



General Assembly

Seventieth session

17th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 29 September 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Lykketoft (Denmark)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Address by Mr. Serzh Sargsyan, President of the Republic of Armenia

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

Mr. Serzh Sargsyan, President of the Republic of Armenia, 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. Serzh Sargsyan, President of the Republic of Armenia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Sargsyan (*spoke in Armenian; English text provided by the delegation*): I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to the post of President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. I am confident that, under your able leadership, this jubilee session will meet our many hopes and expectations.

I also congratulate all of us on the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations. The establishment of the Organization is one of the greatest achievements of humankind, a step that has consolidated nations around its shared aspirations and principles. The past 70 years have been characterized by very important positive developments, namely, an end was put to colonialism, racial discrimination and apartheid. Many people around the world exercised their right to self-determination and took charge of their own fates by

establishing and building independent States of their own, thus increasing the number of United Nations States Members from 51 to today's 193.

Amid all those achievements, we recognize that the world currently faces new challenges, such as terrorism, extremism, intolerance, economic crises, climate change, human trafficking, organ trafficking and trafficking in drugs and arms, a migration crisis and others. The list of those challenges is long. The profound need to struggle against them obliges us to resolutely reiterate our joint commitment to the mission of the Organization and the Charter of the United Nations.

Last year, on the eve of the centennial of the Armenian genocide, I expressed from this rostrum our gratitude to the nations that had recognized the Armenian genocide, and I named each State individually (see A/69/PV.6). I called upon the international community to strengthen the struggle against the recurrence of the crime of genocide recognizing and condemning its occurrence. Today, from this same rostrum, I would like to thank Pope Francis and to acknowledge the historic mass he served. I also wish to thank the European Parliament and to recall the resolution it adopted. In addition, the well-known statement by the German President will, believe me, henceforth be found in the annals of our nation's history.

In that connection, I thank the legislative bodies of Austria, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, as well as numerous provincial and city councils and hundreds of political and non-governmental

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organizations. I also thank the Presidents of Russia, France, Cyprus and Serbia, as well as the delegations of numerous other countries that came on 24 April to pay tribute to the victims of the Armenian genocide in Yerevan. Our determination to keep the prevention of the crime of genocide on the international agenda is demonstrated by the resolutions that we periodically submit to the Human Rights Council. The latest resolution to that effect was adopted this year. Building further upon that, just a few days ago, the Assembly adopted resolution 69/323, establishing 9 December as the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of This Crime.

The peaceful resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh problem remains one of the most salient issues in our region. I must note that the aggressive policy pursued by Azerbaijan has resulted in the absence of any meaningful progress in the negotiations to reach a settlement of the conflict, and the situation has drifted towards increasing tension. The dictatorial regime of that country has used disgraceful repression as an instrument to strangle the people's wrath, as the oil-based economy obviously falters. Even that policy it now considers to be ineffective. Now it requires images from the line of contact in order to divert the attention of its own public. I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to the fact that Azerbaijan, besides various other provocative actions, has now started to use heavy artillery, firing at the peaceful settlements of the bordering districts of both the Republic of Armenia and the Nagorno Karabakh Republic.

Just a few days ago, in the border area of Armenia, three women fell victim to an Azerbaijani bombardment in their houses and in their gardens, where they were peacefully working. The question that comes to mind is whether any reasonable person can see any valid logic in that cruelty. It is obvious to us that the Azerbaijani leadership has irreversibly lost both its sense of reality and its willingness to abide by the norms of human conduct.

Azerbaijan completely disdains the five joint statements issued by the Presidents of the United States of America, Russia and France, as well as the efforts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Minsk Group. If that country continues its aggressive policy, Armenia will have no other choice but to take the necessary legal, political and military

steps to allow the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh to develop in security and peace.

Although it is obvious to everybody which party has instigated and continues to instigate the ceasefire violations, I would still like to recall some facts. Is it not strange that, for years now, Azerbaijan has stubbornly refused to withdraw its snipers and establish an incident investigation mechanism, as proposed by the co-Chairs of the Minsk Group? The question that arises is, what is Azerbaijan afraid of?

Is it not strange that, during the European Games hosted by Azerbaijan, when the Government needed an image of stability, almost no shooting incidents occurred at the border, while immediately after those Games shooting incidents reoccurred on a prolonged basis? I do not expect members of the Assembly to buy the assertions of any one of the parties, but I still hope that everyone will exercise common sense. Is it not strange that in the twenty-first century our neighbour, day in and day out, relentlessly and indefatigably takes pride in its excessive accumulation of arms and the manifold expansion of its military budget? It stubbornly continues making bellicose threats that it intends to renew military hostilities, and that is done at the highest level, that of the head of State.

I think that everyone now understands why Armenia has consistently urged the international community to make statements that are not general, but unambiguous, with regard to the party to whom they are referring during discussions of the ceasefire violations. We must understand that to stifle early-warning signals with regard to threats to peace and security can have catastrophic repercussions.

Today, we are witnessing unspeakable barbarity taking place in the Middle East. Religious intolerance has brought irreversible consequences in its wake. We have been most directly affected by the atrocities unfolding there, since they have led to the destruction of parts of Armenia's spiritual and cultural heritage and its artefacts and to the murder and expulsion of numerous Armenians residing in Iraq and Syria. The Armenian community of Syria, with its centuries-long history, shares and experiences all the hardships that the Syrian people are undergoing in these difficult times. We are trying to aid the refugees to the best of our abilities. Up to now, Armenia has hosted more than 16,000 refugees from Syria. That figure shows that Armenia is one of the leading host countries, together with the European host countries.

Armenians are well acquainted with the fate of refugees, of the exiled and expelled. The Armenian genocide would have claimed many more lives and the survivors would have gone through much greater hardship if a number of nations, our friends, had not lent us a helping hand in those difficult times. Today it is Germany, Sweden and a few other countries that deserve praise for the humanism that they have displayed. They have provided hundreds of thousands of refugees with safe haven, and have reiterated that that assistance was the right thing to do from both the legal and the humanist perspectives.

This year, we all witnessed how joint and adequate actions paved the way to mitigating a difficult international issue. A historic agreement was reached on the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran, an immediate neighbour of ours. That critical deal will undoubtedly contribute to the global settlement of conflict situations and the strengthening of mutual trust. Extended and consistent political and diplomatic efforts made the agreement possible.

All that proves that, when there is a political will to bridge disagreements and embrace a spirit of cooperation, solutions can indeed be found to the most complicated issues. From this rostrum, I would like once again to stress the importance of using diplomacy, especially to do away with closed borders. Our neighbours have subjected Armenia to an illegal blockade, and we deem such an improvident policy to be unacceptable, a policy that in the twenty-first century establishes artificial obstacles that disrupt intercultural, human-to-human and trade contacts. In that context, we highly value the periodic reviews carried out under the framework of the United Nations Conferences on Landlocked Developing Countries. We stand ready to invest further efforts in that endeavour, including by hosting intermediate workshops on that topic in our country.

To conclude, I would like to join all speakers who have called for joint efforts to combat darkness, atrocities and hatred. No country is too great or too small for that cause. Every single one has a role to play. Armenia stands ready to make its contribution to that joint struggle.

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

Mr. Serzh Sargsyan, President of the Republic of Armenia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Kikwete: I join those who have spoken before me in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your well-deserved election to preside over the General Assembly at its seventieth session. Your election is a fitting tribute to your distinguished political career, having served as Foreign Minister and Finance Minister of your country, and recently as Speaker of the Danish Parliament. It is also a reflection of the high regard that the Assembly has for your great country, Denmark. I would like to assure you of my country's full support and cooperation in discharging your duties and responsibilities.

I also wish to pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Sam Kutesa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uganda, for the outstanding manner in which he steered the affairs of the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. Indeed, that great son of the African soil has done us proud.

I also wish to express a well-deserved word of appreciation for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his staff for their dedicated service and efforts in promoting the ideals and principles of the United Nations. I also commend you, Mr. President, and the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session, as well as the Secretary-General, for the excellent work culminating in the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda (resolution 70/1) and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with their 169 targets. We sincerely hope that reliable mechanisms will ensure the availability of the means of implementation and follow-up. It was the failure to have

such mechanisms that was responsible for the shortfalls in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

My delegation welcomes the theme of this session, “The United Nations at 70: the road ahead for peace, security and human rights”. The United Nations at 70 not only has withstood the test of time, but has evolved and become a strong Organization. I am glad we all agree that much has been achieved in the past seven decades. Equally, we agree that not everything that the founding fathers envisaged the United Nations could do has been done satisfactorily. The United Nations has succeeded in preventing another world war, but the challenges of preserving world peace and security remain. Inter- and intra-State conflicts and wars are many and on the increase. Terrorism has become a serious global threat. There are still too many people who live in conditions of abject poverty, squalor and deprivation in a world of unprecedented wealth.

Unlike 70 years ago, today there is better understanding, cooperation and partnership among countries and organizations in preserving peace and security. It is easier today for the world to come together to promote peace than it was before. As a matter of fact, most of the conflicts we are witnessing today are being handled, first and foremost, by regional and subregional organizations. The United Nations therefore must seek to forge strategic partnerships with such organizations. By taking advantage of the knowledge they have of the history and nature of the crises, key players and cultures of the people involved, it would be more successful in managing and resolving conflicts. Where and when appropriate, the United Nations should invest in strengthening the capacity of those organizations and their member States in anticipating, detecting, preventing, managing and resolving conflicts. I am of the view that such capacity is urgently needed in Africa.

We highly commend the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session and the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations on reform of the Security Council for their efforts. It is the wish of the majority of Member States to see an acceleration of the negotiation process during the current session. For the Security Council to remain what it was 70 years ago is incomprehensible and, to say the least, unacceptable. It is high time that the demands of the majority of the Member States be heard and heeded. We must be mindful of the fact that the credibility of the United Nations depends upon a more agile, representative

and responsive Security Council. Let us all muster the courage and political will to accomplish that long-overdue task for the sake of the Organization. In the meantime, we must continue to support the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

Peacekeeping operations remain one of the most dependable instruments for promoting world peace and security. I believe that they will remain so for many years to come. I am told that there are approximately 125,000 men and women deployed in 16 peacekeeping missions across the world. Tanzania is proud to have contributed 1,322 of those gallant people, who often serve under challenging conditions. Sometimes they are compelled to serve in places where there is little or no peace to keep. Tanzania stands ready to contribute more, whenever and wherever requested to do so.

We cannot talk about the security challenges of today without mentioning terrorism — a security challenge about which the United Nations and the entire international community must remain vigilant in the coming decade. While reiterating our strongest condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, we believe that there is an urgent need to bolster efforts at all levels for fighting that scourge. Collectively, we must aspire to improve our preparedness, collaboration and response to the threat we face.

The Ebola outbreak in West Africa in the past year is a stark reminder of how dangerous epidemics can be and how vulnerable we are as nations and peoples. More than 11,000 people lost their lives, including citizens of the United States and Spain, and approximately 28,000 were infected. The economies of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone were devastated. Economic activities and services almost ground to a halt, thereby causing enormous losses to the economies of the three countries. The World Bank estimates that they lost about \$2.2 billion in gross domestic product as a result. Approximately 7,000 children lost their parents, and half a million people became food-insecure. More than 5 million children lost valuable schooling and skills-development time. Mammoth recovery efforts are required to get those economies and societies back to where they were before the outbreak. Unfortunately, many countries in Africa also suffered, irrespective of how distant those countries were from the three primarily affected countries. The tourism industry is a case in point: it is suffering throughout Africa.

The biggest lesson from the handling of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa is that the world needs to be better prepared to prevent and respond to epidemics in future. That was not the case for the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. In that regard, we should all commend the Secretary-General for his wise decision to establish the High-level Panel on the Global Response to Health Crises to make recommendations on how the world can better respond to public-health emergencies of global concern in the future. I was given the honour of chairing the Panel. It is premature for me to report anything substantive now to the General Assembly. We will complete our work in December, and I am sure our report will be brought before the Assembly for information and action. We look forward to the Assembly's support.

Tanzania welcomes the historic and momentous decision taken by the United States of America and the Republic of Cuba to restore diplomatic relations and reopen embassies in Washington, D.C., and Havana. We join the people of Cuba and the people of the United States in celebrating that landmark achievement. We commend President Barack Obama and President Raúl Castro Ruz for their bold and courageous leadership. The two leaders and countries have proved to all of us the power of dialogue in finding solutions even when the differences are deep-rooted and the conflicts long-standing. We extend best wishes to our United States and Cuban friends as they open a new chapter in their bilateral relations. We hope that the United States will lift the remaining economic sanctions and appeal to it to do so. The sanctions have condemned the people of Cuba to untold socioeconomic hardships, poverty and misery for the past 50 years.

In the same vein, it is our wish that Israel and Palestine would resume dialogue so that their long-standing conflict can be resolved peacefully. It is high time that the pain and suffering endured by the people of Palestine over many decades be brought to an end. It is about time that the people of Israel lived peacefully and harmoniously with their neighbours. It is regrettable that, as we celebrate 70 years since the founding of the United Nations, the conflict remains unresolved. Tanzania subscribes to and supports the two-State solution, with the State of Israel and a sovereign, contiguous and viable State of Palestine living side by side in peace, security, harmony, mutual recognition, trust and cooperation. We believe it is possible and achievable. All that is required of us is to redouble our efforts.

Another outstanding issue for the Organization is that of Western Sahara, a matter that must not be left unresolved. The lack of action on the part of the United Nations to implement its decisions in the matter is both regrettable and incomprehensible. The people of Saharawi have waited far too long for an opportunity to determine their fate and future. Let this Organization muster the political will and pluck up the courage to do what it decided long ago to do. At 70, the United Nations is old enough and has accumulated enough wisdom and experience to put this matter to rest. Please, let us do it.

On 20 September 2006 I stood at this rostrum (see A/61/PV.13) for the first time and addressed the General Assembly as the newly elected fourth President of my dear country, the United Republic of Tanzania. Today I stand here to bid farewell, as I prepare to leave office upon the completion of my two-term mandate, in accordance with the Tanzanian Constitution. I thank all my colleagues in the Assembly for the invaluable support and cooperation they have extended to me, my Administration and my country over the past 10 years of our work together. Kindly be assured that I will always value each and every contribution. I feel proud to have had the opportunity to work with all Member States to promote the ideals of the United Nations and to contribute to the pursuit of world peace, security, stability and development.

As I take my leave, I would like to assure the Assembly that Tanzania will remain a faithful Member and an unwavering supporter of the United Nations. I am confident that Members will find in my successor a likeable and dependable friend and ally. Please accord him or her — I should add that we have a female candidate for the presidency of Tanzania — the necessary support and cooperation in fulfilling his or her duties and responsibilities.

The road ahead for peace, security and development remains challenging but worth the journey. It requires our renewed resolve and the reaffirmation of our commitment to the ideals, values and principles set down by the founding fathers of the United Nations seven decades ago in San Francisco. All nations, individually and collectively, should endeavour to promote them, as we have been doing for the past 70 years. It can be done. The international community must play its part.

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

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

Address by Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

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

Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 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. Nicolás Maduro Moros, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Maduro Moros (*spoke in Spanish*): We are assembled here in 2015, once again fully aware of the immense struggle of our peoples to arrive at an age of dignity, a time when there will finally be a world that respects the distinct identities of all our peoples. This year, Venezuela celebrates the 200th anniversary of a prophetic document written by our liberator, Simón Bolívar. I am speaking of the letter that he wrote 200 years ago in Kingston, Jamaica, a beautiful island of the Caribbean, at the exact moment when the liberation forces began their ascent from the depths of history after hundreds of years of colonial domination of our lands — today Latin America and the Caribbean. The purpose of that letter was to define the nature of their struggles and outline the path they needed to follow. In it, Simón Bolívar defined the elements of a geopolitical vision for the Americas — a non-imperialist, non-colonialist geopolitical vision that, in twenty-first century terms, we might call anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist. Two hundred years ago, he set down the conceptual lines of the geopolitical thesis we continue to support today to address the need to establish a balanced universe and a world with justice and peace for all. For 200 years we have drawn inspiration from that prophetic letter. And, only a few days ago, here in our common home of humankind, Pope Francis renewed Simón Bolívar's message (see A/70/PV.3), saying that we need a new form of geopolitics, a new approach, a new world, a geopolitical vision based on respect for the different peoples of the world and for their different identities and models; in other words, a policy of coexistence and of peace with justice and

equality. He called for a political approach that rejects the imposition of all forms of hegemony, whether through the threat or use of force, and all attempts at financial, economic, cultural, military and political hegemony.

This year we also celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Those 70 years have sped by, like a fast-forwarded movie, while we undertook the most important search in human history, namely, the search for ways to settle our differences and to build a world that fulfils everyone's hopes, a world without exclusion or discrimination. Humankind has been able to celebrate some successes in those 70 years.

In 1945, the Charter of the United Nations was written in the aftermath of the Second World War. While the tragedy that destroyed half of the planet and took millions of innocent lives was still fresh in everyone's mind, humankind came together to write that Charter and, with it, to spell out its dreams. For 70 years, the Preamble of the Charter has continued to announce emphatically that we the peoples of the United Nations are determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Today, in 2015, we the peoples of the world announce that we are ready to save humankind from the scourges of inequality, poverty, looting and exploitation, which are the true causes of all the wars that we have known.

During those 70 years, we witnessed the birth of a dyadic world — aptly named because of the two factions involved — that, in the form of the Cold War and the resulting real and painful wars, left their mark on the second half of the 1940s and the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Later, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, we saw the emergence of a menacing monadic world that claimed that it had a panacea that could cure all our ills and rid us of false ideologies. In the 1990s, in that world, one way of thinking and one economic model were imposed on us. That was the era of neoliberalism, an era that sowed poverty and extreme need, owing to the privatization of the natural resources and economies of peoples of the South. In general, it sowed misery, sickness and unemployment throughout the world.

A dyadic world characterized by confrontation was succeeded by a monadic world, in which an intolerable situation was inflicted upon us. The dawn of the twenty-first century, thanks to God and thanks to the work of the people, saw the rise of a revolutionary elan in the Venezuelan people, who have, in turn, inspired

the constructive revolution of the peoples of the South, in Latin America and in the Caribbean.

In this new century, the time has finally come to build a multipolar world — a multi-centred world; a world without hegemony; a world of equals; a world in which the other's points of view are respected; a world that acknowledges the weight that should be given to emerging centres of political, economic and cultural power; a world that recognizes the new regionalisms that are gaining in strength in the various parts of the world; a world that ushers in a new era and recognizes the values set down in the inspiring words of the Charter of the United Nations by ensuring that the rights to human dignity, self-determination, independence and life are realized for all peoples.

This multipolar and multi-centred world encompasses major themes. In this Hall, we have listened to the speeches made from this rostrum. Yesterday, we heard the speeches of President Dilma Rousseff, from our brother country, Brazil, and President Barack Obama of the United States of America. We saw President Vladimir Putin shine as one of the most important leaders in the world today. We saw Presidents Xi Jinping, Raúl Castro, Evo Morales Ayma, Rafael Correa, Cristina Fernández. We have followed attentively the discussion of the topics that are the subject of this debate. We have listened to what was said on the issues of war and peace. I believe that today no one in this Hall, or in any other forum, could offer a single word in defence of the unjust wars that have destroyed our brother peoples in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Today, taking inspiration from the rebelling and clarion voice of the people of Venezuela, we need to acknowledge the tragic errors that were committed when our brother nations were invaded, bombed and waged war on. Today, we should acknowledge that the four wars that the world has seen during the past decade and a half have caused major systems within the United Nations to fail. With regard to the war in Afghanistan, we should ask ourselves and our brothers, the people of Afghanistan: did it bring peace? Did it bring stability? Did it bring life to the people of Afghanistan? Or did it bring more misery, destruction and terrorism? The war in Iraq was inspired by manipulation and lies and had only one goal: to conquer Iraq. It had only one objective: to take Iraq's oil and natural riches. Twelve years later, can we say that Iraq is a more united, more peace-filled or more stable country? We should say to those who staged the war in Iraq that once again, through war,

they have failed and caused international politics to fail. And Libya? The words that Commandant Hugo Chávez Frías pronounced in this very Hall are fresh in our memory. He warned of the lies used to justify the bombing and conquest of Libya. Whatever political differences one country may have with another's leadership or Government, it is not entitled, under the Charter of the United Nations or pursuant to any other mandate, to challenge or judge the political authority of that leadership or to overthrow that Government. No one is authorized to do that.

All this is distressing for us. We love the Arab peoples. We admire their ancient culture. We admire the Muslim peoples. Today, it pains me to say what I think is universally acknowledged, that what happened in Libya was a crime. A stable country, which, in its turn, sustained the stability of a score of other North African and African countries, was destroyed. Libya was the founder of the African Union, but what is Libya now? The people of Venezuela are asking if Libya is a more stable country economically and socially? Is it a united country? Is it a country? Is it a country at peace? And who will pay for the crimes in Libya, Iraq and Afghanistan? Who will acknowledge them? And what will happen to Syria? The situation there brings to mind one of those horror films made in Hollywood. The horror in Syria is created by the politics of terror and the terror of war.

With all due modesty and humility, we in Venezuela believe that the United Nations system still has time to prevent a worse tragedy in Syria, a tragedy of even more terrifying and shocking proportions than those that befell Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. Humankind still has time to create a new alliance of peace. We support the proposal put forth by the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Vladimir Putin, on the creation of a new alliance of peace. Venezuela, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, will submit another proposal with a view to protecting the people of Syria and putting up a real fight against the groups that, instigated and financed by the West, have been sowing terror, death and destruction. Humankind must lend its support and assistance to Syria for the salvation of the surrounding region.

Our fellow citizens in Europe would be wrong to believe that they can escape the consequences of the humanitarian tragedy in Syria, or to think that mass exoduses of Syrians will not reach their shores and lands, exerting an impact on the entire European civilization.

The United Nations must wake up and react to the tragedy in Syria. We must learn from the resounding and tragic failure of the four wars I just mentioned and initiate, in the Security Council and the United Nations system, the establishment of a new regulatory system prohibiting the use of interventionist methods to cause war, spread terror and bring destruction and death to peoples declared undesirable or unfriendly by world elites.

We must overcome huge challenges in order to achieve peace. I believe that on this there is general consensus, because we have heard even President Obama say that there is no development without peace. We have heard that the philosophy of peace has been gaining ground among major world leaders. Only peace can guarantee the viability of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), a noble plan for making progress towards achieving equality and overcoming poverty. Only peace can guarantee the viability of development in international relations on our planet. There are therefore huge challenges facing the United Nations system.

A new regionalist approach is being developed in Latin America. This is good news for our Latin American and Caribbean region. In recent years, Latin America has rediscovered the path to unity and independence, to unity in diversity and to a common search. Today, in 2015, we can justifiably say here at the United Nations that Latin America has been consolidating the strength of its new communities. At their historic Summit in Havana, the Latin American and Caribbean States declared Latin America a zone of peace. The path of our region is heading in that direction. Subregional bodies, such as Petrocaribe and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, and powerful subregional bodies that operate collectively, such as the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), have created a new reality on our continent. We still have one armed conflict to settle: the 60-year-old internal war and conflict in Colombia. On behalf of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, we congratulate Colombia on the welcome steps taken by President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón in order to make progress towards a conclusive peace agreement with the guerrillas of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia. Venezuela is betting heavily on the strengthening of the path of peace in Colombia — that Colombia which was the beautiful dream of our Liberator and the fine creation of our liberators.

In addition, Latin America is speaking with one voice. We will demonstrate this once again on 28 October. President Raúl Castro Ruz and our comrade Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla have announced that the issue of the embargo of the United States against Cuba will be discussed by the General Assembly on 28 October. We acknowledge the steps taken in 2015 for the normalization and regularization of relations, based on respect between the Government of President Barack Obama and the Government of President Raúl Castro Ruz, between the United States of America and Cuba.

We say to the United States Government that we look forward to the day when the relations of its Government with all the Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean enjoy the same treatment in terms of dialogue, respect and recognition as Cuba receives today. We are waiting for the United States to turn the page on a history of interventionism and coups d'état, and of attempts to disrupt revolutionary processes, as occurred in Venezuela and with the long hostility towards Cuba, which lasted for 56 years and consisted of the embargo and economic and financial persecution. That history must not be repeated. The financial and economic blockade and the persecution suffered by Cuba must end as soon as possible.

Just as President Jimmy Carter in 1979 signed the agreement to return the sovereignty of the Panama Canal to the Panamanians, we hope that soon the United States will return the Guantanamo Base and territory to the Cuban people, who have historically been its owners.

The good news is possible only because of the perseverance of the Cuban people and their proud and rebellious spirit, which, like the beauty of Cuba, has remained resilient throughout all these years of struggle. It has also been possible, we must admit, because of the courage of President Barack Obama in assuming a new policy towards Cuba.

In the same spirit, we support and echo the appeal of the Latin American and Caribbean nations to the Government of the United Kingdom to decide sooner rather than later that it will sit down and negotiate, in accordance with international law and via peaceful diplomacy and understanding, the right of Argentina to the Malvinas Islands, South Sandwich and the rest of the surrounding islands that, beyond a shadow of a doubt, historically belong to Argentina. It is an appeal made

by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77 and China, and all who support peaceful diplomacy, dialogue and communication. It is an appeal that must be answered.

Venezuela has been facing significant challenges in recent years in its endeavour to create an eminently Venezuelan social, economic and political model, an endeavour inspired by the doctrine of Liberator Simón Bolívar. It has chosen the human option in the battle that our brother President Evo Morales Ayma referred to yesterday (see A/70/PV.15) and the option that Pope Francis described as eminently humanistic (see A/70/PV.3). Venezuela has opted to build a new society — the socialist society. It is a twenty-first-century socialist revolution that joins such other revolutions of independence in Latin America as those in Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua. Venezuela is on the same path as the historic Cuban revolution and is following the example of Commander Fidel Castro Ruz, President Raúl Castro Ruz and the Cuban people.

Our people have waged a great battle while facing domestic and foreign conspiracies. Recently, we had to deal with major conspiracies and grave attacks. Earlier this year, we had to have a public debate on a threatening executive order issued, on 9 March, by President Barack Obama, which declared Venezuela an unusual and extraordinary threat to the people of the United States. I think that the debate at the Summit of the Americas in Panama in April accurately clarified the real meaning of the thinking underlying the order. The statement of President Obama recognizing that Venezuela was a country of peace and is not and never has been a threat to the United States is a very positive step. However, I must say, as Head of State and Government, it is not enough. The order issued on 9 March must be repealed and annulled, because it is a threat to my homeland and my country. We have initiated talks with the Government of the United States, in the same spirit in which Cuba initiated a respectful dialogue and communication, so that sooner rather than later we can remove the sword of Damocles — the order of 9 March — that hangs above the heads of the Venezuelan people.

This year also, as we reported nationally and internationally, Venezuela had to use peaceful diplomacy to lift the threat of conflicts along our border. I reported, and I do so respectfully now in the General Assembly, a pincer operation aimed at causing conflicts along the borders with Colombia and

with our sister Republic of Guyana. A week ago, we were in Quito, summoned by CELAC and UNASUR, and together with President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, we were able to define a way of clearing the provocations, threats and attacks by paramilitaries and drug traffickers against Venezuela. That is being done, and I am now able to say that I have strong hopes that we will be able to complete the process and then restore normal working relations and communications with the Government of Colombia.

Similarly, with the new Government of Guyana, there were a number of issues that needed to be resolved within the regional framework. I want to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for answering the call of Venezuela and convening a meeting on Sunday, 27 September, the day of the blood moon and the eclipse. While the blood moon was rising, we met with the President of Guyana, Mr. David Granger. Again, I am glad to say that peaceful diplomacy prevailed and allowed us to successfully take steps in connection with a historical claim that Venezuela has had since 1835.

The Bolivarian Revolution of Venezuela therefore will continue to address the threats and difficult circumstances with Bolivarian peaceful diplomacy, a diplomacy that enables us, by means of dialogue and communication, to resolve the various threats to and problems of the Venezuelan people.

Venezuela is shortly to hold parliamentary elections — the twentieth in 15 years of revolution. In the previous elections, the revolutionary, independent and Bolivarian forces, inspired by our Commander Chávez, won 18 of the victories. We are heading into the parliamentary elections. Everything is prepared once again. Former United States President Jimmy Carter once said that the Venezuelan electoral system was the most transparent and comprehensive electoral system he had ever seen. It will enable our people to express their will in the elections on 6 December.

Mr. Alyemany (Yemen), Vice-President, took the Chair.

I urge the world to be very attentive to any attempt to interfere with the political process in Venezuela. Venezuela is willing to continue its course along the active and participatory democratic path. It is the path prescribed by our Constitution and adopted by our people in 1999. It is a path of peace. The Bolivarian people have an eminently democratic, popular and peaceful nature. Therefore, this year we will

undoubtedly continue to demonstrate and strengthen the independence and dignity that characterize the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Two hundred years after the prophetic letter in Kingston was written, we wish here to say aloud, forcefully and with dignity, that we endorse the appeal for a different United Nations and a radical reform of the system created 70 years ago. We venture to say, as Bolívar did, that the world needs a new, balanced and respectful geopolitics that strengthens the new regionalism. Most of all, the world needs to listen to the people. We very much hope that, in 15 years' time, in 2030, when the next cycle of the 2030 Agenda will be drawing to an end — the Agenda to promote equality and life and to eliminate poverty — we will be able to celebrate a new policy of peace, the rebuilding of the towns that have been destroyed by the unfair imperialist wars, and a new regulatory system with which the United Nations can quell attempts to impose hegemony by those who think they have the right to rule other peoples. I very much hope that in 2030 we will be able to build and rebuild this marvellous institution that was born 70 years ago with a dream of peace, which is our dream today. Long live peace!

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

Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia

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

Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Johnson-Sirleaf: On this auspicious occasion, the seventieth anniversary of the United

Nations, I am honoured to address the Assembly on behalf of the Government and people of Liberia. I congratulate the President on his election to preside over the Assembly, and I appreciate the stewardship of his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, who ably conducted the Assembly's affairs at the sixty-ninth session.

This year has registered ground-breaking developments. After 50 years, the United States and Cuba have decided to resolve differences by establishing diplomatic relations. Another milestone was the adoption here, a few days ago, of the post-2015 development agenda, "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (resolution 70/1), by which we committed to implementing measures to transform the lives of our peoples — to lift them from poverty to prosperity — and to preserve the planet. It was this same vision that, 70 years ago, motivated the founding of this global organization to promote peaceful coexistence, economic and social advancement of all peoples, respect for human dignity, and equal rights of men and women and nations large and small. I am proud to say that Liberia was among the founding Members of the United Nations.

The creation of the United Nations came out of a realization that only a global organization, through the support and cooperation of the comity of nations, would be suitable to grapple with the many challenges facing humankind. Today, a reduction in inter-State conflict and cooperation in the protection and promotion of human rights and in alleviating global poverty, disease and hunger are the hallmarks of this body. On the other hand, increased intra-State conflicts and international terrorism are seeking to undermine the gains made in reducing human suffering. Protracted and intense conflicts in various parts of the world pose serious threats to global peace and security.

Thus new and emerging challenges call the United Nations to action. Despite commendable efforts, Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Europe still have vortexes of conflict. Migrants and people seeking refuge from conflicts and economic hardship are swirling across Europe. We are haunted by the growing threats of destabilizing forces, such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS), and by attempts to reverse democratic initiatives, such as that in Burkina Faso, which invoked an immediate and decisive response from the Economic Community of West African States.

Climate conditions are changing, and so must we. In many countries of the world, women are still being treated as second-class citizens. As Liberia bears painful witness, weak public-health systems in individual countries threaten global health and well-being. It is not beyond this body to find answers and to respond, and we know that we must. We feel compelled to ask if, at 70, our world Organization is hindered today by inflexible structures and overburdened by bureaucracies. Is the current structure of the United Nations fit for purpose — to play its role in the global transformation processes over the next 15 years? We are encouraged by the introspection that is taking place at the United Nations around these questions.

We commend the foresight of the Secretary-General in directing a comprehensive review of peace operations, which is complemented by a review of the Organization's peacebuilding architecture and a global study on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women's participation in peace processes. After the completion of these reviews, we expect implementation to bring further improvements. Liberia can attest, with gratitude, to the nature of United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding functions, which are critical and indispensable for post-conflict countries.

This year, we marked the twentieth anniversary of the historic Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, and its Platform for Action for women's empowerment and gender equality. We are also marking the fifteenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), on women's participation in peace processes. And while improvements have been made in the status of women, much more remains to be done. We must therefore all step up and take further measures, going beyond moralizing gender equality to tangible actions. In 70 years only three women have served as President of the General Assembly — one of them, many years ago, being our compatriot, Mrs. Angie Brooks Randolph. Only a few women have served or are serving as special representative of the Secretary-General, and not a single woman has ever served as Secretary-General.

As we ponder, in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, the three countries worst hit by the deadly Ebola virus disease, we bear witness to the foundational creed of the United Nations that we can always find it within our humanity to respond even to unknown enemies to our collective progress. Accordingly, we remain grateful to the international community for the outpouring of

support and assistance as we faced down the deadly disease, the greatest modern threat to global public health. We thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who — in partnership with our countries and with support from the African Development Bank, the African Union, the European Union and the World Bank — hosted the International Ebola Recovery Conference to focus attention on, and seek support for, our post-Ebola recovery programmes.

The Ebola scourge undoubtedly leaves indelible marks of grief, sorrow and unimaginable affliction. But it has also caused us to celebrate heartwarming tales of extraordinary courage and leadership across Governments and communities, as well as exceptional regional and international responses. We are now proceeding with implementation of our post-Ebola economic stabilization and recovery plan, with expectations of support from our bilateral and multilateral partners for a regionally approved post-Ebola recovery strategy that the three Mano River Union countries affected have formulated.

We are determined to address our development losses, including by rebuilding better and more resilient health and education systems. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, adopted in April, offers pathways to various forms of financing, capacity-building and technological exchange in support of our pursuit of our development objectives. We must now forge genuine partnerships in order to move ahead on the road to strengthening peace and security, human rights, socioeconomic development and environmental sustainability. We stand firm in our political will to meet any challenge to our commitment to leaving no one behind.

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

Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia

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

Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Lungu: I would like to begin by thanking the Secretary-General and by expressing my gratitude for the convening of this important session, at which we mark the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. I am confident that, coming as he does from the great country of Denmark, he will preside over our meetings with great success. I would also like to pay tribute to His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa of the Republic of Uganda for successfully presiding over the Assembly at its previous session.

I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to deliver my first address to this gathering of world leaders. I should recall that, almost a year ago, my country found itself at a crossroads following the demise, on 28 October 2014, of our fifth President, Mr. Michael Chilufya Sata — may his soul rest in peace. I was elected President of the Republic of Zambia in the subsequent election, which took place on 20 January. Building on my country's impeccable record in the area of democracy and good governance, the election was described as transparent, peaceful, free and fair, reflecting our commitment to internationally accepted standards for peaceful changes of Government and popular participation in shaping a country's destiny. I would therefore like to thank the people of Zambia for being true champions of democracy. As we meet today, I also feel duty bound to thank the international community for its unflinching solidarity during that very challenging time of the past year.

This year is an important one for the General Assembly, as we commemorate the 70 years of existence of the United Nations. In our deliberations, therefore, it is imperative that we take stock of the collective successes as well as the challenges of the past seven decades, in order to improve the performance of this noble Organization. I am optimistic that the seventieth session will set a tone for the future and meet the expectations of the international community

as a whole. Zambia is proud to be part of the global endeavour to foster the mandate of the United Nations to promote peace, security and respect for human rights and to ensure progress in development for all. We are concerned, however, that the gears for advancing the three pillars of the Charter of the United Nations are moving at a very slow pace, which has the potential to negate the gains we have achieved so far. It is therefore important that we enhance our concerted efforts to address areas of concern.

We have just adopted the world's quintessential development blueprint in the form of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), centred on humankind, the environment and the creation of peaceful societies. Those core elements will guide its implementation, supported by the principle of leaving no one behind. I have been encouraged by the focus on development that has characterized the global discourse in recent years, as the 2030 Agenda has evolved. The development lessons of the Millennium Development Goals and the cumulative experience of the 70 years of the United Nations should serve as a springboard for our ambitions. Let us therefore ensure the successful implementation and attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). I am confident that the invaluable lessons learned will set us on a trajectory that must inevitably lead to a safer, more inclusive, cleaner and more prosperous world.

In the 70 years of the existence of the United Nations, the inequality gap among and between nations has continued to widen, as poverty and youth unemployment have threatened the prospects for peace, security and development. My Government looks forward to the comprehensive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which promotes poverty eradication and the creation of employment opportunities for young people and women, especially in rural communities.

Over the past 70 years, the global community has become more united than ever before in its quest to push boundaries in order to attain peace and security; yet it is as divided as ever, if not more so, on the question of who makes decisions on global peace and security. The 70 years of the existence of the United Nations have seen more conflicts in Africa than on any other continent, and yet those 70 years have been characterized by Africa's absolute exclusion from decision-making in the Security Council, despite the fact that a significant part of the Council's agenda

concerns the African continent. In the 70 years of the existence of the United Nations, Africa remains the only continent not represented among the permanent members of the Security Council. Goal 10 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) on reducing inequality among countries will not be achieved without eradicating the inequality among countries in the Security Council. The United Nations must, therefore, redouble its efforts to implement Security Council reform in order to ensure that Africa can take its rightful place among the community of nations and contributes equitably and effectively to global peace and security.

Zambia has continued and will continue to offer its resources for peacekeeping, including the deployment earlier this year of a large contingent of troops to the Central African Republic. Zambia comes with a long history of involvement in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. As a landlocked country, our independence was incomplete as long as we remained surrounded by nations still fighting their liberation struggles. That gave impetus to our moral conviction to join in the liberation struggles in Africa. Since then, Zambia has continued to participate in peacebuilding initiatives and has supported peacekeeping efforts all around the world. We continue to share the global concerns at the unrelenting threats of terrorism, as it mostly affects the safety of non-combatants and civilian populations.

I have been encouraged by the focus on development that has characterized global discourse during the past year, notably through discussions on the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Zambia has been a beneficiary of various initiatives aimed at facilitating the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, which arose from the collective resolve of the generation of world leaders at the turn of the millennium. Indeed, most of our countries have continued to face serious challenges in the quest to foster development and improve the quality of life of our people. The challenges are numerous, including energy shortages and the effects of climate change. The two are inseparable on the development agenda for countries such as Zambia that rely heavily on hydropower generation.

The changing rainfall pattern has adversely affected power-generation capacities in most of our countries. This year, Zambia is experiencing an unprecedented energy crisis, which has already cost

the nation dearly in terms of productivity, jobs and revenue. Beyond the economic limitations, the social ramifications are equally devastating to the country. It is therefore important that much effort be exerted to develop mitigation strategies to counter the effects of climate change. Furthermore, developing countries are still grappling with other challenges, such as poverty, high unemployment — particularly among the youth — skewed industrial development, low intraregional trade, inadequate infrastructure, low productivity in agriculture and livestock, poor quality health services and the challenges of access to quality education.

As we move forward, it is important for us to acknowledge the realities and imperatives of the world today and to renew our common resolve to sustain the core principles of our Organization as the United Nations. We should redouble our efforts, by harnessing our individual strengths in order to collectively address the rather complex challenges that confront us in our increasingly globalized and interdependent world.

Given the demographic nature of our communities, poverty remains a real concern, particularly in rural areas. In Zambia, 70 per cent of the people in rural areas depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Agriculture is one of my Government's priority areas in the county's efforts to diversify the economy, apart from mining. The Government is therefore devising interventions aimed at improving capacities and adding value for both subsistence farmers and commercial farmers. Our interventions, notably the Farmer Input Support Programme, the Irrigation Development and Support Project, and other credit schemes, need additional support in order to exploit the full potential of that giant industry. We also seek to strengthen partnerships to enable the improvement of services in such areas as providing extension services, improving access to market information and facilitating the physical transfer of produce to markets.

A key element of Zambia's development agenda is industrialization. In that regard, my Government has devised measures to encourage and support the development of appropriate industries, mainly in value-added industries, in order to spur structural economic transformation and increase private-sector participation. The primary focus in that area has been on areas with more backward and forward linkages so as to catapult the Zambian economy to higher levels of growth, leveraging regional value chains so as to

expand trade, attract foreign direct investment, create employment, reduce poverty, promote sustainable development and thereby empower our people.

Financing is one of the major challenges that faces developing countries. We need external resources to bridge the gap in the funds required to finance development projects. It is in that light that the United Nations third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa in July to develop strategies for financing development, was most welcome. The Conference recommended several measures meant to bridge the financing gap, including the need to exploit new sources of finance and improve tax administration systems, which would be supplemented by international support. We know that putting the appropriate infrastructure in place is very important in our quest to expand intra-Africa trade, bolster our productive capacities and enhance Africa's competitiveness in the global market. In that regard, we must quickly identify sources to raise the \$100 billion Africa needs annually to finance its infrastructure development.

It is equally important, from the perspective of landlocked developing countries, to remain committed to implementing the decisions of the 2014 Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024. In keeping with that commitment, Zambia was privileged to host a high-level meeting on the follow-up to the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, held in Livingstone in June. I was honoured to officiate at the Conference and hope that the Assembly finds the time to review the outcome document, entitled "Livingstone Call for Action".

Special attention should be paid to gender and women's empowerment. The International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014 Global Review Report, published in June 2013, indicates that 35 per cent of women have been victims of gender-based violence. Indeed, Zambia acknowledges that the problem extends to most nations, including our own. To that end, we are already implementing important interventions to curb that scourge. Our approach to development will not be limited to the economy but will continue to focus on all pillars of development. I welcome the fact that our traditional leaders, the United Nations system and civil society have all been seamlessly working with Governments in fighting for gender equality for our women and girls.

One of the most important programmes, and one in which I have been engaged as a designated champion, is the "He For She" campaign, which seeks to address issues of gender-based violence. That project was initiated by UN-Women in September 2014 with the aim of addressing incidents of gender-based violence. In a few days, my Government will also launch the United States-supported "From Boys to Men" project, which targets the 15-to-21-year-old age group and is aimed at encouraging the development of a non-violent generation. In our determination to bridge the gap between the sexes, a vigorous campaign is under way to strengthen the education of girls by encouraging them to complete their schooling and unlock their developmental potential instead of being pushed into child-, early or forced marriages.

The situation of our young people remains daunting, with unemployment one of the major challenges they face. To address that situation, my Government recently launched a national youth policy that seeks to lay a foundation for interventions of various kinds aimed at supporting the development of a vibrant and productive generation. We hope to create 500,000 jobs over the next five years, an effort that will depend heavily on the private-sector-led job market. We are also making efforts to address the specific social disadvantages of the most marginalized members of our society, including the disabled. We want to ensure that they can realize their potential and serve in national development efforts in the same way as anyone else.

The challenges are many, but they are not insurmountable. The United Nations has been a key ally in addressing some of those problems, and indeed, to a large extent, the story of Zambia is the story of the United Nations. I am confident that through our concerted and collective efforts, determination and hard work, coupled with able and visionary leadership, we shall indeed overcome. I look forward to working with everyone here so as to ensure that our shared solutions are brought forward and implemented in the spirit of this Organization.

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

Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, President of the Republic of Estonia

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

Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, President of the Republic of Estonia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, President of the Republic of Estonia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Ilves: When I addressed the Assembly last year (see A/69/PV.8), foremost on our minds was the state of European and global security. The blatant violation of international law in connection with the occupation of Ukrainian territory that we witnessed in the spring of 2014 triggered a profound change in the global security situation. A year later, we are still adapting to that altered, more unpredictable state of affairs. As we continue to tackle global challenges, including terrorism, climate change, poverty and human rights violations, the number of conflicts and crises worldwide continues to grow.

We also witnessed a positive development recently. Let us hope that the historic agreement on Iran's nuclear programme will pave the way for greater stability in the broader Middle East. It is a region where conflicts in Syria and Libya have led to the radicalization of an ever greater number of people and to the emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). It poses a serious threat to peace and security in Syria, Iraq and the broader Middle East. ISIL violates universal human values. No country is immune to the threat that it poses. Stopping ISIL and other terrorist organizations requires a global effort. Estonia supports the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, and we believe that the United Nations and the Global Counterterrorism Forum also have an important role to play there.

The ongoing crises and conflicts, including in Syria and Libya, have also led to the current refugee crisis in Europe. While Europe's refugee crisis has been in the international headlines in recent months, the problem itself is obviously wider and more global. According to United Nations statistics, one in every 122 persons is now either a refugee, an asylum seeker abroad or an

internally displaced person in his or her home country. Worldwide, 42,000 people flee their homes every day. Never before have there been so many people forced to be on the move. The civil war in Syria alone has created more than 4 million refugees. The majority of them have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, which have borne by far the greatest burden. But many refugees have opted to take the dangerous route across the Mediterranean and have ended up in Europe. There were 600,000 asylum seekers in Europe in 2014, and there will be far more this year.

I am also extremely worried about the rising support that we are witnessing for far-right and far-left political movements in Europe, often fuelled by anti-immigrant, racist statements that threaten the liberal-democratic base of our continent that has allowed us to live in prosperity since the Second World War. Short-sighted populist policies exploiting the fears of ordinary people will lead nowhere.

The European Union (EU) is the main donor in the effort to alleviate the Syrian refugee crisis. Approximately €4 billion has been mobilized by the European Commission and EU member States for humanitarian, development, economic and stabilization assistance to Syrian internally displaced persons and refugees. And more efforts are being planned, including an African trust fund. The aim is to shift the focus from dealing with the consequences of the migration crisis to dealing with its root causes. But this truly biblical movement of people demands a global response.

We not only have the responsibility to bring peace and stability to Syria and Libya but also to put an end to the aggression against Ukraine. Compared to what it was a year ago, the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine is less intense, but daily fighting continues. Crimea remains illegally occupied. Those responsible for the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 are still at large. The attempts to obstruct justice on that matter are deeply disturbing. The long-standing protracted conflicts in Georgia, Moldova and Nagorno Karabakh remain unresolved. Dialogue and diplomatic efforts to find a solution to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict must continue. A solution to the conflict must, however, not come at the expense of the principles that underpin European and global security. We must continue to stand up for the international agreements that we have collectively agreed upon — the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris for a New Europe — and demand that they be honoured

and enforced. We must continue to stand up to attempts to divide countries and establish spheres of influence.

As the number of conflicts and crises worldwide grows, respect for human rights has become more important than ever. We must uphold universal values and stop massive violations of human rights and crimes against humanity, regardless of who or what caused them. As stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, human rights apply to everyone without exception.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform of Action, which have influenced how we address equality and women's rights today. We need to continuously stand for the rights of women and girls and strive for the elimination of gender-based violence. Women's rights and the empowerment of women and girls must be promoted at all levels. I welcome the 2015 high-level review and global study on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and hope that it will provide us with a new impetus to move forward on those issues. We must advance global actions linked to the welfare of children by investing in their education and health, as well as by keeping them away from armed conflicts.

An active and dynamic civil society is a precondition for prosperity. A free press, the freedom of speech and the freedom of conscience are the cornerstones of any open society. In an era of so-called multiple narratives, we must pay tribute to those activists, journalists and bloggers who risk their lives to expose the truth.

This year, the Human Rights Council established a mandate on the right to privacy. Journalists, bloggers, human rights activists and many others living under authoritarian regimes have urged their Governments to stop the arbitrary or unlawful interference with their privacy. They have called on their Governments to stop taking over their emails, closing their blogs and applying censorship. Unfortunately, the situation concerning the right to privacy and the freedom of expression has worsened during the past several years. Governments must protect the right to privacy, as stated in articles 2, 17 and 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Any interference with privacy must be lawful and reasonable. At the same time, the right to the freedom of expression must be guaranteed. Estonia has high expectations with regard to the new mandate.

This is a crucial year for global action against poverty and for promoting sustainable development.

I welcome the historic agreement reached on the Sustainable Development Goals in the form of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Action (resolution 70/1). National Governments can play a key role in creating an environment conducive to sustainable development. The promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies, the respect for human rights, gender equality, the rule of law and good governance, as well as environmental sustainability, are central to the new global partnership. Economic growth is, assuredly, important, but must not come at the expense of the environment. The twenty-first session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held soon in Paris, should reach an agreement that promotes those goals.

The smart use of the Internet and digital technologies can be essential drivers for economic growth and development. We need strong public policies so that the digital era can become a genuine success and a motor of development for each country and each member of society. That requires a stable, predictable legal environment that encourages foreign investment and competition. We also need an educational system that teaches the necessary new skills, and we need an accessible Internet and Internet freedom. Those are steps that only Governments can provide.

Ninety per cent of the people without access to the Internet live in the developing world. Bridging the digital divide among and within countries — across borders, gender, income and age — is essential for a contemporary digital economy. In 2016, the Internet itself will become the world's fifth-largest economy, behind only those of the United States, China, Japan and India. It is time for world leaders to place the potential of digital technologies at the top of the development agenda. I am personally glad to co-chair the advisory panel for the upcoming World Bank *World Development Report 2016*. That report, entitled "Digital Dividends", examines how the Internet can be a force for development and asks, importantly, what is required to unlock the still largely unrealized potential of digital technologies.

Adherence to the principle of the rule of law is an essential cornerstone of peace and security. Estonia strongly supports the International Criminal Court (ICC) in its activities, including its quest to end impunity. We call on all countries that have not yet done so to join the Rome Statute of the ICC. We also urge all States parties to join in the ratification of the outcome documents of

the Review Conference of the Rome Statute of the ICC. The responsibility to provide accountability is, first and foremost, a domestic task. It is therefore essential that States build their national capacities to investigate and prosecute serious international crimes. Estonia has provided development cooperation resources to assist countries in their national implementation of the Rome Statute, and we encourage other States parties to act in a similar manner.

Under the first pillar of the responsibility to protect, all States Members of the United Nations commit to protect their people from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the responsibility to protect, I reiterate our support for that principle, and call on the international community to make a renewed commitment to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The Security Council bears primary responsibility in that regard. Unfortunately, in the most serious situations, the Security Council has failed to act owing to the abuse of the veto. It is disappointing that in cases such as those of Syria and Ukraine, Council debates have brought no result. Council members must not vote against actions aimed at preventing and stopping mass atrocities. We therefore support the initiatives of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group and of France and Mexico on the non-use of the veto in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes or other atrocities.

Security Council reform clearly needs to become a reality. United Nations reform, which Estonia strongly supports, is not only about the Security Council. We see this seventieth anniversary of the United Nations as a good opportunity to make progress on reform. As a member of the ACT group, Estonia is eager to increase transparency in the process of the election of the next Secretary-General. I am glad that some ACT proposals have already contributed to making the process more transparent. For the first time in the history of the United Nations, an agreement has emerged to the effect that the election process, the lists of candidates and informal meetings should begin in a concrete way. I hope for close cooperation between the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council to that end.

Let me stress the importance of taking responsibility. We are being assaulted by an avalanche of problems. It is especially important that we adhere to our values and

stand by our commitments. Only then will the concepts of human rights, equality, democracy and international law acquire meaning. Only if we uphold those values will we be able to surmount the turbulent times in which we find ourselves today.

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

Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, President of the Republic of Estonia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Danilo Medina Sánchez, President of the Dominican Republic

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

Mr. Danilo Medina Sánchez, President of the Dominican Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Danilo Medina Sánchez, President of the Dominican Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Medina Sánchez (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour to participate once again in the work of the General Assembly as a representative of the people and the Government of the Dominican Republic. At the outset, I would like to welcome and congratulate Mr. Mogens Lykketoft on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session.

This anniversary gives us the opportunity to put in perspective what the Organization has meant for humankind. It was established 70 years ago as the fruit of the worst horrors of war and as the first global forum created to preserve peace, coexistence and the well-being of all human beings. It is true that the United Nations was born of the wounds, pain and fear left by the great conflicts of the twentieth century, but it also arose from the unstoppable force of hope and the iron will of great men and women who believed in dialogue, solidarity and the grandeur of the human race.

Although we still have far to go and although immense challenges remain, the Organization continues to represent the values that inspire us day

after day. Over the past 12 months, the international community has experienced difficult challenges, but it has also witnessed encouraging events that we would do well to recall. We witnessed the reopening of embassies between the United States and Cuba, which brings us closer to the day when that sad, decades-long conflict will finally come to rest in the history books. We are also putting the final touches on a renewed commitment to global development, which is enshrined in the post-2015 development agenda in the form of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). At the same time, the industrialized nations have finally taken a decisive and resolute step forward to combat climate change. We welcome their political will, for which we have been calling for some time, because we believe it represents an act of responsibility and justice that heralds a more equitable model for the distribution of responsibilities between rich and poor nations.

The post-2015 development Agenda provides an excellent opportunity for us to focus on our most central priority and the greatest enemy of sustainable development, namely, inequality. The fight against inequality is the point of departure for solving the majority of the global challenges, yet it remains our main unfinished task throughout the world, especially in Latin America. If we review our achievements, we see a landscape filled with light and shadow, one that offers grounds for rejoicing but also one that prompts urgent calls to action. On the one hand, Latin America, after Asia, is the region with the largest middle class, with more than 130 million people projected to attain that status by 2030, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

However, along with sub-Saharan Africa, it is also the most unequal region in the world. Even today, the wealthiest 10 per cent of Latin Americans receive 32 per cent of the region's income, while the poorest 40 per cent receive only 15 per cent. So, despite our efforts to combat poverty, it remains excessive and is aggravated by great inequality. As the excellent 2014 study by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), entitled "Instability and inequality", points out, greater equality with growth requires two profound changes — first, in our structure of production, and secondly, in our structure of distribution. In other words, growth is as necessary for equality as equality is for growth. To put it even more clearly, we need both a responsible productive sector that

guarantees wealth creation across all layers of society and an active, effective State to ensure the redistribution of wealth and the creation of opportunities.

However, if we look at the current structure of the productive mechanisms of the countries of Latin America, we have to acknowledge the differences within that structure. In other words, we need to recognize that at least three levels of development exist simultaneously in each country. On our journey towards progress, we not only ride in different cars and in different classes, but on different rails, which means that we move forward at radically different speeds. According to a recent study of 18 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean that was conducted by ECLAC and the German Agency for International Cooperation, our region operates a high-speed rail system, as it were, which connects modern global businesses to international trade and accounts for 60 per cent of gross domestic product but only 20 per cent of jobs; a medium-speed rail, which prevails in the middle income countries, accounting for 22.5 per cent of gross domestic product and 30 per cent of jobs; and finally, a rail that serves micro-businesses and the informal economy, which together bring in only 10.5 per cent of wealth but account for 50 per cent of jobs. That makes it impossible for everyone to benefit and participate proportionally in growth.

As the ECLAC study makes clear, what we have is a structural factory for inequality, which means that major changes will be needed to correct our path and enable everyone to advance at the same rate. We need to change the structure of production, shatter the old ways and move ahead together to a model that will benefit everyone, big and small. To begin with, it is essential that the "middle way" be promoted in particular. Public policies must help to ensure that small and medium-sized enterprises have better access to credit and are more competitive, productive and innovative. Small and medium-sized enterprises must also become actors in globalization, finding their proper place in the production chains. In that way they will be able to provide not just more jobs, but proper jobs, high-quality jobs, and they will be able to hire an increasingly well-trained labour force.

Along with the necessary changes in the structure of our economies, the State should be the second pillar of the fight against inequality. We have to reassert the role of the State as an effective redistributor of wealth, as a creator of opportunities and as a defender of the rights of all citizens.

Let us remember the counterexample of what happened in the 1980s, during the so-called lost decade. Poverty increased to cover almost half of the Latin American population. The austerity policy that many States opted for further aggravated the situation and slowed the recovery. In the next decade, the 1990s, the recovery began, and there was major progress in key areas, such as education. That yielded fruit in 2002, when a labour force that was better educated than their parents was finally able to finally benefit from an expanding economy and higher wages.

Since then, the Gini index on income inequality has dropped by 5 per cent. That shows clearly that social policies are essential, along with changes in productivity and improvements in the labour market. We cannot continue looking at the relationship between economic policies and social policies as an unresolvable conflict. Rather, we have to tackle both aspects at the same time and move in the same direction to reduce inequality. Only in that way can we deal with problems that seem to be endemic, but that actually derive in large measure from the disproportionate allocation of available resources.

Look at what has been happening to our youth. Today, this generation of young people has received more years of schooling than anybody else in our history. And yet, they have higher rates of unemployment and only part-time work. Another paradox is that, although they have more years of schooling, only one third of poor students, according to tests, meet the minimum reading competency levels. In parallel, the increasing automation of work means that soon, instead of choosing between skilled and unskilled jobs, it will be a question of skilled jobs or simply unemployment. Therefore, if we do not want that scenario to continue perpetuating exclusion, we have no other option than to make a firm commitment to quality education. And we have to do that in a serious way. The Dominican Republic is trying to improve the quality of its educational system, and we are also trying to achieve the necessary changes to make our economy grow in equality, so that our State can be active in supporting its people.

Inequality is the root cause of many of the challenges that we face globally, including violence and insecurity, which particularly afflict Latin America and the Caribbean. Ours is the only region where the homicide rate has increased over the past 15 years. There is a lot of discussion about the relationship between violence and inequality. Recent studies show that a 1 per cent

increase in the Gini index leads to a similar rise in the homicide rate. And though it may sound harsh to describe that terrible tragedy in economic terms, we cannot fail to note that the impact of violence on people and goods costs us 14.2 per cent of the gross domestic product in the Latin American region. At the same time, inequality is also a breeding ground for transnational crime and drug trafficking, which are recruiting young people at an increasingly early age and robbing them of future opportunities.

Therefore, one of the tasks facing us at the international level is to rethink our policies on how to combat drugs. As members of the Assembly know, next year the special session on the world drug problem will take place, at the request of Mexico, Guatemala and Colombia. We hope that, by the time that session is held, the idea that drugs constitute a problem that affects only some countries will have been dismissed for good. The tens of thousands of people killed in the so-called war on drug trafficking in Latin America and the Caribbean cannot be regarded as collateral damage. It is a humanitarian disaster that is due too often to policies that have been badly designed and/or are poorly implemented. We need to change our focus and reach a new, more updated and realistic international consensus that leaves room for national Governments to design policies suited to their circumstances, as some countries represented here are already doing.

In conclusion, may I return to the more optimistic note on which I began. The international community, represented here in the General Assembly, has made historic progress. Although we know that much remains to be done, the balance of what has been achieved in terms of the Millennium Development Goals shows that we can move ahead when we focus our efforts properly. Our experience in the Dominican Republic shows that having a clear agenda and a common course is the only way to move forward rapidly. We have therefore prepared our post-2015 development agenda, which leads us to propose a major partnership between the private sector, civil society and Government so that the change can be lasting and sustainable. We believe that when the political will exists, no challenge is too great. I have no doubt that we can find the will to overcome the challenges before us.

The post-2015 agenda provides the opportunity to focus our efforts on the roots of the problems. The time is now. The responsibility is ours. From now on, let us work to create countries with equal opportunities

for and access to development for all our citizens. We are working for equality and solidarity and for a fair distribution of the resources of this planet that we share.

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

Mr. Danilo Medina Sánchez, President of the Dominican Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Her Excellency Mrs. Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania

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

Mrs. Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Mrs. Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Grybauskaitė: The seventieth anniversary of the United Nations offers us an opportunity to renew our commitments to the ideals and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Today, those ideals and principles are threatened in so many ways around the globe. We are witnessing the largest displacement of people since the Second World War. As of last year, nearly 60 million people were displaced by war, conflict or persecution. Violent extremism is on the rise, with terrorist groups demonstrating new levels of brutality and barbarity. In the twenty-first century, women and girls are sold in slave markets by the criminals of Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) and abused in unspeakable ways. We have entered an era where the most primitive and brutal executions coexist with the most sophisticated information warfare, hybrid warfare and cyberwarfare.

The Charter of the United Nations has been breached in the middle of Europe, with no consequences. Last year, Russia annexed Crimea, and the Kremlin seeks to rewrite history and redraw the borders of post-war Europe. Even in the context of the multiple crises and security challenges the world is facing today,

the annexation of Crimea and military aggression in eastern Ukraine stand out because of their implications for the future of international peace and security. These acts strike at the very core of international law and at universally accepted norms of behaviour that have allowed the world community to survive without world wars for seven decades.

We cannot pledge respect for the Charter of the United Nations and ignore its breaches at the same time. Our collective failure to stand up for the underlying principles of the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine will have far-reaching negative repercussions for international order. The occupied territories of Ukraine, Georgia or Moldova are full of red lines that we ourselves have drawn but never acted upon. Again, we are reminded that if one closes one's eyes to crimes, they do not disappear. They spread, grow and finally they take over. That is why it is our duty to uphold international humanitarian and human rights laws and to seek accountability when these laws are violated. Vetoing a Security Council resolution to commemorate the Srebrenica massacre or to set up a tribunal for the downing of Flight MH-17 is unjustifiable and is an insult to the memory of the victims. It also raises questions about the relevance, in the twenty-first century, of the Security Council as it is today.

For the Council to maintain its credibility, the least it can do is put an end to the use of the veto in cases of genocide, atrocity crimes, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Where would we be today had the Council been able to secure proper humanitarian access in Syria, had it taken measures to stop the use of barrel bombs and ensure accountability for gross human rights violations and abuses? The Security Council failed to do so, and millions of Syrians had to flee. By protecting the criminals, the four vetoes of resolutions pertaining to Syria did nothing to resolve the situation.

As a result, today we have the largest humanitarian crisis in the world. It is a global crisis that requires a global response. Unless we address the causes that make people flee their homes — such as lawlessness, repression and grave human rights abuses, corruption and poor governance, massive inequalities and marginalization — these flows of refugees will not stop. Conflicts will continue. Lawlessness breeds the worst of the worst — extremism, radicals and terrorists. We simply cannot afford for this to happen.

We live in an era when challenges and threats are enhanced by new ones. At 70, the United Nations must adapt to the realities of the twenty-first century and have the tools necessary to operate. The United Nations must do much better, tackling the underlying causes of the problems and conflicts at hand, and not merely the symptoms. It must be equipped and staffed to operate in environments of asymmetric and hybrid warfare, information wars and the growing threat of terrorism. It must also do a lot better at prevention and mediation, in order to save lives, as well as resources.

In the twenty-first century the world will need a strong United Nations that has been renewed in every sphere. Either we act now and shape globalization through cooperation and partnership, or the crises and conflicts of the globalized world will force us to respond at a much greater cost to all of us. The United Nations will cease to exist if people stop believing in it. Through our activities, 70 years after the founding of the United Nations, we must show that we continue to believe firmly in this Organization, which we all share.

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

Mrs. Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. James Alix Michel, President of the Republic of Seychelles

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

Mr. James Alix Michel, President of the Republic of Seychelles, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. James Alix Michel, President of the Republic of Seychelles, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Michel: “We the peoples of the United Nations, determined ...”. Yes, these are bold and visionary words drafted 70 years ago, providing the United Nations with its sense of purpose and the world with a vision that continues to inspire and motivate us.

I have always believed in this vision. We all do, in fact. Yet, in spite of all the good intentions and the inspiration we continue to draw from the Charter, something seems to be sorely lacking. That something is determination. President Lykketoft’s urging for a new commitment to action more than confirms this. His experience affords him the privilege of speaking his mind, and so does mine.

We must look around us. Let us look at the world. It is a world lacking in determination, a world torn apart by vicious wars and conflicts. It is a world where poverty, hunger, famine and epidemics continue to grow unabated, where inequality, injustice and disparity are on the rise; a world where environmental degradation and despoliation go unchecked; a world — our world — menaced by climate change.

Is that the legacy we want to leave to our children? No, my friends, it cannot be so. We must hear the cries of children who are hungry or in distress. We must hear the cries of despair of islanders affected by climate change. We must feel the pain of women struggling to keep their children alive. We must stop spending money to destroy lives. Instead, we must act together, not only to keep alive those struggling to survive, but to give meaning to their lives. We therefore have a duty and an obligation to change the world we live in and to make it a better place for current and future generations.

We can make that happen if we set our minds to it; if we, who are in the privileged position of leading our peoples, accept our responsibilities; if we cast aside indecisiveness; if we look beyond the narrow pursuit of ideological and national interests. We can make it happen if we adopt the principles of justice and fairness, not half-heartedly but resolutely.

Let us start with the United Nations itself. Its lofty ideals are as relevant today as when it was founded. However, its structures of governance, particularly the Security Council, are not. In today’s world, it represents a fundamentally undemocratic and unrepresentative institution. The same applies to the international organizations set up in the wake of the creation of the United Nations. We have to make them relevant to the realities of the present era. We need action, determination and commitment to set things right, to make all of them relevant to the century we live in and to give true meaning to an all-inclusive and participatory democracy.

We also need resolute action if the spirit and essence of sustainable development is to be truly embraced globally. Many challenges still remain, especially for small island developing States (SIDS). We are the sentinels of nature and the guardians of the oceans. But the actions — or inaction, as the case may be — of others threaten our livelihood and our very existence. As Pope Francis has just emphasized, we must break the current growth model and give primacy to the protection of nature over consumerism, thereby minimizing the effects of climate change. Climate change is not of small island States' making, yet we bear the full brunt of it. That is why we shall never cease to raise the issue in every forum, including this one, because we are the conscience of the world.

The President's acceptance speech (see A/69/PV.94) set the tone for a new commitment to action and, I believe, to determination. The two are indivisible. They form an appropriate backdrop to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). The 2030 Agenda sets realistic Goals, targets and a time frame for the creation of a better world, leaving no one behind. It is an all-inclusive Agenda, which makes it abundantly clear that there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.

Sustainability has always been and will continue to be at the heart of the development efforts of the Seychelles. Together with our fellow small island developing States, we have been actively engaged in this discourse to ensure that our concerns and needs are adequately addressed. The engagement of the United Nations under the Secretary-General's bold leadership has given us a ray of hope. We have again seen many commitments and pledges. But will those alone resolve our challenges? No, not unless they are translated into concrete actions.

The application — or rather, the non-application — of the principle of special and differential treatment for small island developing States is one of our major preoccupations. It is not because some of us have achieved upper-middle-income or high-income status that our development efforts are thwarted by the non-provision of international funds at concessionary rates. A one-size-fits-all approach to development cannot be the order of the day. It is unjust and morally unacceptable. We, the inhabitants of small island developing States, will never cease to remind everyone

of this. That is because islands remain the moral compass of the world, and because our own agenda is inextricably linked to that of humankind. We will always insist on the need for a more tailored approach in tackling the specific challenges we face, one that takes our vulnerabilities into account. The lack of an appropriate vulnerability index that can be applied effectively to development hampers the effective empowerment of small island developing States.

Goal 14 of the 2030 Agenda is of particular importance to all SIDS and coastal States. It presents us with a unique opportunity to set a standard for global governance of the oceans and seas. The Goal to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development provides the thrust for the blue economy. That concept has been adopted by many small island developing States as a mechanism for realizing sustainable growth, based on an ocean economy and an ocean governance. The Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius Strategy and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway are key to this. For oceanic nations, the sea is our lifeblood and the blue economy is the catalyst through which we can learn to thrive.

But we cannot thrive in an environment of insecurity. Maritime security is of the utmost importance to the vast majority of SIDS and to coastal States. In our part of the world, though piracy is on the wane, we must remain vigilant. As we have demonstrated in the case of piracy, however, global alliances have made a difference in providing security where there was none. In that regard, I would like to express my gratitude to the United Nations and other international partners for all their support in our fight against piracy in the Indian Ocean. My hope is that this model will be replicated in order to tackle similar issues that threaten our collective resolve to build lasting peace. The likes of terrorist organizations pose threats that have lasting repercussions, reverberating across borders. The growing refugee crisis reminds us that we should all shoulder the burden of fighting the ideologies of hate and embrace the bonds of fraternity and solidarity.

Looking forward to the Climate Change Conference in Paris, let us use the little time that is left to build further momentum and support in order to reach an ambitious and universal agreement to combat climate change. Paris is not just another international negotiation. It will be the crucial and decisive moment

of choice for all of us. We cannot allow ourselves to be condemned to the wrong side of history by our collective failure to reach an agreement. The stakes are too high. An agreement is within our reach, provided we are able to summon the collective political will and leadership. The time is now. We can make it happen. We must make it happen. We must fulfil the promises and commitments made, especially in terms of financing options to build climate resilience. In that regard, we call on all developed countries to honour their commitments for the mobilization of \$100 billion annually by 2020 for the operationalization of the Green Climate Fund.

Seychelles is one of the smallest Members of the United Nations family and will continue to play an active role in the Organization's efforts to create a just and safer world. The observance of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations is a unique opportunity to transform the world by our own efforts and commitments and to ensure that collective cooperation and partnership triumph over rivalry and mistrust. In that spirit, we salute the rapprochement between the United States of America and Cuba.

We have a unique opportunity to choose the future we want for ourselves and for our youth and our children. We must give them a better deal because they deserve a better deal. Let us truly become what we are destined to be — committed, determined, united and empowered nations forging our future together. Yes, together.

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

Mr. James Alix Michel, President of the Republic of Seychelles, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Miloš Zeman, President of the Czech Republic

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

Mr. Miloš Zeman, President of the Czech Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

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

President Zeman: If a speaker has many topics in a short speech, he has none. If he has many priorities in his speech, he also has none. So let me concentrate on a one topic and one priority — the fight against international terrorism.

One may ask: why does the President of a small Central European country speak about terrorism? There are two reasons. First, terrorism is outrage against human civilization and, at the same time, it is the main danger for human civilization. The second reason is that today, as the Assembly is aware, nearly all European countries face a big migration wave that was provoked by and is a consequence of terrorist actions in the Middle East and in Africa.

It is wonderful to criticize terrorism. It is wonderful to organize demonstrations and manifestations against terrorism, and it is nice to prepare declarations protesting terrorism. I am sure that Mr. Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, reading such declarations, will be careful. In any case, there are three illusions concerning terrorism.

The first illusion is that terrorism will vanish, that it is something like a historical fluctuation, and that we can eliminate or reduce terrorist actions without human endeavour or by using only local means. On the contrary, the terrorist movement is growing like a cancer. There is a diffusion of terrorism, a growing number of so-called failed States, of assassinations, cruelties, murders, annihilation of cultural artefacts, such as the Palmyra ruins, and so on. We cannot deny this growing process.

The second illusion is that we can reduce terrorist organizations to the so-called Islamic State only. But there are many other terrorist organizations — for instance, Al-Qaida, the Taliban, Al-Nusra, Boko Haram and others. Two outstanding politicians from the Arab world told me that the cover organization is the Muslim Brotherhood. If so, there is a terrorism network, and that network cannot be reduced simply to the Islamic State.

The third illusion is based on a standard form of warfare against terrorism. We know that nearly all generals prepare for the previous war. What I propose

for the fight against terrorism are no tanks, no infantry, no artillery. We need to seek new forms for the fight. Because unilateral actions are heavily criticized and, what is more, have been completely unsuccessful, as in the case of Iraq, I do not recommend any massive occupation of any territory. What I recommend is a coordinated action, under the umbrella of the Security Council. The five permanent members of the Council have different interests but one common enemy, and nothing unites more than one common enemy — terrorism. Here in New York, we remember 11 September 2001; in Russia, we remember Beslan and Volgograd; in China we remember Xinjiang; in Europe we remember Madrid, London, Paris and Copenhagen; in India we remember Bombay, and so on.

There is one good precedent, and it is the unanimously adopted Security Council resolution 2184 (2014), concerning pirates in Somalia, including military action against pirates. Does anyone really think that the pirates are more dangerous than the terrorists? In the Charter of the United Nations, there are many, many Articles concerning the possibility of military action, and some of them are never activated. They are referred to as the sleeping structures. What we need is to activate them. We need small military units equipped with drones, helicopters, cooperation of secret services, commandos or rangers — some kind of contingent of Blue Helmets — which would eliminate the leaders of terrorist organizations and their nerve centres, and not the occupation of territory.

I firmly hope that some of the permanent members might propose such a resolution. If not, as a historical optimist, I might add a conclusion that any idea goes through three phases. In the first phase, it is understood as complete nonsense. In the second phase, it is disputable, and in the third phase, it is as evident as the Earth's movement around the sun. I will return next year, and deep in my heart, I do believe that my proposal will be disputable. When I come in 2017, I am sure that this proposal will be evident.

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

Mr. Miloš Zeman, President of the Czech Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, President of the Republic of Yemen

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

Mr. Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, President of the Republic of Yemen, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, President of the Republic of Yemen, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Mansour (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the people and the Government of Yemen, I would like to congratulate the President most warmly on presiding over the General Assembly at its seventieth session. I wish him every success.

I have come today from the brave and strategic city of Aden, which is experiencing great joy because it has been liberated from the Houthi militia and former President Saleh. Yet I am troubled to see the degree of damage that was left in the wake of those criminal militias, including the destruction of the city and the violence against its civilians. The tragedy is continuing in the cities of Taiz and Marib. It beggars the imagination to think that the number of martyrs just in Aden alone has reached 1,350, while the number of injured has reached 11,160. One can only imagine what the numbers are in Taiz, Marib, Al-Baydhah, Abyan and other Yemeni cities.

Three years ago, I addressed the Assembly and spoke of the different measures that we had undertaken in our country in order to ensure a successful political transition of power in a spirit of peace and in compliance with the initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council and its implementation mechanism and pursuant to relevant resolutions of the Security Council (see A/67/PV.9). I said then that Iran was hampering that process. It was training Houthi militias and providing them with weapons, delivered by boat or by other vessels, in order to impose the Iranian model in Yemen.

Between that time three years ago and today, we have worked tirelessly on a peaceful political transition aimed at preparing the broad, year-long national dialogue, bringing together all the political forces of Yemen and setting an honourable precedent

in our country and the region. That was followed by a transparent process for drafting a secular, democratic modern constitution. The Assembly followed the political time lines and dates as they arose and provided direct support. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon also provided direct support and visited our country. All elements of Yemeni society, including the Houthis, were part of the process. In addition, there have been visits by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and the Security Council, as well as the adoption of relevant Security Council resolutions and presidential statements.

Despite all that, as the political transition process was drawing to a close and just when the constitution was supposed to be submitted to a popular referendum, the Houthis and Saleh staged a military and political coup d'état, occupying the capital, Sana'a, and wreaking havoc on hospitals, mosques, Quranic schools, homes and residences. Every form of weaponry was used, including arms from the Yemeni army. The tragedies in Aden, Taiz and Ad Dali could be characterized as genocide. Indeed, it was a desperate attempt to impose the Iranian model through the use of force. Political leaders and thousands of citizens either disappeared or were killed. The media were also affected. Thousands of children were forcibly conscripted, anti-personnel mines were planted and schools, public buildings and homes were converted into weapons storage facilities and barracks. Houthi militia threatened to spread to neighbouring countries, thereby endangering regional and international peace and security.

We attempted to have a dialogue with Saleh and the Houthis, giving them immunity and every opportunity and including them in national dialogue, but they retained their weapons and refused to create a political party in accordance with established law. That was all accepted despite the events that took place in 2004. Saleh's fight has never been a peaceful one, as was, for example, the peaceful southern movement, in Sa'dah province, which saw its citizens expelled. The Houthis seized military areas and took control by force. Despite our positive approach to that armed movement and various understandings with the Houthi movement, agreements were repeatedly cast aside and a coup d'état was carried out against the State, and people were maltreated and severely punished.

The actions of the Houthi militias, as well as those of Saleh, led us to appeal to neighbouring countries in the Gulf under Article 51 of the Charter of the United

Nations. We appealed for assistance in tackling the Houthi militias that were undermining and threatening national legitimacy. The response was courageous. Our brother His Majesty Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, acted with utter determination. On behalf of the Yemeni people, I would like to convey our sincere thanks to His Majesty King Salman and to all members of the coalition who are pursuing efforts to assist the Yemeni people. We are joined together in blood in this battle for our country and for the legitimacy of the State in order to prevent the country from falling into the hands of Iran, which would like to see the destruction of the country and to control the Bab al-Mandab strait.

The Yemeni people have opposed attempts by the Houthis in Aden, Abyan, Al-Baydhah, Taiz, Hodeidah and other cities of Yemen. The people have upheld the law. I would like to commend the efforts of the brave national resistance and the national armed forces, who are indeed our partners in struggle and in victory, construction and development. The Assembly is aware of the human tragedy that has befallen our people as a result of the blockade imposed by the militias, which continue their coup d'état. The Assembly is also aware of the deterioration and destruction of public services in liberated provinces. Greater international effort is needed to alleviate the human suffering and to ensure that the Yemeni crisis is not forgotten. While the United Nations has announced an appeal for humanitarian assistance for Yemen, annual contributions continue to fall short and cover only a meagre portion of the actual need.

I therefore take this opportunity to appeal once again to donor countries to ensure that they provide promised assistance. The Government of the Republic of Yemen would like to see the arrival of emergency humanitarian assistance to provide for all provinces without exception. An oversight mechanism for humanitarian convoys, as proposed by the United Nations, would allow for the return of economic prosperity and would facilitate the arrival of humanitarian assistance through all Yemeni ports. Furthermore, the Government has been moved to Aden. I believe that that will lead to better living conditions for our citizens. It will also re-establish basic services, which have been destroyed by the militias of the Houthis and Saleh.

Without a doubt, and quite clearly, that remains the best way for me to remain side by side with my heroic and steadfast people. That has been our position since

the very beginning of the conflict. We have cooperated with all genuine efforts on the part of the international community and, in particular, with those of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, to end the coup d'état, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2216 (2015). Since that resolution, the political process has been resumed, guided by the results of the national dialogue and facilitated by the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Allow me to reiterate that all efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement of the political crisis should be welcomed and supported. Once again, I would like to convey to the rebels, the Houthi-Saleh militias, that they must lay down their weapons, act in line with reason and implement resolution 2216 (2015) in earnest. I have come here to support peace and accord. I am talking not about a divisive peace but rather of a permanent peace that will be a source of law and order, cohesion and justice. Allow me to advocate for the literal implementation of the most recent Security Council resolution, namely, resolution 2216 (2015), which bears the credibility of the Council itself. I hope that the efforts of the United Nations will be crowned with success. That will ensure that we act in accordance with the aspirations of our people, who have been exceedingly patient and sincere.

Terrorism represents a real threat to States. To the extent of our ability, we have tried to combat terrorism, against which we have conducted a determined campaign, in partnership with friendly countries. The coup d'état and the extremism that ensued created a breeding ground for terrorism. I would like to reiterate, however, our confidence in and support for the Government, which is leading the fight against terrorism with international aid. Given the geographical and strategic location of Yemen, the stability of our country buttresses the stability of the region and the world.

The seventieth session of the General Assembly coincides with the glorious September and October

revolutions of my country. I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to all the Yemeni people, who are a proud and patient people. I would like to restate my commitment to achieving the goals of those two glorious revolutions. We will not allow minority groups, Houthis or others, to repeat the Iranian experience in Yemen. At this time, 70 years since the birth of the United Nations, an Organization that has succeeded in lessening conflicts and wars through its very principles, we reiterate our commitment to working on behalf of future generations. That represents a commitment to those generations, as well as a commitment to making the world more prosperous, safer and free through unity and true determination to achieve the noble ambitions, on which our Organization was established.

The Republic of Yemen condemns in the strongest terms the systematic Israeli attacks against the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Once again, we express our permanent support for the Palestinian people, who are determined to protect the Mosque. A question necessarily arises regarding those recent events. A Government that was created by resolutions of the Security Council refuses to abide by those same resolutions. That is truly surprising.

I would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his important efforts to achieve the noble ambition of our Organization to ensure international peace and security. I would also like to thank him for his great and commendable efforts to promote the political transition in Yemen, reverse the coup d'état and restore State authority. We wish every success to the General Assembly at its seventieth session.

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

Mr. Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, President of the Republic of Yemen, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.