republic of Mali, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Salva Kiir, President of the Republic of South Sudan

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of South Sudan.

Mr. Salva Kiir, President of the Republic of South Sudan, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Salva Kiir, President of the Republic of South Sudan, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Kiir: I congratulate you, Mr. President, your country, Uganda, and the African continent on your election to the presidency of the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. My delegation and I pledge our full support to you, Sir, in this important mission. I also wish to congratulate Ambassador John Ashe for successfully completing his term.

We are all bound by our moral duty and legal obligations to address the challenges confronting the world today. We need to act in solidarity to promote global peace and security for the good of our nations. In this context, I urge the United Nations and all Heads of State and Government to support the current peace initiatives in the world, especially those in the Middle East, the Central African Republic, Somalia, Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of South Sudan. We need to find appropriate ways and means to end these conflicts and many others in the world, and to pave the way for all the nations and peoples of the world to live in peace and to enjoy their basic rights.

In addition, the Security Council needs to be strengthened to deal with new global challenges. Therefore, we support the call of the African leaders for a comprehensive review of the Security Council to ensure that Africa and the other continents are well represented in this important international body, in accordance with the African position as stipulated by the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration. This will create a more inclusive Security Council and empower all the continents to play a greater and more effective role in promoting global peace and security

for the benefit of the human race. More importantly, it will ensure that the Security Council continues to fulfil its purpose and be more able to achieve its mandate.

The journey of my people from conflict to peace, independence and freedom was costly. It was characterized by economic and political marginalization, a prolonged war, humanitarian disasters, the loss of millions of lives and untold human suffering. At independence, we acquired a country with a multitude of challenges, ranging from weak national institutions and inadequate physical infrastructure to limited human capacity and weak security mechanisms. We are grateful the international community for its support and for continuing to provide humanitarian and development assistance.

I have no doubt that the world has followed with shock and disbelief the violent conflict that erupted in South Sudan on Sunday, 15 December 2013, which was plotted by my former Vice-President, who wanted to seize power by force. He was too impatient in his thirst for power. He did not want to wait for the general elections scheduled to take place in 2015, when he could have sought a mandate from the people of South Sudan, as required by our transitional Constitution. The failed coup and the ensuing rebellion resulted in the loss of many innocent lives, the destruction of property and damaged community relationships. However, the coup was foiled, and the Government is continuing to defend the country and the people against the rebellion.

The Government and the people of South Sudan take this opportunity to thank the United Nations, the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) and the entire international community for their prompt action to restore peace and stability in my country. My Government is unwaveringly committed to resolving the conflict peacefully, and my negotiating team has been in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, since January, talking with the rebels about peace, in order to close a dark chapter in the history of our young country and, on a new page, to pave the way for us once again to embark on the difficult mission of socioeconomic development, which our people urgently need.

With the dedicated efforts of the mediators, we were able to sign an agreement on cessation of hostilities between the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition on 23 January and to reaffirm our commitment to the agreement on 9 May.

My Government has demonstrated its firm commitment to peace, has unreservedly honoured those agreements and is continuing to negotiate in good faith to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. However, the rebels have violated the agreements too many times and have refused to sign the Protocol Agreement, which is a crucially important document signed by the Heads of State and Government of IGAD, including myself as a party to the conflict. That important document forms the basis for resolving the crisis peacefully and inclusively. Therefore, I urge the international community to prevail on the rebels to sign the Protocol Agreement.

We appreciate the fact that the international community is rightly concerned about the humanitarian crisis and human rights abuses that resulted from the failed coup and the rebellion. In that regard, my Government has ordered an investigation into those abuses and has also accepted to cooperate with the Commission of Inquiry formed by the African Union to carry out investigations into allegations of human rights violations. We are determined to hold accountable those who are found responsible, as we do not condone impunity under any circumstances.

My Government recently signed into law provisions to guarantee freedom of expression in the media. It has also ratified three United Nations core conventions, namely, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its first Optional Protocol; and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Those are all positive measures put in place to address some of the concerns.

The conflict in South Sudan is purely a political struggle for power and not an ethnic conflict, as has been reported. The citizens displaced by the conflict, especially in the three states of Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile, have sought refuge in the neighbouring states of Lakes, Warrap, Central Equatoria and Eastern Equatoria and in neighbouring countries. Those innocent victims of the conflict urgently need and deserve humanitarian assistance. We therefore thank the United Nations, the Government of Norway and the stakeholders for organizing the donor conference in Oslo, Norway, in May to support our humanitarian

needs. We also deeply appreciate and welcome the high-level ministerial meeting on South Sudan that the United Nations organized on 25 September as a sideline event of the sixty-ninth session of the Assembly, during which a number of donors made pledges of support. My Government is fully committed to providing humanitarian access and has taken the necessary measures to facilitate access for humanitarian agencies.

The conflicts within our two countries of South Sudan and the Sudan tend to be interconnected. That is why we in the Republic of South Sudan will exert increased efforts to strengthen relations with the Republic of the Sudan. Our oil flows through the territory of the Sudan. In the spirit of cooperation, my Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation will soon commence more joint visits with his Sudanese counterpart to donor countries to appeal and lobby for lifting and waiving the Sudan's foreign debt, as was agreed in the Cooperation Agreement between the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan. There are outstanding issues associated with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, especially the final status of Abyei. The Republic of South Sudan and the Sudan are working through those issues with the members of the the African Union High-level Implementation Panel mediation team and our other partners to find an amicable, peaceful solution with the Sudan. I am committed to addressing those outstanding issues, and I am in direct communication with President Omer Al-Bashir of the Sudan to resolve those issues through dialogue.

Furthermore, my Government and the people of South Sudan would like to state our appreciation and thanks to the countries that have expressed support for the peaceful resolution of the conflict in my country, especially the United States of America, China, Egypt, South Africa, the Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Norway, the Congo and Namibia, together with many others.

My Government is collaborating with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and other stakeholders, such as community leaders, political parties, civil societies and faith-based organizations, to build trust with the internally displaced persons in UNMISS camps and to encourage them to return to their homes and their pre-conflict areas and resume their normal livelihoods. With respect to our cooperation with UNMISS, my Government would like to express its concern regarding the latest mandate of UNMISS,

which has very serious implications for service delivery to my people. I note in particular that the new mandate does not allow UNMISS to respond to requests from national, state and local partners for assistance in important activities connected with capacity-building, peacebuilding, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform, recovery and development.

Notwithstanding the fact that the activities I have just mentioned are of paramount importance to South Sudan, we strongly believe that the main objective of UNMISS is to support peace and reconciliation first and foremost. We humbly request the Security Council to reconsider its decision when the UNMISS mandate comes up for renewal in November. Also, we would further urge UNMISS to engage in reorientation of its activities relating to the mandate of protecting civilians and to shift from protection-by-presence to protection-by-action. This is very important because the presence of troops that do not move does nothing to save the civilian population. It is vital that they become active. They must also encourage those in UNMISS camps to return to their homes. UNMISS needs to protect the civilians in their neighbourhoods, not in camps, because ours is a huge country — larger than France.

The theme of the current session is “Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda”. It is no surprise that the Republic of South Sudan, as a three-year-old country facing numerous challenges, will not achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We commend the Secretary-General and the Working Group for coordinating the discussions on the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), which will form the post-2015 global development agenda. It is vital that the SDGs focus nations' efforts on reducing poverty; ending hunger and achieving food security; addressing our health concerns, especially those issues affecting women and children; promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; addressing the issues of access, equity and quality of education; and tackling youth unemployment.

We firmly believe that the attainment of the SDGs will require strong, sustained partnership, collaboration and coordination at the international, regional and national levels, and leadership from the United Nations. For our part, we will spare no effort and will work in conjunction with the international community and our

partners in the New Deal, as a fragile State member of the Group of Seven Plus, to attain the new development goals.

I wish to take this opportunity to express our solidarity and support to the victims of Ebola in the greater West Africa region, particularly in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone. We acknowledge the leading role of the United States of America in assisting the continent to combat the virus. It is vital that the SDGs address such global health threats.

The Republic of South Sudan strongly condemns all forms of terrorism, including piracy, which has become a menace to international peace and security.

Climate change is now recognized as a major global threat — a threat that could wipe out planet Earth and the entire human race. I commend the Secretary-General for convening the recent climate summit to focus attention on this global problem, and I urge all the members of the Assembly to heed the call of the Secretary-General and take bold action. I am pleased that the SDGs cover environmental issues of concern to the international community, and I hope the climate summit to be held in Paris in December 2015 will result in an agreement on a new global legal framework for tackling climate change. We must win the race against the clock to save our planet and humankind before it is too late. To echo Ms. Graça Machel, tackling climate change requires leadership, courage and ambition from all of us. Let us act in solidarity to create the future we want.

Finally, Sir, I reiterate my resolve to restore peace to the people of South Sudan, to fully implement the cooperation agreements with the Republic of the Sudan, to provide unrestricted support to humanitarian assistance, to respect human rights and ensure democratic governance in my country, and to strengthen working relations with UNMISS and all the members of the international community without exception. We will work in unison to establish a safe, secure, peaceful and prosperous South Sudan.

We are all one in this world — whether strong or weak, rich or poor. Let us therefore stick together.

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

Mr. Salva Kiir, President of the Republic of South Sudan, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Her Excellency Ms. Catherine Samba-Panza, President of the Transitional Government of the Central African Republic

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Transitional Government of the Central African Republic.

Ms. Catherine Samba-Panza, President of the Transitional Government of the Central African Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Ms. Catherine Samba-Panza, President of the Transitional Government of the Central African Republic, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Samba-Panza (*spoke in French*): It is an honour and a legitimate source of pride for me to speak from this rostrum on behalf of my country, the Central African Republic, on the occasion of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly of our shared Organization.

I would like first to address, on behalf of the delegation that is accompanying me and in my own name, my warm congratulations to Mr. Sam Kutesa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uganda, for his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. My congratulations also go to Mr. John Ashe, who successfully presided over the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, during which the situation in my country was widely debated and was subject to numerous resolutions of the Security Council.

I would especially like to express all my gratitude and that of the people of the Central African Republic to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his dynamism and commitment to my country, a commitment that was embodied in his April visit to Bangui.

It is also especially important for me to solemnly address members in this Hall to express the profound gratitude of the Central African people for the international community's unwavering and tireless commitment to my country in distress. That recognition goes especially to the Heads of State of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC),

the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the African Union, European Union, and the countries of the International Mediation under the leadership of President Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of the Congo. It also extends to France and its President for their dogged determination, and to the United States of America and members of the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic for their renewed and unflagging support for the transition authorities in my country.

The sixty-ninth session is being held at a time when my country is still experiencing a worrying humanitarian, security and economic situation that challenges all of us as members of the international community. The political instability and internal conflicts that have been recurring for more than two decades have plunged the Central African Republic into a situation of extreme vulnerability. Since December 2012, the Central African Republic has been shaken by one of the worst crises in its history, which has left the Central African people in a dramatic situation.

Following the resignation of my predecessor on 10 January, I responded to the distressed calls of the people of the Central African Republic. My election has raised great hopes among the people of my country, who welcomed the election of the first woman President of the Central African Republic as a sign of a break with the past and the start of a new future. Since then I have felt the weight of the responsibility that has befallen me and taken stock of the situation that I had inherited.

With determination, I immediately embarked upon dealing with the situation, with the support of the international community, in accordance with the road map for the transition, whose main axes are the restoration of security and peace, the resolution of the serious humanitarian crisis, the recovery of State authority throughout the national territory, the relaunching of economic activities, and, of course, the holding of free, transparent and democratic elections. Today, I rejoice that my calls to the international community to support the efforts of the transition have not remained unanswered; we have been offered multifaceted support, thanks to which the worst was avoided in my country.

Those combined efforts have resulted in noticeable progress on security issues and humanitarian, economic and political matters. In terms of security, I welcome the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2149 (2014) on 10 April, authorizing the deployment

of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), which was a strong response on the part of the international community to the Central African crisis and which led, on 15 September, to the final transfer of authority from the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic to MINUSCA. I want to thank all States that have made their troops, materiel and financial contributions available to the Mission.

We have placed high hopes in the deployment of the Mission, which should contribute effectively and efficiently to securing the country's path to peace and sustainable development. The fact remains, however, that the success of the Mission will also depend on the close involvement of the national security and defence forces, which can provide support to the Mission based on their knowledge of the terrain.

I would ask the Sanctions Committee to show great understanding and to reconsider the arms embargo imposed on the Central African Republic. At the same time, it is also urgent to go beyond the Brazzaville forum, which resulted in the signing of an agreement to cease hostilities and opened the way for the disarmament of all armed groups, the reform of the defence and security sectors, and especially the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. In those areas, too, we will need substantial backing from the international community.

In the humanitarian field, efforts have been ongoing since January. To date, the number of internally displaced persons has dropped from 900,000 to 175,000 people, which means that 81 per cent of the internally displaced persons have left makeshift sites to return to their communities. Despite the improvements, the humanitarian situation remains worrying in general, since it is dependent on the fragile security situation, particularly in the countryside.

Efforts should be focused on the return of 400,000 refugees now in neighbouring countries. Similarly, the resources mobilized so far cover only 48 per cent of the expressed humanitarian need. In that respect, we expect other disbursements to support the return of displaced and exiled persons to their homes.

With regard to the economy, the Central African Republic's economy has been hit hard by the deep crisis. As a result, the growth rate of the country fell

to minus 36 per cent in 2013, placing the country in sudden deep recession. Thanks to active diplomacy, the Central African Republic has benefited from emergency budgetary support for CEMAC and ECCAS countries, an agreement signed with the International Monetary Fund for the conclusion of a programme for the rapid disbursement of credits and budgetary support from the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the European Union, as well as agreements signed with France for budget support. Beyond the announcements that have been made, the effective disbursement of those funds will boost our country's economic activities and set it on a path of growth. The emergency plan for sustainable reconstruction was designed to effectively respond to the economic crisis, and one of our expectations vis-à-vis the international community is that we should be given all the necessary support for the effective implementation of that plan.

In order to promote political dialogue and national reconciliation and help Central Africans to live better with one another, I have always focused on pacifying hearts and minds so as to achieve genuine national reconciliation. The first step was taken in Brazzaville on 23 July. It is now time to continue the process in the Central African Republic itself, by providing our people with an opportunity to assess the situation of the country themselves and share their vision for the future of the country, and by bringing together all the parties to the crisis around a table to consider a new republican pact to recast the Central African State. The Central African Republic cherishes the ardent wish that special attention will be given to the political process, whose success will depend on the resources available for its implementation.

I would like to commend the relevance of the theme that was chosen for this session of the General Assembly. That theme should lead us to take stock of the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and of emerging challenges. It comes at the right time, because our world continues to be shaken by crises of all types in Africa, the Middle and Near East, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America. The Ebola virus disease, which is raging throughout the West African region with the risk of expanding beyond the region, is another current challenge that has large-scale, adverse economic and humanitarian consequences in many countries. I would like to take this opportunity to extend, from this high rostrum, my most heartfelt condolences and those of the people of the Central African Republic to our brotherly countries in Africa

affected by that scourge, which has claimed so many lives.

I also extend my condolences and those of the Central African people to French President François Hollande and the French people for the dastardly murder of Hervé Gourdel, which has upset us all. That cowardly murder is a timely reminder of the need to step up our fight against terrorism, which remains a major threat to our planet and a real obstacle to the promotion of international peace and security. The Central African Republic calls for greater mobilization by the international community against terrorism, and in particular against the Boko Haram sect operating in Nigeria and Cameroon, not far from the borders of my country and against the Lord's Resistance Army, which continues to rage throughout the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and some neighbouring countries.

Similarly, the Central African Republic opposes the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which continue to be traded illicitly and continue to fuel the worst conflicts throughout the world, particularly in Africa. The Central African Republic welcomes the efforts undertaken to achieve the signing of the Arms Trade Treaty and the adoption of Security Council resolution 2117 (2013) on the non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and we are awaiting the effective implementation of that resolution.

Related to situations of war is the issue of justice and human rights. I am strongly committed to fighting impunity. The Central African Republic, as a party to the Rome Statute, will continue to support the actions of the International Criminal Court in its fight against impunity for the most serious crimes, which affect the entire international community, and especially my country. In that context, the Central African Republic supports the initiative taken by France and Mexico to cut back on the abusive use of the right of veto in the Security Council in cases involving massacres of civilian populations, war crimes and genocide.

My country had been committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and to that end has developed a poverty-reduction strategy paper that has been implemented with tangible results, including in the areas of water, sanitation and education. That was the case until the most recent crisis unfortunately came about, which called everything into question. I should also like to draw the attention of the international community to landlocked States like mine and to call

for international solidarity to ensure that substantial assistance be granted to them in order to ease the burden associated with our economic vulnerability and facilitate the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

I commend the efforts undertaken by the international community to stem climate change and its negative impact on the world. I strongly encourage all countries to ratify the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol and to incorporate the principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change into the new agreement to be adopted at Paris in 2015.

The Central African Republic is against any and all attempts in favour of partition and threats against the territorial integrity of nations. As such, it supports the position of the Kingdom of Morocco on the Sahara issue, which is in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1754 (2007) and 2152 (2014).

I cannot conclude without paying a heartfelt tribute to the work of the United Nations to promote peace throughout the world. In conclusion, I would like to express, above all, my pride at the courage and great resilience of the Central African people and their determination to rise up from the recurrent crises that have inflicted untold suffering on them. Long live the United Nations! Long live international solidarity to ensure that peace and security prevails throughout the world!

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Transitional Government of the Central African Republic for the statement she has just made.

Ms. Catherine Samba-Panza, President of the Transitional Government of the Central African Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

General debate

Address by Mr. Prosper Bazombanza, Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi.

Mr. Prosper Bazombanza, Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Prosper Bazombanza, Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Bazombanza (Burundi) (spoke in French): On behalf of His Excellency Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, President of Burundi, and the people of Burundi as a whole, I would first like to offer warm congratulations to you, Sam Kutesa, a son of Africa, for your election by acclamation on 11 June as President of the General Assembly at its current session. I would also like to acknowledge the remarkable work of His Excellency Mr. John Ashe, who presided over the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, which he closed in this newly renovated Hall. And I take this opportunity to reiterate our gratitude to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his untiring efforts to improve the functioning of the Organization and for the results attained in a particularly difficult socioeconomic context.

At this important moment, when delegations from many different parts of the globe have come together, we would like to express our appreciation for the theme of the sixty-ninth session, “Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda”. It comes at just the right time, since we are slowly but surely and inexorably approaching the deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Beyond that, I would also like to welcome the priorities that you have already set, Mr. President, which focus on eradicating poverty and hunger and promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth. As the authors of the report of the high-level group established to make recommendations on the post-2015 development programme put it, the theme chosen and your priorities are simultaneously ambitious and pragmatic. The report cites intense discussions in every region and in many sectors, especially on those living in poverty. The same team fosters the hope that our generation will be able to produce the transformations needed to end the poverty that is devastating people all over our planet.

We should therefore emphasize that however ambitious the group’s recommendations may be, they should also take into account the realities on the ground and the fact that the transformative changes linked to the goals and indicative targets — those coming out of discussions with 5,000 civil society organizations, 250 leaders of major businesses and the scientific and

academic communities, along with national, regional and international consultations — can contribute to reducing hunger and poverty around the world by generating tangible economic growth that can be equitably shared in order to achieve the well-being we seek.

The Millennium Development Goals were a pact of global socioeconomic solidarity for our countries. Like other nations in Africa and elsewhere, Burundi has great respect for those Goals. As the aforementioned group has rightly pointed out, the fastest reduction in poverty in the history of the world occurred during the first 13 years of the new millennium. The same group notes that the number of people living on \$1.25 a day has fallen, and child mortality has declined by 30 per cent since the 2000 Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), while deaths attributable to malaria have been reduced by one quarter.

While we should note that not every country can boast the same progress, Burundi shares the belief that it would be wrong for us to abandon the MDGs and start over at zero. On the contrary, we should continue the reforms that have produced the unprecedented progress, which is unquestionably the result of improved policies and commitment on a global scale aimed at meeting the Millennium Development Goals. We should therefore capitalize on them in order to profit further. We also subscribe to the other declared priorities, including the adoption of a post-2015 development agenda, the strengthening of cooperation and reforming the United Nations, as well as strengthening partnerships between the United Nations and other bodies.

Although at the moment it seems clear that Burundi will not be able to fully meet the established Goals, I should point out that we have made undeniable progress in the areas of education and health, thanks in particular to our programmes of free education and medical care for children under five and new mothers. Besides the 3,000 classrooms and many health centres built over the past few years, we have seen positive results in other sectors, too.

In the area of education, many young Burundians, including girls, who had no access to schooling in the past are now attending school. In the area of health care, we have reduced child and maternal mortality, and we are working on stabilizing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and meeting the eligibility requirements for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. We delivered accounts of those efforts at the Assembly's

sixty-eighth session, as well as of the reduction of deaths due to malaria.

On the political front, as we indicated in our address to the Assembly at the sixty-eighth session, Burundi has been working on the process we committed to months ago for holding presidential and general elections, scheduled to begin in May 2015. In that regard, it is important to note that after the holding of successive elections in 2005 and 2010, with support from the United Nations and other partners, the entire political class, through the leaders of the authorized political parties and other parties, agreed in March 2013 on a road map for the next elections.

In that regard, one must add that, thanks to that extremely valuable instrument, which should help the Burundian political parties in the holding of transparent, free and democratic elections, the Burundian Parliament adopted the electoral code by consensus. Subsequently, the Head of State promulgated it, as prescribed by our Constitution, which is the fruit of the Arusha Agreement of 2000, to which Burundi attaches great importance. Moreover, the electoral calendar was announced last June by the Independent National Electoral Commission, itself established after consultations and agreement among the political parties involved in the matter.

We can therefore say that things are moving and progressing well in my country. I also wish to reaffirm loud and clear what the Head of State, His Excellency Pierre Nkurunziza, often reiterates, that the 2015 elections will be held in better conditions than previous elections and that success will be complete. The Burundian people have suffered so much from the violence that has plunged many families into mourning that we cannot afford to relapse into the errors of the past. Indeed, we made the firm commitment to bury the hatchet once and for all. That is why we have made our own the words of former Indian politician Mahatma Gandhi: "I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent".

With regard to good governance, my delegation would like to return to the institutions established during the current legislature session. The tools for improving good governance include the National Independent Human Rights Commission and the institution of the Ombudsman, whose performance is deemed satisfactory by many of our compatriots. A national strategy on good governance and on the fight

against poverty for 2011-2015 has been adopted and is being implemented.

Of course, we are far from achieving the expected results, but in Burundi and elsewhere it is a long-term undertaking. What is important is that there is the political will to always move forward and meet the challenge of zero tolerance in this area eventually. In addition, performance contracts have been signed by members of the Government and by the senior Government officials in order to improve the functioning of our Administration. The establishment of the Burundi Revenue Authority has improved State revenues and reduced corruption, which was also once a common practice in our tax administration and business circles. Here too, one must point out that perfection is not yet at hand, but there is the determination and the will to resolve the scourge of corruption for good.

As for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission envisaged by the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Accord, the relevant law has already been passed by Parliament. Consultations are under way to elect its 11 commissioners, on the understanding that the filing of nominations was closed in July 2014, and an ad hoc committee for the selection of candidates has just been set up by general consensus.

Concerning the participation of women in political life, we have strengthened the number of women in the country's institutions, even going beyond the constitutional provisions in that area. The Burundian delegation provided the figures in its statement last year.

With respect to the peacebuilding programme in Burundi, the coordination mechanisms, such as the coordination group of partners, hold their meetings through appropriate structures, such as clusters, strategic forums and policy forums. The same is true for the coordination of assistance, for which Burundi adopted the same structures.

The mandate of the United Nations Office in Burundi will end on 31 December, and the Office will transfer its responsibilities to a United Nations country team in Burundi, preparations for which are in full swing. A joint transition programme was presented to the appropriate body on 14 May in the United Nations Office. Also, a joint steering committee and a technical transition team were established and are functioning according to their mandate.

Finally, also in the context of peace consolidation, a third phase of that programme, covering the period 2014 to 2016, will soon become operational. The themes of the programme have already been adopted by the relevant authorities.

On the economic front, Burundi has held two sectoral conferences on priority areas, one in July 2013 and the other in October. Their purpose was to decide, together with bilateral partners, on ways and means to implement the commitments made by each at the conference of Burundi's development partners held in Geneva in October 2012. The areas deemed priorities were drawn from two strategic instruments: the Burundi Vision 2025 and the Strategic Framework for Growth and the Fight against Corruption, Second Generation.

The first instrument is for long-term development planning and projects Burundi's image in 2025. It should guide policies and strategies for sustainable development from the perspective of meeting the needs of present generations without hampering or compromising future generations. The second instrument — the Strategic Framework for Growth and the Fight against Poverty, Second Generation — is anchored in Vision 2025. It is the unifying framework for all sectoral and multisectoral policies, breaking the strategic pillars of the Vision Burundi 2025 down into projects and programmes.

The results obtained in the economic sphere are rather mixed. That is why the Government would again like to make an urgent appeal from this rostrum to the partners represented here that they honour the commitments made at the Geneva conference of 2012.

Regarding Burundi's post-2015 development programme, the following areas have been identified. They are: governance, inequalities, conflicts and fragility; economic growth and employment; energy, water and environmental sustainability; access to basic social services; and population dynamics and food security. That agenda was the result of an extensive national consultation that included all segments of the population. On its face, it can be seen to be a programme rooted in the continuity of change, well grounded in the transformative development of the lives of our people and consistent with the theme for this session of the Assembly.

Even if regional integration does not seem to be explicitly laid out in the programme, I would like to

convey to all present that regional integration is a matter to which Burundi is firmly committed and which it considers to be a common thread linking the various policy areas, with the potential to provide appropriate responses to the challenges that our country faces.

At the international level, conflicts continue to tear a number of countries apart and to undermine development efforts in many others. We must mobilize our energies and work in synergy to end and eliminate such threats as terrorism, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, human trafficking and others. In that regard, Burundi is striving, as much as possible, to do its part to help maintain peace and security in the world.

Burundi was one of two countries in Africa and the world that decided to intervene in Somalia as part of the African Union Mission in 2008, and we continue to strive to contribute to the stabilization of that country to this day. In that regard, Burundi is proud of the progress made towards normalization in Somali, which promises a better future for Somalia. However, the success achieved should not obscure the enormous challenges still facing Somalia. Burundi is committed to working with the other partners to address them.

Burundi has also participated in peacekeeping operations in other countries, including the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, the Sudan and Syria, to name but a few.

With regard to Mali, we are greatly satisfied that territorial integrity has been restored in that country and that the presidential elections held there were a success.

Regarding the conflict in the Middle East, Burundi, like other members of the international community, is deeply concerned about the deteriorating security situation in the region observed in recent weeks. That is why we urge all parties to stop armed attacks, to avoid the loss of human life and to seek negotiated settlements to their disputes.

Finally, with regard to the Ebola crisis, we, like other African countries, are very concerned about the rapid spread of the Ebola virus, as was vividly described by many representatives during the Security Council meeting of 18 September (see S/PV.7268). We congratulate the Council on its adoption on 18 September of resolution 2177 (2014) on the Ebola crisis, at the initiative of the United States of America.

My delegation is proud to have sponsored the resolution, along with 134 other States, early in its development.

With regard to South Sudan, we urgently call on all parties to the conflict to break the cycle of violence and resolve their differences through political dialogue. In that connection, we are pleased to announce that Burundi has promised an infantry battalion of 850 men to help that young State to restore peace and security.

I also wish to inform the Assembly that Burundi has made progress regarding the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in general and in the areas of education and health in particular. However, despite my country's efforts to accelerate actions to honour the commitments made at the Millennium Summit in 2000, the international economic climate, and that in Burundi in particular, has not been favourable for their attainment. The Government of Burundi remains committed, however, to the development goals programme and will continue to work beyond 2015 to redouble its efforts to safeguard and strengthen the principles and values contained in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), which is a solid foundation for the post-2015 development programme.

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

Mr. Prosper Bazombanza, Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India

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

Mr. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Modi (India) (*spoke in Hindi; English text provided by the delegation*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.

It is a truly a great honour for me to address the Assembly for the first time as Prime Minister of India. I am humbled by the hopes and expectations of the people of India. I am also mindful of the expectations of the world from our 1.25 billion people.

My country, India, is home to one sixth of the world's population. It is a nation experiencing economic and social transformation on a scale rarely seen in the history of the world. Every country's world view is shaped by its civilization and its philosophical traditions. India's ancient wisdom sees the world as one family, and when I say this, I wish to make it clear that each country has its philosophy. I am not talking about ideology. With the inspiration of that philosophy, a country marches ahead. India is a country that since its Vedic times, has been saying that the world, the entire globe, is a family. India is a country where, beyond nature, we have a communication, a dialogue, with nature. We never struggle with nature. That is a part of Indian life. The reason is that with that philosophy, India has been moving forward. Each country and each nation is shaped by its civilization and its philosophical tradition. India's ancient wisdom, as I have said, sees the world as one family. India is a country that not only speaks for itself but for worldwide justice, dignity, opportunity and prosperity. We have always spoken out in support of such issues.

Owing to our ideology, we have a firm belief in multilateralism. Today, as I stand here, I am equally aware of the hopes and expectations that are pinned on the General Assembly. I am struck by the sacred belief that brought us together. We established the Organization on the basis of great principles and perspectives, in the belief that if our futures are connected, we will have to work together for peace and security, for human rights and for the economic development of all. We must work together to those ends. At that time, there were only 51 countries. Today, 193 sovereign flags fly in front of this building. Each new country enters on the basis of the same belief and expectation.

In the past six decades, we have been able to achieve a great deal. We have ended many wars. We have established and maintained peace. We have assisted economic development in many places. We have helped to build a future for poor children. We have contributed towards the elimination of starvation and strived to save our planet. The 69 United Nations peacekeeping missions have made the Blue Helmet a symbol of peace in the world.

Today, there is a surge of democracy across the world. The peaceful democratic transformation in Afghanistan shows that the Afghan people's aspiration for peace will definitely triumph over violence. We have seen Nepal emerge from war towards peace and democracy. Bhutan's young democracy is flourishing. There are also efforts towards democracy in West Asia and North Africa. Tunisia's success shows that such a path of democracy is possible. In Africa, there is a new momentum for stability, peace and progress, and a new awareness is on the horizon.

We have seen unprecedented prosperity in Asia and beyond founded on strengthened peace and stability. Latin America, a continent of enormous potential, is coming together in the shared pursuit of stability and prosperity. That continent may prove to be an important anchor for the global community. India looks forward to a peaceful and stable environment for its development. Our future is linked to our neighbourhood. That is why, from the very first day, my Government gave the highest priority to promoting friendship and cooperation with our neighbouring countries.

I have the same policy towards Pakistan. I want to hold serious bilateral talks with Pakistan in order to improve friendship and cooperation in a peaceful atmosphere, without the shadow of terrorism. I want to hold bilateral talks with that country. However, it is also Pakistan's responsibility to come forward and to genuinely establish the appropriate atmosphere for bilateral talks. In raising that issue in this forum, I do not know how successful our efforts will be. Some people are doubtful.

Today, we need to assist the victims of the floods in Kashmir. In India, we have organized large-scale assistance. We have not stopped at only India helping Kashmir. We have also asked Pakistan to assist, since that area was also affected by the floods. We have told Pakistan that just as we were helping the flood victims in India, we would also like to help those in Pakistan. We have proposed that. We are a part of the developing world but have limited resources. We would like to share our modest resources with all those who are in dire need of assistance.

Today, the world is witnessing a high level of tension and turmoil. There are no major wars, but tension and conflict abound. There is an absence of peace and uncertainty about the future. Even today, there is rampant poverty everywhere. The Asia-Pacific

region, which is integrating, is still concerned about maritime security. That is fundamental to its future. Europe faces a new threat of division. In West Asia, the dividing lines and terrorism are increasing. In our own region, we are still struggling to combat terrorism and instability. For the past four decades, we have faced such a threat.

Terrorism emerges in new forms and under new names. Be it small or large, in the North, the South, the East or the West, no country is free from threats. I remember when I met with world leaders 20 years ago, and we talked about terrorism. They did not quite understand it and stated that it was a law-and-order problem. Today, the entire world is witness to the slow spread of terrorism far and wide.

Are we really making integrated efforts at the international level to fight against those powerful groups? I know that terrorism is a very serious problem for discussion. Even today, some countries are giving refuge to international terrorists, and they consider terrorism a tool of their policy. Good terrorism and bad terrorism — that is what we hear these days. At this time, there is a question mark regarding our struggle to fight against terrorism. The brutal return of terrorism in West Asia and its impact on countries far and near has elicited a concerted effort, which we welcome. However, the effort should involve all the countries of the region. If we want to overcome terrorism, then they must all contribute towards its eradication. We strongly emphasize this.

Oceans, seas, space and cyberspace, besides contributing to our common wealth and prosperity, are becoming new theatres of conflict. In the same oceans that used to connect us, we are today hearing news of disputes. We once saw space as holding out potential for our achievements. Today, in cyberspace, which connects us in important areas, new dangers are being seen. International harmony and cooperation — on which the United Nations was founded — are needed now more than ever before. Today, we talk about an interdependent world, but have we become more united as nations? We need to think about that.

Why, when we have a good forum like the United Nations, do we keep creating so many different groups? There is the Group of Four, the Group of Seven and the Group of 20 — and the numbers keep changing. Whether or not we really want to do so, we, including India, become members of them. Is it not the time to move on and leave behind those groups? When the

United Nations celebrates its seventieth anniversary, how do we create a Group-of-All atmosphere? How can the General Assembly create an opportunity to solve all our problems? How can people begin to be more trustful? How can we become less competitive? We talk about unity, but then we divide the whole into different parts and pieces. Can we prevent ourselves from doing so?

On the one hand, we say that our policies are interconnected; on the other, we think in terms of zero-sum gains. We think that if the other benefits, I stand to lose. Who receives the benefit and who suffers the loss? That is what we appear to be weighing. The pessimists are cynical. Like them, we are inclined to say nothing will change. It is easy to be cynical and to say nothing will change. But if we do that, we run the risk of shirking our responsibilities and putting our collective future in danger.

We must unite and prepare to meet the needs of our times. We must really work for global peace. No one country or group of countries can determine the course of the world or its policies. It is imperative to have genuine international participation and partnership. We should try to promote positive dialogue and cooperation among countries. Our efforts must begin at the United Nations.

It is important that we improve the Security Council by making it more democratic and participative. Institutions that reflect the imperatives of the twentieth century will not be effective in the twenty-first century. They face the risk of irrelevance. I would like to emphasize that the policies and rules we made in the twentieth century may no longer be applicable. The speed of change is very fast. It is therefore essential that, in tune with the times, we adapt and reformulate, making the necessary changes and introducing new ideas. Only when we have done that will we be relevant.

We should set aside all our differences and mount a concerted international effort to combat terrorism and extremism. Towards that end, we should adopt a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. That is something which is long overdue. It must be emphasized that our combined strength to fight against terrorism should be reflected in the convention. Our country, which has endured so many terrorist attacks, knows that, so long as the United Nations fails to take the initiative in that effort, and so long as we do not adopt a convention, we cannot be successful. In such work, we must not forget to make provision for peace,

stability and order in outer space and cyberspace. We must work together to ensure that all countries observe international rules and norms.

We must include the host countries and troop-contributing countries in our decision-making on United Nations peacekeeping. If they are included, their confidence will increase considerably. They are ready to make major sacrifices and to give their time and energy. But if they are excluded from decision-making, then how can United Nations peacekeeping become more vital and urgent? We need to seriously consider that. Today, let us redouble our efforts in pursuit of global disarmament. Let us also spare no effort to ensure that we work tirelessly towards those goals.

Globalization has created new industries and sources of employment. At the same time, billions live in the shadow of poverty. A great many countries are suffering economic deprivation, barely keeping their heads above water. What seems so difficult today was never so difficult in the past. Technology has made many things possible. Reduction in the cost of technology has made it more widely available. If we think of the speed with which Facebook or Twitter have spread around the world and cell-phone use has proliferated, then we must also believe that development and empowerment can spread with the same speed.

It is up to each country to make its own efforts at the national level. Each Government must fulfil its responsibilities. International participation is also very important. At one level, it requires better coordination of policy, so that our efforts become mutually supportive, not mutually damaging. It also means that, when we craft agreements on international trade, we accommodate one another's concerns and interests.

Let us think about the scale of the need. Today, basic sanitation is out of the reach of 2.5 billion people; 1.3 billion have no access to electricity and 1.1 billion no access to drinking water. That makes it clear that more comprehensive and concerted international action is required. We cannot keep waiting for economic development. In India, the most important aspects of my development agenda are focused precisely on those very issues, which should also be at the core of the post-2015 development agenda, as they deserve our utmost attention.

A world that is more habitable and sustainable is an objective we must work towards. There has been much debate and much written about that, but it takes only a

brief glance around our countries to become concerned. We are very concerned indeed about issues relating to forests, wildlife, birds, rivers, water sources and the blue sky above.

I would like to address three points. First, if we are to meet all of the challenges, we must fully uphold our responsibilities. The global community has agreed to work together on the basis of common but differentiated responsibility. That must continue to be the foundation of future action. That also means that developed countries must fulfil their commitments in terms of funding and technology transfer.

Secondly, national action is imperative. Technology has made many things possible, such as renewable energy. We need imagination and commitment. India stands ready to share its technology and capabilities, as for example through the recently announced free access to a satellite.

Thirdly, we need to change our lifestyles. Avoiding energy use is the cleanest option and would give a new direction to our economy. For us in India, respect for nature is fundamental and an integral part of spiritualism. It is part of our ideology.

I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to another idea. When we talk of climate change, we are also talking about holistic health care, connecting with nature and going back to basics. Today, I would like to underscore that yoga is an invaluable gift from our ancient tradition. Yoga embodies unity of mind and body, thought and action. It is important to coordinate all of those aspects. Such a holistic approach is valuable to our health and our well-being. Yoga is not just about exercise; it is a way to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and nature. By changing our lifestyle and creating consciousness, it can also help us deal with climate change. Let us work towards adopting an international yoga day.

Finally, we are at a historic moment. Every age is defined by its character and remembered for how it rose to meet its challenges. Today, we are responsible to rise and meet those challenges. Next year, the United Nations will be 70 years old. We should ask ourselves whether we should wait until we are 80 or 100 years old to take action. I believe that next year will provide an opportunity for the United Nations. After a voyage spanning 70 years, we shall be able to look back and review what we have achieved, whence we began, why we left certain places, what motivated us, how

we proceeded and what we have attained. What are the challenges facing us in the twenty-first century? If we can keep all of that in mind, through exchanges of views, dialogue with universities, and intergenerational discussions with young people, who can contribute ideas, then we will find the ways to connect all of those things for future generations.

That is why I say that arriving at the milestone of 70 years presents us with a great opportunity that we should not waste. By taking full advantage of this moment, we could achieve a new consciousness, a new life, with new ambitions and aspirations. We could give the journey of the United Nations a new form. I therefore feel that 70 years is a great opportunity for us. Let us come together and fulfil our promise to bring improvements to the Security Council. That issue has been before us for a long time, yet there has not been much progress. We need to think very seriously about it.

Mrs. Al-Mughairy (Oman), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In preparing and implementing the post-2015 development agenda, let us come together to keep our promises. For 2015, let us come together to give a new direction and make the moment memorable by giving the world a new lease on development. The year 2015 should be a banner year in history — a turning point in history. I hope that we will all live up to its promise.

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

Mr. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, was escorted from the rostrum.

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

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

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

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

Sheikh Hasina (Bangladesh) (*spoke in Bangla; English text provided by the delegation*): I warmly congratulate Mr. Sam Kutesa on his election as the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. I also congratulate Ambassador John Ashe for his leadership of the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. My appreciation also goes to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his stewardship of our endeavours to realize our common vision of a world of peace, dignity and well-being for all.

Four decades ago, in his maiden speech before the General Assembly, the Father of our nation of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (see A/PV.2243), described his vision for a global order, saying that the Bengali nation is pledge-bound to establish a global order, one based on peaceful coexistence, social justice and freedom from poverty, hunger, exploitation and aggression. That vision continues to guide Bangladesh's national development policies and our engagement in global affairs.

We gather at a time when the global development discourse finds itself at an important juncture. As the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) approaches its deadline, the global community is engaged in framing a transformative development agenda for 2016-2030. The theme for this session of the General Assembly is therefore quite timely. Bangladesh believes that our deliberations will help us to arrive at a balanced, pragmatic and ambitious agenda.

We cannot achieve sustainable development in the absence of durable peace and security. The volatile global security situation continues to pose significant challenges to international development. Bangladesh believes that a threat to peace anywhere is a threat to humankind as a whole.

In keeping with our position of principle, we continue to express our full solidarity with the Palestinian people in their legitimate struggle for self-determination. We condemn the systematic killing of hundreds of Palestinian civilians, including women and children, by Israel during the recent offensive in Gaza. We seek a permanent solution to that long-standing conflict through the creation of an independent and viable State of Palestine based on the pre-1967 borders and with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

Bangladesh strongly believes in the centrality and legitimacy of the United Nations as the custodian of global peace, security and development. Our

commitment to international peace is manifest in our support for the flagship resolution 68/125 on a culture of peace and non-violence. Our peace leadership is further reaffirmed through our support to the United Nations as one of the top troop- and police-contributing countries in the Organization's peacekeeping endeavours. We have so far contributed 128,133 peacekeepers in 54 peace missions. Bangladesh proudly contributes the highest number of women police to United Nations peacekeeping, commensurate with our credentials in the empowerment of women.

Terrorism and extremism remain major impediments on the road to global peace and development. My Government maintains a zero-tolerance policy with respect to all forms of terrorism, violent extremism, radicalization and faith-based politics. We remain firm in our resolve not to allow any terrorist individual or entity to use our territory against any State.

The anti-liberation forces remain active in attempting to destroy the progressive and secular fabric of our nation. They resort to religious militancy and violent extremism at every opportunity. Under the direct patronage of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party-Jamaat-e-Islami Alliance Government from 2001 to 2006, they coalesced to form terrorist groups that carried out bomb and grenade attacks and killed secular political leaders and activists. Those gruesome attacks cemented my resolve to create a strong legal and regulatory regime for countering terrorism, including the adoption of the amended Anti-terrorism Act of 2013 and the Money Laundering Prevention Act of 2012.

My Government is also seeking to entrench democracy, secularism and women's empowerment in order to defeat terrorism and extremism ideologically. We have also significantly enhanced transparency and accountability in governance by strengthening our election, anti-corruption, human rights and information commissions. To uphold peace and the rule of law and end the culture of impunity, my Government remains pledge-bound to bring to justice the perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity, rape and acts of genocide committed during our 1971 war of liberation. The highly transparent, impartial and independent international crimes tribunals in Bangladesh have already completed the trials of a few key criminals who carried out heinous crimes against humanity. We hope for the international community's full support for our people's desire for this long-awaited rendering of justice.

Our Government has integrated the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) into our national five-year plan and Vision 2021, a people-centric programme that aspires to transform Bangladesh into a knowledge-based, technology-driven middle-income country by 2021. Bangladesh has already met or is on track to meet the first six MDGs. Poverty rates have fallen from 57 per cent in 1991 to below 25 per cent today. During the past five years, our gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate remained at 6.2 per cent, despite a global recession. Our export earnings grew more than threefold from around \$10.53 billion in 2006 to more than \$30.5 billion for the last fiscal year. Remittances have also almost tripled, from \$5 billion in 2006 to \$14.5 billion, while our foreign currency reserves jumped six and a half times, from \$3.49 billion in 2006 to \$22 billion today.

In an effort to unlock Bangladesh's development potential, we have undertaken some massive infrastructure and connectivity projects. We have begun work on a 6.15-kilometre bridge over the great river Padma using our own resources. We will soon begin developing a deep-sea port in Sonadia, Chittagong. We are already working on upgrading our road and rail infrastructure, including expressways and river tunnels. We have reached agreements with friendly countries such as India, China and Japan to develop large-scale power plants to meet our growing demands by 2021. We are developing 18 economic zones around the country to enable potential investors to invest in Bangladesh, especially in the context of our growing integration into the regional connectivity framework. Bangladesh enjoys a clear demographic dividend, with two thirds of its workforce young, employable and capable of remaining economically active till 2031. One of our policy priorities is investing in skills development for our increasingly youthful population.

With a view to developing a knowledge-based society, we are rapidly building the capabilities of our country and people in the area of modern information and communications technologies. Our people currently receive more than 200 types of service from more than 4,500 union service and information centres, while rural populations have access to health-care services from more than 15,000 information-technology-connected community health clinics and union health centres. These networks enable us to bring various crucial public services to our people's homes at an affordable cost. Bangladesh has 117 million SIM cards with more

than 78 per cent telephone penetration and 50 million Internet connections.

Bangladesh's strides in education have enabled us to achieve the MDG targets of ensuring universal primary school enrolment and gender parity in primary and secondary schools. Our Government provides students with a free education up to the twelfth grade and provides 12.8 million students, 75 per cent of them girls, from poor families with monthly stipends from primary level to graduation. Each year we distribute around 318 million free textbooks to all students up to the secondary level. We are now focusing on improving the quality of education to enable our boys and girls to acquire essential life skills and grow up with a truly global outlook.

For us, sustainable development implies the empowerment of women and their equal participation with men in all walks of life. Our efforts to promote women's empowerment by enhancing their access to productive resources and representation at the national and local level are producing visible results. The Government's pragmatic policies have helped leadership by women grow from the grass-roots to the highest levels. Bangladesh may be the only country today where women concurrently occupy the positions of Prime Minister, Speaker, leader of the opposition and deputy leader. In the judiciary, administration, the civil service, the armed forces and law enforcement agencies, 10 per cent of posts are reserved for women, as are 60 per cent of primary-school teaching posts.

With a view to ensuring equality, my Government has established numerous social safety-net programmes that cover more than 24 per cent of the population, notably feeding and development programmes for vulnerable groups; the Ashrayan poverty alleviation project, which provides housing and income generation for the homeless; monthly pensions for senior citizens, widows, destitute women and the disabled; maternity allowances; and food and nutrition security for rural dwellers through one-house, one-farm schemes aimed at promoting family farming. Persons with disabilities are provided with education, skills development and interest-free credit for self-employment, with a 1 per cent jobs quota reserved for them in the formal sector.

The MDGs have been the most successful global anti-poverty push in history. It is due to them that the world is seeing 50 per cent less poverty than in 1990, as well as more girls in school, fewer children dying

and more people with access to safe drinking water and sanitation. However, progress has been uneven and unequal within and among countries and regions. Sadly, more than 1.3 billion people still live in abject poverty. As we reflect on our new and emerging development challenges, eradication of poverty must remain at the centre of the post-2015 agenda, and we must build linkages from it to all other goals. Our new framework must achieve a balance between the three pillars of sustainable development, and it should particularly keep in mind the importance of access and the unique circumstances and diverse needs of countries such as Bangladesh. I am pleased that the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals has used a rigorous, broadly inclusive process to come up with recommendations for a set of interlinked goals and targets.

In Bangladesh, we have held national consultations and remained intensely engaged in the global process. We consider the set of goals and targets a carefully balanced package and a crucial basis for the post-2015 development agenda. The future development agenda must address low-income developing countries' long-standing constraints on resources and capacity in a meaningful way and respond to emerging risks and vulnerabilities. The post-2015 development framework must fulfil our aspirations for building an equitable, prosperous and sustainable world where no person or nation is left behind. It must also contribute to a strengthened multilateralism, go beyond the national policy space and forge international cooperation. Greater resources would be key to the success of the post-2015 agenda. There is a need for a robust and broad-based global partnership based on the principles of mutual trust, respect and common but differentiated responsibilities.

Bangladesh underscores its clear resolve with regard to the financing of sustainable development by next year, in particular from the financing for development process. While it is encouraging that some developed countries have fulfilled their commitment to contributing 0.7 per cent of their gross national income (GNI) and 0.2 per cent of GNI as official development assistance (ODA) to the least developed countries (LDCs), most other countries have yet to fulfil those goals. At the same time, in a globalized economy, the least developed and most climate-vulnerable countries, such as Bangladesh, require greater support in terms of ODA, science and technology innovation and capacity-

building. All products from all LDCs must be granted duty- and quota-free access to all markets of developed countries.

The world today is witnessing unprecedented human mobility within and beyond borders. Bangladesh has emerged as a key stakeholder in global migration. For instance, remittances contribute approximately 14 per cent of our GDP. Millions of our migrant workers continue to make a significant contribution to development in a range of countries worldwide. We need to acknowledge the manifold contributions that migrants and their families make to our economies and societies apart from just remittances. It is therefore logical for migration and development issues to find a well-deserved space across the emerging post-2015 framework. It is my pleasure to announce that Bangladesh will chair the ninth Global Forum on Migration and Development in 2016.

No challenge is as complex, widespread and formidable as climate change, in particular for countries such as ours. A recent Asian Development Bank report estimated that the mean economic cost of climate change and adaptation for Bangladesh would be between 2 and 9 per cent of GDP by 2100. Earlier, I emphasized before the Assembly that an increase of 1°C in the temperature is estimated to lead to a 1-metre rise in the sea level, thereby submerging a fifth of the territory of Bangladesh. That could compel 30 million of our people to move elsewhere as climate migrants. For Bangladesh, climate change is a matter of bare survival.

In addressing climate change, adaptation remains particularly key for us. We have a crucial need for adequate, predictable and additional climate financing, access to locally adaptable technologies and support for capacity- and institution-building. We reiterate, under United Nations leadership, in particular through the role of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the importance of the processes for the integration of the UNFCCC, disaster-risk reduction and the sustainable development goals.

The world also needs to recognize the untapped potential of an ocean-based blue economy. The coastal and small island developing States stand to greatly benefit from the balanced conservation, development and use of marine ecosystems, resources and services. We call for global support for coastal countries, such as Bangladesh, in developing the much-needed capacity, technology and institutional frameworks that will

enable us to tap into blue opportunities. For that reason, we continue to support the inclusion of blue-economy principles and practices in the post-2015 framework.

Bangladesh proposed a flagship resolution at UNESCO, adopted in 1999, which led to the recognition of 21 February as the International Mother Language Day for the peoples of the world. We established the only International Mother Language Institute in Dhaka to preserve the more than 6,500 mother tongues of humankind. Those are two pillars of our commitment to mother languages. I once again call on the Assembly to recognize Bangla, which is spoken by more than 300 million people, as an official language of the United Nations.

This year, Bangladesh celebrates 40 years of its membership of the United Nations. On this special occasion, I should like to reaffirm, on behalf of our people, the appeal by the father of our nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, for our progeny at this Assembly in 1974: Let us together create a world that can eradicate poverty, hunger, war and human suffering and achieve global peace and security for the well-being of humankind.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Bainimarama (Fiji): I join those who have spoken before me in congratulating Mr. Sam Kutesa on his assumption of the office of President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. Like them, I am confident that, under his leadership, the sixty-ninth session

will be productive. I would also like to express Fiji's gratitude for the leadership of Mr. John Ashe throughout the sixty-eighth session.

Five years ago, I stood in this great Hall and promised the global community that my Government would introduce the first genuine democracy in Fiji's history before the end of September (see A/64/PV.10). It is my honour to inform the Assembly that, with the support of the Fijian people, I have kept that promise. I return to the Assembly today as the duly elected Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji. At our general election on 17 September, I led my Fiji First political movement to a decisive victory in the first election to be held under our new Constitution on the basis of equal votes of equal value. The new Constitution replaced the three previous constitutions since our independence from Britain in 1970, in which Governments were chosen under a weighted and discriminatory formula that separated the various communities and favoured some citizens over others.

For nearly four decades, we laboured under a system that was undemocratic, unjust and unfair. Indeed, we were a case study of a nation that was supposedly democratic and casting itself as such, but was failing to meet some basic democratic standards — a common and equal citizenry, a common identity and a level playing field on which every citizen can excel. We have often heard it said that elections are key to having democracy. We in Fiji knew that that was not the case, because our electoral system, before it was reformed, did not give us true democracy. It did not facilitate justice, transparency or good governance. It was about reinforcing power, the power of elites, and keeping the population divided into different communal groups. That weighted system perpetuated injustice for a great many of our people, created different classes of citizens and encouraged corruption. It was a system that no advanced democracy would accept for itself. The status of any Fijian in national life depended on his or her racial origin, whether that man or woman came from one of the chiefly or business elites, and even what part of the country the person lived in.

We needed a revolution to put us on the path to true democracy. And from the time that that revolution began in 2006 to our election 10 days ago, we embarked on a series of reforms that have transformed our nation. More laws were passed during this eight-year period to improve our standard of governance than in the entire 36-year period since independence. And central to that was the development of our supreme law — the 2013

Constitution — from which all other laws flow. It is the blueprint for the new Fiji. Now every Fiji Islander enjoys equal opportunity and a common identity — Fijian. That name was once reserved for the indigenous majority but now applies to everyone from the Republic of Fiji, just as the common name American applies to all from the United States or the name Australian to any Australian from Australia.

A range of social and economic rights have also been enshrined in our supreme law for the first time, rights that comply with a number of United Nations conventions — the right to economic participation, a just minimum wage, education, housing, health and adequate food and water. The right to live in an environment free of pollution is a principle we hope that every nation will embrace, as we strive for the preservation and protection of our natural surroundings. So today, I am proud to report to the Assembly that Fiji is a fairer, more just society and a more compassionate society, as we step up our efforts to alleviate poverty on the back of a rapidly strengthening economy.

We have also set our sights on being a smarter country by introducing free schooling at the primary and secondary levels for the first time. Plus we now have an array of scholarships and a tertiary loans scheme to enable our young people to go on to higher education. Our vision is to cement our place as a pre-eminent Pacific Island nation, a true regional hub and a Pacific beacon of prosperity and progress for our smaller neighbours. We intend to play a bigger role in the wider world to voice our collective concerns about such issues as the environment, climate change and the need to create a fairer trading system to benefit our people in the Pacific and in all developing countries.

As we begin this new era in our national life, I want to thank those in the greater community of nations who have stood by us in recent years as we made the reforms that were necessary to create a better Fiji. Not everyone understood what we were trying to do. Some tried to damage us with sanctions and to degrade our quality of governance because we refused to accept their prescriptive and high-handed approach towards us. But the majority of nations recognized our right to determine our own future and came to understand that we were working not for the benefit of a governing elite but for the common good. To those in the General Assembly who gave us their support, our friends, I extend the grateful thanks of the Fijian people.

I also want to especially thank those countries that made up the Multinational Observer Group that declared our general election credible, free and fair. For the co-leaders from Australia, India, Indonesia, Canada, the European Union, Israel, Japan, the members of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Russia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States of America — I offer many thanks to them all. It has been a long and sometimes traumatic journey for our nation in the 44 years since independence: four coups, a rebellion, four Constitutions and 56 days of shame in 2000 when members of our Parliament were held hostage.

Fiji has struggled to be unified and cohesive; our development was retarded by our inability to think and work as one nation, one people. But with the recent election, we have put that era firmly behind us. In our new democracy, we are all Fijians, not members of separate ethnic and religious groups. And having established a common and equal citizenry, along with a secular State, we intend to move forward together to finally fulfil our promise as a nation, to fulfil our destiny.

I especially want to pay tribute today to the Fijian people. I say to them today before the world: this was their victory. Whichever candidate they chose, theirs was a vote for a better future for our nation. I pledge again that I will govern for the benefit of all our citizens, no matter who they are, where they come from or who they voted for. Mine will be an inclusive Government over the next four years. I will be the leader of all Fijians, for all Fijians. As we move our beloved nation forward, I am determined to leave no one behind. In that spirit, I extend a hand of friendship to my political opponents. Whatever our differences, let us now work together constructively in our new Parliament, when it convenes on 6 October, to improve the lives of every Fijian. We are currently enjoying the most sustained period of economic growth in our history. The possibility to create more jobs and raise the living standards of our people has never been greater. Let us join hands to put our nation first, to put Fiji first.

I want to assure our Pacific neighbours of Fiji's continuing contribution to the region as we work together and collaborate to resolve the great challenges facing us, develop our economies and improve the lives of all Pacific islanders. Fiji has played a leading role in the formation of the Pacific Islands Development Forum, an addition to the existing regional framework,

which, for the first time, links Governments with civil society groups and the private sector in a joint effort to solve our development problems in a sustainable manner.

Fiji is privileged to have been given the responsibility of hosting the Pacific Island Development Forum Secretariat in our capital, Suva. We were equally privileged that the outgoing Indonesian President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, was our principal guest at this year's Forum in June.

In this International Year of Small Island Developing States, we need a more concerted effort to strengthen our regional institutions in order to confront the enormous challenges we face in the Pacific, namely, population growth, the unsustainable use of our ocean's natural resources and rising sea levels caused by climate change. Climate change threatens to engulf some of our Pacific Island States altogether, and is already forcing the evacuation of coastal villages in Fiji.

I repeat here what I have said in other forums: history will judge the world's major carbon-emitters extremely harshly, unless they take immediate and comprehensive steps to reduce emissions. It is simply not acceptable, purely in moral terms, for the world to allow the small island developing States to sink slowly beneath the waves because of the selfish determination of industrialized nations to protect their own economies. Time is fast running out, and I beg Governments to act.

I am also here to rededicate ourselves as a nation to the ideals of the United Nations and to its service, whenever and wherever it is required. That service is at the core of our foreign policy, whose central purpose is to be friends to all and enemies to none. It has been our privilege to chair the largest voting bloc at the United Nations, the Group of 77 and China, and this year to assume the Presidency of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme.

For some 36 years now, Fiji has proudly contributed our troops to successive peacekeeping operations in Lebanon, Sinai, Iraq, Syria, Timor-Leste, South Sudan, Darfur, Liberia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Kuwait, Namibia, Cambodia and the Solomon Islands. Some of those peacekeepers have paid with their lives — as have troops from other countries — and we honour those who have fallen in the cause of peace. Last month, 45 of our soldiers currently serving with the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, were held captive. As a nation, we held grave fears for their safety, but

after two anxious weeks our prayers were answered, and our men were freed. I want to thank the skilful team of United Nations negotiators who worked with our military officers and diplomats in a tireless effort to secure the release of our men. I also warmly thank those nations that came to Fiji's assistance during that trying period. We will never forget the role played by those Governments in keeping our men safe so that they can continue to fulfil their United Nations mandate and eventually return safely to their families and friends in Fiji.

I am proud to say that not once during the course of that crisis were there any calls in Fiji for the withdrawal of our troops from that, or future, peacekeeping missions. Peacekeeping is a noble cause and is our contribution to the welfare of ordinary men and women living in less fortunate circumstances far from our island home. I want everyone to know that Fiji will always be ready to serve.

To strengthen our commitment to meeting our international obligations, this year Fiji opened a Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva, which is focused on strengthening our interaction with treaty bodies, such as the Human Rights Council, the International Labour Organization, the World Trade Organization, the World Intellectual Property Organization, the International Telecommunication Union and other organizations based in Geneva.

In closing, Fiji looks forward to contributing positively to the work of the United Nations during the President's stewardship of the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. On behalf of all Fijians, I pledge our full support and cooperation as the President carries out his tasks in the cause of the great global family to which we all belong.

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

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

Address by Mr. Enele Sosene Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu

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

Mr. Enele Sosene Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Enele Sosene Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Sopoaga (Tuvalu): It is indeed a great honour and pleasure to participate in this General Assembly debate at its sixty-ninth session on behalf of the Government and people of Tuvalu. I extend my congratulations to Mr. Kutesa on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. We wish the Assembly success under his able guidance. I also wish to thank the outgoing President, Ambassador John Ashe, for a successful sixty-eighth session. Likewise, I applaud Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the Secretariat and all the specialized United Nations agencies and staff for their tireless efforts and energy.

Let me also note for the record Tuvalu's sincere congratulations to the people and the new Government of Fiji under Prime Minister Bainimarama for the successful holding of general elections. In the same vein, we also congratulate New Zealand on its successful elections.

Through the United Nations, we have worked diligently to deliver on the noble visions and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Our shared goals are world peace, security and prosperity. Tuvalu celebrates its thirty-sixth anniversary of independence next week on 1 October, and we remain committed and proud to be a Member of this great body. We must applaud the achievements of the United Nations.

But we should not be over-congratulatory. Tuvalu also feels the sadness of the loss of lives and the suffering of fellow human beings from crises the world over. The losses resulting from terrorism, poverty, environmental degradation — especially climate change — and Ebola, along with the loss of lives owing to political conflicts in Syria, Israel, Palestine, the Middle East, Ukraine and many other regions of the world, are most disturbing, even for distant countries like my own Tuvalu in the Pacific. Tuvalu shares in the grief of those people. We in the United Nations must work harder to address the root causes of such crises. We support the ongoing reform efforts in the United Nations, and in particular we urge the reform of the Security Council through an expansion of its permanent and non-permanent seats and its agenda, in order to include climate change as a Security Council issue.

As we go on, though, one question stares us right in the eyes. Do we leaders really care? And do we mean what we say here at the United Nations, in this great Hall? Recently a kindergarten class in Tuvalu asked me this question: "Do we have a tomorrow, and can you, as Prime Minister, save us?" Reflecting on how this body can help respond to those fundamental questions gives me mixed feelings. We are indeed encouraged by the momentum of some strong leadership on climate change, as was displayed at the Climate Summit earlier this week.

But we are also discouraged by the lack of concern displayed most conspicuously by the deniers of climate change, including some of our neighbours in the Pacific. Tuvalu believes that the United Nations must not be distracted by them. We must remain committed to turning the momentum of the political leadership set in motion this week into real action for a more collective, strategic and pragmatic response to world crises. We must walk the walk, as well as talk the talk, on every front of our human crises if we are to ensure global peace and security.

We have talked a lot in the United Nations about designing sustainable development goals and a post-2015 development agenda. The tentative goals and targets identified are reflective of a membership that is seeking the same high aspirations and honourable goals as those enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, namely, a world of peace, security, opportunity and prosperity. The United Nations must remain universal and relevant in bringing the real issues and events into focus and keeping the attention of the global community. It should be more responsive and understanding of the diverse circumstances and needs of its membership and the importance of contextualizing its strategic activities, taking into account the variable and special circumstances of each Member. It must also improve its presence in all countries, particularly in vulnerable States like Tuvalu.

We must also heed the lessons of the world financial crisis, which reversed some of our hard-earned development advances related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Those global realities affect even remote, small island countries like Tuvalu, and can further exacerbate their vulnerabilities. The new sustainable development goals, with better accountability and transparency measures, must provide economies, big or small, with the capacity to address vulnerabilities and ensure sustainability. They must

also help to improve the means of implementation and create governance mechanisms that are inclusive and in which the voices of all countries and all stakeholders, including local Governments and authorities, are heard in decision-making.

The dedication of 2014 as the International Year of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) is much appreciated. At the beginning of this month we congregated in the beautiful and tranquil island of the independent State of Samoa for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, which concluded with an outcome document outlining the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action, or Samoa Pathway, and with the creation of many constructive partnerships aimed at addressing the special needs and circumstances of SIDS.

While Tuvalu acknowledges and greatly appreciates the support of the United Nations membership, and the exemplary leadership of the Samoan Government and people, leading to the Conference's huge success, we also believe that the ultimate measure of success for SIDS is the delivery of tangible action on the ground, reflecting and accommodating their unique, special case. It is urgent that we seriously consider the proper integration of the SAMOA Pathway and a special window for SIDS into the post-2015 sustainable development agenda of the United Nations, and into all other programmes in the United Nations and its specialized agencies, in order to achieve their effective implementation, with particular attention to simplified access to climate change financing for small island developing States.

The graduation criteria and their application to least-developed countries (LDCs) require proper scrutiny and review, because they are mostly not relevant to the characteristics of SIDS. A small island developing State may achieve a high per capita gross national income and a high human development index, but it will always be a small island developing State; one cannot graduate from the natural constraints and environmental vulnerabilities of being a small island developing State. Recognizing the call made in the SAMOA Pathway and given the ambiguity surrounding the recommendations for Tuvalu's LDC graduation, Tuvalu seeks further deferral of that graduation until a thorough assessment and review of the application of LDC graduation is done, taking full account of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's

recent *Least Developed Countries Report 2013* and other studies dealing with Tuvalu.

With Tuvalu's 24 square kilometres of land juxtaposed against 900,000 square kilometres of the Pacific Ocean, the sea has always been our people's lifeline to food and economic growth. As a custodian of the Pacific Ocean, Tuvalu fully supports a sustainable development goal on oceans, as we do the Palau Declaration on oceans issued by the leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum. We call on the United Nations to honour the health of the oceans, because they are the Earth's life-support system. To that end, we also support the commencement of negotiations towards an implementing agreement under the law of the sea that can better protect the oceans.

The seriousness and urgency of the need for action to combat climate change have been reaffirmed, not only by the fifth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change but also by world leaders, and was strongly echoed by youth leaders this week in this very Hall. What more do we need to hear to stop the denial of the need for action against climate change? In Tuvalu, we are experiencing unprecedented, life-threatening effects of climate change. As a low-lying country with an elevation of barely two or three metres above sea level, like our fellow atoll island nations of Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Maldives, Tokelau and all other small island developing States, Tuvalu is finding that its security and survival, and the future and human rights of its citizens, are being seriously compromised. We cannot continue along that path.

The Secretary-General's Climate Summit, held earlier this week, which, on behalf of Tuvalu, I was honoured to co-chair with the President of Bolivia, gave us yet another opportunity to hear from young people, women and community leaders on the front line of the impacts of climate change from every region of the world, including my own Pacific region. Their message from the front line is simple, loud and clear: leaders of the world, do it! Save us!

Time is running out, and it would be grossly immoral, extremely irresponsible and even illegal to pretend that we did not hear the alarms and voices of those who are suffering at the forefront of climate change. Tuvalu highly commends the Secretary-General for his strong leadership and welcomes the announcements made by those Heads of State and Government who contributed

to actions against climate change during the Summit. We commit to building on that momentum and that of the recent SIDS meeting up to the Lima meeting later this year and onwards in Paris in 2015.

Tuvalu fully supports a stand-alone sustainable development goal on climate change. We urgently need a commitment from all countries to supporting a new climate change protocol, to be concluded in Paris in 2015. We must urgently address climate change in a legal and forward-looking manner. Otherwise, our post-2015 agenda will be meaningless and many will be left behind. We therefore urge all parties to work urgently to negotiate a new protocol, to curb greenhouse gas emissions and to keep the average temperature rise well below 1.5°C. The protocol must include loss and damage and insurance mechanisms for SIDS against climate change and must provide adequate and accessible financing for adaptation support to SIDS, such as Tuvalu.

There is no time for half-measures, such as we witnessed in Copenhagen in 2009. It is also critical that the new Green Climate Fund and the other existing climate change funds be adequately resourced and that access by SIDS be simplified for expedient action on the ground.

We all must step up and commit to reducing our emissions and to supporting those who are vulnerable. As for my own country, despite our negligible greenhouse gas emissions, we are committed to employing 100 per cent renewable energy for our electrification by the year 2020. We are already well on the way to achieving that target, thanks to the generous support of international partners, including the European Union, Japan, New Zealand, Italy, Austria, the United Arab Emirates, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the International Renewable Energy Agency. Tuvalu is also a party to the Majuro Declaration.

Tuvalu has made steady progress towards the achievement of its MDGs, with strategic complementary assistance from the donor community. We have designed a road map for development to move forward from the MDGs, and to the sustainable development goals in general. We have adopted and implemented national policies on financial management, women and gender development, people with disabilities, young people and the protection of families, as well as on other sectors of national priority, such as climate change, energy, food security, fisheries, information technology, health care, education and outer islands development. Much needs to be done in order to properly deliver on those policies. We

are committed to doing that. We call for support from our international partners through mutual partnerships with us in Tuvalu.

The future we want is one of inclusiveness, where all partnerships are important. The Government of Tuvalu reiterates its position that the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba runs counter to the need to promote dialogue and to fulfil the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which calls for solidarity, cooperation and friendly relations among all nations.

Tuvalu also fully supports Taiwan's meaningful participation in United Nations specialized agencies and mechanisms, including the World Health Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We recognize the cooperative spirit shown by Taiwan in its involvement in the post-2015 development agenda dialogue. We recognize the need to include Taiwan in the global fight against climate change. We also recognize Taiwan's role as a regional peacemaker. Taiwan supports scholarships and capacity-building for experts, students and officials from Tuvalu and many developing countries.

Finally, I want to say the following in clear and unambiguous terms. We are at a turning point for the future of small island nations such as Tuvalu. We can create MDGs and design sustainable development goals but, unless there is a global commitment to those goals, particularly against climate change, we will have failed humankind. Unless we stop greenhouse gas pollution, we will have failed future generations. The future is ours to create. Let us be bold. Let us take heed of the strong and loud message from those on the front line that we have heard here in this very Hall. Let us be seen as the ones that created a future for all — a future that includes saving human beings and saving the children of Tuvalu. For if we save Tuvalu, we save the world.

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

Mr. Enele Sosene Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Agila Saleh Essa Gwaider, President of the House of Representatives of Libya.

Mr. Gwaider (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express my sincerest congratulations to Mr. Sam Kutesa on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. I am confident that he will steer the work of this session towards the best results. Allow me also to commend the efforts of Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for achieving the objectives of the Organization and for promoting international peace and security. I would like to thank him in particular for standing with the Libyan people during the revolution against the dictatorship and for providing support for our nascent democracy after the revolution.

I am honoured to stand before members today as the representative of the Libyan people to describe their ambitions, pains and hopes, to participate in the quest for the best ways to maintain peace and security on our planet and to achieve the common aspirations of our peoples. There is no doubt that those who witnessed the revolution of the Libyan people against dictatorship in 2011 were impressed by the courage, unity, awareness and creative capabilities of our people. But today there is no doubt that many are astonished by events in Libya — the fighting, the bloodshed among brothers, the unjustified destruction of infrastructure and public and private property. Many may wonder, where are the people they saw three years ago? Where are the unarmed revolutionaries who flocked into the streets, facing bullets with their bare chests to defend their rights? Where are the intellectuals who flooded the media with realistic assessments and convinced the world of the justice of their people's cause?

I would say, yes, that was the true Libyan people. They did not think in terms of material gains or leadership positions. Their only aspiration was to put an end to dictatorship and pave the road for democracy to ensure a prosperous future for all Libyans. Unfortunately, Libya today is in a completely different situation. Most of the activists have left the political arena, either because of the forcibly imposed political isolation law or because of the campaigns of intimidation, arrests and assassinations perpetrated by various armed groups against anyone who opposes their views or calls for their disarmament and demobilization.

Some armed groups are no longer subject to the Government's direction as they try to impose their will on the Libyan people by force, violate human rights and blackmail the Government to gain access to funds, while they refuse to arm the police and to

reinstitute, reconstruct and arm the army. The existing conflict in and around Tripoli among armed groups that opposed the legitimate authorities has forced the Government to evacuate all of its premises, which were seized by a coalition of armed groups. Those included a terrorist group that professes Al-Qaida ideology and is known for its stand against the building of State institutions — a group placed on the list of terrorist organizations by the United States and the European Union. Moreover, the residences of many ministers and citizens were looted and burned down. That group is still waging war on the region west of the city of Tripoli, inhabited by the Warshafana tribe. The indiscriminate shelling with heavy weaponry led to the exodus of most of its population, which then led the House of Representatives to declare it a disaster area. That could not have happened if the international community had taken the situation in Libya seriously, assisted the Government in establishing a strong army, exerted pressure to ensure the disarmament of armed groups and supported the arming of the police.

The armed groups that captured the capital have clearly declared their opposition to the legitimate institutions of the State and their quest to overthrow the elected House of Representatives and the elected Government, in an apparent effort to derail the process of democratic transition and topple the legitimate authorities by forming a parallel Government. Furthermore, that has not sufficed for the group that controls Tripoli. It has also persecuted political activists, human rights defenders and journalists, shut down media channels and forcibly prevented opponents from demonstrating in the city of Tripoli and other cities. It has recruited media personnel and some radical clerics to incite the killing of those with different opinions and those who support the elected House of Representatives and the Government.

The group has allied itself with Ansar Al-Sharia, which professes the ideology of Al-Qaida. It has practised terrorism in some Libyan cities, especially Benghazi and Derna. It has provided a safe haven and training camps for terrorists from all over the world, including Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt and Mali, with unrivalled financial and media support from outside the country, in order to undermine the legitimate Libyan authorities and enable it to implement its conspiracy.

I wish the Assembly to know that turning a blind eye to terrorism in Libya is no longer acceptable. Our people can no longer tolerate assassinations, humiliation,

intimidation, suppression of freedoms or human rights violations based on an individual's background and belief. The international community can either stand with the elected legitimate authorities and implement Security Council resolution 2174 (2014) by imposing sanctions on those who impede the political process, undermine security and seize State institutions, or affirm loudly and clearly that the Libyans have to take on terrorism single-handedly. Surely, the international community must take action to withstand the effects of the expansion of terrorism in North Africa and the Sahel region.

We are in need of substantial assistance from Libya's friends — help in rebuilding the army and providing it with all it needs to stop the fighting among brothers and battle terrorism and extremism, which now form a broad front stretching from Iraq to Algeria. That front cannot be eliminated without an alliance of the States concerned to ensure the elimination of terrorism and guarantee the dissemination of the principles of tolerance and democracy. The failure to provide arms and training to the Libyan army in its war against terrorism serves the interests of extremism, adds to instability in Libya, disrupts calm in the region and threatens global peace.

We welcome all efforts and goodwill by friendly countries, the United Nations, the League of Arab States and the African Union to help the legitimate Libyan authorities regain control, either by taking a bold stand with the House of Representatives, the Government and the constitution-drafting body and by persuading armed groups to give up their arms, withdraw from State institutions and obey the Government's directions, or by exerting pressure on the political movements and armed groups so that they renounce violence and agree to a dialogue on the priorities and future of Libya.

Every illegitimate contact, unauthorized by the Government, of any foreign country with individuals, groups and organizations that do not recognize the Government's authority or that of the elected House of Representatives and that use violence as a means to impose their views on the Libyan people will be considered by the Government an unfriendly act against the unity and stability of Libya. Hence, all necessary measures will be taken to confront it.

The Libyan people, under the leadership of the legitimate authority, will not submit to blackmail and intimidation and will resist any attempt to impose a totalitarian dictatorship, whatever its slogan. We

wish that the Government did not need the assistance of brotherly and friendly countries to extend State authority over its territory and eliminate the terrorism and criminality that threaten Libya's security and unity, causing the displacement of hundreds of thousands from their homes in various parts of Libya and destroying the economy.

The House of Representatives and the Government are determined to pursue the path of dialogue and tolerance within the framework of legitimacy, solve all the problems and differences between Libyans, agree on priorities, respect the democratic process and re-establish the rule of law and the holding of elections. They are also determined to demobilize all armed groups and to stop their funding by the end of the current year. We hope that the international community will help us to carry out the following measures.

First, we must ensure the establishment by the State of defence and security organs and make the Government the sole, legitimate authority capable of using force in disarming the armed groups and exercising its authority over all Libya's territory.

Secondly, we must ensure Government control over the capital, Tripoli, and the withdrawal of armed groups from State institutions so that officials can work without being threatened and provide services to the citizens.

Thirdly, we must realize that the establishment of illegal institutions set up in parallel with the existing bodies is impeding the political process and is subject to sanctions under Security Council resolution 2174 (2014).

Fourthly, we must establish genuine, active cooperation in combating terrorism through a strategic alliance between Libya and its neighbouring countries north and south of the Mediterranean.

Lastly, we must strengthen the culture of dialogue, without exclusion or marginalization, and, with the help of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, the neighbouring countries, the League of Arab States and the African Union, initiate a comprehensive dialogue for all Libyan people.

As the General Assembly begins its deliberations at its sixty-ninth session, whose main theme is the post-2015 development agenda, I would like to point out that when the Millennium Development Goals were set, Libya started to review its economic policies and

restructure its economy to achieve them. However, the deteriorating security situation has disrupted the economy. I would like to note the close interlinkages among security, stability and development. Without security, there will be no development, and vice versa. Therefore, restoring security and stability in Libya is key to advancing development, bringing the disrupted economy back on track, achieving the remaining Millennium Development Goals and preparing to achieve the post-2015 development goals, once they are adopted.

Libya looks forward to the support of the United Nations and friendly countries in restoring security and the capacity-building of military and security institutions in order to ensure the launch of programmes for reconstruction and development. We also look forward to the assistance of all countries in tracing looted funds abroad and repatriating them to enable Libya to increase funding for development and infrastructure programmes. That will help eliminate unemployment and absorb a large numbers of foreign workers, estimated at several millions, from neighbouring countries. Both Libya and the neighbouring countries would benefit, and illegal immigration to Europe of people in search of work and decent living conditions would be reduced.

Despite the circumstances in Libya, we cannot forget the tragedy of the Palestinian people and their suffering. They have taken refuge in various countries around the world because of the Israeli occupation. We reaffirm our condemnation of the Israeli occupation and its practices in the Palestinian and Arab occupied territories. We call for the Security Council to provide protection for the Palestinian people, set a timetable to end the Israeli occupation and establish an independent and sovereign Palestinian State on all the Palestinian territories, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The Palestinian State should be a full member of all international organizations. Palestinian refugees should be entitled to return to their lands, from which they were expelled.

The continued blockade and repeated Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip and the destruction of infrastructure have brought shame on civilized human beings. The international community should be committed to the reconstruction of Gaza, preventing the recurrence of destruction and killing by the Israeli army, ensuring the prosecution of all those responsible for war crimes committed in the Gaza Strip and supporting the efforts of the Government of national

reconciliation, led by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Tanasak Patimapragorn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand.

Mr. Patimapragorn (Thailand): I am here to pay my country's highest tribute to the United Nations for the work it has done to improve the lives of people around the world. Thailand is fully committed to what the United Nations stands for and to realizing through the United Nations the hopes we all share. We are also firmly committed to fulfilling our responsibilities as a Member of the United Nations, because the United Nations can achieve its vision only when we act together in unity.

This year, the theme is the post-2015 development agenda and how to truly make a difference in the lives of the people on the ground. Many countries have achieved many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). For example, they have succeeded in reducing poverty and have achieved their education and health-care goals. But there are many other countries for which achieving the MDGs has not been easy. Therefore, as we move towards the post-2015 development agenda, we must renew our commitments to make sure that no one is left behind.

For Thailand, development is not just about gross domestic product. To be sustainable, development must go hand in hand with democracy, human rights and peace and security, the pillars of the United Nations. It must be allowed to grow in an environment that is free from conflict. Building a strong and robust democracy is the challenge that many of us face. As in many countries, Thailand has learned the lesson that democracy is more than having elections. Democracy must be based on respect for the rule of law, and it must be about good governance, transparency, accountability and equal access to justice.

That was not the case for my country before 22 May. Before that date, we were at a political impasse. We had a dysfunctional democracy. We were in danger of more turmoil. And there was a very real possibility of bloodshed. Political opposition parties were given the chance to save democracy, but they failed because they were unwilling to compromise for the sake of the country. That chain of unfortunate events made the military intervention necessary. We all wished that things had not had to turn out that way. But if the

situation had been allowed to continue, Thailand's democracy would have been torn apart. That would have undermined Thailand's stability and the stability of the region.

Thailand is now going through a period of transition. We remain fully committed to democracy and human rights, and we know we cannot go against the tide of democracy. Thailand needs a real and functioning democracy, one that delivers on the aspirations of the people. Let there be no doubt that Thailand is not retreating from democracy. But we do need time and space to bring about reconciliation, undertake political reform and strengthen our democratic institutions. We do not want a repeat of what happened on 22 May.

In addition to implementing our road map for returning to full democracy, we are also getting our economy moving again. Confidence has returned and growth has been restored.

Thailand is committed to playing an active role with its partners in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in order to build an ASEAN community of peace and prosperity. We are committed to working with our partners in the international community to address the many global challenges we face, such as climate change, transnational crime, pandemics and human trafficking. Most of all, we are committed to working with our partners to realize the development agenda, because real and lasting peace is based not on State-centred security but on people-centred security.

Development must transform people's lives and open the door to a better future for all. Development must empower individuals, communities and societies. That lies at the heart of the sufficiency-economy philosophy of His Majesty the King of Thailand, and that philosophy has guided our development efforts for decades. The sufficiency economy is about promoting the right values, drawing on the inner strengths of each community and building resilience from the grass-roots level up. In doing so, we are able to lay a solid foundation for sustainable economic development at the national level.

But in today's world, no nation can be an island of prosperity unto itself. More than ever, we need a strong global partnership, whether in order to realize the post-2015 development agenda or to meet shared challenges.

First of all, that partnership must meet the challenge of human security, the most pressing of our

time. Human security is about human dignity, human rights, equity, equality and social justice, the promise of a better future for all and ensuring that in our rush for development we do not sacrifice the environment that sustains us. Ensuring human security should be at the heart of sustainable development.

But while we advance the development agenda, we cannot ignore the immediate threats that require our concerted action. Today we are confronted with some immediate threats to the global partnership, such as the Ebola crisis and the humanitarian crises in the Middle East — Syria, Libya, Iraq and the Gaza Strip. It pains us to witness the senseless death of civilians, especially children, in the conflict in the Gaza Strip. The situation demands that we work even harder to bring lasting peace to the Palestinian people and to meet their aspirations to statehood, as well as to affirm the legitimate right of the Israeli people to security.

As the situation in the Middle East unfolds, we are also deeply concerned about the rising threat of radicalism and extremism. There can be no justification for the brutalities and atrocities we have seen. We must rise to that challenge to peace, to our peoples' livelihoods and to the gains we have made in economic and social development. While some radical and extremist movements have indeed been able to draw recruits from many parts the world, their mission is nothing more than the use of terrorism and fear of to advance their objectives.

Our peace and security and development are all connected. In order to achieve them, we must all try to contribute as much as we can and to meet our international responsibilities as best we can. Some of us may have the capacity to do more than others. But if we all do our part, we can make the world better and safer. That is why Thailand has sent volunteers to its neighbours to work in health and education and why we sent medical teams to Japan in 2011 as part of the relief efforts following the earthquake and tsunami.

The Thai flag and Thai personnel have been associated with peacekeeping operations in many places around the world. We were in Timor-Leste and in the Sudan, and along the India-Pakistan border. And we were part of the coalition formed to combat piracy in the Gulf of Aden off the coast of Somalia. The role of the military, however, is not limited to war and conflict alone. Even in times of peace it plays an important role, especially now, when we are dealing

with many challenges such as natural disasters. That is why Thailand is promoting humanitarian assistance and disaster relief cooperation in the ASEAN region and beyond. Perhaps the time has come for ASEAN to begin to explore the idea of a regional humanitarian assistance disaster recovery task force.

The President returned to the Chair.

As members of the international community, we must all share the responsibility to stay true to the original promise of the United Nations, which is to promote social progress and better standards of living in larger freedom for the peoples of the world. It is because of Thailand's commitment to the United Nations that we have submitted our candidature for a seat on the Human Rights Council for the 2015-2017 term and on the Security Council for the 2017-2018 term. We hope our friends will once again give us their trust and allow us to serve.

Whether the issue is democracy, development or peace, we all must assume our responsibilities because we are, after all, a family of United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Mr. Steinmeier (Germany) (*spoke in German; English text provided by the delegation*): The year 2014 is a special one for Europeans — a special year of commemoration. In the summer 100 years ago, European diplomacy failed and the world slid into the First World War. Seventy-five years ago, Germany attacked its neighbour Poland, plunging the world into the Second World War. Twenty-five years ago, the Berlin Wall fell, bringing an end to the world's decades-long division into East and West.

However, merely to look back and remember would not be enough in this year of commemoration. On the contrary, we must ask ourselves: what have we learned for the future? The most important lesson learned from that history was the establishment of the United Nations, for the United Nations embodies the world's hope for peace. That hope derives from an idea which is as simple as it is revolutionary: there is peace when the world sets rules for itself and replaces the law of force with the force of law, when conflicts are resolved at the negotiating table and not on the battlefield, when the world renounces, step by step, the cynical logic of violence.

To date, the United Nations has provided a universal foundation for the hope for peace. But that universality is under threat from the ghosts of the past and from new demons.

In 2014 our world seems to be unraveling. Crises are coming at us thick and fast. That is why it is not enough simply to call upon the United Nations. No, we need to breathe life into that call. Hope will remain but a hope, an unattainable goal, unless States are prepared to take on responsibility. The United Nations is not a forum onto which we can shrug off responsibility. The United Nations is a forum whereby we assume responsibility.

Germany, embedded in a united Europe, is prepared to take on responsibility in and with the United Nations. First and foremost we have a responsibility to the people bearing the brunt of the suffering in the crises.

Next month Germany will host a conference in Berlin to mobilize urgently needed humanitarian assistance for the millions of Syrian refugees. My country will play its part, and I sincerely hope that many others will follow suit. Support is needed above all by Syria's neighbours. They are doing a tremendous job but are also under tremendous strain due to the huge influx of displaced persons and refugees from Syria.

The Ebola epidemic is raging in West Africa. It is bringing suffering and death into the homes of individual families. It is endangering the cohesion of entire societies. That is why we are sending humanitarian and medical assistance and setting up an airlift to the region. I am delighted that many volunteers in my country have responded to the call, saying, "I want to go there to help on the spot".

Above and beyond the immediate solidarity, however, we need a long-term commitment. We need the expertise of the World Health Organization and the coordinating umbrella of the United Nations, particularly in the long term as we try to strengthen States and health-care systems. Germany will contribute to both of those goals. We cannot bring the dead back to life, but we may be able to prevent far too many more people dying of Ebola who ought not to be dying if they were treated. And we must certainly make sure that the next epidemic does not have consequences as deadly as the one we are still fighting.

If we are to move towards the hope of peace, we need many small steps — the commitment of individuals, bilateral diplomacy and regional initiatives. But none of that can replace the United Nations. Only the United

Nations can provide a universal foundation for the hope of peace. That foundation is international law, to which everyone who belongs to the community of nations in the United Nations, and those who want to belong, has subscribed. That is what must be preserved; that is the core of our hope for peace.

That is why I must here mention the conflict in Ukraine. Some people in the Hall may regard it as nothing more than a regional conflict in Eastern Europe. But I am convinced that that view is incorrect. I believe that that conflict affects each and every one of us. Not just any State, but a permanent member of the Security Council — Russia — has, with its annexation of Crimea, unilaterally altered existing borders in Europe and has thus violated international law. We must counter that dangerous sign, because we must not allow the power of international law to be eroded from the inside. We must not allow the old divisions between East and West to re-emerge in the United Nations.

Because so much is at stake in that conflict, not only for the people of Ukraine but also for the future of international law, Germany and its partners have taken on responsibility and committed themselves vigorously to defusing the conflict. I am under no illusion: a political solution is still a long way off. However, just a few weeks ago we were on the brink of a direct military confrontation between Russian and Ukrainian armed forces. I am happy to say that diplomacy prevented the worst. Now the priority must be to bring about a lasting ceasefire and achieve a political solution, one based on the principles of the United Nations and preserving the unity of Ukraine.

I am not discussing only Ukraine. As long as that conflict is simmering and as long as Russia and the West are in a dispute over Ukraine, there is a threat of paralysing the United Nations. We therefore need a Security Council that is able and willing to act to tackle the new and, in the long term, far more important tasks we are facing. The world of 2014 is plagued not only by the old ghost of division, but also by new demons.

We are all shocked by the unspeakable brutality of the terrorists who misuse the name of God in carrying out their evil deeds. My question is, ought we not to be particularly worried that the preachers of hate are drawing in young people who have grown up in the midst of our own societies?

That is why that, too, is not exclusively a regional conflict — a problem in Iraq or in Syria or in Africa,

where terrorists are stamping on the fundamental rights of women and girls in particular. That barbarity is directed against every one of us, and against everything for which the United Nations stands.

Precisely for that reason, our response needs to go much further than the immediately necessary humanitarian and military response. Germany is making substantial contributions to both, including militarily. But all that must be part of a political alliance against the terror of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. My country is strongly committed to that alliance, and I very much hope in particular that the societies of the Middle East, realizing that far more is at stake than just their security, will also join.

In a world haunted both by old ghosts and new demons, we have to be able to pursue both paths. On the one hand, we must steadfastly continue to work towards political solutions in Ukraine, in the Middle East, in Syria, but at the same time we must tackle the huge tasks of the twenty-first century.

I am referring to the fight against climate change. Germany is contributing \$1 billion dollars to the Green Climate Fund. And we will support our closest partner, France, on the road to a successful Paris climate summit in 2015 and to a universal and legally binding climate convention, which we urgently need.

I am also referring to the digital age. Yes, the Internet should be a global, free, open and safe space. But that is not a matter solely for Government agencies or big companies. That global, free, open and safe space must be shaped by society as a whole. If we fail to act, the vast technological possibilities will sweep aside the human dimension. We need an international law for the digital world. Resolution 68/167, which we introduced together with Brazil, has made a start in that direction, I hope, at the United Nations.

I am also referring to the post-2015 agenda, because the fight against poverty begins with asking how we actually create value. How do we create prosperity? That question is not only directed at a few countries in need of help. Rather, it is a call to the whole world for more sustainable economic activity. With its shift to renewable energies, Germany has set out on a path that, although not easy, is one the world must take if we want to preserve our natural resources and if the fight for scarce resources, water and arable land is not to become the major conflict of the twenty-first century.

Our children will judge us by those huge tasks. They will look back, just as we are looking back at our forebears in this year of commemoration. Having learned from two World Wars, our forebears established the United Nations as their lesson to us. If we want to continue that lesson, if we want to master the tasks facing us, then we must further develop this institution. The United Nations is not a finished product. Perhaps it will never be a finished product. It must evolve further, so that in all its parts, including the Security Council, it reflects today's world.

I believe that the United Nations is worth every effort, for in it lives the world's hope for peace and a legal order. I assure the Assembly that my country will play its part in making that hope a reality, step by step.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): There is growing evidence today of a contradiction between the need for collective and partnership efforts in order to develop adequate responses to the challenges common to us all, on the one hand, and, on the other, the aspiration of a number of States to domination and a revival of the archaic bloc thinking based on military drill discipline and the erroneous logic of friend or foe.

The United States-led Western alliance, which portrays itself as a champion of democracy, the rule of law and human rights within individual countries, acts from a directly opposite position in the international arena, rejecting the democratic principles of the sovereign equality of States enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and trying to decide for everyone what is good or evil.

Washington has openly declared its right to the unilateral use of military force anywhere to advocate its own interests. Military interference has become a norm, despite the dismal outcome of all the operations involving the use of force that the United States has carried out in recent years.

The sustainability of the international system has been severely shaken by the NATO bombardment of Yugoslavia, the intervention in Iraq, the attack against Libya and the failure in Afghanistan. It was due only to intensive diplomatic efforts that aggression against Syria was prevented in 2013. The various colour revolutions and other schemes aimed at changing

unsuitable regimes inevitably give the impression that their goal is to create chaos and instability.

Today Ukraine has fallen victim to that policy. The situation there has revealed the deep-rooted and systemic flaws remaining in the existing Euro-Atlantic architecture. The West has embarked on a course towards a vertical structuring of humankind tailored to its own standards, which are hardly inoffensive.

After the West declared victory in the Cold War and the so-called end of history, the United States and the European Union opted to expand the geopolitical area under their control without taking into account the balance of legitimate interests of all the peoples of Europe. The Western partners did not heed our numerous warnings with regard to the unacceptable violations of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act, and time and again they have avoided serious joint work to establish a common space of equal and indivisible security and cooperation from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans.

The Russian proposal to draft a European security treaty was rejected. We were told directly that only the members of the North Atlantic Alliance can have legally binding security guarantees, and the NATO expansion to the East continued in spite of the promises to the contrary given earlier. NATO's instant switch to hostile rhetoric and the reduction of its cooperation with Russia, even to the detriment of the West's own interests, and the additional build-up of military infrastructure along Russia's borders revealed the inability of the Alliance to change the genetic code embedded in it during the Cold War.

The United States and the European Union supported the coup d'état in Ukraine, recklessly justifying any acts by the self-proclaimed Kyiv authorities, who opted to suppress by force that part of the Ukrainian people who had rejected the attempts to impose an anti-constitutional order throughout the country and wanted to defend their rights to their native language, culture and history. It is precisely the aggressive assault on those rights that compelled the population of Crimea to take its destiny in its own hands and make a choice in favour of self-determination. That was an absolutely free choice, no matter what was invented by those who were responsible in the first place for the internal conflict in Ukraine.

There have been attempts to distort the truth and hide facts behind blanket accusations at all stages of the

Ukrainian crisis. Nothing has been done to track down and prosecute those responsible for the bloody February events at Maidan and the massive loss of human lives in Odessa, Mariupol and other regions of Ukraine. The scale of the appalling humanitarian disaster provoked by the acts of the Ukrainian army in south-eastern Ukraine has been deliberately understated.

Recently, horrifying new facts came to light when mass graves were discovered near Donetsk. Despite Security Council resolution 2166 (2014), a thorough and independent investigation into the circumstances of the loss of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 over Ukrainian territory has been delayed. Those guilty for all those crimes must be found and brought to justice. Otherwise, national reconciliation in Ukraine can hardly be expected.

Russia is sincerely interested in the restoration of peace in a neighbouring country, and that should be well understood by anyone even slightly acquainted with the deep-rooted and fraternal relations between the two peoples. The path to a political settlement is known. As early as this April, Kyiv made a commitment in the Geneva Statement on Ukraine — agreed upon by Russia, Ukraine, the United States and the European Union (EU) — to immediately start a nation-wide dialogue involving all of Ukraine's regions and political forces to implement constitutional reforms. The fulfilment of that obligation would allow all Ukrainians to agree on how to live in accordance with their traditions and culture and would allow Ukraine to return to its organic role as a link between the different parts of the European space, which certainly implies the preservation and respect by everyone of its non-aligned, neutral status. We are convinced that with goodwill and the refusal to support the party of war in Kyiv, which is trying to push the Ukrainian people into the abyss of national catastrophe, a way out of the crisis is within reach.

A way to overcome the situation has opened with a ceasefire agreement for south-eastern Ukraine on the basis of initiatives of Presidents Poroshenko and Putin. With the participation of representatives of Kyiv, Donetsk, Luhansk, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Russia, practical measures are being agreed on for the consecutive realization of those agreements, including the separation of the parties, the withdrawal of the heavy weapons of the Ukrainian military forces and of the militias, and the organization of monitoring through the OSCE.

Russia is ready to continue to actively promote a political settlement, both under the framework of the well-known recommendations of the Minsk process and in other formats. But it should be quite clear that we are doing this for the sake of peace, tranquillity and the well-being of the Ukrainian people, and not to appease someone's ambitions. Attempts to put pressure on Russia to force it to abandon its values of truth and justice are absolutely futile.

I will allow myself a digression into recent history. As a condition for the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1933, the United States Government demanded from Moscow guarantees of non-interference in the internal affairs of the United States, obligations not to undertake any actions aimed at changing the political and social structure of America. At that time, Washington feared the revolutionary virus, and such guarantees were secured between America and the Soviet Union, on the basis of reciprocity.

Perhaps it makes sense to return to that subject and reproduce the then demand of the American Government on a universal scale. Why not adopt a General Assembly declaration about the inadmissibility of interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign States and non-recognition of coups d'état as a method of regime change? It is time to fully exclude from international interaction attempts at illegitimate pressure by some States against others. The meaningless and counterproductive nature of unilateral sanctions is obvious in the example of the American blockade of Cuba.

A policy of ultimatums and a philosophy of superiority and domination do not meet the needs of the twenty-first century; they are in conflict with the objective processes of forming a polycentric, democratic world order. Russia promotes a positive, unifying agenda. We have always been and will be open to discussing the most difficult questions, no matter how intractable they may seem at first. We will be ready to seek a compromise and a balance of interests and to agree to exchange concessions, provided only that the conversation is respectful and equitable.

The Minsk Agreement of 5 and 19 September about the ways out of the Ukrainian crisis and the compromise about the dates of entry into force of the Association Agreement between Kyiv and the European Union are good examples to emulate, as is the readiness, at last, of Brussels to begin negotiations on establishing a free trade area between the EU and the Customs Union of

Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, as Mr. Putin suggested back in January.

Russia has consistently advocated the harmonization of integration projects in Europe and Eurasia. Agreement on political benchmarks and terms such as "convergence of integration" would be a real contribution to the work of the OSCE on the topic of Helsinki+40. Another important aspect of that work would be to launch a pragmatic, de-ideologized conversation on politico-military architecture in the Euro-Atlantic area, so that not only members of NATO and of the Collective Security Treaty Organization but all the countries of the region, including Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, would enjoy equal and indivisible security and not have to make a false choice of "either with us, or against us". New dividing lines must not be allowed in Europe, especially because in the context of globalization they could become a watershed between the West and the rest of the world.

It must be stated honestly that no one has a monopoly on the truth; no one can forcibly tailor global and regional processes to suit their needs. Today there is no alternative to developing consensus on the rules of sustainable global governance in the new historical conditions, with full respect for the cultural and civilizational diversity of the world and the multiplicity of development models. To attain such a consensus on every issue will be difficult, perhaps tedious. But recognizing that in every State democracy is "the worst form of Government except for all the others" also took a long time, not until Churchill issued his verdict. It is time to recognize the inevitability of that axiom in international affairs, which currently suffer from a huge deficit of democracy. Of course, someone will have to break the age-old stereotypes, to abandon claims to eternal exceptionalism. But there is no other way.

United efforts can be built only on the principles of mutual respect and mutual consideration of interests, as is done, for example, within the Security Council, the Group of 20, the BRICS States of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, and the Shanghai Cooperation Council.

The theory of the advantages of collective work are confirmed in practice, for instance, the progress in settling the situation concerning the Iranian nuclear programme and the successful completion of the chemical demilitarization of Syria. By the way, speaking of chemical weapons, I would like to obtain honest information on the state of Libya's chemical

arsenals. We understand that our NATO colleagues, having bombed the country in violation of Security Council resolutions, do not want to stir up the disorder they created. However, the problem of uncontrolled Libyan chemical arsenals is too serious to turn a blind eye to. We believe the Secretary-General must show his responsibility in that matter.

The main thing today is to see the global priorities and avoid making them hostage to a one-sided agenda. There is an urgent need to refrain from double standards in approaches to conflict resolution. By and large, everybody agrees that the key task is to resolutely counter the terrorists, who are trying to gain control of increasingly larger areas of Iraq, Syria, Libya, Afghanistan and the Sahel-Sahara region. That being the case, that problem cannot be sacrificed to ideological schemes or to settle a score. Terrorists, whatever slogans they hide behind, must be outlawed.

At the same time, of course, the fight against terrorism should be based on the solid foundation of international law. An important stage in that fight was the unanimous adoption of a series of Security Council resolutions, including those on the issue of foreign terrorist fighters. On the other hand, attempts to act contrary to the Charter of our Organization do not contribute to the success of joint efforts. The fight against terrorists in Syria should be built on cooperation with the Syrian Government, which has clearly stated its willingness in that regard. Damascus has already demonstrated its ability to cooperate with the international community and to fulfil its obligations in the framework of the programme for eliminating its chemical weapons.

From the very outset of the Arab Spring, Russia urged that it not be abandoned to the control of extremists, that a united front be created to counter the growing terrorist threat. We have warned against the temptation to take as allies almost anyone who declared himself an enemy of Bashar Al-Assad, whether Al-Qaida, Jabhat Al-Nusra and other fellow travellers of regime change, including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which today is the focus of attention. As they say, better late than never. This is not the first time that Russia is making a real contribution to the fight against ISIL and other terrorist groups in the region. We are delivering large-scale supplies of arms and military equipment to Iraq, Syria and other Middle Eastern and North African countries, and we

will continue to support their efforts to suppress the terrorists.

The terrorist threat requires a comprehensive approach if we want to eradicate its causes and not be doomed to reacting to the symptoms. ISIL is only part of the problem. We propose to organize, under the auspices of the Security Council, an in-depth study of the threat of extremism and terrorism in all of their aspects throughout the Middle East and North African region. That integrated approach also presupposes that chronic conflicts should be considered, above all the Arab-Israeli conflict. The failure to settle the Palestinian issue over several decades remains, as is widely recognized, one of the main factors of instability in the region, and that helps extremists to recruit more and more new jihadists.

Another area of our common work together demanding attention is uniting our efforts to implement the decisions of the General Assembly and Security Council to combat the Ebola virus. Our doctors are already working in Africa. There are plans to send additional humanitarian assistance, medical equipment and instruments, medicine and teams of experts to assist the United Nations programmes in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The United Nations was established on the ruins of the Second World War, and it is entering the year of its seventieth anniversary. We all have an obligation to celebrate in an appropriate manner the anniversary of the great victory and to pay tribute to the memory of all who perished for freedom and the right of each people to determine their own destiny. The lessons of that terrible war and the entire course of events in today's world require us to join efforts and forget about unilateral interests and national electoral cycles when it comes to countering global threats to all humankind. National egoism should not be allowed to prevail over collective responsibility.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Wang Yi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.

Mr. Wang Yi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): This year marks the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. A distinguished thinker in modern China, Yan Fu, described the devastation caused by the war: "How sad that the air is heavy with the stench of war".

Next year will be the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Over 2 billion people across the world were affected by that calamity. In China alone, the aggression committed by Japanese militarists left more than 35 million Chinese soldiers and civilians dead or injured.

The United Nations was established to keep the scourge of the two World Wars from occurring again, and it embodies the fervent hope of all countries for peace and stability. To achieve that goal, the Charter of the United Nations presented a grand vision of joint efforts to build a better world.

In this world, we should treat each other as equals. The principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity must be upheld. The pursuit by different countries of economic and social development must be respected. Their right to independently choose their own social systems and development paths must be safeguarded. We should be open and inclusive. Only in that way can we open the door of dialogue and exchange and achieve harmony among countries with different social systems, religions and cultural traditions. We should pursue mutually beneficial cooperation. Each country should align its own interests with those of others and work to maximize areas where their interests converge.

Only by helping one another can countries prosper. We should jointly initiate a new thinking for win-win and all-win progress and reject the old notion of a zero-sum game, or the winner takes all. We should uphold justice. It is imperative to promote greater democracy and the rule of law in international relations, to apply fair and just rules to tell right from wrong and settle disputes, and to pursue peace and development within the framework of international law. All parties should jointly uphold the authority and effectiveness of the United Nations and reform and improve the global governance structure.

As we have seen in Gaza, Iraq, the Central African Republic and South Sudan, our world is far from peaceful. In the face of all those who have been killed in war, we must ask ourselves how we can keep the tragedies from recurring. In the face of women and children displaced by fighting, we must ask ourselves when they can return home. In the face of incessant conflicts, we must ask ourselves how we can open the door to lasting peace. To address those problems, China believes that we should do the following.

First, we should seek political solutions. To beat swords into ploughshares may take time and effort, but history and reality have repeatedly demonstrated that to meet violence with violence will not lead to enduring peace, and the use of force will only create more problems than solutions. Coercive action should be authorized by the Security Council. If a country places its domestic law above international law and interferes in other countries' internal affairs at will, or even seeks regime change, the international community cannot but question the legitimacy of its actions.

Secondly, we should accommodate the interests of all parties. Parties to a conflict should reject the zero-sum approach, address each other's concerns in negotiations and endeavour to meet each other half way. They should seek to meet their legitimate concerns through consultations in a mutually accommodating way. When conducting mediation, the international community should uphold justice and take an objective and balanced position. Countries should not be partial to any party in the conflict. Still less should they avail themselves of the opportunity to pursue their own agenda.

Thirdly, we should promote national reconciliation. The ongoing armed conflicts are largely caused by ethnic and sectarian tensions. The process of national reconciliation and the process of political settlement should be advanced in tandem with each other. All parties should uphold the Charter of the United Nations, develop and practice a culture of inclusion and tolerance and uproot the seeds of hatred and retaliation, so that the fruit of inclusion and amity will grow on post-conflict land.

Fourthly, we should uphold multilateralism. We should give full play to the role of the United Nations and observe international law and the basic norms governing international relations. Chapter VII of the Charter is not the only means for the Security Council to maintain international peace and security. We should make better and full use of the means of prevention, mediation and conciliation stipulated in Chapter VI.

Given their familiarity with local developments, we should leverage the strengths of regional organizations and countries and support them in addressing regional issues in ways suited to their regions.

The conflicts in Ukraine remain a cause of concern. We welcome and support the Minsk ceasefire agreement and urge all parties in Ukraine to strictly

implement it and seek a comprehensive, sustained and balanced political solution through political dialogue and negotiation. China hopes that the various ethnic groups in Ukraine will live in harmony and that Ukraine will live in peace with other countries. That is the fundamental way for Ukraine to achieve long-term stability and security. China hopes that the United Nations will play its due role in finding a proper solution to the Ukrainian crisis and supports the international community's constructive efforts to ease the humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine.

China supports Iraq in upholding its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. The formation of the new Iraqi Government has provided an important opportunity. We hope that the Iraqi Government will lead its people in a joint endeavour to develop their country in the spirit of inclusion and reconciliation. China calls for providing more humanitarian assistance to support Iraq. To help the Iraqi people overcome difficulties and to achieve peace and stability in their country is the shared responsibility of the international community.

China firmly opposes all terrorist acts and supports the international community in responding to the threat posed by terrorist forces in a coordinated and concerted way in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. China believes that in conducting international counter-terrorism cooperation, we should take a multipronged approach and address both the symptoms and root causes of terrorism, and that the United Nations and the Security Council should fully play leading roles. There should be no double standard when it comes to fighting terrorism; still less should terrorism be identified with any particular ethnic group or religion.

As new developments emerge in the global fight against terrorism, the international community should take new measures to address them. In particular, it should focus on combating religious extremism and cyberterrorism, resolutely eliminate the root causes of terrorism and extremism, block channels that spread them and crack down hard and effectively on the use of the Internet and other new means of communication by terrorists to instigate, recruit, finance or plot terrorist attacks.

The Syrian crisis has continued for nearly four years. It is negotiation, not fighting, that offers solutions. China urges all parties in Syria to end the

fighting and violence immediately, cooperate fully with United Nations humanitarian assistance operations and help bring an end to the suffering of innocent civilians as soon as possible. We urge all the parties to act in the overall interests of the future and fate of their country and people, demonstrate the necessary political will, actively support the mediation efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy, and follow a middle way that draws on workable practices from other countries and regions, suits Syria's national conditions and accommodates the interests of various parties, in order to give peace a chance.

The Palestinian issue is an open wound on the conscience of humankind. China calls on Israel and Palestine to agree on a durable ceasefire, and it urges Israel to lift its blockade of the Gaza Strip and stop building settlements. At the same time, Israel's legitimate security concerns should be respected. We hope that Israel and Palestine will choose the way of peace and resume and advance the peace talks as soon as possible. The aspirations and legitimate demands of the Palestinian people for an independent nation must not remain unmet indefinitely. Advancing peace in the Middle East calls for the concerted efforts of many, not of one or two countries alone. The Security Council should play its rightful role, and we support its efforts to take action in response to the demands of Palestine and the League of Arab States.

Negotiations on the Iranian nuclear issue have entered a crucial stage. All the parties should display good faith, continue their efforts in a spirit of mutual respect, equality, collaboration and accommodation, and work hard on the most difficult issues, so that a win-win agreement that is comprehensive, fair and balanced is arrived at as soon as possible.

The two sides of the conflict in South Sudan should establish a ceasefire immediately, organize an active political dialogue that addresses the interests of the people in South Sudan in general and, through the mediation of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, work with all the country's ethnic groups and parties to speedily reach a fair and balanced solution and achieve national reconciliation and ethnic unity. South Sudan is the youngest Member of the United Nations. The South Sudanese people deserve a life of hope and vitality, not the devastation caused by conflicts and wars.

China welcomes the election of Mr. Ashraf Ghani as the new President of Afghanistan and Mr. Abdullah Abdullah as its Chief Executive, and will continue to support the Afghan people in their work to achieve a smooth political, security and economic transition and to build jointly with them an Afghanistan that enjoys unity, stability, development and amity. We support an Afghan-led and -owned peace process, with the international community fulfilling its commitment and responsibility to Afghanistan and its people. China will host the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the Istanbul Process so that we can give Afghanistan fresh support as it stands on the threshold of a new era.

On the issue of the Korean peninsula, China calls on all the parties to act objectively and impartially, remain committed to the goal of denuclearizing the peninsula, firmly uphold its peace and stability, and endeavour to resolve the issues through dialogue and consultation. The Six-Party Talks remain the only viable and effective way to resolve the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, and we now have the pressing task of restarting the talks as soon as possible. The issue should be tackled through a sustainable, irreversible and effective dialogue process that addresses all the parties' concerns in a comprehensive and balanced way. Since there are still many uncertainties on the peninsula today, all the parties concerned should exercise restraint, refrain from provocative acts, work harder to help ease tensions and jointly uphold peace and stability.

While the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) established by the United Nations in 2000 have contributed greatly to improving human survival and development, global development is still a task for the long term. The international community is not only dealing with the formidable challenges of reducing poverty, eradicating hunger and improving education and the health of women and children, it is also facing new challenges in the form of the environment, climate change and energy and resource security.

Next year is the deadline for meeting the MDGs, and the post-2015 development agenda will take over this historic mission. Building on past progress and also breaking new ground, the international community should formulate more effective plans and take more robust action to advance humankind's shared development. As we see it, the development agenda should have three goals. First, it should advance people's well-being, with a focus on eradicating

poverty and encouraging development. Secondly, it should promote inclusiveness, in the interests of supporting social equity and justice. Thirdly, it should ensure the implementation of all these things. Based on the principles of diversity in development models and shared but differentiated responsibilities, the agenda should aim to enhance global partnerships for development and improve implementation tools and mechanisms.

Climate change is a challenge that all humankind is facing. Mr. Zhang Gaoli, Vice Premier of the State Council, led the Chinese delegation to this year's Climate Summit at the United Nations as a special envoy of China's President. We congratulate the United Nations on the Summit's success and hope that the political momentum it generated will translate into effective actions for improving international cooperation on climate change. All parties should work to conclude negotiations on a new post-2020 climate-change regime as scheduled, by the end of 2015, in accordance with the principles of shared but differentiated responsibilities, equity and respective capabilities, with the aim of creating fairer and more equitable and effective arrangements for international cooperation on climate change.

The Ebola epidemic, which is raging in some African countries, has once again sounded the alarm on global health security. As a good brother and partner of Africa, with whom it shares the good and the bad, China will continue to stand firmly with the African people and to support and assist them to the best of its ability. We will also take an active part in the relevant international assistance efforts. China calls on the World Health Organization, the United Nations and other international agencies to work closely with the international community, come up with new initiatives for strengthening global health security and provide more assistance to developing countries, particularly in Africa.

Next year is one of special historic significance, as it marks the seventieth anniversary of victory in the anti-fascist world war, the founding of the United Nations and victory in the Chinese people's war against Japanese aggression. Remembering the past makes us cherish peace, and recalling history will help to guide us as we embrace the future. China welcomes the inclusion of the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War on the agenda of this session of the General Assembly as an important opportunity.

When we look back on what happened 70 years ago, the historical facts are clear, and a final verdict has been pronounced on what was right and what was wrong. History should not be falsified or truth distorted. Today, 70 years later, let us jointly uphold human justice and conscience so that those who attempt to deny aggression and distort history will have nowhere to hide. Let us jointly defend the Charter of the United Nations and the outcomes of the Second World War, so that that vision of a world free of war, with lasting peace, will take deep root in our hearts and pass from one generation to the next.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Pasquale Valentini, Minister for Foreign and Political Affairs of the Republic of San Marino.

Mr. Valentini (San Marino) (*spoke in Italian; English text provided by the delegation*): On behalf of the Government of the Republic of San Marino, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session, and to wish you every success in your work. The delegation of the Republic of San Marino assures you, Sir, of its full cooperation throughout the session. I would also like to express my country's gratitude to the outgoing President of the General Assembly, Mr. John Ashe, for his work during the sixty-eighth session. My country also wishes to extend special thanks to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for the energy and determination with which he leads the United Nations and for his sensitivity towards all Member States, without exception.

In particular, I would like to underscore the importance of the climate change Summit organized by the Secretary-General in New York on 23 September. It provided the Heads of State and Government with the opportunity to demonstrate their political will for a global agreement on that issue. The Republic of San Marino contributed to the work through the participation of its Head of State, thereby underscoring the importance and acknowledging the indissoluble link between climate change and sustainable development. The effects of climate change, which are often tragic, are one of the most serious threats to the future of humankind and a challenge that all States, in the context of a joint action coordinated by the United Nations, are called on to face with commitment and determination. We are accountable to future generations for our ability to achieve the goals of environmental protection, energy saving and energy generation from renewable sources.

Climate change is one of the causes of many natural disasters that have befallen our planet, including this year. We need to respond effectively to the many very serious humanitarian emergencies, which show the clear interdependence of the global threats now facing humankind. Today, a strong, rapid and coordinated response at the international level is necessary to deal with the very serious outbreak of Ebola that has developed in some West African States and has become a global threat. The most affected countries must not be left alone or isolated. On the contrary, they must be supported and helped. San Marino was among the sponsors of resolution 2177 (2014), recently adopted by the Security Council, which underscores the need for an immediate mobilization of the international community.

We are deeply moved by the problems at the international level, and, in the light of the theme of this session, "Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda", we recognize the need for a renewed commitment to freeing the world from extreme poverty, inequality and hunger. However, we are aware that the full achievement of such goals is seriously compromised when peace and security, on the basis of respect for the equal dignity of all human beings, are not ensured. This year, we have sadly witnessed too many incidents that represent a serious threat to peace, security and respect for human rights. It is therefore impossible not to share the widespread perception of a weakening of the United Nations capacity to intervene and the subsequent questioning of United Nations-led missions.

Let us consider the following events. Since March 2011, the conflict in Syria has already caused more than 200,000 deaths and injured hundreds of thousands. It has forced millions of people to flee their homes and their countries to escape a war that shows infinite forms of cruelty and ferocity. The Republic of San Marino has strongly condemned and continues to condemn the violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law committed in Syria by all parties to the conflict, without exception. The recent resurgence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has of late claimed the lives of more than 1,000 civilians, among whom were many women and children, for the most part Palestinian, including those who had sought refuge in United Nations schools. The San Marino Government and Parliament have appealed to both sides to let their guns fall silent and the desire for dialogue prevail,

aware that dialogue is the only way to achieve a peaceful coexistence of the two peoples.

The situation is very serious in Iraq, where ongoing ethnic and religious cleansing is taking place with unprecedented violence. In the name of religion, systematic and massive human rights violations, only partially documented and evidenced, are being perpetrated. Such violations constitute massive crimes against humanity. A coalition of States is undertaking a joint response. San Marino hopes that the interventions are coordinated under the auspices of the United Nations. In particular, it greeted with satisfaction and co-sponsored resolution 2178 (2014) on foreign terrorist fighters, unanimously adopted by the Security Council on 24 September, under the leadership of the United States President, Barack Obama.

The war that is being fought in some parts of North Africa is causing the migration of thousands of desperate people leaving for Europe every day in the hope of arriving safely — a migration that, unfortunately, often turns into tragedy. The Mediterranean continues to witness the deaths of migrants from many areas of Africa and Asia. The information provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is evidence — as if evidence were necessary — not only of the utter tragedy of the situation but also of the need for a more united European action to address it.

In addition, this year has seen the crisis in Ukraine, which is a serious threat to the peace and security of the entire European continent, owing to both the large number of victims and also the fact that fundamental principles, such as the territorial sovereignty and self-determination of peoples, are called into question.

These events demand the presence of the United Nations and call for the entire international community to assume its responsibility and to restore the Organization's capacity to intervene in order to protect the citizens of the entire world through the peaceful resolution of disputes between States, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in numerous General Assembly resolutions. These events also underscore the need for a reaffirmation of our Organization's profoundly democratic nature so that each State, large or small, can make its voice heard and contribute to the work and resolutions of the United Nations. These events require that the cultural and religious diversity and the manifold traditions represented within our Organization do not hamper the pursuit of possible solutions. On the contrary, they should be a valuable

resource, enabling us to adopt an approach that unites the interests of the entire international community.

We recognize the duty and the responsibility to work tirelessly for the definition and the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. However, given the seriousness of the international situation, a simple appeal will not suffice. On the contrary, precisely because, in many cases, a lack of integration between the economic and the social and environmental aspects has hampered the full achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, as the report notes, we are convinced that we need new momentum and a new beginning in order to restore elements able to promote a culture of life, tolerance, acceptance and solidarity within our communities and populations. The first element of that process, aimed at building a culture of inclusion, is the family. Recognition of the urgency to create such a culture demands of all States a common commitment and renewed consideration to promote the protection and support of the family. Indeed, the family is clearly the place where our main relationships governing human coexistence are developed. For that reason, weakening and marginalizing the family has often caused great existential confusion in younger generations with many serious personal and social consequences.

In this spirit and with the utmost determination, each State must assume its responsibility and leave no stone unturned in resolving the numerous conflicts, which Pope Francis has referred to as the third world war, since, if they were to prevail, they would nullify the plan for balanced development in the third millennium, as it should be defined in the United Nations agenda. San Marino is a small State that has in its century-old history always considered freedom and peace as the supreme goods to be preserved and protected. Based on that identity, it is honoured and proud to contribute to the community of the United Nations. With humility we call on all States to make every effort to give the United Nations strength and authority as the central referral body we so keenly need today.

The President: I now call on His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates.

Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, let me say that it is my pleasure to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. I am

confident that your experience in international affairs will contribute to the success of the current session. We stand ready to offer our full support during your presidency. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend your predecessor, Mr. John Ashe, for his wise leadership of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. I also would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and United Nations staff around the world for their continued efforts to promote global peace and security and to achieve development and well-being for all people.

We meet today, as we do each year, to renew our commitment to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the basis on which the Organization was founded, and to reiterate our firm belief in its objectives, including creating a peaceful and secure world and achieving prosperity and development for all peoples. We believe that those noble objectives can be achieved by doing two things. The first is playing an effective and responsible role in regional and international issues through constructive dialogue, positive engagement and the peaceful resolution of disputes. The second is by creating a suitable environment for international relations, based on the principles of good-neighbourliness, moderation, tolerance and non-violence.

The United Arab Emirates is gravely concerned about current forms of extremism, terrorism and sectarian divisions in our region, which have become a grave threat to international peace and security. In addition to being a violation of human rights, terrorism threatens the integrity and values of States, undermines their social fabric, disrupts their security and development, and erodes their cultural and human heritage. The acts of terrorist organizations — indiscriminate killings, mass executions, kidnappings and intimidation of innocent women and children — are heinous criminal acts and are strongly condemned by the United Arab Emirates. The United Arab Emirates also denounces the brutal methods used by such groups in the name of Islam, as Islam rejects such crimes, which are inconsistent with Islam's moderate approach and principles of peaceful coexistence among all peoples.

As the international community must be aware, besides the increased incidence of terrorist and extremist acts in our region, most notably those perpetrated by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS), the threats posed by those terrorist and extremist groups are expanding beyond our region to threaten

the rest of the civilized world. Various countries in the region, including Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Libya and the States of the African Sahel, are suffering at the hands of terrorist takfiri groups, which have exploited unstable conditions in those countries to create an environment that they believe will guarantee them steady funding, logistical support, training and recruitment. Those extremist and terrorist organizations promote obscurantism, exclusivity and an illicit ideology, and they perpetrate brutal acts to impose their control and increase their influence in order to achieve their goals. The current collective action against the threat of ISIS and other terrorist groups reflects the international community's shared conviction of the need to confront the imminent danger. Civilized communities have no other option than to stamp out that threat. It is a test in which we must succeed.

With regard to Libya, the United Arab Emirates is concerned about the deteriorating security conditions and their repercussions on the stability of neighbouring countries. We strongly oppose the terrorist acts that have undermined the work of legitimately elected institutions in Libya. The United Arab Emirates's policy towards Libya is to provide full and unconditional support for the legitimate decisions taken by the Libyan people through their nationally elected House of Representatives.

The latest developments in our brother country, Iraq, are increasingly alarming. ISIS has exploited the sectarian practices of the former Government in Iraq to garner the support of affected communities in expanding their influence over large parts of the country with extreme brutality. While the terrorist groups are threatening the sovereignty of Iraq and its social, cultural and religious fabric, they continue to exploit the chaos in Syria to achieve their purposes without any regard for sovereignty or national borders.

In that context, the United Arab Emirates believes that the current collective action will address the growing threat of extremist fighters in Syria as well as in Iraq. In that regard, I welcome the recent decision of the Security Council to confront and block the extremist groups. The threat posed by extremist fighters has increased in the midst of the violence inflicted by the Syrian regime on the Syrian people. At this critical juncture, we must support the moderate Syrian opposition as part of an effective strategy to counter extremism and terrorism.

From this platform, we express our deep concern at the grave developments taking place in Yemen. The Houthis, who are using violence to try to undermine the political process and the constitutional legitimacy of the Yemeni State, compel us to take a firm and immediate stand against attempts to change the reality through violence and force. We have to realize that an exclusively sectarian and individualistic approach is not an acceptable option to the Yemeni people, who aspire to build an inclusive civil State that is capable of committing to a national dialogue and continuing the implementation of the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and its mechanisms. The United Arab Emirates will continue to support the political transition process in Yemen and will assist the efforts of the Yemeni State to achieve stability and development.

In the light of the recent developments in the region, it is incumbent on us, as nations that have pledged to abide by the principles enshrined in the Charter, to focus our efforts on combating that dangerous scourge. The United Arab Emirates therefore calls on the international community and Member States to cooperate in combating terrorist groups and to take comprehensive measures to fight them through a clear, unified strategy. Those efforts should not be limited to Iraq and Syria alone, but must also be directed against the locations of those groups wherever they exist. We wish also to stress the futility of taking gradual measures to address those challenges. We must intensify our efforts in order to combat the terrorist groups promptly and effectively.

While our attention should be fully focused on countering terrorism, the United Arab Emirates believes that providing support to Governments facing serious security challenges is of critical importance. Active participation is also required to provide the necessary assistance to restore peace and security in those countries by helping them to strengthen their legitimate institutions. In that context, we continue to highlight the importance of respecting the sovereignty and independence of States and supporting all political efforts aimed at achieving peaceful settlements of ongoing conflicts and disputes. Without those efforts, violence will continue. The United Arab Emirates hopes to see security and stability prevail in and throughout all countries.

I once again reiterate the firm position of the United Arab Emirates in rejection of terrorism and extremism in all their forms. My country is fulfilling

its responsibilities and is committed to participating constructively at the national, regional and international levels to combat violent extremism and affiliated beliefs and terrorist acts. The United Arab Emirates, through its membership in the Global Counterterrorism Forum, cooperates with international organizations and with concerned countries to ensure that the territories of the latter are not exploited by those who facilitate or execute terrorist acts, as well as other related crimes, such as the financing of terrorism, human trafficking and the recruitment of people to commit those egregious crimes. By hosting the Hedayah Centre for training, dialogue and research to combat violent extremism, the United Arab Emirates continues to support the international community in building capacities and exchanging best practices on that issue.

My country also continues to develop its national policies and its legislative and executive systems in order to deter and confront all terrorist acts, eradicate the roots of terrorism and protect our youth from being lured into a cycle of extremism and violence. To that end, the United Arab Emirates recently adopted a federal law on combating terrorist crimes. The law provides strict penalties for those found guilty of inciting terrorism or committing terrorist acts. The United Arab Emirates is also strengthening preventive policies by establishing centres for the rehabilitation of people influenced by extremist and terrorist ideologies.

The United Arab Emirates hopes for the recovery and restoration of security and stability in the region so that Governments can carry out their duties and obligations and their peoples can resume their normal lives in a constructive way. That hope is driven by the remarkable progress achieved by the new Government in Egypt and its good governance in implementing its political road map. Despite the challenges facing Egypt, the signs of normalcy in public life and the revived economy and culture are promising. Therefore, the United Arab Emirates regrets the statements of some representatives and their unacceptable questioning of the legitimacy of the Egyptian Government.

The present Egyptian Government was freely elected by the Egyptian people, who believe in its ability to fulfil their aspirations. Questioning the Egyptian people's will and right to choose their representatives is an interference in the internal affairs of Egypt and undermines its stability. Accordingly, I emphasize that the stability of our region depends on the stability of Egypt.

The United Arab Emirates therefore calls on the international community to provide the necessary support to the Egyptian Government and its economy in order to boost Egypt's efforts to achieve progress and prosperity. I would also like to commend the generous initiative of the King of Saudi Arabia, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, in convening the economic summit to support the Egyptian economy. His is a visionary approach to promoting Egypt's future and maintaining moderation in the region.

The United Arab Emirates expresses its disappointment over the failure of the peace negotiations between Palestine and Israel. We strongly condemn Israel's aggression against Gaza, especially the destruction directed against the civilian population and infrastructure, including some United Nations facilities. We demand a thorough, transparent and independent investigation to determine legal responsibility for the damage. We hope that the continued failure of the peace negotiations will not lead to a resurgence of violence and the return to the region of a new and more brutal form of terrorism.

The establishment of peace and security in the region is a key element in achieving global stability and a priority of our foreign policy, which derives its principles from the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of international law. On the basis of those principles, my Government again rejects the continuing Iranian occupation of three islands that belong to the United Arab Emirates — Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa. We demand restoration of the full sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over the islands and emphasize that all actions and measures taken by the Iranian authorities are contrary to international law and custom and to all our common human values. In that respect, we note that the Islamic Republic of Iran has recently hoisted the Iranian flag on the part of Abu Musa island allocated to the United Arab Emirates under the 1971 memorandum of understanding, in violation of the memorandum. My country strongly condemns that action as a flagrant violation of the memorandum of understanding and regards it as devoid of any legal effect.

We therefore renew our call to the international community to prevail on Iran to respond to the repeated peaceful, sincere calls of the United Arab Emirates for a just settlement of the issue, either through direct, formal negotiations between the two countries, or by referral to the International Court of Justice to finally

settle the dispute in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of international law.

The United Arab Emirates welcomes the ongoing negotiations between the five permanent members of the Security Council and the Islamic Republic of Iran aimed at reaching a comprehensive settlement concerning the Iranian nuclear programme. We affirm that, in order to avert an arms race in the region, a final and strict agreement must be achieved; the region cannot afford further tension and instability. Nevertheless, the United Arab Emirates believes that the peaceful use of nuclear energy is a necessity in meeting the world's growing energy demands. My country is proud to be a pioneer in this field and to successfully harness the peaceful use of nuclear technology in compliance with the highest standards of transparency, safety and security.

Despite the challenges facing the region, my country has always sought to remain a model of moderation, tolerance and peaceful coexistence in the region, consistent with current international efforts. We strongly believe that investment in human development is important in the long term, and we therefore attach great importance to the negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals. We welcome the results of those consultations, which have placed the eradication of poverty at the heart of the development agenda.

My country also supports the inclusion of goals that would provide sustainable energy for all, develop green economies, promote food security, supply safe drinking water and ensure gender equality and women's empowerment. The United Arab Emirates is committed to pursuing economic and social policies aimed primarily at achieving the development of the individual, providing all means necessary for a person to lead a decent and productive life, and promoting prosperity. In that context, I note that Dubai has been chosen as the venue of the 2020 World Expo. It is a great honour for us to act as host to this event, and we thank all the countries that supported our candidacy. We look forward to working with Member States to organize an exhibition that meets the aspirations of all.

Comprehensive and sustainable development cannot be achieved unless all segments of society participate in the national development process. Accordingly, the United Arab Emirates pays special attention to women's empowerment. My country now occupies a prominent place among the countries of the

world in terms of women's achievements and success in all areas of life. Our efforts are not limited solely to empowering women in the United Arab Emirates, but also include supporting women throughout the region and around the world.

Abu Dhabi will host a UN-Women Liaison Office with the support and leadership of Her Highness Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak. We are also assisting UN-Women in the preparations for the high-level review on women, peace, and security. Those efforts reflect the interest and participation of the United Arab Emirates in international efforts to empower women as effective partners and agents in preventing war and resolving conflict, keeping in mind that women play a key role in countering violence and promoting peace and security throughout the world.

We must continue to devote special attention to the issue of climate change. Recent international reports indicate that the effects of climate change have become a major challenge to development. But there is still some time left to mitigate the impact through international cooperation. In that context, we welcome the outcome of the recent Climate Summit held a few days ago at the United Nations. We are grateful to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his efforts to advance that important issue prior to the start of the general debate of the General Assembly, and we thank all the participating parties. We also urge all parties to abide by the agreements reached and stress that the developed countries must take the lead in that respect.

The efforts of the United Arab Emirates in the field of renewable energy are seen in various parts of the world. We host the International Renewable Energy Agency in Abu Dhabi and make available more than \$500 million in the form of grants and low-interest loans for renewable energy projects in developing countries. We also have extensive and varied international commercial investments totalling billions of dollars in the renewable-energy sector. Such initiatives, investments and grants all contribute to addressing climate change and its impact throughout the world.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore that the United Arab Emirates will continue to make every effort to achieve our aspiration to contribute to a secure and stable world, in which people can live in dignity, peace and happiness.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We live in a globalized world that is moving towards multipolarity in an age characterized by the threat to the survival of the human species. The United States Government and NATO will not be able to reverse that trend with a new world division through the force of arms. However, there is a serious risk that in trying to do so, they render the world ungovernable.

The huge nuclear and conventional arsenals that have been built up, the imposed annual military expenditure that amounts to \$1.75 trillion and the increase in military budgets to 2 per cent of the gross domestic product required of all States members of NATO will not help to address or to resolve issues such as poverty, hunger, epidemics or waves of migration or to overcome the global economic, environmental, food, energy and water crises.

As has already been demonstrated, wherever the so-called unconventional warfare described in the 2010 United States Special Forces Army Training Circular 18-01 and the innovations of the 2010 United States Quadrennial Defense Review are practised, chaos ensues through the destabilization or destruction of States, the proliferation of violent and extremist groups and the tearing apart of nations, cultures and religions, thereby seriously jeopardizing regional and international peace and security. It is necessary to condemn the militarization of cyberspace and the illegal and covert interference in the information systems of some countries in order to use them in aggressive actions against third countries to stir up conflict, as well as global espionage on Governments and entire societies.

The extraterritorial application of United States laws to the detriment of other sovereign nations is becoming increasingly aggressive and encourages the use of unilateral sanctions, in particular financial sanctions, as a tool of foreign policy. The use of its courts of justice to impose multimillion-dollar fines, including on its allies, under decisions that violate international law, has become a means of punishment and threat and a way to spuriously obtain financial resources. Governments, by failing to defend their own sovereignty and to apply their own laws so as to protect the standards of the international financial system and

the legitimate interests of their nations and those of their companies and citizens, are creating the conditions necessary for the proliferation of such practices, which jeopardize the independence of all States and the rule of international law.

Media empires, increasingly linked to the hegemonic goals of the Western Powers, continue their misinformation campaigns, shamelessly and cynically manipulate facts and create public opinion matrices that promote aggression. We need another international order, where there is no room for the philosophy of war and the plundering of natural resources.

The foreign intervention in Syria must stop. It is inconceivable that Western Powers encourage, finance and arm terrorist groups to set them against a State, while trying to combat their crimes in another State, as is now happening in Iraq. The United States Government violates international law when it launches, in contempt of the United Nations, unilateral bombings without respect for sovereign borders or States under the guise of dubious coalitions.

The attempt to deploy NATO up to Russia's borders will have serious consequences for international peace and security and for the stability of Europe. The sanctions against Russia are immoral and unjust. The strategic American deployment in the Asia-Pacific region will create dangers for the sovereignty of all nations in the area.

Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people, most recently in the Gaza Strip, should not remain unpunished under the protection of a veto in the Security Council. Palestine should already be a State Member of the United Nations, established within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The General Assembly must exercise the prerogatives conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations in the current dangerous and unstable international situation, which is full of threats and challenges. The Security Council should be rebuilt on the basis of democracy, transparency and the fair representation of the countries of the South, which are discriminated against, as permanent and non-permanent members. It should be built on credibility and strict observance of the Charter, without double standards, obscure procedures or the anachronistic veto. The Organization needs profound reform and the defence of its principles. The Secretary-General should be the defender and guarantor of international peace.

The 1.2 billion people who live in extreme poverty, the 842 million people who suffer chronic hunger, the 774 million illiterate adults and the 57 million uneducated children affirm that the Millennium Development Goals — which are questionable from a methodological point of view — were a mirage. There has been and still is a lack of political will in the Governments of industrialized States, where blindness and ineffective selfishness prevail. Insatiable transnational businesses increasingly focus on the ownership of huge resources. The unequal distribution of wealth is increasingly ruthless.

It is necessary, inevitably, to establish a new international economic order. In these circumstances, the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda give us little reason to hope. However, we must try to reach agreement, as that is the most urgent task. It must be the result of an inclusive intergovernmental negotiation. The resulting document should not be the interpretation of a few parties to the consensus, but rather of the consensus itself.

It is urgent to make sub-Saharan Africa a priority. It is essential to confront jointly and decisively, with sufficient and genuine cooperation, the Ebola epidemic that is affecting some countries of the continent. Cuba has decided to maintain its medical cooperation in the 32 African countries where more than 4,000 specialists are working and is willing to extend its cooperation, under the auspices of the World Health Organization (WHO), to other, most affected countries, as has been reported. Our doctors and paramedics will do so completely voluntarily.

We call on the international community, particularly industrialized countries with substantial means, to forcefully respond to the call of the United Nations and WHO to supply financial, health and scientific resources right away in order to eradicate the scourge and prevent it from claiming more lives. The necessary resources should also be contributed to support the African Union's Agenda 2063, which sets forth the road map for the development of the region.

In the past five decades, 325,000 Cuban health workers have assisted 158 nations of the South, including 39 African countries, where 76,000 have worked. Also, 38,000 physicians were trained free of charge in 121 countries; of those, 3,392 were in 45 African nations. If Cuba, small and subject to a blockade, has been able to do that, how much more could have been done for

Africa with the cooperation of all, especially of the richest States?

At the second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), in Havana, we agreed on what is needed to achieve the goal of making societies more just and inclusive. It is indispensable that there be a better distribution of wealth and income, the eradication of illiteracy, quality education for all, real food security, health systems with universal coverage, and the fulfilment of other human rights.

The solemn Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace, signed by the Heads of State and Government, enshrines respect for the principles and norms of international law, the promotion of a culture of peace, nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament, and the inalienable right of every State to choose its political, economic and social system. We also undertook to make Latin America and the Caribbean a region free from colonialism and expressed support for the inalienable right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence.

The Havana summit recognized that the current economic, financial and environmental crises have delivered particularly harsh blows to small island developing States, including the nations of the Caribbean. Their efforts to improve the welfare of their populations should not be punished by calling them middle-income countries through schematic calculations of per capita income, without taking into account their specificities and vulnerabilities.

In CELAC, the region of Latin America and the Caribbean has found a native and legitimate space to forge from its rich diversity the essential unity to fulfil the dreams of our heroes, achieve the complete independence of “Our America” and make a substantial contribution to creating balance in the world. In that effort, there have been significant developments — the meeting between the Union of South American Nations and Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa (BRICS); the meeting between the leaders of China and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean; and the establishment of the China-CELAC Forum in Brasilia in July, as had been agreed in Havana. We welcome the Fortaleza Declaration, also adopted in July in Brazil, at the sixth summit of the BRICS countries — whose economies account for 25 per cent of world gross domestic product and almost 40 per cent of the population of the planet — as well

as the setting up of a development bank and a foreign exchange reserves common fund, which are important for the countries of the South and for the construction of a new international financial architecture.

We express our solidarity with the Bolivarian and Chavista revolution, which, under the leadership of President Nicolas Maduro, is battling to fend off destabilizing actions and foreign interference. We support the worthy fight being waged by Argentina against speculative capital funds, and we oppose the interventionist decisions of the United States courts that are violating international law. In addition, we reiterate our strong support for the legitimate rights of Argentina with respect to the Malvinas Islands. We also reiterate our unwavering support for the fight that Ecuador is leading against the ecological pillaging and damage caused by the activities of transnational companies.

On the eve of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024), we would recall that this year we celebrate the 210th anniversary of the independence of Haiti, whose anti-slavery and pro-independence revolution was the precursor of liberation movements in Latin America and the Caribbean. Haiti deserves special contributions for its reconstruction and development, under the sovereign leadership of its Government, in which we encourage the international community to participate. We support the claim of the Caribbean to receive reparations from the colonial Powers for the horrors of slavery.

The State Department has again put Cuba on its unilateral and arbitrary list of State sponsors of international terrorism. Its real purpose is to increase scrutiny of our international financial transactions worldwide and justify the policy of blockade. During the current Administration, there has been a tightening of the extraterritorial dimension of the blockade, with a strong and unprecedented emphasis in the financial realm, through the imposition of huge fines on banking institutions in third-party countries. An example of this is the scandalous and unjust mega-fine imposed on the French bank BNP Paribas. Furthermore, the current Administration has not stepped back from promoting destabilization in Cuba. It allocates millions of dollars to that end in its budget every year and increasingly relies on undercover methods, such as the use of information and communications technology. The ZunZuneo project, sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which

not only violates Cuban law but also the law of its own country, is the latest evidence of that.

Recent disclosures about the use of young people from our continent in subversive actions in Cuba, a project funded and executed by USAID, confirm that the Cuban Government is right in its countless denunciations of the ongoing illegal plans of the United States to subvert Cuba's internal order, in violation of Cuban sovereignty, the sovereignty of third countries and international law. We cannot fail to remember that this month marks the sixteenth year of the unjust imprisonment of three Cubans from the Cuban Five — Gerardo, Ramón and Antonio — who with the utmost altruism confronted the terrorist plans organized within United States territory against our country. I therefore reiterate, on behalf of the people and Government of Cuba, that we will not cease in our efforts to call for their return to their homeland.

Cuba, for its part, remains calm and prepared for mutually respectful and responsible dialogue, based on reciprocity, with the United States Government. At the same time, Cuba continues to make progress in the updating of its socioeconomic model, despite adverse international circumstances marked by a global economic crisis and the tightening of the blockade.

Ms. Gunnarsdóttir (Iceland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Updating Cuban's economic socialist model is aimed at ensuring well-being, equity and social justice for all Cubans. The changes that we are introducing are also geared to preserving the achievements of the Revolution, which so many generations have fought for. The goal is to build an ever more just, prosperous and sustainable Cuban socialism.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sebastian Kurz, Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Austria.

Mr. Kurz (Austria): It is with great respect that I stand at this rostrum for the first time as Austrian Foreign Minister. Many eminent world leaders have stood here before me and laid out their visions on international challenges and crises. As many may be able to tell, probably even from the last row, I look a bit younger than most of the speakers before me. Indeed, I believe I am the only person under the age of 30 who has the privilege of speaking here this week. So while

I cannot speak from many years of experience, what I can offer is the perspective of a young generation.

My generation is the post-Cold War generation. The Iron Curtain collapsed 25 years ago, when I was 3 years old. For us in Europe, the years after the collapse of the Iron Curtain were years filled with hope and new opportunities. We could travel freely, study in foreign countries and meet people from all over the world. We grew up in a society where human rights were respected, where the rule of law was a given, and where religious freedom was practised. We communicate without borders on Facebook and Twitter, we have our entire lives stored on our smartphone, and we consume the news online.

While the world after the Cold War offered fascinating new opportunities, it also proved to be not orderly at all, but quite messy and more uncertain than many had predicted. Just two years after the Berlin Wall came down, war returned to Europe in the Western Balkan countries. Thankfully, the horrors came to an end, and these countries now have a clear European perspective. After the fall of the Iron Curtain, we believed that the world would move forward and that more and more people would benefit from the same opportunities that my generation in Western Europe enjoyed. But the world today seems to be shifting into reverse. We are facing situations and horrors we thought we had overcome many years ago. For young people like myself, who learned about the Cold War only through history books, it seems unbelievable that the thinking in terms of confrontational blocs could return to Europe.

The crisis in Ukraine is probably the most serious challenge to peace and security Europe has had to face in decades. In retrospect, it is easy to claim that this development should have been predictable, and that we should have foreseen it. But let us be honest. Who would have predicted that, after three years of negotiations, President Yanukovich would refuse to sign the Association Agreement with the European Union? Who would have predicted that the Maidan movement would be strong enough to force him to leave the country? And who would have predicted that Russia would react by annexing Crimea and would even actively support separatist movements?

We cannot accept that international law should be violated and that recognized borders challenged in Europe once again. At the same time, we need to find

a political solution that goes beyond a mere ceasefire. We need a solution that offers the prospect of a free, stable and united Ukraine, a Ukraine which enjoys strong economic ties with both the European Union and the Russian Federation. Let us not return to Cold War thinking, where two blocs face each other. Our political guideline must be to move from a policy of “either Europe or Russia” to a logic of “both Europe and Russia”.

Some people have claimed that Ukraine would not be in this situation had it not given up its nuclear weapons. This kind of thinking is dangerous. And we have to ask ourselves, where would this lead us? As long as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of their use, on purpose or by accident, remains real. Let us be clear: the use of nuclear weapons, more than any other human action, has the potential to end life on this planet. And, 69 years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, let us not forget that the humanitarian consequences of a single nuclear explosion are terrifying and long-lasting. The desire to prevent the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons should unite us all. We therefore hope that the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in Vienna in December will mark a real change of direction in international discussions on nuclear weapons.

Looking beyond our region, we are currently witnessing a further rise of extremism in the name of religion, and a new development — foreign terrorist fighters who come from Western countries and travel to the Middle East in order to join the fight. There is no time to lose; we must actively address what is happening in northern Iraq, where the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant is attempting to wipe out entire religious communities, where children are being beheaded, mothers raped and fathers hanged because of their beliefs.

In Europe, we estimate that there are thousands of foreign fighters with European passports. In our case, there are more than 140 people from Austria fighting in the name of a so-called holy war. We all know that the terrorist organizations operate worldwide. They get their terrorist fighters by recruiting globally. They finance themselves through global networks. They buy arms and other resources on a global scale. And they use, or rather abuse, the global communication networks to their benefit.

How is it possible that terrorist organizations have access to financial and economic resources that allow

them to operate so effectively? How is it possible that we allow terrorist organizations to abuse the right to freedom of expression by showing their barbaric acts on social media? And how is it possible that they are able to recruit new fighters within our societies?

We all, Governments and the private sector as well, have a duty to develop preventive measures within our societies to stop the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, to cut off financial support to their organizations and to put an end to the abuse of social media networks by developing forms of voluntary self-restriction for those networks. The adoption of Security Council resolution 2178 (2014) this week was an important first step, but now we must implement it. And we should always remind ourselves that the battle lines in this confrontation are not limited to Iraq or Syria. They run through our own Western societies.

My generation in Austria was privileged to grow up in freedom from fear and from want. There are, of course, other stories to be told of young people growing up in Afghanistan or the Central African Republic, for example. Today half of the world’s population is under 25 years of age, and many of them lack adequate nutrition, health care, education and jobs. All in all, those are not great prospects for life. The work of the United Nations on development is therefore crucial to lifting millions of people out of poverty, helping the hungry and the sick and educating new generations around the world. The United Nations needs and deserves our support, and I can assure the Assembly that Austria fully stands behind the post-2015 development agenda.

But we must also ensure that respect for human rights and the rule of law receive proper attention. Only a society that respects the rights of its citizens can enable each individual to develop his or her potential. We are therefore very pleased to be organizing the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, to be held in Vienna in November. And we are honoured that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has agreed to attend the Conference.

I am aware that the list of challenges that the international community and the United Nations are facing is long: the situations in Iraq, Ukraine, Syria, Gaza, the Central African Republic and Mali and the outbreak of the Ebola disease, to name just a few. In view of those challenges, the United Nations needs and deserves our full support. I want to especially thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless efforts at the helm of the United Nations. I can assure him

that Austria remains committed to working actively within the United Nations and its bodies to support his work and to address our global challenges, whether as peacekeepers, through our presidency of the Economic and Social Council or as a member of the Human Rights Council. We are particularly proud to host the United Nations Office at Vienna, which has become

an Austrian landmark. Austria has a long tradition of building bridges and serving as a place for international dialogue. We will continue to do so in the future and to offer our contribution to making the world a little bit safer and better for the generations to come.

The meeting rose at 3 p.m.