



General Assembly

Seventieth session

14th plenary meeting
Monday, 28 September 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Lykketoft (Denmark)

The meeting was called to order at 4 p.m.

Address by Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda

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

Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, 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. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Museveni: I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session and assure you of Uganda's support. We are confident that you will lead the Assembly effectively and successfully. I would also like to express our gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa for his leadership of the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. I also pay tribute to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his personal dedication and commitment to the work of the United Nations.

The theme for this session, "The United Nations at 70: the road ahead for peace, security and human rights", is a very pertinent one. In the book of Matthew, Chapter 22, verses 37-38, the Bible tells us to "Love God with all your heart" and "Love your neighbour as you

love yourself". Yesterday, while chairing the United Nations Summit on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), I quoted that portion of the Bible. Given the fact that the United Nations has been in existence for the past 70 years, one would have imagined that those fundamental rules of Christianity, which are also found in other religions, would have been clear to every member of the human family. Yet, unfortunately, that has not been the case.

Until recently, the human race has been divided between a small group of affluent and prosperous societies on the one hand and a large number of underdeveloped societies on the other. The underdeveloped societies have been in that condition partly because of endogenous factors and also partly because of exogenous factors. We do not have the time to lay out those two sets of factors that were responsible for that dichotomy in the human race between the developed and underdeveloped societies on the same planet in the same age.

Yet, as if by a miracle, during the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, the Member States finally agreed on the all-important SDGs — 17 of them. The convergence of analysis and solutions, of diagnosis and prescription, is a landmark in the history of humankind. It means that the international community now agrees with us in Uganda, we who have for long identified 10 strategic bottlenecks that have held Africa back from undergoing the necessary transformation to become first-world societies.

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Unlike past prescriptions that entailed mainly philanthropy and aid and spoke of social goals without talking of economic goals, and so forth, the SDGs that we adopted the other day (see resolution 70/1) talk about industrialization and added value, trade, investments and human-resource development in addition to the previously proposed remedies. Above all, the SDGs proclaim in bold letters the concept of universal prosperity for all societies, for the first time in human history. While it is amazing that such enlightened self-interest has taken so long to dawn on all of us, the old saying that “better late than never” appropriately comes to mind in this case.

This convergence of diagnosis and prescription regarding global issues will, above all, assist in prioritizing the use of scarce resources, especially those under the control of international agencies. The tug-of-war as to what is more important, electricity or education, now comes to an end. It is clear that both, and more, are the sine qua non of socioeconomic transformation. Moreover, the use of the word “transformation” in the SDGs is most revealing. That is what we have been urging our partners to adopt instead of vague phrases like “sustainable development”.

Sustainable development without the resultant transformation is like talking of quantitative growth without qualitative change. We have been pointing out that that is not what happens in nature. The healthy quantitative expansion of, for instance, a foetus in the womb of the mother should always result, after a due period of time, into the foetus metamorphosing into a baby who now breathes through the nose and feeds through the mouth instead of relying on the umbilical cord.

Similarly, societies must grow not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. African societies, for instance, must grow from the pre-capitalist modes of production and from being producers of raw materials to middle-class and skilled working-class societies. I salute our own Honourable Sam Kutesa, who played a leading role in that historic effort at the level of the United Nations.

On the issue of global peace, our experience in Uganda has been to go back to the Bible, which teaches that whatever a man sows, that is what he reaps. If you sow the pseudo-ideology of sectarianism, bad governance, corruption, flunkeyism, and so forth, you will harvest insecurity and the stunted growth of the

State pillars, including the armed forces. Uganda is a country that has had a lot of problems, including losing 800,000 people between 1966 and 1986, who were killed extrajudicially by the various regimes.

We have never, however, appealed for external help in dealing with the security problems of our country. We have always emphasized building our own capacity at the earliest opportunity. That has served us well. Uganda today has capable security forces that have ushered in peace throughout the whole country, for the first time in the past 500 years.

Our advice to the United Nations system is therefore that, while it may be unavoidable to rely on external armies in dealing with particularly ugly situations, one should be wary of groups that seek external sponsorship instead of relying on their own internal energies and groups that seek to be puppets of external actors. Some very limited external solidarity may be necessary when oppressed people are fighting for survival and emancipation, if you are dealing with authentic patriotic groups.

However, the United Nations system will not add any value if it is lured into situations where it is supporting puppets who have no legitimacy in the various respective situations or who are pursuing one pseudo-ideology or another. In that case the United Nations becomes part of the problem, not part of the solution.

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

Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Ms. Michelle Bachelet Jeria, President of the Republic of Chile

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

Ms. Michelle Bachelet Jeria, President of the Republic of Chile, 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. Michelle Bachelet Jeria, President of

the Republic of Chile, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Bachelet Jeria (*spoke in Spanish*): Today's world is faced with both challenges and tasks. We are witnessing a plethora of serious international crises in various parts of the world, crises that have impacted international peace and security, most notably in the Middle East, but also in Europe and Africa. Those crises affect, in particular, huge segments of the civilian populations, who, in desperation, are fleeing in order to save their lives and forge a better future.

As an international community, we are dutybound to react with solidarity to restore peace and deploy a response that will enable us to minimize the suffering of both the victims of war and those who are fleeing from war. We commend the efforts that many countries are making to take in the refugees, but we must do more. That is why my Government has decided to take in refugees from the civil war in Syria, and it is also why Chile will expand cooperation with Africa. As of 2016, for example, we will be participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations in that region.

In addition to facing the most urgent challenges threatening peace, our planet has yet to stem growing inequality or reach an agreement that would halt global warming. It is for that reason, against the backdrop of such serious international challenges, that this seventieth session of the General Assembly will go down in history as a momentous occasion on which the international community succeeded in forging an agreement, namely, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). That Agenda is replete with hope and is binding in nature. It focuses on addressing various aspects of inequality, which is the main challenge to be found in Latin America, and of course, it goes without saying, in Chile as well.

In this new phase of our economic and political development the new Agenda is broad and ambitious and is commensurate with the pressing challenges and long-term goals of fair, creative and peaceful human coexistence. It does not sweep aside the commitments that have already been entered into whose fulfilment is still pending, but rather incorporates new goals and targets, integrating them multidimensionally into the concept of sustainable and inclusive development. It is, in other words, an Agenda of change.

That is an approach that we share and vigorously support—equality within and among countries, equality

between men and women, growth, industrialization and inclusive and sustainable consumption, the protection of the environment in its various facets, and social peace, to name but a few of the Agenda's Goals. They are the face and indeed the foundation of a mode of coexistence based on very deeply held values.

We have an opportunity to address the feelings of despair and hopelessness about the future and the lack of trust in institutions that permeate some of our societies. The chief responsibility for sustainable and more equal development rests with each individual country. Chile is wholeheartedly committed to delivering on that responsibility. However, success in that endeavour requires a propitious environment, since many of the targets are affected by global dynamics and most of the challenges that we face today cannot be resolved by any single country acting in isolation.

Only if we can deliver on an agenda of change at the global as well as the national levels will it be possible to promote more inclusive and sustainable societies. When international trade does not act as an engine of growth, when financial flows are asymmetrical, minimal and volatile, if there are no fair and effective mechanisms for dealing with sovereign debt, if there are not enough predictable flows of official development assistance, then emerging countries, especially the poorer ones, will have great difficulty in attaining the Goals contained in the 2030 Agenda.

Similarly, it is clear that international financial, monetary and trading systems must operate more democratically, effectively and fairly in relation to the interests of developing countries. That is not always the case at present. Consequently, a basic prerequisite for making the Agenda a reality is to strengthen the system of global institutions and multilateral cooperation with broad representation, clear mandates and effective tools. We are calling for an architecture of multilateral institutions that will provide backing for the national policies proposed under the 2030 Agenda.

Chile has strengthened the role it plays in the multilateral system. In 2014 and 2015 we have served as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. In the light of that experience we wish to reaffirm our belief in the need to reform the Council by increasing the number of its permanent members and by reducing the use of the veto, at the very least in cases involving crimes against humanity. Such a reform is necessary, reflecting the considerable change and progress seen

in the multilateral system, and it would undoubtedly confer greater legitimacy on that most important organ of the United Nations.

We as a country are aware that we are all responsible for ensuring that the international system works properly. One essential element for bringing that about is the principle of adherence to international law, which includes strict respect for treaties, as a means of guaranteeing peace and international stability. That requires respecting what has been agreed on and refraining from misusing the mechanisms that have been designed for peacefully resolving any differences that may exist.

From its home at the southern tip of the American continent, Chile is looking forward, full of hope, to the outcome of the 2015 Paris Climate Conference in December. We have one of the longest coastlines in the world. We will soon be hosting the second Our Ocean Conference, at which countries will be asked to make voluntary commitments to reducing pollution of the seas, combat illegal fishing and protect the diversity of marine resources.

As for its intended nationally determined contribution, my country committed to reducing its CO² emissions by 30 per cent by 2030, compared with 2007, and by up to 45 per cent if we can count on robust international support. Moreover, we are determined to restore 100,000 acres of forest and to reforest an additional 100,000 acres of land.

Agenda 2030 gives us a shared horizon, a shared destination. Now we must act. Each country must act individually, of course, but at the same time we must cooperate with each other in the various North-South and South-South forums and must tackle global challenges jointly in the multilateral forums that we have available to us.

I should like to conclude this statement by congratulating two Governments of our region that have resumed diplomatic relations recently, namely, Cuba and the United States of America. That is an historic step for our region and for the world. Chile applauds the use of dialogue and respect for international law as the civilized way for countries to resolve their differences.

I should also like to say that we are extraordinarily pleased to see that there have been numerous other agreements reached as well, for instance between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed

Forces of Colombia. We believe that is also proof that where there is a will, there is a way to come to an agreement. Colombia and its people can count on our active support in that process, which we are confident will lead to a lasting peace.

We have reason to be proud of our joint achievements and also, let it be said, to be concerned about and attentive to our collective future. But there are grounds for hope as well. Those beliefs should guide our action and our commitment to build a better world, a world in which there is better balance between development and the preservation of our environment, a world in which we see more justice, cohesion and equality in our societies and among our peoples.

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

Ms. Michelle Bachelet Jeria, President of the Republic of Chile, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Raúl Castro Ruz, President of the Councils of State and Ministers of the Republic of Cuba

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Councils of State and Ministers of the Republic of Cuba.

Mr. Raúl Castro Ruz, President of the Councils of State and Ministers of the Republic of Cuba, 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. Raúl Castro Ruz, President of the Councils of State and Ministers of the Republic of Cuba, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Castro Ruz (spoke in Spanish): It was 70 years ago that, on behalf on their peoples, the first Member States of the Organization signed the Charter of the United Nations. We pledged ourselves to preserve future generations from the scourge of war and to build a new type of relationship, guided by a set of purposes and principles that sought to bring about an era of peace, justice and development for all of humanity.

However, from that moment there have constantly been wars of aggression and interference in the internal affairs of States, the ousting of sovereign Governments

by force, so-called soft coups and the recolonization of territories — all perfected by unconventional ways of acting, using new technologies and under the pretext of alleged human rights violations. The militarization of cyberspace and the covert and illegal use of information and communication technologies to attack other States are unacceptable, as is the distortion of the advancement and protection of human rights when used in a selective and discriminatory approach to validate and impose political decisions.

Despite the fact that the Charter calls on us to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and the dignity and worth of the human person, for millions of people the fulfilment of human rights remains a utopia. Humankind has been denied the right to live in peace and the right to development. It is actually in poverty and inequality that the cause of conflicts should be sought — conflicts that were earlier generated by colonialism and the plundering of regional peoples, and later by imperialism and the distribution of spheres of influence.

The commitment made in 1945 to promoting social progress and better standards of living for the peoples, along with their economic and social development, remains an illusion when 795 million people go hungry, when 781 million adults are illiterate, and when 17,000 children perish every day from curable diseases. In the meantime, annual military expenditures worldwide amount to more than \$1.7 trillion. Barely a fraction of that figure could actually resolve the most pressing problems afflicting humankind. Even in industrial nations, the welfare society, which was presented as the model to imitate, has practically disappeared. The election systems and the traditional parties, which rely on money and publicity, are growing increasingly detached and distant from the aspirations of their peoples.

Climate change is threatening the very existence of the human species. States should assume common but differentiated responsibilities, in view of the indisputable reality that not all countries are equally accountable for what has happened. Not all of us waste natural and human resources through irrational and unsustainable consumerism. The consequences of climate change are particularly for small island developing States and additional tensions to their fragile economies. The same is happening in Africa with the relentless advance of desertification.

We stand in solidarity with our Caribbean brothers and demand that they be treated in a special and differentiated way. We also support the African countries and demand fair treatment for them, as well as the transfer of technology and financial resources.

With the establishment of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), and especially the signing by the CELAC Heads of State and Government in January 2014 of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, we have shown that we can move beyond our differences toward unity and the achievement of common goals in the framework of our diversity.

In the Proclamation we reaffirm our steadfast commitment to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in international law to settle disputes by peaceful means and our belief that full respect for the inalienable right of each State to choose its political, economic, social and cultural system is an essential condition for ensuring peaceful coexistence among nations. We demand that those principles be the basis for relations with other States in our region.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela can always rely on the solidarity of Cuba vis-à-vis the attempts at destabilization and subversion of its constitutional order and the destruction of the work begun by Comrade Hugo Chávez Frías and pursued by President Nicolás Maduro Moros for the benefit of the Venezuelan people. Likewise, our firm and unlimited solidarity goes to the Republic of Ecuador, its citizens' revolution and its leader Rafael Correa Delgado, who has become the target of the same destabilization script applied against other progressive Governments in the region.

We stand in solidarity with the Caribbean nations demanding fair reparation for the horrors of slavery and the slave trade, above all in a world where racial discrimination and repression of communities of people of African descent have increased. We also reaffirm our conviction that the people of Puerto Rico deserve to be free and independent after more than a century of colonial domination. We stand in solidarity with the Argentine Republic in its fair claim of sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia and South Sandwich islands.

We reiterate our support for and solidarity with President Dilma Rousseff and the Brazilian people in defence of their major social achievements and the stability of their country.

We reaffirm our rejection of the intention to expand the presence of NATO up to the Russian borders, as well as the unilateral and unjust sanctions imposed on that nation.

We welcome the so-called nuclear agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran, which proves that engagement and negotiations are the only effective tools for settling disputes between States. We renew our confidence that the Syrian people are capable of solving their disputes by themselves and demand an end to external interference in that country.

A fair and lasting solution of the Middle East conflict unquestionably requires the true exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable right to build their own State within the borders existing prior to 1967, with its capital in East Jerusalem, which we strongly support.

Mr. González Franco (Paraguay), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Over the past few weeks, we have been moved by the images of waves of migration toward Europe. That is a direct result of the destabilizing actions promoted and executed by NATO in countries of the Middle East and North Africa, as well as of the poverty and underdevelopment prevailing in the countries of the African continent. The European Union should take full and immediate responsibility for the human crisis that it helped to generate.

After 56 years, during which the Cuban people put up heroic and selfless resistance, diplomatic relations have been re-established between Cuba and the United States of America. Now, a long and complex process begins towards the normalization of relations. But that will be achieved only with the end of the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba, the return to our country of the territory illegally occupied by the Guantanamo naval base, and the cessation of radio and television broadcasts and of subversive and destabilizing programmes against the island. Our people should also be compensated for the human and economic damage that they still endure.

While the blockade remains in force, we shall continue introducing the draft resolution entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". To all the 188 Governments and peoples that have sponsored our just demand here

and in other international regional forums, we reiterate the eternal appreciation of the Cuban people and Government for their continued support.

Cuba is celebrating with profound commitment the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations. Despite the efforts that have been made throughout those years, not enough has been done to save present and future generations from the scourge of war and to protect their right to sustainable development without exclusions. The United Nations should be defended from unilateralism and should be deeply reformed to democratize it and bring it closer to the peoples.

As Comrade Fidel Castro Ruz, the historic leader of the Cuban revolution, stated in this same Hall 15 years ago

"Everyone understands that the United Nations basic role in the new century now upon us is to save the world not only from war but also from underdevelopment, hunger, diseases, poverty and the destruction of the natural resources indispensable to human life. And the United Nations must do this promptly — before it is too late." (*A/55/PV.4, p. 20*)

The international community can always depend on Cuba to raise its honest voice against injustice, inequality, underdevelopment, discrimination and manipulation and for the establishment of a more equitable and fair international order that really focuses on the human being, his dignity and well-being.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Councils of State and Ministers of the Republic of Cuba for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Raúl Castro Ruz, President of the Councils of State and Ministers of the Republic of Cuba, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of South Africa.

Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Zuma: I should like to congratulate the President and his country, Denmark, on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. He has South Africa's full support for his presidency. The theme that he has chosen, "The United Nations at 70: the road ahead for peace, security and human rights", is timely and relevant to the current global challenges facing the world today.

Furthermore, allow me to convey our gratitude to the President of the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session, Mr. Sam Kutesa of the Republic of Uganda, for the outstanding manner in which he represented Africa at the helm of the General Assembly during that session.

The seventieth anniversary of the United Nations marks a significant moment in the history of global governance. The Charter embodies, through its principles and objectives, the aspirations of oppressed people worldwide. We would also like to acknowledge the role of the United Nations General Assembly over the past 70 years. Rooted in the principle of sovereign equality, the Assembly is the most representative international institution and organ of the United Nations.

The General Assembly has over the years remained central to the provision of support to the disadvantaged, marginalized, occupied, colonized and oppressed peoples of the world. This body elevated the South African struggle for liberation internationally when it declared apartheid a crime against humanity.

Mr. Oliver Tambo, the former President of our liberation movement, the African National Congress, addressed the General Assembly from this very podium on 26 October 1976 (see A/31/PV.41) and spoke from other United Nations platforms as well on other occasions. Many other eminent South Africans were provided an opportunity in various United Nations forums to state our case for freedom, the United Nations providing a voice to the voiceless. A free South Africa has also been honoured by the declaration of 18 July as International Mandela Day, honouring our founding President and world icon, President Nelson Mandela. At this celebration of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations I wish to extend, on behalf of the people

of South Africa, our sincere gratitude to the world for its contribution to our freedom from the shackles of apartheid and institutionalized racism.

The General Assembly continues to provide a voice for the voiceless and the oppressed. In an historic and landmark development the General Assembly approved a resolution to allow the Palestinian flag to fly in front of United Nations Headquarters (resolution 69/320). The resolution was passed by an overwhelming margin, supported by many nations from both the developed North and the developing South. There can be no peace, security and development in the Middle East without a resolution of the Palestinian question. A solution is urgent. Otherwise, if we delay, in the next decade we may no longer have a piece of land to justify the two-State solution.

The historic seventieth anniversary of the United Nations presents an opportunity to reflect on the structure and workings of the Organization. Significantly, this year marks the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) in 2005, which discussed reform of the United Nations.

A number of significant decisions on reform have been successfully implemented since that Summit. They include the following: the replacement of the Human Rights Commission with a more effective Human Rights Council, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission as a subsidiary body of both the General Assembly and the Security Council, the reform and streamlining of the United Nations management system, the mainstreaming of gender equality through the establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), and the membership-driven responsibility to protect and to assist populations facing genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing. We welcome that notable progress.

However, almost no progress has been made on the commitment also made by Heads of State and Government in 2005 to the early reform of the Security Council. It is unacceptable and unjustifiable that more than 1 billion people in the African continent are still excluded from permanent membership in the key decision-making structure of the United Nations, the Security Council.

A continent with a smaller population than Africa is represented by three countries on the Security

Council as permanent members. That is unfair. The United Nations cannot pretend that the world has not changed since 1945. We are no longer colonies. We are free, independent sovereign States. We welcome the fact that the push for the reform of the Security Council coming from Africa has had an impact and has given some impetus to the intergovernmental negotiations process that has been looking at the reforms. We will continue working with progressive States towards the expansion of representation.

Another critical matter that needs attention is the selection of the Secretary-General, who is appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. A review of that process is necessary so as to enable more meaningful participation on the part of the General Assembly in the process.

The President has identified human rights, governance, the rule of law, and the gender aspects of the work of the United Nations as important areas of focus for the seventieth session of the General Assembly. We have to build upon the initial work undertaken in the development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 to enhance protection in areas such as racism, discrimination against women and the promotion of the rights of the child and the rights of people with disabilities.

We also believe that the United Nations human rights system, especially its Human Rights Council, should ensure a balance between civil and political rights, on the one hand, and economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, on the other. The Human Rights Council must also be seen as an independent and impartial mechanism for the entrenchment of a human rights culture throughout the world. It should avoid the pitfalls of its predecessor, the Commission on Human Rights, which was beset by politicization and was caught up in the divide between developed and developing countries.

This year also marks 50 years since the adoption of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The year 2015 also marks 60 years since the adoption of the Freedom Charter in South Africa, which embodies the fundamental principles and values that are now enshrined in our Constitution. South Africa will continue to champion efforts in the United Nations human rights system to combat the scourges of racism, xenophobia, racial discrimination and related intolerances and to support

work aimed at the promotion of substantive global equality.

The seventieth general debate takes place in the context of growing international concern about the rise of violent extremism, terrorism and untold brutality, which we strongly condemn. We welcome the meetings that will take place on the margins of the General Assembly to review the progress made in countering terrorism in the Middle East and North Africa.

We wish to emphasize that the Security Council must take into account the views of the African continent and its subregional organizations when dealing with conflicts in Africa in future. The current situation in Libya and the Sahel region is a direct consequence of the failure of some members of the Council to heed informed counsel from the African Union. The norm of responsibility to protect was abused for narrow political interests that had nothing to do with the fundamental aspects of the prevention of mass atrocities.

The current refugee crisis in Europe is, sadly, the direct result of the militarization of civilian unrest, which included the massive arming of civilians and opposition groups in Libya, Syria and other affected countries. That kind of problem is a deliberately man-made problem, and it is critical that, in discussing violent extremism and terrorism in parts of Africa and the Middle East, we look into the root causes of the problem and not just the symptoms. Also requiring our serious reflection is the regime change doctrine and its role in perpetuating conflicts and instability in various parts of our continent and the world.

We welcome the recently signed peace agreement between the parties in South Sudan and urge the United Nations and all stakeholders to support the Sudanese people as they work to resolve their challenges. We reaffirm our support for the people of Western Sahara and urge the international community to encourage their struggle for self-determination, freedom, human rights and dignity.

We also welcome the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States and the release of the Cuban Five. We reiterate our call for the lifting of the economic and financial embargo to help the Cuban people to gain their economic freedom. We acknowledge the contribution of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Cuban-United States normalization process. We also warmly welcome the contribution of the Holy Father generally to the global pursuit of

peace, justice and the end of poverty and suffering, as eloquently expressed in the General Assembly and globally.

We commend the United Nations for the key role that it has played in peacekeeping and urge that resources be prioritized for this core role of the United Nations, especially in Africa.

The failure of the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to reach an agreement at the 2015 Review Conference — in the year that marks 70 years since the first atomic bombs were detonated in Japan — is a major setback to our commitment to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons. There can be no safe hands where nuclear weapons are concerned. The humanitarian consequences of a possible detonation of a nuclear weapon, whether intentional or accidental, will be catastrophic for humankind.

We welcome the recent agreement reached on the Iranian nuclear programme and the recognition of the right of Iran to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The seventieth session of the General Assembly has seen the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. The outcome document represents a victory for the developing world, as it affirms that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) should build on the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals. Additionally, while the 2030 Agenda is universal in its scope in that the Sustainable Development Goals adopted apply to both developed and developing countries, there is also a clear recognition of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and capabilities. The Agenda also contains a specific Goal on achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. That is all the more appropriate given that this year is the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action and the fifteenth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women, peace and security.

As the initiator of the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action — thanks to which the current round of negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is taking place — South Africa has a special interest in and commitment to the success of the Paris session of the Conference of the Parties later this year. We require the fulfilment of all three parts of the Durban mandate,

namely, the closing of the current ambition gap in the pre-2020 period through the honouring of existing legal obligations by developed countries and enhanced action; the entry into force of the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol; and the adoption in Paris of a new agreement for the post-2020 period that contains all the essential elements, including the means of implementation and the measures relating to loss, damage and response. We seek a fair, ambitious and legally binding agreement in Paris that is applicable to all parties.

In addition, South Africa, as Chair of the G-77 plus China, would not be able to accept a Paris package that is hollow or weak on finance. South Africa has submitted its intended nationally determined contribution to the UNFCCC secretariat ahead of the 1 October deadline, signalling our readiness for Paris.

We join the world in celebrating the 70 years of existence of the United Nations. As we mark this historic anniversary, the reform of the Security Council and the strengthening of the General Assembly and other organs remain a paramount concern. By the end of this session, we should be in a position to adopt a road map, with clear and implementable time frames, on the priorities of this Organization as well as on its reform. We need to do this in order for the United Nations to remain a relevant force and a force for change in the world.

In conclusion, let me express our deep appreciation of the offer made by China when it was addressing the Assembly, an offer that must go through the United Nations. China spelled out the support it intended to give to Africa: a total of \$100 million of free military assistance to the African Union over the next five years to support the establishment of the African Standby Force and the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises. We would like to underline our gratitude to China..

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

Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Mr. Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Al Sisi (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to express to the President the warm salutations of the people of Egypt. At the outset, I wish to congratulate him, and his friendly country, Denmark, on his assumption of the presidency at the current session of the General Assembly. I express my appreciation to his predecessor, the Foreign Minister of our brotherly country Uganda, for his exceptional efforts during his presidency at the previous session.

I should also like to commend the constructive role played by the Secretary-General and his ceaseless efforts to uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter, which has served as the constitutional bedrock and framework of reference for international relations for 70 years.

A few weeks ago, Egypt and the world witnessed the inauguration of the new Suez Canal, an achievement that will have a major impact in a number of economic fields, including transportation, trade and services. It is also a statement of Egypt's capability and the determination of its people to work diligently to overcome challenges and obstacles. I do not intend to dwell on the particulars today, with which I am sure members are familiar. What I wish to highlight is the significance of what we in Egypt have achieved. The new Canal is not only Egypt's gift to the world, it represents hope and the ability to transform that hope into tangible reality, with the promise of a new direction, through hard work.

Members may agree with me that hope, that most important attribute, has provided the motive force that has consistently driven individuals and peoples to search for a better tomorrow. When hope is coupled with hard work and commitment, it becomes a beacon of light

that can dispel the darkness of despair, a darkness that today lingers over the Middle East. Hope and hard work are the example that Egypt offers to its neighbours in Africa, Asia and the Mediterranean by way of a helping hand in overcoming the challenges of the present and illuminating the path towards the future.

It is our belief in Egypt that the Middle East and the world at large are living through perilous times and are in dire need of a model that offers new prospects for the younger generations, providing them with opportunities for a brighter future. They must be shown that with diligent work they can participate in crafting this future.

It is against this background that I announce Egypt's intention to launch, in conjunction with the United Nations and its Member States and with the broad participation of the young people of all nations, an initiative called Hope and Action for a New Direction, or HAND according to the English acronym. This is the hand that Egypt extends as part of its contribution to defeating the extremists and the ideas they seek to spread. The initiative will employ proactive measures rather than relying on resistance alone. This is in contrast to the counter-terrorism efforts so far, which have consisted solely of defensive reactions aimed at preserving the status quo. In parallel with those efforts, we must seek ways of keeping our young people safe from extremists and false ideas and of channelling their productive energies and capabilities into building the future that will soon be their own.

God has bestowed on humankind the gift of the mind, thereby enabling us to find Him. The fact that we can use this mind to make choices is the ultimate proof that our differences and diversities are a product of divine will, which does not accept that human beings should be devoid of purpose. Before that simple, palpable truth, all the arguments made by extremists of all religions and creeds fall apart, particularly arguments made by those who claim to have a monopoly over interpreting Islam. They forget that what they preach is nothing more than their own prejudiced interpretation of religion, which negates the truth of Islam's tolerance, justice and mercy. Their rejection of the right of others to differ is a rejection of the Creator's will. In reality, their goals are worldly and insidious, and they seek to recruit and indoctrinate followers and isolate them from any opportunity to acquire a genuine understanding of religion.

But more than 1.5 billion Muslims have refused to subscribe to the views of this small minority, which claims to speak on their behalf and which seeks through violence and extremism to marginalize and silence all those who oppose their designs. The whole world should realize this. I feel the distress of every Muslim who suffers from discrimination and prejudice solely because of belonging to this great religion. Such discrimination is doubtless viewed by the forces of extremism as an unprecedented triumph, as one of their primary goals is to create the widest possible gulf between Muslims and the rest of the world.

Allow me then to pose this question: How many Muslims must fall victim to the abominations of terrorism and extremism before the world recognizes that we all, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, are at war with the same enemy? That we face the same threat? How much blood must be spilled in countries exposed to terrorism before the international community awakens to the reality of this scourge, which Egypt is now confronting as a front-line Islamic country? When will the international community acknowledge that there is no alternative to solidarity between all peoples to defeat this evil, wherever it exists?

We all witnessed the downward spiral of Libya when the forces of extremism made their presence known through actions that contradicted the principles of Islam and humanity. The slaughter of Egyptians on the coast of Libya was the result of complacency in confronting the expansion of extremists in defiance of the will of the Libyan people, tolerating their exclusivist tendencies and allowing them to hold hostage the destiny of Libya and its people.

Egypt's deep concern for Libya's future, security and stability were the main driving force behind our support for United Nations efforts to reach a peaceful settlement. This support played a significant role in achieving the Libyan political agreement, the Skhirat Agreement, which should be considered a milestone. From this point onwards, the international community should consolidate its efforts and strengthen its support for the parties to the Agreement with a view to rebuilding the Libyan State, empowering it effectively to combat terrorism and enhancing its capacity to defeat the terrorists before they can establish a base from which to target Libya's neighbours and extend their influence. In this context I should like to emphasize the importance of continuing to foster an environment that is conducive to increased participation among Libyans who believe

in a modern State, in parallel with an unflagging effort to eradicate terrorism.

In Syria, too, we have all observed how extremists have exploited the legitimate aspirations of the people and have dragged this brotherly nation into a chaos designed only to further their own interests. In fact, conflicts have erupted between extremist organizations themselves in the struggle over the spoils. Today, Syria is being torn apart. It is facing a major humanitarian crisis, and the ambitions of regional parties have been exposed. In response to this dire situation, Egypt has called on the Syrian national parties to meet in Cairo to formulate a clear-cut plan for the interim period, as agreed in Geneva. That would provide a common ground for all Syrians to build a democratic Syria, with sovereignty over the entirety of its territory, and in a manner that would preserve the State and its institutions and protect its diversity and national identity. The Syrian national parties are invited today to participate meaningfully in all efforts to negotiate a political resolution to the crisis that reflects the aspirations of the Syrian people.

Egypt's political and military support for Yemen and its participation in the steps taken by the coalition of States in support of the legitimate Government were in response to Yemen's request. They also arise from our sense of the need to protect Arab national security in the face of external attempts to intervene in an Arab country's domestic affairs, as well as our commitment to preserving Yemen's unity, independence and territorial integrity. Egypt urges the international community to exert the necessary efforts to resume the transitional political process, in accordance with the Gulf initiative and its implementation mechanisms as well as the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Egypt is closely following the latest developments in Iraq, and we hope that the reforms implemented by the Government will contribute to restoring cohesion between the people of Iraq and advancing national reconciliation.

As Egypt has previously emphasized, the increasing plight of refugees fleeing from armed conflicts reaffirms the need to work towards resolving these conflicts and confronting the scourge of terrorism, which is a major aggravating factor. It necessitates creating channels for legal immigration and facilitating transportation, as well as linking international migration and development.

Egypt is host to an ever-increasing number of refugees, who share with their Egyptian brethren the social, education and health services provided by the State, in spite of the economic burden that this represents. Egypt hopes that the solutions to this crisis will be found, both in the short run to alleviate the humanitarian suffering of refugees and in the long run through overcoming the fundamental causes of this crisis.

The situations I have described point to the existing and ever-growing threat posed by terrorist organizations, which exploit political crises to achieve their objectives. It is incumbent on me, as President of Egypt, a country that is surrounded by such confrontations, to forewarn of the dangers that the expansion of this threat pose to other crises and regions, at the forefront of which is Palestine.

The question of Palestine is a just cause. Resolving the Middle East conflict and empowering the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination and to an independent State within the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, will effectively eliminate one of the most important factors underlying the region's instability and used as a dangerous pretext to justify extremism and terrorism. Members will doubtless agree with me that it is imperative to end this conflict promptly, so that the nations of the region may focus on building their future together in order to achieve prosperity and build a better future for coming generations. The ongoing events in Jerusalem and at the Al-Aqsa Mosque demonstrate that achieving peace continues to face hurdles and challenges and that all of our efforts are required in the search for a definitive solution.

We in Egypt realize the importance of other factors, in addition to defeating terrorism and extremism, in efforts to achieve stability and comprehensive development. The Egyptian uprising and its call for change was an expression of our awareness of the need to build a modern nation, with all its components. We are aware that so far we have taken only a few steps and that the path is long. We are committed to following that path to the end, no matter the challenges we face.

This year, Egypt will hold parliamentary elections, in conformity with the road map for the future. The people's representatives can then exercise their oversight and legislative responsibilities during the upcoming phase. That phase will witness, God willing, the further

realization of the Egyptian people's aspirations for freedom, dignity and social justice. In this context, it is essential for me to highlight that the Government launched in March its sustainable development strategy, known as Vision 2030, in parallel with the international community's pursuit of an ambitious post-2015 development agenda.

We hope that this development agenda will take into consideration the importance of our common but differentiated responsibilities in confronting the global challenges based on a disparity in capacities and resources, as well as the diversity of our cultures. Development is a fundamental human right. To facilitate and promote that right, particularly in developing countries and in Africa, is a joint responsibility and top priority particularly for the developed world.

The vision Egypt is proposing is the continuation of a long journey, one which began with human history itself. Throughout this journey, Egyptians have continuously innovated. They have welcomed all those who have passed through their land; hence their contribution to human culture remains significant to this day. Currently, as a candidate for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the coming two years, Egypt aspires to enhance its participation and to consolidate international peace and stability. The confidence placed in Egypt by Member States will not be regretted. Egypt is aware of the responsibilities it is about to shoulder at this critical juncture and will endeavour to reflect the interests of Africa, the Arab region and the entire world. It will seek to uphold the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the values that unite human beings and civilizations.

The banks of the River Nile witnessed the establishment of the first building blocks of human civilization. Egypt remained for many centuries a centre of knowledge and art and a beacon of light for other countries and nations. In spite of the difficulties and setbacks endured by Egypt at other times, today the Egyptian people long to make history once again. I am confident that, with God's help, the Egyptian people will be able to achieve their highest aspirations for themselves, their country, their region and the whole world. Long live Egypt!

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

Mr. Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Ms. Simonetta Sommaruga, President of the Swiss Confederation

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Swiss Confederation.

Ms. Simonetta Sommaruga, President of the Swiss Confederation, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Ms. Simonetta Sommaruga, President of the Swiss Confederation, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Sommaruga (*spoke in French*): On the ruins of a world ravaged by the Second World War, 51 countries decided to give humankind a forum for voicing opinions again and came together to proclaim the values enshrined in the Charter: dignity, human rights, equality, justice, tolerance and peace.

It is fitting that we celebrate the seventieth anniversary of our Organization, which has achieved so much. It would be difficult to imagine a world without the United Nations. It has contributed to reducing poverty in a great many countries, and it has achieved its primary goal: our generation is the first one not to have lived through a world war. However, if we wish to make an honest assessment we also need to be critical.

Today, close to 120,000 soldiers are currently active in United Nations peacekeeping missions. That means that the crises and the wars which ravage the world are still far too many in number. Today we have 60 million displaced persons worldwide, which is more than at any time since the United Nations was founded. Not only have we not made sufficient progress when tackling certain problems, but we have created new ones ourselves, such as global warming.

Even though we might not like to admit this, we must recognize that our behaviour continues to be marked by major inconsistencies. I should like to offer two examples of that. First, many countries continue to live in abject poverty when they have a wealth of natural resources. Secondly, we are concerned about movements of mass migration, yet, by causing global

warming, we are depriving entire populations of the basic conditions they need in order to remain where they are.

Let us ask ourselves why so many educated young people wish to leave their own countries. This concerns not only developing countries but also a considerable number of European States as well. We must acknowledge that we have not yet succeeded in achieving anything close to a fair global distribution of wealth, nor have we succeeded in establishing the rule of law as the norm. Corruption remains endemic.

We have to admit that we have not yet succeeded in combining growth with the protection of our environment. Furthermore, all too often national interests impede the formulation of joint responses. I am thinking here specifically of the refugee crisis in the Middle East and in Europe. Faced with such major flows of migrants, the solutions can only be joint ones. If we each continue to look after our own interests, we will all lose out in the end — the migrants will lose out, and the solidarity between States will fall by the wayside. If we fail to protect human dignity, we do ourselves a disservice, because to betray one's own values is to betray oneself. I say once again, therefore, that the refugee crises require responses based on solidarity.

One cannot ask Turkey, Jordan or Lebanon to take in all the refugees fleeing the civil war in Syria. These countries have already done so much, such admirable work, which has received too little recognition thus far. Similarly, it is not possible to ask a few European countries to take in all of the refugees. We will all be judged on how we respond to this traumatic humanitarian challenge.

Here we face yet another inconsistency. If countries seek answers to such large-scale phenomena as the current migration movements in an individualistic way, without coordinating, everything will be brought to a standstill. Human beings are not free from inconsistencies, none of us are. To some extent at least, that is part of human nature. However, when it comes to the actions of Governments, States and communities of States, we must strive to minimize such inconsistencies. As we all know, in order to address poverty, the challenges of migration, conflicts, terrorism, organized crime and climate change, collective action is vital.

The United Nations is more necessary than ever. What we require is a strong United Nations for a better world. To that end, we need to focus on three priorities.

The ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) that we have just adopted is a huge step forward. We need to continue to impart this momentum by achieving an ambitious agreement at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris.

As for the peace and security pillar, it affords us an opportunity to strengthen the United Nations, especially with regard to the protection of the civilian population. Switzerland is convinced that one cannot resolve a conflict through a purely military approach. The United Nations must base each of its actions on a political strategy aimed at finding a lasting solution to the conflict. That self-evident truth was apparent during the various peace and dialogue processes conducted in Geneva on Syria, Libya, Iran and Yemen.

As for the review of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), Switzerland will continue its effort to promote the participation of women in peace processes. We must also grant women more responsibility when it comes to security-related issues. Their involvement contributes to the durability of peace agreements by expanding the agenda of negotiations and by improving the population's commitment to such agreements.

The United Nations will review its global counter-terrorism strategy during the summer of 2016. The implementation of this strategy is a priority for Switzerland, especially the parts relating to terrorism prevention and respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

Finally, Switzerland is also convinced that a strong United Nations is a United Nations capable of taking action and decisions when international peace and security are under threat. In this connection, we reiterate our long-standing call to the members of the Security Council not to block or vote against any resolution aimed at preventing or putting an end to crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes.

Human rights are the third pillar of the United Nations. Here, Switzerland is proud to be seeking election to the Human Rights Council for the 2016-2018 term. Switzerland's priorities on human rights are the

abolition of the death penalty, the implementation of the prohibition of torture, the promotion of women's and children's rights, and the protection of human rights defenders. It is also essential that the perpetrators of human rights violations be brought to justice. Switzerland here wishes to recall the important role played by the International Criminal Court in the fight against impunity.

As far as the humanitarian system is concerned, it has clearly reached its limits as a result of the growing number, longer duration and increasing complexity of crises. So far this year, 82 million people have required immediate humanitarian assistance. That is an unprecedented number. The World Humanitarian Summit, which is to be held in Istanbul in May 2016, will afford us an opportunity to improve the efficiency of the humanitarian system in order to enable it to better and more effectively respond to victims' needs.

In December, Geneva will host the thirty-second International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. That will be an important opportunity to make progress towards the creation of an institutional framework in which to discuss how we can improve compliance with international humanitarian law.

Let us continue to work together to build a modern and effective United Nations by reforming its governance. In this context, Geneva, as one of the main centres of global governance, has an essential role to play. The United Nations can count on the full support of my country, Switzerland, to strengthen it during the next 70 years.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Swiss Confederation for the statement she has just made.

Ms. Simonetta Sommaruga, President of the Swiss Confederation, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Robert Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Mr. Robert Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Robert Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Mugabe: Allow me at the outset to extend to Mr. Mogens Lykketoft my warm congratulations on his election to the high office of President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. He assumes this office at an historic moment when the United Nations has just adopted an ambitious agenda for the future of humankind. The task ahead needs all hands on deck and he can count on our cooperation and support during his presidency.

I wish to commend Mr. Sam Kutesa, a distinguished son of Africa, for the dynamism with which he steered this body over the past year. We particularly appreciated his leadership in promoting inclusive dialogue and seeking consensus on the many sensitive issues that he presided over during his tenure of office.

The theme of this session — “The United Nations at 70: the road ahead for peace, security and human rights” — aptly complements the deliberations of the Summit meeting on the post-2015 development agenda. It is our expectation that the United Nations will draw from its seven decades of experiences to give birth to a new era of peace, equality and justice, a new era that recognizes and fosters the commonality of our common fate through renewed international cooperation and solidarity. The African Union welcomes the priorities the President has proposed, for they go in tandem with our own development plan, the Agenda 2063, which recognizes the intrinsic and inextricable linkages between peace, security, development and the full realization of human rights.

The African Union Constitutive Act recognizes that while peace and security are imperative for our progress, conflict is a major impediment to the socio-economic advancement and integration of the continent. Consequently, the Common African Position on the post-2015 development agenda designates peace and security as one of its six key pillars. It is a top priority for us.

The prevalence of peace not only creates conditions conducive to development, but also ensures that the maximum possible resources can be dedicated to development programmes and projects. We welcome and encourage the continued cooperation between the

United Nations and the African Union, principally through the latter’s Peace and Security Council, in advancing peace and security in Africa.

In January, the leaders of the African Union adopted Agenda 2063 as our continent’s plan to accelerate deepened economic integration of our countries and regions. Its main objective is to improve the well-being of the continent’s citizenry through sustained and balanced economic growth. At the African Union Summit in Pretoria, South Africa, in June this year we agreed on the Agenda’s first 10-year development plan.

During these initial 10 years, the flagship programmes will include the creation of a continental free-trade area, an African centre for disease control, a pan-Africa university of science and technology to develop skills for the value addition and beneficiation of the continent’s vast mineral resources, a single aviation market, a high-speed train, and a pan-African e-network.

The successful implementation of Agenda 2063 calls not just for the commitment of African stakeholders but also for the support and engagement of partners beyond the borders of our continent. Africa is not looking for handouts. Rather it is looking for partners in massive infrastructure development, in creating and exploiting the value chains from its God-given natural resources, and in improving the quality of life of the continent’s citizens. The entire world stands to benefit more from an economically empowered African continent than from one emasculated by deprivation and with an over-dependence on others.

Adaptation to change is the most crucial ingredient for the vibrancy and effectiveness of any organization, including the United Nations. While the world has drastically changed since 1945, the United Nations, and indeed the global governance architecture, remains mired in a long bygone era. This archaic hierarchy among nations threatens to erode the confidence and support that the United Nations commands among the majority, but disadvantaged, of its membership. We are disappointed that we have lost the opportunity of this anniversary to address this burning issue of Security Council reform in a manner that satisfies the just demands and expectations of the majority among us.

I wish to reiterate our strong attachment to Africa’s common position on Security Council reform contained in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. I call on all genuine friends of Africa and all those

who value justice, fairness and democracy to support Africa's just and reasonable proposals.

We equally call for the revitalization of the General Assembly, the sole universally representative and democratic organ of the United Nations, so that it can effectively carry out its Charter-mandated responsibilities. Accordingly, we fully support the call for inclusivity and transparency in selecting our Organization's Secretary-General by ensuring that the General Assembly plays a more significant role in that process. After all, the Secretary-General is at the service of all the Member States, and not only that of an exclusive, privileged few.

Respecting and upholding human rights is the obligation of all States and is enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Nowhere does the Charter arrogate the right to some to sit in judgement over others in carrying out this universal obligation. In that regard, we reject the politicization of this important issue and the application of double standards to victimize those who dare think and act independently of the self-anointed prefects of our time. We equally reject attempts to prescribe new rights that are contrary to our values, norms, traditions and beliefs. We are not gays. Cooperation and respect for each other will advance the cause of human rights worldwide; confrontation, vilification and double standards will not.

Self-determination and independence are intrinsic and fundamental rights that should be enjoyed by all peoples everywhere, without distinction. We are deeply concerned by the continued denial of this basic right to the Saharan people. We urge the United Nations to expeditiously finalize what must be done to conclude the decolonization of the Western Sahara.

In the Middle East, the suffering of the Palestinian people continues unabated. What does Mr. Obama say about that? We reiterate our unwavering support for the just cause of the Palestinian people. Do we agree, Mr. United States? We also reiterate that lasting peace in the Middle East can be achieved only through negotiations to achieve a two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders. We are concerned at the increase in tensions in that region and urge the United Nations to assume its responsibility and bring an end to this senseless conflict.

The promotion of gender equality is critical for the realization of the post-2015 development agenda. The African Union has designated 2015 as the Year

of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Agenda 2063 in order to mobilize our individual and collective actions around this key issue. Gender equality and women's empowerment are central to the achievement of human development, progress and the elimination of the scourge of poverty and deprivation. We must continue to build upon the achievements that have been realized since the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The growing list of phenomena that neither respect nor know any borders makes it imperative that we mobilize all mechanisms for cooperation to effectively overcome them. Terrorism and extremist violence, communicable diseases such as HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, bird flu, and Ebola cannot be overcome single-handedly. The United Nations and its specialized agencies are the place and the mechanism for this indispensable and necessary cooperation.

For some months now, we have watched heartbreaking and harrowing scenes of desperate refugees seeking to enter Europe in search of safety and shelter from the ravages of conflict in their own homelands. We have also read of the tragedy and loss of life in the Mediterranean. The majority of the affected people are from Syria or from other countries devastated by conflict and instability, induced in great part by the destabilizing policies of external forces.

This tragic situation could have been avoided through respect for the independence of other countries and non-interference in their internal affairs. In the case of Libya, we are witnessing the results of abusing the authority of the Security Council and ignoring the opinion of regional organizations, in this instance the African Union, that are supposed to be the partners of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

My country, Zimbabwe, is committed to a fair, just and effective United Nations in which multilateralism, inclusivity and transparency replace unilateralism, exclusion and back-room deals. The Charter of the United Nations is built on the bedrock of the sovereign equality and independence of its Members, without distinction as to their geographical size, economic might or any other endowments or qualifications. We are deeply attached to these principles and call on other Members of the United Nations to be similarly disposed. The United Nations was set up, among other purposes, to

“develop friendly relations among nations”. Zimbabwe desires and is committed to nurturing friendly relations with other nations, but it cannot tolerate interference in its domestic affairs.

We invite other countries with which we may have differences of whatever nature — including the United States and the NATO Powers — to eschew threats, pressures and punitive actions in favour of reconciliation, friendship and dialogue. I therefore denounce in the strongest terms the illegal sanctions that are imposed on my country by the European Union and the United States of America and call for their immediate and unconditional removal. We do not know what wrong we have done to the United States. I would kindly ask it to leave us free and independent to do our own thing. Once more, I put on record that my country is desirous to live in harmony with all countries big and small. We have peace in Zimbabwe just now. We do not want war. We do not want interference. We do not want to hear of regime change at all.

The seventieth anniversary of our Organization has been marked by the adoption of a far-reaching Agenda that has the potential to drastically transform our world in all aspects. We are under no illusion about the challenges that lie ahead, but we are not discouraged, either. Humankind has, over the epochs, demonstrated an immense tenacity in overcoming inertia and resistance to change. Now is our time to leave our own positive mark on the history of human development and interaction. Posterity expects no less from us.

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

Mr. Robert Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Ms. Cristina Fernández, President of the Argentine Republic

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Argentine Republic.

Ms. Cristina Fernández, President of the Argentine Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Ms. Cristina Fernández, President of the Argentine Republic, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Fernández (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to welcome a very relevant event that took place here a few days ago — on 10 September — when, by 136 votes in favour, the General Assembly approved the Basic Principles on Sovereign Debt Restructuring Processes (resolution 69/319). That was a very significant triumph.

New principles have been established — which I have written down here so that I do not forget any of them — that should guide how we address and resolve matters when a country has decided to renegotiate its external debt. They include the sovereignty of a country to decide its own macroeconomic policies and how it will restructure its debt; good faith, transparency, impartiality, and equitable treatment so as not to distinguish among different creditors and so that everybody is treated in the same manner. They also include sovereign immunity from jurisdiction and execution, as well as legitimacy and sustainability.

The latter is perhaps one of the most important principles, as it refers to repaying and honouring one’s debts — not at the cost of hunger and poverty for the people, but through a political and economic project and through macroeconomic variables that should make the development and growth of society sustainable.

Finally comes perhaps the most important principle lacking today in terms of regulation of sovereign debt. It is a logical principle that applies in nearly all the domestic legal systems throughout the world. When a company goes bankrupt and is unable to pay its debts in any country — including in this one, the United States of America, where municipalities are also allowed to go bankrupt — how is consensus reached? Through a qualified majority. When 66 per cent of the creditors here in the United States, and also in my own country of the Argentine Republic, come to an agreement with the debtor with regard to timetables and the form of the payment, that becomes law and is mandatory for the other creditors. Let me repeat, when 66 per cent agree. That principle also enshrines the idea that when the majority decides on a form of payment, that should be accepted by everybody else.

Mr. Arízaga (Ecuador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

This agreement — these principles and conventions — was approved here, and we have decided to submit it to our parliament for it to become an instrument of public order that controls our country's domestic practices. It has its roots in the default that Argentina experienced in 2000, history's largest sovereign default. At that time the world was growing by more than good rates. However, Argentina went bankrupt as a result of debts that had been incurred much earlier. In fact, to be more accurate, it began in earnest in 1976, when there was a coup d'état and the country's constitutional order was overthrown, and began to deepen in the 1990s with the convertibility regime, by which they made us Argentines believe that an Argentine peso was worth \$1. That culminated in the 2001 default and in institutional bankruptcy: there were five different Governments in just one week.

Argentina, however, was able to rebuild its economy and its society when politics once again took control over the economy starting on 25 May 2003. It was then decided to summon creditors to a first restructuring offer in 2005, and again in 2010 under my presidency. The first restructuring was during the presidency of Néstor Carlos Kirchner, who in his first address to the General Assembly (see A/58/PV.11) said that the dead did not pay their debts and that it was necessary for the creditors to allow Argentina to grow in order to be able to pay. That was neither a premonition on his part nor a matter of foretelling the future. He simply applied economic logic: it was impossible to pay a debt in the absence of growth in the economy of the debtor country. That is when Argentina began its inexorable process of getting out of debt.

But it also had to do with what happened in 2005, when it was decided to pay off the total debt to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which had been imposing macroeconomic policies on our country. That is when Argentina began to grow and linked itself up as yet another wagon to the locomotive engine of the emerging countries, which were the ones that had been supporting the sustained growth of the international economy. Let us not forget that the greatest growth was led by the emerging countries, essentially headed by the giants of Asia.

During my first address to the General Assembly as President of the Argentine Republic, in September

2008 (see A/63/PV.5), I noted how the locomotive that was driving the world to sustained growth had another locomotive engine added to it. Like those old trains with two locomotive engines, this one now also had two: China and the rest of the emerging countries, pulling towards growth with rates that in the case of China had already attained 14 per cent growth in gross domestic product by 2007.

Then in 2008, with the fall of Lehman Brothers on Wall Street, came an economic crisis that we are still experiencing, but with several differences. Although it began here at the very heart of international finance, there had in fact been signs of a crisis, namely, the 2007 sub-prime mortgage crisis, which ultimately exploded in 2008. The year 2009 marked the global economic collapse, except in Asian countries. Even in Latin America, we experienced negative growth that year. In 2010 the crisis spread to the eurozone, and off they went to the rescue of indebted countries. We all know that was a euphemism; the banks were actually the ones they went to rescue. Billions of dollars were transferred to banking institutions. I still remember a discussion that took place in London at the Group of 20. Our position was that, while it was necessary to save the banks to stave off a 1930s-type depression, it was also absolutely essential that there be regulation so that the tide of resources that was being injected into the financial sector should flow back to the real economy, enter the goods and services production cycle and make the wheels of growth turn again.

But none of that happened. Indeed, on the contrary, adjustment policies were the consideration in exchange for being rescued. And the adjustment policy imposed on the eurozone caused a recession in that zone and a drop in employment to unprecedented lows: 50 per cent of young people in Italy unemployed, with double-digit unemployment in Spain as well.

That is how we got to 2014 and 2015, with a sharp decrease in global demand. Now we see how that crisis train — the Lehman Brothers locomotive engine, which departed from here, in the heart of Wall Street, and stopped off in Europe — is trying to move on to the emerging economies, we who underpinned economic growth for so long. Argentina was and is part of that growth. This year, despite difficulties and the harassment by vulture funds, which do not collect nor do they allow the 92.7 per cent that agreed to the two restructurings to collect, with the complicity of a certain part of this country's judiciary, there are demands that

we pay 7 per cent of the creditors \$20 billion, when the restructuring accepted by the 92 per cent had amounted to \$40 billion.

What is the capitalistic logic behind this? What is the mathematical model for this? How long would it take us to restructure those 93 per cent if we met the demands of these predatory financiers, who make up only 7 per cent of the creditors, and paid them half of what we paid to 92 per cent of the creditors? Any logical judge would say that was not right. One cannot pay to 7 per cent of the creditors half of what one pays the other 92 per cent of the creditors, particularly when some of the 7 per cent had bought lots of these bonds after Argentina had already defaulted on its external debt.

It is for that reason that the approval of the Basic Principles on Sovereign Debt Restructuring Processes — for which there are some precedents already through anti-vulture laws such as those in the Kingdom of Belgium — represents help, not to Argentina, which is depositing 100 per cent of its debt to its creditors, but help to the rest of the world. It is the first serious attempt to introduce fairness and regulation to the financial and derivatives sectors, which, from the moment that merchant banks became investment banks, have remained outside the scope of all oversight and intervention.

That is why we say that what was agreed on 10 September was a very significant and major step forward that must also be in line with the fact that the world is not doing well at all. That is not news to anyone. We could talk about the refugee crisis resulting from the action of financial predators in countries that do not manage to support their people who have to migrate to Europe in canoes or rafts from Africa, or about the refugees who have to flee their homelands because of warlords.

I also want to talk to the Assembly about an unprecedented process of economic concentration that is unheard of in the world. According to the most recently released IMF report, 1 per cent of the global population at present is holding 50 per cent of the wealth. Here, in this very country that once hosted the American dream — the dream of the American middle classes, which encouraged and continues to encourage so many Latin Americans to come here — 1 per cent have more than 30 per cent of the total wealth. How long can such a society or the world continue when income

distribution is that unfair and with all the consequences of such unfairness?

Yesterday, at President Xi Jinping's gender equality meeting, we pondered how gender empowerment could be discussed in a world in which resources are so unequally distributed; how much gender equality can we find in a world that expels people from their home countries because they have become unlivable and when they are refused entry into other countries? That forces us to address the problem of the financial markets and the need to reinject resources into the real economy so that employment and production can be resumed as the main engines for societies' welfare.

I should also like to welcome the fact — and commend the United States of America, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the permanent members of the Security Council and Germany — that an agreement was reached on nuclear issues that will help to defuse the situation and provide more certainty and security to a world shrouded in conflicts and warmongering. We were aware of those negotiations. We harboured hopes that this agreement would eventually see the light of day.

Members will wonder how we knew. Easy. In 2010 Gary Samore, at that time the White House's top adviser on nuclear issues, visited us in Argentina. He came to visit Argentina on a mission with one goal. In 1987, under the first democratic Government and under the control of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Argentina supplied the nuclear fuel for the reactor known as "Tehran". Gary Samore explained to our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Héctor Timerman, that negotiations were under way on an agreement for the Islamic Republic of Iran to cease its uranium enrichment activities or to do it to a lesser extent, but that Iran claimed that it needed to enrich for the Tehran nuclear reactor and that was hindering negotiations. They came to ask us to provide nuclear fuel to the Islamic Republic of Iran. President Rouhani was not yet in office. The negotiations had begun under President Ahmadinejad.

I remember that the Minister for Foreign Affairs came to see me and submitted to me the proposal that Gary Samore had brought. He had already informed the White House envoy that his request would be very difficult to satisfy given the relationship between Argentina and the Islamic Republic of Iran because of the terrorist attack against the Argentine Israelite

Mutual Association (AMIA) that had taken place in 1994 and the decision of the judge in the case to press charges against five Iranian citizens and summon them to appear in court. Against that backdrop, it was impossible for Argentina to make a contribution to the negotiation process, which, I repeat, was already under way in 2010. I looked at the Minister in my office — I recall this clearly — and I said that if the request was made in writing and signed, we could cooperate despite all that, because we believed that the attainment of the nuclear non-proliferation objective was important.

Members know that Argentina is a member of a select club of nuclear energy-producing countries but that, nonetheless, we occupy a leading position in the field of non-proliferation. Therefore, for us nuclear non-proliferation is also a question of governmental interest. That is what I said to my Minister for Foreign Affairs, who in turn conveyed to the White House envoy that we would agree to provide the fuel, because it had been in the hands of Argentina since 1987 and we also had the necessary technology to produce it — in exchange, obviously, for such a request to be submitted in writing and signed. That message was conveyed. I believe that that was the last time that the Minister saw Mr. Samore.

Thus by 2013, when Argentina signed the memorandum of understanding with the Islamic Republic of Iran to unblock the legal matter that had brought the case to a halt years ago — and please bear in mind that the attack took place in 1994 and I am now referring to what happened in 2013 — other Governments had intervened, there had been other developments. And, because we were strongly convinced of the need to combat terrorism and of the importance of remembering, of honouring truth and justice and clarification, we were trying to find those who were guilty of that terrorist attack and to punish them.

That was the objective of the memorandum of understanding. However, it seems as if all hell broke loose with the signing of the memorandum. Time passed, and when the agreement was signed on 2 April between the 5+1 and Iran — no longer with Ahmadinejad but with Rouhani — and with the negotiations well under way, one could not but wonder why there was so much opposition and criticism against us negotiating with Iran a simple agreement of judicial cooperation for the Argentine judge to depose in Teheran the five Iranian citizens accused because of the laws that prevented the extradition of Iranian citizens. What was the reason?

I learned it here from the mouth of another President regarding hypocrisy in diplomatic relations. There is much hypocrisy blended with a lot of geopolitics and very little interest in setting the record straight when it comes to remembering and honouring the truth and justice demanded by the victims and their families.

We later sent a bill on this treaty to our Congress, which approved. I say to President Obama that I fervently hope that the United States Congress will also approve the agreement, or at least refrain from blocking it, as it will be an important contribution to global peace.

We are coherent in our approach. It is not that what applies to us does not apply to others, although we use elements or instruments that have little to do with the objectives we declare to harm the relation or the image of a country, but that is the reality of the situation.

Finally, the judge hearing the AMIA case also considered it to be a mechanism apt to shed light and to allow him to depose the accused. An appellate court was not of the same mind, and today the case has all but come to a halt. Today we can appeal only to the goodwill of the Islamic Republic of Iran, because we have no other instrument to obtain the Iranians' depositions.

But there have been developments in my country. Under way today, on the grounds of concealment, is an action brought against the highest ranking authorities and intelligence and judicial officials taking part in the AMIA case since 1994. The proceeding is now at the oral and public trial stage.

After my order late last year to remove from office whole sectors of Argentina's intelligence officials on the grounds of strong suspicions that they had hindered the investigation and opposed attempts to unblock the case by going and deposing the Iranians, I dismissed some high-ranking officials, some of whom had been in office since 1972 and had rendered services to all the dictatorial Governments and all the other Administrations, including my own. Some of those dismissed officials have settled here in the United States. A few days after these dismissals, the investigating prosecutor, Alberto Nisman, died.

All this amounts to something more than I have already said. I have always maintained that AMIA was a complex game of chess in international politics. Today I believe that, in addition to a chess game, it is also spiderweb of interests alien to my country. As with

all spiderwebs, it is only the weakest and the smallest that get caught, while the others remain outside.

In the trial for concealment being pursued now, the commencement of which was delayed almost 14 years, and also in the investigation under way into the death of Prosecutor Nisman, some details are being revealed of horrific linkages to external secret services, bank accounts abroad and relationships with vulture funds that have been denounced not by me but by individuals who are themselves members of my country's Jewish community.

I am not here to talk with hypocrisy or lies, I am talking about what is actually happening. A few days ago we summoned the United States Ambassador in our country for an explanation of the capacity in which a particular former member of the intelligence services of Argentina was in the United States. He was in charge of the entire investigation of the AMIA case from the outset. I was just a provincial deputy in the south of the country, in Patagonia, and a delegate to the constitutional convention when the bomb exploded, and that person was already in charge of the investigation. The investigation into the death of Prosecutor Nisman is now proving his total and absolute connection with the Prosecutor, as well as that of other individuals.

On instructions from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, our Ambassador to the United States has submitted two letters to the State Department and also held meetings with the State Department to ask in what capacity that person was here in the United States. He is almost protected. I do not know from what or from whom, but he is here and protected. A few days ago, the new prosecutors in the AMIA case asked Interpol to issue a Blue Notice concerning the whereabouts of that individual.

As we have been doing since 2007, first President Kirchner and then me, every year we have been requesting the cooperation of the Islamic Republic of Iran to clarify the attack. Today we are also asking for the cooperation of the United States. Judges in our country want to know the whereabouts of this official whom everybody refers to as someone closely connected to the case, and a cover-up is even mentioned.

Members may ask themselves why I spend so much time on this issue. It is very little compared with the time that organizations paid by vulture funds have devoted in this country to criticizing, slandering and offending us as if we were accomplices of the Iranian

regime. If we are accomplices of the Iranian regime, then what is President Barack Obama? Is he not also?

Hypocrisy and double standards cannot continue in diplomacy. We cannot continue to use weapons and instruments of international intrigue — old ones — worthy of a John le Carré novel. The world is a world of communications, of the globalization of the Internet, which some dreamed would enable them to better dominate the entire world. Today the Internet is a very powerful communication tool for everyone, the entire global village where everybody knows instantly what is happening in a particular place in the world.

Our Government in Argentina will tirelessly continue to seek truth and justice in the AMIA case. We ask for the cooperation of the country whose citizens are accused, and of this country, the United States, so that it will also help to clarify the presence of this citizen, who will surely be required, as he is already being required, by the State agencies in our country.

In this world of economic crisis — and I was listening closely to some of today's speeches — the truth is that enemies change and mutate with amazing speed. I remember the most recent G-20 meeting in which I participated — I was absent for the last one for health reasons — in St. Petersburg, where those who confronted the Government of Syria, the freedom fighters, were those who had to be supported by the entire Western world. Today the freedom fighters are part of the Islamic State of Iraq and Shams. I should like to ask members how this seemingly Islamic group actually functions. Who finances it?

When one sees these horrendous scenes where people have their throats slit and where one can clearly see three or four cameras filming the scenes, it is like a movie. It is not simply a home-made film such as a fundamentalist group could make with a simple camera. No, this is almost a full-on production. At times it seems almost like a Francis Ford Coppola movie. Four or five cameras are used, and the faces are never shown. It would be good if we asked ourselves from where is all this financed. That would help to ensure that the world can find clues to combat one of the worst scourges facing humankind today: fundamentalism of whatever nature, whether dogmatic or religious, but mainly those who consider their neighbour an enemy and a target to be eliminated.

I do not want to leave the Assembly today only with problems of debt and the economy or terrorist attacks

and international complicity. I also wish to pay homage to the continent of which I feel I am a daughter, Latin America.

Not long before I spoke, the President of Cuba, Raúl Castro, a President and a comrade whom I love and admire, spoke to the Assembly. For the first time in 17 years the President of Cuba is back here in the General Assembly. The truth is that for us Latin Americans, members of the Common Market of the South, the Union of South American Nations and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States who have struggled so much, discussed so much and argued so much so that Cuba can return to be part of these multilateral entities, we see this as a triumph of perseverance by the region, and fundamentally an achievement by Cuba.

We also recognize the Government of the United States, which has finally opened its mind and understood that things could not continue as they had done in the past. I should like to thank another Latin American who was also in this very same Hall — and who has perhaps greater authority than the rest of us because he sits on the throne of St. Peter in Rome — who played a determining role in establishing the agreement between the United States and Cuba. He came here and spoke from this platform (see A/70/PV.3) to the world and said that money cannot continue to determine politics and that there was a basic principle understood by all religions, that is, “Do not do to others what you would not like others to do to you”.

As a Latin American I also had the joy of seeing the other day in Havana the photograph of the President of Colombia, the President of Cuba and the representative of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia launching the end of a conflict that has been going on for more than 50 years and that they had tried to end with bombs and rifles. No, political, social and cultural conflicts are not resolved with bombs and rifles; they

are resolved by talking, through dialogue and the acceptance of others.

I am pleased to be part of the Latin American region, where we do not have religious or cultural clashes, where we are all children or grandchildren of immigrants and where we still receive even internal migrations. In my country the public and free national universities host students from across the continent. We do not issue a red card to anyone, for we believe it is necessary to contribute to and establish a more just world.

For that reason I say that Latin America — once perhaps the emblem of inequality — with the growth achieved by the national, popular and democratic Governments that some call populist but which have incorporated millions of our fellow citizens and which have allowed our citizens to enjoy the benefits of education, health and housing — today we say that we are a growing continent, a continent of integration.

Perhaps the contribution that Argentina has made — it was left alone in 2001 but could still reconstruct our country, and today its gross domestic product will grow by 2.7 per cent — allows us to say that inclusion, growth, development, production and trade will be reactivated only by employing the millions who have lost their jobs, improving the wages of those who get a pittance, respecting the rights of young people and children and, on the basis of synthesis, creating a fairer, more equitable and more egalitarian society.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Argentine Republic for the statement she has just made.

Ms. Cristina Fernández, President of the Argentine Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The meeting rose at 6.55 p.m.