



# General Assembly

Sixty-second session

9<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting

Thursday, 27 September 2007, 3 p.m.

New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Merafhe ..... (Botswana)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Merafhe (Botswana), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

## Address by Mr. João Bernardo Vieira, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

*Mr. João Bernardo Vieira, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. João Bernardo Vieira, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Vieira** (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): First of all, I would like to congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly. His great attributes will contribute greatly to the success of our work. I would like to assure him of the constant support of the delegation of Guinea-Bissau in the realization of his noble mission.

I would also like to extend my warm congratulations to the President's predecessor, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa of Bahrain, for the talent and competence she displayed during her tenure.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for the excellent work he has done since his election. We fully agree with the contents of his report and with his analysis of the international situation. We endorse the measures he has recommended.

The prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts and the maintenance of international peace and security occupy a central position in the Charter of the United Nations. It is therefore the duty of all Member States to make efforts to achieve those noble objectives. We believe that the establishment of an international coalition for peace, international security and the promotion and defence of human rights is the ideal way to promote efforts towards the resolution of conflict.

Terrorism and drug trafficking are scourges that threaten all of us and can even gravely affect the stability of a country. Guinea-Bissau, like many other countries in West Africa, is confronting the phenomenon of drug trafficking. The weakened infrastructure of the State and the problems we face in controlling our borders — in particular our waters — have made it possible for drug traffickers and other organized crime elements to flourish in our country. That has resulted in many sorts of difficulties for our authorities, to the point of damaging Guinea-Bissau's image and putting at risk our relations with the international community.

Despite the Government's political will and determination to combat drug trafficking, we have not

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been able to put an end to this scourge. Its eradication will only be possible through international cooperation. The emergency plan to combat drug trafficking developed by my Government illustrates my country's determination to make the fight against the trafficking of drugs and organized crime a national objective. Unfortunately, however, we do not have the trained human resources or the material and financial means needed to carry it out.

I am pleased that an international conference on drug trafficking in West Africa will take place soon. We would like to thank the Portuguese Government for its willingness to host it in Lisbon. Likewise, a regional conference to be held in Dakar will seek to promote better coordination between the countries of the subregion.

I would like to launch an appeal to all countries able to share their experience and technology relating to drug trafficking and organized crime to assist us in the fight against those criminal activities, which jeopardize the internal security and stability of our countries and pose a great danger to our young people. In that regard, I welcome the efforts of the United Nations system to establish a genuine international network to eradicate this scourge.

The Government of Guinea-Bissau has decided to launch programme to address problems in the financial sector that will serve as an adjustment instrument vis-à-vis international financial institutions. That step will certainly allow us to re-establish and strengthen the framework for interaction and external partnerships of cooperation for development. The approval of a post-conflict programme by the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund will be an important step towards achieving the country's economic recovery and stabilization.

We are aware of our responsibilities to manage transparently the meagre resources at our disposal and to combat corruption through good governance based on true democracy.

The disbursement of pledges made during the donors' conference for Guinea-Bissau in Geneva last November is much-needed in the political and institutional stabilization of our country. It goes without saying that without the firm support of the international community, it will be difficult for us to put in place the conditions necessary for the consolidation of stability and for the promotion of true

national political reconciliation, which is essential if we are to preserve peace and achieve sustainable development in Guinea-Bissau.

Allow me to pay tribute to subregional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States and the West African Economic and Monetary Union for their constant support and solidarity, from which we have benefited in our efforts to confront the enormous political, economic and financial difficulties we face. I would also like to welcome the important contribution made by the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau to improve dialogue between international development partners and to mobilize external assistance for my country at a particularly difficult moment in our recent history.

It is also important to emphasize the role played by the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau of the Economic and Social Council.

I wish to express our thanks for the contribution of the United Nations system in general, as well as that of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) in particular, in the process of establishing peace and political stability in our country.

The relationship between the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and the United Nations has been developing in a steady and satisfactory manner. We draw attention to the progress already made in consolidating democracy and the rule of law as well as in promoting respect for human rights in the Community. This constitutes a marked change in the life of the peoples of its member States. Indeed, our eight countries — Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, Sao Tome and Principe and Timor-Leste — are committed to pooling together their affinities and their cultural identities in order to establish a forum for exchange, in a spirit of constant and active solidarity. My country, Guinea-Bissau, has benefited from the support of these sister countries in tackling the many difficulties I have outlined. On behalf of the people of Guinea-Bissau, I warmly commend the leaders present here, and thank them, reiterating our determination to strengthen the historical ties of friendship and cooperation among our peoples.

Allow me also to reaffirm our determination to contribute to strengthening the role of the United

Nations in attaining peace, international stability and development. We support the peaceful settlement of disputes and the promotion of dialogue in all circumstances and situations. History teaches us that change, because it is inescapable, cannot be hindered indefinitely.

China is one nation, one people. The People's Republic of China's contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and its partnership, especially with regard to cooperation for development, are exemplary. The People's Republic of China is the sole, legitimate and true representative of the Chinese people.

We are aware of the problems and the difficulties which we confront in the world in general, and in Africa in particular, where conflict situations and humanitarian crises persist, as in Darfur and in Somalia. We hope that a new spirit of cooperation will prevail within the international community so that a lasting solution and peace can be found in the Middle East.

We therefore need an effective Organization that represents the geographical, cultural and religious diversity of the world, an Organization that takes into consideration and defends with equal commitment and determination the legitimate aspirations of a large number of countries for just representation and participation in the deliberations and decision-making of the Security Council.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. João Bernardo Vieira, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

#### **Address by Mr. Emanuel Mori, President of the Federated States of Micronesia**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Federated States of Micronesia.

*Mr. Emanuel Mori, President of the Federation of the States of Micronesia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United

Nations His Excellency Mr. Emanuel Mori, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Mori:** I am honoured to take part in the general debate of the General Assembly for the first time since taking office as President of the Federated States of Micronesia in May this year. On this occasion, I am honoured to express to Mr. Srgjan Kerim my respect and congratulations on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session. I have every confidence that he will live up to the high standards of his esteemed predecessors. I wish to also convey my congratulations to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, as he takes the helm of the Organization. I pledge to the Secretary-General my Government's strong support. I wish to reaffirm our commitments and the importance that my country attaches to multilateralism and the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

A few days ago, on 24 September, we met in this very Hall to take stock of a global threat which probably is the single most important challenge facing our planet today: climate change. Long before it became fashionable for climate change to be mainstreamed into the global agenda, Micronesia was in the forefront of those speaking out for action against what is now recognized as a global emergency. For years, we have argued that, as a small island developing State, we are among the most vulnerable, and that climate change threatens our very existence.

We have come a long way in a short time. Consider where we were just 15 years ago when the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was signed: climate change was then considered by most as hypothetical and as a threat that was more imagined than real. Now, climate change is accepted as a reality and its adverse impact seen as inevitable and life-threatening, most especially to small island developing States like Micronesia. The current sense of urgency paid to climate change by the world community, as evidenced by high-level meetings around the world, is truly encouraging, but we are still far from reaching the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol.

We need to take collective action now and act responsibly to save our planet, while taking into

consideration the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. If our actions are to be effective, it is imperative that we pursue the climate change agenda both with a sense of urgency and within the framework of the United Nations. It is important that acknowledgment of the threats of climate change be accompanied by provision of adequate and additional financing by the developed countries to the most vulnerable to assist us in coping with our adaptation and mitigation requirements. We therefore support an appropriate institutional arrangement for the Adaptation Fund that is responsive to the needs of small island developing States.

Adaptation and mitigation have many faces, one of which is the pressing need for small island developing States to have increased access to renewable sources of energy, so that we can move away from our long dependence on fossil fuels. In that regard, I must acknowledge with gratitude the kind assistance extended by the Governments of Italy, India and others to small island developing States of the Pacific.

In March, Micronesia presented its proposal for adjusting the Montreal Protocol in order to enhance its effectiveness. Although our proposed adjustment was aimed at improving the effectiveness of the Protocol's ozone mandate, Micronesia has a special interest in the significant climate benefits associated with the Montreal Protocol. We welcome the positive outcome of the historic nineteenth Meeting of the Parties. We hope that other relevant multilateral environmental agreements will also make similar efforts to produce climate benefits.

Two years ago, at the eighth Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which was held in Curitiba, Brazil, the Federated States of Micronesia and Palau showcased the Micronesia Challenge. A collaborative effort among the island States and territories of the North Pacific, the Micronesia Challenge exemplifies the best of the Micronesian spirit of working together towards a common objective and with shared concerns. In effect, the Micronesia Challenge sets aside for conservation at least 30 per cent of our marine and 20 per cent of terrestrial biodiversity across the Micronesian region by 2020.

We are grateful to the regional and international organizations and non-governmental organizations that

have provided support to realize the objectives of our initiative. We are seeking international partnership and assistance to overcome the many obstacles that inhibit the implementation of the Micronesia Challenge. My Government urges the Global Environment Facility to join with others — such as the Government of Turkey — in providing assistance to that end.

I cannot overemphasize the critical role that information and communication technologies play in the socio-economic development of developing countries, particularly that of small island developing States. Given that the islands of the Federated States of Micronesia are widely dispersed in the north-west Pacific Ocean, and owing to our limited resources and high transportation costs, we face many monumental challenges. To confront those challenges, Micronesia believes that access to affordable and reliable information and communication technologies offers us a solution that not only addresses our infrastructure deficiencies but also enables us to meet the aims of the Millennium Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the objectives relating to information and communication technologies emanating from the World Summit on the Information Society.

It is a high priority of my country to bring broadband connectivity to the islands. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States are collaborating on the development of a Pacific Ocean connectivity project that will address the need for developing information and communication technologies infrastructure in the Pacific. We hope that the project will allow our region to establish an effective partnership with the international community and help produce the kind of benefits that will help support our sustainable development goals. We will not, however, be able to implement the project without the financial support of the international community.

I commend the progress on the United Nations Pacific Presence Initiative, which in the case of my country is being represented by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). For the past several years, we have voiced our concern over the lack of an adequate United Nations presence in Micronesia to assist us in addressing our development challenges.

This much-anticipated initiative will be translated into reality for Micronesia later this year. It is an initiative that we will not fail to utilize to the fullest. It is therefore essential that, in keeping with the objective of the joint office to be situated in my country, the original intent with regard to staffing must be adhered to if the Initiative is going to make a difference, both in terms of the effective implementation of United Nations programmes on the ground and in enhancing my country's capacity to access its fair share of other sources of assistance and services provided by the United Nations system.

As one of the countries identified by UNDP as being among those more challenged in meeting the Millennium Development Goals, my country places high value on an appropriate level of United Nations presence in the joint office located in my country to assist us in implementation and effectively utilizing external assistance towards achieving the MDGs. My Government commends UNDP and UNFPA for developing a plan for the next five-year programme cycle that will provide financial assistance to help my country address issues of poverty and institutional capacity. The joint United Nations office will be an important vehicle and will certainly play a pivotal role in the implementation and achievement of the specific objectives of the programme. We look forward to the implementation of the programme.

As custodian of a vast ocean area whose bounty we share with the international community, I would be remiss if I did not make a few comments on the issue of oceans and seas. First, I would like to express our gratitude to the Government of Norway and others that have contributed to the trust fund created to assist small island developing States in claiming their extended continental shelves in compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We are, however, concerned about the obstacles that continue to inhibit access to the fund. There are far too many institutional barriers that need to be immediately rectified to enable use of the fund to allow island developing States to fulfil their obligations under the Convention on the Law of the Sea.

As a people, Micronesians are highly dependent on their marine resources for their livelihood. We take great interest in the conservation and sustainable use of our marine and fisheries resources. We cannot help but raise concerns with regard to the issue of collateral catches or discards in commercial fisheries. While they

may be considered discards to others, they are a critical resource that our people depend upon for their subsistence living. The international community should vigorously seek ways to address this issue to minimize and eliminate the incidence of catching untargeted fish. Another significant and troubling issue continues to be that of bottom-trawl fishing. It would be tragic to our marine ecosystem and biodiversity if that destructive fishing practice were to continue unabated. We renew our call, made from this rostrum years ago, for a moratorium on bottom trawling.

I wish to refer favourably to the long-standing effort by Italy and many others to encourage this body to take a consensus position against the imposition of the death penalty. Last year, my country signed the statement delivered by Finland on this important subject (see A/61/PV.81). We steadfastly maintain our support for this cause.

Turning to the drawn-out discussion over United Nations reform, I should like to reiterate our concern that the reform of the United Nations will not be complete without the reform of the Security Council. We also reaffirm our support for Japan and India, from the Asia-Pacific region, as permanent members of the Council. At the same time, greater representation needs to be given to developing countries, including island States and small States.

While we continue to stand by our position on Security Council reform, we will support any innovative ideas that can lead to further progress on the issue, such as the proposal for an intergovernmental negotiation process. At the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, we must continue the process already begun and make every effort to achieve results.

I should like to close by expressing a sense of optimism about what the nations gathered here can achieve in advancing the admittedly ambitious agenda of the United Nations. Given the challenges that we face, it is only through optimism and determination over time that we can overcome them. We in the Federated States of Micronesia will be here to do our part.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Federated States of Micronesia for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Emanuel Mori, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Ludwig Scotty, President of the Republic of Nauru**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Nauru.

*Mr. Ludwig Scotty, President of the Republic of Nauru, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Ludwig Scotty, President of the Republic of Nauru, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Scotty:** I would like to express my sincere congratulations to Mr. Srgjan Kerim on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session. My delegation also wishes to commend his predecessor, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, for her leadership of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, particularly in addressing the difficult issues that continue to prevent revitalization of the General Assembly and reform of the Security Council. My delegation offers its full cooperation and support towards the President's commitment to continuing with the Organization's overall reform agenda and addressing the many challenges ahead.

As this is the first General Assembly session to be convened since the appointment of His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon as Secretary-General, my delegation takes this opportunity to assure him of Nauru's firm support and full cooperation in his leadership of the United Nations.

I am deeply honoured to be addressing this body for the third consecutive year, this time as the recently returned leader of our small island State of Nauru. As members are no doubt aware, when I first took up office, three years ago, my country was on the brink of collapse. While Nauru was once a small donor country with a high income, our wealth was squandered in a single generation through gross mismanagement and corruption on the part of previous Governments. Our past record of poor governance and the need to rebuild Nauru were the main reasons that our national

sustainable development strategy was initiated by our Government and given one of its fundamental goals: the establishment and operation of a transparent and accountable Government.

My Government is slowly but diligently working to improve Nauru. Over our three-year term, we will continue to do so, on a platform of both economic and political reform, together with good governance. We believe that we are improving our situation, and the August election results tell us that we have our people's confidence. But it is a slow and painful recovery, and we appreciate all the help that we can get.

We appreciate the fact that the United Nations is strongly aware of the development challenges in the Pacific region and that it is also cognizant that assistance has not translated into uniform human development gains in many places, with the result that the Pacific is in danger of missing many targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In that respect, my delegation welcomes and supports the President's intention to hold a leaders' meeting on the MDGs during the present session.

During the general debate at the sixty-first session (see A/61/PV.16), we noted in this historic Hall that the offices and agencies of the United Nations had no permanent presence in many of the small island developing States of the Pacific. In June 2006, it was announced that a coalition comprising the United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund would open a total of eight new offices in Pacific island countries, including my own country, Nauru. We welcomed that historic announcement, the progress that it marked towards harmonization with the United Nations and the assistance and support that the new offices would provide in developing national capacity and meeting the MDGs.

As Member States that pay our dues, deploy peacekeepers and discharge our responsibilities in the international community, we deserve offices that enhance the relevance of the United Nations and the implementation of its policies. We have therefore been severely disappointed by the lack of progress in establishing acceptable offices in our countries since the announcement. The delaying of that initiative, and the assumptions on the part of the United Nations concerning the capabilities of our small island States to

recruit staff for such offices, are also short-sighted. Moreover, the Organization's definition of "partnership" for the initiative places a significant burden on our national Governments. It fails to respond to our national priorities and our lack of resources, and therefore weakens the cohesion between the Organization and our countries.

Despite the lack of visible progress, we are of the view that the project can be salvaged with its original intentions and goals intact if there is a will and a sincere desire to respond to our needs. So we ask the General Assembly and the Secretariat to ensure that offices befitting the ideals and the reputation of the United Nations are opened in our countries. We want to see the United Nations on the ground in Nauru and throughout the Pacific region, providing a helping hand in our pursuit of sustainable development.

There can be no doubt that our Pacific region is doing its best to implement the commitments made under the Mauritius Strategy and other international agreements regarding small island developing States. The relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/62/279) makes that very clear, showing that under its Pacific Plan, the Pacific region has agreed to and is vigorously pursuing its own sustainable development priorities, which reflect and acknowledge our international commitments under the Strategy. The Secretary-General's report and the Pacific Plan updates show progress in some key areas and identify important initiatives for follow-up action.

However, it is also quite clear that we and the United Nations need to do much more. That fact is glaringly obvious in the recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which warns of a narrowing window of opportunity available for slowing down global warming and climate change. This is an issue that reveals some of the inequities in the current world development paradigm: the small island countries contribute very little to the problem but are likely to be the worst affected.

The need to do more also stares us in the face from recent reports on the progress, or lack thereof, in achieving MDGs. Our region is struggling in many areas of the MDGs, and it is fair to say, as the Secretary-General's report notes, that persistent capacity constraints are a key obstacle to the

implementation of sustainable development in the Pacific region — this includes Nauru.

Therefore, I take this opportunity to express my people's warmest appreciation to our development partners, led by Australia, Taiwan, New Zealand, Japan, the European Union and others, for their support in this and other areas, without which we would have completely collapsed as a nation and as a people. However, I hope the Assembly can appreciate that our region, although vast, suffers both from isolation and the relatively small size of its countries and populations.

Even with the best practices in management and governance, our economies' sustainable development is impeded by high transportation costs and diseconomies of scale. In Nauru, freight adds at least 15 to 20 per cent to the cost of all imports. Likewise, affordable and sustainable alternative energy forms are a high priority for my country and region because, with the ever increasing cost of fossil fuel, we are having to pay a high premium for something that contributes both to global warming and to our potential demise as Pacific islands.

Professor Jeffrey Sachs has rightly said that, while we all need to work together to solve world poverty, the opportunity is there for the developed countries with their resources and technology to do something about ending it once and for all. The agreed official development assistance (ODA) target of 0.7 per cent of a gross national product is far from being achieved. This highlights the opportunity for the world to do much more to both alleviate poverty and remove the constraints that frustrate the progress of many developing countries.

Like other highly indebted countries, mine is doubly burdened by a massive debt left to us by previous Governments. After careful assessment of Nauru's development potential for the next thirty years, we have come to the sad conclusion that Nauru will only be able to service a very small portion of that debt. We will need to seek the forgiveness of those countries and institutions to which we owe most of the money.

This Organization prides itself on being inclusive and on being a champion to everyone; yet my delegation is extremely disappointed that, despite the efforts of Nauru and other allies of this cause, the United Nations continues to ignore the expressed wish

of Taiwan and its 23 million people to become a member of this Organization.

On the 19 July this year, an application for membership to the United Nations was delivered to the Office of the Secretary-General, signed by the democratically elected President of Taiwan, His Excellency Chen Shui-bian. Unfortunately, the United Nations Charter and the rules of procedure of the Security Council were then contravened. Owing to poor legal advice, the Office of the Secretary-General failed to forward Taiwan's application for membership to the Security Council, citing General Assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI) for its failure. Even though many Member States continue to hide behind resolution 2758 (XXVI), it should be realized that this resolution does not declare that Taiwan is a part of the People's Republic of China, nor does it preclude Taiwan from future membership of this body. It certainly does not support the so-called one China principle.

Ever since the establishment of the People's Republic of China on 1 October 1949, the two sides of the Taiwan Strait have been governed separately, with neither side exercising any control or jurisdiction over the other. Let me be absolutely clear: Taiwan has no intention of representing the People's Republic of China. Taiwan is a free and peace-loving sovereign State, and its democratically elected Government is the sole legitimate Government of their island State.

Apart from the legal and moral rights of Taiwan to be part of the United Nations, there is another dimension that needs to be taken into account. Taiwan is one of the largest economies in the world, including being one of the larger trading partners of other Members of the United Nations. It is also one of the top twenty sources of world foreign investment and is well positioned to assist many of the members of this body in their development, which it has already demonstrated. Taiwan is a very important investor and trading partner for my country and others in my region — even for those that do not recognize it formally.

My delegation calls on the Office of the Secretary-General to uphold the integrity of this pre-eminent Organization and conform to the United Nations Charter and the rules of procedure of the Security Council. It must immediately accept and

submit to the Security Council Taiwan's application for membership.

Peoples of the world look to the United Nations and to their leaders to identify and act on major global challenges that confront the world today. Earlier this week, we concluded a High-Level Event on Climate Change. Our discussions encompassed a variety of views and proposals that we all hope will lead to global resolve to achieve significant changes. Nauru takes the view that the international community, particularly those countries with the capacity that comes with their status as developed nations, has a responsibility to provide financial, humanitarian and other assistance to small island developing States that stand to suffer the most dire consequences of global climate change.

Of course, we must acknowledge and express gratitude for those aid policies that have been proposed and established, but more is needed to avert a potential disaster, especially to the vulnerable small island nations. Therefore, we ask that ongoing efforts be continued and urge Member States to consider increasing their financial support, including easier access to the Adaptation Fund.

However, capital investments alone are not sufficient. Technology, skills and knowledge are required to guide us in our response to the present challenge. Furthermore, civil society and non-governmental organizations must cooperate with each other in acquiring and building the capacity we need to address this problem.

The world situation demands a renewed, revitalized and more responsive United Nations now more than ever. We need to see the strengthening of this multilateral institution through the revitalization of the General Assembly and comprehensive reform of the Security Council through intergovernmental negotiations. All of that must move forward with a common vision for a more coherent United Nations system capable of delivering as one, sparing no efforts to continue strengthening the three pillars of peace and security, development and human rights.

Nauru is of the view that the comprehensive reform of the Security Council will not be complete without Japan, India, Brazil and Germany as permanent members.

In closing, I wish to remind this Assembly of the Secretary-General's recent observation of the United Nations, whereupon he stated:

“The true measure of success for the United Nations is not how much we promise, but how much we deliver for those who need us most.”  
(A/61/PV.31)

As we move forward our discussions on the many challenging and complex issues before us, let us do so with the best of intentions, and more importantly, let us make good our promise to deliver.

Finally, while I stand in this great country of the United States of America, the land of the free, I cannot help but remember that its people have put their trust in God. On my island country of Nauru, also a land of the free, we have placed our belief in God's will first. Therefore, to every human being on our planet Earth, I beseech each and every one of us to dedicate ourselves to hold true to our God's will.

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

*Mr. Ludwig Scotty, President of the Republic of Nauru, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Ahmed Abdallah Sambi, President of the Union of the Comoros**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Union of the Comoros.

*Mr. Ahmed Abdallah Sambi, President of the Union of the Comoros, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Abdallah Sambi, President of the Union of the Comoros, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Sambi** (*spoke in French*): Echoing previous eminent speakers at this rostrum, on behalf of my country, the Union of the Comoros, and on my own behalf, it is a genuine pleasure to address our warm congratulations to the President on his brilliant assumption of the presidency of the sixty-second session of this Assembly. It is a pleasure likewise to

address our warmest congratulations to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for the effective manner in which he has carried out his duties in this world undergoing vast change, which requires increased commitment by our Organization. May I also extend our sincere thanks to the American Government and to the leaders of this magnificent city of New York for the fine preparations that they have made to receive and welcome us here.

The situations of conflict that claim innocent victims — in the Middle East, in Darfur, in Somalia and in so many other regions where hotbeds of tension erupt — appeal to our collective conscience and call for urgent measures for calm and for the resolution of such problems. My Government endorses any action taken by the international community, particularly the African Union and the United Nations, in seeking solutions to these problems, which are a source of concern for the whole world.

The world has reason to be concerned. Fear and uncertainty have become widespread, within both developed and developing countries. Paradoxically, science and technology have never been so effective. The world has never been so rich, nor has it displayed such great profits.

Today, the countries of the South are overwhelmed by the burden of debt, civil war, insecurity, destitution, precariousness and endemic disease. Therefore, security and harmony in this world call for greater solidarity and greater humanism.

The international community should thus emphasize development assistance to help the small countries to meet environmental challenges, particularly the effects of climate change, degradation of the ecosystem and desertification. Such solidarity should also be forthcoming in combating other scourges affecting our countries, most specifically HIV/AIDS, malaria and all other diseases that decimate our peoples and impede our development.

In addition, yet another scourge besets the world, and that is terrorism, which recognizes no borders. Nor does it recognize race or religion in its unspeakable cowardice and blindness. We should do everything possible to ensure that it can no longer flourish on poverty and prosper on the weakest links of the world chain.

Also, we must ensure that fanaticism and intolerance can no longer impose their law on the world and destroy humankind. Indeed, in bolstering tolerance and respect for the right to difference and for the dignity of every people, we will avoid possible setbacks, attacks on human rights and the amalgam of terrorism and particular religions or regions. In this way, we will be successful in guaranteeing lasting peace, stability, security and development, because it would be an illusion to speak of such ideals in a world of poverty, where economic development and the well-being of each and every individual have not yet been achieved.

Moreover, at this midpoint on the way to the deadline of 2015 set for the Millennium Development Goals, while notable progress has been achieved, full achievement of these objectives depend to a large extent, on international solidarity and respect for the various commitments entered into by the wealthiest countries.

The reform of our Organization is more necessary than ever to ensure that it is fully representative and better reflects its universal nature. Thus, Africa and all other regions of the world should be appropriately represented within the Organization in order to more effectively embody the principle of equality of States within this great concert of nations.

*The President took the Chair.*

Allow me to take this exceptional opportunity to present some insight into the situation in my country, the Union of the Comoros.

Since assuming the highest office, I have endeavoured, with my Government, to give effect to the commitments made to the people of the Comoros and to the international community in connection with respect for human rights, the rule of law and good governance, particularly through the restoration of a system of justice that should serve as a model, the struggle against corruption, the struggle against insalubrious housing and advancing the situation of women.

In this certainly very ambitious endeavour, I rely largely on the people of the Comoros themselves to establish at the national level the conditions necessary for the success of the mission and task I have set myself. I am also confident that international solidarity will continue to increase, to support to a small country

such as ours in confronting the numerous problems that it encounters daily. Indeed, I would like to express from this rostrum our gratitude to all the countries and organizations that support us in this undertaking of building a nation in the Comoros that is peaceful and prosperous.

But I have to emphasize that there was a time not so long ago when the African continent and other regions of the world were shaken by endless coups d'état. That illegal, antidemocratic and frequently violent form of access to power plunged the countries in question into instability.

It would appear that that time is now passed, with the advent of democracy and multiparty systems. The large majority of political forces would appear to accept democratic succession through free and transparent consultation of peoples as being the only acceptable means for acceding to power.

However, another mode of violent political action continues to exist in developing countries and appears to be assuming particular importance, namely, the armed rebellions affecting many countries, including the Comoros, my country. Armed uprisings are a source of destabilization and an obstacle to development efforts. Such uprisings are frequently at the centre of political and geopolitical interests that support them, to the detriment of the best interests of the countries themselves. They benefit from the explicit or hidden support of internal or external forces which use them.

My country is not free from this phenomenon. Indeed, the former Head of the Executive of the island of Anjouan refuses to hold free and democratic elections at the end of his term. He is leading an armed uprising that has attacked the presidency of the Union, the representation of the Government of the Union in the island and the contingent of the National Development Army. The uprising jeopardizes the hopes for development of the country by causing delays in repayment of the debt of the Comoros to the international institutions and hampers the resumption of investment from abroad. It is for this reason that I state here our major concern at the political crisis that we are experiencing.

Therefore, I make a solemn and urgent appeal to the entire international community to assist us in establishing lasting stability in the Union of the Comoros by settling the problem of the uprising that

continues in the autonomous island of Anjouan. Indeed, all the steps taken by the Government of the Union have encountered to date the intransigence of the rebels of Anjouan, who refuse to comply with the resolutions of the African Union and the recommendations of the international community regarding the organization of free and democratic elections in Anjouan, as occurred in the other two islands and in respect of the constitutional legality, particularly, the exercise in Anjouan of legitimate powers.

From the bottom of my heart, I would wish to thank all our bilateral and multilateral partners for their unflagging support in the search for a prompt and final solution to the crisis that we are experiencing. For all these partners, I have always demonstrated our goodwill in seeking to settle the Anjouan crisis by peaceful means because the important thing is to save national unity and preserve the people of the Comoros from anything that might damage our development efforts.

I take this opportunity also to thank the authorities of the African Development Bank and all those instrumental in providing partial debt relief to the Comoros, with a view to facilitating our economic recovery.

The Assembly will understand that the Comorian Government cannot sanction any action that would establish the Balkanization of our country. The Comorian people remember only too well the unfortunate experience regarding the sister island of Mayotte. Although the one case is a problem within the Comoros and the other a dispute with France, which is a friendly country and principal partner of the Comoros — and I stress that fact, France is a friendly country, a friend and principal partner of the Comoros — both situations involve the disunion of our country, and we cannot remain indifferent to them.

Over 30 years have passed since the independent nation of the Comoros was admitted to the United Nations, within its authentic borders, that is, comprised of four islands: Ngazidja, Mwali, Ndzouani and Maoré. During those 30 years, all organizations that have recognized our independence have unflinchingly supported the just claim by the Comoros of sovereignty over the island of Mayotte, a claim upheld by the successive Governments in Moroni. That is a principle that the people of the Comoros will never give up, even

if the approach has varied from one administration to the next. Today, my Government would like, in a calm atmosphere, to deal with this matter with France, giving priority to dialogue and consultation. For we must together find a rapid response to the problem of the human tragedies caused by the frequent shipwrecks of makeshift boats transporting on virtually a weekly basis dozens of Comorians from the other islands who visit Mayotte to meet with their families. We must promptly together deal with the inhuman treatment inflicted on Comorians from the other islands residing in Mayotte, and we must seek to facilitate the free movement of goods and persons among all the islands of the archipelago. Lastly, we must find together a *modus vivendi* that reflects particularly the social, cultural, linguistic, economic, religious and historical realities that shape the life of all Comorians.

To that end, I am happy to note the convergence of views with Mr. Nicolas Sarkozy, President of the French Republic, who, during his address to this Assembly stated,

“I want to say, in the name of France, that there will be no peace in the world without respect for diversity, without respect for national identities, without respect, I venture to say, for religions and beliefs, or without respect for cultures. Attachment to one’s faith, to one’s identity, to one’s language and culture, and to one’s way of life, thought and belief — all that is legitimate, and profoundly human”. (A/62/PV.4)

I thus appeal to the United Nations to take on this matter by working to achieve a closer rapprochement between the two parties, with a view to a prompt settlement of the question. I truly believe that together with the French authorities we can find the ways and means to move towards a final, just and lawful solution to this problem.

In the ongoing quest for peace and freedom, I have a particular thought for those who, throughout the world, are engaged in struggle and are claiming their rights to unity and territorial integrity. Thus, from this rostrum, I would like to renew to our friend the People’s Republic of China, our commitment to a policy of a single China, single and indivisible. To our brother country the Kingdom of Morocco, I would like to reaffirm our support for its legitimate fight to recover its territorial integrity.

In conclusion, I hope that peace reigns in our world, that goodness and good faith win our hearts so that the people of the world can live in happiness and in greater solidarity than ever.

I would like to finish with a few words in Arabic.

*(spoke in Arabic)*

The Israeli-Arab conflict is the source of tensions in the Middle East, and the Palestinians in the occupied Arab territories live in inhuman and tragic economic conditions because of Israeli practices. The international community must deal decisively with this situation by requiring the Israeli authorities to implement relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and decisions. Additionally, the provisions of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights must be observed. As we all know, there can be no peace in the Middle East without a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question effected by the withdrawal of Israel from the Arab territories that it occupied in 1967.

Without the establishment of a viable Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem with its capital, and the settlement of the question of refugees on the basis of the General Assembly resolution of 1949, the conflict will not be settled. Construction of settlements must be stopped, the separation wall must be demolished and Palestinians must be compensated for damage caused by its construction. I also invite our Palestinian brothers to renounce division and disintegration and to engage in dialogue. The international community and the United Nations must provide swift humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, open the crossings and dismantle anything that hampers movement.

We also state our solidarity with our brothers in Lebanon, and we call for full implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), the cessation of Israeli incursions into Lebanon and withdrawal from the Sheba'a Farms.

On the subject of Darfur, we give priority to the peace talks to be held in Libya on 24 October this year. We hope that all the parties will attend these talks. The international community must assume its responsibility and urge the parties to participate in those negotiations, which we hope will be final and decisive. We also hope that the African Union mission and character in Darfur

will be respected and that the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Sudan will be fully respected.

**The President** *(spoke in French)*: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Union of the Comoros for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Sambu, President of the Union of the Comoros, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

## **Agenda item 8 (continued)**

### **General debate**

#### **Address by Mr. Janez Janša, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia**

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

*Mr. Janez Janša, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The President**: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Janez Janša, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Janša** (Slovenia) *(spoke in Slovenian; English text provided by the delegation)*: Mr. President, let me first express my gratitude to your predecessor, Her Excellency Sheikh Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, for her leadership of the General Assembly. To you, Sir, on behalf of Slovenia, I assure full support for your leadership. We also look forward to cooperating with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

An important part of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly will coincide with a period of increased international responsibility for Slovenia. We will do our best to make good use of this opportunity and to benefit not only Europe, but the international community as a whole. The United Nations will be at the heart of our efforts. This Organization still represents humankind in its best light.

The discussions this week have proved that the global community has identified the challenges brought about by the human impact on the environment. The will to find solutions under United Nations auspices was clearly expressed. The sheer dimension and

complexity of the issue require that this Organization have primacy.

Today, environmental changes are occurring all over the world. Slovenia pins great hopes on a regional approach in the search for solutions. At the global level, we support the principle of common, but different, responsibilities. A common approach is necessary because of the considerable impact of climate change, including on global security and stability.

Country-specific solutions should allow space for realizing development potential. Slovenia is very serious about its commitments within the European framework. The European Union has showed the will and ability to take initiative. We hope that such examples will set the dominant tone of the overall discussion through the new framework for the period after 2012.

Slovenia welcomes the progress made so far in the United Nations reform process and will continue to work towards the more responsive, effective and representative United Nations.

The role of the United Nations in maintaining peace and security is indispensable. This year, more than 10 per cent of the members of the Slovenian armed forces participated in missions abroad under the mandate of the Security Council. The majority of them helped to strengthen peace and stability in South-Eastern Europe, and also in Afghanistan, Lebanon and Iraq.

In the last decade and a half, the international community has dedicated considerable human and financial resources to the region of the Balkans. The contribution is great; therefore the dividends of peace for the whole region should not be wasted at the end of the stabilization process. We need to pursue solutions to secure these dividends; then they should be further invested in the common European project.

The international community must, within the framework of the United Nations, complete the establishment of mechanisms aimed at meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century. Finalizing a comprehensive United Nations convention on international terrorism must continue to be a key priority. Another challenge remains concrete application of the concept of the responsibility to protect.

Even the most determined efforts to achieve global security have little chance for lasting success under conditions of inequality. Therefore, achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is of paramount importance. Creating equal opportunities for the disadvantaged and demonstrating solidarity with them are sustainable investments in peace. It is only when both developed and developing countries choose to make such investments that the benefits of the world's current economic growth will be more fairly distributed.

Slovenia was very pleased to become a member of the Human Rights Council. The trust that has been placed in us will be honoured through our active and open efforts to achieve the implementation of human rights standards. We will continue to support the policy of global abolition of the death penalty.

Slovenia attaches great importance to the concept of human security, which is in accordance with the pillars of the United Nations: development, security and human rights. We accord special attention to children: the youngest victims of violence, poverty and deadly pandemics are also the most powerless. Therefore, it remains true that a man never stands so tall as when he kneels to help a child.

In that respect, Slovenia takes particular pride in its full cooperation with the non-governmental sector. The Together Foundation, which is concerned with the psychosocial well-being of children in societies affected by armed conflict, and the Slovenian International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance in Bosnia and Herzegovina were founded as a result of Slovenia's initiatives aimed at the wider region.

Slovenia actively participates in initiatives on intercultural dialogue, devoting special attention to the Mediterranean area. We hope to see the early establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean university, which would be a Slovenian contribution to raising awareness about the need for peaceful coexistence among those with different cultures and world views.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, one of the chief architects of the United Nations, predicted at the time of the establishment of the Organization that change would be a regular feature of its development. Indeed, the United Nations continues to be built today. The great hopes of humanity depend on our joint efforts, which will never be completed. Therefore, it is my

hope that the sixty-second session of the General Assembly will be crowned with success.

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

*Mr. Janez Janša, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Fakhruddin Ahmed, Chief Adviser of the Caretaker Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**

**The President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Chief Adviser of the Caretaker Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

*Mr. Fakhruddin Ahmed, Chief Adviser of the Caretaker Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Fakhruddin Ahmed, Chief Adviser of the Caretaker Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Ahmed (Bangladesh):** I would like to take this opportunity to express to you, Mr. President, my delegation's sincerest congratulations on your well-deserved election. A special tribute goes to Her Excellency Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa and to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, for their visionary and dedicated leadership.

Recent events in Bangladesh have aroused considerable interest worldwide as we struggle to fulfil the promise of democracy for our people. I will take this opportunity to share with the global community some of our recent experiences in consolidating democracy. We have learned that democracy is not an event; it is an ongoing process. It is not just about casting votes and changing Governments; it is also about social justice, accountability and empowerment of the people.

Those who have followed events in Bangladesh over the past few months will know that the Caretaker Government came into office in January this year amid a political stalemate. The fabric of our democracy had been torn apart by years of catastrophic corruption. Widespread frustration with the status quo had led to a

rising tide of political violence. That in turn had disrupted ordinary life and shattered all public confidence in the possibility of credible elections. Moreover, there was little hope that a tainted election could end the cycle of violence. A state of emergency was therefore declared on 11 January of this year in an effort to end the ongoing chaos and to usher in a new beginning.

As stipulated in our constitution, the non-party Caretaker Government acts as a bridge between two successive political Governments. Our task is, first and foremost, to ensure a free and fair election, and we are fully committed to fulfilling that responsibility. However, our nation has learned through harsh experience that an election cannot simply be a one-off casting of votes, but must be part of a dynamic and continuing process whereby people freely choose their leaders.

While Bangladesh has held three elections in the past two decades, our democracy has been brutally undermined by ruinous corruption. The lack of systemic institutional safeguards allowed corruption to run rampant. That created a winner-takes-all electoral system, whereby the spoils of electoral victory were so great, and the stakes of winning so high, that the political process became hopelessly polarized, leading to a paralysis even of ordinary governance. As the benefits of winning elections increased, so did the costs of securing victory, creating a truly vicious circle in which corruption became the linchpin. Corruption thus became both the means and the end in terms of winning elections. If our democratic spirit is to emerge unscathed from that downward spiral, and if we are to deliver free, fair and meaningful elections, we must first free our politics from the clutches of corruption and violence.

Democracy and the rule of law are not merely concepts; they must be embodied in functioning public institutions. In Bangladesh, the very institutions that form the foundations of democracy have been eroded by ongoing corruption. Rebuilding those institutions and restoring public confidence through meaningful reforms are Herculean tasks, but they are ones in which we cannot and will not fail.

In Bangladesh, the task of conducting free and fair elections is the responsibility of the Election Commission. The Caretaker Government has already overhauled the Commission, guaranteeing its

independence and giving it a broader mandate. The Election Commission, of its own accord, has announced a timeline for the holding of the next parliamentary election by the end of 2008. Our Administration is committed to ensuring that that timeframe is adhered to. We will bring to bear the full resources of the Government in that effort.

Our Government has reorganized the Independent Anti-Corruption Commission to ensure that it can effectively lead the fight against corruption. We have given the Commission broad and sweeping powers — including operational independence — not only to apprehend those who have been corrupt, but also to work as a deterrent. Within a month after coming into office, our Government acceded to the United Nations Convention against Corruption as a clear signal of our unwavering commitment against corruption.

The implementation of the Convention will not only contribute to the reduction of corruption in Bangladesh, but will also help us to recover the ill-gotten gains of corruption stored abroad. Those who engage in corruption must confront the reality that there is no safe haven for them. The world is united in the struggle against corruption, and today Bangladesh pledges itself an active partner in that endeavour.

One of the most critical elements of a functioning democracy is an independent judiciary. In Bangladesh, the lower judiciary and criminal prosecution were traditionally under the executive branch of the Government, contrary to the constitutional principle of separation of powers. While judicial independence has been part of the political manifesto of successive governments over the past 15 years, each has repeatedly reneged on its public promises in this regard. Recognizing the importance of an independent judiciary to the rule of law, the Caretaker Government within its first month in office initiated the necessary steps to fully separate the executive and judicial branches of the Government. We have also revamped the Bangladesh Public Service Commission and the University Grants Commission in order to restore the apolitical nature of those important institutions.

Political parties are among the core constituents of democracy. Their accountability and true democratic character remain critically important for democracy to function. In response to demands of the people, the main political parties have themselves initiated various reforms, and the revamped parties will interact with the

revitalized institutions of the Government to move our nation forward.

Bangladesh reaffirms its unflinching commitment to universal and inalienable human rights. Any society committed to democracy requires the recognition and enforcement of human rights, and in Bangladesh the fight against corruption and the strengthening of the rule of law go hand-in-hand with the protection of human rights. The Caretaker Government has, therefore, taken the decision to establish a national human rights commission to ensure that our laws and public institutions reflect international standards and norms of human rights. It is unfortunate that successive Governments have shied away from taking this important step.

Bangladesh remains resolute in its relentless campaign against international extremism and terrorism. We recently acceded to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Bangladesh is now a party to all terrorism-related United Nations conventions, a testament to our commitment to fighting terrorism in all its forms. On the domestic front, we have taken stern measures against militant groups and their patrons. In particular, we categorically reject the claims of those who cloak themselves in the rhetoric of Islam to justify terrorism. Bangladesh is steadfast in its commitment to curb religious fundamentalism in all its manifestations.

Our experience in re-instilling confidence in the Government has a wider relevance to the international community. The problems that we are facing today are not unique to Bangladesh. After all, in the developing world democracy does not necessarily ensure good governance. Many countries face similar problems of political violence, mis-governance and corruption. This is particularly true for post-conflict and transition societies, where the politics of mistrust is pervasive. We feel that a greater understanding of our challenges and, more importantly, of our efforts to re-build political and social institutions, can serve as benchmarks for others facing similar situations. For example, Bangladesh represents an effective model of civil-military cooperation in crisis prevention. Our experience in crisis management could be relevant for many crisis-torn, nascent democracies.

One way in which we can share our experiences in governance is through our robust presence in United Nations peacekeeping operations. We have consistently

been one of the top troop-contributing countries in the world, and our peacekeepers have earned accolades for their contributions. We are confident that Bangladesh will continue to play a leadership role in multi-dimensional peacekeeping efforts, and we are ready to provide comprehensive deployment packages in future peace operations. We also remain active in the United Nations peacebuilding endeavours in post-conflict societies.

We warmly welcome the Secretary-General's timely initiative to restructure the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The world is witnessing a natural evolution from the monitoring of peace to multidimensional tasks of peacebuilding, democratization and development. As one of the largest troop-contributing countries (TCCs), we strongly feel that the TCCs should have equitable representation and play a greater role in deployment and other strategic decisions.

The United Nations is in the midst of a continuing evolution. It is our collective responsibility to make the United Nations more relevant to the present day world, to fulfil the promise Dag Hammarskjöld spoke of when he said, "The day will come when men will see the United Nations and what it means clearly." The Secretary-General's report on system-wide coherence presents several useful recommendations in this connection. However, we feel that the reform exercise should focus on the requirements of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and we recognize that the speed of reform must be gradual.

We must reflect upon what is needed by the United Nations, in terms of financial and human resources, to foster development. Keeping in mind that developing countries differ greatly in their political, administrative and social structures, the reform exercise must take this diversity into account and allow individual countries to determine the structure of the United Nations presence at the country level, the representation of different United Nations agencies and their country programmes. We must not undermine the identities of individual United Nations agencies, including their mandates, independence and institutional integrity.

Earlier this week, we discussed the exceedingly important issue of climate change. World leaders reaffirmed our shared commitment to address the issue

of global warming. Bangladesh is particularly vulnerable to global warming, given that as much as 30 per cent of our land will be submerged if the Bay of Bengal rises by just one metre. The adverse effects of global warming, deforestation and increased salinity are already evident in Bangladesh. Floods have become an annual calamity, and this year our people have suffered particularly severe losses owing to flooding. While the resilience of our people and the quick mobilization of our limited domestic resources helped us to overcome the crisis this year, we envisage that this may become harder in the future. We therefore urge enhanced international cooperation to meet the challenges of global warming and its consequences.

There is a growing acknowledgment that trade liberalization can be an effective tool for economic development. For the least developed countries (LDCs), the trade-to-gross domestic product ratio averages about 58 per cent, while it is roughly 25 per cent for many Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries. These statistics show that the LDCs are far more dependent on trade than their developed counterparts. Bangladesh, along with many other LDCs, is facing significant tariff and non-tariff barriers in accessing developed markets. Global trade regimes must provide unimpeded access to all products of LDCs, so as to ensure that the fruits of progress are shared by all.

While representing a nation of 140 million people, squeezed into an area roughly the size of New York State, I must underscore the importance of migration to our development efforts. For many in Bangladesh and other developing countries, temporary labour migration provides a livelihood option and a route out of poverty. If we are to reduce poverty by half by 2015, we must strengthen our efforts to ensure the free movement of labour. The international community is recognizing the critical linkages between migration and development. It is encouraging that the Global Forum on Migration and Development, held in Brussels this July, accorded migration its due priority. We must also intensify our efforts to defend the rights of migrant workers. We would also like to see momentum in the liberalization of Mode IV services. We call for renewed international efforts — at the World Trade Organization and in other forums — to facilitate the free movement of labour services.

Let me conclude by reiterating my Government's unswerving commitment to democracy and the

protection of human rights. We have pledged to put Bangladesh on a higher trajectory of good governance, rule of law and development. We are determined to hold a free, fair and meaningful election within the timeframe stipulated by our independent Election Commission and to keep our country firmly on the path of democracy. My Government is fully committed to ensuring that our reform initiatives are comprehensive and irreversible. Bangladeshis now stand united for a prosperous future for their country and the world.

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Chief Advisor of the Caretaker Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Fakhruddin Ahmed, Chief Advisor of the Caretaker Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Albert Pintat, Prime Minister of the Principality of Andorra**

**The President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Principality of Andorra.

*Mr. Albert Pintat, Prime Minister of the Principality of Andorra, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Albert Pintat, Prime Minister of the Principality of Andorra, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Pintat** (Andorra) (*spoke in Catalan: English text provided by the delegation*): People and planet. They are our alpha and our omega. They are the foundation and objective of actions by bodies such as the United Nations.

The Earth is blue like an orange, said the poet Paul Eluard. That is a logical statement, as our planet takes its blue colour from the sky and the oceans that protect us, and the orange colour from the fruit that nourishes us. The Earth is a sphere that moves and turns with infinite interdependence. The human attitude, nature and peoples are bound together to form a single scheme of debate, impossible to resolve separately.

Every year in the General Assembly we are pleased to feel that our work is centred on the ideals of

a better world in the environment of a democratic structure, dialogue, the brotherhood of cultures and financial and social interchange, supportive and prosperous between peoples.

The latest data available to us on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) show a positive trend. We have made great progress in the reduction of child mortality and we have applied various measures of truly surprising simplicity that have demonstrated their effectiveness in eradicating many illnesses. And yet the inhabitants of the world — the people, flora and fauna of the planet — look at our organizations and all of us somewhat suspiciously. There is much concern. There is great uncertainty.

With your permission, my words today will not be of self-complacency — either for the results obtained or for the undeniable improvement in some of the ailments that undermine our dignity as people. Congratulations can give way to relaxation and can have a perversely soothing effect on our consciences. The development of global societies has become essential in the light of the positions affecting economic, social, cultural, military and political systems on a worldwide scale. There is an urgent need for conceptualization in the face of the evident poverty resulting from the sudden and profound transformations suffered by peoples, regions and countries. Successive waves of contributions of capital and human resources combine with pre-existing human substrata, creating superimposed layers that further accentuate differences. When those investments cease to be profitable, resources are redirected. That results in situations of change or crisis.

The realities on which we have to concentrate are those of a world in which, according to the latest data published by UNICEF, 9.7 million children's lives were lost in one year; a world in which human life expectancy can differ by more than 30 years; a world in which more than 39 million people are infected with the AIDS virus; and a world in which too many people are still without access to safe drinking water. That is not doomsaying on my part; it is a recognition that the advances made cannot conceal the profound shortcomings that still exist or hold back the achievement of results.

Indignation and rejection in the face of every unacceptable reality have made possible the finest achievements for the progress of humanity in a

remarkable way at the United Nations and must now enable us to obtain more resources, to go faster, to have more ideas and to be even more effective.

*Mr. Beck (Palau), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

For more than six decades, the United Nations has sought to be the moral and legal force which ensures that dialogue, cooperation and solidarity take the place of oppression, weapons, famine, ignorance, misery and injustice. However, during the years of existence of the United Nations, wars, poverty and intolerance have not stopped. On the contrary, we have had to add new ills, such as the radicalization of fundamentalism or the degradation of the environment, and increasingly frequent natural disasters. Earthquakes, hurricanes, typhoons, cyclones, tornadoes and floods and the thawing of many of the glaciers at the two poles are vivid examples of the climatic disorder that we have to combat. To tell the truth, the planet is threatened; but I do not think that this is an accurate assertion. Those really threatened are the most vulnerable persons and countries. They are the ones who suffer from war, illness and underdevelopment. Climate change will affect all of us, but not all of us equally.

At the same time, trafficking in, and the abuse of, children and women continue despite the legal instruments with which we have equipped countries such as Andorra, where the defence of human rights and liberties is considered to be a fundamental inspiring principle.

The world of the twenty-first century views armed conflicts, terrorism, violations of human rights and extremely precarious situations in many areas with something between resignation and impotence. I would refer, merely as an example, to the extreme situation that has affected the population of Darfur for many years.

We should not be surprised that, faced with all those hard realities, international institutions like ours are suffering serious crises of discredit and significant erosion. Nevertheless, if we are here today it is because we believe that we can improve the world — people and planet — because we are convinced that together we are able to react. Hope remains intact. Every country — whatever its size — and every director and every organization with the capacity for action has to fight to make law into the essence of vitality and to achieve open and sincere dialogue in the international

arena. As Charles de Gaulle said, it takes several to deliberate, and one to act. As Al Gore told us on Monday, the world requires a global Marshall Plan, because our planet is in an emergency situation.

We are delighted with the thrust and dynamism displayed by the new Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, since he took office. We praise the efforts of the General Assembly in setting up a Working Group on Security Council reform, as well as the proposals that are being studied. We fully support the model of society proposed by the United Nations — rooted in the principles of peace, solidarity, liberty, cooperation, social development and economic growth.

With regard to goals, I applaud the initiative of the Millennium Development Goals. At the time of their introduction, the previous Secretary-General warned us that we needed to break with routine. He told us that we could not achieve results in a day because success would require sustained action over the 10 years envisaged for implementation. Today, before the entire Assembly, I add my full support to those words. I call upon everyone to maintain the pace and to press the foot down a little harder on the accelerator.

We all benefit from the progress that we have made. We know the enduring relationship that exists between poverty and nearly all the challenges we face: mortality rates, differences in life expectancy, ill health, injustice, intolerance, marginalization and armed conflict. Let us reject before the world and before all peoples some of the pernicious prejudices that prevent us from advancing. Permit me to recall three truths that have been defined a number of times by Jeffrey Sachs, the director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University.

The first is that the illnesses ravaging poor countries are perfectly avoidable and can be prevented. The second is that to avoid all the thoroughly unnecessary deaths caused by them will not affect the population explosion. The third is that poor countries, as has already been shown and in refutation of some voices deliberately ignorant of their prejudices, are capable of installing efficient public health programmes when they receive adequate aid.

As a result of the terror and the material and moral misery suffered during the Second World War, countries, peoples and their representatives came to an agreement, saying “enough” and creating organizations

such as the United Nations to regulate and mediate conflict. They did this with a sense of generosity, a breadth of purpose and a boldness that today must inspire our action even more.

The ideals of the fathers of the Charter of the United Nations were founded on a respect for individuals, on liberty and on access to knowledge and education to achieve welfare and peace around the world. Only through an energetic renewal of those ideals can we ensure that the balance on planet Earth improves perceptibly and continues to do so year by year. Only with the unity, understanding and cooperation of all nations can we obtain results.

The small size of Andorra has not prevented us from maintaining good neighbourly relationships with France and Spain for more than seven centuries. We are fully concerned and involved with the objectives of the United Nations. With our long and, at the same time, humble experience, we could even become a neutral area, impartial and isolated from partisan interests, in the case of any conflict in need of resolution.

We must be realistic, but this must not stop us. We must advance with modest but continuous reforms, tangible and firm reforms that lead us to a better future.

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

*Mr. Albert Pintat, Prime Minister of the Principality of Andorra, was escorted from the rostrum.*

#### **Address by General Surayud Chulanont, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand**

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

*General Surayud Chulanont, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming General Surayud Chulanont, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**General Chulanont (Thailand):** On behalf of the Royal Thai Government, allow me first to congratulate

you, Mr. President, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on your election as the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session. The Thai delegation looks forward to rendering its full support for the work of this session in the coming months.

I also wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless devotion to the United Nations and its reform. The first year in office is crucial for setting the priorities and future direction of this Organization, and the Secretary-General is certainly faced with a great challenge.

Thailand is keen to work with the Secretary-General towards a renewed United Nations — one that is more responsive and empowered to address effectively the needs of the peoples of our world. We are keen to do so because we are committed to what the United Nations stands for: respect for equality, for diversity, for human rights and for people.

That commitment drives us to build a stronger democracy that is more transparent and has stronger safeguards for our people. That commitment also guides us in building a sound, open economy and a more just and equitable society governed by the rule of law — crucial underpinnings for sustainable development.

All of that is taking place during a very special year for the Thai people, namely, the eightieth birthday of His Majesty the King of Thailand.

As most representatives probably know, exactly one year has passed since Thailand moved to address the unprecedented political paralysis in our democratic system. I wish to take this opportunity to assure our friends that we are keeping to the timeline for the revitalization of parliamentary democracy, with general elections scheduled for 23 December 2007.

Exactly 10 years ago, Thailand suffered from a deep crisis of a different nature. Through globalization, that economic ailment quickly spread to many countries and regions. Yet we have emerged from the 1997 Asian financial crisis a stronger and more vibrant free-market economy. Now, despite high oil prices and other challenges, Thailand's economic fundamentals are strong.

But, while continued economic growth over the past decade has lifted millions of Thais out of poverty, some 10 per cent have not benefited. Thailand, like

other developing countries, continues to face challenges to sustainable development in the form of income disparities and an urban/rural divide.

I believe that governments have a moral responsibility to address disparities in income distribution. This is why Thailand has made it our national priority to promote growth with equity and to achieve development from within. Our approach has been based on His Majesty the King's philosophy of a "sufficiency economy", which calls for moderation and mindfulness in consumption, prudent economic decision-making and careful risk management. The philosophy's recognition by the United Nations Development Programme in its 2007 Thailand Human Development Report has strengthened our conviction that we are on the right track.

The Government is leading that effort through universal education and investing in basic infrastructure for people-centred development. We believe that emphasis on moderation and knowledge will lead to a more equitable society, which is fundamental to sustainable development and immunity from external shocks.

In addition to promoting growth with equity, governments must also ensure that progress does not come at the expense of the environment. For Thailand, the sufficiency economy's concepts of moderation and mindfulness relate directly to the sustainable utilization of natural resources. Thailand aims at cutting back on its reliance on fossil fuels and at lowering greenhouse gas emissions through energy conservation.

At the same time, we seek to meet our growing energy demand through renewable energy and biofuels. We are also considering the option of nuclear energy, paying heed to the crucial issue of safety.

But Thailand realizes that a significant reduction of fossil fuel use will likely take a few more decades, owing to the high costs of new technology. There must be greater partnership between countries that have developed clean energy technologies and those who lack them. We therefore reiterate our call for research and development cooperation and the affordable transfer of clean coal and methane reduction technologies.

An inevitable consequence of climate change is unpredictability of the water supply. As a major food-producing country, and in line with His Majesty the

King's "Water is life" initiative, water conservation is a long-term priority for the Thai Government. We have made a commitment to increasing the country's forested and water catchment areas. I would like to call on all nations to make water management a priority on our climate change agenda as well.

Thailand places great importance on promoting human security and is an active member of the Human Security Network. I have spoken about Thailand's efforts to provide our people with freedom from want through democratic reform, respect for human rights and people-centred and sustainable development. The other side of human security is freedom from fear. As a result of fear and mistrust, individuals and communities fall prey to extremist ideas that further divide humanity. I strongly believe that the best strategy to conquer such fear is winning hearts and minds, and Thailand is committed to fostering cross-cultural understanding.

But terrorism continues to draw its strength from extremist ideologies. So we must appeal to the majority in the world who are moderates to join forces against extremism. In addition, enhancing inter- and intra-faith dialogue and dialogue among civilizations should take place at the regional level. We are doing that in South-East Asia.

As a neighbouring country sharing a land border of more than 2,400 kilometres with Myanmar and currently hosting more than a million of its citizens, Thailand is gravely concerned about what we are seeing and hearing about in Myanmar. Thailand and Myanmar, being predominantly Buddhist, share a belief in non-violence and tolerance. Thailand therefore finds unacceptable the commission of violence and bodily harm to Buddhist monks and other demonstrators in Yangon.

This morning, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) discussed the situation in Myanmar. ASEAN is appalled to have received reports of the use of automatic weapons and demands that the Myanmar Government immediately desist from the use of violence against demonstrators. ASEAN expressed revulsion over reports that demonstrations in Myanmar are being suppressed by violent force and that there have been a number of fatalities. We strongly urge Myanmar to exercise the utmost restraint, to seek a political solution and resume its efforts aimed at national reconciliation with all parties concerned, and

to work towards a peaceful transition to democracy. We call for the release of all political detainees, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

ASEAN fully supports the decision of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to send Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari to Myanmar. We ask the Myanmar Government to cooperate fully and to work with him. Mr. Gambari's role as a neutral interlocutor among all the parties can help to defuse the dangerous situation. ASEAN urges Myanmar to grant him full access to all parties in the country, as it has done in the past.

Thailand is undergoing changes that will make it a more capable partner of the international community and the United Nations. At the regional level, Thailand is eager to work with our ASEAN partners to create a closer community. Strengthened by a new Charter, ASEAN will be able to cooperate more effectively with its United Nations partners.

Indeed, promoting closer cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations — two organizations that share the same values and goals — will be one contribution to restoring faith in the multilateral system. Another will be supporting ongoing United Nations reform efforts. Together with Chile, South Africa and Sweden, Thailand has put forth the Four Nations Initiative proposals, aimed at improving the governance and management of the Secretariat on the basis of increased accountability and transparency.

Thailand's cooperation with the international community and the United Nations is being further enhanced by new people-centred initiatives. Our new constitution provides for universal education and health care, gender equality, respect for children's rights and a social safety net for the poor, the disabled and the elderly. More than ever before, we are committed to combating HIV/AIDS and other global health threats.

In the area of poverty eradication, Thailand is also committed to going beyond our borders to assist our friends and neighbours. Our Mae Fah Luang Foundation's community development model is being replicated in Afghanistan and Indonesia. Thai troops participating in United Nations peacekeeping missions are recognized for their contributions in rebuilding basic infrastructures in post-conflict areas.

We see that the immediate resumption of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations is

essential to help the developing world achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). And, as the twelfth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, to be held in Accra next year, approaches, Thailand is looking forward to discussing ideas for South-South and trilateral cooperation to address the opportunities and challenges of globalization for development.

This has been a year of great reform for Thailand. The current political and social reforms that are taking place in my country will allow us to make greater contributions to a world where people can live in security and dignity, free from poverty and despair — a world where the present generation enhances the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

As the world grows smaller by the day, humanity, more than ever before, is sharing a common destiny. Our faith in the United Nations and in the multilateral process must be equal to the challenges and opportunities facing us.

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

*General Surayud Chulanont, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, was escorted from the rostrum.*

#### **Address by Sir Michael Somare, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea.

*Sir Michael Somare, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Sir Michael Somare, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Sir Michael Somare** (Papua New Guinea): I wish to express to Mr. Srgjan Kerim, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session, Papua New Guinea's congratulations on his election. We assure him of my country's full cooperation during his presidency. We compliment his predecessor, Her Excellency Sheikh Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, for her

stewardship of our work during her tenure, and we wish her well in her future endeavours.

I would like to express our support to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his leadership of the United Nations. Let me thank him, in particular, for his courage and strong leadership on the issue of climate change. By the same token, I would also like to thank the staff of the Secretariat and all United Nations agencies who continue to give valuable service to my country, Papua New Guinea.

On 18 September 2007, two days after celebrating 32 years of independence, Papua New Guinea convened its eighth National Parliament. This was a result of another successful general election. Democracy is a challenge, but Papua New Guinea continues to thrive under it. My country of more than 800 tribes and languages continues to find in the democratic principles the binding force and unity in diversity in the 32 years of unbroken democracy.

Papua New Guinea remains committed to the principles and purposes of the United Nations. We agree with the President that we must continue to work with common purpose to renew, modernize and strengthen this Organization so it can rise to the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The increasing incidence of human atrocities, genocide and war, poverty, terrorism, HIV/AIDS, the resurgence of malaria and tuberculosis, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, drug and human smuggling, environmental degradation and climate change are issues that, we believe, the United Nations is best placed to address.

Again we agree with the President that global challenges demand multilateral solutions. The United Nations is the appropriate multilateral forum to take such action. That is why the revitalization of the General Assembly deserves our highest attention. To revitalize the Assembly is also to renew our faith in each other and in our common values and destiny.

We strongly endorse the President's five priority issues of climate change, financing for development, achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), countering terrorism, and the United Nations reform agenda. To complement efforts in other forums, Papua New Guinea with other countries of the Pacific region has agreed to pool our limited resources under the Pacific Plan, in order to address, as the basis of our

cooperation, many of these same issues, in particular, sustainable development, climatic change and regional integration.

Let me turn now to an issue which my country feels strongly about: climate change. To be clear, we are very concerned to see certain industrialized nations attempting to avoid responsibility for their own carbon emissions and shifting the focus to developing nations. Only after industrialized nations take responsibility for the consequences of their own actions will the pathway become clear for lasting solutions.

However, as developing countries, we are willing to contribute equitably towards a sustainable future. During my earlier statements at the high-level event on climate change, I put forward key principles needed to guide future international agreements on climate change after the year 2012.

The time for leadership is now. If we are to defeat this self-inflicted calamity, we must succeed in six key areas: we must construct a shared vision for lower global greenhouse gas concentrations; we must aggressively deepen reduction commitments by industrialized countries; we must create more mechanisms to provide positive incentives for developing countries; we must launch a global framework to reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation; we must scale up adaptation financing for future generations; and we must mobilize sufficient and sustainable resources to support positive incentives and adaptation.

The science is clear. Our planet is in distress. As co-inhabitants of this world, we all must address the root causes of the problem. To succeed, leadership is required on both sides of the economic divide. Together, and only together, we can grasp the challenges before us and construct a sustainable future.

Papua New Guinea supports the ongoing reforms in the United Nations Secretariat. In order to strengthen it to better address some of the key challenges facing the membership, reform should reflect the geopolitical, economic and social realities of today, taking into particular account the different levels of development facing the membership. Above all, the reform must be fair and equitable.

Global trade today is uneven and characterized more by unfair trade practices by those already holding decided advantages than by the opportunities it offers

to developing countries like Papua New Guinea. Our efforts to develop a more equitable trading order are hampered by the reluctance of our developed partners to open their economies and engage in genuine development discussions.

The Doha Round of negotiations are at a critical juncture. We need to collectively ensure that those negotiations are revived so that different trade needs of its members are addressed.

Papua New Guinea has moved forward from an export-driven economic growth strategy to a policy of economic consolidation and empowerment. Its core policy objective is to provide every Papua New Guinean equal opportunity to build home, community and country. To achieve this, strong emphasis will be placed on agriculture, which has always been the mainstay of our rural populace. Along with this aim, relevant infrastructure will be built to support that important sector.

The country's five-year medium-term development strategy is being reviewed to strengthen its alignment with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Achieving the MDGs by 2015 is a challenge that requires our collective input in its implementation.

We call on development partners, including the United Nations, to play a supportive role in implementing and sustaining these activities. That can be done through fair trade opportunities, equitable markets, increased foreign investment, transfer of technology, capacity-building and providing quality overseas development assistance.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is a serious threat to social and economic security in many of our countries. Greater efforts must be made to arrest it. In Papua New Guinea, my Government has passed HIV/AIDS legislation underpinned by a comprehensive HIV/AIDS policy framework. We consider HIV/AIDS to be a development issue and deal with it separately from other health issues. But our experience suggests that national action alone is not enough. A concerted global response is required. HIV/AIDS is a threat that must be addressed on all fronts and by all countries. We thank the United Nations and its related agencies for their efforts in addressing HIV/AIDS. We also thank former President of the United States, Mr. Bill Clinton, for his contribution to this work in my country.

Of equal importance are the battles against malaria, tuberculosis and other preventable diseases. While, as a global community, we have focused on HIV/AIDS and avian flu, little attention is given to malaria, which remains the biggest killer disease in my country. We therefore thank Mr. Bill Gates for assistance given to research work on malaria in Papua New Guinea. We call upon development partners to support Papua New Guinea and other countries in addressing these challenges.

*The President returned to the Chair.*

Despite many United Nations resolutions, the conflict in the Middle East remains unresolved. Papua New Guinea appeals to all parties to the conflict, including those Powers that have the capacity to influence a positive outcome, to make the necessary concessions for a peaceful resolution to this long-standing issue. We appeal to all parties to make full use of the dispute-settlement procedures of the United Nations.

The work of the Special Committee on Decolonization remains unfinished. There are still 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories — some in the Pacific — that have yet to exercise their right to self-determination. The forthcoming referendum in Tokelau demonstrates once again the true spirit of cooperation between Tokelau and New Zealand. We congratulate both Governments and assure the people of Tokelau of our respect for their ultimate decision. In the same vein, we hope that other Administering Powers will follow the example of New Zealand and assist other territories reach a decision of their choice.

While our world today provides untold opportunities, we are at the same time faced with many complex challenges. We must renew our commitment to and faith in the United Nations and seek to reform it in ways that are reflective of the realities of today. Thirty-two years ago, when I brought my nation to take its seat in the General Assembly, I said, and wish to reaffirm today, that, within the limits of our resources, Papua New Guinea will play an active and positive role in the United Nations. That commitment remains.

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea for the statement he has just made.

*Sir Michael Somare, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Sali Berisha, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania**

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

*Mr. Sali Berisha, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Sali Berisha, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Berisha (Albania):** Please allow me, Sir, to congratulate you on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session and to wish you great success in that very important job. I would also like to thank the outgoing President, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, for her valuable contribution to the General Assembly. I also wish to congratulate Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on his leadership, his great efforts in support of peace and cooperation in the world and his contribution to strengthening the United Nations and its institutions.

As a representative of a country that suffered one of the most totalitarian of post-Second World War dictatorships, it is my deep conviction that defending and promoting freedom and its values and supporting oppressed peoples in order that they may free themselves from tyrannical regimes that continue to produce human suffering, poverty, violence and terrorism should be the main priority of the Organization. In that context, I would like to say that Central Asia, the Middle East, the Balkans and the entire world are now freer and safer without the likes of Mullah Omar, Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the message of hope that President George W. Bush and other leaders have sent from this rostrum to all the peoples of the world still living under tyrannical regimes.

Albania is a small country, but one with a clear vocation and determination to strengthen freedom and democracy for its citizens. Albania is also deeply committed to making its modest contribution to peace and security in the world. We have established close

cooperation with friendly countries and international organizations in the fight against terrorism. In that regard, our peacekeeping units have served or are serving in Bosnia, Georgia, Afghanistan and Iraq. I am delighted to inform the Assembly that, in that same spirit, my Government has decided to contribute another platoon to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Albania has also been a staunch supporter of international efforts to limit the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the unlawful use of small arms and light weapons, which pose a serious threat to peace, security and stability. In that context, among other measures, we committed ourselves to the full destruction of our stockpile of chemical weapons. In July 2007, Albania became the first country in the world free of chemical materials and armaments of any kind. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Governments of the United States, Germany, Italy, Greece and Switzerland, which provided valuable financial and technical assistance to achieve that important objective.

We are successfully implementing a number of very important programmes in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF and many other United Nations agencies. Albania became part of the effort to reform the United Nations by voluntarily joining the One United Nations programme as a pilot country. We are currently working with United Nations agencies in order to test the One United Nations concept and to develop new approaches and models for partnership in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment. The first results of the project are truly very encouraging. We are fully committed to making every effort in order to ensure that the initiative can become a success story.

European integration and membership in NATO are two main objectives for Albania. We are committed to undertake any reform and take any step to achieve those goals. A year ago, we signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union (EU). We are working seriously in every way to fulfil its standards and obligations. At the same time, we have undertaken thorough reforms of our armed forces, with the assistance of many NATO member countries. We are also working to strengthen the rule of law and democracy in our country. We are hopeful that by the time of the next NATO summit, in Bucharest, we will

be in a position to deserve an invitation to join the alliance.

It was not long ago that the Balkans was the stage for human tragedies, brutal wars and ethnic cleansing based on the concept of a “greater country” and fuelled by the extreme nationalism and racism of a nation that was consumed by the idea of its own hegemony over others. But in a few years, the Balkan countries have managed to transit from the age of dictatorships, hatred and conflicts into an age of peace, cooperation, friendship and integration.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Governments and taxpayers of the countries members of NATO, the EU and the United Nations, as well as the other organizations whose support and assistance was so important in bringing about that historic change. However, I believe that a final solution to the issue of Kosova’s status that fully respects the expressed will of its citizens for independence is a fundamental precondition for durable peace and stability, not only in Kosova but in the entire region as well. Albania fully supported President Ahtisaari’s project and the efforts of the Troika for the solution for the final status.

Due to the lack of realism and the ghost of a greater Serbia, Belgrade turned down President Ahtisaari’s project, which sets forth and guarantees the highest, by far, European standards for the Serb minorities in Kosova, standards that, in truth, are much more advanced than those enjoyed by the Albanians living in southern Serbia.

Rejection of the Ahtisaari package is unhelpful and proves that what matters first for Belgrade is not the freedom and rights of Serbs in Kosova, but rather the idea of a greater Serbia. Such a stance by Belgrade has been encouraged by the Russian position in the Security Council with regard to Ahtisaari’s project, a position that, despite its motivation, does not contribute to peace and stability in the region.

Claims that Kosova’s independence sets an international precedent or lays conditions for the creation of a greater Albania, as well as the fear of two Albanian states in the Balkans, are unfounded. Those who are interested in the truth and in reality can easily realize that Kosova is a unique case, from both the historical and current perspectives.

For more than five centuries, from the end of the thirteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth, Kosova was a part of the Ottoman Empire, inhabited mainly by native Albanians whose roots and shelter had been there since the very beginning. Only at the start of the last century, in one of the greatest historic injustices, Kosova was separated from the Albanian territory and given in tribute to Serbia — for the sole reason that it was part of an empire that lost the war.

Kosova is also a unique case in her sufferings. During the past century, the implementation of the Cubrilovic doctrine of extreme racism and extermination against Albanians turned them into third-class citizens and turned Kosova into an arena of ethnic cleansing and real apartheid.

It is also a unique case because the last Serbian genocide against Albanians, in 1999, which caused thousands of atrocities among innocent populations, multiple massive graves and the destruction and burning of more than 130 thousand homes, schools and hospitals, obliged the North Atlantic alliance to undertake its greatest offensive to protect human rights and freedom there.

Kosova is also a unique case from a legal standpoint, because during Josip Broz Tito’s regime it was a constitutional entity of the Yugoslav federation, enjoying its veto rights in the federal Government. During this time, Kosova chaired the Yugoslav federation for several terms, based on the leadership rotation principle within Yugoslavia.

The claim that the independence of Kosova could lead to the creation of a greater Albania cannot be farther from the truth. In reality, Kosova’s independence will only end the fluidity of Albanians in the Balkans, along with the idea of the creation of a single Albanian State in the territories where they are a dominant majority. The simple truth is that Kosova Albanians have decided in their great project for the future to join Brussels and not to join Tirana.

On the other hand, I would like to guarantee that Albania remains determined to fully respect the international borders of its neighbours, including those of Kosova. Albania is closely collaborating and will continue to cooperate bilaterally with all countries in the region, including Serbia, in the process of regional, European and Euro-Atlantic integration. I believe that the concern about two independent Albanian States in the Balkans is xenophobic. Two democratic States with

an Albanian majority will be two more countries friendly to their neighbours.

I would like to urge the political leadership of Kosovo to refrain from taking unilateral actions. They should continue, as they have done so far, to cooperate with the Contact Group and the international community in seeking a solution for the final status of Kosovo, with full respect for its will and the dignity it deserves.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the political leadership of Kosovo for submitting a treaty of reconciliation, friendship and cooperation with Serbia — a treaty inspired by the highest European values and the best of European heritage. I hope and wish that Serbia would take up this important opportunity, because I believe that peace and coexistence between Albanians and Serbs in the Balkans will best benefit both of these nations.

**The President:** 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. Berisha, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by the Honourable Nguyen Tan Dung, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam**

**The President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

*The Honourable Nguyen Tan Dung, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Nguyen Tan Dung, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Dung** (*spoke in Vietnamese; English text provided by the delegation*): Mr. President, at the outset, permit me to extend to you my warmest congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session. I believe that with your immense competence, you will lead this session to a successful conclusion. I highly commend Mr. Ban Ki-moon for his important contributions as the Secretary-General of the United Nations. I respectfully convey to all delegates and, through them, to the

people of all Member countries, the greetings of friendship from the Vietnamese people.

When humankind entered the new millennium, we all wished for a more peaceful world, more friendly international relations and a better life. Nearly a decade has elapsed, but that wish has not come true. We are still living in a world blessed with numerous opportunities and at the same time beset with adversities and challenges. It is a blessing that since the establishment of the United Nations, humankind has not experienced any more world wars. However, local wars and conflicts, international terrorism and the continuing arms race, including the nuclear arms race, remain daunting threats to our world today.

Thanks to the miraculous scientific and technological achievements, human living conditions have improved continuously. However, there remains a bitter reality that the gap in living standards between nations and population groups is increasing. Nearly 1 billion people are still living in extreme poverty. At the same time, many pressing global issues have emerged, of which epidemics, environmental pollution and climate change have proved to be serious threats to human life.

We note with satisfaction the rapid proliferation of regional and global cooperation arrangements. In the meantime, the world is yet to be free from tense confrontation, acts of unilateral imposition, violations of national independence and sovereignty, inequality and unfair treatment in international relations.

All these require that together we make greater efforts to maintain peace and stability in all parts of the world, promote equal cooperative relations between and among States, and ensure an international environment conducive to the development of each and every nation.

In the face of enormous challenges in the new millennium, peoples of the world had high expectations of the United Nations and, in that connection, Viet Nam fully associates itself with the orientations charted by the United Nations summits in 2000 and 2005 for the work of the Organization in consolidating peace, security, cooperation and development.

We hope that the United Nations will, together with Member States, intensify efforts to establish long-lasting peace in the Middle East — including efforts aimed at an appropriate solution to the Israel-Palestine

conflict — put an end to conflicts and violence in a number of African countries, restore stability in Iraq and Afghanistan and control and prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Viet Nam supports the settlement of the Korean Peninsula issues through dialogue, in conformity with international law, and shares the Korean people's desire for peaceful reunification.

The United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000 and its policy of promoting sustainable development and ensuring the harmonious combination of economic growth with social equity and environmental protection have elicited practical responses from Member States. Viet Nam hopes that the United Nations will play a more active role in that process in order to create further opportunities for underdeveloped countries to escape poverty and advance with the mainstream countries of the world. In that light, Viet Nam hopes that the Doha Round will be concluded soon to facilitate a fair international trading system.

Viet Nam strongly supports development cooperation between countries and the establishment of equal international relations in economic, financial and trade areas with special attention paid to the needs of developing and least developed countries, including the removal of imposed economic blockades and embargoes. We hope that the United Nations will have more resources for development cooperation, with priority given to the implementation of programmes of action on poverty reduction, advancement of women, child care, population planning and HIV/AIDS prevention. Viet Nam strongly supports common efforts, especially the efforts of the United Nations, to protect the environment and to better respond to climate change.

For the United Nations to fulfil its noble mandate in a vastly changed world, the question of United Nations reform has been raised and keenly discussed. Viet Nam holds that the process of reform should be intensified and goes along with the common understanding that the reforms should ensure the broad participation of all Member States and should be carried out in a transparent manner. Reform should also build upon past experience and, at the same, have a comprehensive forward-looking vision.

In 1945, the United Nations was founded, right at a time when the Vietnamese people had just gained

their independence. Stemming from the belief in the purposes and principles of the United Nations and the desire to contribute to the work of that new international organization, as early as in January 1946, President Ho Chi Minh, the founder of the new Vietnamese State, wrote to the first session of the United Nations General Assembly, stating clearly, "Our nation has gained independence and earnestly requests that you recognize our independence and admit our nation into the United Nations".

Regrettably, it was not until 1977 that Viet Nam became a full Member of the United Nations. Over the past 30 years in its capacity as a United Nations Member, Viet Nam has always worked actively for peace, stability, cooperation and development in the world. Viet Nam has made significant contributions to turning South-East Asia from a war-divided region of confrontation into one of peace, friendship and cooperation, which is now moving towards an Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Community based on the three pillars: political and security matters, economic matters, and cultural and social matters.

It is our consistent position to support efforts towards the peaceful settlement of conflicts, upholding national independence and state sovereignty, promoting development programmes, tackling global social issues and establishing equal international political and economic relations for mutual benefit.

Viet Nam will continue with its policy of being a friend and reliable partner to all countries, striving for peace, independence, cooperation and development. We have established diplomatic relations with 174 countries and economic and trade ties with almost all countries and territories in the world. Viet Nam is an active member of many other regional and global organizations and forums. Most recently, Viet Nam joined the World Trade Organization as its 150th member. Viet Nam has been elected to the governing positions of many United Nations bodies and is now working closely with United Nations development organizations to implement the "One United Nations" initiative in Viet Nam as a pilot country.

We highly appreciate the assistance and support extended by United Nations organizations to Viet Nam. Our significant achievements in socio-economic development have enabled Viet Nam to fulfil a number of Millennium Development Goals ahead of schedule,

especially in poverty reduction. That is also attributable to the support of the international community.

We consider it important to promote South-South cooperation. Despite being a poor country, we participated actively in the tripartite cooperation arrangement between Viet Nam and a United Nations agency to support African countries in the agricultural sector. So far, that programme has produced encouraging results.

With the desire to make further contributions to the work of the international community, in 1997 Viet Nam decided to run for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the 2008-2009 term. I take the opportunity to sincerely thank the Asian Group for endorsing Viet Nam as the only candidate of the continent. We are also grateful to other Member States for their broad support.

Viet Nam is fully aware of the great honour and heavy responsibility of being a non-permanent member of the Security Council, a body entrusted with the primary mission of maintaining international peace and security. If elected, Viet Nam will fully adhere to the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and will do its utmost to cooperate with other members to fulfil that important task.

Viet Nam will work closely with other countries to reduce tension and to prevent and peacefully settle conflicts in different parts of the world. We will fulfil our obligations as a party to all major international conventions and treaties on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We condemn, and are also committed to the elimination of, international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and in accordance with international law.

Viet Nam welcomes and is willing to participate in mechanisms both within and outside the Security Council to increase assistance aimed at the national reconstruction and development of conflict-ridden countries. As a nation that has experienced post-war reconstruction and has accomplished important achievements on its development path, Viet Nam also wishes to share its experiences with other countries throughout the world.

Mindful of the active role played by United Nations peacekeeping operations, Viet Nam has made financial contributions to and participated in a number

of United Nations activities to restore peace in various countries. We are completing the preparatory process for our effective participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations, in keeping with our circumstances and capacity.

We share the view that, if the Security Council is to work more effectively, it must be further reformed to achieve greater representativeness and greater democracy in its working methods. We also support strengthening the Council's relationships with regional organizations. It is therefore encouraging that, at the present session, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the United Nations just signed a cooperation agreement.

I believe that, as a result of its open and constructive foreign policy and its active contributions to international peace and security and development cooperation, Viet Nam will receive full support from all Member States for its candidature for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the term 2008-2009. We will do whatever we can to fulfil that important aspiration.

Viet Nam will always be an active, constructive, cooperative and responsible member of the international community, living up to the expectations of all Member States. On behalf of the Government and the people of Viet Nam, I express the sincere hope that the sixty-second session of the General Assembly will be successful, meeting the expectations of the peoples of the world in the service of peace, security, cooperation and development.

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

*Mr. Nguyen Tan Dung, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Lansana Kouyaté, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea**

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

*Mr. Lansana Kouyaté, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Lansana Kouyaté, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Kouyaté** (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to convey to all members friendly greetings from Guinea, its people and its President, General Lansana Conté. To the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session and to the Secretary-General of our Organization, I wish to convey the same greetings and to express our heartfelt wishes for every success.

The agenda of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly places before us all the essential issues challenging the world: the maintenance of international peace and security, the development of Africa, the promotion of human rights, climate change, the promotion of justice and international law, disarmament, the fight against illicit drugs and the fight against terrorism. Those subjects are timely today, but they were also timely yesterday and will probably remain so tomorrow. They are part of man's long attempt to meet the principal challenge facing him since the dawn of his existence nearly 3 million years ago: his survival.

Today more than ever before, that survival is threatened by a serious lack of respect for the environment. Man emerged from a hostile natural environment, which he tamed in many ways before he began to dangerously threaten it through his appetite for absolute power and his desire for comfort and well-being. Where will this tyranny end? Science has sounded the alarm, although the mobilization consists more of words than of deeds, more of intention than of reality. In this very Hall, during the High-level Event on Climate Change, we absorbed all the information provided by scientists, who concluded that action was urgent. It is paradoxical to note that, after having searched desperately for life on other planets without finding it, man does not realize that, for the time being, he is unique in the immensity of the cosmos.

That unique existence in the Milky Way must continue at all costs, and that is within our reach. The determination that inspired the Organization's founding nations to put the world's affairs in order and forever banish the spectre of war should be the same determination that leads all nations of the Earth to take

concrete and immediate measures to put an end to environmental degradation.

Every time human beings have wanted to do something, they have been able to do it. However, that resolve should not contain secret vices. For example, it should not consist of imposing restrictions on poor countries' use of their forest resources, as if such restrictions were an angelic service to humanity. A balance is possible between environmental protection and the essential will to achieve development. A number of great world leaders have advocated just compensation to Africa for the exploitation of its natural resources. Africa should be grateful for that.

But the continent's needs go well beyond that. Africa no longer wants to be confined to the simple role of supplier of raw materials; it wishes to process them in order to create more jobs and added value so as to create more wealth. The technologies that need to be transferred today are those that guarantee better productivity while respecting the ecosystem.

The issues facing humanity today cannot be addressed by any one country in isolation. The United Nations, because it embodies our common destiny, must be the place where our fears, our anxieties, our visions and our proposals, but also our hopes, come together. But if it is to play such a role, the United Nations must be just and equitable both in its structures and in its decision-making mechanisms.

The Second World War, which was the tragic vehicle that fortunately led to the establishment of the United Nations, spared no nation, race or continent. Reform of the Security Council in particular and of other United Nations organs in general must take account not only of that historic reality, but also of the inevitably universal nature of the problems besetting us.

How can we put an end to terrorism unless we take into account the ferment that would characterize the dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions and enhance mutual understanding and tolerance? How can we overcome HIV/AIDS if profit remains the criterion that guides the pharmaceutical laboratories? How do we put an end to the inexorable degradation of the environment when powerful corporations care little for the future of the planet? How do we eradicate the scourge of drugs when drug traffickers are irresistibly drawn to easy money? All of those questions call for solidarity, vision and joint action. We cannot improve

on the brilliant and poignant analyses that have already been made here in this legendary Hall, but the difference that we can make is to take action.

We should remember that many of the commitments entered into on many fronts have not been respected by the United Nations, nor by the groups of countries represented in specific organizations. Allow me to give you several examples.

In 1974, the most highly industrialized countries promised to eliminate world poverty in the year 2000. That was a mythical year, the year 2000. For that purpose, they undertook to allocate 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product to official development assistance.

In 1989, 15 years later, amidst the euphoria arising from the fall of the Berlin Wall, the same Powers foretold an era of universal peace by the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century. They foretold that the funds previously dedicated to the arms race would henceforth be devoted to accelerating the eradication of poverty, which they said would become effective in 2000. Unfortunately, those predictions were disproved by reality.

Poverty in the world has certainly not been eliminated, it has increased since the beginning of the 1990s. Over 100 million people joined the ranks of the poor in 2003 alone. In September 2000, in this same Hall that, at the time, applauded those aborted hopes, the heads of State and Government of the world adopted the Millennium Declaration. The Declaration implicitly recognized the inescapable nature of poverty, rejecting the goals set in 1974 and admitted that it would only be possible to halve the number of poor people in the world by 2015.

Today, midway towards the achievement of the goals of that Declaration, which did, however, crystallize so many dreams and hopes for the younger generations of the world, all the experts' reports agree that the Millennium Development Goals will only be achieved if we change the strategies and rules that shape our world today.

Instead of a new dawn of global peace, localized wars that rip through the protective membrane of the entrenched and now-defunct bipolar global system now appear in successive waves in Europe, Africa and Asia. The nuclear threat has not disappeared. Is nuclear

energy, whether put to civilian or military uses, actually essential to the life of mankind? Nuclear power certainly is useful when used for civilian purposes, but will always be a threat to humankind — both for those who possess it and those who aspire to possess it — when used for military purposes. It is the logic of rivalry between nations that has led to the logic of the arms race and the theory of deterrence is only a subset of that logic. The best deterrence is the total absence of nuclear weapons.

The effort to combat terrorism is another challenge, the challenge that is played out in a Manichean manner, evil and good opposing each other. Although no attenuating circumstances can be granted to those who subscribe to the philosophy of terror, the realities on which that philosophy seems to be based must nevertheless be eradicated: injustice in the management of world affairs, intolerance in the perception of differences between cultures and cynicism expressed in the theory of natural differences among races.

The success of human rights and worldwide democracy is to be won at that price. Indeed, the great Western Powers, who have guaranteed so much to their peoples in terms of freedom, equality and respect for the fundamental values of mankind must show greater rigor in peacefully promoting the same principles at the global level. They currently give us cause to believe that they frequently choose their immediate interests above the principles in which they believe, although they have good reason to believe in those principles.

All of the heads of State and Government of the African continent and of many other countries that have come before this rostrum have eloquently addressed the issues confronting poor countries. I would like to only briefly touch upon them. Trapped in a vicious circle resulting from the conjunction of bad governance, ever-growing poverty and the Gordian knot of irreducible external debt and unfair capital markets, poor countries are steadily deteriorating. Often transformed into sanctuaries for rebel armed groups, they have become the site of civil wars, with their trails of refugees and massive population displacements. Those devastated societies feed migratory flows and provide an ideal refuge for the mafia networks of organized crime. The traffic in small arms and light weapons knows no borders and the weapons end up in the trained hands of child soldiers.

I do not believe in the inevitability of poverty nor in that of war. Failures in those areas can be clearly explained. The dominant groups of the rich countries and the elites who are charged with governance in poor countries are both responsible for the failure of the fight against poverty and for not having met the commitments taken in 1974. What is worse, they have given preference to commercial, financial and technological policies and strategies that have reinforced the causes of the ongoing impoverishment of poor populations worldwide. With respect to the failure of the pledge for universal peace, it is due to the concepts and political strategies put in place by the dominant groups and leaders of the world who have opted for reaction over prevention.

There are solutions to counter poverty and to bring the world out of this pattern of permanent war. Inspired by the shared destiny of mankind, our dream of universal peace still has every chance of coming true. It would involve promoting a global economic system based on a series of common goods and global public services that must be provided and overseen by the global collective. That is certainly not out of reach.

To eradicate poverty, we must declare it illegal in principle and unacceptable as a phenomenon. Declaring that poverty is illegal means specifically abolishing the legislative and administrative provisions that sustain the mechanisms that create and maintain poverty around the world. It is that new momentum of commitment and collective responsibility towards the eradication of poverty and towards guaranteed peace that will open the way to resolving the many other major challenges that face our time. Of course, the question remains; is our contemporary society, replete with its unprecedented global capacities in the area of know-how, technologies, finance and mobilization of human resources made up, in its essence, not of conquerors but of builders of peace and security who are sufficiently courageous and daring to be able to change the current patterns that mould and forge our world?

Let us take an example from the nineteenth century, which was a time when the world was successful in initiating the process of completely eradicating the age-old practice of slavery, which had until then been considered to be natural and immutable. That required the courageous leaders of the time to declare the practice illegal, at the cost of their own lives at times. The heroic victory of the Allies during

the Second World War was due to a commitment of a similar nature. Similarly, was it not thanks to their firm commitment that the major leaders of the world recently succeeded in abolishing the shameful system of apartheid and replacing it with a democracy of exceptional vitality?

If leaders of that calibre illuminated our past, I am confident that there still exist today those who are capable of changing our world to make a happy legacy for future generations.

In January and February 2007, the Republic of Guinea was beset by an unprecedented socio-political crisis that threatened its social stability and the foundations of its institutions. The cause was the convergence of a cumulative lack of good governance, rampant poverty and an overall economic situation in which all of the financial and monetary indicators were in the red. These tragic events, marked by considerable loss of human life, led to massive destruction of public buildings and involved a great erosion of State authority, creating, at the same time, profound rifts in the social fabric.

Fortunately, the outcome, although it remains fragile, was a peaceful one and is under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations. It owes its existence to the combined efforts of the presidential authority, the unions, civil society, eminent persons and friends of Guinea worldwide.

From this rostrum, I express the deep gratitude and great thanks of the people and the Government of Guinea to all those entities and individuals who were involved to ensure that civic peace would reign in our country.

The Government that came out of these events, a Government that it is my privilege to lead, is doing its utmost to try to meet the many expectations of a people that has become impatient because it has waited far too long. A minimum emergency plan was crafted for the short and medium terms.

Let me conclude by saying that the initiatives planned for by my Government, as promising as they are, continue to be dependent upon the interest that world leaders give to all the subjects that I raised due to my deepest convictions. Beyond the commitment of our elites and civil society to good governance and democracy, the Republic of Guinea needs an effective

partnership in keeping with its specific and pressing needs. This partnership, for which the Guinean people wholeheartedly calls, will be more appropriate, effective and lasting if the dominant groups of the world agree to commit to global solidarity in the service of humankind's development.

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

*Mr. Lansana Kouyaté, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea, was escorted from the rostrum.*

*Mr. Outlule (Botswana), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

#### **Address by Mr. Martin Nduwimana, Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi**

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

*Mr. Martin Nduwimana, Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Martin Nduwimana, Vice-President of Burundi, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Nduwimana** (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): First of all, we would like to extend to Mr. Srgjan Kerim our warmest congratulations on his unanimous election as President of the General Assembly for the current session and to say that the delegation that I have the honour of leading is greatly pleased to see him presiding over the work of the Assembly. We would like also to pay a well-deserved tribute to the outgoing President, who conducted the work of the last session with great wisdom and distinction.

We would also like to convey to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the great appreciation and encouragement of His Excellency Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi, and of our Government, for the tireless efforts that he has been making since he took office to defend and promote the noble ideals of our Organization.

Building a viable world for humanity is a task that is incumbent upon the international community

and every one of its members. Our position in Burundi is that, in strengthening peace and justice within our borders, we are also contributing to the harmonious development of this world. It is in this context that the Government of Burundi is sparing no effort both within the country and at the regional level to establish an environment conducive to the strengthening of peace and security, the rule of law and development.

We are pleased to state that the signing of the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement, which took place on 7 September 2006 between the Government and the Forces nationales de libération (FNL) rebel movement greatly contributed to a return to peace and stability in our country. That paved the way for talks on specific aspects concerning the implementation of the Agreement in a calm setting. Some weeks ago, the FNL movement unilaterally decided to suspend the talks without offering any truly convincing reasons. However, we are not discouraged because we believe that this is simply a hitch that will not have a lasting impact on the gains which everyone wants to preserve.

Efforts are currently being made for a prompt resumption of the talks. A regional summit on the issue should take place shortly to encourage the FNL movement to return to the negotiating table, which is the only acceptable way to achieve a lasting peace. In any case, the Government of Burundi remains open to all proposals that would bring together the necessary conditions for this effort.

The return to peace has also favoured the implementation of programmes that are priorities for the Government in areas such as national reconciliation, education and health for all, reconstruction and economic recovery. Issues related to good political and economic governance, once taboo because of their sensitive nature, are now openly and regularly discussed, and concrete action is being taken to improve the situation.

To achieve greater success in the delicate task of national reconciliation, the people of Burundi have no choice but to review together the history of their country which, in several ways, is characterized by some dark periods. Indeed, the Government has begun negotiations with the Secretary-General in order to set up a truth and reconciliation commission. We are soon going to begin national consultations on this question; the outcome should provide a solid basis for the establishment and operation of such a Commission.

The civil war which ravaged our country greatly impoverished the Burundian population. We are eager to gradually resolve the problem of poverty and to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we have taken measures to offer free health care to children under the age of five and to pregnant mothers in public health clinics, and also to provide free primary school education.

The Government has also set up the Strategic Framework for Accelerating Economic Growth and Reducing Poverty, which was adopted at the national and international levels and which was submitted to our development partners at the Bujumbura round table held in May 2007. Our country's appeal to the international community had a positive reception: funding for our priority programmes for the period 2007-2010 has been pledged.

We take this opportunity to reiterate the gratitude of the Government and the people of Burundi to all of our partners for their generous contributions at the round table. We would be sincerely grateful if their pledges could be redeemed so that we can satisfy the most urgent needs of our population as soon as possible.

Working with the Peacebuilding Commission, my Government has also set up a Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi. This is a framework that involves all of the national and international socio-political partners in contributing to strengthening the return to peace and ensuring that the resurgence of deadly crises will be a thing of the past.

We would also like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the Commission for the positive results we have already achieved together, as well as for the support of the Peacebuilding Fund, from which my country has generously benefited.

We are convinced that peace and security can be affirmed only in one's house and in one's immediate environment. Burundi is playing an active role within the regional framework in the work of the Tripartite Plus Joint Commission, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi. This Commission is a suitable forum for us to discuss our security issues in a straightforward fashion — namely, the presence of many armed groups that are circulating and dangerously jeopardizing the democratic gains made in the development of our member countries. Moreover, on 15 December 2006, at

the International Conference of the Great Lakes region, heads of State and Government of 11 member countries, including our own country, Burundi, signed a Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, with the ultimate objective of making this zone an area of peace, economic growth and sustainable and shared growth. Burundi had the honour of being elected by its peers to host the headquarters of the Executive Secretariat of this Conference.

Furthermore, in re-launching the Economic Community of the Great Lakes countries (CEPGL), along with Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in joining the East African Community, which includes the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda, we are motivated by a desire to build a peaceful, prosperous and united world.

There are still tensions that mark the international situation and new sources of instability and uncertainty have emerged. It is undeniable that remarkable work has been achieved in recent years within the framework of our Organization, as well as in continental and regional organizations. Pockets of tension have now been eliminated, and others are on the verge of being so. However, we are concerned by the continuation of bloody conflicts in Somalia and Darfur, in Iraq, in the Middle East, to mention but a few. Despite the efforts that have been made and the means that have been deployed, there is still a great deal to be done. Burundi decided to lend its modest contribution to resolving some of these crises by providing military observers and police personnel for Darfur and military peacekeeping contingents in Somalia within the framework of operations set up by the African Union.

We know full well that conflict prevention is an ongoing concern of the international community. Stabilization efforts and peacekeeping operations are an eloquent testimony to this. We must accompany this process by strengthening the prerogatives of the Secretary-General in the area of preventive diplomacy to prevent minor conflicts from becoming larger, open conflicts. In this respect, conflict prevention can be effective only if we take into account the nagging question of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which is a dangerous, destabilizing factor.

We would like to launch a vibrant appeal to the countries that produce small arms and light weapons to adopt responsible export policies that would truly help

to curb illicit flows of these weapons. The same applies to the question of disarmament, which our country considers crucial if we want a rapid return to security, peace and development. We say this from experience, because in Burundi, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, as well as in other countries of the Great Lakes region, continue to cause destruction in terms of human lives and social and economic infrastructure, and it always un-does any reconstruction and development effort that we are trying to achieve.

International terrorism is another major challenge to global peace and security. This phenomenon can be seen on all continents, thus proving very clearly that terrorism knows no borders. The absence of a suitable and effective strategy to eliminate this scourge places us at its mercy. These situations should be one of the top challenges for the United Nations family. Our Organization, therefore, must be a tool at everyone's service in all countries, a tool capable of raising hopes, of dispelling concerns and of restoring respect for the rule of international law.

In this context, we must all agree and decide to make our Organization more operational, more pragmatic, more democratic and capable of fulfilling its mission, a mission that is to be accomplished in full cooperation with the regional organizations whose effectiveness in the area of conflict prevention and intervention is well known, despite often insufficient resources. Thus, we express the hope that Security Council reform, which has long been advocated and discussed, will finally become a reality, with a composition that respects the representation of continents that, until now, have been excluded from the category of permanent members, such as Africa, our continent.

Although the cold war is over, we are forced to acknowledge that social relations have crystallized into two blocs with almost antagonistic and diverging interests — that is to say, the rich on one side and the poor on the other. It is high time to humanize relations between the two blocs and to encourage specific measures through respect for commitments that have been taken. Otherwise, we will see the continuation of new societal phenomena, such as the brain drain, worsening crime, sex industry and international migratory pressure, which stir up passions and spark controversy.

To conclude, Sir, the gathering of such a large number of high-level officials makes it possible to take the pulse of the political situation as well as of the international social and economic situation. It makes it possible for us to observe our weaknesses and our potential. We believe that solutions to the different problems that have been mentioned in the course of this debate are always possible, as long as there is a minimum of political will. It is that minimum, which is required of every member of our Organization, that we should all try to obtain together.

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

*Mr. Martin Nduwimana, Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Joseph Nyumah Boakai, Vice-President of the Republic of Liberia**

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

*Mr. Joseph Nyumah Boakai, Vice-President of the Republic of Liberia, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Joseph Nyumah Boakai, Vice-President of the Republic of Liberia, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Boakai (Liberia):** I congratulate the delegation, Government and the people of the Republic of Macedonia on Mr. Srgjan Kerim's election as President of the sixty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly. On behalf of my Government, I acknowledge the astute diplomatic skills and wisdom that he brings to this important assignment. May he rest assured of my delegation's support in his endeavours.

Similarly, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate our new Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, of the Republic of Korea, on his election as Secretary-General of this Organization. It is the belief of my Government that the United Nations will greatly benefit from his wealth of experience as a seasoned diplomat and statesman.

Nearly two years ago, Liberia held its first post-conflict elections, following more than 14 years of civil war. We were strongly supported by the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and members of the international community, including the United States, the European Union, the People's Republic of China and Japan. We commend you for your continued support toward our national reconstruction programmes.

My Government welcomes and highly appreciates the recent decision of the Security Council to lift the sanctions which it saw fit to impose on the timber and diamond sectors in Liberia. We pledge our fullest cooperation with the United Nations as it partners our country's reform, which undoubtedly will strengthen the good governance procedures. Although the imposition of sanctions was considered by many as punitive, I am gratified to inform you that the Liberian people viewed the sanctions as prudent and corrective. The sanctions helped to accelerate the adoption of new laws and the institutionalization of appropriate mechanisms to ensure that we would never again allow conditions such as those that gave rise to their imposition.

We also thank the international community for its continued support to peacebuilding and the strengthening of instruments of security and stability in Liberia. In spite of the gains of peace, Liberia remains fragile. The recent decision by the Security Council to extend the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) is timely and relevant. Liberia remains grateful for that and other decisions aimed at sustaining peace and stability in the country.

Democracy is on an irreversible course in Africa. The values of democratic governance and the rule of law are also on an upward march. My Government notes with great delight the successful holding of relatively peaceful, free, fair and democratic elections in Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Mauritania and Mali. From our experience in Liberia, we know that democratic elections in themselves do not provide quick answers to the monumental problems and challenges that face a new and emerging post-conflict nation. They do, however, create the environment, and potentially unleash opportunities, for freedom and individual enterprise to thrive and prosper. Because such democracies are in their infancy, they need the support of bilateral and multilateral partners. We therefore call

on the United Nations, the African Union and bilateral and multilateral partners to support all new democracies and to help us meet the multifaceted needs of our people.

Liberia reaffirms its belief in the United Nations as the best institution for the promotion and protection of international peace and security and the resolution of crises around our world. Our faith in the United Nations is rooted in our conviction that it represents mankind's best hope and vehicle for the advancement of the common purpose of humanity.

Our generation must avoid the temptation to use the instruments of our common Organization for narrow agendas that undermine its Charter. In this new millennium, the United Nations must continue to renew its resolve to promote, protect and sustain the universal virtues of liberty, equality, solidarity, tolerance and non-violence, while simultaneously respecting and protecting our environment, pursuant to the mandate of the Millennium Summit. Liberia commits itself to being a strong partner and advocate for the promotion of these shared values of our common humanity. But as the United Nations pursues those objectives, we must recognize that it cannot expect to succeed using frameworks that are nearly three quarters of a century old. The United Nations needs to be, and must be, reformed.

Liberia and other Member States have advanced practical suggestions for the reform agenda. Liberia offers the following proposals: first, a timely review and reconfiguration of the Security Council, including the current decision-making machinery and processes of the Organization, should be conducted to make it more relevant and representative of the world community; secondly, mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that the Charter remains inviolate; and, thirdly, careful consideration should be given to due process in dealing with Member States.

Pursuant to our call for reform of the United Nations, we today call on Member States to give meaning and expression to gender equality. We propose that the United Nations recommit itself to ensuring an equitable partnership of women and men in the leadership of the Organization. Reforming the United Nations also means reforming our attitude towards women and other minority groups worldwide. There is no doubt in our mind that women will significantly

contribute to the process of change in this Organization.

Fully cognizant of the evidence that the dividends of peace and security are always greater than the debilitating effects of conflict, Liberia continues to work within the regional framework of the Mano River Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the African Union to ensure the realization and advancement of peace in the subregion and on the African continent. It is said in my country that there is no capitalism without capital. Peace is sustained only with the economic empowerment of all people.

In that regard, since its inauguration our Government has engaged in active subregional initiatives to improve and strengthen ties of friendship and economic cooperation with our immediate neighbours in the Mano River Basin and the ECOWAS Community. As a result of our efforts, the instruments of peace and security and the potential of trade rationalization in our subregion are stronger today than they ever were a few years ago. Under the chairmanship of Her Excellency President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the Mano River Union has assumed a new vibrancy and renewed sense of cohesion and common purpose. Citizens of the Mano River Union countries are exchanging more frequent visits, and undertaking programmes aimed at enhancing integration and peace. That is why we were happy to host President Ernest Bai Koroma a few days following his inauguration as President of Sierra Leone.

As events in the Middle East continue to claim our attention in the world community, we must not lose sight of similarly grave situations in Africa. I refer to the continuous humanitarian catastrophe in Darfur in the Sudan, and crises in Somalia, Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Chad, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and Uganda, among others. My Government therefore welcomes Security Council resolution 1769 (2007) and the consensus reached for the deployment of a hybrid African Union-United Nations force in Darfur following months of painstaking negotiations. We further urge countries that have pledged logistical and other support to fulfil their promises to ensure the timely deployment of the peacekeeping force in Darfur. We applaud the progress made in the resolution of the crisis in our sisterly Republic of Côte d'Ivoire. My delegation calls for strong support of the Ouagadougou

agreement, which provides the best possible framework for peace, security and stability in that country. Peace and security in Cote d'Ivoire means peace and security in Liberia, and indeed, in the Mano River Basin and the Economic Community of West African States.

The world has witnessed and continues to witness phenomenal advances in science and technology leading to the transformation of industrialization and the improvement of the human condition. We must work to save our planet, because, when we save our common Earth, we assure the survival of all of its inhabitants.

Liberia supports the efforts of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Kyoto Protocol, the decision reached on Agenda 21 at the 1992 Rio Conference and the recent high-profile conference hosted here on climate change, intended to raise international awareness of the degradation of the environment and the need for collaborative efforts to reverse negative trends. There could be no theme more appropriate and timely for this year's general debate than the theme "Responding to Climate Change".

This debate will, we are confident, accentuate the issues of environment and stimulate increased international action. Liberia is concerned about the rapid degradation of the climate. We hope that this session will produce a consensus on how to save succeeding generations from the impact of deteriorating climate.

In our world today, there is a correlation between war, civil conflict and the spread of HIV/AIDS. The HIV/AIDS pandemic targets and destroys our human capital, the backbone of our socio-economic development. The records of the United Nations and other organizations show that the prevalence of HIV/AIDS increases in countries affected by war and civil conflicts, owing to the mass movement of populations. Post-conflict countries therefore need special attention if the scourge of HIV/AIDS is to be overcome. The devastating impact of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases has contributed significantly in retarding the progress of the developing nations.

African nations must develop the political will to combat the health crisis on our continent. To this end, we call upon our partners in the developed world to treat the issue of antiretroviral drugs as a purely social and humanitarian matter of an emergency nature, outside of politics. Liberia recently set up its National

AIDS Commission to advance practical strategies that will help to halt the spread of this deadly disease. We are hopeful that prudent action, including a change of life styles coupled with antiviral drugs, will help address this emerging catastrophe.

Liberia continues to be burdened by huge debts owed to bilateral and multilateral creditors. Servicing these debts remains a major priority of the Government of Liberia. However, our capacity to make payment is constrained owing to the severe resource challenges arising out of a 14-year civil war. There is a traditional parable in my country which says that you cannot dig a hole to fill a hole. We renew our Government's plea for international empathy and favourable consideration of our debt cancellation request.

We reassure all of our bilateral and multilateral creditors of our commitment to continue to work with them to develop the necessary framework toward the actualization of Liberia's debt relief initiatives.

We also thank all our partners, especially the United States, Great Britain, China and Germany among others, for active steps taken toward debt relief for Liberia.

I assure you that after learning a costly lesson in violence, the people of Liberia are determined to settle their differences through peaceful means. With your support, we have found a better way to resolve our differences. We have resolved to forgive one another, pick up our dignity and pride and move forward in unity and oneness of purpose with strong determination to work for a better and brighter future. Our unity in fostering the faith of our founding fathers to build a nation dedicated to freedom, liberty and justice for all remains undaunted.

We are confident that our international partners want to see a success story in Liberia. Let me assure this Assembly that nobody wants that more than Liberians themselves! May the Almighty God bless us, protect our sovereignties, unify us, preserve our dignities and keep us safe.

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

*Mr. Joseph Nyumah Boakai, Vice-President of the Republic of Liberia, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mrs. Isatou Njie-Saidy,  
Vice-President of the Republic of the Gambia**

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

*Mrs. Isatou Njie-Saidy, Vice-President of the Republic of the Gambia, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure welcoming Her Excellency Mrs. Isatou Njie-Saidy, Vice-President of the Republic of the Gambia, and inviting her to address the General Assembly.

**Mrs. Njie-Saidy (Gambia):** Let me at the outset congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly and to reassure him of the Gambia's full support and cooperation during his tenure in office. Let me also use this opportunity to express our appreciation of the excellent manner in which the outgoing President of the General Assembly, Mrs. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa managed the affairs of the Assembly at its sixty-first session.

My delegation would also like to use this opportunity to once more congratulate our new Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, on his assumption of the leadership of the United Nations. The Gambia is particularly delighted that Mr. Ban had the opportunity to address the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union during his meeting in Banjul in July 2006. His subsequent election, surely can only be a source of pride and delight for us.

We also wish to commend him for the initiative he took to convene a high-level event several days ago on a subject that is of great concern to all nations and peoples of the world, namely, climate change. All the salient issues surrounding this phenomenon have been brought to the fore. It is now our fervent hope that action will be taken to address them in a most timely manner.

The mid-term review of the Millennium Declaration two years ago indicated that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are far from being attained in most of the developing world. This notwithstanding, our commitment to the MDGs is unwavering. The overarching policy objective of the Government, under the leadership of the President of the Republic of the Gambia Al Hadji Yahya A.J.J.

Jammeh, is to reduce poverty and achieve all the MDGs. We have just concluded a second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, which clearly sets out our policy framework for achieving growth and poverty reduction, despite our meagre resources and endowments and despite the failure of several partners to fulfil their pledges of aid, debt relief and market access for African countries. The same mid-term reviews also showed that the commitments that were made in many forums by the international community in support of the MDGs in poor countries have not translated into real resource flows into these countries.

We therefore call on the international community to rededicate itself to the provisions of the Monterrey Consensus and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the panel of eminent personalities established by the former British Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair, to monitor pledges made at summits of the Group of Eight, including those made at Gleneagles. My delegation considers it particularly critical to take action to reverse the downward trend in overseas development assistance.

We also need to re-examine the framework of key rules that govern, inter alia, international trade and finance, global competition, foreign direct investment and international migration. It is important that bodies making rules in those areas accommodate the views of developing countries in general, and least developed countries in particular. For Africa, where we must of necessity move away from aid dependency, the development of the continent must be addressed from the crucial vantage point of trade and market access, so as to enable our economies to be advantageously positioned in order for us to begin enjoying the fruits of globalization.

My delegation would like to seize this opportunity to request the Assembly to pause for a moment and reflect on the plight of the poor the world over. Poverty anywhere, we will all agree, is indeed a problem everywhere. And it is worth remembering that the plight of the poor can affect the comfort and security of the more privileged and affluent members of human society. There is no doubt that poverty engenders many economic, social and political problems. It negatively affects global health and is a threat to international peace and security as well.

Therefore, the need for greater international solidarity to fight poverty in all its forms and ramifications cannot be overemphasized. The development efforts of most Governments, particularly those in Africa, continue to be undermined by the scourges of malaria, HIV/AIDS and other health related issues, such as hunger and malnutrition. I must thank our true friends and development partners for the excellent support they are providing to the Gambian people, particularly in the areas of health, education, and agriculture. It is my fervent hope that the international community will live up to its commitment to support the efforts of our Government as we strive to improve the well-being of our people. In order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, which we should all consider to be a necessary condition to affect people's living standards, Africa sorely needs significant investments in health, education, agriculture and infrastructure.

Allow me to turn to peace and security in the world, especially on our continent of Africa. In recent years, we have witnessed significant improvements in most of the continent. In West Africa, for example, we have been consolidating peace and deepening the democratization process as well.

The people of Sierra Leone have just gone through a peaceful, free and fair presidential election. My delegation would like to congratulate them and to wish the new Government all the success in its efforts to follow the path of rapid socio-economic development for the Sierra Leonean people. The return of peace to Côte d'Ivoire is a welcome and a vital development not only for the country and its people, but also for the entire West Africa subregion. The Government of the Gambia fully welcomes the Ivorian Government's commitment to organize presidential elections shortly, and we wish the friendly people of that great country every success.

The situation in Somalia requires the urgent response of the international community. Lasting peace, stability, and reconciliation can return to that country only when the Transitional Federal Government is empowered to establish law and order. The United Nations, as the overall guardian of international peace and security, should support the efforts of the African Union (AU) in that regard, and Somalia's neighbours as well, to rally the various factions together and bring lasting peace to that country.

As we gather here, thousands of innocent civilians, including women and children, continue to be victimized by the fratricidal conflict in the Sudanese region of Darfur. My Government therefore welcomes the commitment of the international community to replace the existing African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) with a hybrid United Nations-African Union mission, invested, of course, this time around, with a more active mandate to keep and enforce peace in Darfur. We in the Gambia have been in the forefront in the African Union's peace efforts in Darfur, and we will certainly continue to support the international effort with a substantial contribution of Gambian troops to serve in the new arrangement. At this juncture, let me salute the Sudanese Government for their cooperation and their manifest willingness to find a lasting solution through a political process.

The peace and security situation of the Great Lakes region remains a major concern. While we welcome the successful elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo last year, we recognize the fragility and precarious nature of peace in that country and the region as a whole. My delegation therefore calls on the international community to continue to work to search for ways of achieving durable peace. We also urge the international community to assist in bringing all the parties to the negotiation table and to move vigorously to address the humanitarian situation.

Just as the security and peace situation in Africa preoccupies my delegation, so also do the conflicts and turmoil in the rest of the world, especially in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine. The conflict in Iraq remains a major source of concern, not least because it now threatens the peace and security of the entire Middle Eastern region, if not the whole world. Within Iraq itself, the conflict has brought untold suffering to the civilian population especially women and children. Furthermore, the alarming rate of civilian deaths cannot be justified.

Also, the resultant large volume of refugee outflows has now placed unbearable pressure on the economies of, in particular, the neighbouring countries. While we recognize, of course, the potential of refugees to make positive contributions to the economies and societies of their host countries, refugee outflows of the magnitude that we are seeing in Iraq can only pose a threat to social and political security. We therefore strongly urge that as a matter of urgency,

alternatives be found in order to resolve the conflict in that country.

A new approach to the situation in Afghanistan is also long overdue. The country needs more political dialogue than military engagement. We also wish to see leaders in the region engage each other in meaningful dialogue and, of course, renew their commitment to good-neighbourliness as well.

The unresolved question of the self-determination of the Palestinian people remains the most important political and moral question of our time. A few years ago, we all placed our faith in the so-called Road Map for peace and hoped that the Quartet would bring about the eagerly awaited two-state solution.

My delegation now very much welcomes the new initiative being led by the United States of America and very much looks forward to the convening of a conference that would once and for all settle this festering imbroglio. We urge all concerned to come to the table in good faith and with a strong will to make a positive contribution to the search for a lasting solution to the problems of peace and security in the Middle East and, indeed, in the peace process throughout the world.

Allow me to highlight some issues relating to international justice. The illegal, outrageous and protracted embargo imposed on the friendly Republic of Cuba has no basis. It is devoid of political and commercial sense, and those who impose the embargo should join our ranks in the international community in rejecting the embargo as a colossal error of judgement that should never have happened in the first place. We hope to see a repeal of all laws, measures and policies in that direction.

The Gambian delegation sincerely hopes as well that the international community will reflect deeply on the dangers posed by the increasing and unprovoked militarization of the Taiwan Strait. Regional and, ultimately, international stability are under threat from the build-up of thousands of military warheads for use in attacks on Taiwan. The problem of the Taiwan Strait is one that is very serious indeed, and which calls for urgent action by the international community. The United Nations should not wait until it is too late to address the situation of the Strait and its growing militarization.

We, the Members of the United Nations, have at this juncture abdicated our responsibilities towards Taiwan by refusing it full membership in the Organization. The legitimate aspirations of the people of that dynamic, technologically developed, advanced economic powerhouse ought to be fulfilled by States Members of the United Nations. Let me seize this opportunity to assure the Assembly that my delegation is not acting against the interest of any Member State. Rather, we speak out in the interest of peace across the Taiwan Strait, peace throughout the Asia-Pacific region and, indeed, peace in the whole world. It is in that spirit that my delegation will continue to call on the General Assembly to address this threat to international peace and security.

*Mr. Beck (Palau), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Let me conclude by putting on record the Gambia's frustration with the stalled reform of the United Nations. As former Secretary-General Kofi Annan said when the proposals were first made, two years ago, no reform of the United Nations can be complete without reform of the Security Council. For us in Africa, it is just unacceptable that a body that decides on life and death issues for millions of Africans includes no African country at all as a permanent member. That is why the Gambia continues to strongly endorse the Ezulwini Consensus, which represents Africa's common position on reform of the Security Council.

At a time when we are all committed to good governance at the national level, we surely cannot ignore good governance at the international level. The proposed reform of the United Nations, especially as regards the Security Council, must be seen within that context.

I wish us all a very successful session.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Vice-President of the Republic of the Gambia for the statement she has just made.

*Ms. Isatou Njie-Saidy, Vice-President of the Republic of the Gambia, was escorted from the rostrum.*

### **Address by Mr. Elias Camsek Chin, Vice-President of the Republic of Palau**

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

*Mr. Elias Camsek Chin, Vice-President of the Republic of Palau, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have the very great pleasure of welcoming His Excellency Mr. Elias Camsek Chin, Vice-President of the Republic of Palau, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Chin (Palau):** On behalf of the President of Palau, Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr., and the people of Palau, let me begin by offering my congratulations to the General Assembly President on his election and assuring him of our cooperation in the coming year. We express our appreciation to the Group of Asian States and the General Assembly for the confidence they have demonstrated by electing a representative of Palau as a Vice-President. Palau is the smallest country in the history of the United Nations to have this honour, and we take it very seriously.

Palau congratulates the Secretary-General on his leadership on stopping the genocide in Darfur. We were moved by the calls for immediate action that we heard from President Bush and others here at the United Nations. In this respect, I wish to announce that Palau will send peacekeepers to Darfur and will play our part in this critical demonstration of international concern.

Despite our capacity issues, this will not be Palau's first peacekeeping deployment. But while we are a responsible and proud Member of the United Nations, we note the continuing lack of a permanent United Nations presence in Palau. Last June, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and UNICEF announced that eight new joint offices would open in Pacific island countries, including Palau. We welcomed that historic accomplishment, but we are concerned at the fact that the offices have yet to open. Existing mechanisms appear to have blocked progress on the ground. But we believe that the original goals and intentions of the project can be salvaged if there is a will to respond to the needs of small island nations like Palau. We would welcome the intervention and assistance of our partners, as well as the recommitment of the Secretariat to our original shared goals.

We note the President's call to ensure that the United Nations as an organization and we as Member States are properly prepared to confront terrorism. Palau has worked to improve its anti-terrorism capacity. We have also met with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate to advance our requests for assistance, particularly in the area of combating money-laundering and terrorism financing. Unfortunately, the efforts of the Directorate have been insufficient. Our hope is that during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, the United Nations will be able to help small countries in addressing this threat and in meeting our Security Council obligations.

The Pacific is home to some of the world's largest and most important biodiversity hotspots. Our ocean ecosystems provide the backbone for Palau's existence, and we are committed to their preservation. Last year, our nations banded together to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems from deep-sea bottom trawling, a destructive fishing practice responsible for 95 per cent of worldwide damage to seamounts. As a result, the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization adopted interim measures that took a substantial step towards eliminating this unsustainable practice. We encourage all other regional fisheries management organizations and flag States to follow this example, and we remind them of the deadlines to take action.

Palau has been vocal in its crusade to end bottom trawling because of its effects on ocean ecosystems. The North Pacific is home to some of the world's best fisheries. Their diversity is the key reason for the Micronesia Challenge, an initiative launched by President Remengesau, whereby countries and territories of Micronesia have joined together to conserve 30 per cent of near-shore marine resources and 20 per cent of land resources by the year 2020. This project is the first of its kind in the world. It covers 6.7 million square miles of ocean, and it will help protect 10 per cent of the world's coral reefs, including more than 60 threatened species.

While eliminating bottom trawling and establishing protected areas are certainly important actions, they will be fruitless if rapid progress on climate change cannot be made at the international level. We are no longer in total control of our destiny. When temperatures increase, our corals bleach, the seas rise and the oceans acidify, threatening to

demolish our marine biodiversity, jeopardizing our livelihoods and eventually destroying our identity.

In the light of the high vulnerability of small island developing States to the impact of climate change, we stress the absolute need to reach an agreement on a set of quantified emission reduction targets for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. These emission reduction targets must be ambitious, must reflect the urgency of our collective circumstances and must be consistent with a mitigation framework that protects the most vulnerable parties to the Convention, in both the short and the long-term. It is imperative that the effectiveness of the post-2012 regime address the issue of mitigating the impacts of climate change on small island developing States, as the key benchmark of its adequacy and effectiveness.

We note too the ongoing debate on General Assembly reform and join our voices with others who note the need for concrete results on Security Council reform. Without Security Council reform, there can be no genuine United Nations reform. The early conclusion of the discussion is essential. Japan has demonstrated its concern for and commitment to the Pacific and the international community. It should be a permanent member of the Security Council. That is true too of India, the largest democracy among developing nations, whose contributions to global security have earned it the right to a permanent seat on the Security Council. We have supported and continue to support the draft resolution of the Group of Four and hope that the Assembly will address the resolution this year.

We also note our disappointment that Taiwan continues to be excluded from this Hall. The world would benefit from Taiwan's membership in the United Nations and other international institutions. We were disappointed that the Secretary-General failed to follow the Charter and the rules of the Security Council by refusing to transmit and circulate Taiwan's membership application to the Security Council and the General Assembly. Ultimately, legitimate democracies must be recognized and supported across the breadth of our planet no matter how large or small the country.

On behalf of Palau, a small and peaceful island nation in the wide Pacific Ocean, let me thank all of you in my country's native language: Kom Kmal Mesulang.

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

*His Excellency Mr. Elias Camsek Chin, Vice-President of the Republic of Palau, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I now call on His Excellency Mr. Zarifou Ayeva, Minister for Foreign Affairs and African Integration of Togo.

**Mr. Ayeva (Togo) (*spoke in French*):** Each session of the General Assembly offers us an opportunity to meet in order to take stock of our actions and define the necessary perspectives for breathing new life into our Organization. In analysing events throughout the world during the past year, we should note that despite the efforts of the international community the situation is far from satisfactory. Indeed, international peace and security are still seriously threatened due to persistent conflicts — in particular in Africa, the Middle East and Iraq — while the risks of terrorist aggression are far from being eliminated.

In economic terms, the situation — overshadowed by extreme poverty and endemic diseases continues to be a source of serious concern for the majority of the countries of the planet who are considered to be the poorest. Likewise, natural disasters caused by climate change are a constant challenge to the human conscience, to the point of wondering whether the international community will be able to find appropriate and lasting solutions.

The state of our world today should inspire us to redouble our efforts in order to give real meaning to international solidarity. It should above all incite the international community and Member States collectively and individually to seek with determination ways and means not only to ensure the prosperity of their national populations but also to reduce, at least somewhat, extreme poverty in the world.

Before continuing my speech, I wish to add my voice to those of previous speakers and to express my warm congratulations to the President on his election to the presidency of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly. He may count on the support of Togo in discharging his high functions throughout the term, which I hope will be fruitful. I wish to once again

express my congratulations to Mr. Ban Ki-moon on his outstanding election to the post of Secretary-General of our Organization. I am certain his great wealth of diplomatic experience will make it possible for the United Nations to strengthen its actions in order to achieve a fairer and more democratic world in which each country will be able to exist in freedom.

With regard to Togo, after several years of the democratization process which unfortunately has not been smooth, the country today is now moving beyond the lack of understanding and intolerance among its sons and daughters. To consolidate our achievements we have endeavoured to find appropriate solutions for the concerns of the people by implementing a policy on national reconstruction which will value all Togolese without exclusion. Aware that the peace and economic development that we want for our country cannot be achieved without the effective participation of the population in managing public affairs, we have spared no effort to involve the Togolese political class in a national dialogue in order to overcome their bitterness, to restore confidence and to devote our energies to national construction. That ambition is possible only if we strive to strengthen Togolese democracy each day — a democracy based upon an integral multiparty system and a State based on democratic law.

Very soon, on 14 October 2007, Togolese democracy will become consolidated with the election of deputies to the National Assembly, an assembly within which we dare to hope that most of the political forces within the country will be represented. Those upcoming legislative elections, whose successful outcomes will be possible — thanks not only to the political maturity of the Togolese people — but also to the support throughout the electoral process of friendly countries and international institutions; its resulting selection is an inevitable event and will be a decisive turning point in the history of Togo.

The Togolese Government in turn will spare no effort, nor will it skimp on expenses, to ensure that the elections take place in strict transparency and the will of the people as expressed by the ballot box is fully respected. With that goal in mind, the population will, for the first time, vote with secure voter cards with photographs and the whole system will be supported by a reliable electoral roll. Our greatest hope is that those elections will give an opportunity to the people of Togo to reconcile and an opportunity for the country to resume its place within the family of nations.

For that reason, I wish to take the opportunity now to repeat my Government's gratitude to the international community — in particular the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union, the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, the European Union, the International Organization of la Francophonie, France, Germany, the People's Republic of China, the United States and all the other States — for the unwavering support which they continue to give to Togo throughout these crucial times.

Of course, we cannot forget the United Nations, which, through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has played an essential role since the start of our democratic process, and more specifically, in the preparation for these elections. These elections, which are to be held on 14 October, are due to a great extent on the facilitator chosen unanimously by the political forces — I appointed Blaise Compaoré, President of Burkina Faso and current Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Establishment of the rule of law requires dignified and loyal conduct from its citizens based on the respect of the noble ideals that underpin the Republic and promote progress in society. It also requires bold measures from leaders aimed at promoting national peace and harmony.

In this respect and to take into account commitments undertaken through the Global Political Agreement, our Togolese Government is determined to establish in the near future the two Commissions provided for under the Agreement, namely, the Commission to Investigate Acts of Political Violence Committed in the Past and to Study Methods for Compensation for Victims and the Commission to Propose Measures to Promote Forgiveness and National Reconciliation. The Constitutional Court, one of whose missions is to deal with electoral disputes, was set up on 20 September after its reconstitution in accordance with the wish of the political class as expressed during the national dialogue.

These measures, together with all the other actions that the Government carries out every day, are part of our will to ban political violence and combat impunity, in all sincerity, pragmatism and discernment.

A national programme to combat impunity has already been set up and the first awareness activities

have been carried out with success throughout the country over a period of a month and a half. This programme, which is aimed at helping to develop conditions conducive to the birth of a democratic spirit, is supported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights created in Togo, and we are pleased to express our appreciation of its efficient role in strengthening governmental action.

The problems of peace, security and the building of a democratic State based on the rule of law and the sustainable development of Togo can only be grasped by taking into account the economic realities of the country. Indeed, the Togolese economy has suffered a great deal from disruption of external assistance from its traditional partners since 1993. This absence of external assistance has certainly had a negative impact on social programmes and development programmes designed by the Government and has seriously eroded public infrastructure and has delayed measures aimed at good economic governance. This situation has slowed the efforts of the Government to improve the living conditions of the Togolese, more than 60 per cent of whom still live below the poverty threshold. How can our collective conscience remain indifferent in the face of such a situation?

Giving this alarming observation, we feel that Togo should be able to benefit from special assistance, which would allow it to raise its economic level and to bolster, as a result, its young democracy. I should thus like to make an urgent appeal to all of our development partners that they decide to support our efforts in the face of the major challenges before us. The assistance that we are requesting and the Togolese Government's own efforts will allow my country to work towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The maintenance of international peace and security remains a prerequisite for any development process. Togo thus reaffirms its devotion to the ideals of peace, security and stability, both within and outside of States. My country feels that threats to peace and security on the African continent require that the United Nations become more involved than it has so far.

However, I am pleased to pay tribute to the role that has been played and continues to be played by the Organization in Africa with regard to the restoration of peace and security in certain countries, particularly in

Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We also feel that Chad, Burundi and the Central African Republic should benefit from firm actions for peace and security in order to put an end to acts of violence and to consolidate peace, democracy and political stability in these countries.

As regards Côte d'Ivoire, my country is pleased to note that, despite the delay in the implementation of the United Nations road map, the peace process has reached a key phase with the signing of the Ouagadougou peace agreement on 4 March 2007, the lighting of the flame of peace on 30 July 2007 and the announcement of the presidential election in the next few months.

As regards Sudan, Togo welcomes the adoption on 31 July 2007 by the Security Council of resolution 1769 (2007) on the deployment in Darfur of a hybrid United Nations-African Union peacekeeping force. We hope that the international community will do everything in its power to ensure that the necessary logistical and financial means are made available for this mission.

My country also urges the other rebel factions that did not participate in the Arusha discussions in August 2007 to join the negotiating process in order to reach a comprehensive peace agreement.

As regards Somalia, Togo makes an appeal to the international community that it become more involved, together with the African Union, so that a peacekeeping force can be deployed there.

Beyond Africa, our eyes turn constantly to Iraq and the Middle East, still in the grips of violence. As regards the Middle East, Togo supports the idea of organizing an international conference under the aegis of the Quartet in order to restart the process of direct and constructive negotiations. From this viewpoint, Israelis and Palestinians should be encouraged to persevere with dialogue in order to achieve a comprehensive and lasting settlement, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

However, the prerequisite for any negotiation between the two parties lies in the need to see all of the Palestinian elements overcome their internal differences.

In the area of disarmament and the control of weapons of mass destruction, Togo welcomes the beginnings of a resolution to the North Korean nuclear issue with the historic agreement concluded between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the international community. In the same vein, as regards the question of the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran, my country calls on the interested parties to pursue and give priority to talks, in order to achieve a negotiated solution that takes into account the interests of the parties involved.

With respect to light weapons, Togo expresses the hope that this session of the General Assembly will undertake strong commitments in order to strengthen efforts aimed at negotiating a treaty on trade in light weapons similar to what was done by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

With respect to terrorism, which is also an obstacle to sustainable development, my country believes that, following the momentum that led to the adoption of the global strategy to combat this scourge, it is essential that we make universal and improve the international legal framework to combat terrorism.

In this respect, the rapid conclusion of negotiations relating to the draft global convention to combat international terrorism would be welcome and would serve the interests of all countries and all peoples.

It is disturbing to note that today's new economic order continues to produce a society where profit for profit's sake and inequalities of all kinds reign. The solidarity which we have so keenly advocated in the United Nations has yet to be realized. At the very least, we can say is that this situation penalizes the economies of developing countries, which, due to globalization, are frequently obliged to open their markets against their own interests.

That is why we think that development, generally speaking, should take place at the global level. From this viewpoint, all countries should honour their commitments related to the establishment of a global partnership aimed at promoting equitable and sustainable development for all.

Thus, Togo appeals once again to the international community, in particular to the developed countries, that they increase their development assistance and promote international trade and direct

foreign investment, particularly towards poor countries. It is also essential to focus seriously on the urgent question of debt and to resume the Doha negotiations so that trade liberalization will promote the development of all nations, particularly the poorest among them.

In this respect, we commend the commitments undertaken at the Group of Eight Summit, held in June 2007 in Germany, to support the facilitation of economic growth and investment, including microfinance; to support the establishment or strengthening of development institutions in the private sector and structural reform which will improve the economic environment; and to support efforts in the areas of health, in particular the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

The high-level debates which the General Assembly held on 24 September once more illustrated the fact that one of the major challenges that the international community must immediately tackle remains climate change, which is the source of numerous natural disasters.

Togo, which, like many other countries on the continent, has just experienced serious and deadly floods, firmly believes that it is urgent that concrete actions be undertaken to begin a determined and concerted struggle against environmental degradation. It seems to us that the survival of planet Earth is at stake.

The irreplaceable and unparalleled role of the United Nations in international relations should encourage us to reform this institution in the light of present reality. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that the reform of the Organization should reflect the principles of the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical distribution and should help to strengthen cooperation on an equal footing among States. It should also be based on the principle of broad international consensus, particularly when it involves issues involving the responsibility of all of the Organization's constituent parts.

That is why Security Council reform must guarantee that all regions of the world be represented within that organ and enable developing countries, which play an important role in accomplishing the tasks of the Organization, to make their contribution, no matter how modest, to promoting peace worldwide.

We hope that the present session of the General Assembly will bring hope to the international community, and particularly to the African peoples, who are waiting to see improvement in their living conditions and lives through decisive and tangible actions.

In order to attain the objectives that we have set for ourselves, in particular during the Millennium Summit, it is essential that we honour all of our commitments within their time frames and that we assume additional commitments in order to bring about a world free of fear, hunger, extreme poverty and disease — a world where we will be able to live in security.

Togo, in its determination to construct a State based on the rule of law and to improve the living conditions of its population, will spare no effort in carrying out its obligations. It hopes it can count on the assistance of the international community in order to do this.

**The Acting President:** I now call on His Excellency Mr. David Miliband, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

**Mr. Miliband (United Kingdom):** It is a great honour to make my first speech to the General Assembly.

The United Nations has a duty to lead the world in addressing the shared threats and opportunities that dominate our age, and it must do so in deed as well as in word. That is why I want to use this platform to express my admiration and support for United Nations missions around the world, from Lebanon to Liberia, from Congo and Haiti to East Timor, which, even as we meet in New York this week, are saving lives and spreading hope.

Since 1946, when the first meeting of the General Assembly took place in London, the United Kingdom has been determined to fulfil its international responsibilities through the United Nations. The new Government in the United Kingdom, under the leadership of Gordon Brown, is proud to continue that tradition, and I reaffirm our commitment today.

The focus at this session has been on immediate and pressing issues. In the Middle East, we need urgent action towards a two-State solution that addresses the

security of Israelis and the rights of Palestinians at the same time.

In Iraq, recent security gains can only be sustained through continued support for the development of the Iraqi security forces, through national reconciliation and through political support from the whole region.

Our international community depends on responsibilities as well as rights. If Iran wants to be a leading and respected country, it must cease its support for terrorist groups in Iraq and Afghanistan and end its defiance of three Security Council resolutions in respect of its nuclear programme.

In Zimbabwe, we need United Nations action to support African leadership to reverse the vicious cycle of economic and social devastation that now afflicts the country.

We have all seen the extraordinary scenes in Burma. I call on the regime to allow peaceful protest, encourage national dialogue and promote genuine reconciliation. Let us today send a message to the monks on the streets of Burma: we support your demand for a democratic Burma. And let us take a message from the monks on the streets of Burma: the human desire for freedom knows no bounds of race or religion or region. It is good that the Burmese Government has allowed Ambassador Gambari into the country, but it is now vital that they use his presence there to start the process of reconciliation.

But as well as addressing the traumas of our fellow citizens around the world, the United Nations must be the place where we address the longer-term threats. Today, I devote my speech to one of the great threats to stability and prosperity in the world: the threat of global inequality. I do so because inequalities are not just morally offensive; they are also dangerous. Inequality fuels extremism. It undermines support for an open, global economy. It corrodes trust and respect and reciprocity between nations.

The United Nations Charter talks of the “sovereign equality of States”, and it also talks of the “equal rights and dignity of men and women and of nations large and small”. The principle of equality is nowhere more evident than in the General Assembly where all States have an equal voice. But in the world outside this Hall, economic, social and political inequalities within and between States persist and

worsen. We cannot stand united against the shared threats and opportunities in our world when we are so divided by economic and political disparities. So the need for Governments and international institutions to reduce inequalities and promote our common humanity is stark.

Traditionally, we have focused on the divide between developed and developing nations. However, the growth rates in many developing countries are faster than in developed economies. That is the good news. But there remain around a billion people in the world — one sixth of its population — living in 58 countries, who have been left out of the story of human progress. This “bottom billion” have an average life expectancy of 50 years. Fourteen per cent of the children in the bottom billion die before their fifth birthday, and more than a third suffer malnutrition. The countries that are home to the bottom billion saw their national incomes fall each year during the 1980s and 1990s.

Even where inequalities are narrowing between nations, they are widening within them. According to the United Nations Development Programme, in 73 countries — containing 80 per cent of the world’s population — economic inequality has risen in recent years.

Every nation represented here has responsibilities to its own people. The drive to tackle poverty needs open markets. It needs the empowerment of citizens through democratic and transparent institutions, free from corruption. It needs strong and effective education and health services open to all.

But national action is not enough. Because the causes of inequality cross national boundaries, we need cooperation between nations, bilateral and multilateral, led by the United Nations.

First, three quarters of the countries where the bottom billion citizens reside have recent or current experience of civil war. Conflict is the trapdoor to extreme poverty. Look at Darfur: more than 200,000 people are dead, 2 million are displaced and 4 million are on food aid. As the international community, we decided on a course of action in Security Council resolution 1769 (2007). Now we need to get on with it: an agreement on force composition, swift deployment, effective protection of civilians on the ground and a political process in which the legitimate grievance of the Darfur people is addressed through negotiation. In

Afghanistan, one of the five poorest countries in the world, we need to back up military efforts to secure safe space with economic, social and political reconstruction.

Beyond those crises, we also need to improve our capacity to prevent the emergence of conflict. That is our vision of the responsibility to protect. A critical dimension is controlling the spread of weapons whose easy availability makes it so simple to set up militias and provoke violence and mayhem. Last year, the Assembly voted overwhelmingly to take forward United Nations work towards an arms trade treaty (see resolution 61/89). The Government of the United Kingdom will continue to press for the achievement of that goal.

Secondly, freedom from conflict is the platform for progress, but the battle against disease and illiteracy is the second stage. Despite progress in some countries, the world is off track to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). That is why, in July here at the United Nations, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom launched a call for action: to honour our own commitments and go further, to build a truly global partnership — with the private sector, trade unions, faith groups, civil society and cities — that can meet the 2015 MDG targets. That requires the developed world to meet its commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of its national incomes on development. The United Kingdom will meet that commitment by 2013. But that requires shared responsibility. Poor governance and corruption are the enemies of development.

Thirdly, progress on aid needs to be combined with a new global trade deal that opens up economies on a fair basis. Western producers continue to benefit from subsidies and tariffs, particularly for agriculture. Higher tariffs for processed goods prevent poor countries from diversifying their economies. That is a bad deal for Western consumers, and it squeezes out the livelihoods of producers in poor countries. Neither is it in rich countries' financial self-interest, nor is it fair. The Government of the United Kingdom believes that concluding the Doha trade round this year is not just necessary, but also possible, and we will work to achieve that goal.

Finally, we must address the greatest long-term threat to our aspirations to tackle inequality: climate change. Climate change affects all countries, but the poorest countries — and the poorest people within

those countries — will suffer the most disruption and devastation. I congratulate the President of the General Assembly on choosing climate change as a central theme of this general debate. And I congratulate the Secretary-General on his leadership on this issue. But we need more than debate.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the only body that can conclude a global agreement on climate change. Therefore, in the next two months we need an urgent agreement on the steps towards progress to be taken at the December meeting in Bali. Beyond that, we need a road map to the 15th conference of parties to the Convention, to be held at Copenhagen in two years' time, and agreement on a global deal that succeeds the end of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.

At the heart of such an agreement must be the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities: all countries taking on responsibilities, but making sure that they are equitably distributed, with the greatest action taken by the richest countries. The United Kingdom stands ready to play its part. This year, our climate change bill will be enacted into law in the next session of Parliament to place on a statutory footing our commitment to cut carbon emissions by at least 60 per cent from 1990 levels by the year 2050. But we need similar binding commitments from all rich countries.

The challenges are therefore immense. Crisis resolution and conflict prevention, the Millennium Development Goals, a new trade deal, climate change — they call for all our resources. Military intervention is never the whole solution, but sometimes a solution cannot be found without armed force. Development budgets are necessary, but the developing world needs a growth plan, not just an aid plan. Diplomacy needs to bridge differences between nations, but also to reach out to civil society and business.

The United Kingdom is proud not just of its bilateral relations with the countries represented in the Assembly, but also of its commitment to multilateral institutions, which can be a force for good in the world. But international institutions need to reflect the world as it is, not the world as it was. The United Kingdom therefore welcomes the prospect of intergovernmental negotiations at this session to achieve agreement on reform of the Security Council. We support permanent

membership for Germany, Japan, India and Brazil and permanent representation for Africa. We are not wedded to a single model of reform. Achieving effective change is what matters.

In a world where more than a billion people are online, where companies have bigger turnovers than countries and where global non-governmental organizations have memberships that are bigger than national populations, our international institutions must look inwards to internal reform, but also outwards to broader popular movements for change.

In the last phase of globalization, in the nineteenth century, the emergence of new Powers and the breakdown of the international order resulted in conflict that scarred the whole of the twentieth century. Unless we can build trust and reciprocity between nations and embody them in durable and robust international institutions that reconcile differences and nurture common values, the latest phase of globalization could be another false dawn.

Globalization is not just something to which we must adapt; it is something that we can and must shape for the achievement of our own goals. It must be put to use spreading power, wealth and opportunity. For my Government, this mission is driven by both moral purpose and national interest. We must address the insecurity and inequality that exist beyond our borders if we are to enhance security and prosperity within our borders.

We live in a more prosperous, more peaceful and more democratic world than ever before. Let us commit ourselves to living in a more equal world.

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

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to 5 minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Jeremić (Serbia):** In response to today's statement by the Prime Minister of Albania, I would like to state the following. By advocating the independence of Kosovo, a province of the Republic of Serbia, the Prime Minister of Albania is openly calling

for the violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of a Member of the United Nations and a neighbouring country with which a country should have good relations, in its own interest and in the interest of its population.

Such a position is in violation of each and every basic principle of the United Nations, as well as all the decisions on Kosovo adopted by the United Nations. Moreover, it comes on the eve of tomorrow's first round of direct negotiations between Serbs and Kosovo Albanians on the future status of the province here in this city of New York.

The Prime Minister of Albania is doing this because the province of Kosovo is nowadays inhabited mostly by ethnic Albanians. To understand fully the gravity of this act, one only needs to imagine every country calling for the independence of a part of a neighbouring country which happens to be inhabited mostly by their own ethnicity. There are many such situations. Can we imagine the havoc that would ensue if every such country followed the example set by the Prime Minister of Albania?

I leave representatives of Member States with that question.

**Mr. Basha (Albania):** The Republic of Albania believes in good-neighbourly relations with all of its neighbours, including Serbia. It believes that the path of the region is that of Euro-Atlantic integration, and it shares that vision with most of its neighbours. It certainly hopes the same for the Republic of Serbia.

The Republic of Albania espouses no other agenda but the one set forth by a process started here at the United Nations by the Secretary-General through his Special Representative, President Ahtisaari, a proposal that is fair, balanced and sustainable, that enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority of the members of the Assembly and the Security Council and that is the only true answer — not only for peace and security in Kosova, but also for peace and security in the region — not only for today, but also for tomorrow — not only for the future of the Kosovar people, but also for the future of the Serb people, the Albanian people, the Macedonian people, the peoples of Croatia, Montenegro and the entire region. This is a future that moves away from our bitter recent past incited by ethnic hatred and racial discrimination towards cooperation between nations, free and independent, enjoying full rights and liberties for

themselves and for the minorities incorporated in their societies.

That is a vision that is shared by European Powers. It is shared by the emancipated Powers in the world. That is the vision Albania too espouses.

Albania hopes that the negotiations, which will continue tomorrow in New York and until the end of the 120-day period, are going to produce a solution. It further hopes that the Security Council can undertake the next step, to sanction this move for the benefit of peace and security for Kosova, Serbia and the entire region.

But the Republic of Albania is also conscious that our primary duty is for peace and security in the

region, and that the balanced, fair and sustainable approach that we have now in our hands, in the form of the internationally mediated proposal of President Ahtisaari, is and must provide the basis in case of failure.

While wishing the best of luck to the negotiators tomorrow, and supporting fully the efforts of both parties to find an agreement, we subscribe to the view that, at the end of the period, the inalienable right of the Kosovar people to self-determination will serve not only to build the last sovereign State out of the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, but also to build the bridges — both European and Euro-Atlantic bridges — for the peoples of Serbia and beyond.

*The meeting rose at 8.05 p.m.*