



General Assembly

Seventieth session

26th plenary meeting
Friday, 2 October 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Lykketoft (Denmark)

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

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

General debate

The Acting President: I now call on His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates.

Sheikh Al Nahyan (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure to congratulate Mr. Mogens Lykketoft on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session, and to affirm that the United Arab Emirates stands ready to provide the fullest support during his presidency.

This year's session is of particular significance as it marks the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations and the commencement of a new chapter that builds on the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through the adoption by our Heads of State and Government of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). My country welcomes this ambitious agenda and believes that it will transform the world over the next 15 years.

The United Arab Emirates is deeply worried by the upsurge of violence due to active extremist actions in my region that undermines its stability. Terrorist crimes have surged in an ugly manner unseen since the end of the Second World War, committed by the Islamic State

of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Hezbollah, Al-Qaida and other groups that exploit religion for political purposes. We condemn the brutal methods used by these groups in the name of Islam. They have no connection with the tolerant teachings of Islam, which calls for coexistence and tolerance.

Our principled position, as we stand shoulder to shoulder with the people and Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, is based on our firm belief that the stability and prosperity of Egypt reinforces the stability of our region. The recent political and economic achievements of the Government of Egypt are major steps towards its recovery and positively assist the recovery and stability of the region and restore Egypt's pivotal and historic role in the region. We commend Al-Azhar University for its long-standing tradition in confronting extremist ideologies, and the role of its scholars in renewing the religious discourse. We call on the international community to provide Egypt with the fullest support in its fight against extremism and terrorism.

My country's is participating in the coalition supporting the legitimate Government of Yemen in response to the request by the President of Yemen to provide the necessary support to the Government and people of Yemen in confronting the Houthi coup, and combating other terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and ISIL that have exploited the chaotic and unstable conditions in Yemen and increased their terrorist acts. We seek, with the international community, to restore the political process in Yemen in accordance with the agreed

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parameters, most importantly the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and its Implementation Mechanism. To this end, it is important to ensure full compliance with Security Council resolution 2216 (2015), which was adopted after consultations with relevant States of the region.

This process underscores the importance of improving the working methods of the Security Council by involving affected States and regional organizations in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, which will enhance the effectiveness of the Organization and contribute significantly to improving the implementation of United Nations resolutions and the prevention of conflicts. We commend the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen. We affirm our continued support for the Arab coalition led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its commitment to enhancing the capacity of the Yemeni people to restore stability. We regard the liberation of Aden from the Houthi rebels to be a military and humanitarian victory, with Aden now the logistical base for delivering vital humanitarian aid to the Yemeni people.

To alleviate the humanitarian situation in Yemen, we have provided assistance worth more than \$200 million. We will continue to work with the United Nations to deliver aid to meet the humanitarian emergency needs of the neediest people. We believe that the full control of Bab Al-Mandab by the coalition forces is yet another military success in securing that vital sea lane. It marks the end of the control of the rebels and their ISIL supporters, while demonstrating their weakening presence in other strategic areas in Yemen.

We are deeply concerned regarding the ongoing tension and instability in Libya, which represent a major threat to security and stability in the region. We stress the need to lift the ban imposed on the capacities of the elected Libyan Government to fight ISIL and other terrorist organizations and to respond to transboundary threats.

We are increasingly concerned about the inability of the international community to reach a political settlement of the Syrian crisis and put an end to the violence and systematic mass atrocities committed by the Syrian regime against its own people, which have resulted in the displacement of millions of Syrians and the destruction of their properties. The crisis has also had serious humanitarian consequences on affected

neighbouring countries and created a political and security vacuum exploited by terrorist organizations, especially ISIL and the Al-Nusra Front. The Security Council must therefore fulfil its principal mandate and reach a consensus on a settlement of the Syrian crisis so as to ensure a political transition and the formation of a new Government incorporating all components of Syrian society. We also stress the importance of the ongoing delivery of humanitarian aid to the Syrian people by the international community.

We affirm our humanitarian commitment to supporting the Syrian people and alleviating their suffering. Since the beginning of the conflict, we have received more than 100,000 Syrian nationals and extended humanitarian and development assistance totalling more than \$530 million. The Syrian and Libyan crises have demonstrated the heavy human and political toll that we are seeing every day, especially through the suffering of women and children in their mass exodus as they search for safe havens and safe livelihoods, and the heavy price paid by refugees who have lost their lives in tragic conditions. The barbaric acts of destruction committed by terrorist organizations against historical symbols and sites have also revealed the considerable loss caused to our human and cultural heritage.

As it has done in Syria, ISIL has exploited the unstable conditions and sectarian practices to further hostilities and violence among the Iraqi factions and destroy Iraq's historical and cultural heritage. Therefore, we continue to stand in solidarity with Iraq and support international efforts to combat that terrorist organization. We also support the efforts of the Iraqi Government to achieve peace and stability and end sectarian practices, and stress in this context the importance of implementing reforms to ensure inclusiveness, fairness and equality for all segments and components of Iraqi society. For its part the United Arab Emirates will continue to support humanitarian aid programmes to help the people affected by conflict. It has become evident that the salvation of our region lies in building inclusive nations free from sectarian or religious affiliations used by parties for political purposes and which have led to chaos and bloodshed.

We are fully aware of the consequences of failing to take firm measures to prevent extremist and terrorist organizations from pursuing their destructive endeavours, especially in the Horn of Africa, as we have seen done by exploiting those who do not share their

views. We commend the efforts of the Government of Somalia and its efforts to fight Al-Shabaab. We urge them to continue taking the necessary measures to restore stability and peace and reiterate our support for such efforts to achieve that objective. Therefore, we stress the need to intensify and pool our efforts in order to combat the threats of these organizations wherever they are, and to address the root causes of radical ideologies before they turn into violent extremism.

We have been committed to supporting regional and international efforts, including those aimed at combating ISIL. We have also contributed to hosting the Hedayah Centre to assist the international community in building capacities and exchanging best practices to counter all forms of extremism. We also host the Global Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies with a view to spreading a culture of tolerance and peace and promoting convergence between faiths. Recently, with the assistance of the United States, we launched the Sawab Centre in order to counter the social media messaging of ISIL and to allow moderate voices to reach the millions of people who reject terrorist practices and the misleading conceptions promoted by Daesh and other terrorist groups.

We believe that the security and stability of the States of the region depend on positive cooperation among its various agencies, which must adopt as their fundamental principle respect for sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. With regard to the statement made by the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran (see A/70/PV.13), we believe that Iran's record does not qualify it to speak about the safety of the Hajj pilgrims. We support the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and reject all efforts aimed at interfering in its internal affairs.

We reject Iran's continued occupation of the three United Arab Emirates islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, and call on Iran to return these islands. All actions and measures carried out by the Iranian authorities are contrary to international law and all norms and common values. We call on Iran to reach a just settlement of this issue either through serious direct negotiations between our two countries or by referring the issue to the International Court of Justice.

Despite all these challenges, the Palestinian issue remains at the core of conflict in our region, and one of the main threats to its security and stability. Moreover, the feelings of injustice and frustration resulting from

the continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and the flagrant human rights violations committed by the occupation forces provide extremist groups with an opportunity to exploit these serious humanitarian conditions and to spread their radical thinking and incite frustrated youth to implement their destructive agenda.

We call on the international community to seize the opportunity of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations to create effective international partnerships built on solidarity and a genuine desire to develop our countries and achieve security and prosperity for all.

**Address by Mr. Muhammad Jusuf Kalla,
Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia.**

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

Mr. Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Kalla (Indonesia): Let me begin by congratulating Mr. Mogens Lykketoft on his assumption of the presidency of the seventieth session of the General Assembly.

It is a great honour for me to stand here and share Indonesia's perspective on this year's session of the General Assembly, under the timely theme "The United Nations at 70: the road ahead for peace, security, and human rights". On its seventieth anniversary the United Nations has reached quite a ripe age, the same age as the Republic of Indonesia this year. On this occasion I wish to highlight three points: the achievements of the United Nations in the past 70 years, current challenges, and the way forward.

Firstly, the United Nation's seventieth anniversary is a good moment to look back and reflect on its progress in realizing the ideals of its Charter. The seventieth anniversary of the United Nations has been marked by the adoption of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). I should like to take this opportunity to convey my sincere appreciation to the United Nations

Secretary-General for his leadership and steadfastness in the process.

Another success story of the United Nations is certainly its peacekeeping operations which have contributed to maintaining peace and security. Indeed, the United Nations has been relatively successful in preventing and overcoming major global armed conflicts in the past 70 years. Currently, more than 100,000 personnel are involved in 16 ongoing peacekeeping operations worldwide. Indonesia is proud to be the eleventh largest police and troop contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations with more than 2,700 personnel, and yet my country is prepared to contribute more in future.

Meanwhile, the establishment of the Human Rights Council in 2006 has created a peer-based review mechanism which reflects the collective efforts among Member States to strengthen cooperation and dialogue in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Notwithstanding the achievements of the United Nations, we must not be complacent. Indeed, there are still numerous challenges confronting us. As we speak there are still numerous armed conflicts throughout the world. The suffering of the Palestinian people is still taking place, while the realization of a two-State solution is still elusive. The recent conflict in Gaza has caused more than 2,000 human casualties, displacing more than 5,000 people.

Sectarian conflict, including the threat of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), continues to threaten political stability and cause a multitude of humanitarian crises in the Middle East, especially in Syria, Libya, Yemen and elsewhere. Not only have violent conflicts torn countries and nations apart, but in Syria ISIS has also destroyed remnants of a great ancient civilization that is our shared historical legacy.

We ask whether the United Nations has done enough when faced with these unfolding and recurrent tragedies? Radicalism, violent extremism and terrorism continue to pose serious global threats. Indonesia has consistently played its role in addressing these threats, including their underlying root causes, among other ways through interfaith and intercultural dialogue, in sharing best practices in counter-terrorism as well as strengthening international cooperation. Indonesia has also set a successful example in resolving conflict through dialogue and peaceful means. In August, we commemorated the tenth anniversary of the signing

of the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding on Aceh, which ended about 30 years of armed conflict. We wish to recall, and once again appreciate, the positive contributions of the European Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) through their monitoring missions.

We note with concern that little progress has been made in the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We still lack the necessary political will for nuclear disarmament. Meanwhile, the small arms and light weapons trade, legal or otherwise, is still a multi-billion dollar industry.

We are also witnessing the worst year for human displacement and irregular migration since the Second World War due to political crises, sectarian conflicts and other humanitarian crises globally. In the past weeks, we have seen a flood of refugees fleeing from violence in Syria — where well over 100,000 people have been killed — to seek a safe haven in Europe, despite the dangers and hardships they have to endure on the way. We also ask: does the United Nations have sufficient political will to face these issues?

Meanwhile, economic disparity, poverty and global inequality continue to haunt us. Even today, more than 800 million people throughout the globe are suffering from severe undernourishment. The rich nations, comprising a mere 20 per cent of the world's population, consume 70 per cent of the world's resources. In many parts of the world, women, children, young people, persons with disabilities, the elderly and people living in conflict and emergency situations remain marginalized and untouched by the progress in development. Twenty years after the first session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, we have yet to produce a universal agreement on climate change.

In the context of trade, we have yet to see progress and concrete results from the Doha development agenda to support a rules-based, open and equitable multilateral trading system. The recent Ebola outbreak has strongly reminded us of the importance of building a strong and resilient health system globally. There are many other problems we are facing that also need to be addressed, such as intolerance, youth unemployment and uncontrolled urbanization. All of these challenges are related to the lack of progress in United Nations reform. Therefore, let us join hands in overcoming these challenges. Here, the role of regional institutions

such as ASEAN should be further strengthened in order to complement the United Nations.

We must work together in realizing peace and prosperity for our peoples. We have to stop conflicts and eradicate global inequality. We have to stop the spread of radicalism and violent extremism. We urgently need to realize United Nations reform. With its current membership of 196 compared to 60 in 1950, the United Nations system has to be even more inclusive to better reflect current geopolitical conditions.

With regard to Palestine, we must ensure the birth of a sovereign and independent Palestinian State.

We must ensure the realization of the SDGs in a timely manner. We hope that the upcoming climate change Conference in Paris will seal the long overdue agreement on climate, applicable to all countries, with the aim of keeping global warming below 2°C.

We urge the United Nations to work more effectively through partnerships with regional mechanisms to better address national and regional challenges. In this regard, ASEAN needs to be even more actively engaged in United Nations processes in seeking better solutions for our global problems. And in narrowing global disparities, we should encourage and support the strengthening of South-South cooperation. In this context, Indonesia will establish the Asian African Centre as a follow-up to the 2015 Asian African Summit aimed at revitalizing the partnership between Asian and African countries to promote peace and prosperity.

Finally, let me conclude by stating that the world today relies on the United Nations: to create world order and peace and equitable prosperity; to guarantee security for the global community; and to fully implement the principles of human rights as enshrined in the United Nations Charter. For that purpose the United Nations needs the support of each and every Member.

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

Mr. Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Albert del Rosario, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines.

Mr. Del Rosario (Philippines): On behalf of the Philippine Government, I express our warmest congratulations to the President on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. I assure him of the Philippines' support of his leadership in charting the course for an energized United Nations about to embark this historic year on an ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), our plan of action for our people, planet and prosperity over the next 15 years.

Let me also commend the President for choosing a theme that echoes the fundamental elements that led to the creation of the United Nations. This theme is also at the core of Philippine President Benigno S. Aquino III's social contract with the Filipino people.

In 1945 when the United Nations Charter was signed in San Francisco, the 51 founding Members, including the Philippines, envisaged a future of enduring peace, shared prosperity and a new era of collaboration. Seventy years later, we have created a meeting place of the world, an experiment in world governance, and a venue where the universal values of equality, tolerance and human dignity prevail.

The United Nations has become a major forum of nations that guarantees the dignity and worth of every person. It has evolved as the main platform of opportunities to fight ignorance, disease, poverty, injustice and extremism. With all the successes and challenges, praises and pitfalls, the United Nations has not only demonstrated its resilience, but has also affirmed its continuing relevance against the backdrop of complex global issues and emerging regional threats to peace and security. ape

Today, the Philippines renews its steadfast commitment to the cause of peace and sustainable development through key priority areas and national positions ranging from climate change and the rule of law, memberships in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), disarmament and non-proliferation to women, peace and security, migration and human trafficking, peacekeeping and United Nations reform.

Two years ago in this very forum (see A/68/PV.22), the Philippines outlined the five pillars that form part of the building blocks for the new framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as follows: first, poverty reduction and social inclusion; secondly, environment sustainability, climate change and disaster risk management; thirdly, accountable, responsive and participatory governance; fourthly, a fair and stable order based on the rule of law; and fifthly, peace and security. During the process of intergovernmental negotiations for the 2030 Agenda, these pillars have guided the Philippines in sharing its experiences in pursuing inclusive growth, on some lessons learned in governance and on the continuing development and security challenges that we face as an emerging economy.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the overall global development architecture need to emphasize strengthening the pillar of resilience. The Philippines knows only too well the urgency of building a climate-resilient economy, being one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world and having experienced, almost two years ago, the devastating impact of super-typhoon Haiyan, the strongest typhoon to have made landfall in recorded history.

Given the new normal of mega disasters, the Philippines will continue to play an active role in tackling the issues of climate change, resiliency and disaster risk reduction and management. The Philippines is the current President of the Climate Vulnerable Forum and will promote a meaningful outcome at the twenty-first session of the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris. The international community must adopt a new, legally binding climate agreement that is universal and equitable, that ensures a bright and low-carbon future for the next generation, and that addresses the needs of vulnerable States and sectors, particularly the poor, women, migrants and indigenous peoples.

On disaster risk reduction and management, the Philippines will be guided by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which recognizes that the State has the primary role in disaster risk reduction and management. That responsibility, however, should be shared with local Government, the private sector and other stakeholders. We will support initiatives in the United Nations that will allow us to work on the four priorities of understanding disaster risk, strengthening risk governance to manage disaster

risk, investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience, and building back better.

On maritime disputes in the South China Sea, the Philippines has long placed its faith in the rules and institutions that the international community has created to regulate relations among States. International law serves as the great equalizer among States, allowing small countries to stand on an equal footing with wealthier, more powerful States. International law is the tie that binds the community of nations together. Without it, the global order could fall into anarchy. That is why the Philippines, under the administration of President Benigno S. Aquino III, has been a strong advocate of the primacy of the rule of law. With the growing support of the international community in peacefully resolving disputes in the South China Sea, including through arbitration, the Philippines believes that the final outcome of this arbitration process would pave the way for a settlement of the maritime disputes.

On our dispute with China, a long-time partner and neighbour, we also hope that we will finally see actions that are consistent with Beijing's declarations so that genuine efforts to lower tensions in the South China Sea can succeed and the peaceful settlement of disputes can be obtained.

This year, the Philippines plays host to APEC 2015 under the theme: "Building inclusive economies, building a better world". As APEC Chair for the second time since 1996, the Philippines seeks to mainstream and pursue the following priorities: investing in human capital development; fostering small and medium enterprises' participation in regional and global markets; building sustainable and resilient communities; and enhancing the regional economic integration agenda. APEC, both as a process and a platform, continues to positively contribute to the region's economic environment by promoting legal certainty for trade and investment. APEC also complements global efforts to address challenges to sustainable economic growth through the APEC Strategy for Strengthening Quality Growth, which promotes synergy between APEC's work and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

With respect to ASEAN, the 10 member States will be integrating their economies by the end of this year, realizing the vision of one ASEAN community. We need to ensure that ASEAN and its member States, partners and secretariat remain fully engaged in the

United Nations system. Indeed, the partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations has been beneficial to regional peace and stability. As we reaffirmed when ASEAN met with the Secretary-General last Wednesday here in New York, we are confident of the United Nations continued support for ASEAN centrality and its pillars.

Disarmament and non-proliferation have become more compelling issues for the Philippines, given that 10 per cent of our population live and work overseas, many in hot spots in the Middle East and Africa. The Philippines remains firm on its position in favour of the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We will continue to voice our concerns over the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. We reiterate the need for the balanced and immediate implementation of the 64-point action plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which was chaired by the Philippines, particularly for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. We also look forward to the signing and ratification of the Protocol to the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone by the five nuclear-weapon States.

On conventional weapons, the Philippines will help sustain the positive momentum created by the Arms Trade Treaty's progress and continue to engage in discussions on small arms and light weapons and improvised explosive devices, particularly as used by armed non-State actors.

The Philippines will continue on its path towards successfully implementing the women and peace and security agenda by highlighting at this session the important contributions of women in peace negotiations and peacebuilding, and their roles in shaping the narratives of peace. We will maintain our active role in calling for the continued implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals on women, particularly Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. Taken together, these instruments are powerful mechanisms for realizing national and international commitments to advancing women's roles as enablers of sustainable development.

In the negotiations on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Philippines emphasized and will continue to highlight the positive contributions of migrants to sustainable development in countries of origin, transit and destination. We deeply appreciate the United Nations recognition of the Philippines as a model of migration governance because of its comprehensiveness in terms of managed deployment, solid protection, diaspora engagement and reintegration. Both the United Nations and the Philippines believe that migration governance is really about giving migrants a human face. The basic perspective of the Philippine migration management policy focuses on two important considerations: first, migration must be a shared international responsibility; and secondly, migrants' human rights must be fully respected in all circumstances.

The Philippines will also continue to play an active role on the issue of human trafficking, either as a main or co-sponsor of resolutions that recognize the heightened vulnerability to trafficking of women and girls in humanitarian crisis situations and other emergency environments. The Philippines will work with other Governments to intensify efforts for the speedy disposition of trafficking cases and strengthening of anti-trafficking mechanisms.

Since 1963, the Philippines has been a consistent troop contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations. We are committed to and have answered the call of the United Nations for the deployment of female peacekeepers. I am pleased to announce that there are now 15 Filipino women out of the 161 Filipino peacekeepers in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. Guided by the policy recommendations of the Philippine National Council for United Nations Peace Operations, we will continue to engage with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the deployment of Filipino peacekeepers and support the recommendations of the United Nations High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations to improve the safety and security of our peacekeepers.

At this seventieth session of the General Assembly, the argument for United Nations reform is now more urgent than ever. The Philippines will continue to push for meaningful discussions on enhancing the role and authority of the General Assembly, as well as on proposals to rationalize the agenda of the Assembly and its main committees. The Philippines will support calls for continuing the conversations on the much-needed

and long-overdue reforms to make the Security Council more democratic, more inclusive, more transparent and more accountable. These reforms include urging the Council to provide the General Assembly a plural number of candidates, especially women, for appointment to the post of Secretary-General, with due regard to regional rotation and gender equality. Together with other developing countries, the Philippines shares the position that a sufficient budget is important for the Organization to deliver on its mandates and missions more effectively and with greater accountability.

In conclusion, at the fourth session of the General Assembly on 20 September 1949, the late great Philippine statesman, General Carlos P. Romulo, who was just then elected President of the General Assembly, said that the goal of the United Nations

“defined by its Charter, was to make it possible for men to live better lives in larger freedom under a reign of peace founded on justice and universal respect for law” (220th plenary meeting, para. 19).

Those words now bear greater resonance. Today, I have the honour and privilege of leading the Philippine delegation, and on behalf of President Benigno S. Aquino III and the Filipino people, please allow me to convey these solid commitments of the Philippines.

First, as we prepare the way for our future generations the Philippines will continue to advocate for three key priorities and these would be: eradicating poverty; preventing conflict; and promoting the rule of law. Secondly, as we reaffirm our faith in the wisdom of the United Nations founding Members, we renew our commitment to ending the scourge of war, uphold justice and human rights and maintain international peace and security. Thirdly, as we all pursue the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, let the United Nations continue to serve as the institutional platform, the historical foundation and the moral edifice upon which we manifest humanity’s collective dreams, ideals and aspirations.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Arnold Nicholson, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica.

Mr. Nicholson (Jamaica): It is an honour for me to address this historic seventieth session of the General Assembly. I extend to Mr. Mogens Lykketoft my sincere congratulations on his election to the presidency of the Assembly. We feel confident that under his capable

guidance, this session will inspire what he has called for in this seventieth year — a new commitment to action for international cooperation towards peace, security, human rights and economic justice for all persons.

I also express Jamaica’s profound gratitude to the outgoing President, His Excellency Sam Kutesa of Uganda, for his outstanding stewardship during what has been a truly defining year for the United Nations.

As we mark the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the Organization, let us reflect on its value and work over the decades. We concede that the United Nations is by no means perfect. Yet we shudder to contemplate the kind of world that would have emerged from the ravages of the Second World War without its existence. We recognize the commendable role played by the United Nations in various fields, from peacekeeping, human development and the protection of human rights, to the codification of international law and environmental sustainability. We also value and commend the work of the specialized agencies for their impressive achievements in agriculture, population studies, labour, industrial development, health and culture, among many other areas of pursuit. It is a record of which the international community can be justly proud.

At the same time, we acknowledge that the overall results have been mixed as we have fallen short of our expectations in some key areas. Today, our world continues to be plagued by poverty and strife, which place too many people in vulnerable situations. Suffering and inequality remain widespread and too many are marginalized and left behind. To tackle these challenges we must heed the call to do more and to do better. This is an historic moment and we must use it to muster our collective will to imbue this seventieth session with a firm determination to make the eighth decade in the life of our Organization a period of unparalleled achievement. Let us prioritize action over rhetoric.

Last week, we adopted the most comprehensive, universal global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) the world has yet seen. We have great expectations of the 2030 Agenda, but they will not be met without determined effort, the exercise of political will and the forging of genuine and durable partnerships between and among all States. We must also marshal the resources required at the

national, regional and international levels to increase the likelihood of success.

The challenge posed by climate change is an existential one for the peoples of small island developing States (SIDS), whose lives and livelihoods too often hang in the balance. We therefore look for the continued support of the international community for SIDS. A key part of our work will be to ensure that, as we implement the new development paradigm, we fully address the unique vulnerabilities of SIDS, and the persistent economic and social challenges of countries in special situations, such as middle income countries. This must include the adoption of approaches to measuring development that reflects the realities of our countries.

In yet another reminder of the devastating and disproportionate impact of natural disasters on SIDS, our sister island of Dominica is currently struggling to recover from the ravages of tropical storm Erika. Jamaica joins the appeal to the international community to rally in support of the people of Dominica by assisting in the recovery, reconstruction and humanitarian efforts that are required. It is an unfortunate fact that such events will certainly occur again. In fact, another member of our Caribbean family, the Bahamas, is now being pummelled by Hurricane Joaquin. In spite of this fact, however, the international community can ensure the impact of the next natural disaster on our small island and low-lying coastal countries is lessened by helping us to improve our resilience in the face of these ever increasing calamities.

We firmly believe that the successes recorded by the Organization over the past years have reinforced the value of multilateralism as the best framework for tackling global problems. The adoption of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda are recent examples of our commitment to collective action. The next major step for multilateralism will come in a few weeks when we hope to conclude negotiations in Paris on a global agreement on climate change. We must capitalize on the momentum that we have generated throughout this year and work in concert to make the climate Conference a success for us all. The sustainability of our planet and the prosperity of our peoples depend on a meaningful outcome. We can and we must deliver for present and future generations.

Our deep concern about climate change underscores the urgent need to protect our oceans and seas. As host of the International Seabed Authority, Jamaica views with considerable interest developments that impact the preservation and sustainable use of the resources of the ocean for the benefit of mankind. We urge greater vigilance by all. Let us prioritize sustainable development over short-term goals.

The maintenance of international peace and security remains a most urgent and demanding objective of this body. While we have avoided a war of global scale over the past 70 years, today we face increasingly complex, interconnected threats to our peace and security. Intra-State conflicts and terrorist activities have transformed the geopolitical landscape and increased the threats to international peace and security. In his annual report the Secretary-General (A/70/1), points to some alarming developments in which millions of people are engulfed by conflict and crisis, most notably in the Middle East and North Africa. Millions suffer the brutal tactics of violent extremists such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab.

Transnational organized crime and the presence of weapons of mass destruction continue to threaten international peace and security, while the proliferation of conventional arms in the hands of non-State actors pose a grave risk to many countries and regions. In the face of these crises, our peoples look to the United Nations to find solutions to end human suffering. Yet, the Organization has been impotent to respond in many of these situations, calling its credibility and relevance into question.

We must admit that traditional peace and security responses have to date proven grossly inadequate in the face of today's diverse conflicts. With that in mind, Jamaica welcomes the Secretary-General's timely initiative to review and assess the peacekeeping architecture undertaken by the eminent United Nations High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. We commend the resultant comprehensive agenda and robust action plan set out by the Secretary-General. As a proud police-contributing country, Jamaica is keen to participate in the forthcoming discussions within the General Assembly and in sharing the lessons learned and the ways we might use our enhanced understanding of the new contexts in which our peacekeepers are being deployed.

We, the United Nations, must redouble our efforts to find new avenues for maintaining peace and security, through preventative approaches and the creation of durable solutions. Forging effective partnerships will be the key. History has shown us time and again that when the United Nations works with other actors within the international community, we can produce effective and enduring solutions to seemingly intractable challenges. As we move to decisively address threats to and breaches of international peace and security, I call on the Security Council to act more decisively to address these challenges. Let us prioritize peace over political expedience.

However, the Assembly continues to grapple with the urgent question of Security Council reform. Fortunately, the consensus decision of the sixty-ninth session is a call for the commencement of substantive, text-based negotiation during this historic seventieth session. That is a significant step forward and Jamaica is honoured to have made its contribution as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations during the past session.

Jamaica is well aware that in our region, as elsewhere, peace and development are inextricably linked. However, they can fall prey to rising social and political tensions, which too often culminate in conflicts. For that reason we are pleased that on the occasion of the second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States held in Cuba in 2014, our Community proclaimed Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace.

Jamaica recognizes that it is through dialogue and mutual respect that we can begin to address many long-standing conflicts. We are therefore heartened to see the warming of relations between two of our closest neighbours and call on the United States Administration to take a further bold step by immediately lifting the unjust economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. The Group has further noted and welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General to facilitate a solution to the controversy between the two countries. The importance of keeping diplomatic channels open and engaging in dialogue was reiterated.

Jamaica remains concerned about the ongoing border controversy between Guyana and Venezuela. We therefore welcome the recent decision of our two neighbours to resume diplomatic dialogue with a view to bringing the controversy to an early end.

The conflict-fuelled humanitarian crises unfolding throughout the world, particularly in the Middle East, North Africa, the Mediterranean, and into Central Europe, require our urgent attention. So too do the humanitarian crises that impact people living in areas prone to natural disasters.

It is unthinkable that we should tolerate the immense suffering of millions, including vulnerable women and children. Let us be our brothers' keeper and reach out in the universal and timeless spirit of "one love" so poignantly championed by Jamaica's musical icon, the late Bob Marley. It is Jamaica's hope that the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 will signal a turning point in how we, the global community, treat with such crises in order to contain and reverse their effects, and where possible prevent their occurrence.

I now turn to the area of disarmament and arms control, which is in danger of becoming a neglected and forgotten goal of the United Nations. Sadly, the disarmament machinery has been languishing in a state of paralysis for the past 19 years. The vast expenditures on weapons and military equipment of all kinds, which consume a massive share of the world's resources, could be more properly channelled into the development agenda that we have just adopted. By so doing, the world would not only be more prosperous, it would also be much safer and more secure.

We are disheartened that the international community has failed to seize the opportunity provided by the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to make significant progress on its commitment to ridding the world of nuclear weapons. We must invigorate our disarmament efforts through new and more effective approaches. Jamaica therefore supports efforts to address the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and joins the strong call for the negotiation of a legally binding instrument to prohibit their use, which is embodied in the recent humanitarian pledge endorsed by 114 States.

Of immediate concern to Jamaica is the proliferation of firearms of every description that endanger the lives of ordinary citizens, undermines the rule of law, threatens economic and social stability and fuels violent crime. Those who manufacture such weapons must exercise greater controls and support anti-proliferation efforts. The Arms Trade Treaty, which entered into force less than a year ago, can make a significant

contribution to such efforts. We are therefore pleased that the recent convening of the first Conference of States Parties has laid the foundation for the full and effective implementation of the Treaty. Let us prioritize vision over short-term gain.

The promotion of human rights is a major pillar on which the United Nations was founded. We must remain resolute in our commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, knowing that every human being is equal in value and dignity and endowed with inalienable rights. In too many circumstances, the rights of the most vulnerable are treated with scant regard. Children are often exposed to a climate of violence and face persistent abuse; they are exploited and trafficked; used as labour and denied their fundamental rights. We must continue to take stronger action to protect our children and to safeguard their rights.

Persons with disabilities also face disproportionate hardships that hinder their ability to contribute effectively to their communities and societies. Jamaica is pleased to have recently passed its landmark Disabilities Act, which seeks to ensure that we fulfil our obligations to meet the needs and development aspirations of this important community. Across the world, we ought to make greater efforts to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities. We therefore welcome the higher number of ratifications of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities over the past year.

The President took the Chair.

Too many women continue to face gross violations of their human rights. Too many are victims of trafficking, violence and discrimination, of unequal treatment before the law, and of subjugation and domination. I applaud the active efforts of UN-Women to realize women's human rights. Jamaica is proud of its long-standing social legislation and its record of championing the rights of women, even as we recognize that more remains to be done, in keeping with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Racism, xenophobia and other forms of racial intolerance must also be rooted out in order to help create a more level playing field for all peoples. The launch of the International Decade for People of African Descent last December was a welcome development in our collective efforts to address these issues. In this regard, I call upon Member States to ensure the full implementation of its programme of activities.

On the grounds of the United Nations now stands *The Ark of Return*, a monument erected in honour of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. Jamaica and its Caribbean Community partners in tandem with the African Union spearheaded this initiative with the generous support of the membership. For those who may not have had an opportunity to view it, I would urge you all to spend what will prove to be a worthwhile few moments of reflection at this memorial. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that the message of the memorial, that there is no place for racial discrimination in our world, continues to be passed on from generation to generation. Let us prioritize people over power.

In this seventieth year, let us reaffirm our commitment to the guiding principles of this Organization and place them firmly at the core of our efforts to attain our shared goals and objectives: sovereign equality of States, great and small; observance of fundamental human rights; the equal rights of men and women; respect for the rule of law and the Charter of the United Nations; the promotion of social progress and better standards of life for everyone; and a firm belief that diplomacy, not force, should be our recourse in the quest to resolve conflicts and advance development. Let us therefore prioritize our commitment to action, with renewed fervour and determination. In this noble endeavour I pledge Jamaica's unwavering support and action.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Wunna Maung Lwin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Mr. Lwin (Myanmar): First of all, I should like to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. I am confident that your able leadership and diplomatic skills will steer our deliberations to a successful conclusion. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

I should also like to commend the outstanding work of your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa, at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations. This historic occasion affords us the opportunity to reflect on and look back at the achievements of the world Organization. The United Nations was founded to safeguard international peace and security in order to save succeeding generations

from the scourge of war. The Organization deserves the highest credit for its achievement in preventing the outbreak of another world war of the kind that has plagued us twice in the past. On the other hand, it is confronted with regional conflicts, a rising tide of non-traditional threats and violent extremism. We need to do more to address these challenges, collectively.

There are also achievements in bringing a better life to all. Lifting millions out of poverty, sending millions more children to school, combating deadly diseases, and promoting gender equality and human rights are remarkable milestones in the United Nations journey. The unanimous adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) last week has added to the long list of its achievements.

Still, daunting challenges remain. The colonial legacy with its inherited divisions influences today's conflicts across the world, depriving many of economic and social development. The rising threats of terrorism and acts of violent extremism need to be addressed decisively. Climate change and environmental degradation are undermining the development and lives of the poor. Inequalities are widening, pushing the poor further behind. The time is now opportune to do soul-searching on the future of the Organization and to strengthen our collective resolve to address the challenges of our time, particularly to advance its priorities, capacity and reform.

Today's new and emerging challenges are increasingly calling the effectiveness and efficiency of the Organization into question. While the cardinal principles of the Charter of the United Nations remain valid today, the world Organization, which was founded seven decades ago, needs to be reformed in conformity with today's changing realities and the drastic growth in membership. We believe that the Security Council also has to be reformed to make it more representative, efficient and transparent and to strengthen its capacity to better discharge its responsibilities to maintain international peace and security, as entrusted by the Charter.

As part of the United Nations reform, we set up the Human Rights Council in 2006 to redress the shortcomings of its predecessor, the Commission on Human Rights. Yet, human rights issues are increasingly politicized and exploited. The principles of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity are at stake. Myanmar firmly believes that the universal periodic review is the

forum where promotion and protection of human rights can best be addressed with objectivity and impartiality on an equal footing.

The most significant milestone contribution Myanmar has made to the United Nations was providing the Organization with a Secretary-General. He served the Organization from 1961 to 1971 at a difficult time of ideological contention, mistrust and security tensions among nations. He played an important role in enhancing security and expanding the Organization's work on economic and social development in poor countries. The United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme were also initiated. U Thant believed that the United Nations needed to meet the needs and hopes of people everywhere. That vision is more relevant than ever to the work of the Organization and should guide us beyond the United Nations at 70.

During the tenure of the present Government, Myanmar has moved to raise its profile in the field of disarmament. We started with the signing of the Additional Protocol of the International Atomic Energy Agency in September 2013. That was followed by Myanmar's ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction in December 2014 and of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction.

These actions demonstrate Myanmar's dedicated commitment to the cause of disarmament. Every year Myanmar introduces a resolution on nuclear disarmament that is adopted with the support of a great majority of Member States. The resolution reflects our firm conviction that our world will be more secure and safer without nuclear weapons. As the main sponsor of the resolution, once again we invite all Member States to continue to support the resolution this year.

Peacekeeping has been one of the most effective tools available to the United Nations to assist countries struggling on their difficult path from conflict to peace. Today, the nature of conflicts is changing and becomes increasingly complex. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's timely efforts reviewing United Nations peace operations. At the same time, it is of paramount importance not to weaken the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter as well as the

cardinal principles of traditional peacekeeping of the United Nations.

Fifteen years ago, we gathered here and committed ourselves to fight against poverty. We set ambitious Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and targets. While we have lifted more than 1 billion people out of extreme poverty, some 800 million people are still excessively poor. Myanmar has made notable progress in poverty and hunger reduction, eliminating gender disparity in basic education, reducing the child mortality rate, improving maternal health and advancing a global partnership for development. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development this year will take over the unfinished business of the MDGs. Political commitment, enhanced partnership, the strengthening of capacity and the provision of adequate means of implementation will be keys to success in realizing ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Unilateral economic sanctions imposed on developing countries have a negative impact on their efforts on behalf of their people. They will also hinder the realization of the SDGs. We therefore call for the early lifting of such measures.

The world is experiencing shifting patterns of rainfall and snowfall, rising temperatures and heavy rainstorms. While we envisage a sustainable and resilient planet, scientific agencies agree that human activities are contributing to climate change. This is the time to translate commitments into action and not to argue. It is crucial that the 2015 Paris Climate Change Conference reach a meaningful and universal climate change agreement keeping global warming below 2°C. It must also include obligations to provide the least developed countries with adequate and additional financial and technological resources to help address the impacts of climate change.

Migration definitely is not a new phenomenon. Myanmar shares the concerns expressed by many in this Hall about the migrants in Europe and Asia. Saving lives on the journey, better legal migration policies, creating better opportunities at home and the suppression of people smuggling and trafficking networks are essential to addressing illegal migration everywhere. We strongly believe that economic migration and human trafficking must be urgently addressed in a comprehensive manner.

Let me turn to the state of affairs in my home country, Myanmar. Democratic reforms started in 2011.

The Government is now consolidating firm foundations for democracy. The reforms have widened the democratic space, advanced economic performance and narrowed differences with the non-State armed groups. A new political culture of dialogue has taken root as Myanmar opened its doors to different political forces since the early days of the reforms. Amnesties were granted on several occasions allowing former prisoners to take part in nation-building endeavours. Activists, media people, entrepreneurs and academicians living abroad have returned home. They are working hand in hand with the Government for the common goal of a peaceful and prosperous Myanmar. Unavoidably, there are still challenges typical of a young democracy, but we believe they are not insurmountable.

Economic sector reform has proven successful. Myanmar maintains an average growth rate of 8 per cent gross domestic product in a four-year time frame. Myanmar is aiming at graduating from the least developed countries (LDCs) group at an early date. That is feasible if we can maintain this average annual growth rate over the coming years. The framework for economic and social reforms launched in 2013 for sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction is a solid platform for our LDC graduation ambition. One International Monetary Fund evaluation is that economic prospects of Myanmar remain strong.

Myanmar is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country where freedom of religion is guaranteed in its State Constitution. The houses of worship of different faiths stand side by side across the country where different communities share the same neighbourhood. The situation in Rakhine state has changed. The Government has managed not only to prevent any new violence but has also started to promote a culture of peace through interfaith dialogue and talks among communities and their leaders. Peace and stability has been restored.

As I speak, more than 20 different aid organizations are providing humanitarian and other assistance in Rakhine state. We thank the regional and international partners for their kind assistance to humanitarian, resettlement, reintegration and development needs. The Interfaith Friendship Group in Myanmar has a nationwide set-up and is composed of representatives of all faiths. The Group holds monthly meetings and conveys messages of peace and harmony to the public. They also make religious site visits and provide assistance to the needy as necessary. Various civil

society organizations are also playing their part in bridging different communities.

Peace is a prerequisite for national reconciliation and a cornerstone for building a new democratic society in Myanmar. Democracy will not flourish in the absence of peace. Without peace, economic development will not be sustained. In this strong conviction, President Thein Sein extended an olive branch to armed groups shortly after taking office with the aim of building sustainable and lasting peace in Myanmar.

Negotiations have been going on to determine the timing and modality for the signing of a nationwide ceasefire agreement. The Government, for its part, is fully prepared and patiently waiting for signature. We are hoping to sign the nationwide ceasefire agreement in the very near future. We will then continue discussions over the framework for a political dialogue. We appreciate the interest in and support of the international community for our peace process.

The promotion and protection of human rights have always been high on our agenda. Recent reforms in Myanmar have contributed to our people's ability to better enjoy fundamental human rights and freedoms. The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, first established in 2011, was reconstituted in line with the Paris Principles following the enactment of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Law in 2014.

Widening the space for people to express their views and opinions has been one of the most visible developments in Myanmar. Greater media freedom has been granted throughout the country by abolishing press censorship and permitting the publication of daily newspapers and weekly journals. Myanmar has also made significant progress in expanding the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association.

Our signing of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in July 2015 and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict on 28 September was clear testimony to rising human rights standards in Myanmar.

Myanmar suffered a devastating natural disaster in late July and August in the wake of Cyclone Komen. The damage inflicted by floods and landslides from torrential rains this year is more intense and widespread than that of cyclone Nargis seven years ago.

We appreciate the kind assistance given to the affected people by friendly countries near and far, the United Nations and the international community.

This year, 2015, is vital for Myanmar as we will hold general elections on 8 November. The forthcoming elections will be transparent, free and fair. As such, the Government is working together with local stakeholders and international partners.

Over the past four and a half years, we have been able to enhance peace, stability and the rule of law and socioeconomic development in the country. Some may not be content with the pace of our reform process. However, it is undeniable that we have been able to create better political and socio-economic conditions, foster national reconciliation through a culture of dialogue, and expand space for civil societies in nation-building.

In closing, it is important to highlight that Myanmar's democratic reform process is gaining momentum and moving in the right direction. The international community should continue its support to Myanmar in an objective and constructive manner. We shall remain fully committed and relentless in our efforts for peace, democracy and inclusive socioeconomic development for the people of Myanmar.

The President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Aïchatou Boulama Kané, Minister of State, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration and Nigeriens Abroad of Niger.

Ms. Kané (Niger) (*spoke in French*): It is a real pleasure and an immense privilege to take the floor before the Assembly at this historic celebration of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations. First, I wish to address my warm congratulations to you, Sir, on your outstanding election to head the General Assembly at its seventieth regular session. Your vast experience of international and parliamentary issues, together with your eminent personal and professional skills, are a guarantee for the success of our work.

I should also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa, for having presided brilliantly over the sixty-ninth session. To the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, I reiterate the gratitude of my delegation for the special interest he has always shown in seeking solutions to the many challenges that the United Nations and its Members have had to face.

This session in an historic one, as I said earlier, and the theme that you, Sir, have chosen for the general

debate this year — “The United Nations at 70: the road ahead for peace, security and human rights” — is very timely because it is both an appeal to take stock and a look to the future of the United Nations work in the service of international peace and security, economic and social development and human rights. In that respect, we welcome the fact that the principles enunciated in the Charter of the United Nations have stood the test of time and that the United Nations has many successes to its credit.

In the area of international peace and security, our Organization has played an appreciable role in resolving conflicts and preventing others, in particular with the establishment of preventive diplomacy in 1997. The adoption in 2001 of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; the adoption of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2006; the relaunching of the Conference on Disarmament with a view to recommendations on nuclear disarmament and practical confidence-building measures for conventional weapons; and most recently the conclusion of the Arms Trade Treaty all attest to the United Nations progress towards its goals.

With regard to the maintenance or re-establishment of international peace and security, peacekeeping operations are increasingly carried out with the participation of regional organizations and have evolved significantly in scope and mandate in order to adapt to crisis and conflicts that have become increasingly complex. Moreover, in the weeks to come the General Assembly will discuss in-depth the new report of the Secretary-General on the future of United Nations peacekeeping operations (see A//70/95). In this respect, I should like to emphasize that Niger is the world’s seventeenth-largest troop- and police-contributing country, with 1,826 men and women in United Nations peacekeeping operations in 2015.

With regard to the peaceful settlement of disputes, the International Court of Justice, established by the Charter of the United Nations as the principal judiciary organ of the United Nations, has contributed to maintaining international peace by handing down decisions and advisory opinions in resolution of a variety of many disputes. The Niger trusts the Court and has resorted to it in two border disputes with neighbouring States, which not only allowed those disputes to be permanently settled but also reaffirmed

good-neighbourliness and cooperation with these countries.

In the same vein, the conclusion in July of negotiations agreement between the five permanent members of the Security Council and Germany, on the one hand, and the Islamic Republic of Iran, on the other, with regard to the nuclear programme of the latter, was in our opinion a real reason for satisfaction.

In the Middle East, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which began several years after the creation of the United Nations, has not yet been resolved, despite its heavy toll in human lives, mainly civilians, and the many initiatives of the United Nations and the peace plans initiated by other members of the international community. The Niger continues to stand with the Palestinian people and supports all efforts that could lead to a comprehensive peace based on the two-State solution, with an independent and viable Palestine living side by side in peace and security with Israel and neighbouring countries. We were therefore pleased to attend on 30 September the raising of the Palestinian flag alongside those of States Members at the United Nations.

Also in the Middle East, the wars raging in Syria, Iraq and Yemen are reasons for genuine concern. They have inflicted terrible suffering on civilians, who have been compelled to seek refuge elsewhere. This has created humanitarian crises embodied in the daily tragedy of immigrants in the Mediterranean Sea and along the eastern borders of Europe.

In Africa, the ongoing situation in South Sudan is yet another source of great concern, despite the agreement signed in August. In Burkina Faso, we welcome the successful resolution of the situation and the relaunch of the democratic transition thanks to the efforts of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In the Central African Republic, we welcome the Bangui Forum for National Reconciliation and call on all parties to implement its outcome. We express our great concern, however, on the subject of recent events that may undermine security and respect for the agreed agenda.

In Mali, despite the presence of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and Operation Barkhane, terrorist groups continue to carry out criminal acts against the civilian population and the peacekeeping forces. The signing on 20 June at Bamako of the Agreement

for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali was a crucial milestone in restoring peace, security and stability and in creating conditions conducive to economic and social development in that country. The effective implementation of the Agreement must be supported by the entire international community.

In Libya, the situation remains very alarming and require the international community to be further involved so as to persuade the Libyan people to reconcile and fight together against the terrorist groups sowing despair throughout the country. We see every day how their activities compromise efforts aimed at genuine national reconciliation, which is a sine qua non condition to restore peace and stability and ensure the economic and social development that the Libyan people legitimately deserve. That situation is also a serious threat to the security of the Niger, a neighbouring country, and the entire Sahelo-Saharan region. In regard, we sincerely hope that the United Nations-led peace process under Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bernardino León will be crowned with success.

To those general situations of conflict are also added violent extremism and international terrorism, which are increasingly taking on worrying dimensions with the acquisition of heavy weapons and the desire to conquer territories and destabilize the area to an unprecedented degree. However, we have to be pleased by the awareness on the part of the international community of the danger that represents, as well as by its commitment to face it. Whether it is the United Nations through the relevant resolutions of the Security Council or the actions of regional organizations and subregional organizations such as the African Union, ECOWAS, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the European Union and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the international community is showing great mobilization to eradicate this scourge.

As for the Boko Haram sect, which is disturbing the peace in the Lake Chad Basin, it will certainly be defeated by the effective operation of the multilateral mixed force established by Cameroon, the Niger, Nigeria, Chad and the members of the Lake Chad Basin, as well as Benin. We would like to thank the members of the Security Council for the statement issued in August that urged the international community to contribute all the necessary support to the States of the region, in particular the members of the Lake Chad Basin Commission plus Benin. For its part, Niger is

actively committed to combating terrorism and, in close cooperation with its partners, has strengthened its national committee to combat all forms of terrorism as part of a regional and international undertaking to combat this scourge.

As the President of the Republic of the Niger, His Excellency Mr. Mahamadou Issoufou, said on the occasion of his speech to the audience at Harvard University on 3 April,

“The Clauswitz triad, people, government, army, which has always been sought in the past in so-called industrial wars, functions very well in asymmetric wars conducted by terrorists. While some claim to be carrying out jihad in the name of Allah, Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance. Islam asks Muslims to seek knowledge and, as the Prophet has said, to do so as far as China, so as to learn from the cradle to the grave. The terrorists of Boko Haram, like all other terrorists, are not Muslims. On the contrary, they are the worst enemies of Islam. For those reasons, Boko Haram has no future and will be vanquished.”

With regard to human rights, since the adoption, on 10 December 1948, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights we have witnessed an impressive development of international law and human rights law through the conclusion of numerous international legal instruments covering almost all aspects, including new rights. At the same time, important progress has been made in the codification of international law.

With regard to the challenge of migration, we are delighted that the international community is concerned with dealing with this important issue appropriately and on a global basis. The Niger is a country of origin, a host country and a country of transit. We believe that is imperative to find immediate palliative solutions that will stop clandestine immigration, dismantle the criminal economy that underlies it and solve the problem by attacking the deep causes of migration in countries of origin, causes which are of a security nature, economic and climate and sometimes political due to bad governance.

In the area of economic and social development, the United Nations system, through the operational activities of its agencies, funds, programmes and specialized agencies, has provided technical assistance, capacity-building and development projects to developing countries. I am pleased to note that the United Nations

system has acted as a neutral and trusted partner in supporting Governments, while helping them with their leadership and to fulfil their international commitments and implement their development strategies.

The Niger acceded to the United Nations on 20 September 1960 under the sponsorship of Tunisia, which we commend for its constant friendship as we mark the seventieth anniversary of our common Organization. Ever since, the Niger has been resolutely committed to international solidarity. On this solemn occasion, we welcome the new turning point of the United Nations to go beyond the Millennium Development Goals and bring about the essential changes to our planet so that the Sustainable Development Goals do not just mean rhetoric, but a true commitment to sustainable global development.

A new commitment to act is a commitment for the peoples of the world, to whom we must provide peace, stability and development. It is a commitment to heighten the spirit of sharing and solidarity at the global level. It represents a driving force break down the barriers of inequality between and within nations. Finally, it is about building a more just and more human world. That is why the Niger believes that “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” must be implemented effectively.

The commitments that we have all signed on to have meaning only if they are part of active solidarity and renewed partnership. The United Nations system must be an important actor in the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the 169 targets, including the means of implementation and the follow-up review mechanism. I hope that they will allow for progress beyond the Millennium Development Goals and contribute to meeting the challenges we face to reach the future we want, namely, economic, social and environmental well-being for all. I also hope that the Agenda’s implementation will take into account the close link existing between security, development and climate.

I also welcome the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development, adopted in July, wherein partners reaffirmed their commitment to support developing countries with a view to inclusive economic and social growth and sustainable development, in particular via increased, predictable and steady official development assistance and other public and private financing sources.

While the wounds left by the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s and 1990s have not yet healed, the 2008 economic and financial crisis has gravely undermined the growth achieved during the 2000s. The economies of developing countries — in particular the most vulnerable among them, such as landlocked countries, least developed countries and small island developing States — have been the most affected. In that regard, I underscore the importance for us of the speeding up the comprehensive implementation of the commitments under the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries and the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries.

We also hope that the Paris Climate Summit will produce a binding legal instrument that includes effective steps to mitigate the effects of climate change, including adaptation measures for these countries in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. At the same time, the commitments made with regard for the Green Climate Fund should be both respected stepped up. We welcome all the efforts that the French Government has made under the leadership of President François Hollande to guarantee the success of the upcoming historic climate meeting.

We must also redouble our efforts with regard to the commitments made under the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the post-2015 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the measures to be decided at the twenty-first Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Niger is continuing to implement an economic and social development programme that runs through the end of this year. It aims at economic growth and access by all the people of the Niger to basic social services. A new development programme, known as Vision 2035, will follow thereafter, with a focus on inclusive growth. It is therefore important that there be an appropriate mobilization of financial means and assistance for capacity-building, the facilitation of trade, technology and private investment.

On the political front, we intend to entrench and enhance good democratic governance as an essential factor for all development. In that connection, in early 2016 we will hold a series of elections for the renewal of the mandates of our institutions. Our presidential, legislative and local elections will be transparent, free

and inclusive. I invite all of our partners to support the Niger in that undertaking of consolidating democracy in my country.

The international system also needs democratic governance. That is particularly necessary because it is clearly recognized that the problems we are facing are on a worldwide scale, and therefore deserve responses of the same scope and through comprehensive multilateralism. The seventieth anniversary of the United Nations should be taken advantage of to examine how it functions and make progress in determining the necessary adjustments so that the Organization, and the Security Council in particular, will reflect the current reality of the world. Africa, which was not present when the United Nations was established because it was still under colonial domination, has to correct the historic injustice it has had with regard to its representation in the Security Council. In accordance with the Ezulwini Consensus, and in line with deliberations of the African Union, our continent should be represented in both categories of membership, with two permanent and five non-permanent seats. Furthermore, the General Assembly — the pre-eminent and most representative organ — should be revitalized so that it can play its role in finding solutions to the different challenges in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter.

The Niger believes in multilateralism, sustained solidarity among peoples and the virtues of dialogue among States. In line with those principles, we commend the restoration of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba and hope that the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations will coincide with the end of an economic embargo against Cuba's people that is so unfair.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Lyompo Damcho Dorji, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bhutan.

Mr. Dorji (Bhutan): At the outset, I should like to convey to the members of the General Assembly the warm greetings of His Majesty the King of Bhutan. I should also like to congratulate you on your election, Mr. President, and to assure you of my delegation's full support in the discharge of your responsibilities. I also thank Mr. Sam Kutesa, President of the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session, for his able leadership over the past year, in particular in steering to a successful conclusion the complex negotiations on the post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda (resolution 70/1). I also thank

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his team for their tireless efforts to advance the multifaceted work of the Organization over the past year.

At 70, the United Nations, underpinned by multilateralism and the sovereign equality of nations, remains indispensable. It embodies the collective will and conscience of humankind for a more peaceful, secure and prosperous world. Its existence reflects our enduring commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It unites all nations — big or small, rich or poor — to work together to realize our shared goals and aspirations.

Over the last seven decades, the United Nations has delivered much of what is promised in its Charter, and it is only fitting that we pay tribute to its achievements: from saving millions of lives through relief efforts, vaccinating children, eradicating smallpox and fighting AIDS to feeding millions every year in countries affected by war, conflict and natural disasters; from negotiating peace deals and conducting peacekeeping operations to advancing democracy and creating an international human rights system; and from combating climate change and reducing extreme poverty to preventing the spread and use of nuclear weapons. Those and other achievements of the United Nations are indeed noteworthy.

However, even as we celebrate those achievements, it would serve us well to take stock of the state of our interdependent world and the road ahead for the Organization. For every day we are confronted with compelling evidence that shows we are far from achieving our quest for peace, security, prosperity and human dignity for all — whether it is conflicts and acts of terrorism, the unthinkable stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, the inequalities that persist within and among nations, the rising expectations of billions living at the very margins of existence, or climate change that threatens our very survival — failure to address those interrelated global challenges is not an option.

Peace, security and human rights must go hand in hand with sustainable development. Over the past few years, we have taken stock of the state of our world, our peoples and our planet. We have undertaken a comprehensive review of the challenges and opportunities. And in a spirit of cooperation that many thought impossible, we have adopted an ambitious and transformative Agenda for Sustainable Development. It

is now time to translate the 2030 Agenda into concrete actions in earnest, individually and collectively.

Since joining the United Nations, 44 years ago, under the wise and able leadership of our monarchs the people of Bhutan have endeavoured to fulfil the vision and goals set forth in the Charter. Guided by our development philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH), which is essentially development with values, we have consistently worked to ensure that the peace, security, happiness and well-being of our people always remain at the centre of our development efforts.

Bhutan has achieved most of the Millennium Development Goal targets. Poverty has been reduced to 12 per cent. Our primary school enrolment rate is nearly 100 per cent and life expectancy has increased to 68 years. We remain a bastion of environmental conservation with 72 per cent of our land under forest cover. Our effort to safeguard the environment is reinforced by a constitutional mandate to maintain a minimum of 60 per cent of our land under forest cover for all time. Our achievements would not have been possible without good governance. Over decades, under the enlightened leadership of our monarchs, we have successfully embraced democracy.

Peace, security and human rights depend on an all-inclusive approach to development that puts people and the environment at the centre. In 2011, Bhutan spearheaded the adoption of resolution 65/309, entitled "Happiness: towards a holistic approach to development". A year later, we were gratified by the decision of the General Assembly to observe 20 March each year as the International Day of Happiness. The pursuit of happiness is a fundamental human goal and embodies the spirit of the 2030 Agenda. We stand ready to share our experience with GNH and to contribute to the growing discourse on holistic development paradigms and indicators.

Even though we have contributed least to the causes of climate change, we, like other least developed countries, are among the most vulnerable to its adverse impacts. Despite our limited resources and competing demands of development, Bhutan remains committed to the conservation of our natural heritage, and in fact has consistently contributed more than its fair share to global efforts to combat climate change. In 2009, Bhutan pledged to remain carbon neutral for all time. We have kept that promise. Our expectation is that, through the sale of clean hydro-power, by 2025 Bhutan will have

the capacity to offset approximately 35 million tons of carbon per annum in the region. That is no small feat, considering Bhutan's emissions constitute less than 7 per cent of that figure. I am pleased to state that, this week, Bhutan ratified the Doha amendment to the Kyoto Protocol and submitted its intended nationally determined contributions to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

To support the work of the United Nations in the area of international peace and security, Bhutan began contributing to United Nations peacekeeping operations in 2014. We remain a committed partner and are working to deepen and broaden our peacekeeping engagement with the United Nations. Today it is a matter of great pride that Bhutanese peacekeepers are deployed and serving in nine peacekeeping missions.

We have no doubt that implementing the 2030 Agenda within the next 15 years will be a daunting challenge. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will require countries, both developed and developing alike, to take stock of their existing development strategies and embark on far-reaching reforms to implement the Agenda. For a country like Bhutan, which is least developed and landlocked, addressing the challenges will require innovative and creative approaches to build on the progress we have made thus far.

A key challenge we face is to build a strong and sustainable green economy that ensures gainful employment for our youth, inclusive growth and promotes self-reliance. With a narrow industrial base and a high dependency on a single sector, our economy is faced with unprecedented macroeconomic challenges, despite otherwise prolonged periods of robust economic growth. A careful reorientation of our economy is imperative if we are to ensure that our future development is inclusive and sustainable as envisaged in the 2030 Agenda. In that regard, the continued support and cooperation of our development partners will be crucial as we seek innovative approaches to balance our environmental aspirations and developmental needs. That takes on even greater importance as Bhutan progresses towards graduation from the category of least developed countries to ensure that hard-earned developmental gains are sustained.

I should like to underscore the vital importance of education to achieve our transformative agenda. Many of the SDGs will not be attainable if we do not

relentlessly invest in building a dynamic and relevant education system in our countries, a system that nurtures our children and youth with the right values, knowledge and skills that reflect our aspirations and goals. In that regard, we are happy to note that ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all is a stand-alone Goal in the 2030 Agenda. In moving forward, SDG 4 must remain at the forefront of our planning and implementation of national strategies to achieve the SDGs. The education sector, which has always been accorded high priority by Bhutan, will be given special emphasis as we mainstream the 2030 Agenda in our national strategies and plans. We hope that our development partners will share our sense of priority and urgency in this vital area and support our efforts to ensure that it is relevant to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

The 2030 Agenda sets out a necessarily ambitious vision and SDGs. We have no doubt of the complexity and enormity of the tasks for its implementation. It will require systemic new thinking and a long-term perspective in our planning. It will require sincere global partnerships, predictable resources and the collaboration and commitment of all our people.

The first litmus test for our commitment to action on the 2030 Agenda will be whether or not we reach an ambitious and legally binding agreement at the twenty-first Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. That agreement must be firmly anchored in the principles of the Convention, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Mr. Fornell (Ecuador), Vice President, took the Chair.

Our decisions in Paris must be driven by the latest science. The evidence is unequivocal. An emissions pathway taking us beyond 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels would have disproportionate and irreversible impacts on the most vulnerable among us. A second test of our commitment to action would be whether we are able to deliver on our promises and pledges on the means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda. And, finally, are we able to make tangible progress in the area of United Nations reforms?

Real progress in the revitalization of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council is critical to ensure a robust mechanism for the implementation of the Agenda. Furthermore, the

Security Council must be reformed to reflect current geopolitical realities, through the commencement of text-based negotiations on the basis of decision 69/560, which was adopted by consensus.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda provides us a historic opportunity to truly awaken our spirit of global solidarity and shared values for the sake of our children and our planet. In the words of His Majesty the King of Bhutan,

“Let us place the interest of humanity, not national populations and constituencies, above all else. Let us take political risks and strong decisions in addressing the needs of humanity. The answer to global problems will come closer at hand when we grasp that universal simplicity — that sense of a shared planet and a shared fate for those who walk on it. We need shared human endeavour not just negotiated change.”

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Taukelina Finikaso, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade, Tourism, Environment and Labour of Tuvalu.

Mr. Finikaso (Tuvalu): On behalf of the Government and the people of Tuvalu, it is indeed a great honour and pleasure to deliver this statement at the General Assembly at its seventieth session. I congratulate the President on his election and wish the Assembly success and blessings under his able guidance and leadership. May the Good Lord bless and sustain him and our United Nations.

I also wish to thank the former President of the General Assembly, Mr. Sam Kutesa, for delivering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and the many other core successes of 2015 in our transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) era to that of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We applaud all the Chairs of the major United Nations conferences and summits — on disaster risk reduction in Sendai, on financing for development in Addis Ababa and last week’s Summit for the adoption of the Agenda. We thank the entire membership and members of non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector and academia, who all contributed to the dialogues, negotiations and drafting responsibilities. Let me also pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his managers, the Secretariat and all the specialized United Nations agencies, staff and peacekeepers, who are honouring the citizens of

the world with the best of their service, energy and commitment.

It has been 70 years of successful life for this sacred institution, and we have also exhausted the 15 years of the MDGs. How we have fared is a key beacon of the relevance and effectiveness of multilateralism and this solemn union, the United Nations. The noble visions and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations remain pertinent and vital for successive generations that long for peace, security and prosperity. The MDGs saved millions from hunger and poverty. We are more technologically advanced, more connected, more cooperative and more aware of the global issues — and certainly have resisted the temptation of an all-out world war.

Yet we must be honest with ourselves and note that there are persisting inequities, recurring insecurities and planetary distress that require our urgent attention. A significant number of “we the people” globally are still homeless, jobless, with many more are becoming displaced and stateless. Many are deprived of opportunities for education and health services, and many still have a hopeless future, and as such, extremism has become an alternative choice of existence for those disoriented, if not lost, souls.

In short, there are still many left behind. As we are fully aware, it is usually the aged, women, youth, the disabled and little children who are deprived and robbed of their fundamental rights to be human in such dire situations. We must have a United Nations answer. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with its 17 Goals and 169 targets, must deliver for the people. Every child, every woman, every citizen, every community should know the Sustainable Development Goals and own the rights under these Goals. The Goals must be advocated as widely as possible to all global citizens through the technological advances that we have for information and communication so that they can be understood, owned and adhered to by one and all. The Goals must bring about accountability on the part of our leaders, our development partners, the private sector, religious bodies and the youthful generation.

We must aspire to deliver tangible outcomes in all countries and to be all-inclusive in participation, design, decision-making and implementation and in the gains derived from them. Each country must take the reins and drive its own pursuits befitting their own circumstances and capabilities. The United Nations

and our universal goals are only as effective as the sum of all our positive national and regional actions put together. What we do for our own people is what makes the difference. The success of the United Nations is ours to create.

As a least developed country and one of the smallest small island developing States (SIDS), Tuvalu is fully aware of its responsibilities under Agenda 2030, as it was also with the MDGs. We are planning to host a national summit to help develop our next development plan in November. Our national priorities, along with our framework for pacific regionalism, will be aligned to the interregional agenda of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway and mainstreamed into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Our small islands face multiple structural constraints and vulnerabilities. Sea-level rise continues to inundate many of our small island coastlines and inundate our food plantations. That is a security issue, an urgent and intergenerational one. It is an existential issue for Tuvalu and other Pacific countries, and also bigger populated countries in the flood plains, and will displace many people. While many of our citizens are opting to migrate on their own terms because of existential issues, migration does not solve global warming, and the United Nations does not identify climate change migrants as refugees. That is a dilemma for us in Tuvalu.

The 2030 Agenda will be meaningless to many of us low-lying SIDS if a credible climate change agreement in Paris in December is not ambitious and action-oriented. The Paris agreement therefore must reduce greenhouse gas emissions and keep the global average temperature rise to below 1.5° Celsius; recognize that climate change is a human right issue for Tuvaluans and many other millions and is an urgent security and existential issue; be committed to a low-carbon future; include a loss and damage architecture to recognize that preventing climate change is a national obligation for those who pollute, and the polluters must reduce emissions or pay to clean, mitigate and aid those most vulnerable and without the means to adapt; provide credible, timely public finance and clarity from developed countries to the pledges of \$100 billion for climate change finances; and it must be reassuring for the private sector to transition and invest in clear energy and climate-resilient approaches.

Tuvalu will submit its intended nationally determined contributions. We must all note that our obligation is not only to submit those contributions, but also to ensure that we achieve those set targets. There must be no backsliding. We must have a good review mechanism to gauge whether cumulatively we are reducing emissions and not increasing them.

The increasing unease from destabilizing conflicts, violence, malicious brutality and related impunity throughout the globe is worrisome. We have to provide hope and leadership to find lasting peace. We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the future of the United Nations peace operations (see A/70/95), which calls for change and reform, and the Secretary-General's plan of action to promote tolerance and reconciliation and counter violent extremism.

Tuvalu also welcomes the adoption by consensus of a text to advance the negotiation of reforms to the Security Council. The adopted resolution is long overdue giving much needed impetus to the recycling of known positions and statements repeated in the foregoing 23 years. We must advance with a Security Council that is more representative of a membership and a world with more nuanced and ominous security-related issues.

Recent global social and economic tensions and market jitters remind us that we are of course not immune to a repeat of the global financial crisis. The cost and prolonged painful recovery, even in the far remote small economies like Tuvalu, are still vivid in our memories. The new SDGs framework must ensure that accountability measures are elaborated and enforced, especially for the rich echelons that are untouchable and ignorant of the far-reaching repercussions of their greed, especially to small genuine investors.

As custodians of the Pacific Ocean, Tuvalu fully supports SDG 14. We are all oceanic States as our planet and Mother Earth is more than 70 per cent blue. The blue ocean is not a sink for radioactive spillovers of nuclear wastes. It is not a dump for industrial and general garbage. It is not a carpet to sweep and hide our dirt under. We from the islands have a warning for our SDGs. Without a healthy ocean it would be a challenge to achieve many other sustainable goals. Do not give a man a fish to satisfy his hunger just for a day, give a whole generation a healthy ocean and all succeeding generations will be satisfied for eternity.

The successful implementation and outreach of the Secretary-General's sustainable energy for all will be a vital undertaking of the 2030 Agenda. Clean energy undergirds and empowers most other SDGs. We must cooperate in a shared quest for a smooth transition from fossil fuel to renewable alternatives and to ensuring that energy security, accessibility and affordability is applied holistically.

We look forward to the smooth transfer of technology and technical skills, the development of the technology bank and data and capacity-building that is tailored to each country's unique situation and context. We would appreciate the facilitation of the means of implementation and finance as discussed in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

For vulnerable LDCs and SIDS, the timely operationalization and mobilization of the Green Climate Fund, with minimal bureaucracy, will be most welcome. But as much as we need capacity enhancement, science, data and new technology, we must match this with leadership integrity. The recent papal encyclical of His Holiness Pope Francis agrees that our leadership roles must be free of political wrangling, power squabbling, conflicts, trade imbalances, bad governance, race and gender differentiation, self-interests, greed and profit-only mentality and ignorance of nature's deterioration.

We the people need SDGs championed by good accountable leaders. In Tuvalu we have conducted leadership seminars for our parliamentarians and approved a leadership code for all in leadership positions nationwide. The independent Office of the Ombudsman is now fully engaged in its responsibilities.

Monitoring and reviewing our progress on the SDGs throughout the next 15 years is vital to sustain and focus our transformative agenda per country. The role of the High-level Political Forum will therefore be critical to respond to the changing and evolving circumstances of each member and region, ensuring that Agenda 2030 is adding value, effective and fit for purpose.

The graduation criteria for least developed countries and their application require proper scrutiny and review, as they are biased towards statistical calculations rather than SIDS vulnerable realities. Tuvalu will forever be a small island developing State, with constrained options for productivity, trade and economies of scale. In fact, we are losing land because of sea-level rise. Our economic and social and environmental vulnerabilities

are intrinsically interlocked. They cannot be perused analytically in silos when computing graduation criteria.

Early in March, Tropical Cyclone Pam devastated Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Kiribati and Solomon Islands. Given Tuvalu's low elevation and small size, the devastation was significant, further confirming our high vulnerability to the increasing occurrences and severity of natural disasters. A high-level dialogue on Tropical Cyclone Pam was held with our development partners last July in Funafuti to seek assistance for an Australian \$92 million bill for the recovery efforts. We have also submitted a comprehensive project to the Green Climate Fund to better safeguard and protect our people, land and infrastructure in the long term when such disasters revisit in future.

We applaud the thawing of tensions between close neighbours the United States of America and Cuba. We sincerely hope that the embargo against Cuba will be lifted soon, and for continued dialogue, smooth transition and a resumption of economic partnerships in the near future. We thank the Government of Cuba for offering scholarships to many SIDS and developing countries in the health sector, despite their economic restraints because of the embargo. This year eight Tuvaluan medical doctors graduated from Cuba. That spirit of cooperation gives the Charter of the United Nations Charter real meaning and value.

Tuvalu also welcomes the efforts of the Government of the Republic of China on Taiwan in fostering peace and prosperity in the region and globally. The Government and non-governmental organizations of Taiwan have consistently supported various developmental and humanitarian undertakings directly and through many specialized United Nations bodies, such as the World Health Assembly, the World Health Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Taiwan's infrastructure projects, technology transfer and capacity-building have produced genuine and tangible outcomes in Tuvalu. We can achieve the ambitious goals we have set ourselves in Agenda 2030 only if all the permutations of partnerships are utilized and honoured.

Finally, Tuvalu pledges its full support for the new Agenda "Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" and for the General Assembly at its seventieth session, under the theme of

the general debate, that is, "The United Nations at 70: a new commitment to action". Let us work together to create a future that is accommodating to the total human race, and to heal and secure our planet for successive generations. If we are ambitious in all our 17 SDGs, let us not be any less ambitious with Goal 13 in Paris.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Denis Moses, Minister for Foreign and Caribbean Community Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Moses (Trinidad and Tobago): It is a signal honour for me to address this body and to extend to the President on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago congratulations on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. We also express our appreciation to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa of Uganda, for the many productive initiatives that he pursued to good effect during his tenure.

The President has assumed the mantle of leadership of this body at a critical juncture in the life of the Organization. Now is an opportune moment to reaffirm its founders' guiding vision as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and to rededicate ourselves to be faithful in our joint pursuit of the goals of peace, security, development and human rights.

But, as we assess the performance and impact of the United Nations, we must also look ahead to the next phase in the life of this unique Organization, given the many challenges that confront human civilization in general and the international community in particular. Consequently, Trinidad and Tobago considers the theme of this session — "The United Nations at 70: the road ahead for peace, security and human rights" — to be both most fitting and timely.

A few days ago in this very Hall, Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the overarching framework that will guide global development for the next 15 years. Trinidad and Tobago echoes the words of the Secretary-General that the 2030 Agenda encompasses a universal, transformative and integrated agenda that heralds a historic turning point for our world. The adoption of this landmark agreement is testament to the triumph, and indeed the power and possibilities, of multilateralism, especially as it emphasizes a people's agenda, with the promise of leaving no one behind. This ambitious and inclusive Agenda must not be lost in lofty rhetoric.

The United Nations has as its main purposes to maintain international peace and security, to promote and protect human rights and to effectively address pressing international economic and social issues, such as development, through international cooperation.

Although in the aftermath of the Second World War the United Nations has succeeded in preventing another global war, peace still remains elusive in some parts of the world. Conflicts and tensions adversely affect countries and regions well beyond their immediate place of origin, whether through forced migration, disruption of basic public services such as health, education and sanitation or through rendering impossible the normal conduct of business activity.

Trinidad and Tobago is a strong advocate for the reform of the Security Council to better enable that body to respond to the various security and other challenges that currently confront the international community. This is especially so having regard to the fact that, in the contemporary world, warfare is no longer the exclusive preserve of nation States. Other actors, with pernicious designs, have acquired the capability to threaten States and to carry out dastardly deeds calculated to intimidate, and continue to pose serious threats to international peace and security. The United Nations must therefore respond with alacrity to those threats in a manner that is acceptable to all Member States. That is achievable if the Security Council is reformed to genuinely reflect the diversity that today characterizes and embodies the United Nations.

For small States such as Trinidad and Tobago, the maintenance of international peace and security is of paramount importance. We are keenly aware that our prospects for achieving sustainable development are inextricably linked to the safety and security of our people. However, our ability to provide such safety and security is increasingly being stretched, given that Trinidad and Tobago is located in a region heavily impacted by the trafficking of small arms and light weapons, as well as its attendant ills.

This illicit trade is transboundary in nature and is largely associated with the drug trade and its international criminal networks. Consequently, Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean Community fully subscribe to the aims and objectives of the Arms Trade Treaty as a critical vehicle to address the scourge of the illicit arms trade. We do so because we understand all too well that the continued presence of this menace

in our region can, if left unchecked, undermine our peace and security and limit our progress towards sustainable development.

Trinidad and Tobago recognizes that as we celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the creation of the United Nations, the international community still grapples with the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Trinidad and Tobago and the other members of the Caribbean Community join with the countries of Latin America in celebrating our common commitment to denuclearization through the establishment of our region as the first nuclear-free zone in the world.

The disastrous humanitarian consequences of the use of the nuclear option today for a large number of people from diverse regions of the world could result in widespread suffering, dislocation of populations and increased migration, thus undermining the peace, security and development of many countries and regions. This reality should chasten all peoples, and especially the leaders of countries possessing such weapons.

Accordingly, we welcome the nuclear deal negotiated by the United States, its partners and the Islamic Republic of Iran. We wish to congratulate all the parties involved on the tenacity and patience they demonstrated in that complex and demanding process, and challenge both sides to honour their commitments.

The 2030 Agenda would not be fully implemented if the most vulnerable members of our societies — women, children, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples — are not placed at the very centre of the development paradigm. Regrettably, in some parts of the world, women and children continue to be denied fundamental human rights and freedoms, receive less pay for equal work as men and are systematically prevented from obtaining an education, all of which hinder their ability to participate in the sustainable development of their countries.

Since its independence, in 1962, Trinidad and Tobago has enacted several laws and administrative and other measures to promote and strengthen the general well-being of women and girls in society. On the international plane, we have committed to the full and effective implementation of our obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Additionally, recognizing the progressive contribution of women to peace and development, Trinidad and Tobago has since 2010 introduced, and been the main sponsor of, the General Assembly resolution on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control since the year 2010.

Our commitment to the safety and security of our citizens remains undiminished, and as we move forward it is the intention of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to adopt a 'whole of Government' approach to national security, in which all ministries and national agencies will share responsibility and will be accountable for the safety of the State. To promote such an integrated and resilient approach to national security and to contribute to the attainment of sustainable development in line with the Government's strategic vision for developed country status by 2030, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago will actively pursue mechanisms to strengthen national capacities to reduce risk and to build community resilience to threats to national security.

While time will not allow for a thorough review of our strategy, permit me to share some of the measures targeted for implementation: the development of an adaptable defence and security posture to ensure that the traditional role of the military is integrated with new roles to ensure the security of the State; the establishment of a joint border protection agency; the adoption of an intelligence-led national security architecture; and the enhancement of our disaster risk management capability policy.

The international community now accepts that climate change is a threat to our very existence. We need to be mindful, however, that this threat to humankind recognizes no boundaries, cannot be contained through high-level diplomatic talks and mediation and will weigh heavily upon developing countries, particularly small island developing States and least developed countries, thereby crippling their ability to react to external shocks to their social, economic and natural systems.

Like many other small island developing States, Trinidad and Tobago is at high risk of being severely affected by the devastating effects of climate change, and has therefore made mitigation measures a national priority, within the practical constraints of its limited financial capability. We recently witnessed the destructive effects of Tropical Storm Erika on our

fellow Caribbean State member, the Commonwealth of Dominica, which has set back that country's development by many years.

It is undeniable, therefore, that climate change and development are closely interlinked. Recognizing the need for bold and responsible action on the part of all Governments, albeit on the basis of common but differentiated responsibility, Trinidad and Tobago has adopted a proactive posture and has submitted its intended nationally determined contributions to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ahead of the 2015 Paris Climate Change Conference. It is our expectation, in conformity with that of the Caribbean Community, that any credible agreement from the Paris Conference must set the world on a path to decarbonization of the global economy before the end of the century. In order to achieve that, the agreement must be legally binding and contain provisions on mitigation, adaptation, finance, transparency and compliance that would ensure that the increase in average global temperatures can be limited to less than 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial levels. An ambitious agreement in Paris is therefore also an imperative for the maintenance of international peace and security in the medium to long term. Trinidad and Tobago is committed to work with all States to achieve a new legally binding balanced framework for global cooperation on climate change.

In the area of governance of the oceans, it is well established in international law that the utilization of resources of any kind beyond areas of national jurisdiction must be consistent with the principles under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. In that regard, Trinidad and Tobago looks forward to active participation by all States in the Preparatory Committee on the development of an international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction, for the benefit of all humankind.

The quest for economic and social justice for many cannot be divorced from the fervent desire of all peoples to live in freedom and without fear of persecution. In that regard, the growing religious and ethnic diversity of our societies highlights the ever-present need for mutual respect and appreciation for the value of diversity that today is a defining characteristic of many countries and communities. A lack of such tolerance and respect for human rights and human diversity has

fuelled once again in our lifetime the horrific crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of aggression. With a view to ensuring accountability for those accused of committing such crimes, and in order to act as a deterrent to would-be perpetrators, the international community established the International Criminal Court (ICC). Trinidad and Tobago calls upon all States that have not as yet done so to support the ICC.

We applaud the initiation of steps towards full rapprochement between the United States and Cuba, which has so far, among other things, been exemplified through the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the two States, thus reducing tensions in our hemisphere. Trinidad and Tobago hopes that, sooner rather than later, that process will mature with the lifting of the anachronistic economic embargo and blockade that for too long has undermined the economic development of Cuba.

While we are very much encouraged by the easing of tensions in the northern Caribbean with the resumption of dialogue between the United States and Cuba, we are concerned by the recent developments surrounding the protracted border controversy between our neighbours, Venezuela and Guyana. Trinidad and Tobago remains convinced that the controversy should be settled by pacific means in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations.

At the same time, Trinidad and Tobago reiterates the position of the Caribbean Community on the matter concerning citizens of the Dominican Republic of Haitian ancestry and calls on the Dominican Republic to ensure that the human rights of these citizens do not continue to be infringed and are honoured in accordance with international law.

Once again, the failure to find a permanent solution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict remains of deep concern to Trinidad and Tobago. That situation affects the ability of both sides to live in peace and security and also impinges on the right of the Palestinians to self-determination. It is our hope that both sides will work together with others in resolving this decades-old problem, resulting in the establishment of a Palestinian State with clearly defined borders, coexisting in peace and security alongside the State of Israel.

The United Nations must adapt to the ever-changing geopolitical environment as well as the emerging economic and social landscape. Trinidad and Tobago

therefore emphasizes the imperative to move with greater alacrity on the question of the revitalization of the General Assembly in order to ensure the effective execution of its mandate. The General Assembly is the only institution or grouping of States that possesses the inclusiveness, and indeed the legitimacy, to act on behalf of the international community. We must therefore spare no effort to make it a more effective and dynamic instrument in the service of all the peoples of the world, elevating none above others and respecting and defending the rights of all.

Trinidad and Tobago commits to continue to play its part at the regional and global levels to ensure that we avoid the pitfalls experienced by the United Nations. We will work faithfully with others to build on the tremendous progress made by this institution over the seven decades of its life in order to bring about a greater commitment by all States to peace, security and human rights for all peoples of the world so that they may live in larger freedom and continuing prosperity.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Alva Romanus Baptiste, Minister for External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation of Saint Lucia.

Mr. Baptiste (Saint Lucia): As I address this historic seventieth session of the General Assembly, I join in the chorus of congratulations to the President on assuming the high honour and Office of President of the General Assembly. Please permit me to take this opportunity to wish him a successful tenure, which I am sure will be guaranteed by his experience as Speaker of the Parliament of Denmark.

It has been 70 years since this great vessel of peace took flight following the atomic destruction of the Second World War. At that time, people throughout the planet were of one mind that the pursuit of peace was the supreme objective. For 70 years we have grappled with our mission in the midst of war and conflict and sometimes we have even questioned our effectiveness.

For 70 years we have been coming to the General Assembly to deliver statements of glorious intention, only to be disappointed by inaction or adverse decisions. After 70 years the time has come to confront our collective conscience and reconcile our words with our actions. As we subject ourselves and the global Organization to new levels of critical examination we must answer the question: are we still on course to securing a world of peace or are we evading the urgent

course of duty which calls upon us to act with wisdom, humility and love for humankind?

We must also focus on what we have achieved and the work that we need to do, now and in the future. As we engage in this process of introspection and reflection, we must seize the opportunity for rededication and regeneration for the United Nations to continue addressing the increasingly complex issues of human survival.

The President has assumed office at a time of tremendous trial for many people throughout the world. Today many of our Middle Eastern brothers and sisters in Iraq, Libya, Syria and elsewhere find their lives transformed by graphic experiences of disturbance, personal trauma and, in some instances, much physical and mental pain. That is a human tragedy of unthinkable proportions, and the people of Saint Lucia and other small countries look on in near disbelief at the huge exodus of people from those previously prosperous countries.

Suddenly, the leaders and peoples of the European countries to which those migrants on the move have sought refuge find themselves gripped by surprise and concern as they search to find the correct reaction to this humanitarian crisis. We can well understand the dilemma faced by receiving countries, which have to balance their particular national interests against their wider global responsibility. They know that the more new immigrants they accept, the more they will have to accept as others desperate to escape those situations of suffering and trauma flock to friendlier fraternal nations.

We note that this huge migration flow is towards Europe, some of whose countries border or face the Middle East zone. Although we are geographically far away from the crisis, the human suffering burns our collective Caribbean heart. And even as we see the inevitability of Europe's responsibility to bear the brunt of this tragedy, we recognize the long history of the interplay between Europe and the Middle East.

As we see and hear some in Europe express concern about the magnitude of the challenge, we want to encourage and assure them that the right thing can and must be done. Smaller and poorer nations have demonstrated a humanity and generosity that has made a big difference whenever and wherever they assisted.

In the Caribbean we offer the example of Cuba, which despite being saddled with a United States economic embargo for more than 50 years has been able to provide scholarships to train thousands of professionals from the Caribbean and Latin America every year. In addition, Cuba's support in combating various medical epidemics throughout the world, including the recent Ebola crisis in Africa, has been exemplary and legendary. Therefore Europe, despite the magnitude of the challenge, as a group of powerful countries can respond effectively within the framework of its integrated whole and be comforted and inspired by the example of Cuba.

As a global community our interests cannot be served in the morbid scenario of conflict and war. It is in that context that Saint Lucia extends commendation to both the United States Administration and the Government of Iran for working out a diplomatic solution that will manage the nuclear threat in the region for the next 15 years. That is certainly in keeping with the peacebuilding mission of the United Nations. This approach will not only lead to a general lessening of tension but may set the stage for the West and the Middle East to work out a rational and convincing strategy to tackle the root causes of conflict in that area, thereby re-establishing peace and tranquillity in that part of the world.

In that connection, Saint Lucia appeals for a similar approach to the continuing Israeli/Palestinian conflict, one that will result in the resolution of that longstanding issue. In our seventieth year, we must assert the supremacy of international law and diplomacy. Resolution 181, of 29 November 1947, calls for the establishment of both the State of Israel and that of Palestine. My country reiterates its call for the recognition of the statehood of Palestine and its full membership of the Organization.

Clearly, a powerful byproduct of conflict and war is the displacement of people — physically, socially and economically. Nonetheless, Saint Lucia and other small States expect that present events will reinforce the notion that we now live in one world where your troubles are mine and my troubles are yours, and that there will be a greater concern to have problems resolved through genuine diplomatic engagement rather than through the force of power.

Countries like my own are acutely aware that the problems of others far away throughout the world can

easily wash on to our shores. We are very mindful, therefore, that even when we do not feel directly impacted there is the very real possibility that the consequences may spill over into our region. We have often experienced that through the volatile prices of oil and petroleum products. It has also been spurred by political turmoil and financial disturbances in far off regions but which often have a substantial impact upon our own plans for development and economic progress. The theatre of war is also present in our region.

From an economic perspective, small States like Saint Lucia are literally terrorized by the constant attacks of the rich and powerful on any economic advances by the poor and powerless, which place our future in persistent peril. How can we be expected to be stable and secure if our vulnerabilities as small island developing States are constantly ignored and overlooked? How is our war on poverty supposed to succeed and be sustained if at every turn it is systematically undermined by the regressive imposition of policies by the international community, whether in the form of illogical economic graduation, insensitive erosion of trade preferences or inexplicable black listing of our financial jurisdictions?

This geographic and economic insecurity has become the central source of domestic instability. To increase the specific gravity of our economic problems, from an environmental standpoint small States like Saint Lucia face growing insecurity as climate change unleashes increasingly deadly and destructive disasters upon us. We are now all aware of the recent devastation of Dominica by Tropical Storm Erika, which caused damage amounting to almost 100 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP). As I speak now, Joaquin continues its decimating march across the economic and environmental fabric of the Bahamas. These two most recent examples, only weeks apart, are vivid testimony to the ferocity of the threats that confront us.

In addition, small States like my own find ourselves today trapped in a situation where the erosion of trade preferences and a decline in official development assistance and foreign direct investment have caused us to engage in increased borrowing to meet our current social and economic obligations resulting in high debt to GDP ratios. That has narrowed the room for fiscal policy flexibility and fiscal manoeuvring. This is further compounded by the increased security costs of responding to the negative impacts of the illicit

trade in small arms and illegal narcotics, as well as reconstruction costs following natural disasters.

The new global partnership for sustainable economic and social development provides a platform from which to tackle human security in all its facets. We firmly support the international community consistently working to minimize the causes of global and regional insecurity.

In that vein, 2015 provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to set a transformational global agenda for sustainable development. The quartet of global agreements forged towards that end — on disaster risk reduction, financing for development, the post-2015 development agenda and the new climate change agreement yet to be finalized — are intended to usher in a new era of sustainable development for all. The adoption of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals suggests that we have progressed our understanding of the profound challenges that face developing countries. However, the economic, social and environmental security of small island developing States like my own rests in the effective implementation of these agreements.

Small countries like Saint Lucia can hardly withstand externally induced insecurity. We require for our development a context of regional and international harmony, which is dependent on linkages far from our immediate environments. So there is substantial concern that small States with limited material or diplomatic outreach do not have access to arrangements that allow them to speedily draw support from outside to inhibit or minimize environmental insecurity.

The major countries of the globe, and indeed the members of the Security Council, would no doubt be sensitive to the issues of insecurity. But what small countries have always known, and larger Powers are now beginning to recognize, is that harmful events in particular sections of the globe have the potential to affect and draw in all of us as members of today's integrated global system.

Saint Lucia maintains its position that expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership of the Security Council is imperative to better reflect the contemporary world realities and achieve a more accountable, representative, transparent — and more important — relevant Security Council. We applaud what we have achieved during the past year by moving the process now to text-based

negotiations, and look forward to the realization of that process.

In Saint Lucia, and in the other members of the Western Hemisphere, there is a general sense of relief and welcome at the diplomatic reconciliation that has been taking place between the United States and the Republic of Cuba. The Government of Saint Lucia believes that this initiative opens the way to a full-scale reconciliation of hemispheric relations. It removes unnecessary impediments to our efforts at regional and hemispheric cooperation. It consolidates the channels that are necessary for pursuing viable paths of regional economic integration, and it allows small countries like Saint Lucia to utilize the scale of the regional platform to initiate plans and processes that can be mutually beneficial in the Caribbean region and in the hemisphere as a whole.

Furthermore, it is another indication of the removal of situations and stratagems that serve only to create sources of insecurity. We are firmly of the view that countries in our hemisphere committed to this perspective now have an opportunity, on the basis of the initiative taken by Pope Francis and by the President of the United States of America, to promote the path of peaceful resolution of disputes in full awareness of the fact that national or regional conflicts are inhibitors to persistent economic growth and therefore social stability.

The normalization of relations within our hemisphere is also an indication that old conflicts and disputes kept frigid by the era of the Cold War, are giving way to new avenues of cooperation and collaboration among countries. In addition, the post-world-war period has begun to give way to new arrangements or efforts at reconciliation that permit peaceful relations in various parts of the world.

The Government of Saint Lucia, which has official relations with the Government of the Republic of China on Taiwan, notes the continuing interchange between that State and the People's Republic of China, which is defined in particular by the economic relations in

which they are mutually involved. We believe that as we retain the status quo of accrediting recognition to Taiwan, it is not for us but for themselves to indicate the appropriate template in the relations between the two countries.

As I prepare to bring my presentation to its logical conclusion, I want to return to a reflective mode on the 70 years of the United Nations. There have been problems, of course, but there have also been successes. In the words of the late President John Fitzgerald Kennedy "Let us not curse the remaining dark. Let us continue to gather the light."

There will continue to be challenges and difficult issues that test the resolve of members, as well as those cited by many academics that are important to our international relations — for example, the resolution of national identity and self-determination issues; the increasing importance of non-State actors; great Power involvement in the third world; the role of religion in international politics; global militarization; and the perceived impotence of international law and international organizations such as the United Nations in dealing with very complicated forms of violent and non-violent conflict resolution.

But we must continue to advance the principles of reasoned discussion, dialogue and discourse, and the unswerving pursuit of peace. In the 31 years between 1914 and 1945, the world experienced two world wars, but in the 70 years since the end of the Second World War the United Nations has kept the world away from widespread war.

Let us work, hope and pray that we remain true to our peaceful character and that, even in the midst of provocation, we seek to keep the world safe, projecting an orientation of enforcing peaceful relations and shedding no innocent blood. Therefore, from Saint Lucia to the President I convey once again our warmest congratulations as he guides our proceedings over the next year.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.