



General Assembly

Seventieth session

25th plenary meeting
Friday, 2 October 2015, 9 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Lykketoft (Denmark)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Ruiz Blanco (Colombia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 9.05 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

Address by Mr. Antoni Martí Petit, Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra.

Mr. Antoni Martí Petit, Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Antoni Martí Petit, Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Martí Petit (Andorra) (*spoke in Catalan; Spanish text provided by the delegation*): It is my honour to represent my country, the Principality of Andorra, before the Assembly, which this year is celebrating its seventieth anniversary.

Over the past seven decades, we have listened to speakers talking from this very this rostrum, year after year, of peace, social justice and, more recently, of sustainable development. If we have talked about those themes for so long, perhaps that is because something has not been going as planned. Perhaps the

international community has not done well and has been unable to make sufficient progress in promoting the values that are part of the philosophy and charisma of the United Nations. Clearly, with the United Nations, the international community has made unprecedented progress. However, to recognize that not all has gone smoothly and that there is much room for improvement is the first step towards meeting present and future challenges in a realistic and effective manner.

The world has changed a great deal in the past 70 years. Seven decades ago, the international community came to an agreement to prevent a third world war that would have devastated the future of humankind. To prevent that, the major Powers were able to choose consensus and harmony over unilaterally imposing their own order, because solutions that are concerted, balanced and fair are much more lasting than those imposed through coercion or the unilateral use of power.

As we heard President Obama say a few days ago before the Assembly (see A/70/PV.13), no country can claim to solve the world's problems unilaterally, and no country can remain isolated and think that the problems affecting the rest of the world will not affect it. A country as small as Andorra understands, perhaps better than others, the deeper meaning of those words.

Over the past 70 years, Andorra has made the transition from isolation to openness. Seven decades ago, our country was only beginning to overcome its cloistered past. For centuries Andorra was a reclusive country, surrounded by its mountains — both isolated

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and protected by its environment. The construction of roads that connected us with the neighbouring regions of France and Spain were the way we overcame our isolation. Thanks to that geographical opening, various sectors developed in Andorra, such as tourism, trade and finance. That provided opportunities to the local population, as well as to the thousands of people from neighbouring countries who sought new opportunities in our country and who have helped enrich the Principality of Andorra and make it greater.

Andorra's history is the history of its ongoing adaptation to its environment. It is also the history of continuous change. In the 1980s and 1990s, my country aligned its institutional systems to others. That too was a change and an opening. In my generation, our mission has been to open up and harmonize our economic system. Three years ago, we proposed and approved an economic law that removed restrictions on foreign investment and conferred full economic rights to foreign nationals starting on their first day of residency. In parallel with that, Andorra has opted for cooperation and transparency. We have approved a new fiscal model that is in line with others. We have made and will continue to make progress in exchanging tax information, and we have begun to build a network for double taxation agreements.

The world is changing, and Andorra must change with the world. We have chosen to become a more open, more competitive and more transparent country, because we are convinced that increasing economic ties among countries is a way to establish the foundations of a more cooperative, more just and more peaceful world. That was in fact the spirit that guided the construction of the European Union over the past 60 years.

Andorra is currently negotiating an Association Agreement with the European Union that establishes a stable horizon for opportunities and prosperity for our citizens. We do so in the same spirit of cooperation, healthy competition and transparency that we have brought to our economic reforms in recent years. Andorra needs broader horizons than those fixed by our mountains, and that will also happen through the European Union. To opt for a more interrelated and open world, with stronger economic, cultural and social ties among nations, is also to opt for peace and harmony. As President Obama said yesterday, the great challenges of our time, including economic ones, must be addressed jointly, and that is what we are trying to do in Andorra.

Andorra believes that after its first 70 years, the United Nations also should promote a process of reform. That is why we have supported the political declaration on suspending the right to the veto in the Security Council in cases of mass atrocities, an initiative that has been and is being promoted by the French Republic and the United Mexican States. It is important that France, as a permanent member of the Security Council, is part of that initiative.

Here, I would like to commend France's initiative, as expressed on Monday through President Hollande (see A/70/PV.13). France could retain the major Powers' right to the veto, but it understands that that right should be moderated under certain circumstances, because institutions are here to serve the values, and not the reverse. And international institutions should be at the service of people and the universal values of peace, solidarity and justice.

In extreme situations, when the survival of thousands of people is at stake, the international community cannot remain deadlocked. The balances that gave birth to the United Nations cannot be used to excuse deadlock in situations that are extreme for humankind. The citizens of this great global city that is the world demand solutions, and institutions must always be part of the solution, not part of the problem. That is why we must address the matter of Security Council reform. We must move the United Nations forward, adapt it to the changing times and reform it to improve it, without making radical changes yet in a resolute, effective way. We need to do that now, without waiting for another humanitarian crisis or a new stalemate to reveal our shortcomings and weaknesses.

In extreme situations such as that in Syria during recent years, the international community must be able to provide effective and fair responses. And, let us say clearly, so far we have been unable to do that. That creates an image of frustration and impotence that we should avoid. When there is a massacre, there is no middle ground: one is either part of the problem or one is part of the solution. The international community must always be part of the solution. The consequence of our failure to respond in time to the crisis in Syria is obvious every day on Europe's borders, where thousands of refugees arrive in flight from massacres. This is not a migration phenomenon motivated by socioeconomic factors. What we are seeing is an exodus of people fleeing war and fleeing death. They are not seeking a better life; they are seeking simply to live.

And that calls directly and bluntly to the very essence of the United Nations.

Andorra is committed and sensitive to the situation we are witnessing in Syria. That is why the Government that I have the honour to head has decided to join the effort to host refugees. Our country wants to be faithful to its tradition of hospitality and integration, and we want to be part of the solution — a balanced solution agreed in the European framework because, once again, global problems require global solutions. Andorra, from its modest position, will be part of that global solution. The desperate cry of refugees, wherever they may come from, calls us all. It is sad that the developed countries have taken longer to react than have those less favoured. As we heard on Monday from President Hollande, it is the least developed countries that have most quickly welcomed the refugees fleeing the war and the tyranny of the various conflicts that unfortunately affect many places on our planet.

Because we in the more developed countries have been slower to react, we must move decisively to enact reforms that guarantee that an atrocity such as that in Syria will not be repeated. Governments need to carry out forward-looking policies. In the international arena also, the best policy for promoting peace is clearly conflict prevention. Accordingly, Andorra commends the recent agreement between the United States and Iran on the nuclear issue, which shows that no matter how far apart positions may be, there is always room for cooperation and harmony.

The fact that we are a small country is not in any way incompatible with the fight against atrocities of war. In that connection, Andorra accepted the Kampala amendments, a text that defines the crime of aggression and establishes the conditions in which the International Criminal Court can exercise jurisdiction over such crimes so that they do not go unpunished.

Some years ago, in this very Hall, in speaking about the conflicts in Libya and Syria, we discussed whether effectiveness or justice was preferable in resolving conflicts. That is an open question, but I believe that the way in which events have unfolded demonstrates that it is an artificial debate. We must be both effective and just, because justice, if not effective, is just a pretty word. And effectiveness without justice winds up being ineffective. As His Holiness Pope Francis said from this rostrum last month (see A/70/PV.3), justice is a will that is effective, practical and constant, with concrete steps and immediate measures.

There are no lasting solutions without justice. In that regard, regimes and tyrants who continue to perpetrate massacres and repeatedly violate human rights cannot be part of the solution, because they are ultimately part of the problem. The victims of conflicts cannot live knowing that they have not been taken care of adequately by the international community.

From the time of its founding, the fundamental goal of the United Nations has been the promotion of peace and the prevention of conflicts. The founders soon realized, however, that peace and justice cannot be disassociated from education, opportunities, social rights and the rational and sustainable use of the environment. Andorra has accordingly committed itself to other fields such as education and sustainable development.

Our country has long experience in welcoming immigrants and in dealing with diversity. Proof of that can be seen in our educational system, which incorporates the French, Spanish and Andorran educational systems and has resulted in a trilingual society, prepared for a global world. On that account, our country has become meaningfully involved in the Global Education First initiative, promoted by the Secretary-General, which advocates universal primary education, quality teaching and the promotion of global citizenship. We must always bear in mind the values that are part of that initiative.

The need to tackle problems from a global perspective is more apparent than ever in environmental concerns. There are problems that we can attempt to solve unilaterally, and we might achieve an imperfect and short-term solution. Global warming is not one of those problems. Either there will be a global solution, or there will be no solution at all. That is why we cannot lose sight of the notion of global citizenship within a global village, which President Dilma Rousseff evoked in her opening statement in the Assembly (see A/70/PV.13). Small countries such as ours perhaps better understand the notion of a global village, for Andorra is both a country and a village. Who better than we can act on the slogan that says we must think globally and act locally?

As a small country, it is clear that Andorra needs its natural environment and the help of others to reverse the situation and resolve issues. In Andorra, the effects of global warming concern and affect us in a very specific way. The average temperature in the Pyrenees is rising at a rate of 0.2°C per decade, and precipitation

has been annually decreasing by 2 litres per square metre. Experts' calculations predict that by 2050, our water reserves will be reduced by 18 per cent. Those statistics are of particular concern to a country that lives on the tourism of snow and of mountains.

The major climate change agreements must be integrated into the national policies of every country. For some time Andorra has been working in that direction, and in recent years we have seen the improvement of all environmental indicators. But we also know that the reach of national policies is reduced, especially in a country like ours. We need global solutions that can be applied locally. For that reason, Andorra was one of the first countries to make its national contribution to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to be held in Paris in December. Andorra has committed to reducing its emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases by 37 per cent by 2030. That metric places us within the global commitment to ensure that the increase in global average temperature remains below 2°C.

We endorse the statement made by President Hollande in urging countries that have not yet submitted their contribution to the Conference of the Parties to do so by December. At the Conference, we must provide the international community with the necessary tools to be able to confront the tremendous environmental challenges of the future and come away with a new paradigm for the energy and environmental policies of every country. At times, within the international community it seems as though there is little sensitivity to national problems and that national policies lack a global vision. As our fellow leader and President of the French Republic said, if in Paris we put off finding solutions, later will be too late. The citizens of the nations we represent are calling on us. We cannot allow failure to reach an effective and definitive agreement in Paris.

Seventy years ago, the world was coming out of a half-century marked by two world wars. It was a world of delicate balances. This is not the time for balances, but rather for firm commitments. It is time to forge more policies among nations and leave behind disunity in decision-making. For seven decades, the United Nations has been the guarantor of peace, human rights, justice and sustainable development. When it is time to take a determined decision, each country and each ruler knows that the international community and the world

are watching. As representatives of the international community, we must also be aware that the world is watching us and that our decisions will be judged by future generations. To those future generations we must leave a more just, prosperous, peaceful and sustainable world.

For 70 years, heads of State, prime ministers and ministers have stood and spoken at this rostrum. They have done so to talk about peace and promoting human rights and justice. There will come a day when we will no longer need to defend those values so vehemently, because we will have made them into a reality.

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

Mr. Antoni Martí Petit, Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Nikola Gruevski, President of the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

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

Mr. Nikola Gruevski, President of the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, was escorted to the rostrum.

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

Mr. Gruevski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) (*spoke in Macedonian; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): It is my privilege to participate in the general debate in the year in which we mark the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Conference, a decade and a half since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and a decade since the 2005 World Summit.

Since 1945 and the end of the devastating war that took the lives of more than 50 million people,

the United Nations, firmly committed to promoting freedom from want and fear, has established itself as a determined and driving force behind the international community and positive changes in the world. Critics of the United Nations mission say we live in a world in which conflicts in many regions are perpetuating and affecting the lives of millions while new conflicts emerge and affect the lives of millions more; a world where arms proliferation jeopardizes innocent lives and undermines economic development; a world of extreme poverty, lacking a collective will to agree on the issues affecting us all, such as climate change. We live in a world with tens of millions of refugees and displaced persons.

Despite all of that, I do not think that the United Nations has failed in its mission. On the contrary, it has resolved or mitigated difficult situations and issues that no one could handle alone, and it continues to do so. That is why we gather regularly here in New York to discuss and develop instruments that demonstrate how the United Nations can better cope with various existing and emerging challenges. The failures do not fall only on our Organization, but predominantly on Member States, due to a lack of political will, and sometimes courage, to take bold but essential decisions.

Our common efforts with regard to human rights should focus on reinforcing the system that guarantees human rights both individually and collectively. We should support endeavours aimed at ensuring the protection of human rights as the essence of the strategies and operational activities of the United Nations. What we need for the present and for the future is for the United Nations to continue to exercise its global leadership role for the benefit of mankind. In that context it is encouraging that the Member States decided to give a greater role to the General Assembly in the upcoming election of the next Secretary-General. Given the fact that no Secretary-General has ever been elected from the Group of Eastern European States, we stand firmly in support of our Group's request in that regard.

The Republic of Macedonia remains a staunch supporter of multilateralism with the United Nations at its heart, and believes in the benefits of multilateralism to the world. It remains the core principle of our foreign policy.

While we live in an era of unprecedented technology, with immense innovations that make our lives easier and with examples of the dedication of the scientific

community, such as the work on the Ebola vaccine that brought hope and a possible cure, humankind is still confronted with issues that threaten international peace and stability. They threaten our development and prosperity, and they threaten our future.

In this ever more globalized world, where today's news is already in the past, where no one individual is isolated from the problems of the others, we need a bold shift in our policies. To resolve problems, the policies of commitment, cooperation and wisdom should be our common choice, with a proactive approach and maximum engagement. High moral standards must be the main pillars that articulate a new world reality. In their essence they embody freedom and human rights and solidarity for humankind. The United Nations must continue with this principle in mind: to protect democracy.

Those standards must remain at the heart of our new policies today, and we must keep this solidarity in mind. That is essential. The past 70 years of United Nations experience have led us to understand that all Member States must be committed to the process of United Nations reform. The future world should be multipolar and avoid the senseless wars that have caused so many nations to suffer. We should face reality and prepare the future for the coming generations.

The region of South-East Europe is now entering a phase of positive development, and, in general, national and regional primary objectives have been fulfilled or are within reach. Despite that progress, it is clear that certain longstanding unresolved or partially resolved bilateral issues are negatively affecting our present and on our near future. The Republic of Macedonia is facing an open dispute that has become a serious obstacle to our integration in international organizations. That dispute presents an obstacle to progress in building capacity aimed at preventing breakdowns in stability in times of great global stress.

Our region faces two key strategic and global challenges. The first is the refugee and migrant crisis, and the second and more dangerous one concerns the aspirations of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) to penetrate to a greater extent into Europe, which brings with it a more serious danger to European economies and to sustainable development. Even worse, the ISIS agenda is to destroy societies that are based on universal values and principles protected by the United Nations.

Today, not just my country, but the whole of the Balkans and Europe are faced with thousands of refugees — children, women, elderly people and entire families who are fleeing the bloodshed in their home countries. Since the beginning of 2015, nearly 200,000 people, mainly Syrians, have transited through the Republic of Macedonia. Syria's neighbours Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan are also heavily affected. The first signs of that heavy social burden are now being felt in the Balkan countries, whose economies cannot cope with the situation on their own.

For our part, we will do everything in our power to help those people who have needs and people who seek peace and cherish the hope for safe travel and for a safe and decent life. Regardless of the economic and sustainability aspects, we are trying to help them by overcoming certain weaknesses in the established system, with a strong commitment to contributing to the creation of positive solutions for the people based on their needs. However, we cannot do the job alone. The problem requires stronger engagement from the European Union in cooperation with the Balkan countries. Such a commitment would also be quite significant for the enhancement of cooperation on other practical levels.

In that manner, the challenge we face will have some positive effects. Besides helping the people in need, it will also mean significant improvements in standards in the Balkan countries and the implementation of European values and approaches through cooperation on solutions. What is also crucial — indeed the only way to resolve the refugee crisis — is for Europe to urgently address the main reason for their suffering — in this case, the Syrian conflict. The existing differences with regard to solutions must be put aside. We need unity and a concerted United Nations and Security Council position, such as, for example, that which achieved positive results in the agreement on the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons, a situation in which diplomacy accomplished a great victory.

The situation in the Middle East is growing worse. The appearance of ISIS has worsened the situation even more. The security situation, aggravated by the presence of foreign fighters, has brought a new challenge for us in dealing with religious intolerance and extreme hatred. ISIS is not a threat only to the Middle East but is a global threat to which no country is immune, especially the countries of South-East Europe, where there is a bigger risk of greater penetration by ISIS and of greater

influence on the population. Those facts can have very serious consequences, leading to the destabilization of multi-ethnic societies. That is why peace in the Middle East in particular is an issue of the utmost importance. The P5+1 agreement with Iran is a positive development for the region, since it serves as a model that could be followed for the situation in Syria.

We need to pursue a policy of prevention, which is precisely what we have been discussing in the United Nations and in our region. That is why, through the joint efforts of the United Nations in the collective security area, especially the security services within the region, we must prevent the manifestation of extremism in the region by heading off isolated conflicts or efforts to destabilize the region. Actions to repress the core ISIS forces are a positive step forward. But we must also continue to address the populations in the region, based on social inclusion and the values of the United Nations, because extremist groups target them for recruitment.

South-East Europe must tighten its security arrangements and move forward to solve outstanding questions in accordance with the principles of the United Nations. That strategic effort must be an urgent priority for the United Nations. The Republic of Macedonia remains a positive, instructive actor, seeking to make a positive contribution to good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation in ways that unite cooperation with security. This year, our country is serving as the President of the Central European Initiative, and we are focusing on promoting regional interconnections and the development of infrastructure connections.

The main strategic and foreign policy priority of the Republic of Macedonia remains our membership in the European Union and in NATO. All reforms undertaken in the country bear that goal in mind. All problems are being resolved in that spirit. Despite the challenges we face, allow me to stress that we expect no obstacles on our path to the North Atlantic community.

One unanswered question relating to the permanent stability of our region that directly influences my country and remains on the United Nations agenda is the difference we have with Greece on the name of my country, that is, the difference we have with regard to our constitutional name, the Republic of Macedonia. Resolving that issue with our neighbour is a priority that should be pursued in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and international law, which are defined. We seek discussions on a mutually agreed solution.

Our position is clear. There is the reality that we are Macedonians, that we speak the Macedonian language and that we live in a country whose constitutional name is the Republic of Macedonia. International law must be abided by all and in all cases, not just in certain cases. That is why the decision of the International Court of Justice, handed down in favour of my country, must be respected by all Members of the Organization, precisely because the Court was founded by the United Nations and must be seen as a guarantor of the execution of the law and the bilateral agreements concluded under the auspices of the United Nations. Otherwise, trust in the United Nations will fall and sceptics who attack the validity of the Organization will gain strength.

In the 25 years since gaining independence, my country, the Republic of Macedonia, has seen a transformation of its region and of Europe. The impression has arisen, unfortunately, both in my country and elsewhere, that the United Nations is resisting dealing with our problem and is even an obstacle to progress on that and other issues in my country. Such an approach by the international community can set precedents and can, unfortunately, be easily manipulated to cause broad instability. Serious commitment is required if Greece is going to be motivated to improve its performance on the issue. Its inertia stems, at least partly, from its economic problems.

The international community's failure to focus on my country has allowed key players to give minimum priority to the issue. As two friendly nations that, except for this issue, do not have any other problems with each other, we have to find a solution. We must respect and talk to each other and cooperate with each other in a positive spirit of friendship and cooperation with all countries in the region. My country will work towards that end, both for its own sake and for the sake of the region.

As we have done before, I would like to call upon the new Government in Greece, in the spirit of the good-neighbourly relations, to resolve this issue as neighbours, respecting the 1995 Interim Accord between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which is the cornerstone of our relations. The Accord is an agreement made under the auspices of the United Nations, and it by now should have brought about a resolution of the dispute, not its postponement. We have recently developed a new approach that should take us forward and create a positive climate

for resolving the issue. I hope that that approach will be pursued with the new Greek Government and that prejudices can be overcome.

Today's generation of politicians should use the Accord, which was created 24 years ago as a purely political instrument and a road map. We need to move towards a commonly agreed solution supported by the citizens of both countries, which, while helping the Republic of Macedonia to move forward, will be a positive step for Greece and contribute to the positive atmosphere in the region. Such a solution will strengthen the region, so that it can deal with the challenges posed by radical elements and provide a better response to humanitarian crises.

We seek a permanent resolution of the issue, one that opens economic possibilities in the form of increased investment in our countries and the region. We must expand our ambitions to include large-scale infrastructure projects that involve the efforts of several countries and that will lead to growth in the economies of all countries in the region and the creation of tens of thousands of new jobs. Similarly, we will move forward on the strategic goal of lowering unemployment in our country, which has been a fundamental goal in my political life.

Many of us have had great economic successes in the past year. Although I may not sound humble in saying so, my country is one of the economic surprises of the past few years. We have attracted a lot of investment, including investments in large-scale projects, which has accelerated the economic progress of our citizens, developed education and improved standards in almost every sphere, which will naturally benefit the country and the region.

I would reiterate once again here, from this rostrum, as we invoke the purposes and principles of the United Nations, that it is incumbent on my country and our neighbour to the south to make full use of international law and justice so as to responsibly resolve the outstanding issue between us. As we try to overcome the issue for the sake of European values and our common future, the positions of both our countries must nevertheless be respected.

In this anniversary year, under the leadership of President Lykketoft, the General Assembly will address issues of critical importance for all of us. I would like to emphasize our support for him and wish him every success. The Republic of Macedonia will

continue to work together with all States Members of the United Nations to strengthen international peace and security, promote human rights and achieve the global development goals.

Finally, I would like to express our gratitude for the Secretary-General's leadership and tireless efforts aimed at taking our Organization forward.

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

Mr. Nikola Gruevski, President of the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Freundel Stuart, Prime Minister, Minister for National Security, the Public Service and Urban Development of Barbados

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister, Minister for National Security, the Public Service and Urban Development of Barbados.

Mr. Freundel Stuart, Prime Minister, Minister for National Security, the Public Service and Urban Development of Barbados, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Freundel Stuart, Prime Minister, Minister for National Security, the Public Service and Urban Development of Barbados, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Stuart (Barbados): I would like to begin by congratulating Mr. Mogens Lykketoft on his election to the presidency of General Assembly at its seventieth session. He represents a country, Denmark, whose service to the United Nations and the global community has been exemplary. I anticipate that in upholding those fine traditions, Mr. Lykketoft will guide us judiciously as we embark on the journey towards the Organization's centenary. I assure him of Barbados' full support as we begin to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), striving collectively to address the diverse challenges that States Members of the United Nations are facing. I also take this opportunity to express the sincere admiration

of my delegation for the sterling manner in which his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, so ably guided the work of the General Assembly during its sixty-ninth session.

Three score and ten years ago, 50 delegations, assisted by a temporary Secretariat, gathered in San Francisco to sign the Charter that established the United Nations. That was a moment whose consequences have been felt across space and time and resonate with a unique power to this day. Of course, Barbados, like the overwhelming majority of countries that today make up the United Nations, was not among the countries represented in San Francisco on 26 June 1945. Only 50 delegations gathered then, representing, generally speaking, the victors of the Second World War. In stark contrast to that select group gathered on that summer day in 1945, the membership of this Organization today totals 193 States and represents virtually all of humankind.

In Paris in December, 196 delegations, including that of Barbados, will gather for the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. At that meeting, we will agree on collective action that will make possible the continued survival of our planet. That is an existential issue for all countries, but in particular for those like mine that are small island developing States. Our countries stand on the edge of the yawning abyss opened up by climate change. For those who framed the Charter of the United Nations, the cessation of global wars was the single existential threat. While that threat undeniably remains today, it would be to our peril not to accord climate change the same deadly capacity to threaten our planet.

Barbados and all the countries of the Caribbean Community have made clear their views on what should be the outcome of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention. All parties should commit to taking individual and collective action to curb greenhouse gas emissions in line with our ambitious goal to hold the average global temperature increase to well below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, and all parties should commit to cooperating on taking such action and submitting to regular five-year cycles of reporting, verification and updating on mitigation commitments. All parties should also commit to supporting the particularly vulnerable countries, which are the small island developing States and the least developed

countries. In short, we need an ambitious, high-performance, legally binding agreement with global participation.

The tragedy that struck our sister Caribbean nation of Dominica, battered last month by Tropical Storm Erika, highlights the urgency of an effective global response to climate change. As we have often seen, a single natural or man-made disaster in a small island developing State can have catastrophic economic, infrastructural and humanitarian effects on a national scale. It has been estimated that the damage caused by Erika set Dominica's development back by 20 years. As Chairman of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, I take this opportunity to express the region's unwavering solidarity with and commitment to our brothers and sisters in Dominica, and I call on the international community to continue to help Dominica in its hour of need.

History is a superb teacher. Seventy years on from the creation of the United Nations, it is appropriate that we reflect on the path that small States like mine have helped to prepare. It is a path made possible in large part by the principles that this Organization has embraced from its inception, which are embodied in the Charter and in the many treaties, resolutions and plans of action of the United Nations. It is a path from exclusivity to universality, a path that has seen a near quadrupling of the Organization's membership in 70 years, and a path towards an international legal order that seeks to balance the rights of States with their responsibilities, including their responsibilities to their citizens.

Without question, those changes combine to reflect a significant and positive transformation of the international system — a transformation that has seen the country that I have the honour to represent move from subordination under colonial status to full sovereignty. In 2016, Barbados will proudly celebrate the fiftieth year of its independence and its membership in the United Nations. The United Nations has provided a forum where all countries, irrespective of their size or geopolitical influence, can meet, discuss and sometimes argue, always on an equal footing.

The transformation of the United Nations has provided the necessary but hardly the sufficient conditions for the Organization to realize the extraordinary promise expressed in the Preamble and Article 1 of the Charter. Member States have by and large failed to eliminate the scourge of war, and

relations among nations are not everywhere friendly. International cooperation has not, by itself, solved many international economic, social, cultural or humanitarian problems, nor has it everywhere encouraged respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The United Nations has not proven able to harmonize the actions of nations in the attainment of those common ends. And for small developing countries in particular, the promised emphasis on development has yet to be fully realized.

Development is a plant of tender growth and cannot flourish in an environment where there is no peace. It is therefore heartening to learn of the reduction of tensions between the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, which was facilitated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Over the years the tensions between those two countries had the effect of stymying the development potential of Guyana. I should like to take advantage of this opportunity to express my country's unwavering commitment to the territorial integrity of Guyana and to state our support for a juridical solution to a dispute that has lasted far too long.

Is it permissible to inquire whether the world is a safer and more peaceful place today than it was in 1945? While there have been no world wars of the kind that precipitated the founding of this Organization, proxy wars and internecine, fratricidal conflicts have proliferated. The United Nations has registered many successes in addressing the myriad challenges to peace and security that have confronted the international community over the past 70 years. However, as Member States, it is our responsibility, and ours alone, to ensure that the United Nations is equipped and empowered to do much more.

Like many around the world, we in the Caribbean are deeply concerned about the connected crises of refugees and internally displaced persons. We regret that the international community has failed to take the firm political action necessary to bring those crises to an end. We underscore that if people are able to live in peace and security and in an environment that respects their human rights, they will feel less compelled to flee their countries, which they have often done under conditions that place their lives, and those of their children, in peril. We cannot afford to be indifferent. As Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel has noted: "Indifference is always the friend of the enemy, for it benefits the aggressor."

I have described the contours of an international system radically different from the one established when the United Nations was born 70 years ago. Collectively and individually, we struggle to address many of the problems that we now face.

In 2013, the General Assembly adopted the Arms Trade Treaty (resolution 68/31) to regulate international trade in conventional weapons, with the expectation that it will contribute to the prevention and eradication of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Through the determined efforts of the countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and other like-minded States, small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, parts and components were included in the scope of the Treaty. Barbados was, therefore, pleased to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty in May of this year.

In July of this year, under the presidency of New Zealand, the Security Council held its first-ever open debate on the particular peace and security challenges facing small island developing States (see S/PV.7499). At that meeting, Barbados indicated that it has always opposed, and continues strongly to oppose, the proliferation and use of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. However, for countries like Barbados, the real weapons of mass destruction are small arms and light weapons, and our focus is necessarily on the trade in those weapons, which often goes arm-in-arm with the traffic in illicit drugs and other forms of organized crime. Both have the capacity to seriously undermine our economies and destabilize our societies. Barbados welcomes the initiative and persistence that made possible the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty and commits to playing its part in addressing global peace and security challenges.

Also in July of this year, we adopted the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (resolution 69/313, annex), which provides a series of bold measures to overhaul global finance practices and generate investments for tackling a range of economic, social and environmental challenges.

Finally, last week we adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which formulates a new development agenda based on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The link between the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda is clear: the former sets out the Goals and the latter the means of their attainment. One without the other is bereft of meaning.

I take this opportunity to connect those important initiatives to a concern that the countries of the Caribbean Community and others have been expressing for some time, most recently during our meeting of Heads of Government in July, which, this year, Barbados had the honour to host. The United Nations and the international financial institutions must address the matter of the graduation of middle-income countries, such as Barbados, from access to concessionary and grant-based financing. Now, we contend, is the time to develop and utilize appropriate measurements for development that go beyond a simplistic reliance on a country's gross domestic product per capita.

It was with especial pleasure that we received the news earlier this year that, 43 years after Barbados and three other CARICOM member States — Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Guyana — had ended their diplomatic isolation of Cuba, the United States of America has decided to do the same. For Barbados, that must be seen as a positive development, as we have been calling consistently, insistently and persistently since 1972 for an end to the economic embargo, which has not only retarded the development of Cuba but has also cheated its people of the opportunity to fulfil their aspirations, as they should. My delegation congratulates President Barack Obama of the United States of America for the hindsight, the insight, and the foresight that informed his decision and looks forward to the process of Cuba's total embrace through the removal, in the near future, of the economic embargo.

In a similar vein, it is not without significance that 21 months before we adopted the 2030 Agenda, the General Assembly adopted resolution 68/237, which proclaimed the International Decade for People of African Descent, under the theme, "People of African descent: recognition, justice and development", commencing on 1 January 2015 and ending on 31 December 2024. The Decade was launched by the Secretary-General in December 2014, with the keynote address delivered by Barbadian Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, then Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies. My delegation confidently expects that as we pursue the Sustainable Development Goals, due regard will be accorded to the reparative justice contemplated not only by the theme of that very important Decade, but also by its specific mention in the programme of activities for the implementation of the Decade.

Permit me to reach back again into our Organization's history, for it continues to illuminate our

present and to set out the way forward for our future. When he took office as the first Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Norwegian diplomat, Trygve Lie, said at one of the earliest meetings of the General Assembly, on 2 February 1946:

“The purpose of the United Nations is the maintenance of peace in an atmosphere of international security and general well-being ... But there is a close connection between the peace problem and the economic and social conditions of the countries of the world.” (*A/PV.22, p. 325*)

Barbados, a small island developing State, has been and remains a staunch supporter of the United Nations, committed to the principles of multilateralism and the sovereign equality of States and to the inextricable link between peace and security, on the one hand, and economic and social development, on the other. Today those principles, we are proud to say, are nowhere better reflected than in the ideals to which States Members of the United Nations still subscribe in their collective march to promote, for the peoples of the world, social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister, Minister for National Security, the Public Service and Urban Development of Barbados for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Freundel Stuart, Prime Minister, Minister for National Security, the Public Service and Urban Development of Barbados, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Michel Kafando, President of the Transition, President of Faso and Minister of National Defense, Veterans Affairs and Minister of Security of Burkina Faso

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Michel Kafando, President of the Transition, President of Faso and Minister of National Defense and Veterans Affairs and Minister of Security of Burkina Faso.

Mr. Michel Kafando, President of the Transition, President of Faso and Minister of National Defense and Veterans Affairs and Minister of Security of Burkina Faso, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Michel Kafando, President of the Transition, President of Faso and Minister of National Defense and Veterans Affairs and Minister of Security of Burkina Faso, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Kafando (*spoke in French*): It is my honour to address the Assembly as President of the Transition of Burkina Faso. I wish to convey my warmest and most sincere appreciation to the General Assembly and to congratulate the President on his election to preside over the Assembly at its seventieth session. I should also like to pay tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Sam Kutesa, for his clear-sighted guidance of the work of the sixty-ninth session.

Since the transition that I am leading resulted from a popular uprising in October 2014, which said “no” to the arbitrariness, nepotism and injustice of an undemocratic regime, I have come here to promote liberty and democracy. Here, before the Assembly, I have come to extol the virtue of liberty, true liberty, the liberty that the French revolutionaries of 1789 dreamed about and an ideal that so many human beings today still aspire to. I want to call for liberty, plain and simple. As I was deprived of liberty for a time, I know how precious it is. I have come here to pay tribute to democracy, which today has become a universal canon — except in Burkina Faso, where praetorians of another age were trying to row against the tide of history and attempted to seize our democracy in order to serve their sordid ambitions.

Thanks to the international community, which is the defender of those values I just mentioned, I speak here freely before Member States. That was unthinkable only two weeks ago, when I was jailed during the military uprising. On 16 September, my country, Burkina Faso, was the victim of a heinous coup d'état perpetrated by officers bought by vengeful politicians. Moreover, that happened just before the launch of our electoral campaign. The wishes of the people of Burkina Faso were not taken into account. The national and spontaneous response of the people was impressive. They tried to block the path that those adventurers were attempting to take. Regrettably, that led to a tragic loss of life and many wounded. On that occasion, the people of Burkina Faso, and its youth in particular, showed an unprecedented level of patriotism.

The international community also promptly came forward to unanimously condemn the coup and support the transition. From this rostrum, I wish to thank all the countries, without exception, and the international organizations, civil society organizations and journalists from around world that came together so quickly to frustrate the coup d'état, thereby enabling a return to normalcy and legitimacy. The people of Burkina Faso have asked me to speak to the Assembly, to the nations of peace, and to convey our deep appreciation to Member States. We ask them to continue to support our efforts to implant genuine democracy in Burkina Faso through the holding of free and transparent elections, which we will be organizing shortly.

I have spoken at length about my country, but now I wish to address some major concerns on the international scene.

First, the global economic situation continues to develop unfavourably and thus makes demands of us, particularly with regard to our common commitment to eradicate poverty, especially in developing countries. It is completely obvious that we are far from having successfully risen to the challenge of fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals, although several Member States have made significant progress. We must thus redouble our efforts and take robust action in order to improve the living conditions of our populations. "A new commitment to action" — the theme we have chosen for our session calls on us to act quickly to attain tangible results through programmes that are ambitious and, above all, pragmatic.

We should note, in that context, that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda adopted at the third International Conference on Financing for Development lays the groundwork for the effective implementation of the post-2015 development agenda that we have recently adopted (see resolution 70/1). We welcome the holding of that Conference, and we hope that the consensus forged around a new generation of Sustainable Development Goals will bring about social and economic well-being for our populations.

Climate change, a key parameter of development, merits particular attention. That is why the the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Paris in December, is so important. The environment pact that should result from that event should enable us to strengthen the protection of our planet against

climate disasters and environmental aggression arising from the abuses of a consumer society.

In 70 years of its existence, the United Nations has unflinchingly endeavoured to work for a world of peace, a world that is safe. Burkina Faso reaffirms its determination to resolutely support peacekeeping efforts around the world. We are already actively participating in peacekeeping operations, in our sister Republic of Mali, for example, where the mission is twofold: to ensure security in the country and to combat terrorism. We contribute to the international community's efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism, as the eradication of those phenomena requires a global coalition.

On the issue of disarmament, we must continue our efforts to strengthen confidence among our States. Such confidence facilitated the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action of 14 July 2015 on the Iran nuclear issue, which reassured the international community with regard to its legitimate fears concerning nuclear proliferation.

We encourage the States Members of the United Nations likewise to move towards a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

With regard to Western Sahara, my country, which has always encouraged a negotiated political solution, reaffirms its endorsement of the initiative of the Kingdom of Morocco promoting a status of autonomy for the Sahara region, as a credible and realistic alternative in the conclusion of that dispute.

With regard to the American sanctions imposed on Cuba, Burkina Faso favours its total lifting. We also welcome the recent positive developments between Cuba and the United States of America, which augure well for a definitive normalization of bilateral relations between the two countries.

A full Member of our Organization, Burkina Faso endorses the reforms aimed at streamlining the functioning of the United Nations. On Security Council reform, we reiterate our full support for the African position, which is based on the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

Always respectful of the ideals of the United Nations, which are based on the principles of peaceful coexistence, dialogue and the peaceful resolution of disputes, we welcome and encourage a rapprochement

between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China on Taiwan.

Before concluding, I wish to convey my appreciation for the international solidarity shown in eradicating the Ebola virus. We must not relax our vigilance. We must intensify international cooperation to maintain those results and ensure that the countries severely affected by that disease can recover. The virtues of international solidarity and dialogue among nations must continue to inspire the United Nations so that together we can meet the challenges of our time.

In the tremendous task before us of building an international society that is more democratic and humane, Burkina Faso can always be found in the front ranks. Burkina Faso wishes to reiterate its good will and deeply thank the Assembly, yet again.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Transition, President of Faso and Minister of National Defense, Veteran Affairs and Security of Burkina Faso for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Michel Kafando, President of the Transition, President of Faso and Minister of National Defense and Veteran Affairs and Minister of Security of Burkina Faso, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs, Minister of Rodrigues and National Development Unit of the Republic of Mauritius

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs, Minister of Rodrigues and National Development Unit of the Republic of Mauritius.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs, Minister of Rodrigues and National Development Unit of the Republic of Mauritius, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs, Minister of Rodrigues and National

Development Unit of the Republic of Mauritius, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth (Mauritius): Twelve years ago, I bade farewell to the Assembly, as I had decided to retire from active politics thereafter, which I did. However, destiny and the wish of the people of Mauritius brought me back into the political arena, and I stand here anew as Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, following my electoral victory in December 2014 through free and fair elections.

This is yet another affirmation of the fact that Mauritius upholds a high tradition of democracy, respect for human rights, the rule of law and peaceful coexistence. We will solemnly continue to uphold those universal values, which require our careful nurturing as States Members of the United Nations. For indeed, there can be no better tribute to the United Nations, as we celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the Charter, than to see nations working together to sustain those values and to promote the establishment of peace and security.

In that context, we commend the Secretary-General for the timely setting up of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations to review the United Nations peace architecture. We are particularly supportive of the recommendation for stronger and deeper partnerships among global and regional organizations aimed at promoting international peace and security. For we in Mauritius have witnessed how the collective efforts of the United Nations, the African Union, the Southern African Development Community, the Indian Ocean Commission and other regional economic communities unlocked the political stalemate in Madagascar, enabling our neighbour and brother nation to pursue its path to development. Similar collaboration has also enabled the African Union to deploy robust operations in complex situations in Mali, the Central African Republic and Somalia.

Mauritius strongly condemns the recent coup in Burkina Faso and appreciates the current initiatives of the United Nations, the African Union and Economic Community of West African States to keep that country on the path of democracy. Mauritius is fully committed to the implementation of Agenda 2063 of the African Union, which represents the collective vision of Africans for a peaceful, united and prosperous Africa.

We congratulate the Palestinian Authority on the occasion of the formal recognition by the United

Nations of Palestine as an Observer. Mauritius calls on the international community to put in even greater efforts to ensure that the two independent, secure and viable States of Palestine and Israel live peacefully side by side. Similarly, we wish to see an end to the phenomenon of refugees fleeing one tragedy only to face an even greater disaster.

The spread of armaments, nuclear proliferation, terrorism and piracy remain important threats to world peace and require our constant vigilance. My country will therefore pursue its fight against piracy as a member of the Contact Group on Somali Piracy and welcomes the decision to review the boundaries of the High Risk Area, so as to reduce inflationary pressures on maritime and freight costs. We welcome the agreement reached on the Iranian nuclear issue and call for the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, as it can contribute to international peace and security.

Let me share with the Assembly the fact that Mauritius acceded to the Arms Trade Treaty in July, and yesterday I deposited our instrument of accession to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. As we deal with the issue of armaments, we must remain conscious of the fact that the biggest weapon of all remains fear — the fear that terrorists use so extensively to curtail freedom of thought, freedom of expression and impose their intolerance upon those who dare to be different. Mauritius unreservedly condemns terrorism, in all its forms and remains committed to combating intolerance and extremism, whether at the domestic level or internationally.

As we focus on peace and security, let us continue to let ourselves be inspired by the life and deeds of Mahatma Gandhi, whose birth date we are commemorating today. We have another golden opportunity here to pay tribute to the Mahatma, the apostle of nonviolence, the man who shunned intolerance and who asked us to live simply so that others may simply live.

As a small island developing State (SIDS) that is vulnerable to natural hazards, Mauritius believes that the greatest challenge to peace and security in the years to come will be climate change, which requires our utmost attention now. If we do not act collectively and in a spirit of solidarity, if we are unable to reach a binding climate agreement at the coming United Nations Climate Change Conference that would limit the world temperature increase to less than 1.5°C compared to

1990, we will be failing in our duty towards Mother Earth and future generations.

Let there be a space carved out for small island developing States, the most vulnerable of all, for the least developed countries (LDCs) and for Africa to enable them to implement fully the necessary mitigation and adaptation measures. Let financing be available and predictable, in addition to the sharing of technology to address a collective threat. In this respect, Mauritius is pleased to host the Commonwealth Climate Finance Skills Hub, which will be launched at the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta. This mechanism aims to assist SIDS and LDCs access much-needed funds for adaptation and mitigation.

Mauritius particularly welcomes Sustainable Development Goal 5, relating to women's and girls' empowerment. Mauritius has made steady progress on this agenda and continues to put in place appropriate strategies to further promote gender equality in all spheres of development. I am proud to announce that for the first time in history, my country has three women in high positions: President of the Republic, Vice-President, and Speaker of the National Assembly of Mauritius.

There can be no democracy without human rights and no human rights without development. A balance needs to be maintained in the trident of peace, human rights and development.

We are living at a time of uncertainty when not a single nation is immune from external shocks, but some are more exposed than others.

As a small developing State, my country is highly vulnerable to external shocks and a high current account deficit. We depend on foreign markets for tourism, trade and investments, and we have limited fiscal space to manoeuvre. In addition, our ageing population not only leads to a reduction of our productive capacity, but also costs significant resources in terms of health care financing and retirement benefits. However, against this bleak backdrop, my Government is making sure that the welfare State, of which we are so proud, is maintained. We are re-engineering our economy. We have pledged to achieve an average gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 5.5 per cent annually as from 2017 on the back of a technology- and innovation-driven economy focusing on sustainability and human development.

More than ever, Mauritius needs the support of the international community to untangle itself from the middle-income web and reach the high-income country status. Financial institutions and development partners need to look beyond our relatively high GDP, which obscures the real cost that we have to pay for our development and precludes us from accessing vital development finance and support. Development partners should not forget that the specific and unique vulnerabilities of SIDS have been reiterated, highlighted and acknowledged by world leaders in the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and now in the post-2015 agenda.

It is gratifying to note that the Addis Ababa International Conference on Financing for Development has pledged to support the economic transformation of SIDS and LDCs through domestic resource mobilization, catalytic use of official development assistance and strong trade commitments. These promises should be effectively translated into reality to drive forward our sustainable development agenda.

Mauritius is committed to upholding good governance, transparency and the rule of law at all levels. We have been very active in ensuring effective implementation of international standards of transparency and exchange of information, with a view to combating tax evasion, money laundering and other malpractices. Mauritius was one of the earliest States to sign a Multilateral Competent Authority Agreement with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), to automatically exchange information on financial matters, and in June we reaffirmed our commitment by officially signing the OECD's multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters.

In March this year, Mauritius was privileged to host the signature ceremony for the United Nations Convention on Transparency in Treaty-based Investor-State Arbitration (resolution 69/116, annex), otherwise known as the Mauritius Convention on Transparency. By being the first country to sign and ratify the Convention, we are forcefully demonstrating our commitment to democratic participation, transparency and good governance.

The rule of law should be promoted not only at the national, but also at the international, level. We need to pursue meaningful efforts to reform the United Nations to make it more responsive to the needs and aspirations of all the Member States. If our Organization is to

remain legitimate, there should be a comprehensive reform of the Security Council. The status quo is not an option. The legitimate aspiration of Africa for permanent representation in the Council should not be denied. Mauritius reaffirms its commitment to the African Common Position, enshrined in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. Small island developing States, which represent over a quarter of United Nations membership, deserve representation on the Council. Likewise, Mauritius supports India's rightful aspiration to a permanent seat in a reformed Security Council.

Mauritius has always firmly supported the resolution of disputes by peaceful means, as inscribed in the Charter of the United Nations. We believe that, in accordance with resolutions of the Assembly, it is high time to complete the process of decolonization in Africa.

It is also high time to resolve the situation that prevents Mauritius from effectively exercising its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago and the island of Tromelin, which form an integral part of the territory of Mauritius. The Chagos Archipelago was illegally excised by the United Kingdom from the territory of Mauritius prior to its accession to independence, in breach of international law and resolutions of the Assembly. In the wake of that illegal excision, the Mauritians who were residing at the time in the Chagos Archipelago were forcibly evicted by the British authorities, in total disregard of their human rights. Most of them were moved to the main island of Mauritius. The Government of Mauritius is fully sensitive to their plight and to their legitimate aspiration, as Mauritian citizens, to resettle in the Archipelago.

Mauritius welcomes the Award of the Arbitral Tribunal delivered on 18 March against the United Kingdom, under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We welcome the Tribunal's decision that the Marine Protected Area purportedly declared by the United Kingdom around the Chagos Archipelago was established in violation of international law. We also welcome the Tribunal's unanimous recognition that Mauritius has an interest in significant decisions bearing upon the uses of the Archipelago pending its return to the effective control of Mauritius.

This arbitral proceeding was the first occasion on which any international judge or arbitrator has considered the facts and history lying behind Mauritius' entitlement to sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago.

Mauritius appreciates the fact that two arbitrators have confirmed the opinion that the United Kingdom is not the coastal State in relation to the Chagos Archipelago. That view has not been contradicted by any other judge or arbitrator. It unquestionably confirms our stand that the Chagos Archipelago is and always has been an integral part of the territory of Mauritius.

The Tribunal underscores the United Kingdom's legally binding obligations to Mauritius. It establishes beyond doubt that under international law Mauritius has real, firm and binding rights over the Chagos Archipelago and that the United Kingdom must respect those rights. The Tribunal recognized that Mauritius has a legal interest in the Chagos Archipelago such that decisions affecting its future use cannot be taken without the involvement of Mauritius.

Despite the Tribunal's clear ruling, we regret that the United Kingdom appears to be adopting a different approach to Mauritius's rights. It recently launched a so-called consultation exercise on the potential resettlement of Mauritians of Chagossian origin in the Chagos Archipelago under conditions that again amount to a gross violation of their most basic human rights. Mauritius rejects this purported consultation exercise unreservedly. We wish to assure the international community that once Mauritius is able to effectively exercise its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, our brothers and sisters of Chagossian origin who resettle there will be able to live in dignity and enjoy their basic human rights, as they currently do in Mauritius.

Considering the Tribunal's decision, we urge the United States of America, which is currently using Diego Garcia for defence purposes, to engage in discussions with Mauritius regarding the long-term interests of Mauritius where the Chagos Archipelago is concerned, particularly in view of the affirmation by the President of the United States when he said so earnestly in his address to the Assembly on Monday that "we cannot stand by when the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a nation is flagrantly violated" (A/70/PV.13, p. 12).

The Government of Mauritius is resolutely committed to making every effort that accords with international law to enable it to effectively exercise its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, including the possibility of having further recourse to judicial or arbitral bodies. We urge the Assembly and the international community in general to support

Mauritius in its legitimate endeavours. The Assembly has a direct institutional interest in the resolution of the matter.

The Assembly has of course historically played a central role in addressing decolonization through the exercise of its powers and functions, especially in relation to Chapters XI through XIII of the Charter of the United Nations. In its resolution 1514 (XV), of 14 December 1960, on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples, the Assembly declared that any attempt to disrupt the territorial integrity of such a country was incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter. In resolution 2066 (XX), of 16 December 1965, which dealt specifically with Mauritius, the Assembly drew attention to the duty of the administering Power not to dismember the territory or violate the territorial integrity of the then colony.

The Assembly therefore has a responsibility to help to complete the historic process of decolonization that it so successfully instigated and oversaw in the second half of the twentieth century. That is why we are convinced that the Assembly should now establish a mechanism to enable and monitor the full implementation of its relevant resolutions.

I would like to take this opportunity to express Mauritius's deep appreciation for the unflinching support it has consistently received from members of the African Union, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77 and China, and other friendly countries on the issue of its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago.

As regards Tromelin, we urge France to pursue a dialogue with Mauritius in order to quickly resolve the dispute over that island in the spirit of friendship that has always characterized the relationship between our two countries.

(spoke in French)

We know we can count on France's nobility and its ideals of justice and fraternity to ensure that Mauritius can exercise effective sovereignty over Tromelin.

(spoke in English)

I will conclude by saying that for peace, security and inclusive and sustainable development to prevail in our countries, we must act from our hearts. Only then will we succeed in building the world we all dream of. We should take inspiration from the wisdom-packed message of Pope Francis, who blessed us with

his presence in the Assembly last week. As he said so magnanimously:

“It must never be forgotten that political and economic activity is only effective when it is understood as a prudential activity, guided by a perennial concept of justice and constantly conscious of the fact that, above and beyond our plans and programmes, we are dealing with real men and women, just like the Government leaders, who live, struggle and suffer, and are often forced to live in great poverty, deprived of all rights.”
(A/70/PV.3, p. 4)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs, Minister of Rodrigues and National Development Unit of the Republic of Mauritius for the statement he has just made.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs, Minister of Rodrigues and National Development Unit of the Republic of Mauritius, was escorted from the rostrum.

**Address by Mr. Timothy S. Harris,
Prime Minister, Minister for Sustainable
Development, National Security, People
Empowerment and Constituency Empowerment
of Saint Kitts and Nevis**

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister, Minister for Sustainable Development, National Security, People Empowerment and Constituency Empowerment of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Mr. Timothy S. Harris, Prime Minister, Minister for Sustainable Development, National Security, People Empowerment and Constituency Empowerment of Saint Kitts and Nevis, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Timothy S. Harris, Prime Minister, Minister for Sustainable Development, National Security, People Empowerment and Constituency Empowerment of Saint Kitts and Nevis, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Harris (Saint Kitts and Nevis): It is indeed an honour for me to address this organ of the United Nations in my capacity as Prime Minister of Saint

Kitts and Nevis, a privilege of service bestowed on me following our people’s historic victory at the polls in February of this year. I take pleasure in sharing the perspectives of the Government and people of Saint Kitts and Nevis on matters that are before the General Assembly at its seventieth session.

My delegation is pleased that the focus of the general debate, “The United Nations at 70: a new commitment to action”, will shed special light on the Sustainable Development Goals, which form the basis of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). We are in full agreement with the Assembly that the new partnerships for sustainable development will be at the centre of the work of the United Nations until the year 2030. We are optimistic that the post-2015 development agenda, when taken in conjunction with the recently adopted Addis Ababa Action Agenda and a forward-looking and responsible outcome at the Paris Climate Change Conference in December, represents a courageous step forward for humankind that, if fully implemented, will yield the kind of future that our children and grandchildren deserve.

So onward with action — the action that is required to create decent jobs for our people, build schools for our children, deliver quality health care for all and provide affordable homes to our working mothers and fathers. Be assured that Saint Kitts and Nevis stands committed to the process of implementation, which of course must include a robust, systematic and effective monitoring and review process.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Climate change is of utmost importance for us. It must never be placed on the proverbial back burner. I dare submit that for small island developing States (SIDS), like Saint Kitts and Nevis, it remains an existential threat. Our economic, social and environmental well-being is threatened by natural disasters, including devastating floods and persistent droughts, by sea-level rise, coastal erosion and ocean acidification. Those acts of nature have the capacity to undermine our economic growth, threaten food security and bring hardships on our people. The challenge to our vital tourism industry is unsettling, and the loss of entire coastal communities is devastating to our islands. The current situation in Dominica represents what islands face when dealing with climate change. We call on the international community to do more to help small island developing States adapt and adjust. We would like consideration

to be given not just to climate change adaptation and mitigation, but also to disaster response, recovery and insurance.

When we speak of adaptation to climate change and the wider issue of disaster-risk mitigation, it is incumbent on us to underscore the significant financial burden that is placed on national budgets by projects designed to build resilience and increase our chances of survival in the face of climate events. Access to global funding mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund is of critical importance to us. For too long we have been hamstrung by complex application procedures that have prevented us from accessing the vital funds needed to enable us to achieve sustainable development. We appreciate the recent decision by the Green Climate Fund Board to aim for a floor of 50 per cent of the adaptation allocation for particularly vulnerable countries. We also appreciate the importance placed on filling capacity gaps in assessing and managing climate finance. Access to finance, if it is to be meaningful, must be simplified and it must be timely.

My delegation welcomes the establishment of the SIDS DOCK facility for sustainable energy, which will serve as a clearing house for the implementation of climate-related projects in small island developing States. We acknowledge the assistance provided by our partners in development. We are convinced that working closely with our partners to build effective and meaningful partnerships will accelerate the pathway to achieving sustainable development in all its dimensions.

Saint Kitts and Nevis has emerged as a leader in renewable energy development in the Caribbean. Even now, our country has a mix of wind and solar power in our energy grid. By 2016, we shall add a waste-to-energy programme and by 2018 we shall add geothermal energy on the island of Nevis. We are working assiduously to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and so reduce our carbon footprint. In that ambitious agenda, I thank all our international partners who have lent their technical assistance and expertise in advancing the renewable energy trust in my country.

The Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis is fully committed to social equity, justice, people's empowerment, good governance, transparency and, of course, prosperity for all. We are a people's Government, born out of the desire to put the development of our people first. We therefore are hoping to build broader constituencies of support on several fronts to address the problem of crime.

At home, we instituted a six-point plan in our fight to reduce violent crime, in particular. We are investing in new equipment and training to support our law enforcement professionals in the prevention, detection and solving of crimes. We are working hard to build a new professional culture among and between our law enforcement agencies. We are encouraged by new statistics pointing to a decline in major crimes in the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis, while accepting at the same time that much more still needs to be done.

Our Government is determined to aggressively confront the issues of crime. We will work on multiple tracks, including working to empower families and communities through education, skills development initiatives and civic programmes. We will work in schools, with non-governmental organizations, with our religious leaders and with the youths themselves, especially those most likely to become targets or perpetrators of criminal behaviour. We will offer them alternatives and opportunities for personal growth, decent work and constructive engagement in our society. It is a challenge to which we are committed and which we have to win.

However, if small States are to overcome the challenges posed and exacerbated by transnational criminal activities, we must work in partnership. We need the support of gun-producing countries to restrict the movement of illegal guns, light weapons and ammunition. Those who produce firearms must do more to stop them from reaching our shores. We must share information and improve access to opportunities, education and employment, because sustainable development is not achievable in an environment of crime and violence. Prosperity must be built brick by brick, day by day, and is realizable solely in the context of peaceful and safe societies.

Saint Kitts and Nevis, like the rest of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), has consistently lent its voice to the clarion call for greater attention to the harmful impact of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) on our main resource: our human capital. We continue to wrestle with the high incidence of diseases like cancer, heart disease, diabetes and hypertension in our country and, indeed, throughout the CARICOM region. We wish to reiterate our call for a stronger global response in combating NCDs in developing countries like ours. We remain hopeful that the inclusion of NCDs in the Sustainable Development Goals and the implementation of the targets and indicators at the

national level will reverse the high incidence of NCDs at the national, regional and global levels. The famous adage “A nation’s health is a nation’s wealth” resonates well with us. We therefore urge the United Nations system to play a leading role in that regard through its specialized agencies and regional offices.

We are pleased with the work of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and our Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS in CARICOM, and we call for continued global solidarity in that endeavour. My own country is on track to achieve zero mother-to-child transmission by the end of 2015, and we are committed to the aim of making CARICOM the first region in the world to end AIDS by 2030.

My Government is pleased to draw the international community’s attention to the invaluable contribution by the Government of the Republic of China on Taiwan in the areas of international cooperation, health, technology and peace and security. We live in an age when global partnership is a prerequisite for solving complex problems at the international level. The Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis is proud to announce that a relationship established more than three decades ago has yielded benefits in every area of sustainable development. Such a level of engagement between a developing country and its partner in development is indeed a model fit for consideration by small States such as ours in their quest to achieve sustainable development.

As we looked for models and arrangements that would advance our global agenda, we found pragmatic, beneficial value in our PetroCaribe agreement with Venezuela in support of poverty alleviation and social cohesion. Venezuela, under President Chávez and now under President Maduro, must be commended for showing the world that there can be a better and more helpful way to drive the development agenda. Saint Kitts and Nevis is of course cognizant of the territorial issues that exist between Venezuela and our fellow CARICOM member State of Guyana. We expect the leaders of Venezuela and Guyana to resolve their issues peacefully and in accordance with international law. My Government stands willing to assist alongside CARICOM in resolving those very challenging issues.

Saint Kitts and Nevis is indeed pleased by the recent decision of the Governments of Cuba and the United States of America to re-establish diplomatic relations, a solution that CARICOM has long advocated. It is an opportune time for us to usher in a new era of regional

partnership and cooperation. My own country has benefited substantially from capacity-building in the areas of education and health thanks to our partnership with Cuba. We applaud several prescriptions outlined in the address of President Castro to the Assembly (see A/70/PV.14) that call for better arrangements for Caribbean countries and for special and differential treatment.

We concur that the issue of reparation must be seen in the broader context of the evil of slavery and its lingering negative impact on the development of the Caribbean. Reparation has to be considered a pathway to addressing the continuing disadvantages that slavery has inflicted on our economies and societies.

As part of our development agenda, Saint Kitts and Nevis will work daily to ensure that every citizen has access to high-quality health care, a twenty-first-century education, decent work and an improved quality of life consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. We remain eager to work within the United Nations system, but the United Nations must be re-energized, retooled and refocused to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. In fact, we want to see a United Nations strengthened and reflective of the reality of our world, the needs of its membership and the wishes of our diverse and swelling populations.

In Saint Kitts and Nevis, we are building a modern, responsible and responsive society, rooted in democracy and the rule of law. We are optimistic that in the months and years ahead, the United Nations and its specialized agencies will be more robust, nimble, modern and responsive in order to complement our work and be better able to prevent crises in ways that effectively improve lives. Through such commitments and actions we will transform our beloved Saint Kitts and Nevis, the United Nations and indeed the world. God bless the country and people of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister, Minister for Sustainable Development, National Security, People Empowerment and Constituency Empowerment of Saint Kitts and Nevis for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Timothy S. Harris, Prime Minister, Minister for Sustainable Development, National Security, People Empowerment and Constituency Empowerment of Saint Kitts and Nevis, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Edi Rama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania

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

Mr. Edi Rama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Edi Rama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Rama (Albania): One year ago, Pope Francis began his visits around Europe in Albania. Last week, we saw here in America the hope and joy he could bring to the richest and most powerful country in the world. Imagine the joy he brought to us, not least by the praise he bestowed on Albania in saying that we were proof that a peaceful and fruitful coexistence between persons and communities of believers of different religions is not only desirable, but possible and realistic. We are rightly proud of that heritage; of coexisting as fraternal communities at a time when religious extremism, violence and terrorism are causing unspeakable suffering — violence and extremism that have put multitudes of people on the move in scenes reminiscent of the exodus of biblical times, with children, women and men arriving in their thousands on our doorsteps in the Balkans as they seek safety and protection in Europe.

As everyone here probably knows, ethnically motivated conflicts and violence are by no means unknown to us in the Balkans. Today, however, we as a region can finally dare to look ahead with hope and show that another way forward is possible.

Last year, for the first time after 100 years of frozen or live conflicts and confrontation in the Balkans, no guns were pointed at anyone's window. After a century scarred by conflict, we have finally seen a year of cooperation aimed at making the peace we have achieved a peace worth living.

The talks between Serbia and Kosovo, a new State contributing to stability in the region, have enabled the two countries to find common solutions to a series of issues, for the good of their peoples. And here I would like to call on all those in this Hall that have not yet recognized Kosovo to do so, and by so doing to make a straightforward contribution to strengthening stability,

peace and cooperation in a region that last year became a significant success story, a region in which hopes and dreams for the future are prevailing over the fears and nightmares of the past. Full recognition of Kosovo by every nation in this Assembly will be good for Serbia as well.

Moreover, last year I made the first visit of an Albanian Prime Minister to Belgrade in 68 years. And since the Western Balkans Summit, held in Vienna in August, our region has been successfully collaborating in a number of areas, including youth exchanges promoted by Albania and Serbia and inspired by the model of youth exchanges between France and Germany after the Second World War. We are focusing on this in particular because it is crucial for our young people to be aware of what history has taught us: that it is better to celebrate our differences than to fight over them and to learn from our past than to live in it, no matter the place, no matter the language, no matter the colour and no matter the religion.

In an unprecedented approach, the United Nations has engaged in conversation with hundreds and thousands of young people. In developing the Sustainable Development Goals, it has taken into account their hopes and expectations. As we affirm our pledge to achieve these Goals, let us focus our attention on the young. Let us — countries large and small — come together to begin the process of developing a global charter that puts the education of our young and our determination to give them a better future at its heart. We are going to introduce a reform in Albania that will include in the school curriculum such a charter of values. We have also been working hard to make progress on important reforms in a number of areas, including education, public administration, energy, economic development, justice and the fight against crime.

Albania is eager to be part of the global team that will meet this December in Paris to decide on measures to protect the environment in line with the objectives of sustainable development and the purposes to be served by the intended nationally determined contributions. This unprecedented event will be effective if we act as a great team and all play their parts. Yet, in an era beset by enormous challenges like climate change, violent extremism, poverty, inequality, corruption and illicit trafficking, first and foremost let us ensure the future by teaching young people the values of tolerance, respect

and understanding no matter the place, the language, the colour or the religion.

I was an artist before being elected to political office. Every day I still like to pick up a pencil or a pen or a paintbrush, even for a few minutes, and draw, doodle or paint. All of us are trying to paint our own big picture in our different ways, to set out a clear vision and to work towards it.

If the world were a painting, today it would probably be more grey than black or white. There are few certainties. And many splashes of glaring and harsh colours would warn us of the many dangers and threats we face. But here in this place, there are values and principles that we can apply to all the challenges in the world, and we need them now more than ever. At a time of tragic events, with the sounds of war around him, Winston Churchill noted: "Words are the only things that last forever." Let us all depict in words in our school curricula these values and principles of tolerance and respect for the diversity of faiths, identities, cultures, histories and beliefs, thereby recognizing the common humanity that we all share.

Obviously, global principles and values of tolerance, written in black on the white paper of a global charter, cannot wipe out violent extremism, hatred, stereotypes, discrimination and the scars they have caused. Yet these values, when they are put into words and taught in our schools, can bridge differences and inspire hearts and minds to take common action and usher in a better future for our world. The hearts and minds of our young people represent the best insurance for a better future. If we show them the right path, they will take it.

Let us also try to be a better team and demonstrate, first and foremost, that we — men and women, individuals and peoples — are joined together by our common humanity and must work together to build a common and sustainable future for all, no matter the place, no matter the language, no matter the colour and no matter the religion.

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

Mr. Edi Rama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Walid Al-Moualem, Deputy

Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Al-Moualem (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to congratulate Mr. Mogens Lykketoft on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at the seventieth session and to wish him success in leading the work of this session. I would also like to thank his predecessor for his presidency at the previous session.

I greet the Assembly of this great international Organization, which was originally established, with all its agencies, in order for peace and security to prevail in the world. I come from a country where security has been disrupted and peace has been disturbed — a country that has been experiencing a brutal war for more than four years. I greet the Assembly from a land baptized by the blood of its people, who are fighting terrorism and defending their fellow citizens against terrorism, while waiting for the United Nations to fulfil its promises and implement its resolutions aimed at combating terrorism.

The resolutions adopted by the Security Council under Chapter VII are still just ink on paper, mentioned only in press releases and media statements, while on the ground the countries funding, sponsoring and supporting terrorism are still fuelling extremism in the region, still arming and training terrorists and sending them to Syria and are indifferent to and unconcerned about the implementation of those resolutions.

I ask the Assembly, on behalf of the Syrians who are resisting this scourge, how long will the powerful Member States continue to intimidate other Member States committed to international law and to ignore States that disregard Security Council resolutions? What has the international community done to stop those States from committing criminal acts against the Syrian people? Why is there all this silence? The international community watched as this extremist ideology spread until it reached Europe and struck there as it is striking the Middle East now. It watched while sleeper cells were awakened and bombings and assassinations re-emerged in the West. The people of those countries are not guilty, yet they are beginning to pay the price for some of their politicians' support of terrorism.

Everyone here knows better than most that terrorism is an ideology that recognizes no boundaries, and that when this monster is on the move, it is not limited to

particular countries. The terrorism of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and of the Al-Nusra Front and other Al-Qaida-affiliated terrorist organizations is killing the innocent, capturing women and bombarding civilians with mortar shells. This terrorism is cutting off drinking water and destroying historic and cultural landmarks, including those on the World Heritage List, which form part of the heritage of all humankind. The most recent of such crimes was the destruction of the temples of Baal Shamin and Bel and the brutal killing of archaeologists.

Why do some countries support other countries that are accustomed to exporting their crises beyond their borders? Why do they support them while knowing that they only cause destruction? How can developed countries that hold elections and have parliaments align themselves with countries that do not have parliaments and do not recognize the rights of women, who represent half of society? How can the former accept such practices as sexual jihad, slaughter, cutting off hands and the systematic destruction of history, monuments and culture?

In the light of that situation, I affirm that Syria will continue to fight terrorism in word and deed. The Syrian armed forces are capable of cleansing the country of terrorists, despite the sacrifices involved and the high prices they have already paid and are continuing to pay. Syrian people from all backgrounds have also paid with their lives and in every other way in terms of security, the economy and their livelihood.

Now is the time for honesty and truth. It is the duty of the international community to stop the flow to Syria of terrorists, who, according to United Nations data, are coming from 100 countries to create a caliphate State. That State, as members all know, will not be limited to Syria or Iraq. Those who wish to lead such a caliphate have frequently stated that their goal is a State that stretches from Mecca throughout Europe, a State that, according to them, will restore the glory of the caliphate. If the international community does not stop States from supporting terrorism and sending terrorists, the fire that has broken out in Syria, Iraq and Libya will continue to spread.

Syria has not stopped advocating political dialogue and practising what it preaches. Its earlier vision — that the fight against terrorism must take priority if progress is to be made on other tracks — has proved to be correct. The Government cannot implement any democratic political measures related to elections, a

constitution or the like while terrorism is striking at home and threatening innocent civilians in the country. How can it ask the Syrian people to head to the ballot boxes when they are not safe either in the streets or in their homes because of the missiles and mortar shells launched against them by terrorist groups supported by countries whose identities are well known?

Nevertheless, we were, and still are, believers in political dialogue within the parameters known to all, namely, the preservation of national sovereignty, the unity of Syria's territory and people, and the maintenance of State institutions, which may, nonetheless, be developed and improved. Moreover, there has to be an understanding that the only way to achieve a political solution is through a Syrian-led national dialogue without any foreign interference. On the basis of those conditions, Syria agreed to participate in a second Geneva conference on Syria and the first and second round of talks on Syria held in Moscow.

In this regard, I would like to announce that Syria agrees to participate in the four brainstorming committees of experts proposed by the Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura. Mr. De Mistura has repeatedly confirmed that the role of these committees is mainly to exchange ideas and that they will conduct non-binding preliminary consultations whose agreed outputs can be used to prepare for the launching of the third Geneva conference on Syria.

Some imagine that Syria's acceptance of the political track — regardless of the form it takes, the initiative it is based on and the name it is given — stems from what they term the weakness of Syria's army and people on the ground. To them I say that Syria is strong and continues to fight terrorism, and that the Syrian army and the Syrian people are united in the face of terrorism. Let no one think that, after all Syria's sacrifices and steadfastness over more than four years, its adversaries can obtain through political means what they could not win militarily or that they will achieve at the negotiating table what they failed to achieve on the ground. The decision of the Syrian people lies in the hands of the Syrian people alone, and no one can deny them that right. I repeat: the decision of the Syrian people lies in their hands alone and no one can strip them of that right. The Syrian armed forces have astonished the world with their power, faith and persistence.

The important invitation of His Excellency President Vladimir Putin aimed at establishing an international/regional coalition to counter terrorism received the

attention and support of the Syrian Government. Terrorism cannot be fought only from the air, and all the previous operations to combat it have merely led to its spread and to further outbreaks. Air strikes are useless unless they are conducted in cooperation with the Syrian armed forces, which currently are alone in combating terrorism in Syria. Russian air strikes in Syria, which were launched at the request of and in coordination with the Syrian Government, are effectively supporting the Syrian efforts to combat terrorism.

The so-called Arab Spring was a spring only for Israel and its covert and known allies. Israel continues to attack Syria while the world watches. Israel is arming the terrorists and treating them in its hospitals. It is helping them with its intelligence services and supporting them, so that they will stand between it and the Syrian armed forces across the border. While those terrorists are being weakened, it is intervening directly through air strikes and artillery shelling, just as Turkey did and is still doing, whether in Aleppo or Idlib, and just as Saudi Arabia and Qatar, which are eager to shed Syrian blood by various means, are doing.

The continued support for terrorists and the escalation of their attacks on citizens in most regions and cities of Syria have led to shortages of basic commodities and services in many areas. The inhuman sanctions imposed by the European Union and the United States of America have exacerbated the hardships of Syrian civilians.

My Government is cooperating with the United Nations and its humanitarian agencies within the framework of response plans, agreed with the Syrian Government, to meet the basic needs of our citizens, especially those forced by terrorist activities to flee their homes, many of whom have gone to neighbouring countries. Some of those countries have accommodated them in camps for weapons training or in places that resemble detention and isolation facilities. I stress that the Syrian Government guarantees a safe return and a decent life for all citizens who are willing to return. At the same time, Syria continues to make every effort to deliver aid from international organizations to all Syrian citizens, without discrimination, wherever they may be.

The Syrian Arab Republic reiterates its support for the full restoration of the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967. It also emphasizes its rejection of all actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to alter the geographic or demographic characteristics of

the occupied Syrian Golan, in clear violation of relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 497 (1981) and 465 (1980). Furthermore, Syria confirms that the issue of Palestine is of central concern to the Syrian people, who support the inalienable and legitimate rights of the brotherly Palestinian people, in particular the right of return, the right to self-determination and the right to the establishment of an independent State on their own land, with Jerusalem as its capital.

At the end of 2013, Syria, acting on a proposal made by the President of the Russian Federation, His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Putin, acceded to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, with the aim of establishing in the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction. It also wanted to demonstrate to the whole world its opposition to any use of chemical weapons. Syria fulfilled the obligations that resulted from its accession to the Convention and completed its commitments despite the prevailing difficult situation. Thanks to Syria's cooperation, the Joint Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations was able to complete its task.

The Syrian Arab Republic would like to commend the Islamic Republic of Iran for its steadfastness in achieving the historic agreement that fulfils the aspirations of the brotherly people of Iran. The agreement recognizes Iran's right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and lifts the sanctions imposed against Iran and the freeze on its assets. It also opens up international relations for that brotherly country. The agreement proves that a diligent and serious diplomatic approach can be successful in overcoming all obstacles and can lead to a peaceful and just solution to a difficult issue.

Syria stresses that establishing a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is unachievable unless Israel, the only nuclear Power in the region, accedes to all the treaties banning such weapons. Furthermore, with respect to its nuclear facilities, Israel should conclude a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. At the same time, Syria emphasizes the right of all countries to acquire and develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

The imposition of unethical, unilateral and coercive measures by the United States and the European Union contradicts the rules of international law and the principles of free trade. On that basis, we congratulate Cuba on reaching an agreement with the United States that lifts the blockade imposed on it. It remains for all unilateral, coercive measures imposed on Syria and on the people of other countries, such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Belarus, to be lifted.

Finally, all those who claim to care about the security and safety of the Syrian people should know that if we are to achieve victory over terrorism and accomplish economic and political reforms, it is essential that the counter-terrorism resolutions of the Security Council be fully and honestly implemented. Only then can we begin the countdown to the end of war in Syria. Only then will we arrive at the final moments and can prepare to implement what has been agreed through political dialogue.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iceland.

Mr. Sveinsson (Iceland): The world has changed enormously since the establishment of the United Nations 70 years ago. It has become a real world body with 193 Member States. The United Nations has established a peacekeeping structure, overseen the development of a strong human rights framework and set up key agencies for development, humanitarian issues and the environment. And we have seen the codification of international law under the auspices of the United Nations through such landmark treaties as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Over the same period, the United Nations has witnessed the agonies and tragedies of several generations around the world —tragedies brought on by poverty, conflict and natural disasters.

The United Nations has not always met our expectations, but it is the only organization through which all countries can work to solve the problems that we face today and to prevent potential problems in the future. This anniversary year provides a striking example of how the world's nations, within the forum of the United Nations, can work together to chart a future for our peoples. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda are achievements of which we should be proud. Iceland, together with many other Member

States, worked hard to achieve the balanced result we see today. We are particularly pleased with the prominence of gender equality and the empowerment of women, which are key to sustainable development.

We are also pleased that the sustainable management of natural resources is central to both those Agendas. Eliminating hunger will require food security. That can be achieved only by safeguarding and sustainably managing the only two sources of food we have: the ocean and the land. Inefficient fisheries management and the lack of infrastructure in that field cost our societies around \$50 billion every year. Also, arable land the size of South Africa becomes degraded every year. We now have a blueprint for fixing that, and Iceland is committed to contributing to those efforts.

Another highly significant aim in terms of the sustainable management of natural resources is Goal 7, on affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. We need to aim for the elimination of carbon-based fuels and, in the meantime, to channel the enormous amount of subsidies granted in the fossil-fuel sector — some \$14.5 billion a day — towards renewable energy resources. That would be a good start, and here, those who count need to be counted.

Iceland also worked hard with others to include in the 2030 Agenda language that deals with non-communicable diseases, including neurological disorders.

The universal nature of our new, common Goals requires each of our States to contribute at the national, regional and global levels. None of us can succeed alone. Iceland is committed to playing its part in reaching those ambitious Goals.

Everywhere we are witnessing the drastic consequences of climate change. Last month, with participants from other Arctic countries, I took part in the Global Leadership Conference in Alaska, aimed at drawing attention to the impacts of climate change, which are particularly revealing in that region. Temperatures in the Arctic are increasing at more than twice the average global rate. The region's fragile ecosystem is increasingly at risk, and Arctic communities are experiencing at first hand the challenges of dealing with a rapidly changing climate. The consequences are far reaching, as shrinking glaciers in the North contribute to higher sea levels in the South.

There is still time to turn things around. The meeting on the United Nations Framework Convention

on Climate Change in Paris in December will be a chance — maybe our last one — to put ourselves on track towards a sustainable future and to take decisions based on best available science. Iceland is committed to an ambitious, long-term global climate agreement and intends, working collectively with other countries in Europe, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40 per cent in 2030.

We have been asked to focus on the road ahead for peace, security and human rights. When injustice is the everyday experience of a large part of the population, and when people have no voice, peace and security are at risk. And without peace and security, we will not achieve sustainable development. At the same time, peace and security considerations cannot be used as a justification for violating human rights.

The imposition of the death penalty should not be justified by the pretext of needing to maintain order and security. In that regard, the case of Ali Mohammed al-Nimr in Saudi Arabia, a minor when his alleged crimes took place, is particularly worrying. I call on Saudi Arabia to uphold its international obligations and commute his sentence.

One characteristic of a just and humane society is the way it treats its minorities and the most vulnerable. Iceland will continue to work with others for non-discrimination, including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Human rights are for all men, all women, all girls and all boys, not just for some. “We the people” includes everyone.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Iceland will continue to be a champion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, as are many other committed Member States. At the beginning of the year I co-hosted, with my colleague from Suriname, a successful Barbershop Conference here at the United Nations. The aim was to get others to join in getting men to be more active on the issue of gender equality. I saw it also as support for the He For She campaign run by UN-Women. In the light of that success, Iceland intends to host Barbershops in other international organizations of which we are members.

The small size of our world is being set into sharp relief by the ongoing migrant and refugee situation. Particularly in Europe, well before the Syrian crisis, we witnessed the desperate efforts of men and women fleeing their own countries, often with tragic

consequences, in search of a safe future for themselves and their children. The search for a better life is nothing new. About one fifth of Iceland’s population left our country in the late nineteenth century in the face of extreme poverty and harsh weather conditions. For many Icelanders and millions of European who undertook the perilous journey to North America, emigration was a matter of survival. Others were escaping injustice and political systems in which they had no voice.

The current refugee crisis, however, is unprecedented in recent times. The term migration hardly captures the severity of the situation. This is an exodus. We have all seen the figures. This year alone, some 500,000 refugees and migrants have crossed the Mediterranean to Europe, and millions have fled to neighbouring countries. Here, I would like to pay tribute to Syria’s neighbours, who have quietly and resolutely given shelter to the great majority of the refugees. The conflict in Syria, with its complex roots in the larger conflicts in the region, has produced a scale of suffering that we all hoped never to see again. The long-term solution has to be to solve the conflict in Syria, and others like it, by political means.

The Security Council bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We call on all Security Council members, in the words of the Charter, to “unite their strength” to halt the bloodshed in Syria. The situation is already having consequences far beyond the region. Meanwhile, it is the humanitarian duty of the rest of the world to seek ways to reduce the suffering of the refugees. These are extreme circumstances and call for extraordinary measures.

The Icelandic Government has decided to allocate \$16 million to deal with the crisis and to support the vital work of front-line United Nations institutions, like the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Food Programme and UNICEF, and to welcome increased numbers of refugees to Iceland. This is, however, not a numbers game. There are different circumstances in different countries. But we all have to do what we can. These are defining moments in history.

Iceland reiterates its strong conviction that the only path to peace between Israel and Palestine is the two-State solution. Both sides need to commit fully to that solution, and they must refrain from actions that undermine it. Of continuing and deep concern is the humanitarian situation of the Palestinians, particularly

in Gaza, where we continue to call for the lifting of the blockade. Israel must abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law. That includes an immediate halt to the demolition of Palestinian homes and an end to the displacement of Palestinians from their land. Terrorist activity on the part of Palestinian elements is also totally unacceptable and can only undermine peace. We condemn all acts of violence against civilians. The safety and well-being of civilians on both sides must always be ensured.

While the situation in the Middle East region gives little cause for optimism, there has recently been a triumph of diplomacy over conflict. I would like to congratulate all the parties that achieved the breakthrough agreement on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear programme. We hope to see that agreement contribute to greater stability in the region. We should be careful not to forget other disputes, which, if not attended to, could flare up. Here, I am thinking of the Western Sahara.

On this seventieth anniversary of the foundation of the United Nations, we should recall the basic tenets of the Charter of the United Nations and related instruments. They include refraining from "the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State". It is a matter of grave concern when a permanent member of the Security Council acts to undermine the territorial integrity of another State. The rule of law and the peaceful resolution of disputes are of existential importance for small States like mine.

The United Nations is not perfect. I would like, however, to compliment Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the determination with which he has approached the Organization's shortcomings. There is important work under way to revitalize the General Assembly. Iceland welcomes resolution 69/321 on that topic, in particular with regard to the appointment of the Secretary-General. After a succession of eight men in the position of Secretary-General, it is high time for qualified female candidates to be seriously considered for that most important international position. The same applies to the position of the President of the General Assembly. The gender imbalance in high-level positions must be addressed if we wish to strengthen the credibility of the United Nations.

Iceland has long supported an expansion in the permanent and non-permanent seats in the Security Council. It is a difficult process, but we cannot ignore

the current increasingly indefensible situation, in which the Security Council represents the world as it was in 1945. The danger is that its authority will gradually be undermined if it does not better reflect the world as it is.

Iceland is ready to look at all options for squaring the circle. In the meantime, Iceland has stated its support for the initiative by France and Mexico on regulating the use of the veto and for the code of conduct on Security Council actions against genocide and other crimes against humanity, drafted by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group of States.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on His Excellency Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Al-Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Shaikh Al-Khalifa (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, it is my pleasure to warmly congratulate the President and his friendly country, the Kingdom of Denmark, on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. I wish him sustained success in directing the work of the General Assembly and in bolstering the role that the Assembly plays in addressing the challenges that the world and the international community as a whole face today. I also wish to express my appreciation to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, President of the General Assembly at the sixty-ninth session, for all his efforts in conducting the business of that session and for his concrete initiatives aimed at attaining our common goals.

I would also like to express my deep appreciation for the hard work of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who spares no effort to improve the effectiveness of the Organization in the face of the increasingly complex problems and crises in the world. I commend his comprehensive annual report on the work of the Organization (A/70/1) and the important steps that he has taken to address the numerous challenges on issues, including sustainable development, climate change, conflicts, humanitarian disasters and the refugee crisis, in addition to the deadly diseases, poverty and hunger in many developing countries.

At this juncture, I wish to totally submit myself to the will of Allah and express our heartfelt condolences to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of the brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and to the Muslim nation as

a whole, following the tragic stampede that occurred during this year's Hajj a few days ago. We highly value the great and historic role played by the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its blessed efforts as guardian of that holy land and as servant of the guests of the sacred shrine, dedicating all means necessary to the organization of the Hajj and Umrah and their rites. Anyone who denies that fact ignores the scope of the responsibilities that the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia discharges so ably. We strongly deplore the false allegations made by President Hassan Rouhani of the Islamic Republic of Iran in his statement before the General Assembly (see A/70/PV.13) and reject any offense against or belittling of the tremendous efforts made over the years by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

A few days ago, the General Assembly took an important step for the welfare of humankind by adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). We made it a point to participate in the process, which is consistent with our full support for United Nations actions aimed at furthering development goals and with the Kingdom of Bahrain's record of achieving remarkable results in the fields of education, health, youth empowerment, poverty alleviation, literacy and the enhancement of human rights, as documented in international reports.

Bahrain, as a pioneering country, has been classified in the United Nations Human Development Index as being among the countries with a very high level of human development. It has scored a 5 per cent economic growth rate over the past five years, thanks to the reform process instituted by His Majesty King Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa of the Kingdom of Bahrain and his profound interest in meeting the aspirations of the people of Bahrain at the political, economic and social levels. We shall persevere in our development efforts by devising plans and programmes for the implementation of the new post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

In the context of our efforts to enhance the Sustainable Development Goals contained in the new Agenda, my country will host, on 6 and 7 December, the Ministerial Conference on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Arab States. It will be the first regional conference to be held anywhere following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The world testified to the success and excellent record of the Kingdom of Bahrain in the field of sustainable development when, here in New York, the

International Telecommunication Union conferred an Information and Communications Technologies in Sustainable Development Award for 2015 on His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, thereby confirming the esteem in which the Kingdom and His Royal Highness are held, as evidenced by a series of distinguished awards in the recent past.

Given that the environment is one of the three dimensions of sustainable development, we want to stress the importance of solidarity and joint action to address the major challenges of climate change. We look forward to the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held later this year in Paris. We hope that the session will result in a binding and ambitious agreement to deal with that dangerous phenomenon and its repercussions, especially on small island developing States.

The current session of the General Assembly coincides with the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, an Organization that we all cherish, whose indispensable role we all appreciate and which, for us, is indispensable. We shall relentlessly endeavour to attain its goals, especially in the light of the tragedies and hardships faced by humankind at the end of the Second World War, with its huge toll in lives, the displacement of peoples and the obliteration of a great number of cultural monuments in many parts of the world. All of that should make us firmly united, cooperative and transparent, so as to avoid the recurrence of such past tragedies and to lay strong foundations for international cooperation leading to safe future for humankind.

It is no secret that the Organization's noble humanitarian goals have not been fully attained, yet we still maintain the hope of achieving them, thereby closing a painful and cruel chapter and inaugurating a new era without wars. Our region has had its share of wars — war after war, albeit of various types and objectives — and all were destructive. We have seen confrontations with occupiers. We have seen opposition to foreign interference that has sought to impose hegemony, undermine national sovereignty and exploit extremist groups and organizations as well as those financing them in order to jeopardize any national gains, destroy cultural heritage and obliterate national and regional identities.

Taking on those challenges is not easy, nor is the way carpeted with flowers. Rather, it is a long and

arduous road, requiring uninterrupted work, persistent efforts and collective confrontation with the difficulties that need to be overcome. Paramount among them is the disregard by some – Iran, for example — of the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and of good-neighbourliness. There is also the exploitation of extremist groups, the provision of safe havens to fugitives, the opening of training camps for terrorist groups and the smuggling of arms and explosives. My country has experienced that directly. Bahraini citizens and expatriates, the security personnel protecting them, and the nation at large have been the targets of murder and other criminal acts that have claimed the lives of 16 security personnel and injured some 3,000 people.

Those dangerous criminal acts go even further. Barely two days ago, the security authorities in the Kingdom of Bahrain discovered a cache of locally made bombs in the heart of a densely populated area. The cache included some 1.5 tons of highly explosive material destined for use in the manufacturing of such potent explosives as C4, RDX and TNT, together with other chemical substances and a number of explosive devices ready for use, automatic weapons and guns, hand grenades, ammunition and wireless equipment.

For that reason, I would like to state that the Kingdom of Bahrain and a number of sisterly countries in the region have attempted, through various ways and means, to invite Iran to seek normal neighbourly relations based on respect for the sovereignty and independence of nations and non-interference in their internal affairs. The security and stability of a State cannot be detrimental to those of another State. Iran would be better advised not to squander the resources of its people on foreign adventures but rather to use those resources to achieve development and progress and build bridges with its neighbours, so that all may live together in peace. Iran has responded in a negative manner, however, and we were left with no choice but to recall the Kingdom's Ambassador to Iran and declare the chargé d'affaires of the Iranian Embassy a *persona non grata*, as part of the measures we have taken to protect our people and interests.

The Kingdom of Bahrain and its sister countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have not hesitated to support Yemen in response to a request by His Excellency Mr. Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, President of the Republic of Yemen, that we help the brotherly people of Yemen, who have been confronted

with rebel groups that benefit from Iranian support. Those groups failed to live up to their commitments and took over the institutions of the Yemeni State. Our aim was to curb the deterioration in the security and humanitarian situation there. The position taken by the GCC in support of Yemen is a matter of principle and a long-standing position arising from our conviction that Yemen's security and stability constitute an integral part, not only of the security of the Arabian peninsula but also of the entire region at large.

That has inevitably led to military confrontation, as we had no other choice available to us. All roads were blocked by the obstinacy of the rebel groups and their belligerent designs with regard to the people of Yemen and the region. To paraphrase my brother, the late Prince Saud Al Faisal, we are not warmongers, but when the war drums are beaten, we will be ready. I say that to show that the GCC countries are, and have always been, advocates of peace, not war.

We are steadfast in our efforts to fulfil the aspirations of the Yemeni people, and we shall remain faithful to our position until those who have taken up arms have laid them down, until those who have overthrown the legitimate Government have abandoned their greed and put an end to the occupation of the State institutions, and until those who have broken the 2014 peace agreement have come back to their senses. Only then can the situation be conducive to bringing together all the factions of the Yemeni people through a constructive national dialogue based on the GCC Initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcome of the comprehensive national dialogue and the Riyadh conference and the unconditional implementation of Security Council resolution 2216 (2015), which provides the basis for a settlement of the Yemeni crisis.

We welcome the efforts of the United Nations in that respect. While we appreciate the humanitarian efforts of the United Nations in favour of Yemen and its people and the remarkable role played by the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre in Yemen in conjunction with assistance provided by the GCC and other friendly countries, we urge the international community to intensify its assistance and alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people.

We regret that many States have become a breeding ground for terrorist groups and organizations, which have expanded under the cover of various sectarian and religious affiliations with the sole purpose of advancing

their own agendas aimed at controlling nations and obliterating the will of peoples. The Syrian experience is an abiding example. That country has become an arena for confrontation among terrorist organizations such as Daesh, Hizbullah and others, which has led, inter alia, to the destruction of ancient cultural sites in the country.

As Syria goes down this treacherous and slippery slope, we call for an end to the situation and the return of that sisterly country to its previous condition of unity, harmony, security and stability. To that end, foreign military intervention must cease, and a unanimously accepted political settlement, consistent with the final communiqué of the Action Group for Syria (A/66/865, annex), must be reached.

Reference to Syria automatically draws our attention to a related humanitarian crisis that requires all Member States to take concrete and tangible action to address it. I speak now of the crisis of the Syrian refugees and displaced persons. It represents the worst ramification of the current situation in Syria and is a major humanitarian disaster, unprecedented since the Second World War.

The GCC member States have not remained idle in the face of that tragic situation. They have taken comprehensive and practical humanitarian action by hosting around 3 million Syrian brothers and sisters and granting them permits to stay, with all the attendant rights, such as free education, health care, the right to employment and an acceptable standard of living. In that respect, we also appreciate the major contribution of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which is providing Syrians with care and opportunities for a decent life. We also call for concerted efforts to support Jordan and to share the great burden that it has taken up. I should also mention the considerable efforts of Egypt, Lebanon and Turkey in bearing that humanitarian burden.

With regard to the sisterly country of Iraq, we hope that the great efforts of Prime Minister Haider Al Abadi to unite the Iraqi people and overcome the challenges facing his country at this critical juncture will be crowned with success and that stability, security and peace will be restored. We call for the protection of Iraq's territorial integrity, an end to foreign interventions, especially by Iran, and the preservation of Iraq's stability. We call for an all-out war against terrorist groups such as Daesh and other armed militias that have found in Iraq favourable conditions for their activities.

Libya is not immune to the threats posed by international terrorist groups, and the situation there has deteriorated, as we all know. The only way out is for all of the parties to the Libyan crisis to commit to giving precedence to the highest interest of the nation in order to restore its security, stability and unity. We welcome the text for the framework to create a Government of National Accord so as to put an end to the fighting and bloodshed in this sisterly country.

We reiterate the consistent position of the Kingdom of Bahrain, which rejects terrorism in all its forms, regardless of its motivations or the entity backing or financing it. Terrorist acts by Daesh are unprecedented and constitute crimes against humanity. Such terrorism will stop only if a collective effort is made at all levels to destroy its sources of financing. That is consistent with our commitment to combating that threat, which jeopardizes the security and safety of our countries, as well as our shared humanity.

The Kingdom of Bahrain, in cooperation with the countries of the region and with the support of our allies, will work to defeat that threat. To that end, we have been participating in the efforts of the Global Coalition to Counter Daesh, militarily, logistically, intellectually and in the field of communications.

In that context, in November last year, the Kingdom of Bahrain hosted the Manama Meeting on Combating the Financing of Terrorism. This November we will host a conference on the protection of civil society institutions against the risk of being exploited as channels for funds intended for terrorists. In the near future, we will also organize a conference on protection against improvised explosive devices, which are the favourite and most frequently used weapons of terrorist groups all over the world.

What is taking place today in Al-Quds Al-Sharif offends the feelings of all Muslims around the world, as they witness the violations committed by the occupying Israeli authorities and Israeli extremist groups against the sanctity of the holy Al-Aqsa Mosque Compound. Such illegal and inhuman acts run the risk of wrecking any chance for peace. Instead they create an atmosphere filled with more tension, violence, extremism and hatred, all of which do not contribute to building the human relations and mutual respect that all religions advocate.

Nor do such acts contribute to building peaceful societies that preserve national dignity and a culture

of peaceful coexistence. To quote Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's iconic phrase before the Israeli Knesset, "no one can build his happiness at the expense of the misery of others".

Attaining that happiness will be possible only when the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people are granted through the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, within the borders of 4 June 1967. Occupation, coercive practices and the construction and expansion of settlements should come to an end. The right of Palestinians to return to their towns and villages, consistent with the relevant international resolutions, the two-State solution and the Arab Peace Initiative, must be acknowledged.

In that connection, we welcome the raising of the Palestinian flag at United Nations Headquarters as a first step of great symbolic value, underscoring international support for the right of the Palestinian State to full membership in the United Nations, which we look forward to in the near future.

We want to reaffirm the importance of the agreement between Iran and the P5+1 group on the Iranian nuclear programme. We hope that it will contribute to security and stability in the region. However, we believe that the agreement does not eliminate all sources of tension resulting from Iran's attitudes towards the countries of the region. It covers some future issues, but it does not touch on the real problems that we face today, since Iran will attempt to destabilize the region and its security by providing support to terrorist organizations, including by smuggling weapons and explosives, as I mentioned earlier in detail. Iran is also openly interfering in the internal affairs of our States. It has occupied the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, namely, Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs, and refuses to end that occupation either through direct negotiations or by accepting arbitration by the International Court of Justice..

In that context, we reaffirm the importance of a Middle East nuclear-free-zone, including the Arabian Gulf region, as well as the need for Israel to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to place its nuclear facilities under comprehensive safeguards if the International Atomic Energy Agency. I regret that no agreement was reached at the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, recently held in New York .

The Kingdom of Bahrain reiterates its full support for the Arab Republic of Egypt and the tireless efforts of President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi to achieve development, progress and prosperity for the Egyptian people, consolidate the foundations of a modern State and combat terrorism. The building of a new Suez Canal and the other major projects decided at the Sharm El-Sheikh Conference to support the Egyptian economy clearly demonstrate the determination to enhance genuine development so that Egypt, the land of civilization, will remain a source of security and prosperity for all and a pillar of the Arab world. In that way, it can continue playing its leading role in our common Arab endeavours to defend our cause and our national security.

Similarly, we would like to put on record our consistent and principled position vis-à-vis the Moroccan Sahara question. We express our support for the territorial integrity of Morocco and the efforts of the United Nations to find a negotiated political settlement accepted by all parties on the basis of the Moroccan initiative on self-government.

Confronted with such daunting challenges to our region's long-term security and stability, we need more than ever to reflect deeply and seriously on how to create a mechanism for collective action that can bring all Middle Eastern States together with a view to consolidating security and stability. We need to discuss among ourselves, with clarity and transparency, all those issues and reach solutions to build confidence through practical policies and steady progress. We would then be able to preserve what we have already achieved for our peoples and countries in terms of construction, comprehensive development and mutual understanding and cooperation. Such a mechanism would preserve the sovereignty of our countries and their territorial integrity and ensure non-interference in their internal affairs.

Better relations would also ensue, based on mutual respect for the principles of good-neighbourliness and the non-use or threat of use of force. We would be able to build on the common characteristics that unite us, including our religious and cultural heritage and our diversity. That would allow for better management of our collective resources so as to achieve food and water security, build a genuine and lasting peace for all and achieve economic and development progress in the context of peaceful coexistence.

I want to conclude by stating that the many achievements of the Kingdom of Bahrain confirm our

confidence in our approach and our persistence in our policy of perpetual improvement and comprehensive growth, while enhancing our country's security and preserving our identity. We defend ourselves with one hand and work to build a modern State with the other, a State based on justice, the rule of law and plurality, and popular participation in the decision-making process, without exclusion or discrimination. Our foreign relations are wide open and are built on strong foundations and principles, most notably respect for the Charter of the United Nations, efforts at the regional and international levels, and cooperation with our brothers aimed at achieving a peaceful life and a lasting and comprehensive peace for all.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Aurelia Frick, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister for Education and Minister for Cultural Affairs of the Principality of Liechtenstein.

Ms. Frick (Liechtenstein): It is an honour to be back in the Assembly, especially as Liechtenstein is celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of its membership in the United Nations. We may not have been among the earliest countries to join the United Nations, but we certainly were and remain among those who did so with full conviction. Today, United Nations membership is a key platform for our Government's foreign policy. The Organization enjoys strong approval among our population, two thirds of which have expressed favourable views in recent polls.

For people to approve of the United Nations is important, of course. After all, the Charter of the United Nations is explicitly written on behalf of the peoples of the world. But we must ask: what about people who are more directly affected by its work than the population of Liechtenstein? In celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, we must ask ourselves what would approval ratings be among the people of Syria, Haiti, the Central African Republic, Ukraine or Sri Lanka. Are we achieving the purposes of the Charter that we fought so hard for seventy years ago in San Francisco?

There is much to be proud of even when just looking back at the recent past. The United Nations-led response to the Ebola crisis in West Africa saved thousands of lives, and it has prepared us to act with even more resolve in the future. The Millennium Development Goals have had a catalytic effect on our development efforts and paved the way for the 2030

Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), a visionary blueprint for sustainable development. The United Nations continues to provide emergency relief, education, health care and other services to millions of people around the globe. The United Nations is the strongest symbol for human rights, the rule of law, gender equality and the protection of vulnerable populations.

People around the world place their faith in the Organization, but all too often, they have been disappointed. It is true that the United Nations has a huge task. Mistakes are unavoidable, and at times, perhaps, the same can even be said of failure. Nonetheless, there can be no justification when the Organization fails at the very core of its mission. There is no justification when the very people who should be protecting civilians and children exploit them instead in the most abusive way possible. There is no justification for the failure of diplomacy in Syria, with civilians suffering from unspeakable violence and terrorist extremism taking over an entire region. We should not look for justifications. We need to look for solutions. We need to do better.

The maintenance of peace and security is at the heart of the Charter. Therefore, in the eyes of the world, the work of the Security Council has a decisive effect on whether the Organization as a whole is seen as a success or a failure. Like many others, we want the Security Council to act with resolve and be effective and be guided by a common sense of purpose. That is primarily the task of the Council members themselves. Others, however, must contribute, as well. The Council works on our behalf, and we are bound to carry out its decisions. In other words, we are all in this together, both in times of success and in times of failure.

Some of the Council's most damaging failures have occurred in the face of atrocity crimes. Rwanda, Srebrenica and now Syria sadly stand out in that respect. When we celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the Organization later in October, we should clearly acknowledge the damage done, and we should commit ourselves, therefore, to taking decisive action in the future when it is needed. To that end, Liechtenstein has led the discussion in the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, which has resulted in a Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. That Code of Conduct is a voluntary political commitment that any State can enter into.

The pledge is twofold. First, it is aimed at supporting timely and decisive action in the Security Council and at ending or preventing mass atrocity crimes — in other words, at being constructive. Secondly, it is aimed at not opposing credible draft resolutions put forward for the purpose of preventing such crimes — that is, at not being obstructive. Fifty-nine States have already made that commitment. I hope that many more will be on the list when we launch the Code of Conduct on 23 October, and I hope that that will give impetus to efforts aimed at finding agreement among the permanent members, who have the right of veto, in pursuit of the objective of preventing mass atrocity crimes.

Preventing mass atrocities is so important because their effects are irreversible. They have no remedy. How can one possibly make compensation for the slaughter of civilians, the mass rape of women or the brutalizing of children? Our primary objective must be to prevent those crimes from happening. That is a complex and long-term task, involving all parts of the United Nations system, but when volatile situations move closer to escalation, preventive diplomacy remains one of the most powerful tools at our disposal. Clearly, however, we need to make much stronger investments in it, both politically and financially.

As we consider how we can sharpen our tools for conflict prevention and resolution, one conclusion is already clear. We must get better at including women and their perspectives in those processes. The fifteenth anniversary of the women and peace and security agenda, laid out in Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), therefore marks a bittersweet moment. That agenda sets out a comprehensive vision for how to include women in peaceful solutions and how to protect them from the effects of armed conflict. It is in itself a remarkable achievement. Yet, we have, by and large, been unable to fulfil the promise made fifteen years ago. Girls born into a post-resolution 1325 (2000) world still suffer from abuse, sexual violence, forced recruitment and displacement. Let us take decisive steps forward when we meet later this month in the Security Council.

These are turbulent times, not just for the United Nations but also for an institution closely affiliated with it, the International Criminal Court (ICC). As the first treaty-based international court with jurisdiction over the worst crimes under international law, it is shouldering a massive responsibility. In just over ten years, the Court has established itself as the world's central player in the fight against impunity.

It is an independent judicial institution and therefore does not engage in political calculations. Quite often, however, it finds itself forced to navigate a politically charged environment. We must, therefore, step up our support for the Court. More States should join the family of the current 123 parties to the Rome Statute. Consistent support should come from those who can, should or must cooperate with the Court, including the Security Council. We must also intensify and give greater assistance to national efforts to investigate and prosecute.

The link between the ICC and the United Nations will soon get stronger, thanks to the Kampala Amendments on the crime of aggression, which will enable the ICC to help enforce a core provision of the Charter of the United Nations, namely, the prohibition against the use of force. The most serious forms of the illegal use of force are no longer merely breaches of the Charter; they also entail criminal accountability for those responsible for such acts. We are only a little over a year's time and a handful of ratifications away from activating the Court's jurisdiction over that crime. We look forward to more States ratifying the Kampala consensus. It will be a big step, both for international criminal justice and for the United Nations.

Finally, let me offer some thoughts on the unprecedented levels of the displacement of persons in the world, which is quickly turning into one of the biggest challenges for the United Nations. Countries close to the conflicts have been grappling with that issue for quite some time already. More recently, Europe has been impacted in ways that test the fabric of our region. Even though we are not a member of the European Union, Liechtenstein feels strongly that Europe is not just a continent. It is also a symbol of common values and a promise to address challenges together, irrespective of our models of political and economic integration. We therefore want to contribute to a sustainable solution based on international law and human rights.

Regional approaches will remain key to such solutions. But migration and refugee flows are not simply a regional phenomenon, and by far the largest share of people who have left their homes are still in developing countries. A truly global discussion is therefore required, as well. The World Humanitarian Summit next year seems to offer a good and timely platform.

The President took the Chair.

We are confronting daunting challenges, yet to lose hope is not an option. Therefore, in closing, I would like to share with you the perspective of a man whom I greatly admire and who has extensively collaborated with Liechtenstein. In 1944, he landed on the shores of Normandy, he participated in the liberation of the concentration camps, and he led the prosecution in history's biggest murder cases at the Nuremberg trials. He is now 95 years old and continues to fight for law, not war, as he has done all his life. His name is Benjamin Ferencz, and he has three pieces of advice for all of us: "Never give up. Never give up. Never give up."

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Wilfred Elrington, Attorney General and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Belize.

Mr. Elrington (Belize): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventieth session and to assure you of Belize's steadfast support and cooperation. I deem it both fortuitous and fitting that I am accorded the privilege of addressing the Assembly on the occasion of the International Day of Non-Violence.

The theme of this session, "The United Nations at 70: the road ahead to peace, security and human rights", provokes the question of whether the United Nations, as presently constituted, is up to the task of providing the world community with the protection that it will so genuinely need in the coming years and expects to obtain. While the events that gave rise to the founding of the United Nations seventy years ago are in many respects similar to some of the events we see today, it can legitimately be argued that the world of 1945 was neither confronted with, nor could it contemplate a phenomenon as potentially intractable and catastrophic as climate change. Does it therefore follow that the United Nations is not imbued with the resilience to deal satisfactorily or adequately with that most ominous and dreaded phenomenon?

Thanks to the information age and the attendant communication revolution, the ubiquitous media, both mass and social, incessantly publish disquieting global events widely and instantaneously. The events accentuated by the media are, for the most part, those that speak to the multifarious threats, misfortunes and disasters being experienced on a daily basis by humankind. Those threats have their roots in human-

made causes. The accelerated phenomenon of climate change — giving rise to the inexorable melting of the glaciers, the rising and warming of the oceans and seas, the spawning of super typhoons, hurricanes, tornadoes and floods, droughts, desertification, and the indiscriminate igniting of conflagrations of gigantic proportions - is increasingly attributed to anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

The senseless violence and excesses of terrorists, religious extremists, rogue soldiers, police and security personnel, human and drug traffickers, and regimes that brutally, mercilessly and wantonly slaughter their own citizens and citizens of other countries who in their view pose a clear and present danger to them or to their vital interests — all these constitute human-made threats to the world's population.

Of all those threats, however, the one that poses the greatest existential threat to our entire planet and all living things thereon is climate change. Eminent scientists opine and predict that the damage that will be done to the world's marine life and ecosystems caused by, for example, melting glaciers and rising sea temperatures alone are incalculable and irremediable. They predict that there will be a similar impact on the world's flora and fauna and terrestrial ecosystems from large-scale and indiscriminate deforestation and desertification. One obvious consequence, among others, of such occurrences could be a severe curtailment in the world's vital food supply and the advent of the spectre of massive starvation worldwide. Such occurrences would unquestionably have a negative impact on all of humanity, for we all inhabit the same planet and share the same core needs, adequate food supply being only one of them.

Even as the United Nations endeavours to deal with the dire consequences of climate change, it still must dutifully serve the aspirations of our peoples to enhance their economic and social development. Although globally we can claim some success in poverty eradication, the current unprecedented, desperate and perilous flight of hundreds of thousands of people from the perennially impoverished South to more affluent regions is irrefutable evidence of the most urgent need to do more for the poor and the powerless.

It is axiomatic that in times of deep personal crisis, such as when someone is diagnosed with a terminal illness, one does not stop to count the cost of finding a cure. On the contrary, strenuous efforts are immediately initiated in search of one, even if that

entails the exhaustion of one's life savings. Given the clear and present existential threat posed by climate change, it is imperative that that threat be treated with no less urgency and gravity than that with which a diagnosis of a terminal illness is treated. And we must do so in tandem with our ongoing quests to vest our people with hope, opportunities and a chance for the future that they deserve.

To that end, our world community must be prepared to deploy whatever resources that may be required without counting the costs. It would be most unwise for the wealthy nations — whose historic responsibility it is to furnish those necessary resources without this proof — to regard contributions made to meet these challenges as simply an exercise in philanthropy or altruism. Nothing could be further from the truth. Such contributions are vital investments in the survival of planet Earth and of all living things therein.

Some countries are evidently in greater and more immediate danger than others from the effects of climate change at this time. What is happening in the Bahamas as we speak and what happened in Dominica and in still earlier in Vanuatu are constant and incontestable reminders of the particular vulnerability of small island developing States (SIDS) and low-lying coastal States, like my own country, Belize. My Government expresses its deep solidarity with our fellow SIDS and assures the Assembly of our fullest support for them. Today, they are on the front lines; tomorrow it will be us. For no country will escape the devastating impacts of climate change, which does not defer to size, borders or wealth, or lack thereof.

The lessons of history are salutary. The tragic sinking of the mighty Titanic reminds us that whereas those passengers berthed in the lower decks were the first to perish as that giant ship made its perilous descent toward the dark depths of the Atlantic on that fateful day of 10 April 1912, ultimately all passengers on that ill-fated ship who had not been rescued in life rafts perished by drowning, including those berthed on the top-most deck. We cannot afford to forget for one moment that all of us human beings are merely passengers on planet Earth, sailing ceaselessly in the celestial firmament.

Belize is ever mindful that our community of nations, not unlike the proverbial chain that is only as strong as its weakest link, is only as strong as the weakest of its members. Small and weak though they may be, nations like my own form an integral part of

humankind's food chain and security ecosystem. Any impairment of that food chain or security ecosystem potentially imperils the security of humankind globally.

In its 70-year history, the United Nations has undeniably made notable inroads to combat climate change and promote sustainable development. It has galvanized attention to climate change and adopted a Framework Convention to fashion a global response to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions without jeopardizing global development. The United Nations has marshalled financial, scientific and technological support for countries in need of it and, with the adoption of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), signaled a global transformation for planet, people and prosperity.

But the jury is still out on the United Nations record of achievements. Notwithstanding a global commitment to tackle climate change, our efforts have been less than ambitious, and achieving a successor global emission reduction regime hangs in the balance, not least because finance and technology are conspicuously wanting. Worse yet, the failure of the world's Powers to agree to hold the global average temperature increase to well below 1.5°C relative to pre-industrial levels will certainly condemn small island developing States and low-lying coastal States.

Our misses in peace and security are no less grave, with the vulnerable paying the price of political expediency. Through our awesome power of communication the world is stricken with the unanswered cries of men, women and children suffering from indiscriminate acts perpetrated in Syria, Palestine, Israel, Nigeria, Ukraine and beyond.

This condition brings me back to the question posed at the beginning of my statement regarding the capacity of the United Nations to address the most pressing global challenges. Belize entertains no doubt that the power, wealth and knowledge that lie within the collective membership of the United Nations make it capable of achieving stupendous feats. But we must first commit to working together and with all stakeholders — large and small, public and private. Unity is strength. The might of the United Nations rests in its universality and the enduring values enshrined in its Charter. Belize readily shoulders its responsibilities as a member of this community of nations.

We are committed to doing everything in our power that will promote the containment, if not the

reversal, of climate change. We have joined with our brothers and sisters of the small island and low-lying developing States in a pioneering initiative — the Small Island Developing States Sustainable Energy Initiative, which Belize proudly hosts — to foster our transition to low-carbon and climate-resilient economies. We also commit to pushing for a robust and ambitious regime in Paris that will have all of us working in lockstep to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions and safeguard the planet and the sustainable development of our people.

Likewise, we stand ready to provide every support to United Nations initiatives that will bring the warring factions in Syria, and in Israel and Palestine, to the table to find peaceful solutions to their differences. We are committed to combating terrorism, and we unreservedly condemn the atrocities perpetrated against women and girls in Nigeria by Boko Haram. We express our solidarity with the Nigerian Government on its efforts to dismantle that criminal gang and bring its members to justice.

Belize supports the ongoing initiatives to reform the United Nations to make it more representative and better able to maintain peace and resolve conflicts. We continue to call for the United Nations to engage with Taiwan, whose 23 million people stand ready to contribute, especially through United Nations specialized agencies, to resolving the world's problems and who have every expectation that their interests should be heard and represented.

We welcome the unanimous support for the Security Council decision to terminate seven resolutions that inflicted sanctions on Iran upon receipt by the Council of a report from the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Belize also welcomes the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba, and we urge the United States to now proceed expeditiously to ending the very damaging embargo against Cuba and to return Guantanamo Bay to the Cuban Government.

We call upon powerful arms-producing nations to refrain from selling arms and weapons to those who use them to oppress others, and to warlords in war-torn countries.

Belize has always taken peace, security and respect for human rights very seriously. Our Constitution is modelled on the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in which the protection of fundamental rights

and freedoms is enshrined. The Belize Government assiduously respects the rule of law.

Belize also endeavours to be a good global citizen. Our laws have evolved to reflect international norms and standards, covering areas from human rights to finance, creating enabling environments that promote and protect the fundamental freedoms of our people, and fostering socially responsible investment in our country. Our National Assembly has recently enacted a new and robust Banking Act and has improved regulations for our Ship Registry to bring them in line with global efforts, including those of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, so as to enhance transparency and strengthen our legislative framework.

Our Government has focused very heavily on improving the lives of ordinary Belizeans. We are investing millions of dollars in improving infrastructure countrywide, including the construction and refurbishment of schools, sporting facilities, hospitals and roads. We are investing heavily in road safety to reduce injuries and deaths associated with traffic accidents. Access to public health services has been expanded throughout the country. We have made it easier for Belizeans to access affordable credit by ensuring an unprecedented reduction in interest rates through the establishment of our very own National Bank of Belize. Unemployment has been significantly reduced, by 10 per cent, while at the same time we have been able to keep the inflation rate among the lowest in our region.

Belize believes fervently in integration and in peaceful coexistence. To that end, we are also doing our part to ensure that peace and security prevail in our part of the world. Together with all Latin American and Caribbean countries, we have jointly designated our region as a zone of peace. Alongside the Caribbean Community, we stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Haiti as they deal with the human rights impasse with their sister nation, the Dominican Republic. We also stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Guyana and Venezuela as they work towards an amicable solution to their territorial dispute.

Earlier this year, we signed a protocol to the Special Agreement between Belize and Guatemala, to submit Guatemala's territorial insular and maritime claim to our country to the International Court of Justice. We expect that will facilitate and speed up the process to finally and definitively put an end to the unfounded

claims that have plagued us and our region for far too long.

The President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Clarice Modeste-Curwen, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Grenada.

Ms. Modeste-Curwen (Grenada): I am pleased to bring our usual warm greetings from the Government and the people of Grenada, on whose behalf I am privileged to address this renowned institution and distinguished gathering. I am also pleased to join esteemed colleagues who preceded me in thanking the outgoing President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa of Uganda, for his energetic and focused leadership in the sixty-ninth session. I commend that session for blazing a trail that gives us no choice but to follow as we strive to deliver and implement a transformative post-2015 development agenda.

I also congratulate and thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his extraordinary leadership of the United Nations and express our deep gratitude especially for the keen interest he has shown in the developmental challenges facing small island developing States (SIDS).

To the President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session, Mr. Mogens Lykketoft of Denmark, I wish to say: please be assured, Sir, of my delegation's fullest cooperation and support as you embark on the road ahead for peace, security and human rights.

As is the custom, our themes reflect the current state of international affairs, as indeed they must. It should be no surprise that matters of peace, security and human rights continue to feature in the international discourse. Indeed, without those fundamental pillars of an orderly international system it would be colossal waste of time to even start to think of improving the quality of the lives of our people. Therefore, at this historic juncture of the United Nations at 70, the President is accepting a new commitment to action for transforming our world. Interestingly, recent history has shown us that without peace, security and human rights, development cannot be sustained.

The impacts of climate change are already being felt the world over, and without a successful, legally binding agreement in Paris, we will see climate change continue unabated. We will see more floods and droughts, more hurricanes and cyclones, more hunger, more insecurity, more troubled spots around the world and more economies in crisis. As leaders and as a

community of nations, we will take actions from today onwards that will dictate whether we bequeath to others a world where peace, security and human rights can be assured, or a world where human tragedy and suffering become the norm.

The General Assembly has recognized the unique vulnerabilities of SIDS. Grenada endorses the Security Council's initiative to discuss the challenges facing SIDS. We strongly urge the Council to give greater consideration to the special circumstances of SIDS in relation to both traditional and non-traditional security concerns. Climate change is a critical issue, not only for intellectual debate, but in its manifestation as a major, multidimensional security threat to small island developing States. The foundation of our sustainable development platform is undermined by climate change. The recent experience of our sister nation, the Commonwealth of Dominica, is ample evidence.

Let us now commit, ahead of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris, to adopting a new, legally binding global climate change agreement that will hold the global temperature rise well below 2°C, or 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. A framework for climate change cannot wait. We need immediate consensus on climate change, including financing.

We wish to place on record our gratitude to our international partners for their support in developing our capacity for climate change adaptation and mitigation in Grenada. We reaffirm our commitment to Agenda 21 and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) 2Pathway.

Grenada strongly supports convening the Triennial Oceans and Seas Global Conferences, for the duration of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), to coincide with World Oceans Day, beginning with the June 2017 Conference in Fiji. We further suggest that initiatives like the Small Island Developing States Sustainable Energy Initiative be used as a global platform for Governments and relevant stakeholders to ensure financing for the full implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 and its targets.

A little over two years ago, the Government of Grenada, with the support of the international community, initiated a programme of fiscal adjustment and structural reforms to boost economic growth and

competitiveness, restore fiscal and debt sustainability and strengthen the financial sector. We have made significant progress thus far, and our achievements have been documented in published reports of the International Monetary Fund and others. The success of the programme derived from a social compact initiated by government to include our churches, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, the private sector and political parties.

We now call upon the international community to make good on its unkept promises of 0.7 per cent official development assistance, notwithstanding that 0.2 per cent goes to SIDS, such as Grenada. We urge the international community to share in the sacrifice that is required at this difficult period in our history. However, the unilateral graduation of many small island developing States to middle-income status is premature and has resulted in significant budgetary shortfalls. I therefore reiterate the call for a more holistic and comprehensive set of indicators for classifying States. The point is that per capita income as a sole measure, without the context of climate vulnerability and other inherent structural challenges, does more harm than good.

We must reaffirm that the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will depend on revitalized and enhanced global partnerships. Together, Governments, civil society, the private sector and the United Nations system must embrace all stakeholders, and we must get delivery on the commitments made on the Samoa Pathway. Our people and our planet can realize prosperity and peace only through reliable partnerships and frameworks, which are assured by trust.

Small island developing States like Grenada — already disadvantaged by small economies of scale, climate impact caused mainly by developed countries, and high indebtedness — only seek a level playing field that takes our disadvantages into account. However, we are disheartened by the fact that the same developed partners with whom we sit in our transparent intergovernmental engagement to find ways to develop our capacity revert to suspiciously blacklisting and declaring all jurisdictions to be harmful tax havens. We call for developed countries to carefully weigh their interactions with small and vulnerable island States to ensure that we are in no way unjustly victimized economically and in reputation, especially when we

have worked assiduously to comply with stipulated requirements.

Grenada asserts that partnerships for sustainable development must be based on global solidarity, which affirms that none among Member States is more equal than the others. Grenada seeks to safeguard the fiscal performance achieved with the necessary support of partners and stakeholders.

History dictates that we must embrace our grave responsibility, daunting though it may be, to ensure a peaceful and sustainably developed planet for posterity. The carnage being committed around the world as we speak, demonstrated by the persistent disregard for human life, and the quest for dominance concealed by any faith cannot be condoned. The concept or definition of peace begs for global consensus. A peaceful world is not just one without a world war. Authority and power must mean caring, not killing.

The plight of displaced people driven from their habitat — in extremely inhumane conditions, in search of peace and a better life, free of fear — is regrettable and warrants our collective and decisive action to avert a wider and more destructive wave of migration. The spectacle of drowning and dying people, lost and displaced children, the abuse of the weak and the elderly and sexual violence against women are disgraces to humankind. Their stories remind us of our interconnectedness as a global village and of our common humanity. In the words of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

Mr. Gumende (Mozambique), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Grenada condemns the atrocities and crimes against humankind. Human dignity must be maintained in our world as one vital element to ensure the future we want. Our cities and human settlements must remain inclusive and safe, resilient and sustainable. Therefore, Grenada appeals to all Member States to embrace SDG 11 and to promote dialogue and diplomacy in the resolution of conflicts. In that regard, Grenada applauds the progress made in the recent rapprochement between Cuba and the United States. Grenada sees this peaceful resolution through dialogue as an example to be emulated between and among all States where violence, conflicts and disputes prevail. Nevertheless, Grenada joins in the call for the total lifting of the commercial and financial embargo imposed on the sister island of Cuba.

Grenada supports objective assessments of the role of the United Nations in the modern world so as to consolidate its established knowledge-based authority and legitimacy as the premier global political forum. However, it is time to update our GPS. Maintaining the status quo in the Security Council should not be an option. But the Security Council, as a pillar of global security, must be carefully handled. In this regard, our Organization should take stock of the contributions made by all Member States to the reform of the Security Council, bearing in mind that a strengthened Council will be better obtained and maintained through global consensus. Grenada also applauds the efforts to strengthen the role of the General Assembly to ensure lasting peace, security and human rights.

Ambitious though it may be, the agenda set for the post-2015 era dictates that we must succeed. If we have the courage to start, we have the capacity to successfully implement the SDGs for our planet, for prosperity today and for posterity.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Jean-Claude Gakosso, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Gakosso (Congo) (*spoke in French*): His Excellency Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, has bestowed on me the great honour of representing him at the Assembly. On his behalf and on behalf of the delegation accompanying me, I would like to take this solemn opportunity to sincerely congratulate His Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. I also pay tribute to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa, for his leadership. I recognize Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's tireless commitment in guiding the affairs of the Organization, and I renew the indestructible support of my country, the Republic of the Congo, for his constant efforts to bring about a world characterized by peace, freedom, democracy and development for all.

In creating the United Nations, the founding fathers did not intend just to preserve future generations from the scourge of war, but also — and this is stated in the San Francisco Charter — to promote social progress and better standards of life for the multitude.

In the past 70 years tremendous human progress, with spectacular scientific and technological advances in various areas, has opened up unexpected opportunities

for humankind. People everywhere have become thirsty for democracy and freedom. Many Bastilles have been stormed and the walls of totalitarianism have crumbled. There are many countries like mine that, since the beginning of the 1960s, have been able to enjoy their inalienable right to self-determination, shrugging off the yoke of colonialism and joining the large family of the free, right here in the concert of nations. The emergence of new Powers, a historic development of which we are privileged witnesses, has birthed a multipolar world. Since then, international cooperation has experienced a tremendous expansion through activities in varied areas.

Over the past 70 years, humankind has not experienced tragedy on the scale of that of the Second World War. This long period of peace since 1945 — quite similar to that which began following the famous Congress of Vienna in 1815, two centuries ago, and which lasted until the start of the First World War — is owed largely to the United Nations, the Organization that has often served as a catalyst and central forum for harmonizing the efforts of peaceloving nations. When we draw up the balance sheet of the last 70 years, it can be said that the United Nations has more than kept its promise and given proof, if proof were needed, of how much it is needed and how relevant it is to history.

My country, the Republic of the Congo, welcomes the resumption of relations between Cuba and the United States. We believe that this easing of relations between the two countries goes in the direction of history. My country's Government fervently hopes that this courageous and thoughtful process will lead fairly quickly to the lifting of the economic embargo that has had a stranglehold on the Cuban people for far too long. We call on that generous humanism that the American people have demonstrated in crucial periods of history, such as during the Second World War.

My country, the Republic of the Congo, welcomes the recent conclusion of the Iranian nuclear agreement because it represents a further step towards a world free of destructive arsenals, indeed towards a world of peace.

Along with this inarguable progress, we cannot ignore the weaknesses that have often characterized the actions of our Organization and that sometimes have reduced its ability to influence the course of events. We still have not managed to ward off the spectre of war or all forms of armed conflict — conflicts often fuelled by non-State actors, by nebulous networks that

feed terrorism, by widely dispersed small groups that take religious proselytism to extremes, by reckless drug cartels or by pirates of misery who plunder the waterways.

Climate change and its dangerous repercussions for the environment, endemic poverty, migration crises, inequalities between States and within States, to stick with iconic and contemporary examples, are today real threats to the stability of States and world peace. Central Africa, the region that I hail from, has not been spared by these plagues, in view of the attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army and the unspeakable atrocities committed in Nigeria, the Niger, Cameroon and Chad by the sadly infamous sect called Boko Haram. Given the gravity of this new genre of terrorist threat, the States of the region have recognized the need to oppose it with a common response, which is why we in the Economic Community of Central African States have mobilized to fight that irredentist, terrorist and sectarian organization. To this worrying picture we might add the ongoing tensions in Mali and South Sudan, which continue despite the signing of several peace agreements.

With respect to the Central African Republic, His Excellency Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, as is well known, is steadfastly leading the international mediation in the crisis that this brotherly country has been facing for many years. The national reconciliation forum held in Bangui in May resulted in findings that demonstrate the willingness of Central Africans to turn the page on the recurrent crises that have marked the history of their country.

However, their legitimate aspiration for peace remains subject to the successful conclusion of the electoral process, for which the support of the international community as a whole remains necessary if we want to see that country achieve the transition, token of lasting stability, before 31 December. Unfortunately, the painful events of recent days, which have been punctuated with unheard-of violence, could jeopardize all the efforts to help the country recover lasting peace and stability. The serious incidents that shook Bangui recently and the recurrence of intercommunal violence can only reinforce the widely shared impression that the transition process as it stands today remains fragile. That is why our commitment to that country is so highly sought after.

In this decisive phase of the transition process, President Denis Sassou Nguesso, international mediator

of the crisis, is dedicated more deeply than ever to his mission. With the support of all partners, he will spare no effort to meet the Central African Republic's innumerable challenges, almost all of which can be characterized as a high priority or an emergency.

I would like to pay tribute to the international community for the ongoing commitment of the International Contact Group, and also salute the tireless efforts of all the peacekeeping forces deployed in Central African Republic since the beginning of the crisis, first in the framework of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic, then under the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, then under Operation Sangaris, and finally under the European Union-led peacekeeping force. At the same time, I wish to salute the memory of all the brave soldiers who have sacrificed their lives for the sake of peace and international solidarity.

Peace and stability, both at the national and international levels, as we know well, cannot be effective without a minimum of economic development that benefits the greatest number of people, especially in developing countries. As we celebrate the seventieth anniversary of our Organization, the adoption a few days ago of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) is in all respects a decisive step in building the brighter future we want for our planet, for our people, for posterity.

By establishing an effective strategy for funding and planning for sustainable development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, adopted in July at the third International Conference on Financing for Development, puts us squarely on track for cooperation for development for all. The Republic of the Congo completely aligns itself with this viewpoint and hopes to see significant progress in the implementation of that comprehensive new programme.

My country is among those that have a national strategy for sustainable development, which is an essential instrument for strategic planning. It is also one of those countries where the practice of democracy is being consolidated and strengthened every day, in particular through a continuous process of regular citizen consultations between opposition and majority parties, with a view to peaceful elections.

With the peace and stability it enjoys, and aware that sport contributes to the promotion of education, health,

development and peace, our Government successfully organized, from 4 to 19 July 2015, the eleventh All-Africa Games, of which our capital Brazzaville is the historic birthplace.

At the 2005 World Summit our senior leaders clearly expressed their decision to see the United Nations reformed, starting with its spearhead, the Security Council. That decision demonstrates the steadfast collective will to put our Organization in a new historic perspective. We firmly believe that the United Nations vitally needs greater transparency, justice, equality and internal democracy, while strictly respecting the sovereign equality the dignity of each State. By defining and adopting a common position in the framework of the Ezulwini Consensus, Africa has clearly shown the way for the necessary reform that it resolutely calls for.

The Republic of the Congo here solemnly renews its commitment to the United Nations, in the footsteps of the founding fathers and in accordance with the Preamble of the Charter. On behalf of the Republic of the Congo, I exhort the community of nations gathered here to consolidate its efforts more than ever to definitively make manifest the noble ideals of freedom and equality, justice and peace, solidarity among peoples and human generosity.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Manuel Salvador dos Ramos, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Communities of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tomé and Príncipe.

Mr. Dos Ramos (Sao Tomé and Príncipe) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): It is my distinct honour and privilege to participate in the proceedings of the General Assembly on behalf of and representing the Democratic Republic of Sao Tomé and Príncipe.

At the outset, I would like to respectfully congratulate Mr. Mogens Lykketoft on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventieth session and to express our full support for him throughout his term. May it be highly successful. His election is a result of the recognition by the States Members of the United Nations of his noble humanity, vast political experience and unblemished professional history.

Before we begin to address the various topics that are of crucial importance as contributions to a better world, we must remember that this year marks

the seventieth anniversary of this Organization. That should provide Member States with the opportunity to deeply reflect on the road that has brought us this far and on the different reforms that must be introduced to make it more representative, legitimate, dynamic, efficient and inclusive and ever more responsive to the reality and challenges imposed by armed conflicts, climate changes, migrant and refugee crises, economic deregulation, endemic diseases, poverty and hunger.

Against that backdrop, we welcome the relevance of the themes of this session, which reflect the reality of our times. The post-2015 development agenda and the proper framing and resolution of climate change issues will surely create a path towards sustainable development for developing countries, particularly on the African continent.

We further wish to express our appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for the competent, selfless and zealous manner in which he has led our Organization. We also pay tribute to outgoing President Sam Kutesa, who led our General Assembly with dedication and strength during the past 12 months.

Gathered at Headquarters from 25 to 27 September, world leaders adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (see resolution 70/1). The Millennium Development Goals proved to be a good catalyst to mobilize synergies and achieve progress in social development — the reduction of poverty, hunger and disease; advances in maternal health; and access to drinking water. During that period there were major geopolitical and economic shifts. We believe that the multidimensional nature of poverty and fragility has changed. We hope that the development process in this new phase may be more inclusive, qualitative and, as the name suggests, sustainable for all, with all regions of our planet taking ownership and making commitments.

For this purpose, Africa chose, as its path towards economic and sustainable development, six pillars that are important to mention here and with which Sao Tomé and Príncipe identifies: structural economic transformation and inclusive growth; science, technology and innovation; people-centred development; sustainable environment, natural resources and natural disaster management; peace and security; and finances and partnerships.

We believe that in erecting those pillars Africa will take significant and necessary steps to guide the continent towards fulfilling the legitimate aspirations

of its peoples, thereby ensuring ever greater integration, prosperity and peace, under African leadership, with top priority given to the dignity and identity of our sons and daughters. That will enhance the capacity for creativity, innovation and production and will have an immediate and direct impact on the economy and sustainable human development because it will be properly sustained.

Our country, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, believes in the above and urges the United Nations to adapt its programmes to the specific realities of Africa, without losing sight of the continent's accomplishments in achieving some of the eight Millennium Development Goals by some countries.

Unfortunately, we continue to see persistent hotbeds of tension and the emergence of new ones with humanitarian repercussions of alarming proportions throughout the world. In Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the efforts undertaken by regional organizations, the African Union and the United Nations have introduced some stability to the conflict zones. These efforts must continue to be coordinated and channelled in order to consolidate and reinforce the achievements.

The perennial issue of Western Sahara remains on the international stage and therefore requires greater engagement from all of us in the search for a permanent solution for that negotiation process, which has dragged on and stagnated for some time. However, to the credit of the parties, armed conflict has not resumed. We appeal to them to return to the negotiations and find a mutually acceptable political solution.

We are heartened by the recent resolution of the political situation in the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, where a serious political crisis has been overcome without recourse to violence and in strict accordance with the rule of law. That bears clear testimony to the democratic maturity that our brothers and sisters have achieved.

As terrorism continues to be a central issue in international politics, and in light of renewed acts of terrorism throughout the world, we believe the international community must act in a coordinated manner. Only then will we be able to fight this global scourge. We clearly and strongly condemn the repeated and hideous crimes that the Boko Haram group has been perpetrating in our neighbour, the sisterly nation of Nigeria.

In our opinion, nothing can justify the atrocities that Boko Haram terrorists have committed, and we take the opportunity in this privileged forum to reiterate our unequivocal condemnation of such practices, which are unacceptable in every way. We wish to express the unwavering support for and heartfelt solidarity of all Santomeans with our Nigerian brothers and sisters, and we congratulate the people and Government of Nigeria on their successes in the fight against terrorism perpetrated by Boko Haram.

Unfortunately, in the Middle East we continue to see bloody conflicts and loss of lives with the ongoing hostilities between Israel and Palestine. Therefore we appeal again for a peaceful and negotiated solution that upholds both the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the State of Israel's right to exist, in accordance with the pertinent United Nations resolutions, with two free and sovereign States living by side in peace and cooperating fully for development.

Similarly, we cannot fail to comment on the persistence of the domestic conflict in Syria and its disastrous consequences. We again appeal to the international community to make all efforts to achieve a cessation of hostilities, thus opening the way for a frank dialogue toward a political solution to re-establish a lasting peace.

However, the prevailing situation is an opportunity for deeper reflection, in light of the migration crisis that is centred on the Mediterranean as the main access point to Europe. Indeed, the waves of people of all ages who are reaching Europe from war zones are not migrants. They are refugees. They are not evading poverty or hunger; they are literally running away from death. When a mother places a young child in a precarious boat for a difficult journey across a rough sea, with criminals at the helm, she does so because she considers that to be safer than the terra firma that she left behind. Therefore, we must seriously reflect on such episodes and the lessons they teach us regarding the signs of the new times, and draw our conclusions. We must refrain from promoting or exporting democracy in an outsider's meddling manner or, worse still, through aggression and/or violence.

We believe that everybody will agree with us when we affirm that global security is vital to ensure sustainable development for our countries, and that it should begin at the regional and local levels. Located on the Gulf of Guinea, where we have seen a fresh outbreak of acts of maritime piracy, terrorism, drug trafficking, oil heists

and other transnational organized crimes, São Tomé and Príncipe understands that the international community must combine its efforts to stop such acts. Therefore, allow me to mention the various existing partnerships, both bilateral and multilateral, and cooperation, among the Economic Community of Central African States, the Economic Community of West African States and the Gulf of Guinea Commission in implementing the recommendations of the Yaoundé Summit, which have made significant progress possible in the relentless fight against this type of criminal organization in our region.

With respect to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change that will take place this year in Paris, São Tomé and Príncipe believes that it is imperative that we reach a global agreement on climate change, as our country is already being affected by its nefarious effects, even though we are not an active polluter. Our vulnerabilities include, for example, a reduction in rainfall and, as a consequence, diminished flows in our rivers, as well as floods and the gradual erosion of our coasts. Those warning signs are already causing concern with respect to our country's climate problems, and we have been combating them by stopping deforestation and protecting our coastal areas.

Therefore, we welcome the determination of Germany and France to reach a climate agreement that is ambitious, broad and binding on all parties and is in accordance with the general rules of international law, with the ultimate objective of limiting the increase in the global temperature to 2°C at most, as compared to pre-industrial levels. In our opinion, that constitutes a responsibility shared among developing and developed countries. We hope that the agreement, once reached, will enhance the international obligation of all signatory parties to make funds available for ongoing scientific monitoring of climate issues and the transfer of technology to developing countries as a way of improving actions to achieve the Framework Convention's goals.

In December 2014, São Tomé and Príncipe effusively welcomed the announcement on the re-establishment of relations between the United States of America and Cuba, and we joined the world in jubilation over the recent opening of diplomatic missions in both capitals, which thus resumed full diplomatic relations. As we did then, we express the wish that both countries continue to strengthen their relationship on the path

of economic, social and cultural progress for the benefit of their peoples and humanity in general. To that end, one issue remains pending — the trade embargo imposed against Cuba. It made no sense in the past, and it makes no sense now. For that reason, São Tomé and Príncipe appeals again for the lifting of the embargo, which would be a sign of a relationship without handicaps and would allow both countries to take fair and equitable advantage of bilateral trade relations, on an equal footing with other countries around the world.

In conclusion, we must acknowledge and welcome the political progress achieved by both sides of the Taiwan Strait, with a clear reduction of tensions, ever greater openness and broad trade exchanges. In addition, given Taiwan's manifold potential, we recommend that Taiwan participate in the United Nations specialized agencies, as it already does in the World Health Organization.

Finally, we reiterate our country's readiness to continue participating in efforts to mobilize wills and synergies to realize the fundamental principles and noble objectives that guided the establishment of the United Nations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Ahmed Abd al-Aziz Ghandour, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Sudan.

Mr. Ghandour (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. We trust that his expertise and efficiency will guide our deliberations in achieving the goals to which we all aspire. I express my thanks and appreciation to his predecessor for his patient and clear-sighted manner in steering our deliberations. I also thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his team for their commendable efforts at the previous session to establish peace and advance the development goals so that all peoples can enjoy security and stability.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the President, Government and people of the State of Palestine on the raising of the Palestinian flag at United Nations Headquarters, and we call on the international community to enable the Palestinian people to establish their free and independent State, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

On behalf of the Government and people of the Sudan, I convey to the Assembly the greetings of the President of the Republic, Field Marshall Omar Hassan A. Al-Bashir, and reiterate our intention to contribute positively to the success of this important session of the General Assembly, which coincides with the celebration of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations under the slogan “The United Nations at 70: the road ahead for peace, security and human rights”.

Clearly, the agenda for our debate this year reflects the concerns and aspirations of millions of people around the world for a better tomorrow and a brighter future, from surmounting crises caused by conflicts and hostilities in many hotspots around the world to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) . For all those reasons, humankind has great hopes for our upcoming discussion based on the solid foundation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which we adopted last week.

The Government of the Sudan paid close attention to the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, which culminated in the document adopted after lengthy negotiations. We therefore welcome the adoption of the document, in whose negotiations we participated. The Sudan has begun to implement measures with a view to attaining those Goals. The Agenda has been mainstreamed into our national and regional programmes. We want to bolster the complementary role of the United Nations, its country teams, relevant funds and agencies, whose role in implementing those plans we commend.

However, we reaffirm our resolve to ensure that those Goals complement the process of peace, stability and growth in our country, despite the fact that we remain subject to unilateral coercive economic sanctions that hinder our ambitions to achieve those noble Goals. From this rostrum, we strongly reject the coercive and unilateral sanctions imposed on certain countries, as clearly and explicitly stated in the Agenda.

In the wake of signing and implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 and the signing of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur in 2011, the Sudan had great expectations that the international community would give special consideration to its overarching concerns and economic problems, especially regarding the alleviation of the debt burden that is a serious economic impediment. With regard to resuming development aid, the Sudan

also anticipates treatment equal to that enjoyed by other countries emerging from conflicts.

However, to its utmost dismay, my country’s reward for achieving peace and stability and for all its sacrifices has been endless, politically motivated pressure, sanctions, boycotts and unilateral and coercive measures that lack any legal justification whatsoever. To make matters even worse, obstacles have been set up to bar the Sudan from benefiting from certain constructive initiatives, such as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, also for purely political reasons unrelated to reality.

Despite the unfavourable conditions created by the embargo and boycott that unfairly target our people, we have made strenuous efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and have given high priority to the elimination of poverty in its various manifestations and the mitigation of its effects. However, our gains in increasing per capita income have been offset by the fallout from the independence of South Sudan, after which the optimal share of our oil revenues went to the fledgling State, in addition to the negative effects of the global economic crisis and the economic embargo.

Despite those difficulties, we have achieved reasonable success in educational services. Enrolment rates in basic and secondary education have greatly increased, as has the proportion of female students, reflecting our growing interest in female education following the implementation of national incentive policies and awareness programmes. The growth in the proportion of female students coupled with a State gender policy have led to a marked increase in the female employment rates, which significantly exceed those of men in some sectors, such as health care.

With regard to the maintenance of peace and security, my Government is on track to consolidate democracy and good governance. As Member States might have seen, the presidential and parliamentary elections conducted in the Sudan last April were peaceful, fair and transparent and were monitored by a number of regional and international centres. The people elected a President and members of Parliament and other legislative bodies throughout the country for the first time in the history of modern Sudan since its independence in 1956.

We recall the comprehensive national dialogue initiative launched by the President of the Republic on 27 January 2014, to which a total of 87 political parties

responded positively. All agreed to meet and discuss issues pertaining to peace, the economy, the alleviation of poverty, unity, identity, foreign policy, civic rights and duties, human rights, freedoms and political practices.

Member States might also have taken note of the adequate and effective safeguards guaranteed by the Government to the remnants of the armed rebel groups in a bid to secure their safe participation in the dialogue, without restriction or precondition. In that context, on 21 September 2014 the President of the Republic issued two presidential decrees on the renewal of amnesty for all armed individuals and the extension of a unilateral moratorium for an additional two months as an incentive to the armed groups and individuals to participate in the comprehensive national dialogue process, which is open to all.

With regard to safeguarding human rights, the Government of the Sudan has made commendable achievements in the past and has taken many steps to safeguard and protect those rights, including the adoption, more than one year ago, of a comprehensive 10-year human rights development plan, which now represents a comprehensive strategy and course of action for all relevant ministries and State institutions.

With regard to the protection of women's rights, especially their right to participate in political life, the aforementioned presidential and parliamentary elections bear witness to the inclusion of women, which proved to be critical at all stages to ensuring the success of the elections. Women hold 30 per cent of all parliamentary seats.

In respect of cooperation with United Nations mechanisms and relevant envoys, the Government of the Sudan maintains constant cooperation and coordination with the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan and participates actively in the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

In the field of combating cross-border crime, the Government of the Sudan has signed several bilateral agreements with neighbouring countries, including Libya, Chad, the Central African Republic, South Sudan and Ethiopia, with a view to tightening border controls, preventing trafficking in arms and stopping the infiltration of organized crime, including trafficking in persons. In October 2014 my Government hosted and co-organized the Regional Conference on Human

Trafficking and Smuggling in the Horn of Africa, and has enacted a national law to combat trafficking in human beings, which entered into force last year.

Our discussion on human rights brings us back to the issue of unilateral sanctions, in the context of which we would like to mention the study conducted by the Human Rights Council two years ago on the human rights implications of such sanctions. The study concluded that innocent people, not Governments, are the primary victims of sanctions regimes.

The Sudan has always been an active partner in international efforts to combat terrorism. At the national level, we have made considerable progress in ensuring that our laws and legislation fully comply with international law and the international instruments on terrorism to which the Sudan became a party more than a decade ago. The Sudan adheres strictly to their norms and provisions.

In that connection, we categorically reject all attempts to politicize and circumvent the provisions of international law. I cite the relationship between the Security Council and the International Criminal Court, in respect of which experience has shown again and again that the scourge of politicization has turned the Court into a tool for targeting African leaders in particular. In that regard, members may have noted the decisions adopted by the African Union, notably those adopted at its Summits in Sirte, Libya, and in Addis Ababa, which were subsequently endorsed at the most recent Summit, in Johannesburg.

Our world will not be healed in the absence of a fair, equitable and universally acceptable international order. However, it has been clear for decades that the current international system can no longer cope with the developments and major transformations occurring worldwide. It is therefore imperative that we embark on an in-depth reform and reconsider agreements in accordance with the circumstances surrounding us today. Therefore, my country strongly calls for the expeditious implementation of structural reform of the United Nations and the Security Council, in conformity with the principle of fair and equitable representation of all countries.

The daunting challenges facing our world today require an overriding international will and demonstrate the urgent need to do more to meet them. That fact needs to be reiterated on the anniversary of the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations. The

United Nations system, and the Security Council in particular, need reform that will ensure the African continent's representation in the permanent and non-permanent seats of the Council in a process free of politicization, selectivity and double standards.

In that context, we note that the fight against impunity is a noble goal, around which the international community should converge in good faith. However, as a rule, mixing justice and politicization is inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. It makes

the delivery of international justice a platform for achieving narrow political goals that have no relation whatsoever to those noble objectives. In that context, my delegation calls for strengthening and supporting regional mechanisms and enhancing preventive diplomacy to address all conflicts and their root causes within the framework of fighting poverty and achieving a fair balance in the field of international politics and economics.

The meeting rose at 2.10 p.m.