



General Assembly

Sixty-seventh session

7th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 25 September 2012, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Jeremić (Serbia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Balé (Republic of the Congo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

Address by Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda

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

Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

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

President Kagame: It is timely that we are meeting here over the next few days to seek ways and means to prevent and generally manage conflicts. While it may seem that conflict is perennial and its forms increasingly destructive, we have the urgent task of seeking more effective ways to prevent, manage and solve it. The losses we witness or experience on a daily basis in terms of human life and devastation are unacceptable. Moreover, at a time when widespread poverty robs too many people of the opportunity to realize their full potential in life, conflict also diverts us from development.

We might ask ourselves why, after decades of efforts to rein in conflict on a global scale and foster multilateral cooperation for sustainable peace, the results are still not where they should be. The reasons for this are several and multifaceted.

First, we must appreciate that many conflicts arise when people are, or feel they are, excluded from full participation in the affairs of their country, particularly around issues that affect their everyday lives. Even a cursory look at the conflict hotspots around the world shows us the dangerous consequences of a disenfranchised and despondent citizenry. Durable solutions can come only from an inclusive approach to both politics and development.

Secondly, thorough analysis of the specific political and cultural contexts of any given conflict is key to finding lasting solutions. Too often, the inclination is to parachute into a situation with ready-made answers based on a superficial examination of the conflict's dynamics, doing considerably more harm than good, despite good intentions. There is no one-size-fits-all remedy; these issues are complex and should be approached as such to arrive at the best possible outcome.

Thirdly, the links between conflict and development are often overlooked. If we are looking for peaceful ways to resolve and prevent conflicts, promoting development tops the list. The stakes are high. A civil conflict costs the average developing country about 30 years of gross domestic product growth, and violence can easily spill over borders,

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threatening hard-won progress. Since security and development cannot be achieved without each other, we all — from the average citizen to Government leaders and global institutions like the United Nations — have to play our roles in order to find inclusive solutions for lasting peace and prosperity.

Finally, it is increasingly obvious that local or regional initiatives aimed at resolving conflicts yield more positive results because those involved have a deeper understanding of the issues at hand. Their proximity to the conflict makes them more invested in a comprehensive resolution and enables the necessary support for whatever process is agreed upon. We need to see these initiatives strengthened. We should be highlighting root causes as we address conflicts.

In the 50 years of our independence and membership of the United Nations, Rwanda has lived through conflicts. Our country was destroyed by political exclusion and subsequent genocide. Over the past 18 years, we have been able to rebuild the country through policies that include all citizens in governance processes and by applying home-grown conflict resolution and development mechanisms.

While our experience with the United Nations since becoming a Member has been a mixed one, it has taken on a positive trajectory in recent years, and we are optimistic that it will remain there. The history of how conflicts have been handled in Rwanda, and indeed in our region, however, shows that improvement is needed. It is our obligation to point this out not in order to be critical, but because we subscribe to the ideals and principles on which the United Nations was founded. We can and should do better.

Rwanda remains committed to a more effective United Nations, particularly with respect to its work towards a more peaceful, just and equitable world. We will continue to contribute to various programmes for development and peace, from our role in promoting the Millennium Development Goals and supporting the Broadband Commission for Digital Development to our troops participating in peacekeeping missions. We hope to contribute and participate even more going forward.

Let me conclude by saying that although the challenge to better prevent and resolve conflict may seem daunting, it remains ours to take on. When we see leaders work with the people in an inclusive manner; when development can proceed unhindered by conflict; when regional groupings take greater responsibility

in tackling their own issues; and when international cooperation takes place in a spirit of true partnership, I believe that the results will speak for themselves and billions of lives across the globe will improve. Ultimately, this is what we all should work towards.

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

Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

**Address by Mrs. Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf,
President of the Swiss Confederation**

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

Mrs. Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, President of the Swiss Confederation, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Mrs. Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, President of the Swiss Confederation, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Widmer-Schlumpf (*spoke in French*): Ten years ago, Switzerland joined the United Nations, thus becoming both the 190th Member State and the first country in which United Nations membership was approved by its citizens in a popular vote. The United Nations and Switzerland share the same values and pursue common goals: the promotion of peace and security, sustainable development, the protection and promotion of human rights, and the provision of emergency relief to victims of conflict and natural disasters.

We face significant and pressing challenges in all these areas. Climate change, food and water scarcity, migration, organized crime, terrorism and the proliferation of weapons do not respect borders. These are global challenges that threaten entire regions. In an increasingly interconnected world, we have to search for global solutions that respond to regional and national needs. It is not enough to simply maintain the status quo. We have to find today the solutions of tomorrow.

The United Nations spans the entire world. Its universality gives it unparalleled legitimacy and enables it to find and implement solutions to global challenges that enjoy broad support. In view of the growing interdependence of those challenges, the United Nations is now more important than ever. It must be at the heart of international governance. The support of every Member State and every one of us is therefore crucial. In order to accomplish the Herculean tasks awaiting it, the United Nations can no longer settle for the lowest common denominator, as it does all too often when consensus is reached among its Members. If the United Nations is to overcome the challenges facing it, it must be efficient, innovative and active. What does that mean?

The United Nations is efficient when it updates and improves its processes so that it can act more rapidly and in a more coordinated manner, despite growing budgetary pressures. In this respect, Switzerland supports the reform agenda of the Secretary-General. It should be implemented swiftly.

The United Nations is innovative when it develops new ideas and solutions that are tailored to the big picture. United Nations structures have evolved organically over past decades. They do not encourage people to stray from the beaten path. More intensive exchanges within the United Nations and between the Organization and scientific circles, civil society and the private sector promote creativity and ensure broad support for United Nations activities. At the seat of the United Nations in Geneva that type of exchange is encouraged in a targeted manner. Switzerland also supports the strengthening and development of reflection and research activities within the United Nations. Bringing those activities together in Geneva would further strengthen the creative potential of the Organization.

Finally, the United Nations will show its strengths if it can achieve consensus in conflict situations and push through to find solutions. Resorting to the right of the veto in the Security Council is difficult to justify in the event of genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity. That is why Switzerland, together with other countries, continues to clamour for reform of the working methods of the Security Council. Transparency and the Council's collaboration with other bodies within the Organization should be improved, and the right of veto should be limited.

As Switzerland traditionally defends dialogue, we call upon all States and peoples to commit to greater understanding and peaceful coexistence among cultures, religions and beliefs. Freedom of belief and religion, like freedom of opinion and expression, are universally guaranteed core values that must be protected and respected. Moreover, responding to an unpleasant opinion with violence can never be justified. It must be countered by ideas and logical arguments, and if necessary through legal recourse, especially if national, religious or cultural hatred has been incited. The attacks in recent weeks against diplomatic missions are therefore unacceptable regardless of the motivation behind them. We all bear a common responsibility to promote tolerance and the respect for beliefs.

For the current session of the General Assembly, the President has chosen as the theme for the high-level debate "Bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means". I applaud his choice. In recent years, the United Nations has strengthened its capacity in the area of mediation and preventive diplomacy, which has brought about a re-evaluation of mediation processes. We need to go further, however, as most of the United Nations budget continues to be spent on peacekeeping operations. Switzerland is therefore convinced that greater investment in peaceful means that could bring about a settlement of disputes, especially through mediation and preventive diplomacy, would pay off in the long run. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure; that is as true for States as it is for people.

It is not just a matter of funding. Every single conflict that is averted means the avoidance of human suffering and the non-interruption of development in the countries concerned. Over the past decade, Switzerland has actively participated in more than 30 mediation processes in some 20 countries. Moreover, Switzerland regularly makes its experts and know-how available to the United Nations and hopes to see its collaboration with the Organization grow. Adapted to current needs, special political missions respond to the complexity of political realities. Thanks to those missions, the United Nations is in a position to react flexibly and quickly in the event of a constitutional crisis or a coup d'état. As the main instruments of preventive diplomacy, such missions should be strengthened, specifically through the introduction of modalities, financing and optimal support.

When prevention is not enough, the international community must act firmly. The United Nations should therefore demonstrate that it is capable of intervening and imposing itself. Switzerland is deeply concerned by the dramatic worsening of the situation in Syria, where human rights and international humanitarian law are being flouted. At this very moment, as I speak, innocent people are dying from bullets fired by the Syrian army and the armed opposition. Thousands of people have been killed, more than 1 million are on the run in their own country and some 250,000 have sought refuge in neighbouring countries. It is difficult, maybe even impossible, to reach hundreds of thousands of victims who, wounded and traumatized, are condemned to wait in zones under siege. United Nations agencies estimate that approximately 2.5 million people need urgent humanitarian assistance. Switzerland has therefore set aside more than \$15 million for humanitarian assistance in Syria and neighbouring countries.

As long as human rights continue to be trampled upon and those responsible are not sufficiently perturbed, it will be impossible to guarantee security. Switzerland therefore calls for the perpetrators of serious violations of human rights answer for their actions. The impunity of perpetrators is not just immoral; by compromising the process of reconciliation that gets under way in a society after a war, it encourages history to repeat itself.

Switzerland leads a group of some 30 countries that are asking that the International Criminal Court take up the case of Syria. I would invite all heads of State and Government present here today to rally to that initiative. The international community must be made aware of the extent of human rights violations in Syria. Switzerland welcomes the work of the commission of inquiry set up by the Human Rights Council and calls for it to be strengthened. It also welcomes the appointment of Mr. Brahimi as the new Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for the Syrian crisis and will do its utmost to help him find a political solution to the conflict in that country.

We know that our use of the world's available resources is not sustainable at the global level. We are exploiting those resources without concern for the future. We also know that human beings are the cause of climate change. The fate of our planet rests in our hands. Much will depend on whether we succeed in making the transition to sustainable development and whether we succeed in moving towards a green

economy. The Rio+20 outcome document provides us with an opportunity that we must embrace. We must act today so that future generations do not have to pay the price for our inaction.

However, a great deal of mutual distrust remains, as does the fear that not everyone will be able to compete on equal terms in a green economy. We must overcome that hurdle. Switzerland will play its part in sharing the burden of efforts between the North and the South. The Green Climate Fund will be a key element in financing that transition. It should therefore be set up without delay and in an optimal environment. I am convinced that Geneva can offer such an environment.

The transition to a green economy also requires new approaches, in terms of both thinking and acting. In any process of change, there are winners and losers. However, with regard to sustainable development the winners and losers are the same, namely, future generations. Either they will be able to continue to live in an intact environment where they benefit from the natural resources they need, or they will have to put up with a decline in the standard of living due to the exhaustion of resources and the broad consequences of climate change. Our common challenge lies in ensuring the well-being of all without overexploiting our natural resources.

Switzerland attaches the greatest importance to the post-2015 agenda, which will allow us to benefit from our experience with the Millennium Development Goals in order to prepare for the future. That approach gives us the opportunity to consider all dimensions of sustainable development together and, for the first time ever, develop a universal system of targets for the well-being of future generations throughout the world.

Switzerland is convinced that setting sustainable development goals is an important element in strengthening that development. It will play an active part in defining a new system of goals. Switzerland believes it imperative to combine discussions on the post-2015 agenda and on sustainable development goals into a single process.

According to the Roman philosopher Seneca, it is not that we have a short space of time, but that we waste much of it. So let us today take on the great challenges before us. Let us join forces to bring about more peace and security in the world and better protect human rights. Let us put an end to the impunity of the perpetrators of serious human rights abuses and bring them to account.

Let us take bold steps for more sustainable development in the interests of our children and grandchildren. And let us strengthen the United Nations so that, as the only truly universal Organization, it is better equipped to address those immense challenges.

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

Ms. Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, President of the Swiss Confederation, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

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

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

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

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

President Fernández (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin my statement by confirming my personal position and that of the Argentine Republic and the Argentine people with regard to our emphatic rejection and repudiation of the savage assassination of United States Ambassador Christopher Stevens in the city of Benghazi, Libya. That ugly act of terrorism warrants that we reflect upon certain interpretations of events that took place in various Arab countries and were for many Western leaders interpreted as or called the Arab Spring. But, in reality, from our point of view — and I say this humbly and with all respect — it reflected other situations that were not correctly perceived or understood by the main leaders in the West.

It is no accident that the death of Chris Stevens occurred in Benghazi, where the principal focus of resistance against Muammar Al-Qadhafi's regime originated, and where those of us with an understanding of international politics clearly know that the main Islamic fundamentalists were located — not just opponents of Muammar Al-Qadhafi's regime, but

those opposed to the very idea of peaceful coexistence between men and women of different races, religions, beliefs or faiths.

I say that because it is necessary to have a clear understanding of our problems and of the situations in the world, particularly in the Middle East. It is important to understand the need for different policies geared to building true and lasting peace — a peace that must always imply choosing the language of diplomacy before choosing the language of weapons. If one reviews recent history, one can see that important figures or political factions that appear to be allied with the West frequently end up becoming sworn enemies of Western values, perhaps as a result of poor interpretations or policies ill suited to what was happening in the Middle East and around the world.

The need to recognize the Palestinian State and the need to recognize that Israel must live within legally recognized borders in accordance with the 1967 borders is the crux of the problem in the Middle East. The Argentine Republic — and I believe we reflect the interests of our region — maintains that it is necessary to have a response to an issue that has been calling for a solution for decades. Yet, owing to different circumstances, to Governments and to interests in the West, which has an enormous responsibility of leadership in the issue, nothing constructive has been achieved.

For Chris Stevens, and for his family, there will be no Arab Spring, but rather a terrible and eternal winter. That is why it is absolutely necessary that we in the West rethink our strategies and policies with respect to the Middle East. Otherwise, we run the risk of ending up embarking upon erroneous strategies that undermine our values and deepen the crisis. What will happen is what happened in Benghazi, and we shall have to mourn the death of a diplomat, regardless of his nationality. In this case, it was an American, something that had not happened for a very long time.

A similar situation could be described with respect to the other great crisis, which was apparently economic in nature and which is shaking the world. In 2008, when we came to the General Assembly, Lehman Brothers collapsed, causing a crisis that seemed triggered by poor people who could not pay off the mortgages on their homes — the famous sub-prime loans crisis — but it has ended up today as something greater than a crisis of the poor who cannot pay off their mortgages.

It has spread well beyond that issue. It has been discovered that it was precisely those financial administrators of capital who were behind all this. Actually, it was the wealthiest sectors of society who created this global crisis.

In Europe the eurozone crisis is basically a crisis of sovereign debt for countries that owe more than their gross domestic product (GDP). Also, families have taken on more debt than they can pay off in the next 20 or 30 years. At this very moment in Spain there is repression against indignant citizens who are demonstrating against the belt-tightening programme being imposed on their country. They are protesting the same austerity programme that has been applied for decades now and that has not borne any fruit.

When we in Argentina discuss the problem we talk about it with deep-seated knowledge of the type of neoliberal policies that were the result of the Washington consensus, which was launched following the problems in the 1990s and ended up exploding as a default on the most significant sovereign debt known in history. Argentina owed 160 per cent of its GDP, the result of debt policies that in turn had resulted from the industrialization and ongoing imposed adjustment and consumption policies. Those policies were ferociously and methodically imposed on countries, just as we are seeing now with Spain, Greece and Portugal, with the resulting danger to the eurozone.

Endangering the eurozone involves more than just the undermining of an economic region. It is actually endangering the very stability of the world financial system. We should recall that some 65 per cent of international reserves deposited in central banks around the world are in United States dollars, and some 24 per cent are in euros.

It is necessary to rethink all of this. We need to rethink the trade war that has exploded between various countries. Some countries have denounced it as protectionism. Basically, participants in such trade wars assert that such policies are needed to defend their societies, their workers, their labour markets and their businesses against developed countries' economies, which actually were the root cause of the crisis we are all experiencing today. The developed countries are trying to push their problems off on to others. I keep asking, if one of our countries had had a deficit in its current account, such as the United States is running right now, that country would no doubt have been

censored, punished and criticized. Of course, because dollars are the reserve currency — some 85 per cent of world transactions are in dollars — and the United States has been considered the country that issues the money used as reserve currency par excellence, it ends up being outside of the whole system. It is not criticized and is not targeted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Yet the IMF continues to impose adjustment policies. Even yesterday, there were threats issued to countries like the Argentine Republic.

The IMF has tried to allude to sovereign debts as though the whole thing were just a soccer game. If Argentina were unable to accomplish certain things, the country was going to be given a red card, just as in soccer. I just want to say to the head of that organization that this is not a soccer game. First, this is the most serious political and economic crisis in memory since the 1930s. Secondly, my country is not a player in a soccer game; it is a sovereign nation, which makes its decisions on a sovereign basis. It will not be subject to pressures brought to bear from the outside nor any threats of red cards. Finally, continuing with this analogy between soccer and the economy, the President of the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) does a much more satisfactory job than the head of the IMF.

With regard to organization and responsibility, FIFA organizes world matches every four years. Next time, they will be in Brazil, and no doubt they will be a success. The International Monetary Fund is in charge of organizing economies and has been doing so since the 1980s, and yet it has been unable to carry out its task effectively. However, it seems that it is countries that should be criticizing themselves, whereas I do not hear any self-criticism from the IMF.

With regard to the statistics for Spain, what were the statistics for Greece or Portugal, Ireland or Italy? What were the figures that allowed them to go more into debt without any kind of control or oversight? Why are some countries being controlled and not others? That is a question that we have to ask, and that we are asking from this rostrum. Since 2003, we have been saying this.

When President Néstor Kirchner came here for the first time he was representing an Argentina that had been devastated by the crisis, with poverty at levels that we had never seen before: 25 per cent of Argentine people had no work. People were losing their savings in

dollars, roubles, pesos, pounds, whatever; they simply had nothing left. They came to the United Nations and said that we needed an opportunity to grow. For a country to pay off its debt, it needs to be able to grow. The dead do not pay off their debts. That is what the Argentine President said, and he was not mistaken. In 2003, based on the policies he was able to put into place, and without access to capital markets, Argentina was able to restructure a significant part of its foreign debt. We have been rigorously making every single payment since 2005. We will continue making those payments because we believe in policies that promote national production.

We are working with the most vulnerable sectors of society and promoting social programmes. We have dedicated more than 1 per cent of our GDP to those programmes. We have put social policies and programmes in place, and they are the most notable in Latin America. They have allowed us to promote growth, which undoubtedly is the most significant seen in the last 200 years of the history of the Argentine Republic.

We are not coming here to preach to anyone or to teach lessons. We do not think that we are teachers. We just want to tell the Assembly about the experience of one country that went through a situation quite similar to that now being experienced by other countries in the developed world. What we want to contribute is our empirical experience, not theoretical experiences. There are still decisions that need to be taken, but that have not been taken because many continue to follow the practices of those who control the capital markets.

They hit one country and then another. One day, the stock market goes up 20 per cent, skyrockets, and then it plummets the following day. We may not be economists, but we are not stupid either. We are talking about incredible transfers of money, and those who end up being harmed are the same millions of people who lose their jobs and lose their hope. What I hope to see is that they do not lose patience. Usually, when people lose patience, that is when they hit the wall. When people cannot find a job and do not have a State that is protecting them, it becomes a political and institutional crisis. That is what happened to us in 2001 in Argentina.

I also believe that it is important to understand that we have a new world before us now. This new world requires more creative leadership.

It requires taking the risk of applying new ideas and new concepts. Trying to solve the current problems of the world with the same medicines that caused them is absolutely absurd. That has to be stated clearly.

Then there is the matter of the current accounts deficit, which is transferred from the United States to emerging countries, so that our currencies are devalued and we have to make immense efforts to build up our reserves. We also have to take measures to prevent the central countries from transferring cheap merchandise to us that undermines our economies — the economies of the emerging countries that, it bears saying, propped up the growth of the global economy during the past decade.

Today, as emerging countries, we are being condemned as protectionist by the very countries that survived by protecting themselves through agricultural subsidies and all sorts of special breaks at the expense of our economies and, above all, of millions of our people who only now are being incorporated into the labour force.

It is crucial for developed countries to understand the contribution that emerging countries can make to the international economic recovery with the millions of dollars we still owe, on top of our costs for social benefits and production. Besides, we have paid down our debt to levels never seen before. Argentina, whose foreign debt represented 160 per cent of its gross national product, today owes only 14 per cent of its gross national product abroad; the remainder of its borrowing is intrasectoral public debt. We are at the lowest level ever of foreign debt and debt held by foreign sources.

Obviously, for some we are a bad example. Why? Because when we restructured our debt — and I am not proposing restructurization as a solution — we held that under capitalism anyone who risked investing dollars in a country like Argentina, with interest rates in the 1990's between 15 and 16 per cent to ensure convertibility, when the rate in rest of the world was a mere two per cent, had to know that there was a substantial risk that that person, that bank or that institution would not repay the debt.

Our thesis was that if they had taken the risk, they should share it. We therefore proposed a restructuring whereby both parties would share. The fact is that Argentina paid its stockholders more than Enron did. Enron paid, I believe, \$1 per \$100 share; Argentina paid \$25 to \$30 on \$100. In reality, we were more generous

and responsible than Enron was, not just towards the rest of the world but to the citizens of the United States.

That may of course annoy certain multilateral credit institutions, especially because, during the 1990's, Argentina was held up as an example of the way things should be done, while in 2001 we were left to our own devices and told to resolve things by ourselves. I believe that is why some would censure us or fine us, so that our bad example does not spread, but if we think of the world as a totality, we will understand that that is not an economic problem, but a political one. Without leaders who can point to a clear, specific path for overcoming a world economic crisis of this magnitude, we are no longer facing a problem of economics or economists; we are facing a problem of politics for which there are neither solutions nor responses nor new models.

We know that some multilateral agencies are angry with Argentina, but we tell them there is no point being angry with us. The important thing is to analyse the mistakes that were made in both economics and politics and what was done wrong so that we can correct them, move forward and overcome this crisis, because if allowed to continue it will trigger not just severe economic problems but severe political and institutional ones. Having been a political activist at a young age and having experienced periods in my country when Western values were not respected, when people were raped, tortured and disappeared — because democracy had disappeared — what I am most afraid of is that if there continues to be no solution to the present crisis, many millions of people in the West will cease to believe that a democratic system can provide solutions.

If we examine human history, we can clearly see that the most terrible totalitarian periods were preceded by severe economic crises that gave people no way out, deprived them of hope and filled their ears with siren songs that promised things we all know could never be delivered.

I wanted to speak emphatically about how to tackle the problem, about how to conceive of it, so that the situation can be brought back into line instead of languishing as it has since 2008. Unfortunately, we have begun to see that the crisis in the developed world is starting to spread into emerging countries, which have been the engine of global growth.

I believe those things are connected. The lack of a correct interpretation, of an adequate classification, so that political and economic events get jumbled together,

gives rise to fallacies — for example, that the people in certain political movements want to live like Westerners or that certain orthodox economic adjustments might lead to some way out or some solution — all false, of course.

I would now like to address two topics that might be called bilateral in nature. One, in the form of this little booklet in English and Spanish, was delivered to each of the Missions represented here and deals with the question of the colonial status of the Malvinas. Last June, I appeared before the Committee on Decolonization here in New York to present our request for compliance with resolution 2065 (XX), which urged both countries — the United Kingdom and Argentina — to undertake a dialogue on the issue of the Malvinas. Next January, it will have been 180 years since the United Kingdom illegally usurped our Malvinas islands. Not only has that country not ceased, it has not listened to or heeded any of the many allegations and resolutions of the United Nations, the resolutions of the Committee on Decolonization, and the many resolutions of various organizations such as the Organization of American States and other multilateral organizations such as the Rio Group, which have asked Great Britain to sit down to a dialogue with Argentina. We are not asking them to say that we are right. That would not be dialogue; it would be to impose a point of view. We are simply asking them to sit down with us to comply with the United Nations resolution and to undertake a dialogue on the sovereignty of the Malvinas, as well as to demilitarize the South Atlantic so that it becomes a region of peace in South America, without regard to ethnic, religious or any other differences that could lead to clashes between us.

That is why we once again reiterate our appeal. There is a clear double standard here: the permanent members of the Security Council have the right to violate any and every requirement of the United Nations, while everyone else has to accept without demur any and every Council resolution. That is not building multilateralism. It contributes nothing whatever to the peacebuilding that we all demand and need, and it leads to a growing feeling of injustice and inequality between nations, which significantly affects the possibility of a more just world, of living in a world without violence.

That is why we say once again: this is not a bilateral issue between us and the United Kingdom. It has become a global issue — doing away with the last vestiges of colonialism, which became one of the great

contributions of the United Nations when it created the Decolonization Committee, in 1961. Entering the twenty-first century without colonies is a matter of human rights, rights that in my country we certainly defend very strongly; our support for them is an example to the world.

Finally — and this relates to the early part of my speech, when I repudiated and condemned the killing of Ambassador Christopher Stevens in Libya — I would like to mention something that for us, the Argentine people, continues to be an open wound, since in its case justice has still not been served. That is the bombings of the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA) in 1994 and of the Israeli Embassy in 1992, acts that should be utterly deplored and condemned. Former President Kirchner and I both asked the Islamic Republic of Iran, which stands accused by Argentina's judiciary of participation in that crime, for its collaboration and cooperation. In 2010 and 2011, given the lack of response to that request, I suggested, as an alternative, that if the Islamic Republic of Iran did not trust the fairness and independence of the Argentine judiciary, the solution could be based on a case that the Assembly will recall, the Libyan terrorist attack on a British airplane, in which a trial was eventually held in a third-party country to arrive at reparations — if one can talk of reparations in the case of death — for some of the damages. Thus both countries would agree on a third country where a trial would guarantee justice for both sides. In the aftermath of that terrible event, what was most important was the quest for truth.

I began my statement by talking about international terrorism, and I am ending it on the same subject. I am not talking about an act committed in a single African country against a single member of the diplomat corps; I am talking about what was done in my country, on my territory, to my brother Argentines, in clear violation of territorial sovereignty. Last Wednesday, 19 September, we received a request from the Islamic Republic of Iran for a bilateral meeting at which, as we understood it, there would be a dialogue on this matter. My country, which has continued to ask for a dialogue and which promotes dialogue as a universal — and, in the case of the Malvinas, a specific — instrument, decided to instruct our Minister for Foreign Affairs to hold a bilateral meeting between the two ministries, here at the United Nations, as requested by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

I should say here that I am expecting results from that meeting, based on the fact that the Islamic Republic of Iran showed that it wanted to cooperate and collaborate on the matter of the attack. If they do not want to conduct the case in Argentina or in a third country, we hope that they will come forward with other proposals as to how we can address this deep-seated conflict, dating back to 1994. I would like to remind the Assembly that when President Kirchner had just become President, in 2003, nine years had elapsed since the attack, without results. But I would also like to say that we hope this meeting will yield specific, concrete results if the Islamic Republic of Iran has a proposal for making headway. It might not necessarily be in the direction proposed by Argentina, but I would in any case, as a member of a representative and federal republican country, submit it for consideration by the representative parliamentary bodies of my country. A proposal made by the Islamic Republic of Iran is too important to be resolved through executive power alone, quite apart from the fact that our Constitution requires that the legislature and judiciary be involved in such an issue.

This is not a matter of casual or standard foreign relations with another country. It concerns an event that has marked the Argentine people and is enshrined in the history of international terrorism. The essential fact is that the families of the victims, to whom I feel very committed, need answers. For six years I sat on the bicameral commission of inquiry into both the Embassy and the AMIA attacks, and I was always critical of how the investigation was conducted. That is why I believe I have the authority to address the families of the victims — because they are the ones who truly need answers; they need to understand what happened and who is responsible — and to assure them that this President will not take any decisions on any proposals put forward without first and foremost consulting them and the parliamentary representatives of my country. They all have an obligation to voice an opinion publicly on a matter of this importance.

Lastly, I would like to say to every member of the Assembly that in 2013 and 2014 Argentina will have the great honour and responsibility of occupying a seat — a non-permanent seat, obviously — on the Security Council. I would like to make it clear that beyond the fact of our taking a seat at that table, each and every country with serious aspirations to peace as a universal value will be represented by us in that

seat. That is not a disingenuous or informal wish. It is a firm declaration that peace must go hand in hand with truth, justice and equality. Peace is impossible in a world where countries are not all treated equally. Peace is impossible in a world where people are growing poorer and becoming increasingly excluded. Peace is impossible in a world where people do not tell the truth or state how things really are.

We believe that in peacebuilding the largest and leading nations of the world bear the greater responsibility. Just as in a country's political system the President bears the greatest responsibility and the chain continues down from there, the same is true in the wider world.

We cannot, beyond the call for equality, turn a blind eye to hegemonies or to the importance of certain countries in not only resolving conflicts but sometimes also in triggering them.

The Argentine Republic will, from its seat, do everything in its power to promote the values that it has always defended: peace and the unconditional promotion of human rights in all countries, whether we are on good terms with them or not. Human rights are universal values that should be respected by all types of Governments throughout the world. It is the obligation of the Assembly and the Security Council to act on the basis of a single standard so as to build the values of peace, human rights, equality and truth. That is the only way to bring about a world that is more fair and equitable than the one of today.

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

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

Address by Mr. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will hear an address by the President of the Republic of Senegal.

Mr. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

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

President Sall (*spoke in French*): I should like to begin by extending my congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić on his election as President of the Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, and I wish him every success. I would also like to commend Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, President of the Assembly at its sixty-sixth session, for his positive contribution to the proceedings of the Assembly. I would like to reiterate to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon the encouragement and support of Senegal in the conduct of his delicate mission at the head of our Organization.

On 25 March 2012, in a two-round, keenly contested presidential election, the Senegalese people, inspired by its values of democracy and freedom, calmly and serenely voted massively, by more than 65 per cent, for change and the respect of republican norms. We were supported by friendly countries and organizations in that great undertaking, which was aimed at the consolidation of our democratic tradition, especially through the improvement of our electoral institutions and the monitoring of the various stages of the process. I would like to express here my deep gratitude to all those who supported that process.

In my capacity as Senegal's newly elected President, let me reiterate our faith in our shared values and in the mandate of the United Nations to promote, through cooperation, the advent of a better and friendlier world for all.

Building a better world entails, undoubtedly and above all, working together for peace to reign among and within our peoples, as suggested by the theme of this session: "Adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means".

Born out of the ashes and ruins of war, the United Nations is the expression of the dream of and hope for a world free from the spectre of antagonism and of any Manichaeian view whereby the good are on one side and the bad on the other.

Sixty-seven years on, through mediation efforts and good offices, conciliation, arbitration and peace missions, the United Nations has made a considerable

contribution to the pacification of international relations. Yet, although commendable progress has been achieved, threats to peace and security remain worrisome and have radically evolved.

That is the case in northern Mali, where organized and heavily armed terrorist groups, living off trafficking of all kinds, are occupying, in complete illegality, two thirds of the country, sowing despair among the population and destroying symbols of the world's cultural heritage. Northern Mali has become a lawless area, used as a safe haven for recruitment and training by the international terrorist nebula, which wrongly uses Islam as a pretext to disguise its criminal activities and seeks to attack foreign interests as well as extend its reach to other countries of the subregion.

As the guarantor of the collective security of Member States under the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council has an obligation to act in order to bring an end to such a situation. If it does not do so, it will have failed to live up to its responsibilities. Therefore we call once again on the Council to authorize all actions required to combat those terrorist groups and restore the country's territorial integrity.

In addition, I reiterate our firm rejection of any partition of Mali and our condemnation of the 22 March 2012 coup d'état. It is our conviction that in Africa as elsewhere, the place of the army is in the barracks, under the command of a civilian authority.

As for Guinea-Bissau, we, like other Economic Community of West African States member States, appreciate the efforts made by the transitional Government towards national reconciliation, the re-establishment of the country's institutions, the holding of credible elections and the definitive withdrawal of the army from the political arena.

Already ravaged by years of institutional and economic instability, Guinea-Bissau also faces the issue of foreign drug traffickers. The country deserves the attention and support of the international community.

The same holds true for Palestine.

In its capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Senegal restates its support for the creation of a viable and independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital and with a seat here among free nations. A viable and independent Palestine, living in peace with the State of Israel, each within secure

and internationally recognized borders, is one of our longest-standing unfulfilled promises, even though its fulfilment is the only guarantee for a peaceful, fair and lasting settlement of the Middle East crisis. In the interest of all the peoples of the region and the world, it is high time that the Holy Land of the three revealed religions no longer be a land of fire, blood and tears. The light of wisdom emanating from its spiritual legacies requires it instead to be a land of peace and human fraternity.

In Africa, as in the rest of the world, Senegal welcomes and supports the progress of democracy and fundamental freedoms. We are deeply concerned because some leaders deny the obvious fact that the destiny of humankind is to live free, and respond to the legitimate aspirations of their people with appalling violence against innocent civilians.

The adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means, the apt theme of this session, should not overshadow other emergencies and unmet needs. More than ever before, we live today in an era of paradoxes and unanswered questions. The greatest paradox of our time is that never before in human history has the world accumulated so much wealth even though never before in human history has the world counted so many poor. So what will the world of tomorrow be like? The question is indeed difficult, but to govern is to foresee and we cannot dodge it.

What kind of world do we want when, 20 years after the Rio Earth Summit, it is a proven fact that continuous environmental degradation as a result of human activity threatens to jeopardize the conditions for life on Earth? What kind of world do we want when, according to estimates by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, more than 900 million people suffer from undernourishment even though agriculture has the potential to feed more than twice the planet's population? What kind of world do we want when, in our towns and villages, millions of human beings have no access to basic social services and millions of women die in childbirth?

What kind of world do we want when millions of young people, after years of study, hard work and sacrifice to escape their misery, rather than realizing their dreams are rewarded with nothing but the nightmare and indignity of unemployment? What kind of world do we want when millions of fathers and mothers working for the minimum wage wake up

one morning unemployed because the company has gone bankrupt, while those responsible enjoy generous golden parachutes?

In a time of so many old and new challenges, history has shown that paradigms have changed and that old solutions will definitely not work. We need to redefine our priorities, invest in the real economy and agree on a new and fairer world order. The African continent, having endured centuries of slavery and exploitation, cannot afford to accept yet another Trojan Horse and be duped into forfeiting its resources in a contest hobbling its progress and well-being.

We call for new relations with Africa, not acting upon Africa and Africans but acting with Africa and Africans, in a spirit of cooperation and fairness, taking into account all parties' priorities and interests. That is the hope we declare here in the United Nations. It is also what we call for in the relations between the New Partnership for Africa's Development, on the one hand, and the Group of Eight, Group of 20 and other partnership mechanisms, on the other hand.

As for Senegal, beyond the demands of democracy and good governance, about which we agree, our national priorities must more than ever focus on agriculture, infrastructure and energy. That is the only path to the progress that will improve people's day-to-day lives, the sine qua non of development and democratization.

With respect to the reform of the Security Council, Senegal reaffirms its belief in the African position expressed in the Ezulwini Consensus. It is only justice and common sense that Africa, the continent with the largest number of countries at the United Nations, and whose problems take up most of the work of the Council, should be fairly represented in that body. Indeed, the democracy required of States should also be required of the Organization to which they all belong.

To conclude, on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, currently chaired by Senegal, I hope to renew our common faith in dialogue and the peaceful coexistence of religions, cultures and civilizations. Entering into dialogue and learning to live together depends on recognizing and respecting our differences as a source of richness rather than as a springboard for confrontation. It requires rejecting the defamation of religions and violence in all its forms. It demands renouncing any thought of domination by one culture or one civilization over others. It is about promoting mutual understanding in order to overcome

unfounded feelings of suspicion and fear that deform our common humanity.

If humankind embraces the "civilization of the universal" advocated by my illustrious compatriot, the late President and poet Léopold Sédar Senghor, man will no longer be a wolf to man, as Hobbes said. Instead, as the saying in our country goes, man will become a remedy to man. We owe that to ourselves and to future generations.

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

Mr. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

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

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

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

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

President Zuma: I thank you, sir, for the opportunity to address the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh general debate. Let me start by congratulating Mr. Vuk Jeremić and the Republic of Serbia on his election to preside over the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. We also acknowledge the contribution of the President of the Assembly at its sixty-sixth session, Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser.

South Africa fundamentally believes in the principles and purposes contained in the Charter of the United Nations, and correctly so, given our nation's history. This year, we are proudly celebrating 100 years of our people's selfless struggle for freedom, led by the African National Congress movement. We recall with great appreciation the immense contribution of the

United Nations to the creation of a free and democratic South Africa.

In 1966, the General Assembly labelled apartheid a crime against humanity in resolution 2202 A (XXI), which ultimately led to the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, later known as the Apartheid Convention. The United Nations defined the crime of apartheid as “inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them” (*resolution 3068 (XXVIII), annex, article II*). The Apartheid Convention was adopted by the General Assembly on 30 November 1973 and set the tone for vociferous action against apartheid around the world.

Let me repeat the words our leader and international icon, President Nelson Mandela, uttered in his very first address to the General Assembly, in 1994, the first by a democratically elected leader and Head of State of our country. He said,

“The millions of our people say ‘Thank you’ and ‘Thank you again, because the respect for your own dignity as human beings inspired you to act to ensure the restoration of our dignity as well.’” (*A/49/PV.14, p.7*)

The theme of this session is most appropriate as it takes us back to the basics — to the founding principles of the United Nations. The founders intended the United Nations to be the foremost multilateral forum entrusted with bringing hope, peace and order to the world. Indeed, the United Nations enjoys universal membership and is at the centre of global governance and multilateralism. The theme reminds us that peace is a choice. We can either choose peace as Member States or choose the path of conflict.

The founders of the United Nations made that choice 67 years ago. They decided that the United Nations must lead the world to peace. It is important for the United Nations and its organs, especially the Security Council, to execute the Organization’s mandate of working for peace without fear or favour. We must not steer away from the founding objectives of the Organization.

The United Nations faces immense pressure when the world sees the unprecedented loss of lives, as it now does in Africa and the Middle East. It is of concern when it appears as if the United Nations were unable to

act and assist, and when it comes across as paralysed in certain instances, due to the actions of some Member States. We have seen a divided Security Council unable to muster the collective courage to say “no more” to warring parties in the interest of peace. That brings to the fore the need to continue and deepen the reform of the United Nations and its organs to make it agile and nimble in addressing the contemporary challenges facing humanity.

The debate on the reform of the United Nations and its organs, in particular the Security Council, has been going on for the past 18 years. However, there has been no significant movement forward. I would like to focus in particular on the Security Council. Given its mandate, the Council has to be legitimate, democratic and transparent. Its current composition has a propensity for deadlock and paralysis even in the face of crisis. It remains unrepresentative and undemocratic in both its composition and decision-making.

We would like to see a more meaningful representation of Africa in the Security Council. About 70 per cent of the Council’s agenda is taken up by issues from the African continent. The Security Council has to be expanded in both categories, with at least two seats for Africa in the permanent category and five in the non-permanent category. In addition to seats for the continent in the composition of the Council, the United Nations should also fully recognize and appreciate the role of regional organizations working with the United Nations in conflict management and resolution.

In that regard, we urge closer collaboration with the African Union (AU) peace and security mechanisms, especially given the progress being made by the AU in conflict resolution and peacebuilding in some parts of the continent since its formation 10 years ago. Therefore, cognizance should be taken of Chapter VIII of the Charter, in particular when dealing with African issues. That is why South Africa piloted resolution 2033 (2012) during our rotating presidency of the Security Council in January.

Currently, the AU continues to address one of the longest outstanding conflicts on the continent through one of its mechanisms, the African Union High-level Implementation Panel on the Sudan. Together, as the international community, we recently celebrated the creation of the State of South Sudan. We wish to congratulate the Somalis and their leadership on choosing the path of peace, democracy and prosperity.

The international community and the United Nations must continue to give the people of Somalia all the necessary support.

Africa is indeed making progress and, with United Nations support, that could go further. To promote the peaceful settlement of disputes, we also wish to emphasize that the Security Council should carry out its Charter mandate within the confines of international law.

Any Member State or international body that implements Council resolutions should be accountable to the Council, so as to ensure that we avoid the abuse of internationally agreed principles such as the responsibility to protect and the protection of civilians. Those principles must not be used, amongst other things, to justify the notion of regime change. They exist to prevent mass atrocities, war crimes, genocide and ethnic cleansing. We should continue the debate on them in order to develop norms and standards for accountability when actions are taken.

It is also of critical importance for the United Nations to closely guard its impartiality, independence and objectivity and not allow itself to be dragged into a conflict to take sides with any party under the guise of protecting civilians.

The situation in the Middle East, in particular the Palestine-Israeli question, continues to be of concern to us. The United Nations should play a central and decisive role in efforts to resolve the long-standing conflict in that region. Any act of aggression or violations of international law should be condemned unequivocally by the United Nations at all times. As the United Nations, we cannot be seen to be strong in condemning some acts while being soft on others. As South Africa, we remain committed to the two-State solution based on the 1967 borders, with Palestine and Israel coexisting side by side in peace.

Let me also emphasize that South Africa fully supports the application by Palestine for full membership of the United Nations. It is unacceptable that, even today, Palestine remains outside the membership of the United Nations. We trust that that matter will soon be positively concluded.

In further promotion of the peaceful resolution of disputes, we believe that the sovereign right of States to nuclear energy for peaceful and civilian use should be respected in accordance with international law.

We have taken note that the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency has been able to draw the conclusion that all declared nuclear material in Iran is used for peaceful activities. Clarification of the nature of undeclared materials will enable the international community to have full confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. South Africa therefore encourages Iran to continue its cooperation with the Agency.

We should also remember that so long as some States are allowed to operate outside internationally agreed norms, such as those of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, it will be difficult to expect others to operate within them. South Africa supports the long-standing call for a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East. In that regard, the peaceful resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue is very important.

Let me use this opportunity to reiterate our support for the ongoing struggle for self-determination by the people of Western Sahara. We urge the international community to support their quest for freedom, human rights and dignity.

We also reiterate our call for the lifting of the economic and financial embargo against the people of Cuba in order to help the Cuban people to gain their economic freedom.

Poverty, underdevelopment, lack of opportunities and competition for scarce resources contribute to some of the conflicts in the developing world, including Africa. Therefore, the promotion of sustainable development and the fight against poverty cannot be divorced from the quest for peace.

In 2015, the United Nations will be 70 years old and will also reach the target year for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). World leaders committed themselves to eradicating extreme poverty, facilitating universal primary education, attaining gender equality, improving maternal and child health, reducing the burden of disease primarily by combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, protecting the environment, and mobilizing global partnerships for development by 2015. The Heads of State also committed themselves to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate truly sustainable development. We urge the United Nations to continue promoting the achievement

of the MDGs and other instruments whose tenets advance the human rights of women.

We are concerned that sub-Saharan Africa is unlikely to meet the targets for the MDGs. Awareness of that possibility should not make us give up; in the next three years, we must accelerate the implementation of the MDGs. We appeal to all who have made financial commitments to Africa for the achievement of the MDGs not to renege on those commitments. We would like to express our appreciation to those development partners that continue to stick to their 0.7 per cent official development assistance commitment despite their financial difficulties at the domestic level.

We support the Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Eminent Persons to focus on the acceleration of the implementation of the MDGs, and would urge that much of its focus be on assisting Africa in meeting all its targets. However, we wish to caution against prejudging the review outcome and prematurely setting in motion processes that would undermine the ideals of the MDGs.

The protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms should be at the centre of our collective desire to resolve international disputes by peaceful means. Racism and racial discrimination continue to be an affront to the very basic founding principles of the United Nations and must be fought relentlessly. We should shun any idea in any part of the world that seems to suggest that there is a superior race or human being on the basis of skin colour. The danger of such ideas is still fresh in our collective memory. We have learned from the evils of colonialism, two World Wars and the system of apartheid. We should all renew our commitment to continue to build on the solid foundation laid by the Durban Declaration and the Plan of Action that we adopted more than a decade ago at the end of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

In Durban last December, South Africa had the honour of hosting the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. Member States must ensure that agreements are implemented. In that regard, the Durban Platform offers an opportunity for progress that we must utilize to move forward.

Today's timely debate is a reminder that, ultimately, peace is a choice. Peace is achievable. The wise and brave choices we have the power to make can deliver lasting peace to every corner of the world. We are called upon at this sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly to choose peace by reforming and strengthening the United Nations so that it can play its rightful role and deliver peace, security, sustainable development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the world. As the foremost multilateral forum bringing together all nations of the world, the United Nations is best placed to play this role. It requires our support as Member States at all times, both for our sake and for that of future generations.

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

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

Address by Mr. Ricardo Martinelli Berrocal, President of the Republic of Panama

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

Mr. Ricardo Martinelli Berrocal, President of the Republic of Panama, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Ricardo Martinelli Berrocal, President of the Republic of Panama, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Martinelli Berrocal (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate the President on his election to preside over this session of the General Assembly. I respectfully offer him the support of the Panamanian delegation during his tenure. We welcome his proposal to focus this high level debate on the theme "Bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means". That theme is based on Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter, which addresses the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Since its establishment, the United Nations has played an essential role in the prevention and

resolution of international conflicts. The commitment of the United Nations continues to be to protect future generations from the scourge of war and to ensure that peace and respect among nations are the permanent conditions for global coexistence.

International conflicts have always been and will remain a challenge for the international community and a grave threat to freedom and the right to enjoy a peaceful coexistence among all the nations and peoples of the world. That is why all the countries of the world have the responsibility to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Panamanian people possess the strong conviction and the commitment to use all existing peaceful means to solve international conflicts on the basis of the United Nations Charter and international law. Those are simple truths that are easily forgotten, but which we all must defend. They are the basic condition for our existence in full peace, freedom and independence.

Panama advocates for the solution of all international conflicts by peaceful means. We support the promotion and defence of multilateralism and of all multilateral organizations as ideal frameworks for solving, through dialogue and cooperation, the problems that afflict humankind so that we may thereby maintain peace and international peace and security.

The search for mediation and dialogue has been the stance that Panama has historically always maintained with regard to the conflicts that disturb peace and international political stability. That search must include legitimate representatives of the parties in conflict, who must make efforts to recognize the rights of their counterparts and comply with their own obligations, with sincerity and a generous spirit, to reach just and permanent solutions.

For that reason, the Government of the Republic of Panama considers that Palestine has the right to be recognized as a nation-State. However, it must resolve its differences with its neighbour, Israel, recognizing that Israel has the right to a peaceful and safe existence within its national territory — a right that has already been recognized historically and legally by the international community.

Panama expresses its concern at the escalating violence that has been developing in the Middle East and calls upon the international community to propose

and attempt to enforce plans and solutions oriented towards peace, contributing to ending violent acts that affect the most vulnerable populations.

The Government of the Republic of Panama expresses its concern about the severe crisis that has affected the fraternal Syrian Arab Republic for over a year. We therefore respectfully remind all parties involved that peaceably resolving conflicts is the only means acceptable to the community of nations and peoples of the world for achieving a just and permanent solution.

The Panamanian people deeply deplore the murder of His Excellency Mr. J. Christopher Stevens, Ambassador of the United States of America to Libya, as well as the Foreign Service personnel who were victims of the nefarious attack against the American Consulate in Benghazi. Our prayers and thoughts are with their families. Panama energetically condemns such actions, which cause sorrow and grief to a friendly nation and which violate the fundamental principles of international law, particularly the Charter of the United Nations and the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations.

The recent attacks on the diplomatic missions of the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Israel and France are absolutely unjustifiable. We reiterate that host States have an obligation to ensure the principle of the inviolability of the diplomatic and consular missions of the world and to safeguard international peace and security, as they are the source of communication and understanding. We call loudly and clearly for tolerance, dialogue and peaceful coexistence,

The Republic of Panama is convinced that all international conflicts should be settled by peaceful means, using the instruments and mechanisms that have been created for those purposes. For that reason, Panama formally joined the Group of Friends of Mediation, demonstrating its historic commitment to the peaceful solution of conflicts, which is the central topic of this debate at the current session of the General Assembly.

As a firm believer that dialogue is a powerful tool for facilitating peace and the international political stability so necessary to ensure economic and social development for our peoples, Panama wishes to reiterate its call, as it has done on other occasions, to support the Chinese people in Taiwan so that they may have greater

participation as observers in international forums, organizations and initiatives and may cooperate and support the development and maintenance of peace both in Asia and other parts of the world.

Panama is a multicultural country where people of diverse ethnicities, cultures and religions coexist in peace and harmony and which has historically maintained friendly relations with States of different political and ideological orientations. I am speaking of a demilitarized country, one that by virtue of its domestic law adheres to the doctrine of human security and that possesses a canal that is neutral. In addition, Panama has tradition and experience as a participant in efforts for the peaceful solution of international controversies. Those conditions are our guarantee and asset in advocating for a world that is peaceful and respectful of international law.

Panama continues to be committed to multilateralism, dialogue and negotiation among States as the only way to seek and achieve just solutions in global affairs. As a part of this commitment, in 2013 we will host a series of important international meetings at the global and regional levels.

Panama will welcome the International Congress of the Spanish Language, an event of a universal character and a forum for the reflection on the status of the Spanish tongue, which shapes our identity as a nation and unites the peoples of Hispanic America. In 2013, Panama will also host the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption. That demonstrates that the fight against corruption and the promotion of transparency are essential elements of the modern rule of law to which my Government is fully committed.

We will also host the fifty-fourth annual meeting of the Board of Governors of the Inter-American Development Bank, at which ministers of economy and finance, central bank presidents and representatives of various multilateral financial institutions will discuss topics related to their financial appointments.

In addition, we will host the Americas Competitiveness Forum, which will address the issue of the development of the region's competitiveness agenda on the basis of the 10 general competitiveness principles of the Americas.

We will also host the Ibero-American summit, which will bring together the 22 States of Latin

America and those of the Iberian peninsula. That summit represents an effort, involving dialogue and cooperation, to foster the development of our countries by opening up new markets and new opportunities for trade and cooperation with the peoples and the countries of Europe.

The international meetings set to take place in 2013 will be held in the context of the celebration of a historic event that marks Panamians to this day. I note that today is the anniversary of that event — the discovery of a passage, through our country, to the Pacific Ocean. Today — 25 September — marks almost 500 years since the so-called discovery of the South Sea, later known as the Pacific Ocean, a feat that changed the geography of world navigation and the history of humanity.

With the discovery of a passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific, we saw the beginning of a process of economic and demographic globalization around the world. From that moment on, Panama began to play an important role in global navigation and trade that continues today. Since then, Panama has become the primary hub of the Americas. Indeed, it is one of the most important telecommunications and navigation routes in the world.

We continue to make good progress in the expansion of the Panama Canal and Tocumen international airport, which will become the largest airport in Latin America. Both of those projects will make it possible to further develop the Panama Canal route and will have a tremendous impact on international trade and on tourism.

The feat accomplished by Vasco Núñez de Balboa on 25 September 1513 helped to forge Panama's character as a country dedicated to the global transit of goods, and, with the construction of the Canal, it was consolidated as the hub of worldwide maritime trade.

There is no magic formula for the resolution of conflicts. Nor do the global conditions exist for the complete fulfilment of Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, on the peaceful settlement of disputes. The world still has some important steps to take in order to ensure that dialogue is always the means of adjudicating differences. There must be a commitment at the State level for meeting that goal.

One of the major steps forward we must take is in the area of education. Education not only sets us free: it makes us free thinkers. It helps us understand

and respect different ideas. It provides us with an opportunity to be dreamers. Through education we can learn to value cultures that might seem strange to us; being different does not make us enemies. But in order to understand this in an all-encompassing way, we need a good and objective education.

Access to information through the Internet and social networks is an indispensable tool to raise the level of knowledge and discernment among all peoples.

While I advocate for the responsible use of those tools, I think that we have to go further. I believe that we must also address the issues of equality and self-esteem, which help distance us from resentment and violence. Once again, education is the answer.

Such intangible wealth leads us to honest competition. The substitution of competition for violence can be achieved only through a modernization process in which our principles are preserved. A good education is one that is built upon a foundation of ethics and values. Money is not the best type of assistance we can give our children. The best assistance we can give them is an education that is divorced from politics, passions and paradigms. That is the only way to achieve excellence.

We must focus our educational efforts on young children. Good, balanced primary education is the base of a solid pyramid. Educating our children properly today is the best guarantee of a better future for all tomorrow.

Without education, there is no possibility of dialogue and vice versa. That is the reason for my Government's focus on the well-being of Panamanian children through the improvement of our schools and classrooms; the creation of a free national Internet network; the provision of free computers; the implementation of a universal scholarship, without any distinction on the basis of class or politics; and, finally, the transformation of our educational curriculum.

However, access to information must be provided to children in keeping with their developmental stage, respecting the fact that they are children and requiring that they do the best they can for their age. To respect children is to harvest peace.

As I stated at the recent Connect Americas Summit, held in our country in July, we must continue to harness our respective wills to reduce the digital divide and to maximize Internet access around the world. Every step

in that direction will be key to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Nevertheless, I remain uneasy about the risks posed by the misuse of cyberspace for boys, girls and adolescents.

Our job will not be finished if we do not assume the responsibility of facing up to one of the most significant ethical and moral challenges of our time: the protection of children and young people from the threat posed to them by the misuse of cyberspace.

For that reason, we support the initiative promoted by the International Telecommunications Union in that respect. I also invite all States represented here to share their experiences in order to establish and harmonize, on the basis of international telecommunications criteria, norms that will allow us to ensure that minors are no longer exposed to the risks and dangers disseminated through cyberspace. That should in no way be interpreted as a means of limiting or distorting freedom of expression or the universal use of the Internet, which we defend firmly and with great conviction.

Panama is preparing draft legislation in order to establish minimum regulations geared towards protecting our children and adolescents from the dangerous content spread through the Internet and other electronic media. We are currently working to pass that legislation based on consensus with all of Panamanian society. We must become allies and close ranks against Internet sites that promote child pornography and pornography in general, obscene and lascivious conduct, and physical, sexual and emotional violence.

Let us combine efforts and take concerted action against sites that facilitate the making of weapons or explosives, that incite illegal drug use, and that promote racism, xenophobia or any other type of discrimination that runs contrary to human dignity.

Let us take measures against those who dedicate themselves to making public, using and disseminating minors' personal information and to making threats of all kinds against our boys, girls and adolescents. Let us harness information and communications technology for the benefit of development and to ensure a better quality of life for our children, and let us not allow the benefits of accessing the Internet to put them at risk.

The Government of the Republic of Panama supports the international community and the United

Nations through two large-scale projects. The first is the United Nations Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean in Panama, which will host the 16 United Nations subregional offices already established in our country. That Centre will contribute to greater coordination and synergy within the United Nations system, thereby contributing to its operational process, as outlined in the report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence, “Delivering as One” (see A/61/583). We invite friendly nations who are committed to those reforms to financially contribute to that project, which will soon be open to international bidding. The other project is the regional humanitarian assistance logistics centre for the Americas for the delivery of humanitarian aid in the event of disasters in the region. Panama is committed to being a responsible humanitarian actor in the region, and we place our advantages as an international logistical platform at the disposal of the international community.

Panama’s economic growth is widely recognized throughout our region. From 2012 to 2013, Panama moved up nine places — from 49 to 40 — in the Global Competitiveness Index, which represents our biggest jump in that ranking since 2005, when our country began to be monitored by the World Economic Forum. Such an increase indicates we are doing things well.

Panama’s economic growth is the greatest in Latin America. It is based on free market principles, is respectful of the environment, social standards and free enterprise initiatives, and is strongly committed to social inclusion. That has made it possible for us to significantly reduce unemployment in our country to 4.6 per cent and to reduce poverty, including extreme poverty, from 33.4 per cent to 25.8 in just three years, without compromising the riches of our environment. At the same time, our economic growth allows us to allocate resources to confront the threats of climate change, which is affecting and will continue to affect large and small nations without regard for their level of development. We all need to be more responsible in that regard.

Panama will continue to advocate for the international community to work on an institutional and multilateral structure that would reinforce the rights of all people to a planet with an environment suitable for the development of a healthful and peaceful life. We will insist on a new high-level discussion forum on the protection of the environment in the context of the General Assembly.

Mr. Kanda (Ghana), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Finally, Panama reaffirms that it is a country that favours peaceful and respectful coexistence among all the peoples and Governments of the world. We Panamanians believe that humankind will always be capable of fighting for that cause, united by the hope that we can all build a better tomorrow. There is still time to share, as brothers, in the feast of existence on a peaceful planet that truly belongs to all.

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

Mr. Ricardo Martinelli Berrocal, President of the Republic of Panama, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by His Majesty King Abdullah II Bin Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

His Majesty King Abdullah II Bin Al Hussein, Head of State of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 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 Majesty King Abdullah II Bin Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

King Abdullah: It is an honour to join this eminent gathering. Allow me to extend Jordan’s sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić. I would like to assure him of Jordan’s full cooperation. May I also express to the Secretary-General Jordan’s appreciation for his untiring efforts. I welcome his voice and the voices of world leaders of many religions who stand with billions of Muslims worldwide in rejecting provocations meant to divide those of different faiths.

Islam teaches us to honour all human beings, promote tolerance and show mercy. As a Hashemite and a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad — peace and blessings upon him — I condemn all acts that vilify the name of the Prophet or falsely use his name or the name of Islam — or any other religion, for that matter — to justify violence and evil acts such as we have recently

witnessed. There are no sidelines on this issue. All of us of every faith everywhere must be proactive in promoting understanding and a much stronger global dialogue.

“To unite our strength” — these four words in the United Nations Charter are not just an old dream, they are a modern urgency. The United Nations and the General Assembly — empowered and strong — are needed today as never before.

In my region, we have important tasks ahead. We must provide new and better opportunities for our people, especially our youth, to avert the dangers of regional instability and conflict and to fulfil the universal desire — the basic human right — to live in freedom, dignity, justice and peace. The international community has a crucial interest in supporting countries that are taking risks for peace and reform.

In Jordan we have charted our course guided by our heritage, by our mutual respect and by moderation. Our Arab Spring journey is one of opportunity to accelerate home-grown reforms and achieve national goals. Last year I stood before the Assembly and spoke about the reforms that were on the horizon (see A/66/PV.11). Since then, new and comprehensive constitutional amendments, as well as new laws, have created a matrix of institutions and principles to support our path of reform and democratization. And with the new year, we will have our new Parliament, and our Jordanian Summer will begin.

I would like to address the tragic situation in Syria.

Violence must end immediately, and a transition must begin now. There is no alternative to a political solution that will end the bloodshed, restore security and stability and preserve the territorial integrity of Syria and the dignity and unity of its people.

The United Nations has an important part to play in helping people commit to a political solution. Jordan will do all in its power to support the newly appointed Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi.

The peoples of Jordan and Syria have long and deep ties. Since the current crisis erupted, over 200,000 Syrians have sought refuge in Jordan, putting heavy pressure on our limited resources and our economy. Yet we, as Jordanians, have opened our arms, as we have many times in the past for others in need. As we

continue to shoulder that responsibility, international support is essential. We are very grateful for the generous response of Governments, international bodies and dedicated United Nations agencies. The somber reality is, however, that more will be needed, as the camps grow more crowded with vulnerable families and the cold desert winter approaches. I call upon the countries of the United Nations to work together to prevent a humanitarian disaster.

While we deal with those challenges, we must never lose our focus on the crisis at the heart of the region. For almost 65 years, the Palestinian people have been the exception to the United Nations promise. We pledge the shelter of international law and human rights, except not yet; the dignity of living in freedom and security, except not yet; the right to self-determination, except not yet. It is time to say, “Enough!”

As the Arab Spring demanded dignity for all, so it demanded the end of exceptionalism. No single issue causes greater anger than to tell an entire people that when it comes to global justice they do not count. The Arab Summer cannot bear its full fruit until the Palestinian-Israeli conflict ends, and ends with a just peace and a Palestinian State living side by side with a secure Israel at peace with the entire region.

Earlier this year, in Amman, we succeeded in getting both sides back to the table for exploratory talks. Then positive traction stopped again. Illegal settlement-building and unilateral actions have continued, constituting direct threats to a negotiated peace. We are extremely concerned by threats to Jerusalem and the sanctity of its Muslim and Christian holy sites. The Al-Aqsa Mosque compound of Al-Haram Al-Sharif in East Jerusalem is under Hashemite custodianship, a special role recognized by the 1994 Jordan-Israel Treaty of Peace and protected as occupied territory by international law. It is Islam’s third holiest site and its importance to 1.7 billion Muslims, one quarter of the world’s population, is similar to the importance of the Ka’ba itself.

Let me be absolutely clear, any invasion or division of the site of Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa would be viewed not only as a breach of Israel’s obligations but as a profound religious transgression. The international community must send a clear message that such a transgression, or any attempt to erase the Arab, Muslim or Christian identity of Jerusalem, will not be tolerated. What is needed now is the full weight of our nations, united.

Neither the parties nor the world can afford continued hostility and insecurity. There may be a rare window of opportunity later this year, after the United States elections, to achieve what both sides so urgently need, namely, two States at peace, Palestine and Israel, both secure, both free to look forward on the basis of a just, comprehensive and final settlement. That has always been and will remain a foremost priority for Jordan.

Let me say now, as I have said before, that the Arab world seeks peace. We mean by that real peace: diplomatic relations, economic relations, trade and investment. We mean by that a new normality, in peace, where people are safe in their homes, where communities are able to build and where cooperation helps the entire region prosper. All this has been on offer for over 10 years, since 2002, under the Arab Peace Initiative, through which 57 Arab and Muslim countries reached out collectively to Israel. It is time for Israel to turn around, look to the future we must share and make a just and lasting peace with the Palestinians.

Almost 70 years ago, countries from every continent chose to come together in hopes of a world united in peace and respectful of all humankind. After a bitter, destructive global war, the United Nations was the right step, the brave step. Today, almost three generations later, we have learned that it is not enough to make the right choices. We must also pursue effective action. Not only as nations but as nations united, we must take the right steps, the brave steps, now.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly I wish to thank the King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for the statement he has just made.

King Abdullah II Bin Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. János Áder, President of Hungary

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now hear an address by the President of Hungary.

Mr. János Áder, President of Hungary, 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. János Áder, President of Hungary, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Áder (spoke in Hungarian; English text provided by the delegation): The rule of law is among the topics before the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. This is an especially important issue, especially for someone who has had the opportunity to personally experience the lack of it. For many decades, Hungary belonged to the Communist-Socialist bloc. By 1949 the Communist takeover of power had been completed, just four years after the end of the Second World War. The multiparty system had been eliminated. The majority of leaders of political parties established after the war were forced into exile or were imprisoned.

I was born 10 years later. I spent my early adult years, and thus the years of my political awakening as well, in a dictatorship. In fact, my two older children were born under that political system. For our generation, just as for that of our parents, our everyday experience was of being deprived of human rights and liberties. Independence? From what, when Soviet troops kept Hungary under occupation? Free elections? How, when political parties were non-existent and, even at late as 1988, it was a crime against the State to form political organizations.

Constitutional freedoms, such as the freedom of speech, the right of assembly and the right to practice religion freely, existed only on paper or not even on that. The end of the 1980s and the fall of the Berlin Wall and of the Iron Curtain, brought democratic changes to Hungary as well. It was in the spring of 1990, more than 40 years later, that we could organize free elections again. Preparations for the peaceful transition, and then the post-election years, can be deemed to be a successful period from the perspective of the rule of law.

Hungary, however, did not have a new, consolidated Constitution that was not unlike the 1949 Constitution, easily revealed through the number in its title. It was that shortfall that the Hungarian National Assembly rectified in April 2011, when it decided to adopt the new fundamental law of Hungary. What is now the youngest Constitution of Europe incorporates almost all elements of the European Convention on Human Rights, along with the rule-of-law institutions safeguarding the checks and balances established in 1990. As a new element, constitutional constraints compliant with the rule of law have been imposed to curb irresponsible public spending and the reckless increase of State indebtedness.

The new Constitution of Hungary provides guarantees for the fulfilment of international legal obligations and for compliance and adherence to the generally accepted rules of international law. It is important to point out that numerous new provisions, which concern the new, so-called fourth generation of basic rights, have been included in the new fundamental law.

Article P of the Constitution stipulates that:

“All natural resources, especially agricultural land, forests and drinking water supplies, biodiversity — in particular native plant and animal species — and cultural assets shall form part of the nation’s common heritage, and the State and every person shall be obliged to protect, sustain and preserve them for future generations”.

Whereas Article XXI sets forth that:

“Hungary shall recognise and enforce the right of every person to a healthy environment. A person who causes any damage to the environment shall be obliged to restore it or to bear all costs of restoration as defined by law.

“No pollutant waste shall be brought into Hungary for the purpose of dumping”.

Environmental protection, the preservation of natural values, the protection of soil, air and water quality — how much time have we spent talking about them recently? Due to the limited time allotted, permit me to highlight only a single issue from the larger set of problems before us, namely, the issue of water and sanitation. It is even more important to mention it here because, as a result of our common decision, next year has been designated as the International Year of Water Cooperation.

We can truly appreciate the adequate quantity and quality of water if we experience what it means to be deprived of it, whatever the reason — pollution, overconsumption or environmental changes. During recent years, a great variety of studies have been published about our irresponsible behaviour, about the short-sighted, and may I say, foolish, attitude with which we are polluting our waters. Allow me to cite just a few findings from these documents. Ninety per cent of all communal wastewater and 70 per cent of industrial wastewater in countries of the developing world is discharged into rivers without any treatment whatsoever. The chemical revolution of the era following

the Second World War also has had seriously adverse implications on the environment. Industry nowadays has been using about 12,000 different types of toxic chemicals, while a single drop of crude oil can render 25 litres of drinking water non-potable. Manufacturing a single vehicle requires 148,000 litres of industrial water. The toilet culture of nearly 2 billion people is still not adequate today.

What are the consequences? Polluted and toxic lakes, lifeless streams of water reminiscent of rivers only by their names. Instead, they are stinking industrial canals. The consequences are that there is not enough water around to meet the everyday needs of human consumption. Today, more than 1 billion people do not have access to clean, potable water. Another consequence, according to a 2009 UNICEF study, is that serious diseases, spread by polluted water and the lack of sanitation, have been killing young children at a pace equivalent to that of a Boeing 747 airplane packed with young children crashing every four hours.

I could continue to list dramatic examples and serious consequences of the lack of sanitation, but let us ask ourselves the question: if everything were all right with wastewater management, would it mean that everything was also all right with respect to our water management, water treatment and protection of our water basins? Unfortunately, the answer is no.

Water management today requires international cooperation. It is indispensable. Half of the Earth’s population lives in so-called shared, or joint, water catchment areas. The same river provides the water supplies for two, three or more countries. Cooperation between such countries is a daily obligation. Absence of such cooperation could lead to supply, social, health or even war-related tensions. Nearly 1.5 billion people live in river basins, where water usage is larger than the minimum extent of water replenishment, which leads to the exhaustion of water reserves.

At least two thirds of European cities with a population of 100,000 or more people are using their water resources faster than they can be replenished. It is true that the standards are set high in agriculture, especially if the agricultural sector wishes to produce adequate supplies of food for a further 2.5 billion people by 2050. That is especially true if we consider that currently it takes about 140 litres of water to produce one cupful of coffee or about 15,000 litres for 1 kilogram of beef.

We have been aware of these figures for years. But what is knowledge worth if we do not put it to use? Why do we wait for nature to remind us again and again of our grave irresponsibility? Hungary assesses the issue of water and sanitation to be one of the most important questions of the twenty-first century. During recent years, we have been active participants in the friends of water working group, created under the auspices of the United Nations. I think we will have ample work waiting for us during the coming years as well. We are ready and willing to share our knowledge and experience. We are also looking forward to welcoming everyone interested to the conference on water and sanitation to be organized in Budapest next autumn.

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

Mr. János Áder, President of Hungary, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 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. Asif Ali Zardari, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Zardari: Before I begin my statement, I want to express the strongest condemnation of the recent acts of incitement to hatred perpetrated against the faith of the billions of Muslims around the world and our beloved Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Although we can never condone violence, the international community must not remain a silent observer and should criminalize such acts, which destroy the peace of the world and endanger global security by abusing the freedom of expression. Pakistan asks that the United Nations immediately address this matter of great alarm and concern and bridge the widening rift in order to enable the comity of nations to be one again.

I would like to congratulate the President on his election to his important post and to convey our appreciation to the previous President, His Excellency Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, from the brotherly state of Qatar, who carried out his work with skill. I would also like to express our appreciation for the laudable work of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. We greatly appreciate his leadership in guiding the work of the Organization. It is a special privilege to be at the General Assembly today, representing the brave and courageous people of Pakistan.

Globally, we face enormous challenges. But with collective efforts and commitment we can provide our people with a better future. We must work to end poverty. We must work to protect the planet and mitigate climate change. We must ensure that all people have equal rights, and we must protect the weak and vulnerable. We must pursue justice and fairness for all. We must pursue the peaceful settlement of international disputes. We must save our current and future generations from the horrors of war. I think of my own children and the generations of unborn children yet to come. They, and all the children of the world, deserve safety, stability and security. Those goals have guided me throughout my four years in office as President of Pakistan. They are the goals and principles about which I want to talk today.

Pakistan's engagement with the United Nations lies at the heart of those goals. We are proud of going above and beyond the call of duty in fulfilling our international responsibilities. Pakistan has consistently been among the top United Nations peacekeeping troop contributors for many years. Today, more than 10,000 Pakistani troops proudly wear the Blue Helmet of the United Nations in the service of our brothers and sisters around the world.

Our election to the Security Council reflects our commitment to world peace. It is also a vote of confidence in Pakistan on the part of the international community. The United Nations represents our common aspirations for peace and development. However, it needs reform. The United Nations system must become more democratic and accountable, and reform should be based on consensus and democratic principles.

In the last several years, Pakistan has repeatedly suffered natural calamities. The people of Pakistan appreciate the support of the United Nations and the international community in that connection.

Being a democratic country, we believe that the legitimate aspirations of any people should be accommodated peacefully and in a manner consistent with the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of States. We support the rights of the Palestinian people and an independent Palestinian State. We also favour the admission of Palestine to full membership of the United Nations.

There are many questions that are asked of Pakistan these days. I am not here to answer questions about Pakistan. The people of Pakistan have already answered them. The politicians of Pakistan have answered them. The soldiers of Pakistan have answered them. We have lost more than 7,000 Pakistani soldiers and policemen, and more than 37,000 civilians. We have lost our Minister for Minority Affairs, Shahbaz Bhatti, and my friend Salmaan Taseer, Governor of Punjab, our most populous province, to the actions of extremists. And I need not remind my friends here today that I bear a personal scar. On 27 December 2007, knowing that her life was under threat from the mindset that she had warned the world against, Pakistan's first elected female leader, and my wife, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, was martyred by the bullets and bombs of terrorists. Terrorism and extremism have destroyed human lives, torn the social fabric and devastated the economy. Our economy, our lives and our ability to live in the shadow of our Sufi saints and our freedom-loving forefathers have been challenged.

We have responded. Our soldiers have responded. So I am not here to answer questions about Pakistan. I am here to ask some questions on behalf of the Pakistani people: on behalf of the two-year-old baby who was killed in the bombing at Lahore's Moon Market on 7 December 2009; on behalf of Pervaiz Masih, a Christian Pakistani who was killed with six others while trying to protect Muslim Pakistanis during a bomb attack on Islamic University in Islamabad on 20 October 2009; on behalf of Commandant Siffat Gha-yoor of the Frontier Constabulary police force in Peshawar, who was martyred by militants on 4 August 2010; on behalf of the traders and businessmen in Peshawar, Quetta, Lahore and Karachi and in the dozens of marketplaces that have been ravaged by multiple bombings, over and over and over again; and, perhaps most of all, on behalf of my three children, whose mother, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, was also martyred by terrorists.

For more than 30 years, our doors have been open to our Afghan brothers and sisters.

For many years, we were left to fend for ourselves and our Afghan guests.

I remember the red carpet that was rolled out for all the dictators in our country — dictators who promised the international community the moon — while Pakistan was kept in the dark. Those dictators and their regimes are responsible for suffocating and throttling Pakistan, Pakistan's institutions and Pakistan's democracy. I remember the judicial execution of Pakistan's first elected leader, Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. I remember the jailing of Pakistan's elected leaders.

I remember the 12 years that I myself spent in prison, and I remember the billions provided by the international community to support those dictatorships. My country's social fabric and its very character have been altered. Our condition today is a product of dictatorship.

No country and no people has suffered more in the epic struggle against terrorism than Pakistan. Drone strikes and civilian casualties on our territory add to the complexity of our battle for hearts and minds through this epic struggle. To those who say that we have not done enough, I say in all humility: please do not insult the memory of our dead and the pain of our living. Do not ask of my people what no one has ever asked of any other people. Do not demonize the innocent women and children of Pakistan, and please, stop this refrain to do more. The simplest question of all is: how much more suffering can Pakistan endure?

I am sure that the international community does not want any suffering anywhere, least of all in Pakistan. We believe, in fact, that the international community is a partner. That is because it is in the common interest of all nations to work together.

In Pakistan, I have helped bring about a major strategic shift in how we view working together. Within Pakistan, our democracy has brought about major changes. God willing, this will be the first civilian Government in Pakistan's 66-year history to complete its full five-year term.

In that time, Parliament has passed unprecedented reforms. We have restored the consensus 1973 Constitution.

The National Assembly has enacted wide-ranging social reforms. We have established a National Commission on Women and a National Commission on Human Rights. We have established, for the first time, a truly independent election commission, to ensure free, fair and transparent elections. Our media is free, uncensored and thriving. Our civil society is flourishing under the protection of democracy. We have created the first social safety net, through the women of Pakistan, for the weak and less privileged. Millions of families have benefitted. We have aided the poor and at the same time empowered the women of our households. That safety net is called the Benazir Income Support Programme. These are the gifts of democracy. This is the dream of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

The growing regional pivot in Pakistan's foreign policy is a symbol of our democratic policy-making. In engaging with our region, we are changing the future. In China, our strategic partnership is growing from strength to strength. In Afghanistan, we have begun to engage and deepen our friendship with the entire range of the Afghan political spectrum.

We believe that a sovereign, stable and secure Afghanistan is good for the Afghan people, and what is good for the Afghan people is good for Pakistan. While our hearts and homes remain open to our Afghan brothers, it is imperative that the international community support the 3 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan in their quest to return home with dignity. A brighter Afghan future will be possible only when the quest for peace is Afghan-owned, Afghan-driven and Afghan-led.

We respect and support the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan for reconciliation and peace. Pakistan will support in every way possible any process that reflects Afghan national consensus.

Similarly, we approach our relations with India on the basis of mutual trust. The contacts between our leadership are expanding. I was encouraged by my discussions last month in Tehran with the Prime Minister of India, whom I met with for the fifth time in four years.

Our principled position on territorial disputes remains the bedrock of our foreign policy. We will continue to support the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to peacefully choose their destiny in accordance with the Security Council's long-standing resolutions on this matter. Kashmir remains a symbol

of the failures, rather than the strengths, of the United Nations system. We feel that a resolution of these issues can be arrived at only in an environment of cooperation.

By normalizing trade relations, we want to create a regional South Asian narrative. Such a narrative will provide an environment that will mutually benefit the countries of our region.

Along this road, there are pitfalls. One of them is the tendency to respond to failure through blame. Pakistan does not blame others for the challenges it faces. We believe that we should look for a win-win solution. Regional cooperation and connectivity will bring us closer and bind us together. It will make us stakeholders in one another's futures. Our hosting of a quadrilateral summit next month and our signing of the Afghan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement are proof of that commitment to regional connectivity.

In Pakistan, the lesson we learned from the last 30 years is that history cannot be changed, but the future can — to a future that is brighter, more prosperous and more secure, not only for Pakistanis but for all the peoples of the region, and, indeed, the world.

I must thank the member States of the European Union (EU) for recognizing the value of trade to Pakistan. We seek trade, rather than aid. By granting trade concessions to Pakistan, the EU has sent a positive message. Those concessions will help us revive the economy and fight terrorism.

As we embark on this ambitious transformative experience, we are aware that there are threats and pitfalls. One of them is the expanding illegal trade of heroin. Despite the presence of international forces in Afghanistan, the size of the heroin trade has increased by 3,000 per cent in the last decade. The heroin industry is eroding the social fabric of our society.

Terrorist activities within our region and, indeed, all over the world are funded and fuelled by the unrestricted production and sale of illegal drugs. Pakistan has pursued an ambitious agenda to control that menace. We are coordinating with our neighbours and will hold a conference later this year to develop a unified approach to stamping out the drug trade.

My call upon this body, and especially those nations represented here that are actively engaged in the region, is: here, today, let us begin to work together.

I have committed my presidency and my nation's future to a paradigm shift, a permanent democratic future for Pakistan. It has not been easy, but nothing worth fighting for is. We long ago stopped thinking of doing what is easy. Instead, we have committed ourselves to doing what is right. In that regard, I recall the powerful words of my beloved martyred wife and my leader, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, when she appeared before this body 16 years ago.

Her words ring out and guide us into a new future. She said in 1996,

"I dream of a third millennium in which the gap between rich and poor evaporates; in which illiteracy, hunger, malnutrition and disease are at long last conquered; in which every child is planned, wanted, nurtured and supported; and in which the birth of a girl is welcomed with the same joy as that of a boy. I dream of a millennium of tolerance and pluralism, in which people respect

other people, nations respect other nations, and religions respect other religions.

"That is the third millennium I see for my country and others". (A/51/PV.20, p.4)

We have made some progress towards achieving those goals. But so much remains to be done. In her memory and in the name of God Almighty, Pakistan commits to that path again today.

May peace be upon all countries and their people.

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

Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.