



General Assembly

Seventieth session

16th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 29 September 2015, 9 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Lykketoft (Denmark)

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

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

The President: 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 President: 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: The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (resolution 70/1) marks a new era in international cooperation. Ending extreme poverty was never going to be enough to fulfil our ambitions. This new compact is about prosperity, and it recognizes that the only sustainable future is one that includes all of us. It could hardly be otherwise. The creativity and dynamism of billions of people is already transforming our world for the better. That is thanks to improved health, education and access to new technologies and to empowering women to take their rightful place in the world.

But growth and progress also raise new challenges related to international migration, the protection of the environment and demands for good governance. For the generation to come, responding to those challenges will put the United Nations at the centre of global affairs

as never before. Cooperation is the only way forward. And yet the new consensus on sustainable development is incomplete, because it lacks a shared definition of the political legitimacy required to sustain that international order.

That divergence of visions is rooted in history. When world powers created the United Nations 70 years ago, independence for the colonized peoples of Africa and Asia was not on the agenda. We were still seen as people who needed to be looked after. Those moral hierarchies and prejudices are still with us, contributing to the mismanagement of political change and corroding the trust on which effective multilateral cooperation depends.

The internal character of national systems counts for everything. It cannot be bypassed. Political legitimacy is not a legal abstraction. It is an objective reality that can be measured, for example, in terms of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as in terms of indicators of public opinion. We face serious challenges that we must confront together as an international community. We cannot afford to undermine the most responsible and capable members by applying standards to some countries that are not applied to others, and even by imposing inappropriate ones.

To take just one example, international refugee law has barely been a factor in the current crisis, as if the purpose all along was more to keep refugees encamped far from developed countries than to protect the rights of people fleeing persecution. In other cases,

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multilateral institutions are used to gain credibility for biased attacks on countries even while scrutiny of the powerful is considered unnecessary. When matters of principle become associated with domination and disdain, the basis for joint action in the multilateral system is compromised.

We have nothing to fear from high standards. The only stability worth having is one based on good policies that deliver real results for citizens and facilitate peaceful change. Human dignity and even survival are implied in that. No country or system has a monopoly on wisdom, much less a claim to moral superiority. Our task is to settle the future, not the past. Change is coming, and it is necessary. No one can manage it alone, and the Sustainable Development Goals rightly recognize our mutual interdependence. We have made good commitments; now we must make good on them. Building a community with a shared purpose that is capable of doing so starts with recognition of our equality.

The President: 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 Mr. David Arthur Granger, President of the Republic of Guyana

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

Mr. David Arthur Granger, President of the Republic of Guyana, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. David Arthur Granger, President of the Republic of Guyana, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Granger: The Cooperative Republic of Guyana is honoured to participate in this historic session of the General Assembly. We would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election, and pledge Guyana's cooperation as you guide the Assembly in the fulfilment of its tasks. We would also like to thank your predecessor, Mr. Sam Kutesa, for his stewardship in piloting the post-2015 agenda. That

process has culminated in the historic 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). The Sustainable Development Goals it contains reflect the common consensus within the international community on the elements that are integral to human development.

The United Nations, established 70 years ago and a mere five months after the formal end of the Second World War, became the midwife of a new international order. That new order of world peace was depicted symbolically and powerfully in the form of a bronze statue on the grounds of the Headquarters of the United Nations. It embodies the vision revealed in the Holy Bible in the Book of Isaiah that states,

“And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” (*The Holy Bible, Isaiah, 4:2*)

That prophetic verse became the philosophical basis of the United Nations, which became the organizational foundation for a global order that saw the emergence of a plethora of newly independent States, a result of the decolonization process after the Second World War. In the years since its establishment, 126 States have gained their independence.

The United Nations began in 1945 with a membership of only 51 countries, but today that has almost quadrupled to 193. The majority of new States are mini-, micro- and small ones. The undemocratic and warlike empires of which they were colonies were dismantled after two world wars. These are the questions that small States ask of the United Nations on this, its seventieth anniversary: How will our peoples be protected from foreign aggression? How will our territories be safeguarded from invasion? How will peace among nations be preserved? How will the independence of the new States be sustained? The Charter of the United Nations charges our Organization with the responsibility

“to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes”.

That responsibility is essential to the existence and survival of small States that are threatened by more powerful ones. They risk being subjugated unless the international community can demonstrate a

commitment to providing an effective deterrent against their domination by larger, stronger States, and the capability to do so.

On 9 May 1994, at its forty-ninth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 49/31, which, among other things, recognizes that small States may be particularly vulnerable to external threats and acts of interference in their internal affairs; stresses the vital importance for all States of the unconditional respect by all States of all the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and the peaceful settlement of disputes and their consistent application; also stresses the importance of strengthening regional security arrangements by increasing interaction, cooperation and consultation; appeals to the relevant regional and international organizations to provide assistance when requested by small States for the strengthening of their security in accordance with the principles of the Charter; requests the Secretary-General to continue to pay special attention to monitoring the security situation of small States and to consider making use of Article 99 of the Charter; and calls on the Security Council and other relevant organs of the United Nations to pay special attention to the protection and security of small States. That is a manifesto for small States, contained in a resolution adopted by the General Assembly 21 years ago.

Guyana is a small State and a new State, a product of the post-Second World War promise of peace. Guyana is a child of the United Nations. Eight months from now, on 26 May 2016, Guyana will mark the fiftieth anniversary of its independence. But for 50 years, our small country has been prevented from fully exploiting its rich natural resources. Venezuela has threatened and deterred investors and frustrated our economic development. For 50 years it has violated our territorial integrity by occupying part of our territory, the most recent incident in that regard being on 10 October 2013, when it sent a naval corvette into our maritime zone and expelled a peaceful petroleum-exploration vessel conducting seismic surveys. For 50 years Venezuela has promulgated decrees making spurious claims on our territory, the most recent on 26 May, our independence anniversary, when it issued decree number 1,787, containing specific coordinates that would annex almost our entire maritime zone, and

constituting a reassertion of Venezuela's claim to 5 of Guyana's 10 regions.

Guyana rejects Venezuela's threats and claims, made in defiance of international law, and we resist its acts of aggression, conducted in defiance of the Charter of the United Nations, which prescribes the peaceful settlement of disputes and proscribes the use of armed force.

Guyana's borders with Venezuela were settled 116 years ago. The entire world, except the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, accepts and acknowledges our borders. In 1968, at the Assembly's twenty-third session (see A/PV.1680), Guyana explained to the world how in 1897 a treaty of arbitration was signed between the United Kingdom and Venezuela. That treaty provided for the establishment of an arbitral tribunal to determine the boundary line between the colony of British Guiana, as we were then, and Venezuela. It committed the parties to consider the result of the proceedings of the tribunal of arbitration as a full, perfect and final settlement of all the questions referred to the arbitrators. The tribunal issued its decision on 3 October 1899, awarding Venezuela 13,000 square kilometres of our territory, an area bigger than Jamaica or Lebanon. Venezuela was bound under international law to respect that decision, which it did for the next six decades.

From the beginning of Guyana's independence, however, Venezuela has resorted to various stratagems to deprive us of our territory. There has been a series of acts of aggression by Presidents of Venezuela against my country, from President Raúl Leoni Otero's decree number 1,152 of 15 June 1968 to President Nicolás Maduro Moro's of 26 May of this year. Venezuela — more than four times the size of Guyana, with armed forces that are more than 40 times the size of our defence force — mindful of its superior wealth and military strength, but unmindful of its obligation as a Member of the United Nations, the Union of South American Nations and the Organization of American States, has pursued a path of intimidation and aggression. It is unsettling a settled border. It is destabilizing a stable region of the globe by the use of armed force against a small, peaceful State. Venezuela has retarded Guyana's development through its use of threats that are intended to force a small State to yield up its birthright. Its expansionist ambitions cannot be allowed to undermine the principle of the inviolability

of borders and the tenets of international law, and to redraw borders that have gone undisturbed for decades.

Guyana recommits to preserving the Caribbean as a zone of peace. Today we renew our pledge before the Assembly that we will pursue the path of peace for all time. We reaffirm our commitment to the peaceful settlement of international disputes. Guyana has total confidence in international law, and seeks a resolution of this controversy that is consistent with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Geneva Agreement, signed on 17 February 1966, between the Governments of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Venezuela and British Guiana, as we were then, provides for action to be taken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in order to resolve any contention occasioned by the claim made by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela that the arbitral award of 1899 is null and void. Guyana has full confidence in the judgement and capacity of the United Nations, through the Office of the Secretary-General, to identify solutions that will validate the just, perfect and final nature of its decision. We thank the United Nations and the Secretary-General for appointing various officials during the past 25 years to use their good offices to help to resolve this controversy. We feel, however, that the process has now been exhausted.

Guyana does not want this obnoxious territorial claim to obscure our country's prospects for peace and obstruct its potential growth for the next 50 years. We need a permanent solution if we are to avoid a fate of perpetual peril and penury, and we seek a juridical settlement to the controversy. We put our faith and our fate in the hands of the international system of peace promised by the Charter of the United Nations nearly 70 years ago. We want to bring an end to Venezuelan aggression. We want to develop our country, all of our country, in accordance with international law. Guyana therefore calls on the United Nations to give real meaning to resolution 49/31 of 9 May 1994 by establishing a collective security system designed not merely to monitor but also, more importantly, to maintain the security of small States. That resolution, as I said, is a manifesto for the security of small States.

The United Nations remains our best hope and prospect for peace, the best assurance of security for small States. It is our strength, support and succour in times of danger. We pledge Guyana's adherence to the Charter of the United Nations. Guyana seeks

nothing more than the solidarity of the international community, the assurance of the Charter and the safety of international law.

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

Mr. David Arthur Granger, President of the Republic of Guyana, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia

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

Mr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Geingob: I am honoured to be here today to deliver my maiden address to the General Assembly as the third President of the Republic of Namibia. I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. In the same vein, let me take this opportunity to thank the outgoing President, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, for the sterling job he did during his tenure as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.

As I arrived at this building, I could not help but experience a strong sense of nostalgia. It has been said that a journey of 1,000 miles begins with one step. In 1964, 51 years ago, standing at the foot of the steps to this building, I began my 1,000-mile journey, starting off as a young petitioner for the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) against the illegal occupation of South West Africa by apartheid South Africa. On 23 April 1990, I returned to address the Assembly as the first Prime Minister of an independent Namibia during the admission of our young nation into the fold of the United Nations family (see A/S-18/PV.1). Today, 25 years after that moment, I am once again standing in this building, having ascended to the presidency of our Republic. It is therefore a great joy to

be present at the seventieth anniversary celebrations of our Organization.

Namibia is a child of international solidarity, midwifed by the United Nations. As Namibians, we are both grateful for and proud of the support we received from the international community, through the United Nations system, during our struggle for independence. In fact, if I can illustrate our close bond with the United Nations, in 1990, upon attaining independence, we refused to allow the instruments of power to be handed over to our first President, Comrade Sam Nujoma, by the then President of South Africa, Mr. De Klerk. We demanded that the said instruments be handed over by Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, who in so doing symbolized the birth of our Republic.

After the termination of South Africa's mandate over South West Africa, the United Nations assumed direct responsibility over Namibia. Furthermore, it established the Nationhood Programme for Namibia, which was meant to prepare the country for independence and future responsibilities. Through the United Nations Institute for Namibia, established by the United Nations Council for Namibia, which I was tasked to head from 1975 to 1989, we were able to develop the building blocks that we would use to construct our democracy. There is an African proverb which says that a patient man will eat ripe fruit. With the assistance of the United Nations, we exercised patience in preparing for self-governance. Today, I can proudly announce to the world that in Namibia, after having fought to free ourselves, we are now eating the ripe fruit of peace and democracy.

As an expression of our profound gratitude to the international community for its solidarity with our people and our undying commitment to international peace and security, we have continued to make our modest contribution to United Nations peacekeeping operations since our independence. Among other things, we have contributed contingents to peacekeeping missions in Cambodia, Angola, Liberia, Darfur, Côte d'Ivoire, Timor-Leste and South Sudan, in which our men and women participated.

As we celebrate 70 years of the existence of this great experiment in human interaction, namely, our United Nations, there is a lot of which we can be proud. Although the world has not been as peaceful as we would like, we can take solace in the fact that since the Second World War, we have avoided a conflict of such

magnitude and intensity. Most important are the inroads we have made into improving the conditions of human beings on this planet by lifting millions out of extreme poverty, empowering women, advancing human rights, and spearheading the process of decolonization, which has been completed with only one exception — that of Sahrawi.

We hail from a continent whose leaders are busy addressing new goals and new commitments under the banner of the African Union. We are in the process of establishing the new Africa, with its own narrative as told by its sons and daughters. Africa has turned a new leaf, bidding farewell to the days of coups d'état and embracing electoral democracy. We as Africans, through the African Union, have ostracized those who have come to office through unlawful ways. The recent coup in Burkina Faso is an example of our zero-tolerance policy towards those who come to power through illegal ways.

Having achieved electoral democracy, it is pertinent that we buttress it by establishing processes, systems and institutions. When we talk about processes, we are referring mainly to electoral processes, in which electoral commissions need to be independent, impartial and able to instil confidence in the electorate. This will ensure that those who lose at the polls accept the results. In so doing, we can bring to an end a situation where those who lose at the polls feel left out and defeated and therefore choose to wage war.

With respect to systems, we talk about Government systems that continue to function through the civil service even though there may be a political deadlock within a particular country. If all else fails, then institutions, such as our own courts, play their part. This is what we have in Namibia. It is clear, therefore, that we have put sound governance architecture in place. With regard to effective governance, our track record speaks volumes. We are rated, *inter alia*, sixth overall as the best-governed country on the African continent by the Ibrahim Index of African Governance, rated seventh in Africa as a clean country in terms of corruption by Transparency International, and ranked as a country with the freest press in Africa by Reporters without Borders.

Similarly, our macroeconomic architecture is admirable. It is underpinned by financial stability evident in our world-class banking system — a sector ranked twenty-fifth in the world by the World Economic

Forum — and well regulated through a prudent monetary policy for the past 25 years. Both Fitch and Standard and Poors, the globally recognized rating experts on a country's financial stability, have consistently rated Namibia with a BBB+, which means that we are indeed a credit-worthy country. Our debt stock is between 25 per cent and 30 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). Clearly, at the level of governance, Namibia by all local and international standards has been doing quite well as a maturing, stable, peaceful and democratic society.

However, we should understand that electoral democracy without economic democracy is meaningless, because people do not eat peace, security, good constitutions and democracy. We still face the challenge of rectifying socioeconomic deficits and the subsequent entrenched poverty caused by many years of deliberately orchestrated policies of the historic neglect and economic exclusion of black people. That situation has proven resilient against the conventional anti-poverty strategies we have employed for the past 25 years, meaning that we have to become more innovative in our approach in that area. We are still faced with enormous social disparities between the rich and the poor. Among other notable concerns is the critical shortage of housing and other basic necessities. For that reason, on the day of my inauguration as President of Namibia on 21 March, I announced to my countrymen and women and to the world at large that the Namibian Government was declaring an all-out war on poverty.

The distribution of wealth is one of today's most widely discussed and controversial issues. However, the distribution of wealth is too important an issue to be left to economists at international financial institutions. It is for that reason that Namibia continues to advise caution against the arbitrary classification of countries based on income alone. The current approach developed by international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and subsequently adopted by the United Nations, to classify countries based solely on GDP does not reflect justice and fairness. That approach, which simply divides GDP by population, completely ignores inequalities in the distribution of wealth and opportunities and comes with adverse effects on social mobility and progress.

Namibia has been one of the casualties of that approach, as it has been wrongly classified as a so-called upper-middle-income country without taking into account that, due to Apartheid, the economic

wealth of the country remained in the hands of the minority white population, leaving blacks on the fringes of the economy. Instead of the international community assisting us in fighting the second phase of the struggle, we feel as if we have been left to fend for ourselves since the aforementioned classification effectively denies Namibia access to grants and concessional loans to support our development agenda.

One cannot build a nation when some citizens do not participate in the economy and therefore feel left out. Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen rightly states that poverty should be seen as the deprivation of basic capabilities rather than merely as low income. The deprivation of elementary capabilities can be reflected in premature mortality; significant undernourishment, especially of children; persistent morbidity; widespread illiteracy and other failures. We can therefore see that the effects of poverty are so interrelated that those among us who have the misfortune of being poor are trapped in perpetual cycles of poverty and despair.

Further to the issue of poverty eradication, I would like to add that one of the most impactful interventions we can make in the war against poverty is by empowering women, who, although representing half of the world's population, account for nearly 70 per cent of the world's poor. In Namibia, gender equality is not merely lip service. We have benefitted from SWAPO's internal reform of its party list system to include the 50-50 per cent representation of women. Due to the SWAPO victory at the national electoral polls, female representation in our Parliament has increased from 24 per cent to 47 per cent, second only to Rwanda, which has up to 64 per cent female representation in its Parliament. I have promised that we shall catch up.

I have also appointed a Namibia's first female Prime Minister, and a female Deputy Prime Minister who also serves as our Minister for International Relations and Cooperation. She is present in the Assembly today. Furthermore, I have appointed female Ministers at the helm of our Basic and Higher Education Ministries. Both the Minister and Deputy Minister are females. What matters is educating us when we are young; we think that by placing education under their care that we will do better.

The current, reflective seventieth session of the General Assembly has charted the course for the future with the adoption, two days ago, of the new Sustainable Development Goals, which urge us all to join hands

to build a new type of international relations based on win-win cooperation in order to realize the lofty ideals of living together in peace with one another as good neighbours. The onus is on us to ensure that this seventieth session marks the beginning of a unified commitment to establishing peace in all areas of the world. Let us ensure that no country feels left out of that process.

Human rights are not divisible; fundamental freedoms are not divisible; democracy is not divisible; self-determination is not divisible. These freedoms apply to all of us as human beings on this planet. The peoples of Palestine and Western Sahara should be allowed to enjoy their inalienable rights to self-determination and national independence, just like all other people, because those rights are not divisible; they apply to all of us.

Namibia therefore reaffirms its full and unequivocal support for the inalienable rights of the people of Palestine and of the Western Sahara to self-determination and national independence. In that context, we call upon the United Nations to assume its full responsibility by implementing all its resolutions and decisions on Palestine with no preconditions. We equally call for the urgent implementation of all Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, with the aim of holding a free and fair referendum in the Western Sahara.

There have been a number of developments on the geopolitical landscape that are encouraging in terms of a more safe and peaceful world. One of those developments is the thawing of relations between the Republic of Cuba and the United States of America. For the past 25 years, Namibia has continued to call for the United States and Cuba to walk the 15 miles of peaceful coexistence. In that regard, we applaud the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, as well as the laudable efforts of the two leaders to ease political tension. We commend both countries for realizing that their differences are best addressed through engagement rather than estrangement. However, we hope that the first step will be followed by the unconditional lifting of the embargo imposed on the people of Cuba.

Over the 70 years of its existence, the United Nations has evolved with the world as new issues and challenges have emerged. It is therefore proper for the Organization to reposition itself to deal with these

dynamic changes. Accordingly, Namibia remains committed to comprehensive United Nations reform in order to strengthen the Organization and make it more efficient and responsive to the needs of all its Members. In this regard, reforms of the United Nations system should be guided by the principles of democracy, equity, justice and fairness for all.

With respect to reform of the Security Council, Namibia fully supports the African Common Position as set forth in the Ezulwini Consensus and reaffirmed by declaration at the 25th Ordinary Summit of the African Union. The continent of Africa deserves to be fairly and equitably represented in the Security Council in order to rectify the long historical injustice endured by a continent with over 1 billion people.

As President of the eleventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, Namibia is of the view that we will not end poverty unless we tackle the interlinked issues of desertification, land degradation and drought. These issues are of critical importance, not only to Namibia and Africa, but for the entire world.

As we prepare to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the creation of the Organization, an organization with which so many of us here share a history and fond memories during our struggle for freedom and dignity, we must ensure that we leave a legacy behind for future generations — a legacy of peace, unity and the commitment to equitable and sustainable development. I would like to reflect on the words of the former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who once said,

“More than ever before in human history, we share a common destiny. We can master it only if we face it together (*SG/SM/7262*).

And that, my friends, is why we have the United Nations. The only way we can overcome our challenges is to form a united front for the advancement of humankind. Through the United Nations we have the platform to achieve this goal. We can either choose to march to the tune set by the original ideals that led to the formation of the United Nations or we can choose to pursue our ambitions at the expense of others and ourselves. Let us choose nobility, where we overcome our fears, insecurities and prejudices for the sake of shared sustainable development. Let us leave a long-lasting legacy that will shape the future of our planet politically, economically and ecologically.

The time to act is now, and Namibia stands ready to join hands with all members of the international community to celebrate a new type of global coexistence, where no continent, no region and no country will feel left out.

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

Mr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan

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

Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Rahmon (*spoke in Tajik; English text provided by the delegation*): It is a great pleasure to join other delegations in expressing our cordial congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session.

The current session of the General Assembly offers a unique opportunity not only to acknowledge the accomplishments of the United Nations over the last 70 years, but also to reiterate our strong commitment to meeting the aspirations and hopes of our peoples for secure and sustainable development. For 70 years, the United Nations has stood for peace and security, international cooperation and human rights. Over this short but intense period of history, the United Nations has made great strides in promoting stability and sustainable development and in reducing or even eliminating poverty and inequality all over the world. During this period, the mechanisms for interaction that we have set up together to facilitate international cooperation have functioned with considerable success. Recently, the United Nations Summit adopted the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which lays the foundation for and identifies the

areas in which the international community can work to attain sustainable development that would meet the interests of all peoples and every individual.

Over seven decades, the United Nations has made a remarkable contribution to assisting in the formation of new independent States and their further development. When, at the dawn of its independence, Tajikistan was faced with the difficulties of transition, it received extensive support from the United Nations, which enabled the country to embark on the road towards democratic development. The major pillars of Tajikistan's development, laid down with the assistance of the United Nations, contributed to the country's ability to participate in international processes set up to foster cooperation and interaction. Today, Tajikistan is contributing significantly to fighting terrorism and extremism, transnational organized crime, illicit drug trafficking, arms smuggling and human trafficking, and in promotion of the United Nations water agenda.

Our national police officers are participating in United Nations and African Union peacekeeping operations in Darfur and are contributing to peacebuilding processes shoulder to shoulder with colleagues from other Member States. Our drug control agency that was established with United Nations support continues to play an important role in combating illicit drug trafficking. Indeed, since 1995, Tajikistan's national drug enforcement authorities have confiscated more than 111 metric tons of narcotics, an amount equivalent to 206,650,000 drug doses, which could turn 50 million people the world over into drug abusers. This data proves that Tajikistan ranks among the world's top 10 States in the seizure of illicit drugs.

The world has undergone dramatic transformation in the last decades. Global processes are more dynamic and complex than ever. Along with the positive contributions globalization has made to overall development, globalization has also had negative impacts that threaten security and development in individual countries and in the world as a whole.

The increase in the number of armed conflicts and acts of terror, food, energy and financial and economic crises, degradation of the environment, climate change and the spread of infectious diseases demand from us a concerted and comprehensive response. In this context, the United Nations remains the key platform for consensus on the key issues of international security and development and for coordination of joint action

of the international community towards responding to global threats and challenges. Of special concern are the scope and global nature of the current threats posed by terrorism, drug-trafficking and organized crime. The destructive and inhumane forces of terrorism and extremism have continued to gain in strength, attracting into their orbit an ever-growing number of young people. Those forces seriously undermine efforts of countries and regions to maintain the security and peaceful development.

Combating international terrorism and extremism has become a top priority. There is an undeniable need to develop national, regional and international mechanisms to eliminate military infrastructure, block channels of financial and logistical support, prevent recruiting and propaganda that promotes violence, and counteract the use of modern information and communication technologies for the purpose of terror. It is also essential that we pool our efforts to find ways to address the issues of poverty reduction and the negative impact of globalization, and to prevent and resolve regional conflicts. Strengthening cross-cultural and interfaith dialogue, mutual trust and tolerance would play a pivotal role.

It is in our common interests for Member States to implement the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council in order to effectively combat all forms and manifestations of terrorism, including the use of the Internet for terrorist activities. Any joint response to a sudden outbreak of terrorism and extremism should be commensurate with the scope of that threat.

The prevention of drug-trafficking, which has unfortunately continued to increase yearly, should become an integral part of our common struggle against terrorism and global organized crime. Money earned from drug-trafficking is channelled to financing acts of terror and organized crime activities. In that context, the special session on drugs to be held in 2016 will offer an opportunity not only to review the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, but also to develop new and effective measures for combating that evil. In the light of those efforts, in May Tajikistan held a high-level international conference on drug control that sought to consolidate international cooperation on counter-narcotics.

Our friendly neighbouring nation of Afghanistan has embarked on the implementation of its transformation decade. The new stage of enhancing and reinforcing the security and stability of the country and the rehabilitation of its economic and social sectors is being accompanied by addressing the most urgent and practical issues, which requires increasing the targeted assistance of the international community, in which the United Nations should play a central and coordinating role. Tajikistan is in favour of expanding friendly and good-neighbourly relations with Afghanistan and calls on the international community to support the efforts of the Government of that country to achieve peace and stability by addressing the social and economic challenges that the country faces, pursuing the process of national reconciliation and inclusive dialogue, and involving the country in regional cooperation. Tajikistan continues to make its contribution to the social and economic development of Afghanistan.

The peaceful solution of the issue of the Iranian nuclear programme demonstrated the enormous potential of diplomatic means to resolve the urgent problems of our shared planet. We are convinced that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear programme, enshrined in Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), will contribute to the strengthening of regional and international peace, genuine stability and mutual trust and be instrumental in reinforcing the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We hope that United Nations Member States will be guided by good will and resolve to resolve the most urgent disputes and conflicts, by using political and diplomatic means, in addressing other urgent issues.

Last July, Tajikistan hosted regional consultations for the countries of South and Central Asia in preparation of the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 in Istanbul. We hope that the recommendations voiced at those consultations will have a positive effect on the humanitarian activities of all countries.

In December, the international community will meet again at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris to conclude the round of negotiations on climate change that we began in Bali. We hope that Member States will take advantage of that opportunity and adopt a new document on climate change, based on the principles of the Framework Convention and, by so doing, lay the foundations of a transition to sustainable development. We believe that such a transition will

require not only industrial modernization, based on innovative technologies, but also significant changes in mentalities and consumption patterns.

The long-term observations of our experts attest to the increased impact of climate change on the environmental, social and economic situation in our country and region. According to those observations, over the past 60 years the average annual temperature in Tajikistan has increased by 1°C, the number of days with heavy precipitation has risen, natural meteorological disasters have become more frequent and severe, and the degradation of glaciers has accelerated. This past summer, as a result of the abnormally high temperature and severe precipitation, the mountainous part of the country suffered natural disasters that caused hundreds of millions of United States dollars in economic damage. Regrettably, these disasters also claimed human lives.

In terms of carbon dioxide emissions, Tajikistan ranks one hundred and thirty-fifth among greenhouse gas-emitting countries. Per capita greenhouse gas emissions in the country is 10 times less than that of the average world index. Widespread use of renewable energy sources — predominantly hydropower — would facilitate the economic and social development of the country and promote the “green economy”.

It is becoming apparent that climate change affects the quantity and quality of freshwater resources. It is known that as a result of climate change, the amount of water resources stored in glaciers and snow caps has diminished, the area of ground waters affected by salinization has increased, and precipitation has become more frequent and heavier. In turn, the changes in the hydrological cycle may have a negative impact on water, energy and food security and entail an added risk of floods and extreme droughts. We believe that in such circumstances, it is essential to review existing practices of water-resource management in order to ensure adequate adaptation not only to climate change, but also to population growth and a changing world economy, as well as to the scarcity of freshwater resources.

In Central Asia, where water resources are a key factor in achieving the sustainable development of the region, the need for the elaboration of a comprehensive regional plan of adaptation to climate change became urgent long ago. This imperative is also driven by the accelerated degradation of the glaciers in the region as a result of climate change. The observations of expert

confirm that, since the 1960s, the region's glaciers, which remain the main source of water for Central Asian rivers, have been degraded by a factor of three.

As 2015 is the final year of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Life”, 2005-2015, a global initiative approved by the General Assembly to facilitate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, a number of water forums have been held to review progress and analyse gaps in the implementation of the International Decade. Such forums include the General Assembly high-level interactive dialogue for a comprehensive review of the progress on the implementation of the International Decade, held last March here in New York, and a high-level international conference on the implementation of the International Decade held in Dushanbe, in June. We expect that, in taking stock of the results of the Decade, the United Nations will take on board the outcomes of these events and other relevant forums held in support of a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Decade.

I take this opportunity to extend my deep appreciation to the Member States, the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, the United Nations agencies and institutions, international organizations, and representatives of civil society, academia and business for actively participating in and implementing the Decade and for following up its outcomes.

A few days ago, we adopted a road map for achieving sustainable development that comprehensively incorporates the water component. Over the next 15 years, against the backdrop of the ever-increasing impact of climate change on water resources, environmental degradation, population growth and food and energy crises, we will have to make enormous efforts to ensure the timely achievement of the goals we have set forth.

In our view, fostering cooperation, partnership and water diplomacy will promote the timely adoption of relevant measures to mitigate the impact of destructive processes and help to achieve Sustainable Development Goals. In this context, there is a need for additional platforms for strengthening cooperation at all levels with the engagement of all interested stakeholders. In this regard, and given the positive outcomes of previous joint initiatives, we propose to consider the possibility of proclaiming a new international water decade, aimed

at promoting the implementation of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We sincerely hope that all States Members of the United Nations will lend their support to make this initiative a reality.

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

Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Sauli Niinistö, President of the Republic of Finland

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

Mr. Sauli Niinistö, President of the Republic of Finland, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Sauli Niinistö, President of the Republic of Finland, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Niinistö: Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. You have the full support of Finland in your important task.

We are celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations. The Charter of the United Nations was written in a world that lay in ruins after the Second World War. Today, we must face our challenges with the same determination our predecessors had in 1945. By adopting the ambitious new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) we are taking equally, or even more important steps, for humankind.

This year also marks the sixtieth anniversary of Finland's membership of the Organization. Finland joined a family of countries that care and shoulder their responsibilities. We felt this concern when Finnish national composer Jean Sibelius passed away in 1957. The General Assembly decided to honour him with a moment of silence. The President of the Assembly at that session, Mr. Leslie Munro, described how Sibelius belonged to the whole world. We also understood what shouldering responsibility means by participating in the first United Nations peacekeeping operation in Suez.

We are now facing an extremely dangerous crisis in Syria, Iraq and parts of North Africa. We are also witnessing an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe unlike any other since the Second World War. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and its horrendous terror are a direct by-product of the conflicts in Syria and Iraq. It threatens the peace and stability of the Middle East, Africa and even Europe. We are facing a new era of migration, largely due to wars and conflict. Around 60 million refugees, the largest number since the Second World War, clearly attest to this.

The current refugee situation in the Middle East, in many parts of Africa and in the Mediterranean is unbearable for everyone. Although neighbouring countries bear the heaviest burden, the refugee crisis is causing serious political tension in Europe. Finland is also receiving a very high number of asylum-seekers. Not providing assistance is not an option for us, but we have to find more effective and sustainable ways to help those in need. Resolving the conflict in Syria and elsewhere is essential to any lasting solution. The international community must show that it cares. The Security Council and the countries in the region in particular must work together to find a political solution to the crisis in Syria. Finland welcomes all constructive efforts that pave the way for realistic, workable and lasting peace within a framework of international cooperation. Finland also remains committed to the work of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL.

The conflict in Ukraine has not been resolved, although an agreement to this end has been approved. We welcome the steps taken towards the implementation of the Minsk agreement. All illegal measures, such as the annexation of Crimea to Russia, cannot and must not be accepted.

These conflicts are not the only ones. Last year alone, there were 42 armed conflicts that resulted in approximately 180,000 fatalities. Wars and their consequences continue to threaten stability far beyond the war zone itself. United Nations peace operations are at the very heart of its efforts to maintain international peace and security, yet the scope and complexity of today's violent conflicts have surpassed the ability of the international community to address them properly. Critical thinking, flexibility and decisive action are needed to manage and resolve those crises. The initiative to carry out major reviews of the United Nations peace and security architecture was therefore most timely.

I very much welcome the excellent report produced by President Ramos-Horta's High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (A/70/357). It rightly stresses the primacy of politics; political solutions must always guide the deployment of United Nations peace operations. The United Nations prevention and mediation capacities must be strengthened and sufficiently funded. Finland is proud to have contributed to that shift of paradigm, especially by co-chairing the Group of Friends of Mediation, together with Turkey. The Group of Friends will continue its efforts to advance the recommendations of the Panel. Since the beginning of its membership, Finland has contributed 50,000 men and women to United Nations peacekeeping operations. In per capita terms, we are the second-largest contributor in Europe, and we will further increase our contribution. We will shoulder our responsibility.

Let me add that this year also marks a major success of international diplomacy — the historic agreement reached on the Iran nuclear programme. We look forward to the swift implementation by Iran of all the nuclear measures and its full engagement with the International Atomic Energy Agency to resolve all outstanding issues.

Humankind faces the need for profound change. We cannot continue business as usual, which is a way of life transcends our planet's boundaries and exhausts the Earth's resources. We have all the facts at our disposal. For example, on global warming, it is up to us to act. We can choose or lose our future. I believe that we are on the right track. We have just adopted the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which has the potential to transform the world. For the very first time, we have a real programme for sustainable development binding all Member States. Now it is up to us to implement that ambitious agenda.

I urge the United Nations to once again demonstrate its convening power. We must get everybody on board to make the commitments a reality. The private sector and civil society are in a key position to take the Agenda forward, together with Governments. Even individual persons have a role to play. Another vital step in tackling global challenges is yet to take place; I refer to the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris in December. Let us make it a success. We must care for our children and their children.

The post of the Secretary-General has been called the most impossible job in the world. Actually, it is not only a job — it is an institution of which the whole United Nations membership should feel a sense of ownership. Strong political leadership is required, especially in cases where the international community is unable to find common views. I very much welcome efforts to enhance the transparency and inclusiveness of the selection process of the next Secretary-General. As a nation that has championed gender equality throughout its 60-year United Nations membership, my country, Finland, expects to see many excellent female candidates for the position. It is high time that the other half of humankind took up that challenge.

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

Mr. Sauli Niinistö, President of the Republic of Finland, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Elbegdorj Tsakhia, President of Mongolia

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

Mr. Elbegdorj Tsakhia, President of Mongolia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Elbegdorj Tsakhia, President of Mongolia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Tsakhia: I extend my heartfelt congratulations to you, Mr. President. You can count on my delegation's full support during the jubilee session and the year ahead.

We are commemorating the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations. As a family of nations, our hopes for peace and progress, as expressed in the Charter of the United Nations, still resonates deeply today. The United Nations is designed to uphold humankind's primary aspirations to live in peace, enjoy equal rights and achieve everlasting happiness. The United Nations has tirelessly served those noble purposes for seven decades. If the United Nations did not exist, most of humankind would have ended up in violent confrontations and faced more arduous, complex challenges than those that have arisen.

Together, we have achieved a lot and we have charted a better course. The number of sovereign nations has quadrupled since 1945. The world's economic output has increased fivefold. Human beings enjoy longer, healthier lives. We are more literate and educated. Today, the world has achieved the highest degree of international cooperation in history. Starting with the founding of the United Nations, Governments have steadily invested more and more in new means of cooperation. Those tools create new options, more space for compromises and more legal frameworks than humankind has ever possessed. The United Nations has justly become the primary universal organization working for peace, instead of war; prosperity, instead of poverty; and a dignified life for all, instead of human rights violations. Hence, I would like to state that the past 70 years were the best 70 years ever for humankind.

The founding of the United Nations, a historic milestone, connects our past, present and future. All of humankind is poised to make another great stride towards a new, better reality. I am hopeful for the future because we have the United Nations, because we have useful experience to tackle today's challenges, and because a new generation of humankind is rising. The new generation has creative solutions to challenges and sees new opportunities in them. It shares knowledge and advance technologies.

At this moment more than ever in history, we share a common destiny as a family of nations; yet, despite our achievements, billions of people still live in forbidding conditions. Our home, Mother Earth, is becoming more turbulent and is in fragile health. The Second World War is behind us and the arms race of the Cold War ended two decades ago. Many military conflicts today are not tied to defending a particular territory, but are motivated by borderless ideological, criminal and religious goals.

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

Paradoxically, although we are more aware of those challenges and understand them better than ever, we seem unable to tackle them decisively and effectively. That is why we have gathered here and embarked on a momentous new journey to do much better to transform our world. The only way to bring peace and stability is through a system of rules and norms, laws and institutions that every country agrees to abide by in exchange for the benefits of peace and stability. If

the United Nations fails to adopt a system of laws, we all will fail. The future is not only about the United Nations. The future is about all of us. It is about our community; it is about our family. Therefore, we have no right to fail.

We have recently shown that we can make positive changes. At the dawn of the new century, we adopted and have since implemented the Millennium Development Goals. We achieved many targets, yet failed to achieve some others. Still, by and large, the global community passed the test. We learned lessons about working together and made huge strides towards achieving positive goals. With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), the international community produced a new history-making document. The entire United Nations family agreed on that road map towards sustainable development. Now humankind has a truly universal, ambitious action plan for the upcoming 15 years. A consensus-based, global platform, the Agenda is for all, because every single human being holds a stake in our planet's future. The 17 Goals and 169 targets are real. Yet, they also embody the dream of humankind. Never before in history have nations reached such a universal and unanimous agreement.

Our historic 2030 Agenda is comprehensive and sustainable. We have agreed on urgent targets on a broad range of economic and social challenges and on environmental emergencies. Is that not miraculous? With one voice, the entire world shouldered a mountain of responsibilities and adopted these bold Goals. In the Agenda, I recognize the overarching objectives for global sustainable development. I note that the Goals are intended literally to save Mother Earth for future generations, which I can readily accept to save a happy, equal human race. I believe that we must build inclusive, capable institutions and create prosperous, peaceful, open, just, equitable societies. In order to advance those societies, the family of nations needs a robust, inclusive and open mechanisms. We must have reliable implementing, monitoring and accountability regulations and institutions in place. I appeal to every Member State to adopt national laws and policies to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. Such laws and policies would ensure their sustainability.

I am deeply proud of my country's contributions to the common causes of humankind. During the past quarter century, Mongolia has relentlessly striven to build an open and just society with a free

market economy, participatory democracy and environmentally conscientious policies. We have made notable progress in the areas of governance transparency, citizens' participation and the reduction of corruption and poverty. In the past quarter century, the life expectancy of Mongolians has increased by seven years. Our gross domestic product (GDP) has increased by a factor of more than 20. We believe in human rights and human creativity, and we foster private initiatives. Our private sector generates more than 80 per cent of our GDP growth. My country, within a single generation, peacefully transformed from one of the most isolated and closed regimes in the world to one of its most vibrant and open democracies. Mongolia also created one of the most unique, open, competitive and fair election systems in our region. It has nationwide electronic voting and biometric voter registration. We no longer use wooden or paper boxes or finger inks, and public participation goes beyond electronic voting.

Corruption is still a big threat. Yet, over the past five years, with transparent, determined and enforceable policies, our country's corruption index has dropped by one-third, according to Transparency International. We will continue to block the menace of corruption head-on. Mongolia is among the top countries in the world in the number of media tools used per capita. We have the most open, censorship-free private media, including social media and burgeoning Internet use. We have slightly more than 3 million citizens, yet it feels like there are 3 million journalists, too. New media technologies, transparency and public scrutiny make our society much healthier.

We have adopted and implemented a set of laws related to an open, fair, service-oriented judiciary. Because the process takes place under strict civil monitoring, people's confidence in a fair court of law is being restored. We have also created regulations and institutions regarding public hearings and participatory democracy. We are also prudently enforcing a law called the Glass Account — a budget transparency law that requires full disclosure of public expenditures.

Education is key to human development and the country's development. More than one-third of our population is engaged in educational activities. More student-centred than previously, our education system emphasizes their practical involvement in learning. Our Government also now covers tuition if

a Mongolian citizen is accepted into one of the world's top universities.

We believe in gender equality and women's empowerment. Mongolia is a strong supporter of the United Nations in that cause. If societies are to advance, we need more women in public service at all levels, local and global. If women hold more positions of power, we will have less suffering and conflict and more harmony and civic engagement. All such efforts on the part of Mongolian citizens constitute a just, transparent, inclusive, accountable and action-oriented platform to guide us on a sustainable development path. I am confident that building on those bedrock successes and decisively moving forward is compatible with your appeal, Mr. President, for a new commitment to action.

Today, the world faces a shocking range of new challenges on a global scale — from weapons of mass destruction to global warming; from human rights violations to humanitarian disasters; from heinous crimes and mass terror to the breakdown of sovereign States; from an uncertain supply of energy, food and water to new challenges to freedom and security. In facing global challenges, we must admit one thing — no one country, big or small, can address them on its own. Therefore, the coordinated actions of all players and countries are needed.

When all cultures and civilizations unite, we can tackle global challenges. The upcoming twenty-first session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Paris later this year, will be the first new test. It will require the widest possible cooperation of all countries. We all must bear responsibility for protecting planet Earth and its ecosystems for the benefit of present and future generations. We must all work to ensure justice and fairness throughout the world. Every nation and Government must actively contribute to the global good according to their respective capabilities and responsibilities.

Mongolia has committed to always doing its humble share to promote global well-being. We Mongols are eager to contribute. Our peacekeepers proudly serve, along with fellow United Nations peacekeepers, to maintain international order and security. Mongolia has become one of the 20 largest peacekeeping contributors in the world. To date, 14,000 Mongolian peacekeepers have served on active duty in global hot spots. That is

a significant number in proportion to the size of our population.

We are enthusiastic to share our experiences in transitioning to democracy in our quest for freedom, justice and development. When Mongolian citizens share and actively collaborate with countries in our region and beyond, we make our own success more durable. We care deeply about global stability. Mongols believe that we must preserve our planet by eliminating nuclear weapons throughout the world.

For 23 years, our country has maintained a nuclear-weapon-free status. Any nation seeking nuclear power must not endanger the peace and security of their independent neighbours. We believe that the solution to those challenges is engagement, rather than isolation. We believe that strengthening multilateral collaboration and mutual trust among countries is vital. In Asia, Mongolia is a non-aligned nation and an honest broker that promotes peace and security. We launched a regional initiative similar to that of the Helsinki dialogue, known as the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on North-East Asian Security. Within that security initiative, Mongolia has hosted and has helped arrange multilateral meetings, conferences, and symposiums to examine peace and security issues. We also put forward a common platform called the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, or FORUM-Asia. A compelling need exists to establish a solid and inclusive platform for comprehensive dialogues involving all Asian States.

FORUM-Asia would seek to promote an equal representation of the interests of all sovereign nations in Asia, whether big or small. All nations would bear in mind the concerns of all other nations, rather than wrestle one-on-one within the global arena. It would ensure each member State its independence, integrity, and right to development. We invite all interested parties to play an active part of that cause.

Our country also successfully chaired the world's most reputable democracy movement, the Community of Democracies, for two years. Currently, Mongolia is chairing the Freedom Online Coalition. The first Asian country to lead that important community, we promote universal Internet access. We support a comprehensive convention on Internet freedom, to be agreed to by all United Nations Member States. I appeal to everyone to work collectively to advance the great, global digital

revolution, in order to bring greater prosperity to humankind.

Mongolia has pursued a peaceful, open and multi-pillared foreign policy. That stance has enabled us to declare Mongolia to be a State of permanent neutrality. Our national laws and the international treaties to which Mongolia is signatory are consistent with the principles of neutrality. I therefore kindly ask for Members' understanding and support for Mongolia's peaceful, open, neutral and active foreign policy efforts. I am convinced that Mongolia's status of permanent neutrality will contribute to the strengthening of peace, security and development in our region and the world, in general.

Recently, Mongolia hosted the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, and for the first time in our country, the autumn meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly was convened. The human rights experts and the European parliamentarians had fruitful, lively discussions and exchanges. The conference also provided a splendid opportunity for them to comprehend at first hand our achievements in protecting and advancing human rights, in exercising the rule of law and in running a pluralistic and open society.

We are honoured to be hosting many events in the coming months and year in our capital city. Most importantly, the eleventh Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) will be held in Mongolia in the summer of 2016. Leaders of 53 countries in Asia and Europe will meet in Mongolia on the historic twentieth jubilee of the founding of ASEM. I earnestly look forward to welcoming them. Mongolia will further consolidate and strengthen our peace initiatives and our role as mediator. Our doors are always open for dialogue and engagement. We will always say that all are very welcome to cooperate with us in the spirit of freedom, justice and prosperity. We are ready to share the lessons we have learned and to listen to and learn from the lessons of other nations.

I wish to stress that Mongolia is running for the first time for membership on the United Nations Human Rights Council. We believe that the Human Rights Council is a crucial body for the protection and promotion of human rights worldwide. It is a platform for open discussions on human rights issues, and it positively impacts national and international

policies. Mongolia reaffirms its full commitment to the promotion of human rights and our willingness to share our experience in transitioning to democracy, fighting against corruption, abolishing the death penalty and ensuring genuine human rights. I respectfully ask every Member State to extend its valuable support to Mongolia's candidacy for the Human Rights Council at the October elections.

We, the States Members of the United Nations, need to mobilize the full potential of humankind to achieve the primary purpose for establishing the United Nations, namely, the promotion of peace, the respect for human rights and inclusive economic and social development. I believe that, in the twenty-first century, the United Nations will remain at the heart of our common humanity. Its mission will be defined by a new, more profound awareness of the sanctity and dignity of every human life, regardless of race, gender or religion. Nevertheless, there are still numerous cases involving cruel violations of human dignity and rights. One thing is certain: every nation State should always strive for good governance, the strict rule of law and a sound human rights policy.

I reiterate the appeals of all speakers in the Assembly that we must vow to exercise clear and decisive leadership in effectively tackling the tough challenges ahead and in fulfilling the core missions of the United Nations. We have many opportunities to benefit the world. We are the first in history to have the potential, technology and resources to resolve the world's problems.

When I observe a giant display of military might, I think of the huge amount of money, human ingenuity and time that are being spent on war machines and weapons of mass destruction. With a fraction of the money that we spend and the technology that we develop to put on such macho war shows, we could solve many of today's troubling issues. We also have a smart, tech-savvy, energetic young generation, who will soon shoulder our tough challenges with their innovative, dynamic and shrewd solutions. They give us hope and reassure us.

I would like to reiterate that the solemn purpose of the United Nations has always been to enhance global peace, protect fellow human beings and contribute to global well-being. We all know there are well-founded criticisms of the United Nations. If our United Nations is to survive in the new reality, we must embrace substantive change. We need reforms to build a just and

common home. If we delay action, change will become more painful and even more challenging. The United Nations is still our most representative and important global body. Its foundation is based on the preservation of the rights and interests of all nations, whether big or small, so that they may have a voice, a vote, and be part of our common human home. More relevant than ever, the United Nations is our common home where nations can meet and create solutions to solve the challenges of the world. If the 70 years since the United Nations was founded were the best 70 years ever, as I believe, then let us make the next 70 years even better.

We humans are at our best when we face challenges and when we exercise collective bravery, spirit and leadership. With the Sustainable Development Goals, we all become developing countries and we all have a stake in our plans for success. There is no future without peace, there is no planet without sustainability, and there is no humanity without justice. Let us strive for victory. Let us all be champions, Let us raise all our flags at the finish line, and let us all proudly present them to our beautiful planet's next generation.

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

Mr. Elbegdorj Tsakhia, President of Mongolia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Klaus Werner Iohannis, President of Romania

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

Mr. Klaus Werner Iohannis, President of Romania, 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. Klaus Werner Iohannis, President of Romania, and to invite him to address the General Assembly.

President Iohannis: My delegation would like to congratulate the President on his assuming the presidency of this important session. We have found inspiration in the theme of the session: "The United Nations at 70 — a new commitment to action". Allow me also to express my appreciation to Denmark, an example of true dedication to the work of the

Organization and one of the very few Members that have met the commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of its gross domestic product for official development assistance.

The seventieth anniversary of the United Nations is yet another opportunity for a lucid reflection on the lessons learned and the future of our Organization. What we have seen is a visionary project born from the ashes of a terrible tragedy, with the lofty goal of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war. We have seen a working agenda that has continuously expanded into new areas of cooperation, within and beyond its main pillars, namely, peace and security, development and human rights. We have witnessed the continuous efforts of the Organization and its Member States to adapt to new challenges and to major shifts in the paradigm of international relations. As a consequence, the United Nations has steadily developed new mandates, reaching a level of complexity never seen before. Of course, the United Nations is not a panacea for all the evils of humankind. Its history is one of ups and downs, achievements and failures. At the same time, we all know that the increasing number and depth of the tasks entrusted to it have not been matched by the resources needed to accomplish all of its goals. It has become common practice to ask the United Nations to do more with less.

The Charter of the United Nations, after 70 years of being tested against all winds, has proved to be a visionary document that has stood the test of history. The Charter was drafted as a solid corpus of principles and norms for international conduct. It was conceived in an intelligent manner that allowed enough flexibility for designing the actual ways and means to cope with increasingly complex situations. The United Nations has steadily consolidated its universal vocation and legitimacy. It has created and promoted an impressive body of international law that touches on almost all domains of international cooperation. It may occasionally have been convenient for some Member States or other stakeholders to point to the failures of the Organization. We should try harder to point to the magnitude of the prevention work carried out by the Organization. Prevention being admittedly much more difficult to measure, we have tended to underestimate its importance among the achievements of the Organization. In the same vein, it is worth reminding ourselves that the United Nations is neither an organization born out of the blue nor an independent

and self-ruling entity. The United Nations is nothing but we ourselves, the Member States, living in the trust and resources we invest in it.

Romania is among the countries that have fully trusted and unconditionally supported the United Nations. The year 2015 is a special one for my country, because this year we celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of Romania's admission to the Organization. The United Nations has helped Romania in various ways over various periods of the post-Second World War era. In the beginning, despite having been part of the monolithic group of former Communist countries, Romania found in those years, a propitious framework, here in the United Nations, within which to assert its national independence and to make friends and partners throughout the world. Later on, the United Nations provided my country with the opportunity to engage in the debates over and action on global issues through dialogue and cooperation across all continents. In the aftermath of the Cold War, the United Nations was actively engaged in supporting Romania during its difficult economic transformation and the transition towards democracy. The funds and programmes of the United Nations assisted Romania in addressing social problems related to children, population, health and the environment, along with many others. Allow me, in particular, to thank the United Nations Development Programme for its 45-year presence in my country.

Our sixtieth anniversary allows us to take a retrospective look. Romania is a country with limited economic power. Nonetheless, we take pride in having made some significant contributions to United Nations goals throughout our six decades of membership. In essence, they were based on a reliance on multilateral diplomacy and international law and the pre-eminence of peaceful means over the use of force in the pursuit of national interests.

Romania has often been at the frontline of major United Nations campaigns. I would like to highlight just a few of the topics that were the focus of initiatives undertaken by Romania in the General Assembly, the Security Council and the various human rights bodies. They include, inter alia, arms control and disarmament, good relations among neighbouring States, the role of science and technology in development, a more effective and influential role for youth, increased cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and arrangements, and the promotion and consolidation of democracy. Since 1991, Romanian contingents have

participated in peacekeeping operations across all continents from Angola to Cambodia, from Somalia to Haiti, and from the former Yugoslavia to Rwanda. Moreover, Romania hosts the Institute for the Protection and the Security of the Citizen, which contributes to the training of special categories of United Nations peacekeepers.

Since 2008, Romania has been part of one of the most innovative arrangements for the protection of refugees through its hosting of the first Emergency Transit Centre in Timișoara, as a result of an agreement with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration. After almost two decades as a recipient, Romania has thus itself become a provider of official development assistance to countries in our neighbourhood and beyond.

On the occasion of its seventieth anniversary, the United Nations does not need to prove the legitimacy of its actions. What the Organization needs is a strengthened capacity and readiness to act and galvanize the political will of Member States, so as to be able to further enhance its role in maintaining international peace and security and in delivering global public goods. That role is, once again, being dramatically tested these days.

The United Nations is called upon to make, in concert with regional organizations and individual States, new commitments to the fight against terrorism in all its manifestations — whether they be the cowardly crimes against innocent people, the barbarous destruction of the common cultural heritage of humankind, or the unprecedented and abhorrent form of terrorism developed by what is known as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, whose actions constitute clear violations of international law and human rights, which we are striving so hard to uphold.

At this juncture, let me reiterate Romania's support for the initiative of France and Mexico to propose a collective and voluntary agreement among the permanent members of the Security Council regarding the non-use of the veto when action is needed to prevent or bring to an end situations of mass atrocities and war crimes on a large scale. Ten years after the endorsement of the responsibility to protect, we should continue to support that responsibility by identifying the best ways to understand, implement and operationalize it.

The current massive waves of migration are just one of the worrisome consequences of the internal and international conflicts in the Middle East and Southern Mediterranean region. That phenomenon requires more than just responses to the immediate humanitarian needs of refugees. The United Nations must also address, in a realistic and energetic manner, the root causes of migration. We should stop the destruction of the social fabric of conflict-torn societies, help populations escape their extreme poverty, help youth regain their hope for a better future, and help individuals rebuild their dignity. Through official development assistance (ODA), the United Nations should play a much stronger role in that respect. For that to happen, a thorough reform of ODA may probably be needed.

The United Nations should be less lenient in respect to the protracted conflicts in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova, in Georgia and in Nagorno Karabakh. Where the status quo is characterized by conditions that are contrary to international law, the situation will always be fragile and possibly conducive to occasional outbreaks of violence. In addition, our non-action in such situations creates the wrong impression that unlawful territorial gains — to the detriment of independent and sovereign States — are possible and tolerated. That is the case with the situation in Ukraine, in which the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, have not taken the action expected, as defined by the terms of the Charter of the United Nations. We call upon all members of the Security Council to act responsibly and decide in the interest of international peace and security and in accordance with international law, while addressing the situation in Ukraine.

Romania wholeheartedly welcomes the agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme. That agreement proves that nothing is impossible, if there is a genuine political will and there are visionary statesmen engaged in bold action. We also praise the role so ably and diligently played in that connection by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The agreement with regard to that long-standing problem proves once again the virtues of diplomacy and negotiations undertaken in good faith and with patience, with the support of the expertise developed within the United Nations system. We hope to see more, ancillary benefits of that agreement in the broader context of the Middle East peace process.

I would like to call upon all States Members of the United Nations not to miss the opportunity to conclude

a new and ambitious binding agreement in response to climate change. The moment is still auspicious, in view of the commitments of the European Union, as well as the massive activism on the part of civil society. The example of the European Union is expected to be followed by other major contributors to global warming. People everywhere and, in particular, those in the small island countries, whose very physical existence is threatened, are waiting for new commitments, before it is too late.

Beyond the thematic and geographical configuration of United Nations diplomacy, we believe that the nuts and bolts of our Organization can be found in the codification and progressive development of international law. Romania believes that international law and international justice are fundamental values for humankind. We should never cease to act to promote the reaffirmation and consolidation of the principles of international law, which represent a landmark of our society of nations for all time.

The sixtieth anniversary of Romania's admission to the United Nations is being marked as an important step concerning our commitment to international justice. Romania became the seventy-second Member State to accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. Our declaration, submitted to the Secretary-General on 23 June, is a continuation of the interwar tradition of my country to conduct its international relations in full compliance with international law.

The consolidation of international justice and the need to put an end to impunity should trigger a strengthened legal approach to international terrorism. Terrorism represents the worst in crimes against individuals and societies. Romania believes that the international community should do more to combat terrorism with the tools of the law, including international criminal law. It is with that purpose in mind that Romania and Spain have set in motion a process of reflection on the possible creation of an international court for the crime of terrorism. We are fully aware of the conceptual and operational difficulties of such an undertaking. However, the values that stand behind that reflection, which are aimed at strengthening the rule of law in our multilateral antiterrorist drive, are likely to generate fresh ideas for innovative legal tools. We believe that that reflection process is worthwhile in its own right, as it will fuel the debate on reinforcing the values of justice and international law. I would like to

take this opportunity to invite all interested delegations to engage in good-faith discussions about how to implement those values in the fight against terrorism.

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

Mr. Klaus Werner Iohannis, President of Romania, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

King Mswati III: It is a great pleasure for me to address the General Assembly of the United Nations as we celebrate the seventieth anniversary of our global Organization. It is important, at this time, that we revisit the founding objectives of the United Nations to determine whether we have been able to live up to what they have required of us since its establishment. Primarily, the United Nations was set up to promote peace and stability among humankind and to assist nations to develop socially and economically, to mention but a few of the founding objectives. This annual session gives us an opportunity to review and recommit ourselves to the objectives laid out by our predecessors.

Tremendous progress has been made on a number of social fronts, while growth in the economies and the development of nations is evident. However, that success has come with its own challenges that need to be addressed in a spirit of global cooperation in order to achieve the ultimate goal of peaceful progress and development that leaves nobody behind. We urge the United Nations to continue to play its role in fostering a collective approach to overcoming all impediments.

The capabilities and successes of the United Nations are well documented. We have seen the United Nations play a significant role in resolving conflicts on the African continent and in other parts of the world. The role of the United Nations in curbing the Ebola outbreak is appreciated. While we have not eradicated the disease completely, we applaud the Organization's tremendous efforts to stem its spread. We also commend the United Nations for launching such initiatives as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which has played a significant role in combating those diseases. We appeal to the United Nations to continue helping Africa emerge from the cycle of poverty and disease as the continent seeks to fulfil its Agenda 2063, which seeks to eradicate poverty and create prosperity for all.

Africa has great potential for investment. What remains is to create the requisite environment for economic growth. We strongly believe that the United Nations system can establish a peaceful global village free of fear and violence. We adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), aiming to emancipate humankind from poverty and hunger by creating prosperity in a safe and peaceful environment that offers acceptable basic living standards (resolution 55/2). We are pleased to observe that our decision has, by and large, yielded positive outcomes that live up to the founding principles of the United Nations.

The impressive progress witnessed during the implementation of the MDGs makes us confident that the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) will enjoy even greater success. We have good reason to anticipate a sustainable transformation of nations over the next 15 years. Our presence here should signify a renewed commitment to our resolve.

The Kingdom of eSwatini is one of many nations to report significant progress in the implementation of the MDGs. That progress has been guided by a people-driven road map leading us towards our Swaziland Vision 2022, which is designed to propel the Kingdom to become a developed country, a development State. We are very much aware of the challenges that lie ahead on the journey, but I have full confidence in the capabilities of our people. They have worked very hard over the years to bring us to where we are today. Although we may not have an abundance of natural resources, we do have an innovative and educated workforce that is united in a common purpose.

With Africa opening up new trade markets and investment opportunities, the Kingdom of eSwatini has fast-tracked reforms that have yielded improved ease of doing business. Infrastructure development has also improved direct access to global markets through the completion of our new international airport, while providing multiple investment opportunities in its immediate surroundings. We believe that the airport will give rise to downstream projects that can create employment opportunities and add the required impetus to our economic growth.

Access to markets of the developed world remains critical for Africa, which is well endowed with mineral resources yet still faces the challenges of poverty, hunger and unemployment. The support of the United Nations is essential if we are to successfully deal with the mammoth task of developing infrastructure so that we can add value to our natural resources. The success of trade and investment also hinges heavily on a reliable and sustainable supply of energy. As a result, we now have a comprehensive strategy and programme of action that outline the gaps that need to be addressed by all players in the energy sector. They present viable opportunities for investment in that sector, particularly in renewable energy.

As we envisage a world free of poverty, hunger, disease and want, where all life can thrive, it becomes critical to make youth empowerment central to achieving that goal. Attaining a 97 per cent enrolment rate in primary education is a significant milestone for our country as we seek to ensure education for all. Sustainable education requires that that high enrolment should be complemented by quality education that is further accessible at the secondary, higher and tertiary levels.

We remain challenged in meeting that requirement, and we call upon our global friends to partner with us to ensure that we do not become victims of our own success. We are recognizing and rewarding outstanding educational talent through entrepreneurial development initiatives at the secondary and tertiary levels. We trust that those initiatives, among many others, will produce a future generation that is equipped with the life skills needed to provide solutions to the socioeconomic challenges facing many of our unemployed youth today. The Kingdom is also developing innovation parks that will provide our young people with the creative skills needed to enable them to contribute to the sustainable development of the country.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic, which has stretched our health resources to the limit, remains a challenge that requires our collective effort. As a nation, we have taken a decision that we want to become one of the first African countries with a generalized epidemic to achieve an AIDS-free generation in 2022 — a vision that is in line with the global agenda to end AIDS by 2030.

The Kingdom of eSwatini still largely relies on agriculture as a means to sustain itself and prosper. Programmes aimed at increasing food production, ending hunger and improving nutrition have been developed. A farm input-subsidy programme aimed at increasing yields through the availability of tractors, seeds and fertilizer is now in place. The country has also invested heavily in building dams to harness water, and we hope that friends of the Kingdom will continue to partner with us in building more such facilities. The dams are helping many of our people to irrigate their crops. We look to international financial institutions to support those initiatives. We are concerned, however, that some of that support attaches stringent conditions with consequences that leave the recipient countries worse off. We therefore appeal to the United Nations to address that phenomenon, which seriously undermines the objectives of the 2030 Agenda.

We are very aware that, working alone, we are limited in our success. It is, therefore, important that the developed countries of the world support the growth of developing nations like ours. We appeal to donor countries to increase their funding to smaller nations so that they can strengthen their capacity to create jobs and address existing social challenges. Only when our communities achieve better living conditions will developing countries enjoy the peace and stability that provides the requisite environment for sustainable growth.

The effects of climate change have not gone unnoticed, nor have they left us unharmed. Sustainable Development Goal 11 calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. We continue to urge our developed partners not only to fulfil their pledges to the Green Fund but also to adopt policies that strike the correct balance among the requirements for the production of essential products, profits and the sustainability of our environment. Anything less would seriously jeopardize the ideals of the 2030 Agenda. We look forward to a legally binding global climate

agreement at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in France later this year.

The Kingdom of eSwatini continues to enjoy the peace and stability that all people on the globe deserve. The secret to our success has been consultation and dialogue aimed at building consensus, which is a model of peace that has a place in the implementation of United Nations operations. It is apparent that military intervention in resolving conflict has a short-term effect that leaves the people that it is meant to serve worse off. Only a peaceful solution to conflict can yield sustainable conclusions to the current crises facing various parts of the world today. That calls for us to unite and to bring the warring parties to the table for dialogue.

However, for that to be truly effective, we need the United Nations to ensure that any intervention is undertaken by a united body. If the United Nations is divided on the mandates that it creates to deal with challenges that require a collective approach, it runs the risk of worsening the problems. It is critical that, when the Members of the United Nations are confronted with conflict situations, they resolve them with one voice.

The protracted war in Syria remains a huge challenge for the United Nations. One of its consequences has been the serious refugee crisis that we have today, affecting neighbouring countries and, most recently, various European States. We applaud all the countries that have accepted the refugees and provided them with food and shelter, and we appeal to the Syrian people to come together to find a peaceful and lasting solution to their differences. There can be only one solution to that predicament, which is to resolve the source of the conflict so that all of the people of Syria are able to benefit from the peace they deserve. It is imperative that the objectives of the United Nations be met. One important aim of the United Nations is to work to rid society of all hostilities. We have put conflict-resolution mechanisms in place, and it is our duty to ensure that they are implemented effectively.

We trust that, as we proceed with the 2030 Agenda, we will fully embrace an all-inclusive approach. We therefore urge the United Nations to give every country in the world the opportunity to contribute to the global community in whatever form and capacity it can. In that regard, we appeal to the United Nations to consider admitting the Republic of China on Taiwan to membership. Like every other country, it has the

potential to contribute positively to the global agenda, in its case in such areas as health care and information and communications technology, to mention only a few.

The inclusiveness espoused by the United Nations should encompass representation in the key bodies of the Organization. The African continent continues to appeal for a permanent seat on the Security Council through which its voice will be fully represented, as outlined in the Ezulwini Consensus. We trust that the matter will receive the attention it deserves.

Finally, I would like once again to extend my heartiest congratulations to the entire United Nations family for its attainment of 70 years of togetherness. We wish to commend all United Nations agencies for their sustained efforts to fulfil the ideals of the Organization, which have benefited humankind in many ways. Let us renew our commitment to the objectives of our global Organization. We have grown in numbers, and that has given rise to new paradigms. We are certain that, with the correct mindset, that will be addressed accordingly. However, it is important to realize that, as much as our goals may be universal, we do not share the same capabilities and capacities for implementing them. May Almighty God bless us all.

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

His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Ernest Bai Koroma, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone

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

Mr. Ernest Bai Koroma, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

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

President Koroma: I would like to warmly congratulate the President on his election to conduct the affairs of the Assembly at its historic seventieth session. I can assure him of my personal support and that of Sierra Leone during his tenure. I would also like to convey my sincere appreciation to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa of the Republic of Uganda, for the effective way in which he led the previous session. And I heartily commend the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his constructive leadership of our Organization. Sierra Leone will continue to support progressive implementation of his laudable Five-Year Action Agenda, announced on 25 January 2012. We also welcome his synthesizing report on the work of the Organization (A/70/1), which articulates a call to action to transform our world beyond 2015.

Seventy years ago, we committed to promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. Today, that is still our task and common goal, and the very foundation in which our shared and common values are firmly embedded and should therefore be respected. It is in the pursuit of that task and our shared values that, 15 years ago, the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) articulated a bold vision to eradicate extreme poverty, promote gender equality and ensure that children everywhere receive a basic education. Together, we have achieved a lot, getting millions out of poverty, getting millions into schools and breaking down many barriers to the empowerment of women. But our achievements are works in progress, as is our Organization. Many challenges still remain.

Many actions need to be taken in the offices of our Organization, and many actions must be taken in the field where the citizens of the world lead their lives. The two are interlinked. Without changes within the structures of our global Organization, our actions in the field will be hindered by the lack of ownership, lack of inclusion and lack of irreversible successes. That is why we commend the President for the choice and relevance of the theme of this session: “The United Nations at 70 — a new commitment to action”. We have put forward negotiating positions for reform in our Organization, we have drawn up plans for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and we adopted the financing for development framework in Addis Ababa in July. What is left now for us to do is to take action on all these fronts: to continue action to reform our Organization, to commence action in areas

where there has not yet been action, to take action to overcome challenges, and to follow through on action to sustain, deepen and expand our achievements.

The unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals and its accompanying challenges are critical to the work that lies ahead. We have learned lessons that are invaluable, and we have made undeniable progress. But the challenges we still face are seen in the millions not going to school, the millions not having health care, the millions of women who are oppressed, and the millions of people whose rights and lives are being trampled upon in the war zones and on the refugee routes of the world. The challenges have the urgency of a life-and-death situation for millions.

What we see the world over — in the refugee crisis, in the fight against poverty, transnational organized crime, terrorism, proliferation of small arms and light weapons, piracy, violence against women, in our actions to uphold human rights, and in the efforts for expanding access to health and education — what we see are struggles to promote inclusion in the better achievements of humankind: achievements in the areas of security, safety, peace, education, health and development. Where there is exclusion, people seek inclusion. The poor seek inclusion in a fairer world, and refugees seek inclusion in a safer world. We believe that the SDGs are about building a fairer, safer and better world for those excluded from the great achievements of humankind.

Making our global Organization more democratic, more participatory and fairer is part of the struggle for inclusion the world over. It is a prerequisite for achieving our universal aspirations as expressed in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (resolution 70/1). As the Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on the Reform of the United Nations Security Council, I take this opportunity to emphasize once again the need for urgent reform of the Council and again echo Africa's concern over the failure of the General Assembly to adopt measures that will lead to a comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

I wish to call attention to the regrettable status quo that undermines the principles of equity, legitimacy, accountability and transparency. The current state of affairs also undermines the effectiveness of the Security Council in its pursuit of international peace and security. The need to address the issue of Africa's

non-representation in the permanent category and its underrepresentation in the non-permanent category is long overdue and therefore now imperative. Africa's demand for two permanent seats and two additional non-permanent seats as articulated in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration is just and provides a framework for a fairer and more inclusive United Nations. I welcome the recent adoption of resolution 69/321, designed, *inter alia*, to further the intergovernmental negotiation process, and I very much hope that meaningful progress will be made towards a consensus-building mechanism in the course of this seventieth session.

Sierra Leone is very committed to promoting inclusion in governance and in development and to furthering peace around the world. We shall continue to support initiatives to sustain and expand democracy, peace and security, in Africa in particular, and in the world at large. The contribution of Sierra Leone to United Nations peacekeeping efforts demonstrates our strong commitment to global peace and stability. We acknowledge the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on uniting our strengths for peace: politics, partnership and people (A/70/95). We stand ready to explore further ways of increasing our contribution to global peacekeeping in order to enhance the success of United Nations peacekeeping operations. I take this opportunity to pay a special tribute to the men and women in uniform, as well as to civilian staff, who continue to make the ultimate sacrifice to serve humankind in complex and dangerous environments around the world. We totally condemn attacks against United Nations peacekeepers, and we call for action against the perpetrators of these cowardly acts.

The report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture and its recommendations is a useful document that informs us of lessons learned, best practices and the challenges ahead in terms of preventing relapses into violent conflict. We look forward to constructive engagement in the intergovernmental process in the light of the fact that Sierra Leone is one of the case studies and a storehouse of lessons learned.

We applaud our collective establishment of the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone for the purpose of carrying out the continuing legal obligations of the original Special Court. Given the profile of persons convicted by the Court and those currently serving prison sentences under the supervision of the Residual

Court, it is in the interest of international peace and security and in furtherance of justice that we extend support to the effective operations of the Residual Court in order to enable it to fully deliver on its mandate.

Whether it be terrorism, climate change, disease or refugees, no country is immune from the challenges facing the world at large. Some countries may be able to keep some of these problems from reaching their shores. However, our globalized world has multiplied the routes along which these challenges move, going from country to country, from one region to another, from one group of people to another. That is why we cannot say a particular problem is only a problem for this country or that region. Poorer countries suffer disproportionately from particular problems but, without support from the world to solve them, the problems spread and haunt other regions, other countries and other groups. We need to incorporate that piece of wisdom into decision-making in every country, every region and every global organization.

That is also the piece of wisdom we need to incorporate into our decisions about climate change. Changes in the weather patterns in the Pacific and in the ocean currents of the North Atlantic are unleashing devastating floods in many places. A week and a half ago, we witnessed floods of proportions hitherto unseen in Sierra Leone, which devastated many parts of our capital, Freetown. Storms rage in the Cape Verde Islands and floods have ravaged other parts of West Africa. We believe that our experts are right when they attribute those disasters to man-made climate change.

We call for action, not only to lower emissions of greenhouse gases, which are implicated in those changes, but also to shore up capabilities to deal with the effects of climate change. No country, I reiterate, is immune from the physical, social, health and other consequences of climate change. We need to integrate that insight into our decisions about other urgent matters — youth unemployment, insecurity, extreme hunger, violence against women, transnational organized crime and piracy. Allowing these to get out of control in vulnerable nations increases the vulnerability of all nations.

Africa has made efforts to strengthen the continent's capacity for preventing and resolving conflicts. Countries in the global South have also been at the forefront of finding solutions and providing relief from the miseries of the world. They host more refugees

than other lands; they contribute more personnel to peacekeeping missions. Global solidarity is imperative in building our regional capacity to better handle those challenges. Without that solidarity, the challenges will jump across borders, evade immigration controls and leap over walls. That is why we need cooperative and coordinated partnerships to strengthen the capacities to respond to those challenges. Our voice, as fragile and conflict-affected States under the Group of Seven Plus, is a call for country ownership and country-led implementation of the SDGs.

Since 2012, Sierra Leone has been proactively tailoring its development framework in anticipation of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). The implementation of our national vision for socioeconomic development, as contained in the Government's poverty reduction strategy paper and articulated in the Agenda for Prosperity, was launched in July 2013 as Sierra Leone's road map for the post-2015 development agenda. The Agenda for Prosperity aims to build a sustainable future for all Sierra Leoneans. It demonstrates our firm commitment to putting Sierra Leone on the path to resilience and sustainability.

To that end, we have recorded significant progress in strengthening political and economic governance, including the improvement of social indicators. My Government has continued to place emphasis on the protection of the basic rights of the people of Sierra Leone. We have put in place comprehensive reforms in the justice sector, in response to both national and global demands, to ensure that the rights of citizens are preserved and that access to justice is accorded to all. The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone is closely collaborating with the Government to ensure that a human rights culture is entrenched in our society and that the Government ratifies several international treaties and protocols whose ratification is still outstanding and fulfils its various reporting obligations.

We have undertaken specific reform measures to improve the national investment climate. My Government is keen on delivering results in several priority areas, including infrastructure development, commercial agriculture, improved access to education and health-care services, youth empowerment and employment, women's empowerment, effective and efficient public service delivery and the social and political integration of persons with disabilities.

At a time when Sierra Leone was being commended for its remarkable progress with respect to peace, stability and steady economic growth, we were hit by the unprecedented Ebola virus outbreak, which took a heavy toll on the entire socioeconomic fabric of Sierra Leone. However, we fought back, with support from our international friends, and have now almost defeated the evil virus, with zero cases being recorded for several days in September. As we make progress to end the epidemic, I wish to commend the United Nations agencies and the international community for their support and their commitment to ending the epidemic, as well as their support for the post-Ebola recovery plan.

I particularly commend the Secretary-General for mobilizing, for the very first time, a coordinated and integrated United Nations system intervention to support countries affected by the outbreak of the Ebola virus disease in our region. In addition to containing the epidemic, the intervention of the United Nations and our partners has resulted in an enhanced preparedness to respond to similar outbreaks in the future. That is a useful model that can be applied to contain and tackle pandemics wherever they may surface. In order to guarantee a lasting recovery, my Government, in collaboration with our sister Republics of Guinea and Liberia, have also formulated a subregional post-Ebola socioeconomic recovery plan to ensure that the three most Ebola-affected countries return to the path of stability and prosperity.

The Sierra Leone National Recovery Plan is based on two main pillars. The first pillar concentrates on immediate recovery activities, including maintaining zero infections. The second pillar focuses on building resilient and sustainable national systems, including a viable health system, and establishing an integrated national security and disaster risk management system.

I must state, with a considerable measure of satisfaction, that the international community's commitment to supporting the Ebola recovery plans has been very encouraging. On behalf of the Government and the people of Sierra Leone, allow me, Sir, to once again applaud our development partners for their unwavering commitment of support to Sierra Leone's development aspirations. Sierra Leone is poised and ready to continue working with the international community to resume its pre-Ebola development trajectory. We look forward to strengthening our partnerships for the effective

implementation of our post-Ebola recovery plans, both national and subregional.

In conclusion, as our noble Organization celebrates its seventieth anniversary this year, it is important to reflect on the Charter, which reaffirms

“faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large or small”.

With the commitment of leaving no one behind, we must objectively follow a pragmatic approach, with renewed vigour and resolve, to provide a future for our people that will guarantee justice, sustainable peace and security, accountability and democratic governance, employment opportunities, the transparent and equitable distribution of wealth, a safe and sustainable environment, improved health and relevant education. It is also important to ensure that conflicts are resolved around the world, if the Sustainable Development Goals are to be achieved, as no development can take place without peace.

Together, let us rise to that challenge with greater resolve, and take action to create a fairer, safer and better world.

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

Mr. Ernest Bai Koroma, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Petro Poroshenko, President of Ukraine

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

Mr. Petro Poroshenko, President of Ukraine, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

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

President Poroshenko: On behalf of Ukraine, I sincerely congratulate Mr. Mogens Lykketoft on his

election as President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session, and wish him every success in his activities at this crucial historic moment. Our future will largely depend on the outcomes of this session and our collective decisions — whether we choose to follow the path of peace, security and human rights, or to plunge into the turmoil of new hybrid wars, chaos and suffering.

On the occasion of this seventieth anniversary, I am proud to speak on behalf of one of the founding members of the United Nations, a State that, back in 1945, took an active part in the San Francisco Conference, helped to establish the Organization and lay down the foundation for its activities, a State whose contribution back then was of importance in shaping the core of the United Nations: the Purposes and Principles of its Charter.

Regrettably, I am also speaking on behalf of a State Member of the United Nations that is now the victim of a brutal violation of the fundamental norms and principles of that Charter. The statement by Ukraine upon its joining the United Nations as one of its founding Members, which was delivered at the San Francisco Conference, emphasized that Ukraine had repeatedly been the subject of bloody invasions by aggressors that for centuries had sought to capture its territory.

A long time has passed since that landmark event. But, today, I have to recall that my country has become the object of external aggression. This time, the aggressor is the Russian Federation, a neighbouring country and a former strategic partner, which legally pledged to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and inviolability of the borders of Ukraine. That country used to be a guarantor of Ukraine's security under the Budapest Memorandum, whereby security guarantees were provided to my country in exchange for the voluntary renunciation of the world's third nuclear arsenal. Moreover, it is a permanent member of the Security Council, which is entrusted by the Charter of the United Nations with the maintenance of international peace and security.

In February 2014, Russia conducted an open and unprovoked aggression against my country, occupying and annexing the Crimea, wantonly and brutally violating international law and shocking the whole world community. I am deeply grateful to the delegations of the majority of the States Members of our Organization for supporting resolution 68/262, entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine", which condemned the illegal

Russian annexation of the Crimea. It is regrettable that this clear verdict of the international community failed to persuade Russia to return to the civilized sphere of international law. Moreover, Moscow started a new reckless military game — this time, in Ukraine's Donbas region.

Despite the fact that Russia is still refusing to officially acknowledge its direct military invasion, there can be no doubt that an aggressive war is being waged against my country. To mislead the world community, the Russian leadership orders its military servicemen to remove their insignias and the identification marks on military equipment. It orders the abandonment of its soldiers captured on the battlefield and the cynical use of mobile crematoriums to eliminate traces of its crimes on Ukrainian soil.

I would like to stress that neither a civil war nor an internal conflict is taking place. Russia's occupation of Ukrainian territory in the Crimea and the Donbas region covers approximately 44,000 square kilometres, and millions of Ukrainians are under that occupation. The goal of the current war is to force the Ukrainian people to give up their sovereign choice to build a free, democratic, prosperous and European State. All that is taking place against a backdrop of traitorous rhetoric about brotherly peoples, sharing a common history, related languages and a predestined common future. In actual fact, we are dealing here with a desire to return to imperial times, with spheres of influence, and a desperate attempt to obtain self-affirmation at another's expense.

For over 20 months, the aggression against my country has been fuelled by Russia's financing of terrorists and mercenaries and its supplying of arms and military equipment to illegal armed groups in Donbas. Over the past few days, we have heard a conciliatory statement from the Russian side, including a call for the establishment of an anti-terrorist coalition and a warning that fraternizing with terrorists would pour oil on the flames. That was an impressive but hard-to-believe story.

How can a country call for an anti-terrorist coalition when it is inspiring terrorism so close to home? How can it talk about peace and legitimacy, if its policy is to wage war through puppet governments? How can it speak of national autonomy, if it punishes a neighbour for making a choice? How can it demand respect for all, if it respects no one? The Gospel of St. John teaches

us that in the beginning there was the word; but what kind of Gospel is one following if all one's words are so duplicitous?

Let us return to the situation in Donbas, where, I have to say, we are being forced to fight fully armed troops belonging to regular units of the Russian armed forces. Heavy weaponry and military equipment are concentrated in the occupied territories in quantities such as the armies of the majority of Member States can only dream about. In particular, various pieces of state-of-the-art military equipment that were manufactured in Russia are to be found among that same weaponry and, contrary to the public assertion of the Russian President, are unlikely to be available for sale in a regular wholesale army store, unless, of course, it was located in the Russian Federation and provided free shipping.

During the period in question, over 8,000 Ukrainians, of whom 6,000 were civilians, died at the hands of the Russian-backed terrorists and occupiers in Ukraine and Donbas. More than 1.5 million residents of Donbas were forced to flee their homes and, moving to safer regions within Ukraine, became internally displaced persons. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the international community for making such a considerable effort to provide assistance to those in need.

At the same time, I call on the United Nations and other international actors to continue to pay special attention to that very important issue. I would like to draw everyone's attention to the fact that this is not the first time that the same permanent member of the Security Council is undermining peace and security at both the regional and the international level.

Over the past 24 years, ever since the questionable transfer of permanent membership on the Security Council from the former Soviet Union to the Russian Federation, the conflict in Ukraine is but one of several hybrid wars that Russia has unleashed. In fact, in order to preserve its influence in neighbouring countries, Russia, for decades, has deliberately created, and surrounded itself with, a belt of instability, made up of Nagorno Karabakh, Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Crimea and Donbas — all regions involving protracted conflicts and supported by or directly related to Russia. But the Kremlin has gone even further. Today, the Russian men in green are treading on Syrian land. What and who are next?

In every democratic country, if one party steals another party's property, an independent court restores justice by enforcing the rights of the aggrieved party and punishing the offender. Yet, here we are in the twenty-first century and our Organization is still without an effective instrument to bring an aggressor country to justice, a country which has stolen the territory of another sovereign State. Seventy years ago, the authors of the Charter of the United Nations envisaged that sanctions imposed by the Security Council would be one of the punishments applied in response to breaches of peace and acts of aggression.

However, they would have been hard put to imagine a situation in which that punishment needs to be applied against an aggressor State that is a permanent member of the Security Council. Since the beginning of the aggression, Russia has used its right of veto twice during the Council's consideration of questions related to Ukraine. At the outset, Russia blocked a draft resolution (S/2014/189) that condemned the fake referendum on Crimea's annexation in March 2014. At that very moment, in my capacity as a Ukrainian member of Parliament, I was there when the Russians said that there was a vote on this same fake referendum. No member of Parliament was present. On the contrary, there were only Russian soldiers surrounding the Parliament of Crimea.

The second time that Russia used its right of veto was to block a draft resolution (S/2015/562) that would have established an international tribunal to investigate and bring to justice all those responsible for the crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17. By its disgraceful use of the veto on that draft resolution, Russia clearly demonstrated to the whole world its defiance and its unwillingness to establish the truth — not just the truth about the perpetrators of that terrorist attack and the arms that were used to shot down that plane, but, more important, the truth concerning those who organized that crime and the country from which those arms had been transported. I think that everyone in this Hall clearly understands the real motives of Russia's use of the veto on a draft resolution concerning a tribunal to investigate Flight MH-17. Moreover, a draft resolution on the establishment of an international peacekeeping operation, whose purpose would have been to stabilize the situation in Ukraine and stop the bloodshed, was also blocked because of the potential threat of Russia's use of the veto.

Abuse of the right of veto — its use as a licence to kill — is absolutely unacceptable (see S/PV.7384). The Organization should make its collective voice heard clearly on this subject. For its part, Ukraine stands for the gradual limitation of the right of veto, with its eventual abolition. The right of veto should not be exercised randomly or to grant a pardon or clemency in cases where crimes have been committed and merit appropriate punishment.

In that context, I welcome the proposal of my French colleague and friend, President Hollande, supported by President Peña Nieto of Mexico, aimed at regulating the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities. Primary attention should be given to the modernization of the Security Council, including the enlargement of its membership and the improvement of its working methods. The membership of the Security Council should reflect the realities of the twenty-first century and include a higher number of African, Asian and Latin American States. An additional non-permanent seat on the Council should be given to the Eastern European Group, as its membership has doubled over the past two decades.

Ukraine also considers improvement of the peacekeeping and peacebuilding architecture of the Organization an important element of United Nations reform. I am proud of Ukraine's international reputation as an active and devoted contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Despite external challenges, we remain a reliable partner of the Organization in that noble matter. Ukraine's contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security provides us with the moral ground to count on the same assistance from the Organization in times of the vital importance of that issue on the part of my country.

The special peacekeeping mission in Dombas, under United Nations auspices, could become a very useful instrument contributing to the implementation of the Minsk agreements. Ukraine is committed to following the letter and spirit of the Minsk package. We demand the same approach from other signatories that have lately resorted to the language of blackmail. Otherwise, there is no alternative to sanctions, including their strengthening; and there is no alternative to a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

Full access to all occupied territories by the monitors of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), withdrawal of Russian

military forces, military equipment and mercenaries from Ukrainian territory and restoration of full control by Ukraine over its border with Russia — these must all be ensured. Freedom, peace and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity — Ukraine does not demand more; however, it will not settle for less.

Unfortunately, today Ukraine is, though not by its own free will, one of the areas involved in the fight against the terrorist threat. We strongly condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The activities of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Al-Qaida, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and others comprise a global challenge. The only possible way to address that evil is to unite in a common, uncompromising fight against it.

International terrorism has proved to be more flexible than the political will of nations and today has taken on new hybrid forms. State and non-State actors have become interlinked. The struggle for one's rights has been replaced by ruthless terror. We are convinced that the need for a universal international instrument able to counteract that crime is not only urgent but long overdue. For that reason, the conclusion of the preparatory work on the draft United Nations convention on the prevention and combating of terrorism should become a top priority of the General Assembly at this session.

A special role in the fight against international terrorism should be given to the most reputable legal institutions: the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. Ensuring that those institutions have universal jurisdiction is a core element in overcoming the impunity of the terrorists themselves and their patrons — those regimes whose national policy has become the mass production of terror.

I strongly believe that one of the most important aspects of fighting terrorism lies in honouring and sharing the memories of the victims. In that context, I propose that, at the current session, the General Assembly consider designating an international day to commemorate the memory of the victims of terrorist acts. It is my feeling that humiliation, disregard of people's will and violation of their fundamental rights prompted Ukrainians to leave their homes in order to protest in 2013, which led to the beginning of our revolution to uphold our dignity.

Ukraine has paid and continues to pay an extremely high price for its freedom and the right to live in a free country — the price of human lives. That is why the

interests of every single individual and the protection of people's rights are at the core of my large-scale reform programme, which was launched one year ago. For the first time in its 24 years of independence, Ukraine has adopted a national human rights strategy. It took into account the best international practices from the human rights perspective, including the European Union's Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy.

Russian aggression exposed the problem of ensuring human rights in the Crimea and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Leading international human rights organizations warned about the radical deterioration of the human rights situation, which applies directly to Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars in the occupied Crimea. I am referring specifically to the practice of imposing Russian citizenship in occupied Crimea by the Crimean occupation authorities, as well as the systematic persecution, arrest, abduction and killing of pro-Ukraine residents of the peninsula and the complete elimination of the independent media. Ukraine reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. By all legal means, we will continue to defend the rights of the Crimean Tatars — the indigenous people of Ukraine — and the Ukrainians, who are suffering from the repressive policies of the occupation authorities in the Crimea. I believe that the problem of blatant violation of human rights in Crimea deserves particular consideration in the General Assembly. And I hope that the decision to address this issue will be taken during the current session.

I also feel obliged to mention the names of Nadiya Savchenko, Oleg Sentsov, Alexandr Kolchenko, among many other Ukrainians, who are political prisoners of the Kremlin or have been illegally detained and sentenced. For example, Oleg Sentsov, a respected filmmaker, was sentenced to 23 years in prison solely for being a Ukrainian patriot. I call upon the United Nations and its Member States to launch a worldwide campaign to put pressure on the Russian authorities to immediately release all the Ukrainian citizens that they are holding hostage. We will be able to achieve our goal only if our action is global. Most of all, Ukraine needs solidarity and assistance, which are truly powerful instruments against aggression and injustice. Ukraine will win for sure because truth is on our side. But we will do so much faster if we have the support and solidarity of the whole international community.

The ongoing hybrid war of Russia against Ukraine has demonstrated that the international community is facing another challenge, which requires the consolidation of our efforts. The full-scale information war and propaganda campaign have become a particularly corrosive form of non-military aggression. Fake news, blatant lies spread to justify aggression, propaganda of intolerance and violence are phenomena of the same order, which undermine the principle of freedom of expression and poison human souls and minds. That is why the task of strengthening the role of information in the maintenance of peace and security is more important than ever. I call on the General Assembly to strongly condemn these shameful phenomena and to discuss the ways to confront them.

Despite the external challenges that I have referred to, Ukraine is fully committed to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. We are ready to share joint responsibility for solving specific vital problems and priorities of the most vulnerable groups of countries, such as the small island developing States. As one of the Friends on Climate Change, Ukraine is looking forward to reaching consensus on a universal agreement in the area of climate change as soon as possible. We hope that this result will be achieved by Member States in December in Paris. We have to understand that the price of this issue is the safety of future generations and the sustainable development of humankind.

We shall not be able to achieve the sustainable Development Goals unless we are able to prevent environmental and technological disasters from happening. As a result of the Russian aggression, Ukraine faces another challenge — the protection of its environment in Donbas. The irresponsible and criminal flooding of mines by terrorists has led to the poisoning of drinking water, the soil, and the flora and fauna in the region. The atmosphere is polluted owing to explosions and the shelling of sensitive industrial infrastructure. In fact, we can even speak about the risk of environmental disaster. I am convinced that the issue of environmental protection during conflict needs the special attention of the relevant United Nations body.

With regard to technological disasters, it is my duty to recall one of the most horrific of them. Next year will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the tragedy of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant. I would like to request that the President hold a special meeting of the General Assembly dedicated to that anniversary in April 2016.

My country's address on the occasion of joining the United Nations included the words,

“Ukraine, with its best human strength and material resources, will be able to make a significant contribution to maintaining peace and global security”.

Now, 70 years on, I reiterate Ukraine's unwavering commitment to exerting a further maximum effort to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, a commitment enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Our focus will be on the achievement of that noble goal if we are elected to a non-permanent membership of the Security Council during 2016-2017. In the capacity of member of the Council, Ukraine intends to remain a reliable and consistent partner, guided not by its own, but by the global agenda, and will resolutely follow the spirit and letter of the Charter. And I am firmly convinced that the Organization will pass the extremely complex test with dignity and strengthen its role as a guarantor of order, peace and prosperity in the world. Let God be with us!

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

Mr. Petro Poroshenko, President of Ukraine, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

**Address by Mr. Juan Manuel Santos Calderón,
President of the Republic of Colombia**

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by Mr. Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, President of the Republic of Colombia.

Mr. Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, President of the Republic of Colombia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, President of the Republic of Colombia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Santos Calderón (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank our Ambassador Maria Emma Mejía Vélez for giving me the floor. What a source of great pride it is for us that a Colombian woman is presiding over this meeting at this historic moment, when the General Assembly is considering the topic “The United

Nations at 70: the road ahead for peace, security and human rights”, which is the road along which Colombia is travelling, now more successfully than ever before.

I am therefore honoured to come to this Assembly to share some news which is also historic. Today, I proclaim to the entire world that one of the more than 20 armed conflicts taking place across the globe, which are causing so much pain, poverty and suffering, that of my country, Colombia, is finally nearing a genuine solution. We will put an end to the longest and most recent armed conflict in the Western Hemisphere. Achieving peace — in Colombia or in any part of the world — is a responsibility that nobody must shirk.

As Pope Francis said so well a few days ago in the Congress of the United States of America,

“When countries which have been at odds resume the path of dialogue — a dialogue which may have been interrupted for the most legitimate of reasons — new opportunities open up for all. This has required, and requires, courage and daring, which is not the same as irresponsibility.”

In Colombia we have tried to work with the courage, the audacity and also the sense of responsibility of which the Holy Father spoke, and we are beginning to see the fruits of our efforts. We have had more than 50 years of internal warfare in a country destined for progress and happiness, and we are determined to put an end to that conflict. Peace is a difficult goal to attain, but not an impossible one. Peace is something more than the fruit of a political, social or economic process. Peace, more than anything, is a great process of collective cultural transformation that begins with an individual spiritual change, and it requires that all individuals — each within himself or herself — open their minds, hearts and souls to reconciliation.

Why do I say that today I come to this Assembly with greater optimism than ever before? Well, it is because less than a week ago in Havana, after almost three years of negotiations in which we made progress on most of the items on the agreed agenda, we reached an agreement on what was perhaps the major obstacle to peace. We reached an agreement on the most difficult element of any peace process — a system of transitional justice that ensures that there is no impunity for the most serious crimes committed during the conflict. In this agreement, which respects the norms and principles of international law and our own Constitution, we put the greatest emphasis on the right of victims to justice

and on truth, reparations and the non-resumption of the conflict, placing them at the centre of the solution to an armed conflict. And we are reaching our goal: the maximum degree of justice compatible with the attainment of peace.

It is also the first time in the history of conflicts in the world that a Government and an illegal armed group — in a peace agreement, not as the result of something that was imposed later on — are creating a system of accountability in a domestic court for international crimes and other serious crimes. We are setting a precedent that could serve as a model for other armed conflicts in the world. The progress made is so important and significant that it has enabled us to take two additional steps, which is the best news that I could convey to this great forum of nations. We have agreed to a deadline for signing the final agreement that would put an end to our armed conflict. It will be, at the very latest, 23 March 2016, in less than six months from now. On that date at the very latest, we shall bid a final farewell to the last and longest war not just in Colombia, but in the entire Western Hemisphere. In addition, we have also agreed that the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) will begin to lay down its weapons no later than 60 days following the signing of the final agreement. That means that next year, when I return to this Assembly, I will do so as President of a Colombia that is at peace and has achieved reconciliation.

Our talks with the FARC guerilla forces offer a glimmer of hope in a world overshadowed by war, violence and terrorism. This is also an opportunity to thank the international community, on behalf of 48 million Colombians, for its support for our peace efforts and for its willingness to assist us in the post-conflict stage. A peaceful Colombia will be a positive factor for the world in several distinct but interrelated areas, such as combating climate change and illegal drugs, security and eradicating extreme poverty.

Our country is proud to be the most biodiverse country in the world in relation to its size. However, we are also one of the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. That is why we insist on the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals. At the end of my term in office in 2018, I hope to have left behind protected areas in Colombia of approximately 20 million hectares, accounting for almost one-fifth of our landmass. We fully support the twenty-first session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations

Framework Convention on Climate Change, which is to be held at the end of this year in Paris, where we will commit to assisting in the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

We are also addressing the problem of illegal drug crops with a comprehensive strategy that we have proposed to the rest of the world. At the Summit of the Americas, held in Cartagena, Colombia, in 2012, I raised the need for an objective assessment of the outcome of the so-called war on drugs declared here more than 40 years ago, which has been so costly in human lives and resources. The study was conducted and submitted by the Organization of American States two years ago. Now, we are preparing for the special session of the General Assembly on this issue, to take place seven months from now. We continue to advocate a new global strategy based on scientific evidence that puts greater emphasis on health, education and tackling the social roots of this phenomenon and seeks to minimize the negative effects of drugs through the use of smarter, more effective and more humane strategies.

In Colombia, we have gone even further. Last week, I presented a comprehensive crop-substitution plan based on that multifaceted approach. Not only will we attack the mafias, whom we will pursue relentlessly, but we will also provide social and economic opportunities for farmers, ensure that the State and the justice system are ever-present, prevent drug use and treat it as a public health issue. If we end the conflict, the guerrilla forces that have been a negative factor in drug-trafficking will become, once they lay down their weapons, an ally in combating it. It will be extraordinarily symbolic when those who once protected these illicit crops will help us to eradicate them. In that way, Colombia wins and the entire world wins. We will begin to free ourselves from coca and, at the same time, to preserve and save millions of hectares of tropical forest. As the Pope so eloquently said in this very Hall four days ago, “war is the negation of all rights and a dramatic assault on the environment” (*A/70/PV.3, p. 5*).

A peaceful Colombia will also be a safer Colombia because the enormous energy and effort that today are dedicated to dealing with this domestic conflict will be focused on improving security and on fighting crime in the cities and villages of my country. Of course, it will be a Colombia with more opportunities for everyone where we will continue to reduce poverty and create jobs, as we have been doing at a rate that has made us the leader in Latin America in terms of social progress,

in recent years. Achieving peace will enable us to meet the Sustainable Development Goals, which are now enshrined in Colombian law and which we adopted in 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1).

I now invite all Colombians, without exception, and all citizens of the world to pave the way for peace. The most worthwhile legacy we could leave to our children and to future generations is peace. Nothing could be more important or more urgent because peace is the supreme good of any society. It is the most sacred good and the very reason for the existence of the United Nations. Today, I am delighted to announce the good news that, in fewer than six months, bells will toll in Colombia to announce that the time for peace has come. I hope that clocks around the world will be synchronized with our own to show the same time — a time for peace, a time for humankind.

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

Mr. Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, President of the Republic of Colombia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Nicos Anastasiades, President of the Republic of Cyprus

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

Mr. Nicos Anastasiades, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

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

President Anastasiades: This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the creation of the United Nations, and provides us with an opportunity to take stock of the past seven decades, as well as to jointly discuss and exchange ideas on how to further improve the Organization's effectiveness and its members' collaboration, with the benefit of humankind always in view. In order to assess our collective efforts, we

should first recall the guiding principles that led to the establishment of the United Nations in the aftermath of the death and destruction of the Second World War. The Preamble to the founding Charter of the United Nations establishes the eradication of the scourge of war and the promotion of human rights as the cornerstones of our edifice.

So far, the United Nations has succeeded in preventing another world war and has helped to end conflicts through mediation. Currently, more than 100,000 United Nations peacekeepers are deployed in 16 countries. Yet numerous armed conflicts all over the planet attest to the fact that global peace still evades us. In the area of human rights, the United Nations has undertaken inspiring initiatives, starting with the adoption in 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and followed by many international agreements and treaties setting universal standards for civil, political, social and economic rights. Yet in a world challenged by poverty, hunger, child mortality and social and economic inequalities, it is evident that we have a long way to go.

At the same time, leaving aside the strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures of the United Nations, we should not undermine or underestimate the fact that in an interdependent world it provides the only international forum in which nations can interact, deliberate and negotiate so as to resolve not only their differences, but also pressing regional and international challenges that are not country-specific and that call the international order into question.

In order to enhance its value and influence in a globalized era, the United Nations has evolved, with its recent adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). The 2030 Agenda seeks to address the needs of a developing global population through its commonly agreed 17 Goals and 169 targets. Cyprus, which has been actively involved in the process since its very beginning, is proud of this achievement, since it reflects our high principles of effective multilateralism and close cooperation among the nations of the world.

However, while on the one hand we have achieved the adoption of such an ambitious agenda, on the other we are also witnessing the ongoing turmoil, extremism, sectarianism, civil war and terrorism that are taking place in the Middle East, North Africa and other regions. Their effects — death, persecution,

dispossession of property, displacement, destruction of cultural heritage and forced migration — are becoming defining features of the daily lives of those affected. We must therefore be vigilant, for while we are attempting to establish fundamental principles of peace, stability and sustainable development for the future, in practice we are seeing the increasing migratory flows of those who are involuntarily fleeing their homes in search of a better future. As we strive to set up noble, long-term objectives and goals, events that are currently unfolding may render them irrelevant or unattainable. When we assume that only Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and, more recently, Europe are affected by the current refugee crisis, we fail to acknowledge that if it persists, other countries and continents will be affected as well.

In order to reverse those worrying developments, therefore, we should direct our efforts so that every country and region in a conflict zone, particularly the Middle East and North Africa, can become a place in which sustainable development is a reality. That can be achieved only by tackling the root causes that have led to this unprecedented situation — that is, political instability and economic insecurity. We should address this collectively and comprehensively. It is not enough to take action against the individuals responsible for terrorist attacks; we should focus our efforts on the enablers of terrorism. It is not enough to rescue people from sinking boats; we should focus our efforts on human traffickers. It is not enough to support economic immigrants financially; we should focus our efforts on creating the political and socioeconomic conditions that can ensure that all these people do not emigrate from their countries.

In view of this horrific humanitarian crisis, one might wonder if we have neglected to take the necessary measures to avert this crisis. Has our strategy been adequate? Have we failed to predict the events that have unfolded? Considering Cyprus's proximity to the Middle East and North Africa, as well as our historical, political, social and cultural links, I am firmly convinced that the international community has failed to sufficiently appreciate those regions' complexities. At the same time, foreign interventions and involvement have not produced the hoped-for results, because they have failed to take into account and understand those nations' internal characteristics and particular sensitivities.

I would like to quote a remark made by the Secretary-General at a ceremony in San Francisco on

26 June commemorating the seventieth anniversary of the adoption of the Charter.

“Today, we take the idea of the United Nations for granted, but bringing it to life required huge leaps of statecraft to bridge differences.”

And while we recognize how valuable and necessary the United Nations is today, we can also see that it is in need of reform and modernization to enable it to tackle today's realities.

The international order and perspectives of 1945 are not the same as those of 2015. Traditional security orientations have changed due to new geopolitical circumstances. Issues of peace and stability can no longer be confined to the differences between and within nations, when non-State actors such as terrorists have challenged the established international order, paving the way for religious fundamentalism, violent extremism, the forcible displacement of people and forced migration.

At the same time, new global threats such as climate change and environmental degradation have also emerged. After 70 years, world leaders must once again demonstrate statesmanship and vision in order to rebuild newly broken societies and find a path to renewal. In that regard, we welcome the recently adopted resolution 69/321, on revitalization, as well as the ongoing dialogue towards enhancing the effectiveness of the Security Council. We also support the upcoming high-level United Nations meetings aimed at resolving a number of global challenges, including the United Nations Climate Change Conference, in Paris in December; the special session on the world drug problem, in April 2016; and the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, in Quito in November 2016.

Peacekeeping constitutes one of the main pillars and accomplishments of the United Nations. However, the United Nations is not only about peacekeeping; it is also about conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations provides a wide gamut of options for the peaceful settlement of issues. We look forward to concrete proposals for adapting United Nations peacekeeping operations to the changing nature of conflict and for enhancing their effectiveness and their ability to promote political solutions. In that regard, we greatly welcome the 2015 review of United Nations peacebuilding operations (see

A/70/95), and we compliment the Secretary-General for undertaking that initiative.

Cyprus, through its own experience of hosting a United Nations peacekeeping force, greatly values the contribution of the United Nations to the maintenance of peace and security. We also express our appreciation for the plethora of United Nations resolutions and Security Council decisions that have condemned the unacceptable status quo and the violent and ongoing division of the island, calling for its reunification and the withdrawal of occupation forces — resolutions and decisions that, unfortunately, have yet to be implemented.

Following the non-renewal of actions that violated the exercise by the Republic of Cyprus of its sovereign rights within its exclusive economic zone and the change in the leadership of the Turkish Cypriot community, a window of opportunity opened, reviving our hope that the round of negotiations that resumed in May will lead to a final settlement of the Cyprus problem. That hope is based on my conviction that both I and the Turkish Cypriot leader share the same courage and resolve to advance decisively towards making the joint vision of our peoples — who desire the solution of the Cyprus problem through a viable, lasting and functional settlement — a reality. That settlement must be in full conformity with the values and principles of the character of the United Nations and the European Union acquis, as well as with the high-level agreements between the leaders of the two communities and the joint declaration of 11 February 2014. Such a settlement would lead to the evolution of the Republic of Cyprus as a federal State in a bizonal, bicomunal federation with political equality, single sovereignty, a single international legal personality and a single form of citizenship; a State that is and will continue to be a Member of the United Nations, the European Union and numerous other international organizations, and whose sovereignty, territorial integrity and constitutional order will not be constrained by anachronistic systems of guarantees by third countries or the presence of foreign troops on the island.

What we aspire to achieve through this new round of negotiations is to reach a settlement in which there will be neither winners nor losers; that takes into account the sensitivities and concerns of both communities; that respects the fundamental freedoms and human rights of all Cypriots, Greek and Turkish alike; that reunites our country, its people, its economy

and its institutions; that creates a homeland of peaceful coexistence and prosperous collaboration among all its citizens, to the benefit of the younger generations; that allows Cyprus to realize its full potential by removing all political barriers that prevent the full exploitation of its unique geographical position at the crossroads of Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and Asia; that transforms Cyprus into a shining example of ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic cooperation between Christian and Muslim communities; and that turns Cyprus into a model of reliability, stability and security in a turbulent and volatile region currently characterized by protracted conflicts and instability.

I am pleased to inform the Assembly that, during the new round of negotiations, progress has been achieved on a number of issues that touch on almost all chapters of the Cyprus problem. However, on other substantive issues, significant differences still need to be resolved — differences whose resolution will also require the active and determined contribution of Turkey, whose occupation forces remain in the northern part of our country. I sincerely hope that Turkey's rhetorical assurances of its desire to reach a settlement will at last be tested in practice through the adoption of concrete measures that will positively underpin the negotiation process and reflect the current climate of hope on the island.

I strongly believe that reaching a solution to the Cyprus problem could become a paradigm for the way in which diplomacy and the adoption of a conciliatory stance can prevail over mistrust and contribute to the resolution of even the most difficult international issues. Furthermore, the discovery of hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean has the potential to create synergies and a grid of alliances for broader cooperation between hydrocarbon-producing and hydrocarbon-consuming countries of the area and beyond, to the benefit of the socioeconomic development and welfare of our peoples. Such positive developments can foster the achievement and maintenance of a much-needed environment of stability and peace in our immediate neighbourhood.

I am certain that the General Assembly shares the view that the settlement of the Cyprus problem will create a win-win situation, not only for its people, but also for the region, the interested parties and the international community at large.

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

Mr. Nicos Anastasiades, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Tabaré Vázquez, President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay

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

Mr. Tabaré Vázquez, President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

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

President Vázquez (*spoke in Spanish*): I bring to this forum, the largest and most representative of today's world, the greetings of the people and the Government of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay — a greeting that expresses our passion for peace and freedom; our commitment to democracy, human rights, justice and solidarity; our commitment to the sustainable development of our country; and our desire for a humankind that, despite the redundancy, places at its core human beings — all human beings, men and women of this world without exception or excuse. We are all equal before the law, but above all we are all equal before life.

Although I come from Uruguay, I am not here to talk about the problems of Uruguay. I would modestly like to discuss problems affecting humankind as a whole. Weeks ago the world public opinion was moved by the image of a dead child on a beach after the sinking of the vessel with which, like so many other victims of the conflict in their country, he was trying to find a place in the world where he could find the protection to which he was entitled. The international reaction was immediate, but we hope that it was not ephemeral, that we not forget this tragedy that hit us and shamed us, to act with determination and efficiency in finding

solutions to the global tragedy of the exodus of millions of human beings.

Uruguay, as a nation nurtured by immigration and as a people that received international solidarity when it needed it, accepts this unavoidable duty. It is imperative to avoid a repetition of this tragedy, but it is also necessary to address the causes that brought it about. Always, and not just in matters of health, prevention is better than cure. Prevention means recognizing others as the same as us, which is much more than “tolerating” them”, respecting and promoting their rights, all their rights; betting on democracy as a form of government and state of society; educating and training for dignified life, decent work and full citizenship; respecting the planet on which we live, which, moreover, is still the only one on which the human species can survive as such. If we continue to destroy this world in the short term, humankind and future generations are sure to be homeless.

Prevention also means rejecting all forms of terrorism and discrimination so that there are no dead children on the beaches of the world because they cannot find a place to live, rejecting terrorism and discrimination wherever they arise and in all circumstances and places. Prevention is thinking boldly and acting sensibly with an eye on future generations, but as there is no future without a present, prevention is also thinking and acting according to our hopes, needs and possibilities.

A moment ago, I made a reference to health, no doubt because of my work experience — since I am a physician and until very recently was in the full exercise of my profession and vocation — but not only from experience. As the leader of my country, I am well aware that public health is a key and essential component of the sovereignty of nations, a right of individuals, a factor in the development of societies and an unavoidable responsibility of States.

From that perspective, we face a disturbing and unavoidable reality at the level of the whole of planet Earth. Indeed, according to recent studies and reports of the World Health Organization, first, the global burden of disease is shifting from acute, infectious diseases to chronic non-communicable diseases; the two must be fought, by working to keep acute diseases from appearing and by acting to prevent non-communicable chronic diseases from occurring. Secondly, chronic conditions such as heart disease and strokes are

currently the leading cause of death worldwide. If we add other non-communicable diseases linked mainly to the lifestyle that we are developing as we advance, it is obvious that there is little left to say. Over 60 to 70 per cent of morbidity and mortality worldwide is due to chronic non-communicable diseases — cardiovascular diseases, cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, and so on. Accordingly there is still so much to be done.

That task should have no borders of any kind, because the complex of problems underlying them know no borders. That is so much the case that the mere mention of the complex global landscape brings to mind Africa and Asia in particular, as well as Latin America, where many low-income and middle-income countries currently face a double burden of morbidity. Infectious diseases are killing people mercilessly and impacting us deeply, while chronic non-communicable diseases are also insidiously killing our populations.

At the same time, malnutrition and risk factors for chronic non-communicable diseases, such as overweight and obesity, have been said to also affect high-income countries and remain prevalent in the world. It is estimated that cancer has been costing Latin America \$4.5 billion annually in terms of direct costs for physicians' consultations, studies, diagnoses, treatment, medication, hospitalization, palliative care and more. There are indirect costs as well, such as travel and accommodations, lost work days and productivity. How much of that money could be saved if, rather than using it to treat the effects of these diseases, it could be put into social policies to improve people's lives by offering better education, better health and dignified living conditions for our peoples?

It may be unpleasant to mention this aspect, but it is part of an uncomfortable reality that we must change, because if we do not adopt immediate measures by the year 2030, 1 million Latin Americans will die annually of cancer alone, and more than 7 million people globally will die from a preventable disease that, with early diagnosis and proper treatment, can be cured. Cancer will kill more people in the world every year than those killed during the Second World War. We are facing a brutal pandemic and, I humbly suggest, we must be aware of the reality we are currently suffering a pandemic that the humankind has never before known.

Life is precious; it has no price. In order to address and reverse the growing morbidity and mortality

from cancer and other non-communicable diseases, it is important to adopt political positions and policies and to implement systemic strategies to end poverty, generate social inclusion, promote education, encourage healthful lifestyles, and strengthen integrated health systems, including national programmes for the primary prevention, early detection and diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and long-term follow-up of these diseases. In regard to healthful lifestyles, physical activity and sports are important, as is a healthful diet, as opposed to the harmful and highly processed foods of an industry that growing exponentially.

We must control smoking, alcoholism and drug abuse. Based on our experience, we feel that it is indispensable to include tobacco and alcohol in our policies on drugs. We know it is not easy, but it is possible to regulate those markets without resorting to prohibitionist dogmatism and respecting the rights of individuals and making public health a matter of State sovereignty and social progress. Above all, I reiterate that the fight against smoking is also one against its vector of transmission, which is not mosquitoes, birds or rats but a multinational tobacco industry that, in order to double its profits, has no problem killing its own customers.

Uruguay has been a world leader in the implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Beginning in January 2014, Uruguay adopted a law on the control and regulation of cannabis, and we are working on measures related to controlling alcoholism, perhaps with a zero-tolerance policy in certain cases and circumstances. Finally, with regard to that issue, nothing can be achieved in isolation. Everything requires sensitivity, resolve and perseverance on the part of all Governments and peoples throughout the world.

In the area of international cooperation, we are not starting from zero. There are a number of institutional frameworks and modalities and very many projects under way. Could the implementation of the former and the progress of the latter be improved? No doubt, but rather than inventing new ones, let us make better use of what we already have. To that end, we certainly will need more human, material and financial resources, but there is one resource without which all these things, as abundant as they may be, will always be insufficient. I am referring to the resource of political will, which in this case is more than an ideological dilemma or a question of left, right or centre; it is an ethical issue.

It is not ethical that, in some circumstances, tribunals and multinational organizations are able to prioritize trade over the defence of the fundamental human right to health and life. That is what Uruguay is suffering from. A major international tobacco company — I would cite only its initials so as not to offend certain sensibilities, but it is in fact Philip Morris — has appealed against Uruguay for bringing the issue of tobacco control to the World Health Organization. That is the situation Uruguay faces. Perhaps because we are a small country, we have been chosen for that role, not just to punish Uruguay but so that other countries of the world do not follow the path Uruguay has taken to fight against tobacco and to provide a better quality of life to its people.

Calling for ethics in the twenty-first century, I realize, might appear to be naïve or anachronistic, but the reality indicates the opposite. As we stated, we need only look at the news of the past few weeks to see that in some aspects, none of them trivial, the world really seems to be a kind of lunatic asylum run by its own patients. That is terrible, but if humankind wants to survive and progress, it cannot resign itself to such a terrible situation. It cannot become resigned to war or to the humiliation of poor people who have nothing to eat, nor can we close our eyes 24 hours after seeing a Syrian boy dead on a Turkish beach.

From our own perspective as a Latin American country and as Latin Americans, we cannot fail to mention three situations that are prominent on the agenda of our region. The first is the restoration of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba as an indispensable step in the normalization of bilateral relations between the two countries. We commend that step, and while we are aware of the complexity of the process under way, we are confident with regard to its future, particularly with regard to the key element of ending the economic, trade and financial embargo imposed on Cuba more than 50 years ago by the Government of the United States. As it has done on previous occasions, Uruguay will vote in favour of the General Assembly's draft resolution calling for an end to the embargo. Hopefully it will be the last time that the Assembly will have to pronounce on the issue.

The second situation in Latin America is the tension that has existed for several weeks on the border between Colombia and Venezuela. We call for calm, respectful and open dialogue between the Governments of these brother countries in order to deal with this

situation, whose main victims are the peoples of the two countries, especially their socially most vulnerable sectors.

The third situation is the peace talks in Colombia, another complex but decisive process for our brother country and our region as a whole. We support this process and are ready to cooperate with it under the terms agreed to and demanded by the parties. Uruguay is not omnipotent, nor does it claim to be omnipresent or infallible, but neither is it indifferent.

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

In 2008, our country officially submitted its candidacy for a seat on the Security Council as a non-permanent member for the period 2016 to 2017. We did so based on our commitment to this Organization, of which we are a founding member; on our adherence to international law and multilateralism; on our firm rejection of all forms of terrorism and discrimination; on our conviction that the only means capable of resolving conflicts are the peaceful ones laid down in the Charter of the United Nations; and on our confidence in the value of the Security Council's efforts to fulfil its primary function of maintaining international peace and security.

Uruguay has contributed to peace and security with a concrete and unwavering commitment that began before the creation of the United Nations, has been maintained over the Organization's 70-year history and today is manifest in its participation in the peacekeeping operations whose mandates come from that very Security Council. We want to bring our values, commitment and efforts to bear as a non-permanent member of the Council for the period 2016 to 2017. We rely on the support of those here to help us do that, and we will not disappoint them.

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

Mr. Tabaré Vázquez, President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, Minister for Defense and

Commander-in-Chief of the Malawi Defense Force and the Malawi Police Service

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): These Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Malawi, Minister for Defense and Commander-in-Chief of the Malawi Defense Force and the Malawi Police Service.

Mr. Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, Minister for Defense and Commander-in-Chief of the Malawi Defense Force and the Malawi Police Service, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, Minister for Defense and Commander-in-Chief of the Malawi Defense Force and the Malawi Police Service, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Mutharika: It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Mr. Mogens Lukketoft on his election to preside over the General Assembly at its seventieth session. His credentials are impeccable, and I am confident that he will steer the Assembly's affairs to a successful conclusion, with all his objectives and aspirations fulfilled. I would like to assure him of my delegation's support. I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa of our sister country Uganda, the outgoing President of the General Assembly, for his untiring efforts during his presidency. His dedication to the work of the United Nations is commendable. And I reiterate Malawi's support for the Secretary-General as he strives to realize the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

The theme of this year's general debate, "The United Nations at 70 — a new commitment to action", comes at a very opportune time, for it fittingly summarizes the core business of the United Nations at its inception, today and in the future — that is, the maintenance of international peace and security. The United Nations was created on the understanding that peace is not just the absence of war; it comes with the struggles, compromises, sacrifices and choices we make as nations and as individuals for the benefit of humanity. We cannot realize a complete sense of peace without justice, dignity and freedom. We can rejoice that in the 70 years of the work of the United Nations, we have collectively averted another world war. However, during

the same period, we have lived in fear and uncertainty, in a world tainted by the conflicts, poverty and violence that have endangered our very existence.

As we live in this imperfect world, the pursuit of peace should be our main goal if we are to shape a promising life for our future generations. I would therefore like to commend the Secretary-General for convening the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, aimed at reviewing current United Nations operations and considering emerging future needs in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. The Panel's report (A/70/95), submitted in June, has highlighted some important issues that I feel that we, as part of the global family, should consider and take seriously. I would like to mention just a few of those issues demanding our attention as members of the United Nations.

First, peace operations should be guided by a focus on political solutions, in which the emphasis should be on conflict prevention through political means, with a bias towards people-centred solutions as well as the protection of civilians. Secondly, there is a need for comprehensive peace and security partnerships that involve the Security Council, regional actors and national mechanisms. Thirdly, the world, through the United Nations, should find a way to compensate people who have suffered abuse. Fourthly, there is a need for greater political will on the part of all actors in peace missions.

Let me now touch on another important issue that has been on the agenda of the United Nations for quite some time, that is, reform of the Security Council. I have followed with keen interest the intergovernmental negotiations on how the Security Council can be reformed to make it more representative, democratic, effective, transparent and accountable to all. The Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration are our guiding principles in that endeavour. Our quest for peace and security should be hinged on sustainable socioeconomic development for our people that has true meaning and reflects the lives of our people.

Despite varied progress among Member States, and developing countries in particular, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have proved that unity of purpose is critical to transforming the world into a better place for our children and future generations. My Government is grateful to development partners that have worked to help Malawi achieve four of the

eight MDGs: reducing child mortality, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development. It is evident that as a country we are embarking on the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda with unfinished business. It is therefore imperative, as we move to implement the new global development agenda, to be mindful of the important role that global partnerships can play in effective development cooperation, thereby ensuring the successful implementation of development programmes in the developing countries.

We in Malawi are also glad to reiterate the fact that, as we look to the Sustainable Development Goals, we can draw international pride and inspiration from our collective achievements on MDG 6, which involves halting and reversing the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Under that goal, we aimed to put 15 million people on treatment globally, and today we can stand here and boldly declare that we have met that target. As we look to the sustainable development agenda, we must commit, as the international community, to putting an end to AIDS as a public health threat and finishing the business of HIV/AIDS by 2030.

My Government has already committed to doing so, and current evidence shows that Malawi is well on the way to achieving that goal. Together, we can end AIDS by 2030, but it will require conducting business “as unusual” and fast-tracking HIV responses, in line with the evidence of what works. But more importantly, it will require continued shared responsibility and global solidarity in financing HIV programmes and enhancing the capacity of developing countries such as Malawi to manufacture the drugs and make them more accessible to our people.

Having said that, let me also reiterate what I have always maintained — that all of the aforementioned wonderful programmes will be realized when we, as a global family, do not leave our youth and women behind. In Malawi and, I believe, in almost all developing countries, young people and women constitute the majority of the population. It is therefore only natural that they be adequately represented at all decision-making levels of society. The late President Mandela of South Africa once said, “As long as a nation refuses to acknowledge the equal role of more than half of itself, it is doomed to failure”. That is a fact and I could not agree with it more.

Let me commend President Xi Jinping of China, and the Secretary-General, through the Office of UN-Women, for organizing on the margins of this session the Global Leaders’ Meeting on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: A Commitment to Action, under the theme “Planet 50-50 by 2030: step it up for gender equality”, to which a number of leaders, including Malawi’s, made national commitments.

My Government is committed to the “He For She” campaign to address gender inequality, end gender-based violence, promote women’s political participation and facilitate women’s economic empowerment. It has therefore been singled out as one of the core priority areas of our revised Malawi Growth and Development Strategy — the blueprint of Malawi’s development. Malawi also took advantage of the forum to host a side high-level event to share perspectives on demographic dividends and investing in youth, which we hope will successfully lead to improved coordination, commitment and support for youth empowerment and development for Africa.

We have expressed the desire for shared prosperity and well-being and unity and integration, for a continent where the full potential of women and youth are realized with freedom from fear, disease and want. As others taking the floor earlier have noted, two days ago we adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). That was brilliant. However, allow me to highlight SDG 4, which speaks of education. As a champion of higher education in Africa, I wish to reiterate in no uncertain terms that all of the brilliant resolutions and decisions coming out of this great forum, and many similar ones across the world, will fall flat if countries ignore the task of educating the people, especially young people and, even more so, girl children.

In that vein, I am pleased to note that Sustainable Development Goal 4 is about “ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning”. However, it does not fully capture the centrality of higher education in achieving the wider Sustainable Development Goals and targets. Allow me to express gratitude to those partners that continue to stand with us to promote higher education in Africa. With improved and increased access to higher education, the world will strike a massive blow at poverty.

In fulfilling its national and international responsibility, my Government recognizes the cross-cutting role of respecting and protecting people’s

human rights and the rule of law. My Government will continue to promote human rights, inter alia, by enhancing awareness of human rights, promoting equitable access to opportunity and strengthening legal protections.

The full enjoyment of people's human rights cannot be achieved in a society full of fraud, corruption and theft of public resources. Those vices must be dealt with in order to protect people's human rights and ensure the delivery of expected services from their Government. Our Government has therefore always been committed to fighting corruption, fraud and theft. It is against that background that we are pursuing and prosecuting suspects for the theft of public funds. May god bless the United Nations family.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the President of the Republic of Malawi, Minister for Defense and Commander-in-Chief of the Malawi Defense Force and the Malawi Police Service for his statement.

Mr. Arthur Peter Mutharkika, President of the Republic of Malawi, Minister for Defense and Commander-in-Chief of the Malawi Defense Force and the Malawi Police Service, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Donald Tusk, President of the European Council

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

Mr. Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, and inviting him to make a statement.

Mr. Tusk (European Council): I am here today to reassure the General Assembly that Europe is as committed to its values and objectives now as it has ever been. Europe will stay the course, even though it is now confronting challenges that we have not witnessed for decades. Wars are raging both to the south and east of our borders. European leaders are tackling the consequences of borders being changed on our continent by force — as is the case in Ukraine — in violation of the Charter of the United Nations. We are also dealing

with the refugee crisis, with terrorist attacks inside Europe and with economic difficulties in some member States.

As difficult as the situation is, I am sure that we will find ways of dealing with it and, most importantly, we will at the same time remain dedicated to helping make the whole world a better place. Everyone who wishes to contribute to eradicating poverty, supporting peacekeeping missions and solving the migration crisis, as well as handling the causes and effects of climate change, can still count on us. For Europe, isolationism has never been and never will be an option. We are always ready to listen to the good and sound advice from our friends on the unprecedented refugee and migrant crisis that we face today.

The myth prevails that Europe is the only rich place on Earth. That is not true. There are other places comparable to us in terms of wealth, but for some reason refugees and migrants are not flowing there. That is because wealth is not the only element that determines the place where people choose the future of their children. Values such as tolerance, openness, respect for diversity, freedom, human rights and those enshrined in the Geneva Convention are also a magnet attracting them to us.

And we refuse to change in those respects. If in Europe we are engaged in animated discussions on relocation quotas, it is because we care; it is because we seek to be as effective and as inclusive as possible. But establishing quotas are just a small part of what Europe is already doing to help those who flee wars and persecution. By contrast, many countries represented here deal with that problem in a much simpler way, namely, by not allowing migrants and refugees to enter their territories at all. That is why suggesting that Europe represents an example of poor treatment or indifference towards asylum-seekers is sheer hypocrisy. In fact, the opposite is true, as we can see from the direction of their travel. No one seems to be escaping from Europe, while people from all over Eurasia and Africa are coming to Europe. The crisis we are talking about has global dimensions and demands a global solution. First of all, it demands global solidarity. Everyone can offer help to the refugees, and those who do not want to should at least refrain from hiding their indifference by criticizing Europe for doing too little.

It is no coincidence that the general debate this year is focused mainly on the situation in the Middle

East, especially in Syria. Let us have no illusions. Syria's crisis will not be resolved unless a common denominator of interests is found among the regional players. But a peace plan must not be only a formula for defining a new division of spheres of influence; here in the United Nations we should speak not only about the interests of the regional Powers but, above all, about the interests of millions of Syrians, including the internally displaced and refugees. The fight against terrorism is no doubt important in that context; that is why we welcome the fact that this objective is gaining the support of new and quite unexpected allies. But we cannot overlook the fact that many refugees are fleeing State terrorism, which is demonstrated dramatically by the case of Syria.

Europe, which every day witnesses the tragedies of millions of Syrian refugees, must be their advocate. We all want to see stable States in the region. Stabilization is a value beyond any dispute, but stability cannot be won by the use of barrel bombs and chemical weapons against civilians. Today, the circle of those proposing the idea that Bashar Al-Assad should be part of Syria's transition is growing, yet we cannot forget that millions of people have fled his horrific methods of trying to secure stability in Syria. During my trips to the region, I was told that Al-Assad's victory would lead only to further exodus. The only goal and intention of a peace plan for Syria must be to make it possible for the people to start leading normal lives in the region once again. That message, and that message alone, will be consistent with the values of the international community and the European Union, and with the values that the United Nations has held dear for more than 70 years.

This year will also be crucial in the global efforts to fight the causes and consequences of climate change. Over the past days and weeks, we have listened with great hope and satisfaction to the pledges of leaders committed to fighting global warming. Europe is determined that the Paris Climate Change Conference will be a breakthrough, symbolizing our readiness to undertake unified action in confronting that global problem.

With a pledge to reduce carbon dioxide emissions to 40 per cent of its 1990 levels, Europe remains in the lead of that process, but fighting global warming is not a sports competition. Victory is possible when everybody moves in the same direction and at a similar pace. That is why we invite all Member States to take part in that common endeavour. Without a global

agreement, Europe's isolated efforts will be impractical. What matters for Europe is practical effects and not ideological fervour. Global challenges must be dealt with multilaterally or they will not be dealt with at all. We all have a duty to make the international community mean something real. We are facing multiple global emergencies. Let them pave the way to forge a global community that is truly strong, truly global and truly real.

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

Mr. Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan

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

Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Abe (Japan) (*spoke in Japanese; English interpretation by the delegation*): The United Nations, which this year commemorates the seventieth anniversary of its founding, brings together people who do not easily despair even in the face of desperate circumstances. What else can explain the Organization's ability to withstand such adversity and to arrive at this moment? The Ebola virus has spread wildly. Extremism is running rampant. And now an immense tide of refugees is attempting to flee from horror, with their very lives at risk. We must address whatever challenges arise, under the auspices of the United Nations. Each Member State must bring its own distinctive capabilities to the struggle.

Japan has a history of supporting nation-building in a wide range of places. We have worked extensively to enhance human resources, and we have given our utmost in humanitarian assistance and in the promotion of women's rights. Now more than ever, Japan wishes to offer its wealth of experience unstintingly. Japan will further enhance its assistance for refugees and internally displaced persons from Syria and Iraq. In monetary terms, our assistance for 2015 comes to approximately

\$810 million, triple the amount we provided last year. In Lebanon, we will spend \$2 million in new assistance measures. We will leverage that amount in order to give momentum to the collaboration between humanitarian and development actors. We will also provide approximately \$2.5 million in humanitarian assistance to neighbour countries of the European Union that are grappling with the influx of refugees and migrants, such as the Republic of Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Each of those assistance measures is an emergency countermeasure that Japan is able to implement. At the same time, however, our steadfast principle is always to endeavour to return to the root causes of a problem and to improve the situation on the ground. In order to bring stability to the daily lives of the Iraqi people, it is vital to ensure that they have dependable water supply and sewage systems. Taking those programmes into account, Japan is preparing assistance worth approximately \$750 million to help build peace and fully consolidate peace across the Middle East and Africa.

It is important to look squarely at the facts. Behind the present tide of refugees is a far greater number of people who are unable even to flee and become refugees. Rebuilding devastated countries and transforming them into places that allow people to resume the pursuit of happiness may seem like a roundabout way of reaching our goal, but promoting and cultivating each human being's abilities and capacity to fight fear and want at the grass-roots level is in fact the shortest path to that end. That strong belief has guided Japan's policy of prioritizing the promotion of education and health and, in particular, the importance of strengthening women of all ages. Our policy seeks to fully ensure human security. I am extremely pleased that such efforts to value each individual were thoroughly incorporated within the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (resolution 70/1) set forth by the United Nations community.

Japan wishes to create an environment in which mothers of newborns are free to focus exclusively on the healthy growth of their children. In reflecting on that premise, I came across a photograph that portrayed the contents of a bag carried by a female refugee. I asked myself what people would pack in the one bag they take with them when fleeing hardship? Abessa, a 20-year-old woman who crossed the Mediterranean Sea on a rubber raft, was able to bring very little with

her when she fled a Palestinian refugee camp south of Damascus. Everything in the photograph was for her 10-month old daughter: a clean change of socks, a hat and a single jar of baby food.

But as I contemplated that photograph, my eyes were drawn to a notebook that had been wrapped carefully in plastic to protect it from getting wet. I recognized it as a handbook on maternal and child health that Japan has been distributing in refugee camps in Syria. In Japan, all pregnant women receive this handbook, in which they can keep records about their own health and that of their child. This handbook system has been in place for more than 70 years.

Who among all the mothers who smile sweetly at the hand-written records of their child's heights and weights could wish for that same child to grow up to become an apostle of fear? Each woman's handbook is a record of her prayers for her child to grow up healthy. Her notebook acquires a power of its own: the power of the mother's wish for her child's life not to be squandered. We have distributed maternal and child health handbooks in refugee camps in Palestine, Syria, and Jordan in the hope that a mother's love can transform the soil that sometimes gives rise to despair and fear. We know that some women continue to treasure those hope-infused handbooks even during their exodus. I am struck by the fact that the concept of human security, which seeks to empower each individual, has produced such eloquent, albeit bitter results.

The rule of law and the principle of equality before the law are values that Japan respects above all others. The extension of those principles also begins with fostering human capacity. I would like to share with the Assembly the story of a young Japanese woman who has been giving her all through Japan's training assistance programme for police officers. In order to break with the very root of violence and fear, it is critical to cultivate good police personnel and good police governance. In that conviction, we have been directing our efforts at training police personnel in Afghanistan and many other locations. Through the Japan International Cooperation Agency, Japan has been steadily providing such assistance to the national police force of the Democratic Republic of the Congo since 2004. More than 20,000 police personnel to date, including women and a number of former armed insurgent soldiers, have received such training. Our motto has been to cultivate a police force that is friendly towards the local people.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency was responsible for developing and implementing the training plan, and women have consistently been in charge of Japan's staff on the ground in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. One such woman was called a "little giant" when she first arrived. Seen alongside her male police colleagues, she was indeed small in stature, yet she was dubbed a giant because she never flinched from difficulties and took the initiative to grapple with issues, making full use of the French language skills she had acquired. The national police personnel respected and trusted her. Two years ago, here in the General Assembly (see A/68/PV.12), I emphasized that Japan has recently made a point of establishing itself as a proactive contributor to peace, based on the principle of international cooperation. The woman I just mentioned is one of the Japanese individuals dedicated to this and working on the front lines.

I am one of Japan's biggest champions of ensuring that women take on many of the roles that will shape our country's future. In our external assistance efforts, too, we emphasize policies and measures aimed at improving women's safety, health and well-being and upholding their human rights. In countries recovering from civil war, Japanese women have been making splendid contributions in support of those working to uphold the rule of law, something I am particularly proud of. On a number of previous occasions, I have urged the international community to ensure that the twenty-first century will be an era in which women's human rights are protected.

Today, I am also pleased to be able to report that Japan has finalized its action plan on women's participation and protection based on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), important aspects of which include protecting women and girls from violence and providing them with basic health services. Moreover, this year, for the second consecutive year, we hosted WAW! 2015, the World Assembly for Women, holding meaningful discussions with a view to creating a society in which women can shine.

I believe the United Nations is a venue where optimistic realists can come together. It does not give itself up to impotent despair of the future, but neither does it avert its eyes from reality. That is how it has shaped the 70 years of its history. And I, too, feel compelled to face up squarely to reality on several issues, the first of which is North Korea. In that regard, Japan intends to work in coordination with other relevant countries

in an effort to arrive at a comprehensive resolution of the outstanding issues, including those related to abductions, nuclear power and missiles.

This year, the seventieth anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, was one in which we relived our grief. Regrettably, however, it seems that in some places nuclear arsenals, with no transparency, continue to grow. Moreover, this year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons failed to come up with guidelines for future nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We believe that the United States and Russia should continue to reduce their nuclear weapon stockpiles, while we also insist that other States possessing nuclear weapons should also work to reduce their arsenals. In its determination to eliminate nuclear weapons completely, Japan is preparing a new draft resolution aimed at promoting united action on the issue by the international community that I am sure many countries will support.

This year, as we celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, a major push for reform of the Security Council has begun. During the last session of the General Assembly, the assiduous efforts of dedicated individuals and various countries greatly intensified the discussion of Security Council reform. And two weeks ago, here in this very Hall, that enthusiasm was passed on to the current session as the entire Assembly applauded (see A/70/PV.1). Emboldened by that enthusiasm and by my conviction regarding the role that Japan should play in that process, I will continue to work to achieve reform of the Security Council with the cooperation of the President and Member States. Japan hopes to become a permanent member of the Council and to make a commensurate contribution.

Here I would like to emphasize three points. First and foremost, Japan has remained a strictly peace-loving nation during the 70 years since the end of the Second World War, and we have accumulated a successful record in our efforts to foster peace and prosperity around the world. Japan worked hard diplomatically in Cambodia and Timor-Leste, first by sending personnel to participate in peacekeeping operations there and later by providing assistance over the long term.

The first of the three stages involved in peacekeeping operations is decision-making, in which we determine what is to be done and where. That is

followed by the necessary preparations of personnel and financing and, lastly, by the process of launching physical operations on the ground. Japan has been able to help to bridge the information gaps that tend to occur between those stages. We have also been able to make a positive and major contribution by ensuring that we take full responsibility for our decisions and actions at every stage. Right now, members of an engineering unit of Japan's self-defence forces are working around the clock in South Sudan. In Kenya, experts from our ground self-defence force are training members of the Kenyan, Ugandan, Tanzanian and Rwandan armed forces on the best ways to operate heavy engineering equipment so as to deal with the problems that arise when peacekeeping operations become hopelessly trapped in areas where roads and bridges have been destroyed. We also recently made changes to our domestic legal framework that will enable us to contribute more broadly to peacekeeping operations going forward.

Secondly, Japan is a country that values ownership and partnership. We have been of the view for many years that if we are to overcome despair and improve our welfare, it is important to give equal consideration both to the wishes and intentions of the parties concerned and to international cooperation. Our ultimate objective is to ensure that the people themselves gain the ownership that will enable them to determine the direction of their own lives, and by emphasizing that approach to arrive at the concept of valuing human security.

My third point is that Japan always strives to listen actively to the voices of the parties concerned. Three days ago, for the third consecutive year, I hosted the Japan-African Regional Economic Communities Summit Roundtable, meeting with leaders from the African countries concerned. For the past 20 years, Japan has also hosted the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), and next year for the first time TICAD will convene in Africa, where I hope to be able to listen to an even richer spectrum of African voices. Last night I also met with leaders from the Pacific island countries to discuss such matters as observing 5 November in common as World Tsunami Day, as well as conducting training and capacity-building related to tsunamis.

Japan became a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the first time in 1958, two years after it was admitted to membership in the United Nations. If we are again selected this year thanks to

the gracious support of all those here, it will be our eleventh time serving on the Council.

More than any other country, Japan has subjected itself to review by its peers. The three points I have noted today represent some of Japan's strengths, something that all here will concur with, based on the path we have trodden so far. We intend to use those strengths to help strengthen the United Nations. We are a people who have always seen in the two letters "UN" a certain radiance. Bearing the standard of its role as a proactive contributor to peace based on the principle of international cooperation, Japan is determined to undertake reform of the Security Council in order to transform the United Nations into a body relevant to the twenty-first century and subsequently, as a permanent member of the Security Council, to fulfil its responsibilities by making still greater contributions to world peace and prosperity.

In conclusion, I look forward to Members' kind understanding.

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

Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait

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

Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Sheikh Al Sabah (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, on behalf of the Government and the people of Kuwait, I extend our sincere congratulations to the President of the General Assembly and his country, the Kingdom of Denmark, on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. We

believe that his vast experience in political affairs will enable him to conduct the deliberations of this session wisely and ably. We wish him success in that endeavour.

We also note the successful manner with which his predecessor, Mr. Sam Kutesa, conducted the deliberations during the previous session. In that regard, I also would like to pay tribute to the tremendous efforts of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in leading the Organization in accordance with his vision and ideas based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security, while simultaneously striving to achieve the Charter's goals in a sustainable manner by confronting the manifold risks and challenges that are engulfing the world.

Once again, we express our most sincere condolences and heartfelt sympathy to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in connection with the stampede that resulted in numerous deaths and injuries at Mina during the Haj. While we pray to Allah, the Almighty, to accept the victims in His Grace and grant them eternal peace, and solace and fortitude to their bereaved families, we also pray for the speedy recovery of the injured. We appreciate and are grateful for the enormous human and material assets that the King, his Government and people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia make available every year to organize and facilitate the Haj and to provide every comfort to the pilgrims.

This year, the international community is celebrating 70 years of service by this great leading world Organization, during which it has worked to create a world in which humankind can enjoy peace and security during a period marked by exceptional circumstances — a period when the political, economic, social and humanitarian challenges in the world have increased. During that time, the United Nations has continued to provide its service in accordance with the aims and objectives of its Charter in order to surmount those growing challenges and confront them by creative means. Those undertakings have to a great extent become history to be taught to future generations in order to demonstrate the importance and inevitability of international cooperation and the capacity of the United Nations system to continue its boundless giving to the peoples and countries of the world.

Perhaps one of the most outstanding milestones on the path to the success of the United Nations is embodied in the adoption of the post-2015 development

goals in the form of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (resolution 70/1), which can be considered to be an extension of the international community's efforts based on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs have, by and large, achieved their purposes, and the United Nations has surpassed its goals in facing up to the challenges that it is confronted with, and has proceeded to implement comprehensive, radical solutions in the areas of human development and individual rights. That includes the goal of totally eliminating poverty in its multiple forms, ensuring that all human beings enjoy equal rights in dignity and access to education and health care, as well as ensuring political participation, gender equality, youth empowerment and addressing the ongoing environmental degradation.

In that regard, the State of Kuwait affirm its effective participation in the international partnership to fully implement the Sustainable Development Goals over the next 15 years. That is based on Kuwait's firm belief in the Charter of the United Nations and on Kuwait's support for the Organization. Kuwait will continue its funding in appreciation of the certificate of appreciation presented by the Secretary-General to Sheikh Al Sabah, the Amir of the State of Kuwait, as a humanitarian leader. That award is tantamount to a medal of honour for the leadership displayed by the Government and the people of Kuwait in saving the lives of millions of people. Indeed, Kuwait occupies first place in the provision of humanitarian assistance globally as a proportion of its gross national income, the highest percentage provided by a donor State, according to the *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2014*.

Furthermore, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development continues its leading role in providing development assistance to developing countries, without any regard for geographical location, religious belief or nationality. Since its establishment, in 1961, more than 100 countries in all parts of the globe have benefited from the Fund's projects, which total \$18 billion. Over the next 15 years, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development will continue to provide loans and create development programmes within its operational programmes, which are based on its own resources, including \$15 billion to meet the needs and requirements of sustainable development.

Undoubtedly, it is important for the international community to work to consolidate and promote the existence of peaceful societies that are based on

justice and are free from all manifestations of violence and radicalism. That confirms the principle that no sustainable development can take place without security, and no security can exist without sustainable development.

There has been a proliferation of conflicts and civil wars in our world today, accompanied by the emergence of violence and the dangers of radicalism and terrorism, with their multiple causes and employing diverse means in a number of countries, particularly in the region of the Middle East. It is civilians who make up the majority of the victims. The international community must stand up to those challenges, which threaten international peace and security; it must address their causes and dry up the resources that fuel them.

The Republic of Yemen and its brotherly people face serious challenges owing to the intransigence of the Houthi militias and their insistence on breaching their commitments and on threatening the security and stability of our region and our countries. That situation requires strong action to support the legitimate Government of Yemen and to achieve peace and stability in our region. We would like to emphasize the need to commit to the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative, comply with the outcome of the National Reconciliation Conference and respond to the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen in that regard. The State of Kuwait has not ignored the humanitarian needs of the Yemeni people. Kuwait announced, upon instructions from His Highness Sheikh Al-Sabah, the donation of \$100 million to meet the needs of Yemen.

In Syria, as that disaster enters its fifth year, the scope of humanitarian suffering is exacerbating the multiple other parameters of the crisis. The number of dead and injured are rising, and the number of refugees and internally displaced persons continues to increase. The flow of Syrian migrants and refugees to Europe attests to the magnitude of the crisis. We have warned against the dire consequences of the situation on Syria, the Syrian people, their neighbours and the entire world. In view of the aforementioned, the State of Kuwait reiterates its firm and principled position, namely, that the solution to that disaster can be achieved only through peaceful, political means, as opposed to other means, whose price would be paid by our brothers in Syria. In that regard, we welcome the endeavours of the United Nations and those of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Mr. Staffan de Mistura,

which seek to mobilize efforts to implement the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex), issued in 2012, aimed at establishing a transitional Government that is fully functional, and at maintaining the territorial integrity of Syria, preserving the coherence of Syrian society and meeting the needs for dignity of the Syrian people.

Within the framework of supporting international efforts to alleviate the humanitarian suffering in Syria, since 2013 the State of Kuwait has hosted three successive international donor conferences to lend support to efforts to improve the situation in that country. The pledges made at those three conferences amounted to approximately \$7.15 billion, of which the State of Kuwait contributed \$1.3 billion. The bulk of the money pledged has been delivered to the United Nations specialized agencies and other international, governmental and non-governmental organizations in the humanitarian affairs field. The remainder of those contributions has been distributed through local charitable institutions working in the humanitarian and development fields.

With regard to the situation in Libya, we are closely following the agreement announced in the Moroccan city of Skhirat by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya, aimed at forming a national consensus Government that would put an end to the fighting. We look forward to a positive response to that initiative from our brothers in Libya, so that they can stop the bloodshed, preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their homeland and restore security and stability throughout Libya.

Our region faces exceptionally delicate dangers that threaten its security and stability. They stem from terrorist and violent groups that commit, supposedly in the name of Islam, criminal acts rejected by all religions. The brutal crimes committed by the so-called Daesh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant have spread death and destruction, particularly in Iraq and Syria, and are a threat to international peace and security. A much-needed international coalition has been formed to tackle those terrorists. The State of Kuwait took part in the establishment of the coalition by providing logistical support. The practices of that terrorist organization have extended to the State of Kuwait. Daesh committed a cowardly terrorist act, targeting a mosque during the holy month of Ramadan, which killed and injured a number of our citizens. The national unity and cohesion between the people and the leadership of Kuwait made those who wished Kuwait ill miss their mark, thereby

reaffirming a long, honourable national history that has witnessed floods of sacrifices for the sake of the unity and stability of the State of Kuwait.

In the humanitarian field, the State of Kuwait has also responded to the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. Kuwait announced the donation of \$200 million to assist our Iraqi brothers in alleviating the suffering caused by the brutal practices of the Daesh terrorist group. Work is ongoing to disburse that donation, in cooperation with the competent parties in Iraq and international organizations. We reaffirm our support for all the measures taken by the Iraqi Government to preserve the security, stability and territorial integrity of Iraq. In that regard, the State of Kuwait reiterates its firm and principled position rejecting all forms of terrorism, extremism and intolerance, irrespective of their causes or motives and whatever their sources or the identity of their perpetrators. Kuwait stresses that promoting a culture of tolerance and coexistence among peoples and nations is among the top priorities in the approach that it follows in its internal and external policies. Such policies are anchored in the tolerant Islamic sharia law and in the importance Kuwait attaches to maintaining the links between development, security and human rights, as it works to develop a global strategy to combat terrorism and achieve international peace and security.

The international and regional efforts that seek to lay the foundation for peace in the Middle East face many impediments as a result of Israel's intransigence. Israel continues its illicit expansionist policies by building illegal settlements on occupied Palestinian territory and by detaining thousands of Palestinians in its prisons and detention centres. Its repeated acts of aggression, including the attack on Gaza during the past year, has left in its wake unprecedented destruction and loss of life and property. That is in addition to its continued imposition of an illegal and inhumane siege on Gaza, and the escalation of its attacks on the holy Al-Aqsa Mosque and Muslims there. Those attacks are in violation of all humanitarian standards, international laws and the relevant Security Council resolutions. That makes it incumbent upon the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, to carry out their responsibilities and continue to put pressure on and compel Israel, at all levels, to accept the resolutions of international legitimacy, grant the Palestinian people their legitimate political rights, and recognize their independent status and sovereignty over their territory,

with East Jerusalem as their capital, in accordance with the borders of 4 June 1967 and in line with the principle of land for peace, the Quartet's road map and the Arab Peace Initiative.

In the same regional framework, the State of Kuwait welcomes Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), which endorsed the comprehensive agreement on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action concluded between the five permanent members of the Security Council, plus Germany, and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The agreement was the result of diplomatic efforts over a number of years aimed at addressing the Iranian nuclear situation. The State of Kuwait hopes that the Islamic Republic of Iran will continue to cooperate and fully implement the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and adhere to its responsibilities under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the relevant Security Council resolutions. In addition, Kuwait hopes that Iran will respond to the efforts of the countries of the region to lay the foundations of good neighbourly relations based on cooperation, mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs, and that it will end its occupation of the three Emirati islands, all of which will contribute to reducing tensions and to security and stability in the region.

In that context, we call upon Israel to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to subject all of its nuclear facilities to the inspection and supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency, in compliance with the resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, which called for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the adherence of the State of Kuwait to the multilateral international system, as well as to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. I would like to underscore our belief in the importance and necessity of exerting all efforts to ensure the continuity and generosity of our great Organization through the fulfilment of all States' obligations and responsibilities, as pledged in international conventions and conferences. That will, in turn, contribute to finding just and fair solutions to global threats and challenges, while according due attention to the higher goal of maintaining international peace and security.

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

His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Matteo Renzi, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy.

Mr. Matteo Renzi, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Matteo Renzi, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Renzi (Italy) (*spoke in Italian; interpretation provided by the delegation*): It is with gratitude and pride that I come here today to express the voice of the Italian people, a generous and responsible people, who every day have shown their commitment to saving the lives of hundreds of their brothers and sisters in the heart of the Mediterranean region.

This Hall calls for profound thinking rather than slogans. In every part of the world, political life is more and more fixated on the present. It is tied to discussions shaped by 24/7 news stations, the Internet and social media. Let me be clear. I belong to a generation for whom social media represent an extraordinary tool, a horizon of freedom that allows us to change lives and prospects. There is nevertheless the risk of reducing that horizon to a discussion of the next opinion poll or tweet. I think we should reject what has become a dictatorship of the moment, and take the time to pay homage to this Hall for its efforts in engaging in more meaningful reflection.

I am thinking of my country, which, on a map, appears to be shaped like a bridge, a bridge connecting North and South, Europe and Africa and East and West, a bridge that spans from the Middle East to the Balkans. Because of its geography, and especially its culture, Italy has always been a kind of extraordinary cultural laboratory affected by influences of every kind. That is the reason that we were the first country

in Europe to grasp the momentous dimension of what is happening in the Mediterranean region. From the very beginning — even in this Hall last year — we have said that the refugee question is not a question of numbers (see A/69/PV.9). The problem of migration is not one of organization or statistics. The problem is fear, the fear that runs through our societies and that we must take seriously if we wish to defeat it.

In Greek mythology, Phobos was the god of fear, able to paralyse the best armies and cause the most easily fought battles to be lost. That is why the glorious and ancient city of Sparta built a great temple to Phobos and did everything to gain his favour. Europe was born to defeat fear and replace it with the ideal of courage, peace, cooperation and civilization. And for a long time, Europe embodied that ideal. Over the past 70 years, our continent has left behind centuries of war and civil war. Europe had become a true miracle. For those like me, who as a young man witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall and found in that event a reason to devote my life to public service, to see new walls going up today is intolerable.

Europe was reborn to tear down walls, not to build them. That is why Italy is on the front line in rescuing thousands of migrants fleeing from war and despair. For that same reason, I had the privilege of accompanying Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on one of our ships currently participating in the rescue operations. Addressing migratory flows requires the capacity to respond to that emergency with a global and comprehensive strategy. In that vein, Italy has partnered with African countries through a broad array of initiatives, and in particular with the African Union, a cooperation about which I am the opportunity to speak recently at the third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa, which produced the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

In the 70 years since the birth of the Charter of the United Nations in San Francisco, the Organization has learned how crucial its role is. It has had the wisdom to recognize its mistakes and the strength to correct them by writing a new chapter that will ensure a better future for all of our children. I think that it will take an effort on the part of everyone, and Italy will not shirk from its responsibilities.

That is why we decided to present our candidature to the Security Council for a non-permanent seat for 2017-2018, with the ideal in mind of building the peace

of tomorrow. We believe that it is the job of each one of us here today to create an alternative to the culture of violence and nihilism exemplified by the recent crises in the Mediterranean, the Middle East, Europe and at the borders of Europe. I am thinking, for example, of the consolidation of the ceasefire in Ukraine. I am thinking of the great joy with which we welcomed the news of the agreement between the United States and Cuba, one of extraordinary historic proportions. I am thinking of the hope that each of us now has as a consequence of the agreement with Iran on that country's nuclear programme, which begins a new hopeful phase.

While we are committed to the implementation of that agreement, we also firmly reiterate the right of the people and the State of Israel to exist. Only through dialogue and negotiation will we be able to find a future for coming generations. Moreover, on the delicate question of Israel and Palestine, there is no alternative to dialogue. It is essential to return to the negotiating table, with the goal of reaching a solution based on two States living side-by-side in peace and security.

This open debate of the General Assembly has been characterized by many discussions on Syria. All of us have acknowledged and felt, on a very personal level, the failure that years of inertia has produced. We believe that the only way out of that quagmire is through a political solution that leads to a process of genuine transition. That will work only if we have the courage to stare reality in the face and acknowledge the presence of an enemy of unprecedented danger at our doors, namely, Daesh, the embodiment of extremism and terrorism. Through its Carabinieri corps, which plays an important role in Italy and the world, Italy is proud to lead the coalition for training the Iraqi police force. We know that the work of the security forces is decisive in ensuring daily security, enabling a family to return home without incident and enabling a mother to reassure her children. We will continue working with the global coalition to counter ISIL, in particular the United States and Saudi Arabia, and will maintain our leadership role in the working group to counter financing for Daesh.

At the same time, we underscore that Daesh is not limited to the specific region of the Middle East, even if there is an extraordinary mosaic of pluralism and beauty there. Daesh may reaffirm itself with strength in Africa, starting with Libya. From this rostrum, I renew my appeal to all the parties who hope for peace and a unified nation in Libya. We must unite our forces. Our

Libyan brothers and sisters must know that they are not alone, that the General Assembly has not forgotten them. Italy is ready to collaborate with a national unity Government and to restore cooperation in key areas so as to give Libya back its future. If the new Libyan Government asks us, Italy is ready to take on the leadership role in a mechanism, authorized by the international community, to assist in the stabilization of the country.

There are many reasons for our role in the fight against terrorism. It is a battle for values, a battle for culture. The terrorists want us to die. Failing that, they want us to live under their rules. That is why the battle that we are waging is a battle against darkness and fear, because fear is the playground of terrorism. The first area in which we see that is that of culture. When terrorists attack Palmyra or the Bardo Museum in Tunisia, or a school or a university, from Asia to Africa, they are not attacking the past, they are targeting our future.

Italy is the country where the culture of the conservation of cultural assets was born. Proud of our roots and of our Renaissance, we have the highest concentration of UNESCO cultural heritage sites in the world. That is why, together with our partner countries and friends, we aspire to be the guardians of culture throughout the world, carrying out concrete actions, both here in New York and at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, through United4Heritage, the Blue Helmets of culture. On the basis of a model developed in our country, we are proposing the establishment of an international task force, with military and civilian members, for operations to protect and rebuild art historical sites. That is our identity. That task force will be available to UNESCO, and it could be deployed in the framework of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Let us not forget that even Europe runs the risk, in the absence of a major educational project that would show that the evil seed of terrorism is growing on European soil as well. Let us not forget that what has happened in recent months and weeks — from Charlie Hebdo in Paris to what took place in Belgium and in Denmark — involved women and men born in European countries, raised and educated in European countries and yet transformed into terrorists who sought to undermine human rights and the very *raison d'être* of our continent. I think, therefore, that it is important that we all succeed in this educational challenge together and that our peacekeeping model,

which President Obama noted yesterday and for which we thank him, can serve as an established model that can be deployed in various countries, such as is happening now in Afghanistan. I wish to recall Italy's commitment to honouring the women and men who have sacrificed their lives for our collective security, in particular in that country. We are proud of the work of our soldiers and civilians aimed at supporting the Afghan Government on the road to peace and prosperity.

The Security Council is at the centre of the challenge. That is not a bureaucratic issue, but rather a political one. The Uniting for Consensus group is ready to continue to work with all members.

Human rights, which are today under attack, are for us a reference point at every level. I am thinking about Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. I am thinking of resolution 69/186, adopted by the General Assembly last December, with its moratorium on the death penalty, an issue on which we will tirelessly work. I also recall the words that the Holy Father Pope Francis pronounced here (see A/70/PV.3) and at the United States Congress. The resolutions against forced and early marriage (resolution 68/148) and against female genital mutilation (resolution 67/146) are clear signs of the shared commitment of our world community.

The deep connection between peace and security and between human rights and development is also the message of the current Universal Exposition in Milan. The slogan of Expo 2015, "Feeding the Planet: Energy for Life", is a message that brings together many of the aspirations of the General Assembly, in particular that of promoting sustainable agriculture. I wish to make a commitment, especially to the African countries, that we will never stop working in that direction, bolstered by Italian know-how and the desire to work together. Guaranteeing access to food for all, fighting world hunger, changing consumption patterns, ensuring the centrality of women as central stakeholders in agriculture, defending smallholder farmers, as well as easing tensions and conflicts caused by the degradation of arable land and the scarcity of water for irrigation, are not secondary issues.

The legacy of Expo Milan is assured by the Charter of Milan and by the commitments of each of us to fight climate change. Italy stands alongside Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and is mobilizing the necessary

resources to ensure that the conferences in Lima and Paris are successful.

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), Italy has accepted the challenge of the five Ps — people, prosperity, partnership, planet and peace, which we recognize and which inspire our action for the future. But let me say that Italy intends to contribute with strength, in particular in those battles in which some countries seem to be alone. In the next few weeks in Milan, we will welcome our partners, the small island developing States, which are considered small States but are actually great States for their value, to the events on climate-change adaptation that will take place in mid-October at Expo Milan, and we will bring a large delegation to Venice, where we will show participants, in one of the most beautiful artistic cities in the world, how we are working to combat the risks associated with the presence of high waters and the lack of attention on the part of the international community.

In conclusion, as a candidate for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council, Italy wants the values we have discussed to occupy a central place in the Security Council. But I do not want us to think of those values in an abstract way. I do not want us to forget that what brings us here is not a document. It is a face; it is many faces.

In Italian schools, our children learn about the strong connection among the ancient civilizations of the Mediterranean, Africa and the Middle East. Today, those children are not just extras in a movie. They are the reason why we are here today. We believe that of all the values we teach our children at school we cannot forget that the first value is life.

Faced with the migration crisis, many of us were deeply moved this summer by the photo of a little boy named Aylan. He was a child from Kobani, who, together with his older brother, fell asleep without ever being able to see the future. He was photographed, dead, on the beach at Bodrum. We must not limit our commitment to the emotion of the moment. We must bear that image in mind and commit to doing our best. Many children have died in the heart of the Mediterranean. They died on the ships launched in the direction of Europe by traffickers, the new slave traders of today. However, together with all of those children who are no longer with us, I want to recall the names of children whom no one talks about: Yambambi,

Salvatore, Idris Ibrahim and Francesca Marina. They are some of the children who were born on the ships of the Italian Marines and Coast Guard, which saved thousands of women, and in some cases enabled them to give birth on those ships. I wish to thank my fellow citizens for the extraordinary work that they have carried out. I want their names to be remembered with the names of those who did not make it. Their heroic actions should serve as an admonishment for all of us. Politics can be restored to dignity when we are aware of the enormity of our challenges. The old Europe, born in

the name of courage, does not give in to fear. Italy will proudly do its part.

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

Mr. Matteo Renzi, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy, was escorted from the rostrum.

The meeting rose at 3.05 p.m.