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Seventieth session

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Official Records

President: Mr. Lykketoft (Denmark)

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

Agenda item 8 (continued)

General debate

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Hugo Roger Martínez Bonilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of El Salvador.

Mr. Martínez Bonilla (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour to address the Assembly on this very important occasion, as we commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the international Organization, and we have entered a new phase related to the future of humankind by adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1).

There is no doubt that the challenges that lie before us are enormous, and consequently we have need an Organization that is ever more democratic, participatory and effective. We must move forward in the still-pending reforms of the Organization. We must work with renewed vigour on that task, especially with regard to the Security Council. The adoption of the new Agenda imposes on our countries numerous challenges to which we are committed, but it also imposes challenges on the Organization, particularly with regard to providing us with timely support to fulfil the historic responsibility that we have assumed.

We have concluded a stage in world history marked by important progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. However, that progress has

not been sufficient. The fight against poverty and inequality goes on. Economic and financial crises have aggravated the vulnerability of the poorest. In addition, the proliferation of conflicts throughout the world and natural and human-made disasters have had an impact on the living conditions of many people in various parts of the world. Those conditions demand that we bring about a genuine and sustainable global transformation, which must include the restructuring of the international financial architecture, as well as a rethinking of cooperation mechanisms with a view to transforming them into transparent and efficient mechanisms that meet the needs of human development.

I believe that we must pay special attention to the issue of sovereign debt. The negative impact of debt servicing on development needs and on the effective enjoyment of human rights in our countries is enormous, because it directly affects the capacity of the State to generate public investment and stimulate private investment. That in turn impedes the fulfillment of the goals related to development. It is therefore a priority to establish a debt restructuring mechanism that promotes a just and shared distribution of responsibility between debtors and creditors by adopting an approach centred on human needs.

We know that for the success of the Sustainable Development Goals, a new vision of international cooperation is required. To that end, we must work to change the current structure of development financing and strengthen South-South cooperation without delay.

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My country recognizes the importance of the fact that in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), adopted by the Sustainable Development Summit, special mention is made of migrants as a vulnerable group, and of their undoubted contribution to sustainable development in the countries in which they live. El Salvador insists that the international community, the organizations involved in migration issues, those defending migrants and human rights in general — but especially the United Nations — should take up the challenge with courage and guide the actions of their agencies, resources and programmes to strengthen cooperation initiatives in the field of international migration in all its facets. In the various migration crises we face, we must not lose sight of the fact that we are dealing with human beings, whose rights and development we should guarantee.

I take this opportunity to highlight the special contribution that Latin America and its regional organizations have made to multilateralism. Their valuable proposals and initiatives have contributed to promoting and making progress on issues that are very relevant to the international agenda, such as migration, the environment, disarmament, human rights, gender empowerment and equality, and sustainable development, among others. All of the efforts that we have undertaken as a region have been extremely valuable in the progress of the multilateral agenda, and they have been aimed at strengthening solidarity and cooperation among the peoples of the world.

In that context, we should mention the regional efforts made by the Central American Integration System, particularly in the area of security, which complement the regional efforts and the national efforts undertaken by each of our countries.

In the area of security, as members know, El Salvador is waging an unprecedented war against organized crime through its El Salvador Seguro plan, which, like the Central American Security Strategy, has four main components: crime prevention, crime prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration, and the strengthening of the institutions that fight crime. We have committed a major part of our national resources to this effort, but the scope of the challenge forces us to come to the international community to request its strong support and solidarity, so that we may win this good fight against criminal groups that threaten the peace of our families.

Moreover, in relation to the global drug problem, I wish to emphasize the coming special session of the General Assembly on drugs, to be held next April in this Hall. The special session in 2016 will give us an opportunity to revitalize the dialogue and exchange good experiences so that we can assess the progress made in complying with our international obligations to combat drugs and to work at the same time on the challenges to be overcome at the global level.

El Salvador is pleased and honoured, as the coordinator of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, to have the opportunity to represent the Latin American region at meetings of the preparatory committee for that event. We will seek close and effective coordination so that the debates and dialogues move towards the definition of a comprehensive vision of an international policy against drugs based on the welfare of the individual and respect for his or her rights.

Furthermore, in the context of the importance that my country attaches to controlling the arms trade as an effective means of reducing the violence plaguing Central America, El Salvador supports relevant international regulation to combat organized crime so as to prevent the human suffering caused by irresponsible transfers of weapons. I fervently appeal to the international community to work together on the effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and its universalization. Let us not forget that decisive action in that area means nothing less than the difference between life and death for thousands of individuals in the world.

At the same time, El Salvador, as a country that has benefited from peacekeeping operations, recognizes that mechanism as a legitimate and effective measure for ending conflicts in countries and regions. On that count and as part of our staunch commitment to peace and international security, my country will continue to participate in United Nations peacekeeping missions through its contributions of military and police personnel. We will continue to work to strengthen our participation by deploying units under their own flag. We also support all the initiatives aimed at ensuring the participation of women in the various contingents, as provided for in Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent Council resolutions.

In conclusion, I wish to recall the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We

must be aware that they are still valid and should be respected by all Member States in the process of change that we have begun.

In that context, we should also mention the process of detente that has begun between Cuba and the United States of America, a process that has had a positive impact not only on the relations between the two countries, but also on the continent as a whole. El Salvador is pleased with the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States of America and trusts that in the current favourable climate, the will expressed to lift the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba will become a reality as soon as possible.

I am convinced that with a will and with effort, we can all build an international order based on promoting peace, security and sustainable development, protecting human rights, eradicating poverty and reducing inequalities. El Salvador stands ready to face that challenge and is committed to working to that end.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Al-Alawi Bin Abdulla, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman.

Mr. Abdulla (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and your country, the Kingdom of Denmark, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. We trust that your diplomatic experience will greatly impact the success of this session. We are ready to work with you, Sir, and all the delegations of Member States so as to accomplish our goals and objectives, particularly in the maintenance of international peace and security and in the achievement of sustainable development.

We are also pleased to express our appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the friendly Republic of Uganda, for his able stewardship of the Assembly at the previous session. I would also like to take this opportunity pay tribute once again to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless efforts to improve the work of the Organization in order to meet the aspirations of all Member States.

This session coincides with the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. The occasion represents an opportunity to renew our confidence in joint international action through the adoption of positive initiatives that could contribute to

the creation of an international economic order based on justice for all States and nations.

Since the dawn of the Omani renaissance on 23 July 1970, we in the Sultanate of Oman have embraced peace and dialogue as basic principles. That is because we are convinced that dialogue is the most logical foundation upon which all forms of conflict can be resolved. Throughout the history of the United Nations, humankind has sought to strengthen confidence through agreed and conciliatory ideas and the principles of the United Nations Charter, which help to deepen and widen common interests and mutual benefits. We also believe that dialogue is a peaceful means of settling disputes, and its use is preferable to resorting to confrontation and conflict.

From that perspective, my country welcomed the agreement reached between the P5+1 and the friendly Islamic Republic of Iran on the Iranian nuclear programme. Despite the fact that that breakthrough took great effort and a considerable amount of time, it can serve as a model for solving controversial and complicated issues among countries through dialogue, negotiation and the balancing of international interests. We hope that that historic agreement will have a positive impact on regional and international peace and security and pave the way for a new era of relations based on cooperation, respect and mutual trust.

The raising of the flag of the State of Palestine as an observer State at the United Nations, though a symbolic gesture, reminds us of the tragedy of the Palestinian people and their aspirations to attain fulfilment of their legitimate rights. We call on the Palestinians and the Israelis alike to return to the negotiating table and work on achieving the vision of two independent States living side by side, through steps that would secure the interests of both parties, based on the pillars of the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant United Nations resolutions. We also call upon the United Nations and the parties sponsoring the peace process in the Middle East to make greater efforts to reach an agreement for the settlement of the crisis, instead of merely to managing it.

My country also follows with great concern the developments in the crisis in the brotherly Republic of Yemen, which has resulted in disastrous humanitarian tragedies. While we understand the circumstances that provoked the crisis, we continue to believe that the political parties in Yemen are capable of restoring security and stability to the country. We are deeply

concerned that the continuation of violence in Yemen has enabled several terrorist organizations, including those on United Nations watch lists, to use Yemen as a base for their terrorist activities. That poses a direct threat to the region's security and stability.

We call upon all political forces in Yemen to support the efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, to contribute to the restoration of peace and stability in the Republic of Yemen and to enable the achievement of the aspirations of the brotherly Yemeni people to a safe and dignified life. My country also expresses its strong condemnation of the targeting of diplomatic and consular premises in Yemen's capital, Sana'a. We call on all parties to respect the rules of international law and refrain from any acts that violate their international obligations, particularly those set forth in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 1963.

As the Syrian crisis has now entered its fifth year, the Syrian people continue to suffer; hundreds of thousands have left their homes and risked their lives in circumstances unprecedented in modern history. We call upon all Syrian parties and neighbouring countries to support the mission of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, to restore security and stability to that brotherly country and contribute to the eradication of the terrorism that has been able to find a foothold in Syria and currently poses a threat to regional and international security. My country reiterates its firm and uncompromising stance in condemning all forms of terrorism, without regard to their causes and motivations.

While we commend the humanitarian efforts by countries and regional and international organizations to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people, we appeal to the international community to do even more to protect the brotherly Syrian people at home and abroad. In that respect, we would like to emphasize the continuation of the humanitarian programme offered by the Sultanate of Oman to help Syrian refugees.

My country stresses the importance of maintaining the universality of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. That can be achieved only by strengthening the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), namely, nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In that context, we call upon the sponsors of

the Treaty to fully implement the resolution of the 1995 NPT Review Conference on making the Middle East a region free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. That would help safeguard the credibility and universality of that important treaty.

Resolution 55/2, containing the Millennium Declaration, is considered an important document, as it sets forth an ambitious international programme to assist countries achieve high levels of economic and social development. However, the weakness of the global economy over the past 20 years has had serious social repercussions, including an increase in number of unemployed, which has crippled the ability of many countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Bearing that in mind, we call upon the international community to put the issues of the economy, trade and the environment at the forefront of the urgent issues that need to be addressed. The first and foremost of those issues is the international energy trade, since it is crucial that the international trade in energy, specifically the price of oil and its by-products, be properly organized.

My country looks forward to the convening of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris. We hope that participating countries can agree on a balanced international programme that takes into account the concerns and interests of all developing and developed countries.

We are facing real challenges that we must tackle resolutely if we are to ensure that we are not hindering development but encouraging it in a way that helps us to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. We therefore believe that the next phase of joint international action requires that the members of the international community expand their concept of genuine partnership and shared destiny. We hope that this session succeeds and that the goals of the United Nations will be accomplished.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Péter Szijjártó, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary.

Mr. Szijjártó (Hungary): I am pleased to be addressing the General Assembly on the occasion of this seventieth anniversary.

Seventy years ago, the United Nations was founded to promote cooperation among its Member States and

to establish international peace and security. That would be a good reason to celebrate, but here we are, 70 years later, and if we are frank with one another — and we should be — it is obvious that there are no major reasons to be satisfied or to celebrate. That is because, on the seventieth anniversary of the foundation of the United Nations, it is not an exaggeration to say that in the years since the end of Second World War, Europe, where I come from, has not had to face at any one time challenges as numerous and as serious as those that it is facing now. And if we are talking about the world as the whole, putting things in a global context, we can say that since the end of the Cold War, the world has not had to face as many simultaneous difficulties as it is facing now.

Over the past five years, we have seen 15 wars and armed conflicts launched or renewed. And now Europe is facing a war as well. A couple of years ago, we would not have thought that Europe would have to face a war again in the twenty-first century, but now that has happened. There is a war going on in Ukraine, in our neighbourhood; and if we look at the eastern region of Europe, we see a series of frozen conflicts and territorial disputes. The European Union runs a programme called the Eastern Partnership, through which we promote cooperation with six former Soviet republics that would like to have some type of European perspective. But Belarus is the only country of the six that is not involved in some kind of territorial dispute or frozen conflict.

And Europe still faces economic challenges. I do not want to discuss that in detail, since another entire general debate would not be enough to lay out all the economic and trade challenges that we have been dealing with, but what I can say is that Europe, whose share of the world's population is between 7 and 8 per cent, produces 15 to 16 per cent of the world's gross domestic product and at the same time contributes 50 per cent of the world's spending on social welfare. One does not have to be an economist to see that that is an unsustainable situation.

Currently, however, the European Union is confronting the most complicated challenge that it has seen since its foundation, namely, mass migration. Unfortunately, we have not been able to find the right answers — yet. That is because we have no consensus in Europe, or worldwide either, about the nature, size and volume of this mass migration.

In that regard, I should underline that what we are facing is not a refugee crisis. It is much greater and more complicated than that. We are situated on the most travelled migration route, and I have to say that this mass migration is composed of asylum seekers, economic migrants and also, unfortunately, some foreign fighters.

As far as its size is concerned, this mass migration has an unlimited supply of people, and if we cannot stop the influx soon, the problem will stay with us for a long time. I totally agree with the statement made by the Secretary-General at the start of the general debate to the effect that there have never been so many people on the move as there are right now (see A/70/PV.13). There are 60 million people all over the world who have had to leave their homes because of armed conflicts or wars, and in 2014 we saw the biggest increase of all in the numbers of migrants and refugees. There have not been this many refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons (IDPs) at one time since the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established.

There are two reasons for that. One is that there has been a series of bad international political decisions, in which Europe was not the only participant. The other is that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) has been gaining additional territory. If we are honest with one another, we have had only limited success so far in fighting ISIS. Owing to those two reasons, a significant part of the Middle East and North Africa has been destabilized. As a result, more than 8 million people in Iraq and more than 12.2 million in Syria now live on humanitarian aid.

In Afghanistan, after the mission of the International Security Assistance Force concluded, the international military presence there was to be reduced by 90 per cent. There are already 1 million Afghan refugees in Iran and 1.5 million in Pakistan. We have not even mentioned the struggles in Libya and the lack of a unity Government there; we have not mentioned Boko Haram or sub-Saharan Africa, where there are already more than 12.5 million IDPs.

In the meantime, we also need to focus on the fight against climate change, in which our success so far has also been limited, since the average temperature on Earth has increased by almost 1 per cent since the last century. Global warming leads to rising sea levels, which lead to extreme weather conditions, which lead

to droughts, a lack of food, and because of that, to further migration movements. Today, there are between 25 and 30 million people who are migrants because of environmental conditions, and some forecasts say that by 2050 there could be around 100 million.

The overall picture we are seeing is one of a destabilized region in the Middle East and North Africa, with 15 new armed conflicts and wars in the past five years and limited success in combating climate change and water shortages. And it is obvious that for those three reasons, a mass global migration has begun.

“Global” is the most important word here. We have to agree that this is a global challenge. And if mass migration is a global challenge, we need a global answer, a global solution with global participation. Currently, it is Europe, or more precisely the European Union, that is bearing most of the burden of the latest waves of mass migration. I have to say that if that does not change, if we cannot regain control over our borders, if we cannot reduce the influx and the pressure, Europe could be destabilized as well, first at the periphery and then even at the centre. I would therefore like to stress again that this is a global challenge that needs a global answer, a global solution based on global participation.

What should be done? In principle, instead of addressing only the consequences, we should handle the root causes. That is the key issue. For that we have a five-point proposal. First, we have to increase our international efforts to combat ISIS. Secondly, we have to stabilize the situation in the region of North Africa and the Middle East. Thirdly, we have to create a system of world quotas for the relocation of migrants. Fourthly, we have to continue and strengthen United Nations missions. And fifthly, we have to fully implement the Sustainable Development Goals. If we are not able to comply with those five requirements, I doubt that we will be able to address the challenges entirely.

With respect to ISIS, we need to take into account that, although we have put together a very broad military coalition, we have so far achieved only limited success. ISIS is still acquiring additional territory, killing people and committing brutal crimes. We have all seen the videos. ISIS has caused more damage to our common historical heritage than all armed conflicts in the world since the end of the Second World War. So we have to increase our efforts and take coordinated action. There also needs to be close cooperation between the transatlantic community and the Russian Federation.

Hungary has already done its homework. We have deployed 112 troops in Iraqi Kurdistan. Our original mission was to act as a force protection unit but, based on a request from the United States, we are now participating in training Peshmerga troops as well. We must not forget that ISIS has committed crimes against humanity, so we urge the International Criminal Court to investigate and sanction those brutal crimes properly.

My second point was that we have to create stability in the region of the Middle East and North Africa. The major challenge there is Syria, but it is obvious that if we fail to make peace in Syria, then the migration pressure on Europe will not decrease. The only acceptable means, and maybe the only successful means, is through negotiations. There I agree with the German Chancellor, who said that we have to ensure maximum political inclusiveness. That might be the successful way to settle the conflict in Syria. That returns us to the critical point that there will be no forward progress and no possibility for resolving the crisis in Syria unless there is agreement and cooperation between the transatlantic community and the Russian Federation.

If we study the nature of mass migration, we see that migrants are usually transported by human traffickers. That is why I urge the international community to take international action to harmonize and tighten its legislation against human trafficking.

Thirdly, there should be a system of world quotas. For that reason, we ask the Secretary-General to prepare a proposal to ensure that we address the challenge globally and that all major players in global politics and economics do their part to share the burden.

My fourth point was that we have to maintain and increase the efforts of United Nations peacekeeping missions. If we are successful in peacekeeping missions and if we are capable of creating peace in unstable parts of the world, then we can hope to successfully handle the migration crisis. Hungarian troops have taken part in missions in Cyprus, Western Sahara and Lebanon. We support those missions, and we urge the United Nations to increase its efforts in that regard. However, until long-term solutions are in place, we Europeans will have to take effective short-term measures to avoid becoming unstable ourselves as a result of the heavy pressure.

Our first task in that regard is to regain control over our borders. If we cannot regain control over Europe's borders, we will not be able to stop the influx of migrants

and we will be defenceless. It is our responsibility to establish a joint European Union force to protect the external borders of the European Union. Our second task is that we must pay tribute to all those countries, such as Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon, that have been bearing enormous burdens to properly supply and treat refugees. We cannot, of course, expect them to bear that burden on their own. They are now caring for hundreds of thousands or even millions of migrants and refugees. So we propose that the European Union take over the financing of the refugee camps and, if more camps are necessary, then we must finance them. Here we would like to ask the Secretary-General to consider how the United Nations can increase its efforts to help Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon and how it can share the burden relating to migrants and refugees.

Finally, I would like to draw members' attention to the danger of anti-Muslim policies spreading throughout Europe or even beyond. We must stress that the Muslim faith has nothing to do with the root causes of this mass migration. I come from Hungary, a Christian country, and a Christian approach does not tolerate anti-Muslim policies. We honour and respect the Muslim faith, and we would like to cooperate, as we must, in addressing the root causes of mass migration.

To summarize, mass migration is a global challenge. We must respond globally. All major players must contribute. The burden must be shared. The United Nations should play a leading role in that initiative. We are ready to work together according to the agreed Sustainable Development Goals, which call for action to ensure that migration is safe, orderly and regulated.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Osman Mohammed Saleh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea.

Mr. Saleh (Eritrea): It is my pleasure, at the outset, to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. I also wish to extend my deep appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, for his commendable efforts in conducting the business of the sixty-ninth session of the Assembly.

Seventy years after the birth of the United Nations, with its promise of peace, justice and development for all and its call for all nations to act in concert for the common good, it is undeniable, however, that we continue to live in an unfair and unequal world — a world where conflicts and wars rage, where extreme

poverty persists in the midst of plenty, where children die from easily preventable diseases and where justice is routinely trampled.

The United Nations is itself a reflection of the unfair, unequal and undemocratic global order. In the United Nations, the overwhelming majority of Member States are marginalized. The General Assembly, which should be the most powerful organ, is bereft of real power and influence. Power and decision-making are dominated by a few among the few. Two decades of talk to reform the Organization have yielded zero results. The resistance of those who believe that they benefit from the current configuration is so stiff and the ranks of those who seek change are so divided by approaches driven by narrow national interests that the enthusiasm for reform is giving way to a disquieting paralysis.

Yet all Member States, peoples and political and social forces that thirst for peace, justice, equitable socioeconomic development and the protection and enhancement of the environment must not give up. We need to persist in our efforts to rebuild and revitalize the United Nations. We need to strengthen our solidarity and defend the time-tested principles of the equal sovereignty of nations, respect for territorial integrity, peaceful coexistence, the right of nations to choose their social and economic path of development, respect for the dignity and rights of citizens and migrants, and fidelity to the Charter of the United Nations and international law. We need to work and cooperate at the national, regional and global levels to achieve sustainable and equitable development, a lofty goal that underpins peace and social justice.

We need to fight to avert an environmental catastrophe that awaits humankind and threatens human civilization. That will require more than human ingenuity and advances in science and technology. We must realize that there can be no technological fix to the environmental challenge. It will require radical change away from economic and social systems based on greed, the maximization of profits for the few, massive inequality, and unsustainable and unhealthy patterns of consumption and gross wastage.

Eritrea is committed to striving for a fair, just, truly representative and effective United Nations, because it was and still is a victim of the United Nations and the Powers that have dominated the Organization. Six decades ago, we were denied our inalienable right to self-determination and independence. For three

decades, we were savagely bombed from the air and the ground, with the aim of crushing our liberation struggle; and today we are being subjected to unfair and illegitimate sanctions and baseless accusations. The United Nations and its Security Council continue to countenance the illegal occupation of our sovereign territory in violation of international law and several Security Council resolutions.

Despite that hostility and injustice, Eritrea achieved independence by dint of a heroic struggle against tremendous odds. Today, Eritrea is making remarkable progress in building a nation based on citizenship and inclusiveness and respect for human dignity and rights. It is peaceful, stable, secure and harmonious, achieving unity in diversity, with its people animated by a common struggle and committed to a common future. It has avoided the pitfalls of sectarianism, radicalization and terrorism that have infected the surrounding region and many other areas in the world.

Mr. Alyemany (Yemen), Vice-President, took the Chair.

On another front, Eritrea is building a solid basis for sustainable development with social justice by prioritizing education, health, agriculture, industrialization, infrastructure, science and technology, all within a framework of regional cooperation and integration in the Horn of Africa and the Gulf region across the Red Sea. Eritrea welcomes the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which are in accord with its development vision and priorities, and is determined to achieve them ahead of the 2030 deadline.

Maintaining its focus on development, Eritrea is fighting human trafficking and is working to stabilize illegal migration and give youth and women adequate opportunities to pursue a high quality of life and build their nation. Eritrea is also making its contribution to regional peace, stability and security in the Red Sea region and the Horn of Africa. Eritrea sees its own efforts to promote peace, justice, development and environmental protection as part of the global struggle for a better, fairer and more equitable world and for a strong, effective and truly representative United Nations.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. François Louncény Fall,

Minister of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Guineans Abroad of the Republic of Guinea.

Mr. Fall (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): Seventy years ago, the United Nations was born with the aim of creating a world of peace, security and economic and social progress. Transformed by those noble ideals, we have together extinguished many hotbeds of tension, sown the seeds of trust among peoples, restored hope to the people and paved the way for prosperity for all nations. Beyond those undeniable achievements, the state of the world motivates us to consider the way forward to assure our people of true tranquillity that will enable them to thrive in harmony in a safer and more equitable environment.

Indeed, peace, security and human rights remain the foundation of our prosperity. We must, therefore, recognize that the prosperity we wish to share is seriously threatened by new barriers to stability and universal progress. Violence is resurfacing, driven by extremism and intolerance. Development for all remains a struggle owing to entrenched extreme poverty and its corollaries. Exclusion, a source of frustration, threatens democracy and good governance. There are so many aspects that feed the tragic migration flows — a true bleeding of the productive forces of the South that requires an urgent, comprehensive and lasting response.

Our commitment to peacekeeping materialized first in the Middle East, but that region is today once again being subjected to shocks that inflict the worst sort of suffering on its peoples by denying them their fundamental rights to freedom, dignity and well-being.

Palestine is still occupied. Its people should enjoy all their rights within the limits of a State with secure and internationally recognized borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. We urge the international community to do everything possible for the resumption of negotiations between Israel and the State of Palestine, which are fated to live side by side. That is the way to ensure security in that part of the world, which is plunged into the throes of a many-sided crisis with tragic humanitarian consequences.

Africa, which is gradually emerging from its stagnation to enjoy renewed growth, is investing in mechanisms for capacity-building in the defence and security sectors in the framework of responsible autonomy for the stability of its States. It goes without saying that our efforts will seek to eliminate all the hotbeds of tension that stand in the way of democratic

progress at a time when we are witnessing a flare-up of terrorism whose ramifications from now on will leave no region untouched. We must find the ways and the means to check that scourge, which strikes our peoples at their very core, attacks our national symbols and leads to profound humanitarian crises.

It is clear that this wager can be won only with a participatory, concerted approach on the part of our peoples and countries to defining inclusive development policies and programmes as a bulwark against marginalization, which causes frustration and withdrawal. This wager also depends on our determination to eliminate economic inequalities and social disparities in order to maintain global stability. The challenge is therefore to dedicate democratic culture as a guarantor of human rights and fundamental freedoms as the foundations of more just and more equitable international relations.

We have just adopted the post-2015 development agenda, which integrates the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Achieving the 17 Goals of that ambitious programme will clearly demand the mobilization of resources sufficient to guarantee, inter alia, decent jobs for young people and to equip women with the skills necessary for their full potential and empowerment.

However, that will be possible only in a healthy, protected environment. That is why we hope that the upcoming twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris will lead to a binding agreement that ensures the survival of our planet. We urge all Member States and partners to contribute to the Green Climate Fund.

Prosperity cannot be built on instability. The international community has the obligation to assume the responsibility for making our planet a safe place where the creative genius of humankind can flourish. It is up to us, under the umbrella of global partnership, to strengthen our collective action to spread peace across the universe in order to crystallize the ideals that inspired the creation of our Organization. To do that, we must adapt our vision of the management of global affairs to the current reality.

It cannot be said often enough: the international system must be reformed. It must allow us all to fully participate in the world's evolution. The time has come to make the United Nations the springboard for the

emergence and spread of a truly global society. The time has come to turn this prestigious place into a mold for shared solidarity. It is high time to turn this marvellous tool into a temple for the promotion of peace, equity and justice.

Guinea remains convinced of the need to strengthen the role of the General Assembly and to democratize the Security Council. That is why we welcome the initiative of France and Mexico to limit the use of the right of veto in cases of mass atrocities. Still, that measure aimed at preserving peace and respect for human rights must be universal, equitable and applicable to all regions of the world.

Détente, a key concept in international relations, is indispensable to the global equilibrium. The peaceful settlement of the Iranian nuclear issue and the long-awaited rapprochement between the United States of America and Cuba that should lead to the lifting of the embargo constitute important steps in establishing a climate of peace and security conducive to the promotion of mutually advantageous cooperation. History has demonstrated once again that by choosing the virtues of negotiation and dialogue over the use of force it is possible to work through the most serious differences.

Our firm belief in the efficiency of multilateralism remains unshakeable. It is the only option for addressing the ever more numerous and complex challenges that stand in the way of the progress our peoples so deeply yearn for. Our country will spare no effort to participate in that uplifting endeavour, above all at a moment when Guinea is joining the democratic dynamic by holding a transparent presidential election on 11 October. In that regard, I would like to commend the leading role of the United Nations and all our partners in the dialogue process that led to the signing on 20 August of the comprehensive agreement between the presidential movement and the opposition. For our country, this election will mark a new beginning towards genuine economic and social development.

The President returned to the Chair.

Moreover, Guinea welcomes the goodwill of the international community, which has consistently supported us in our efforts to realize the legitimate hopes of our people. The exceptional mobilization of the international community in the fight to eradicate the Ebola epidemic, along with its commitment to

supporting our reconstruction programme, is part of that spirit of solidarity.

That is why, as we express our warmest congratulations to you, Mr. President, we already comprehend the immense task that awaits you, for which Guinea will provide unstinting support. You will surely benefit from the positive actions of your predecessor, Mr. Sam Kutesa, whose dedication and accomplishment gave greater impetus to our collective commitment. Along with the activity of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who has earned our congratulations and encouragement because of his invaluable contribution to strengthening multilateralism, your actions, Mr. President, will help to make the United Nations more responsive to the legitimate hopes of humankind.

The President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Francine Baron, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Caribbean Community Affairs of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

Ms. Baron (Dominica): Several weeks ago, as we prepared to address this historic seventieth session of the General Assembly on the post-2015 development agenda and in the general debate, we pondered issues of significance to our country, our region, small island developing States (SIDS) and our planet. We decided then, as we have done in the past, that we must highlight the challenges brought about by the increasing concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and the resulting changes in global climate. That is a major threat to our planet, with a disproportionate impact on SIDS.

Our concerns have been magnified since 27 August, when Tropical Storm Erika brought with it up to 18 inches of rain in 16 hours in Dominica, with a concentration of heavy continuous rainfall over a five-hour period. The intensity of the rainfall led to rapid flash flooding and numerous landslides in several communities. Dominica was severely impacted, with 13 people confirmed dead and 17 still missing, while roads, bridges, houses, public buildings and the main airport were devastated. Two communities in the south of Dominica had to be evacuated, displacing hundreds of families.

According to an initial assessment conducted by the World Bank, the Government of Dominica and other partners, Tropical Storm Erika caused losses and damage to infrastructure in the amount of up to 1.3 billion East Caribbean dollars, or \$483 million. In

less than 24 hours, 90 per cent of Dominica's gross domestic product was wiped out, and over 7,000 people were severely affected. Most of the damage was sustained in the transport, housing and agriculture sectors.

Owing to the magnitude of the damage and the limited resources of our country, we had to depend on support from outside Dominica to provide immediate relief to those who were affected. The outpouring of support allowed us to bring emergency relief to all people in a timely manner. On behalf of the people and Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica, and on my own behalf, I wish to extend our profound gratitude to all the countries, governmental and non-governmental organizations and Dominicans, at home and abroad, for their tremendous support during our time of need.

We also thank those partners that have pledged their commitment to workingYay!! with us during the rebuilding of a stronger and more climate-resilient Dominica. My Government and people will forever be grateful to those who extended the hand of friendship to us. With the help of God, the international community and the resolve and resilience of the Government and people of the Commonwealth of Dominica, we will build a stronger and more resilient Dominica. In building a better and stronger Dominica, we will, of necessity, have to factor into our constructions and settlements measures that will provide resilience and adaptation to the impact of climate change.

We therefore expect that replacing and restoring damaged infrastructure will be more expensive than it has been in the past. That extra cost undermines our progress inY achieving sustainable development, because of the constant need to re-allocate resources from nationally identified priority areas to address the challenges — challenges brought about, to a large extent, by climate change. Those are factors that contribute to the high debt burden of small island developing States such as Dominica.

At times like these, in order to respond effectively to the disaster, we urgently need the assistance of the international community, to make available, in a timely manner, access to grants, concessionary financing and development assistance. That is of critical importance to ensure that the gains we have made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals are not reversed and that we are able to meet the agreed Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs). Beyond the immediate present, the Commonwealth of Dominica calls for an international natural-disaster-risk fund to provide financial resources to small island developing States that have been impacted by natural disasters. In the case of the Caribbean States, that could be in collaboration with or an extension to the catastrophic risk fund that exists in the Caribbean Development Bank. We propose that that special natural-disaster-risk fund should be capitalized by the annex I parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, other major greenhouse-gas emitters and voluntary contributions by other countries.

Over the past decade, the impact of climate change has wreaked havoc on Caribbean SIDS. In 2004, Hurricane Ivan, a category 3 system, wiped out twice the value of the gross domestic product of Grenada — approximately \$1 billion — and left 18,000 people without shelter, food and personal belongings. On 24 December 2013, we were violently reminded of the impact of slow-moving weather systems on the lives of our Caribbean people. Dominica, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines were set back by 3.4 per cent, 1.4 per cent and 12.8 per cent of their gross domestic products, respectively.

We in the Caribbean have been on the receiving end of the impact of climate change for decades. We therefore know from our own experiences that the impact of climate change represents a real and present danger to the existence of small island States like Dominica. We are living the effects of climate change. Even as recently as yesterday, our sister Caribbean island country of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas was impacted by Hurricane Joaquin. We stand in solidarity with the Government and people of the Bahamas, as they struggle to deal with the devastation that it has caused.

As we move closer to the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) later this year, we trust that all States parties are heeding the warnings of the scientific community and the plea of those of us who experience the impact of climate change on a daily basis, and that they are preparing to make serious commitments to reducing global warming. It will be crucial at COP21 to put in place a system that makes possible the achievement of the not-more-than 1.5°C goal, by agreeing to the highest possible levels of mitigation, ambition, finance and a

very rigorous system for transparency, complemented by a compliance regime.

However, while such commitments are commendable and should reduce and hopefully reverse the trend of increasing global mean temperature, the slow onset of events of climate change will continue to have severe impacts on developing countries. We therefore call for the establishment at COP21 of a new loss and damage mechanism that will take into account the impact of climate change and provide resources for SIDS to respond to those challenges.

The recently concluded Summit on the post-2015 development agenda laid out a highly robust and people-centred framework that we must all commit to implementing for the sake of a better tomorrow for our citizens and future generations. We must participate and play our individual and collective roles in ensuring that all 17 of the Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals and its 169 targets are not merely aspirational but also achievable. We were gratified to see several of our priority issues reflected in the text, such as a need to build resilience and to conserve and sustainably use oceans and seas; food security; water and sanitation; affordable, reliable and sustainable energy; crime; climate change; and sustainable consumption and production, among others.

It is up to all of us, individually and collectively, to ensure the realization of the SDGs. The Commonwealth of Dominica is therefore encouraged by the strides that small island developing States are making towards the attainment of SDG 7, on affordable and clean energy. Just a few days ago, on 27 September, SIDS demonstrated their leadership, by creating the first-ever intergovernmental organization for SIDS, the Small Island Developing States Sustainable Energy Initiative (SIDS DOCK). The statute came into force with a membership of 32, creating a sustainable energy and climate-resilient organization. SIDS DOCK is intended to provide a collective voice, financial leverage and implementation mechanisms to transform our national energy sectors into catalysts for sustainable low-carbon economic development and help us meet the urgent need to mitigate, adapt and build resilience to climate change. The Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica is proud to have had the opportunity to serve as the Chair of the steering committee responsible for the establishment of this first-ever intergovernmental organization of SIDS.

On behalf of the States members of SIDS DOCK, we wish to express our gratitude to our partners, Denmark and Japan, which have made our initiative possible. We also extend our thanks to the Government of Austria and the United Nations Development Programme for being genuine partners in the spirit of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and establishing the earliest centres for renewable energy and energy efficiency in the Caribbean and Pacific. We also thank the Government of Sweden for its support for the development of the project pipeline. We look forward to their continued partnership in that and other initiatives aimed at achieving the SDGs.

SIDS are equally concerned about sustainably utilizing and conserving local resources, such as our oceans, seas and marine resources, for the benefit of all our people. SDG 14 creates an opportunity for SIDS to have more control over the vast marine area, which when combined is six times larger than the land mass of the European Union. For small island States — or, more appropriately, large ocean States — we are the oceans. We therefore endorse the We Are the Ocean initiative being developed and co-chaired by the Marshall Islands and Grenada, with the Commonwealth of Dominica playing a major coordinating role. As a response to that need, a few days ago, at the annual meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative, SIDS DOCK, together with partners, launched the Blue Guardians. We look forward to participating in that initiative.

The Commonwealth of Dominica is encouraged by the emphasis that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda has placed on the mobilization of support for the post-2015 development agenda. A combination of financing modalities and sources is essential to assist developing countries meet their development goals by providing access to essential public services, ending hunger, reducing poverty and enhancing the lives of all people. Dominica is therefore committed to and supports the call for us to incorporate sustainable development and the pursuit of equity, including gender equality, women and girls' empowerment, and social inclusion, in our domestic policies. Those policies are consistent with the goals my Government has been committed to and has been promoting since the dawn of the century.

Our efforts notwithstanding, middle-income SIDS like Dominica are a special category that must be recognized and dealt with in a manner that reflects our realities. The measure of per capita income as a qualifier for determining access to official

development assistance and concessionary financing distorts the true situation of SIDS and ignores our special vulnerabilities. The public debt stock is another essential indicator that must be factored in when the true state of middle-income SIDS is considered. High debt overhang makes it difficult for SIDS to provide essential public services. That is compounded by the fragility of our economies and the constant threat and impact of natural disasters, which make us especially vulnerable. In fact, according to a recent report by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, it is estimated that the economic cost of natural disasters in Caribbean countries over the 2000-2014 period exceeded \$30.7 billion.

Furthermore, I am advised that at least 40 per cent of the debt burden of Caribbean States is due to debt incurred in responding to natural disasters. A single major natural disaster can set back one of our small islands for more than a decade by obliterating the country's gross domestic product overnight. The recent cases of Grenada and Dominica illustrate that point vividly. In order for financing for sustainable development to be effective, durable and genuine, there must be partnerships based on mutual respect. Development partners, especially intergovernmental agencies and financial institutions, must be more responsive to the needs of SIDS. Interventions therefore must reflect the aspirations of the people and be informed by genuine participation and local ownership.

The traditional North-South relationship must be reset to embrace collaboration and cooperation rather than prescription and dictation. The new approach should be enhanced by South-South and triangular cooperation. We therefore encourage countries in the South that have the means to do so to support South-South and triangular cooperation, to build essential public infrastructure, to provide financing and to participate in science and technology innovation and capacity-building.

The People's Republic of China, for example, has emerged as a leader in South-South cooperation. The South has been benefiting from China's role in economic and social development through bilateral cooperation. We commend the efforts by the People's Republic of China for its role in establishing the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, thereby creating a multilateral platform for South-South cooperation as an extension to its excellent bilateral cooperation. Our cooperation with the People's Republic of China has

brought about major improvements in our country's infrastructure, education, health care, sports, national security and agriculture. We thank China for its contribution to the people of Dominica.

South-South cooperation in some cases has created economic space for our countries to implement infrastructure and social programmes for the benefit of our people. A case in point is the PetroCaribe arrangement by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in which Latin American and Caribbean countries are provided with a reliable supply of oil and oil products under favourable terms and conditions. That spirit of solidarity is a shining example of South-South cooperation. The leadership of Venezuela has also led to the creation of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA). ALBA has funded and continues to fund development programmes in agriculture, infrastructure, education and health care in Dominica and its other member States, especially in the Caribbean.

Similarly, the Republic of Cuba has been a leader in South-South and triangular cooperation. Cuba has provided tremendous support to countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region and as far away as Africa, thanks to its vast pool of human resources, especially in health care and education. At the same time, Cuba has provided capacity-building and technology transfer in essential areas.

We applaud the actions taken by President Barack Obama to normalize relations between Cuba and the United States. The removal of Cuba from the United States list of countries that sponsor terrorism is an endorsement of the call that Dominica, the Caribbean Community and the majority of the States Members of the United Nations have been making for almost two decades. Those steps are undoubtedly steps in the right direction, that is, towards the full integration of Cuba into the international, economic, financial and trading systems. We appeal to the legislative branch of the United States Government to allow President Obama to complete the process by lifting all sanctions on Cuba.

Almost 70 years ago, on 24 October 1945, the United Nations came into existence when 29 nations ratified the Charter of the United Nations. The impact of two major wars in short succession had devastated the world, leaving millions dead. The world vowed "never again". The world of today is far different than it was 70 years ago. There are far more Member States and the

balance of power has shifted slightly, with the South playing a greater role. Human development has been unprecedented, moving more people out of poverty, and yet so much more needs to be done. We have placed our planet in peril from the existential threat of climate change. The rise of terrorism and radicalization throughout the world, especially in Iraq and Syria, is an attack on peace and security everywhere.

We therefore must resolve to enhance the role of the United Nations in resolving matters that go beyond borders and affect all of humankind and our planet. That requires changes to the working methods of the General Assembly and a more representative Security Council to reflect today's realities. We must continue to call for the protection of our planet. We must listen to and heed the cries of those who are suffering throughout the world. We must create and adopt policies that address the pressing needs of the most vulnerable among us. Above all else, we must continue to work to resolve the issues that threaten the peace and stability of our nations.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Dunya Maumoon, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives.

Ms. Maumoon (Maldives): The first three words of the Charter of the United Nations reads "We the peoples". Those words make it clear that human life is at the heart of the Charter of the United Nations. It must remain the key principle guiding our work.

This year, we mark the seventieth anniversary of the adoption of the Charter, 70 years since the establishment of the United Nations. There is not a more opportune time to ask ourselves, "Have we served 'we the peoples' well?" The answer to that question is probably "yes". I say that because succeeding generations have been saved from the scourge of inter-State war.

Yet we remain unable to counter intra-State conflict. Our faith in fundamental human rights is reaffirmed in principle, yet the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small are ignored. The rule of law and the values of good governance are advocated for some but ignored for others. We promised to promote social progress and better standards of life, and, yes, extreme poverty has been reduced significantly; more children than ever are going to school. Yet the gap between the rich and the poor is widening, and ignorance and intolerance are rampant. The Charter failed to recognize

the environment as an issue of importance, and we fail the environment every day.

Despite all that, the United Nations is the best hope for humankind. And it must remain relevant. If we want the United Nations to become more resilient, face the emerging challenges of our time, give hope to the many who perish in dire situations, inspire courage in the face of adversity and protect the rights of nations regardless of size, then the United Nations must be reformed.

Last week, we adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which recognizes at its core that development must be holistic, that poverty is a multidimensional problem, and that what matters is the human being, whose rights must be protected and promoted. Yet here in the United Nations we remain trapped in silos, hiding away behind the excuse of mandates. Why is it that the only issue the Security Council can discuss is guns and bombs, that the Economic and Social Council cannot discuss war and peace, that development and war cannot have a human rights dimension, that specific issues have to be confined to a specific body?

We believe that every problem can and should be looked at from every angle. That is the only way of responding to crises in a sustainable manner. In the real world, neither real problems nor real solutions fit neatly into separate compartments. A new way of approaching the global challenges of our time is necessary, so let us start organizing our work differently.

One important way of doing that is to redefine the concept of security: to include all issues that threaten all of humankind, including climate change. For us in the Maldives, climate change is a security threat. It damages our economy, deprives us of our rights, our land and our way of life and threatens the very existence of our nation. When young children play by the beach, the waves lapping at their feet, when a fisherman looks to the sea for the day's catch and when we feel the cool breeze of the ocean caressing us, it seems inconceivable that those same waters may become our watery grave.

The Maldives is ready to act. We have always been the first in line. Together with other small island developing States (SIDS), we have taken urgent action to keep the rise of global temperature below 1.5°C. We are reducing our emissions. We are working in good faith towards a legally binding agreement in Paris this year. If we, the smallest can act, why cannot the biggest?

The health of the oceans is another issue that demands attention. The oceans are intimately linked with our lives and livelihoods. Oceans and their wealth are the drivers of our economy, the source of our food and the backbone of our heritage and traditions. Unless we sustain the wealth of the oceans, we can achieve nothing. That is why the Maldives banned turtle poaching in the early eighties, declared a biosphere reserve in 2012 and made its entire area a shark sanctuary. We understand the value of our oceans and all the treasures they contain. Our oceans are home to some of the most valuable marine habitats in the world, yet the illicit exploitation of natural resources, maritime piracy and other criminal activities threaten and undermine the peace and security of our countries.

Building the resilience of our people must remain at the centre of all our efforts, abroad and at home. That is why President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom's Government has embarked on a national development programme based on empowerment, especially of the young and of children and women. We believe that investing in people is the best way to promote human rights, to guarantee a brighter future for the generations to come and to ensure that the democratic gains we have made are consolidated and further enhanced.

The Maldives is a nation that is governed by the rule of law. Our strong commitment to upholding the rule of law will continue, regardless of a person's position in society and even in cases where it is most inconvenient to do so. I can assure Member States that we will not fail in that endeavour.

The United Nations rose from the ashes of war and destruction at a time when swarms of refugees were crossing borders and seas, leaving everything behind to seek safety and security and to save their own lives and their children's. We have gone through those times and built a better, more integrated, more tolerant world. Fear of the other did not overtake humankind.

Today, as we see similar pictures of girls and boys, women and men seeking safety from war and certain death, I urge everyone to show compassion. A good start can be made by using the right term: it is a refugee, not a migrant, crisis. The refugees are running away from senseless violence — barbarism that is being carried out by terrorist groups in the name of Islam. The Maldives condemns the acts of those groups, which are not only un-Islamic but also anti-Islamic. They are fuelling the rise of Islamophobia around the world.

The international community must not let those groups redefine our beautiful religion of peace, tolerance and compassion.

We thought that apartheid had been dismantled, yet Israel pursues apartheid policies in occupied Palestine and the world remains indifferent. Three days ago, we witnessed the raising of the Palestinian flag here at the United Nations. That was indeed a historic step, but if Palestine were to attain full membership in the United Nations that would be a much more significant step. A permanent solution would involve the complete withdrawal of Israel and the establishment of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem at its capital, within the 1967 borders.

The small island developing States of the world are different from the large States. We face different kinds of challenges that require very different responses. That is a fact that everyone now recognizes. However, the international architecture, including the United Nations system, is not designed to accommodate the unique features of small States. That needs to change, and changes need to happen now. We, the small States, do not want to be defined only by our vulnerabilities. We are ready to be part of the solution. In Samoa last year, the SIDS called for the building of partnerships as the way forward. Alone we might be weak, but united we can move mountains.

We in the Maldives have always believed that we can do anything we set our mind to, as long as we remain sincere in our intention and unwavering in our commitment. And the United Nations has never failed to inspire us in our resolve. That is why the Maldives joined the United Nations less than two months after gaining independence. Just a few days ago, we celebrated 50 years of our membership. The United Nations has served us well, and we are committed to expanding and further strengthening that valuable partnership.

Though short of finances, we have no shortage of smart ideas. Our former President, Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, was the first to speak about the issue of sea-level rise from this rostrum. We were the first to introduce the concept of the security of small States to the United Nations and the first to start advocating here in the Assembly for the link between human rights with climate change. And we remain relentless in our pursuit of those issues, not only because it is good for the Maldives, but because it is also good for humankind.

Fifty years ago, when we applied for United Nations membership, some doubted our ability to survive and questioned our capacity to contribute. After 50 years of United Nations membership, I say to those sceptics that we are not only willing, we are also able. We are not only viable, we are also valuable. And as Maldivians, we are proud of what we have achieved.

The President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Niermala Badrising, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Suriname.

Ms. Badrising (Suriname): On behalf of President Desiré Delano Bouterse and the Government and the people of the Republic of Suriname, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventieth session, a landmark anniversary for our global body of nations. We pledge our full support to you in the successful execution of your duties. We also wish to take this opportunity to salute your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, for his skilful leadership and commitment in helping to shape the new global agenda, and we wish him well in his future endeavours. And we would like to pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his sterling efforts in guiding our Organization through these challenging times for international peace, prosperity and security.

At its inception 70 years ago, the United Nations made a commitment to saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war, reaffirming faith in fundamental human rights, establishing global justice and promoting social progress. The ensuing seven decades have unquestionably brought many achievements. The United Nations, in collaboration with its Member States, specialized organizations and other relevant stakeholders, including civil society, has promoted and assured access to education for boys and girls around the world, brought humanitarian relief to those in need, assisted societies in restoring democracy and supported defenders of human rights. It has given a voice to marginalized groups, especially the elderly, women, young people, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities, and played a crucial role in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

However, despite such advances, there still remain challenges such as armed conflicts, the rise of fundamentalism, disregard for fundamental human rights and freedoms and global health concerns such as

HIV/AIDS and non-communicable diseases, as well as the devastating effects of climate change and natural disasters. My Government therefore applauds the timely and inspiring themes chosen for this general debate and for the session as a whole: “The United Nations at 70: a new commitment to action” and “The United Nations at 70: the road ahead for peace, security and human rights”. Given that context, it was only fitting that we should adopt our new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). In that spirit, therefore, we, the global community, must recommit to the ideals of peace and security, human rights and sustainable development.

Combating climate change is high on my Government’s national agenda. Last Wednesday, my President reiterated its importance for our country’s development and future in his address to Parliament on the occasion of the presentation of our annual budget and our Government policy statement for the period 2015-2020.

Although Suriname is South America’s smallest country, we are home to about 8 per cent of the world’s untouched tropical forest. With around 94 per cent of the country covered by rainforest, we can proudly inform the Assembly that we are the greenest nation on Earth. Approximately 12 per cent of our total acreage, including the Central Suriname Nature Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, has been designated a natural protected area. Our rivers carry between 10 and 15 per cent of the world’s supply of fresh water. We can be seen as almost unique, since we are one of the few carbon-negative countries in the world.

Despite such wondrous natural blessings, my country continues to see the first effects of climate change. Suriname has 239 miles of low-lying coastline and is listed as one of the seven countries in the world most vulnerable to the effects of the rising sea level. My Government looks forward to the establishment of a new global agreement on climate change in Paris later this year. It should include specific actions aimed at meeting mitigation and adaptation commitments. It will be necessary to make the provision of financial resources a priority, especially for small island developing States and countries with low-lying coasts, if we are to implement the necessary measures effectively. In that regard, we welcome the further implementation of the Green Climate Fund, including the ongoing efforts to create a logical framework model for financing for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest

Degradation in Developing Countries, or REDD-plus. In the context of its intended nationally determined contribution, the Republic of Suriname will submit a new climate action plan to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The Americas are committed to peace and security as a precursor of sustainable development. The proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace is testimony to our use of a multifaceted approach to assure the long-term development of our continent and peoples. My Government underscores the critical importance of the processes of dialogue and diplomacy as essential contributing elements to democracy, peace, stability and security. My Government therefore supports the peaceful and negotiated settlement of various types of dispute, including border disagreements.

My Government welcomes the positive steps taken towards normalizing bilateral relations between the Republic of Cuba and the United States of America. Suriname has a longstanding friendship with the people of Cuba, and we are of the view that the ongoing process of strengthening relations will help to enhance peace, stability, unity and development in the Americas. We agree with the international community that lifting the economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba should be a top priority.

Decades ago, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a cornerstone document that has inspired the adoption of various standard-setting human rights instruments at the international and regional levels.

My Government is concerned about the loss of life and destruction resulting from current violence and ongoing armed conflict. We are also concerned about the current humanitarian crisis caused by the huge numbers of refugees fleeing the Middle East and Africa.

Issues related to gender equality and the empowerment of women, particularly that of increasing women’s political participation at all levels, continue to be of particular interest to the international community. My Government applauds the commitments made in that regard by the Heads of State and Government at last week’s global leaders’ meeting here in New York. It is vital that we undertake the necessary measures to prevent all forms of discrimination at all

levels, including establishing relevant legislative and administrative frameworks.

Despite the many positive developments with respect to shaping the international agenda over the past seven decades, the socioeconomic development of and existing social inequality in a number of regions still remain alarming. My Government is of the view that human-centred economic development policies are instrumental in guaranteeing the realization of social developmental goals for the benefit of our peoples and countries. My Government emphasizes that there is an urgent need for an international enabling environment, including access to financing for development, in order to alleviate all forms of poverty and to create economic opportunities that enable all peoples and countries to prosper.

Indeed, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can fulfil a critical role in gradually advancing sustainable development and equality. At the national level, my Government adopted the integrated Strategy for Sustainable Development, which emphasizes the centrality of the human being in our developmental efforts.

The United Nations at 70 is at a critical stage to become a more efficient and effective global institution, adequately resourced and fit for the challenges ahead. We the peoples of the world have to carry forward the renewed hopes and aspirations of the Organization. Suriname stands ready to play its part in strengthening multilateralism in partnership with other States and civil society to protect and preserve the planet and to ensure that everyone has a fair chance to develop his or her fullest potential for a better life.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Daniel Jean, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada.

Mr. Jean (Canada): I am honoured to appear before the Assembly today to deliver these remarks on behalf of the Government of Canada in this, the seventieth anniversary year of the United Nations.

As a founding Member of the United Nations, Canada played a constructive role in drafting the Charter of the United Nations and creating the Organization before, during and after the 1945 San Francisco Conference. There can be little doubt that over the past seven decades, through the General Assembly, other United Nations bodies and the myriad

of agencies, funds and programmes associated with the United Nations, the Organization has often helped to improve the lives and prospects of people around the world. It has done so even as Member States and the United Nations itself have struggled to realize the Organization's most fundamental aspirations. Since that time, Canada and Canadians have been steadfast supporters of the United Nations and deeply engaged in its work to deliver results for the benefit of our common future.

One of the ways in which the United Nations led the way in its early years, and in which it continues to light the path ahead, has been in the vital area of international development. Canada is proud to support, in word and deed, the commitments in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). The Organization and the international community it represents deserve our praise for aiming to eliminate poverty on a global scale. It is an objective that will require innovative new approaches and new partnerships. We will also need to promote fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and accountable governance in those parts of the world where the critical building blocks for sustainable development are weak or absent.

Canada looks forward to collaborating with others to sustain the momentum already underway as a result of the Millennium Development Goals and to move forward with renewed determination. The Government of Canada has identified maternal, newborn and child health as a priority for development, in support for which we have committed \$3.5 billion over the next five years. There has been progress, to be sure, but there remains much to do. Canada welcomes the inclusion of maternal, newborn and child health in the 2030 Agenda as a means to follow through on the commitments made under the 2010 Group of Eight Muskoka Initiative, adopted at the Saving Every Woman, Every Child Summit, held in Toronto in 2014, and the renewed Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health.

As the international community commits to implementing the 2030 Agenda, one of the most critical questions we still face is how to finance the Sustainable Development Goals. While current official development assistance will retain its important role, current and projected levels fall well short of the trillions of dollars required to implement the Goals. We need to find new ways to blend financing from donors, foundations, the private sector and other sources to fill the gap.

The Global Financing Facility (GFF) in support of Every Woman, Every Child is an excellent model of how the private sector can be brought on board to collaborate with national Governments to sustainably finance maternal, newborn and child health initiatives. The additional investment generated through the GFF and other innovative financing mechanisms will set the course for increasing funding from the current billions of dollars allocated for development finance to the trillions required if we want to achieve the post-2015 development agenda. Canada will continue to play a leading role in helping to establish those mechanisms to secure sustainable financing and leverage the expertise and resources of the private sector in support of the development outcomes.

(spoke in French)

Humanitarian assistance is even more important, as progress in development can be wiped out overnight by natural disasters, political violence and international conflicts or crises linked to acute food insecurity or the spread of disease. When considering the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit, to be held in May 2016, we all must strive to increase countries' determination to respect international humanitarian law, to protect civilians and to strengthen resilience when faced with possible crises, in particular by ensuring that national Governments will be equipped to deal with those crises.

In responding to the needs of humankind, Canada always strives to act with generosity, speed and efficacy to save lives, to alleviate suffering and to preserve the dignity of the people most affected. In 2014, Canada increased by 32 per cent its financial contribution to humanitarian assistance in response to the ever-increasing needs in the world, especially for countries in crisis, such as Iraq, Syria, the Philippines, Ukraine, the Central African Republic, South Sudan and Yemen. Similarly, Canada has played a leading role in the prompt and effective action by the international community to the Ebola epidemic in certain regions of West Africa.

As shown at numerous times in the past, Canada has the capacity and the will to assist and deal with the crisis of refugees and migrants currently affecting Europe. Since the establishment of the United Nations, the international community has been confronted with many situations brought about by the voluntary and involuntary displacement of people. In some cases, such as those of individuals trying to escape the crisis

in Syria, the issue is urgent. In others, it is part of a long-term phenomenon. We work in collaboration with our partners to address those difficulties, including by accelerating the resettlement process of Syrians and Iraqis in our own country this year.

We know that Canadians will support those efforts with the same spirit of generosity that has characterized the assistance they have provided when others were in distress and affected by disasters. However, we cannot stop there; we must also take on together human rights violations and promote stability, peace and prosperity in regions subjected to instability or violent conflicts. The United Nations, rooted in respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, democracy and the rule of law, was established specifically for that purpose.

Without the strong and collective commitment of all Member States to those principles, the edifying words of the Preamble to the Charter risk becoming simply hollow and meaningless words. In the words of the Prime Minister of Canada:

“Where human misery abounds, where grinding poverty is the rule, where justice is systematically denied, there is no real peace — only the seeds of future conflict.” (*A/69/PV.11, p. 11*)

Canada continues to support a wide range of initiatives and measures established by the United Nations to promote peace and security, including the most recent efforts to combat terrorism and to identify new ways to combat violent extremism.

Innocent civilians suffer the most in internal and international conflicts, as we see today in Iraq and Syria, where the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) and other terrorist groups are sowing destruction. We are concerned by the resurgence of the Taliban in northern Afghanistan, by the scale of the ambition shown by Daesh and their expanding networks in South Asia, the Middle East, North Africa and the Sahel, as well as by their subsidiaries, such as Boko Haram. The international community must continue to take significant steps to combat terrorism together.

Faced with that situation, Canada's action includes not only its role in the military coalition that is fighting against the immediate threat posed by Daesh, but also efforts to provide humanitarian assistance. Canada will continue to support ethnic and religious minorities whose very existence is threatened.

We are committed to drawing everyone's attention to the consequences of sexual violence and other barbaric abuses perpetrated by ISIS against women and girls. Last July, we hosted the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Bangura, who presented graphic and detailed conclusions of her assessment mission to the Middle East to members of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, gathered in Quebec City. At that meeting, Canada announced an additional financial contribution for the survivors of abuses committed by Daesh and in support of the essential work being carried out by Ms. Bangura.

Canada has long been determined to work for the independence of women and girls and for greater respect for their rights in conflict situations. That is why we support a high-level review of the implementation of the programme on women and peace and security, as we have done for the past 15 years, that is, since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the first resolution on that issue. Canada has played a leading role in the global campaign to eliminate child marriage, early marriage and forced marriage, a widespread and harmful practice that threatens the lives and the future of girls around the world, with devastating consequences not only for them but also for their communities.

(spoke in English)

Our rules-based international system must be preserved. International guarantees lose their meaning if rules are flagrantly violated. We must face acute challenges to security and human rights, such as in Iraq and Syria, as well as the abuses that follow in the wake of acts of aggression, such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the illegal annexation of Crimea and the continued interference in eastern Ukraine. This rostrum must not be used by leaders to subvert the principles on which this Organization was established. This platform should be used to respond to, and tackle, these global threats.

Two countries that persistently violate international standards in this area and whose Governments oppress their own people and threaten their neighbours, as well as global peace are Iran and North Korea. Non-compliance over the course of decades raises questions about ambitions and intentions. Verbal pledges or paper promises are not enough. There must

be verifiable evidence of compliance and meaningful penalties for continued defiance.

In that regard, while we appreciate the efforts of the P5+1, the real test of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action concerning Iran, or any similar agreement, will be in its concrete implementation and independent verification. Actions speak louder than words. To that end, it is vital to support, sustain and, where necessary, enhance the monitoring capabilities of the relevant agencies, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, and ensure that verifiable deeds match conciliatory words. Nothing less than the credibility of the United Nations is at stake on such matters.

As with any organization, it is vital for the United Nations to reassess what it does and how it pursues its goals in the light of the remarkable changes since its founding. Canada wholeheartedly supports the high-level review of peace operations. We cannot always rely on the instruments of the past to deal with the crises of today.

Freedom, peace and stability pave the way to lasting prosperity. As we all know, the path to real sustainable development requires action at many levels and with many partners. Private-sector-led growth is a key ingredient for achieving that goal and for reducing poverty. Trade and investment are at the heart of that effort. That is why Canada is a firm supporter of a free and open trading system that fosters growth, contributes to development and supports poverty reduction in all regions of the world.

Perhaps no issue reminds us that we are all part of one world more than the threat to our collective well-being posed by climate change, a global challenge that requires global solutions. Canada takes the challenge of climate change seriously and is working with all parties under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to reach an effective post-2020 climate change agreement at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention, to be held later this year in Paris. For Canada, an effective agreement must address both mitigation and adaptation, and, most importantly, such an agreement must include a commitment to mitigation actions by all of the world's major emitters of greenhouse gases.

On 15 May, Canada announced its post-2020 climate change target — an economy-wide reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030. That is an ambitious target that is in line

with other major industrialized countries and reflects our national circumstances, including Canada's position as a world leader in clean electricity generation.

Canada recognizes that financing is a key part of the discussion and, moving forward with our partners, we will, as we have done in the past, continue to support international climate-change financing. Canada has already pledged \$300 million to the Green Climate Fund, in addition to a previous investment of \$1.2 billion that we provided under quick-start climate-change financing, which has supported a number of beneficial projects in more than 70 developing countries.

Mr. Alyemany (Yemen), Vice-President, took the Chair.

From the beginning, Canada has been one of the largest and most reliable financial contributors to the United Nations. In the light of that support, it should come as no surprise that the Government of Canada and Canadians expect that money to be spent wisely and that the United Nations should be held accountable for its expenditures.

As I said at the outset, the overarching aims of the United Nations since its creation have been remarkably consistent, namely, to help achieve greater prosperity and security, to advance mutual respect, fairness and good international conduct, and, ultimately, to inspire and sustain the hopes of people everywhere for a better future. With our friends and partners in the global community, we have striven to make this world a better place and to make the United Nations a better instrument for achieving those goals. We look forward to working together with other nations, as we have done for seven decades, in pursuit of that common purpose.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Daniele Bodini, Chair of the Delegation of the Republic of San Marino.

Mr. Bodini (San Marino): I would like to congratulate the President on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. I also wish to commend the work of His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, President of the General Assembly at the sixty-ninth session, and to express sincere thanks to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless efforts in leading the United Nations. The result of such efforts culminated in the very successful United Nations Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda and this general debate, as well as the historic

visit of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, to the General Assembly (see A/70/PV.3). Moreover, San Marino appreciates the constant and impartial attention that the Secretary-General has paid to all States Members of the United Nations.

After 70 years, the United Nations has not only passed the test of time, but it continues to represent a shining beacon of hope for all our countries. I believe that in future we will have to be even more willing and inspired to strengthen and improve the role that this great institution plays. In fact, the first and last line of defence for San Marino, a small State without an army and with limited territory and resources, is the United Nations.

Even the strongest and largest countries cannot deal with the complexity and the multitude of today problems all by themselves. They need the United Nations too. With the help of the United Nations system, we, the Member States, have over the years built the foundations for peace by preventing and ending numerous disputes. We have been able to free millions of people from extreme poverty and have made important progress in advancing human rights and democracy and in promoting justice and international law.

Unfortunately, despite all our efforts and successes, the international community continues to face the same challenges: wars, poverty, inequality, discrimination and violence against women and children. In addition, today we face new global challenges, such as climate change, economic and financial crises, unrelenting unemployment, international migration and terrorism. Those new threats are interdependent, and we should work together with the United Nations to take them on and defeat them.

Around the world, our people look to the United Nations for leadership. That is why reform of the United Nations is fundamental and must remain at the core of our collective efforts during the seventieth session of the General Assembly. We must make the Organization more effective, while preserving its integrity and enhancing its status.

Every day, we witness the tragic migration from Africa and Asia towards Europe. Those desperate people have left their countries and their families behind, fleeing from conflicts, violence and persecution. Thousands of them have died in the Mediterranean Sea. We are pleased that, a few days ago, the high-

level side event here at Headquarters on strengthening cooperation on migration and refugee movements in the perspective of the new development agenda was organized.

San Marino cannot remain silent about what is happening in Iraq and Syria, where an ongoing inhuman ethnic and religious cleansing is being carried out with unprecedented ferocity. We hope that under the able stewardship of Mr. Staffan de Mistura, a diplomatic solution will be found in the near future.

San Marino believes that one of the most important tasks for us to deal with is the total elimination of nuclear weapons, thousands of which are ready to be employed at any time. We cannot afford to wait any longer.

San Marino strongly believes in further revitalizing and empowering the General Assembly, the forum where solutions to today's challenges can be found and where consensus on issues of common interest must be reached. We commend the Security Council for all the delicate and challenging work that it has accomplished over the years in favour of peace and security. Nevertheless, it is time for a reform. We believe that Security Council reform should include an enlargement of the category of non-permanent members and a more balanced geographical distribution. We are convinced that, for that reform to be legitimate, it must be achieved with the widest possible consensus.

We welcome the new post-2015 development agenda adopted a few days ago as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). It represents a unique opportunity to prepare a brighter future for our citizens. The Goals at the core of the new Agenda are ambitious; they will guide our efforts in pursuit of poverty eradication, the empowerment of people, the safeguarding of human dignity, shared prosperity, decent jobs for all, and the protection of our planet. It is important that each country, after adopting its national agenda, assume responsibility for its own citizens and for the international community in working to implement the new Agenda. San Marino welcomes the fact that the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the Economic and Social Council will be assessing the progress of that implementation. However, it is critical that a comprehensive and effective mechanism for review and accountability be established.

The Republic of San Marino has always paid special attention to the most vulnerable groups, such as

women, children, the elderly and the disabled. Today, women are still the victims of discrimination and violence in many parts of the world, including in the most developed countries. Trafficking in women is an issue that is far from having been solved. Women living in conflict and post-conflict situations are often subject to sexual violence, torture and summary execution. Children, the most vulnerable group, are also subject to violence, abuse and exploitation. A large number of children all over the world do not yet have access to basic services, health care and education. We have the duty to protect and help our children. Moreover, the international community must strive for the full inclusion and participation of the elderly and people with disabilities in the economic, social and cultural life of our communities.

Freedom and peace have always represented the core values of the Republic of San Marino over its centuries-old history. San Marino is a small country, but one strongly committed to the implementation of the universal values of the United Nations and the principles enshrined in its Charter. We are honoured to offer our contribution to the United Nations community.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Carlos Raúl Morales Moscoso, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guatemala.

Mr. Morales Moscoso (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I come before this highest forum of the United Nations as the representative of the Government of Guatemala and of the President of the Republic, Alejandro Maldonado Aguirre. I greet Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. With his vast experience and well-known skill he can lead ably.

I want to begin my statement by expressing the grief and sorrow of the people and the Government of Guatemala after the tragedy that occurred last Thursday night, 1 October, when a landslide buried at least 125 homes, and in two hours killed 33 people and caused the disappearance of approximately 600 other citizens, as well as a considerable number of injured, in a town near Guatemala City. The landslide occurred as the result of the heavy rains that have plagued Guatemala after nearly 12 weeks of extreme drought, which caused serious damage to the country's agricultural sector. Our rescue teams are now searching for survivors. More than 616 rescuers are participating, and the citizenry

is providing invaluable and exemplary support. We are grateful for the international solidarity that the world has shown following that tragedy.

During the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, the Vice-President of Guatemala described the momentous events that have taken place in our country over the past several months, which represent a watershed in our political history (see A/70/PV.6). He described how, beginning in April, the people of Guatemala took to the streets in huge numbers to demonstrate their complete rejection of corruption and their indignation at the collapse of an economic, social and political system that was incapable of overcoming poverty and segregation of all kinds that revealed grave flaws in our system of governance.

It is important to stress the pluralistic, mass nature of the civic movement and especially its peaceful character. There was not a single incident of violence during four months of protest. In fact, the protests lasted 22 weeks, during which the collective civic behaviour was exemplary, without incidents of any sort, without vandalism and without a single act of aggression of any kind.

That great popular movement led to the resignation and trial of the Vice-President and, subsequently, the President of the Republic, along with other Government officials and individuals. In that regard, it is important to stress the role that the United Nations played through the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala — known as CICIG — in support of the Public Prosecutor's Office. As a result of the foregoing, and with our Political Constitution as its framework, a process was developed that culminated in the appointment of President Alejandro Maldonado Aguirre on 3 September and the election of Vice-President Juan Alfonso Fuentes Soria on 16 September. They now have the responsibility of leading the country towards the transfer of presidential power on 14 January 2016.

I would like to underscore that despite the serious challenges that arose, our laws and legally constituted institutions responded. The constitutional order remained intact and no laws were violated. The constitutional mechanisms, the system of justice, the electoral system and the social media all functioned, and in general terms, our participatory democracy proved its strength.

All of these factors affected the results of the general elections held on 6 September and had an

impact on voter turnout, which was the highest it has been since the return to democracy 30 years ago. Those important gains belong to all Guatemalans, who are demanding deep and immediate changes. Their expectations are high, and they hope to see concrete results benefiting citizens in a short time, both from the current transitional Government and from the one that will be elected in the second round of voting, which we will hold on 25 October.

The various sectors of Guatemalan society are demanding the urgent reform of certain laws, including those governing the civil service, the electoral process and political parties, legal education and State contracts. But perhaps the most important aspect is the social impact of the collective realization that Guatemala needs to aim for a future built on a genuine, solid rule of law. As we stated when we took the floor during the Summit to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1):

“The invisible Guatemala, made up of indigenous peoples and peasants who have been marginalized by the system, has not been satisfied with the resigned approach taken by their leaders; it has flooded the streets to warn that the amendment of a few laws is not enough. They demand reforms of the State for a profound transformation of the economic, social and political system that would allow them to overcome poverty, exclusion and racism, thereby developing a true concept of national and international solidarity, an essential element of peace and security.” (A/70/PV.6, p. 4)

It is therefore important for the Guatemalan State to respond appropriately to the population's demands to be able to consolidate our democracy on the foundation created by that extraordinary movement and to achieve a more peaceful, less exclusionary and more equitable society.

Another of the main challenges facing the State of Guatemala is to create better living conditions for its citizens in order to avoid the exodus of so many who must seek better horizons abroad. Migration should be an option, not an obligation. Approximately 2 million Guatemalans currently live outside the country, most of them in the United States of America. That is a long-standing phenomenon, but now one of the biggest concerns is the growing migration of boys and girls who travel by themselves, primarily with the goal of family reunification. Our countries should do their

best to see that such children remain at home instead of risking their lives.

Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador make up Central America's Northern Triangle. With the support of the Inter-American Development Bank and the Government of the United States of America, we have been developing the Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity, whose goal is to deal with the deepest roots of migration and to serve as a framework that offers new and better economic prospects; build the conditions for better civil security; create a social safety network for the most vulnerable groups of our societies; and strengthen our democratic institutions. In our draft budgets for 2016, the three countries have planned for approximately \$2.8 million to implement the Plan.

There is shared responsibility among the countries of origin, transit and destination. Comprehensive immigration reform in the United States of America is inevitable. It is a matter of principles and respect for human rights. We appreciate the efforts of President Barack Obama, and I take this opportunity to reiterate my Government's call for the approval of Temporary Protected Status, known as TPS, for Guatemalan immigrants. The State of Guatemala, for its part, needs to broaden its consular network as soon as possible, especially in the countries of North America, in order to offer protection and consular services to its citizens.

One of the main causes of migration is natural disasters. This year again, the long drought and the delay in rains in the first harvest have impacted food security in the most vulnerable homes. More than 120,000 families are currently affected, representing more than 600,000 people who lack food for subsistence. We are grateful for the cooperation that we have received and call for more, basically because on top of chronic poverty come natural disasters, and now the effects of the man-made crisis, which the citizens have rejected. Nevertheless, our great strength is without a doubt the desire for civic participation, which the transitional Government must support and respond to effectively with an extreme shortage of resources.

At the same time, I would like to reiterate the State's commitment to the communities affected by the development of the Chixoy Hydroelectric Dam. We are committed to making reparations to the affected groups and expect to begin making the first payments in the coming weeks as part of a process that we hope to bring to a successful conclusion.

I would like now to mention a few subjects relating to our foreign policy. First, I am pleased to report that we have continued to make progress in our bilateral relations with our neighbouring countries.

With respect to Belize, we have committed to appearing before the International Court of Justice to seek definitive resolution of our territorial, island and marine dispute, as both countries have agreed. We look forward to the entry into force of the 13 bilateral agreements signed in December 2014 and the protocol to the special agreement of 2008, signed in May.

With Mexico we maintain a robust, significant agenda and an unprecedented dynamic of cooperation. Recently 12 agreements were signed on economic issues, trade, border modernization and energy, in addition to addressing jointly challenges such as migration and organized crime.

With Honduras, we have made progress on a customs union, a commitment that has been pending for many years in the Central American integration process. It will be the first customs union of the American hemisphere.

The President returned to the Chair.

Moreover, Guatemala welcomes the restoration of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba as an important step towards the strengthening of hemispheric cooperation. In that connection, we trust that the embargo imposed on Cuba for over 50 years will end.

We also applaud the reconciliation and the growing climate of cooperation generated among the parties separated by the Taiwan Strait. We hope that that atmosphere of cooperation can be extended to the global effort to fight climate change.

Turning now to our position on some of the challenges facing the United Nations as this session begins, I want to reiterate our deep concern over the instability in the Middle East, above all the protracted conflict in Syria. It has had a huge cost in human life and suffering, as demonstrated by the terrible images of the current migration exodus.

At the same time I would like to highlight the central role played by peacekeeping operations and to reiterate our full support for their basic principles, which remain relevant and should be preserved. Guatemala's contribution to such missions is a testament to our strong commitment to international peace and security.

We believe that an important step has been taken in the review and assessment of those operations through the work of the High-level Independent Panel on all aspects of United Nations peace operations, as well as the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Panel's recommendations (A/70/357), and we stand ready to start a serious discussion of all measures that could improve our contribution to peacekeeping and the success of such operations.

We agree with other delegations that the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) was an important step to carry into the future the unfinished tasks of the Millennium Development Goals. We join in the clamour for a response in the Paris Climate Summit to the enormous challenges posed by climate change and hope that it will produce a legally binding instrument. I wish to share with the Assembly the fact that Guatemala has already played its part. It has already approved some important laws and national documents to present at the Summit.

We have followed the debate on reforming the principal organs and reviewing their working methods. We recognize that the international community is faced with limited resources and a plethora of needs and vulnerable populations to deal with. While recognizing the invaluable role played by the United Nations for humankind, we warn that the Organization has been lagging in adapting to the conditions of the twenty-first century. Let us unite efforts to advance this ambitious agenda for future generations.

Faced with the loss of so many lives in conflicts around the world, as well as new threats, it is timely for Member States to ask ourselves whether we are fulfilling the promise on which the Organization was founded — “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”. But we reiterate our faith in the United Nations as we commemorate its 70 years, and we trust that it is in the hands of all the Member States to secure its growing relevance for the future so as to focus on peace, security and human rights.

The President: I now give the floor to the Chair of the Delegation of the Republic of Palau.

Mr. Otto (Palau): On behalf of President Tommy Esang Remengesau Jr., President of the Republic of Palau, I have the honour to make the following remarks before the General Assembly at its seventieth session.

At the outset, Palau would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to lead our work during the seventieth session. We pledge our support for the work ahead. May we also take the opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to Mr. Sam Kutesa, for his sterling leadership during the sixty-ninth session.

We meet here today in perilously challenging, yet still hopeful, times. The principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations are more critical to our common future than ever before. We must not only reaffirm our faith in fundamental human rights and the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, but also redouble our efforts to uphold those rights. Our collective determination to promote social progress and better standards of living must be matched by our on-the-ground partnerships to fight poverty, protect the most vulnerable among us and protect the one planet we call home.

So while the challenges — violence and war, poverty and disease, rising seas and wildfires as well as droughts caused by climate change — are enormous, so too is the resolve that I share with all here today to make good on our commitment to transforming our world through the urgent and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1).

I would like to congratulate the Secretary-General, the co-facilitators and the thousands of people whose dedicated work made the Sustainable Development Goals in the 2030 Agenda a strong set of imperatives for transformational change that all of our peoples so urgently need to preserve our cultures, our economies and our environment and to ensure a sustainable and prosperous future for our children.

Let me also briefly express my President's sorrow at the plight of the countless refugees who are seeking havens of peace and prosperity for themselves and for their families as they search for refuge and protection away from their motherlands, which have been torn by strife that was sparked and worsened by internal conflict and/or environmental degradation and climate change.

The theme of the general debate at the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, “The United Nations at 70: a new commitment to action”, is very appropriate for this year's high-level event, the United Nations Summit for the adoption of the new post-2015 development agenda. It took place just before the

general debate and adopted resolution 70/1, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, containing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Just prior to the Summit, His Holiness Pope Francis addressed the General Assembly (see A/70/PV.3), reiterating the theme of his papal encyclical, *Laudato si'*, wherein he criticized the careless use of our planet's resources leading to environmental degradation and global warming. Let his commentaries serve as an inspiration to us all that will change hearts, minds and actions for a better future that will focus the world's attention on the most vulnerable among us and on our Mother Earth.

My friends, we can only hope that a generation from now, this session of the General Assembly will be remembered as the defining event when the nations of the world decided, with the greatest resolve, to reverse the tide of the unchecked development and exploitation of our planet and redouble their efforts to end poverty and protect the most vulnerable among us and truly committed to transformative action.

Fifteen years ago, 189 nations and 23 international organizations committed to moving forward with the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Goals served as the framework for a new global commitment to reducing extreme poverty, improving health, enhancing environmental sustainability and addressing gender equality. We now know that progress towards achieving these Goals has been impressive but uneven. Our work to augment these Goals and adopt a new set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals reflects a very clear recognition that the results of the MDGs would have been more impressive had they addressed the underlying causes of poverty and environmental degradation, and had Goal 8, on partnerships, been better realized.

Through 15 years of experience, we now recognize that it is only through international cooperation and partnership with a wide variety of stakeholders that we can scale up the urgent action needed to realize the full potential of sustainable development for our people and for the oceans, forests and coastal areas that sustain our cultures and livelihoods. I am hopeful that now, in 2015, we will all embrace the overarching goal represented by the new Sustainable Development Goals, that is, our commitment to revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development.

The third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa in July, was the first test of the degree of commitment on the part of the developed countries to endowing the new sustainable development agenda with the means needed to meet the new proposed level of ambition. Unfortunately, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda merely reiterated, by and large, the commitments made to the outgoing agenda of the Millennium Development Goals and failed to bridge the gap between grand speech-making and down-to-earth expanded financial commitments.

A more ambitious and reinvigorated global partnership is clearly required. The annual report of the MDG Gap Task Force, including the recently released 2015 report, highlighted several shortfalls in international efforts to achieve the MDGs and provided sobering reminders of the need to substantially step up efforts to meet long-standing international commitments.

Over four and a half decades ago, the international community committed to transferring 0.7 per cent of the gross national income of the rich countries to the poorer countries in the form of official development assistance. To date, the rich nations of the world have generally fallen short of that commitment. In the coming decades, affordable and equitable access to technology will be ever more critical if we are to attain the designated levels of human progress and sustainable development in many areas, including enhancing food security, improving health, including mental health and well-being, and preventing non-communicable diseases. Technology will be the bedrock for aggressive action in climate-change mitigation and adaptation, which remain urgent.

Let me reiterate an important point. If our collective will to implement the 2030 Agenda is sincere, then it is essential to greatly enhance the means and mechanisms of implementation on a much greater scale than those recommended in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. That is the only way to achieve the promise of a more inclusive and sustainable world free from hunger and where poverty is eradicated. Let me say it again. That will be achieved only through expanded, genuine and durable partnerships.

Fortunately, my country has a history of strong partnerships. The United States continues to support Palau in its development and movement toward economic independence. We continue to be strong friends, and

we recognize the unique relationship that we share. We look forward to completing our Compact of Free Association agreement with the United States, which reflects that close and special relationship. We wish to express our special gratitude to the United States and our many other global partners for their support of Goal 14, on oceans, and for the ongoing support towards the preservation of our largest global resource through the set-aside of 10 per cent of our global oceans as marine protected areas. Finally, we thank the United States for its continued and increased assistance to Palau's expanded marine surveillance and enforcement efforts. That is critical if we are to successfully protect the proposed new Palau National Marine Sanctuary.

Palau would also like to acknowledge the great friendship that it has with Japan and the very significant economic support that we have received from Japan over the years. We also wish to express our sincere gratitude for Japan's generous support and enhanced public and private assistance to our marine surveillance and enforcement efforts. We continue to express our support for the expansion and reform of the Security Council and for Japan's permanent membership in the Council.

Palau would also like to thank the Republic of China on Taiwan for its friendship and economic support in assisting Palau to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Palau also wishes to recognize Taiwan's commitment to lowering carbon emissions by 50 per cent by 2050, compared to 2005 levels. We urge the United Nations system to involve Taiwan in the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Additionally, we advocate in favour of Taiwan's participation in the relevant international environmental mechanisms, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Taiwan possesses technical capacities in many areas that can be shared with the world. It should therefore also participate in other international meetings, mechanisms and frameworks such as the World Health Organization, International Civil Aviation Organization, the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, among others.

The success and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals will rest, in great part, on the strength of partnerships, which means inclusion rather than exclusion. Taiwan has been a valuable partner to Palau in achieving our MDGs, and we look forward

to our continued partnership with that country as we embark upon the great challenge of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We would like to express our special gratitude to India for its recent efforts to expand relations with the Pacific Community and to enhance regional cooperation aimed at achieving mutual goals of environmental recovery and economic development. Palau reiterates its support for the reform of the Security Council so as to allow the Council to reflect more closely the issues of today's world, including the security needs and concerns of the Asia-Pacific region. In that respect, expanding the permanent membership category to include India would be welcome.

Finally, we would like also to recognize the very broad list of partners across the globe that make our efforts towards a sustainable future possible, including the Governments of Australia and New Zealand and the European Union, private organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society.

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we have reaffirmed the commitment enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations to fundamental human rights. Inherent in that commitment is an obligation to provide appropriate support for the realization of that commitment. As my President often says, at the end of the day the success of the 2030 Agenda will depend on the strength of the partnerships we develop.

It is now time for the world community to develop those partnerships and, through them, to commit to a much expanded and more accessible financing, technology and human-resource capacity. We must now match our collective determination to promote social progress and better standards of living with on-the-ground partnerships to fight poverty, protect the most vulnerable among us and protect the one planet that we call home.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Claude Stanislas Bouah-Kamon, Chair of the Delegation of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Bouah-Kamon (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of His Excellency Mr. Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, and myself, I, like the Heads of State and Government who have preceded me in this Hall, would like to congratulate you warmly, Mr. President, on your election to the

presidency of the General Assembly at its seventieth session and to assure you of our support as you carry out your important and noble mission. I also wish to pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, for the excellent work accomplished during his tenure. And I am especially pleased to salute His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General of our Organization, for his continued commitment to peace, security and development around the world.

As we celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, which coincides with the adoption of a new cycle of development — a bearer of hope — it is impossible not to feel moved by the intolerable human tragedy of migration that is taking place before our eyes, and I take this opportunity to bow to the memory of so many who have been lost in the Mediterranean. In the face of that unprecedented humanitarian drama, the international community must take a concerted, comprehensive and coherent approach to finding a humane response to the crisis of the migrants and refugees who are risking their lives to flee poverty, misery, violence and wars. We must all share in that common responsibility.

In 1945, when the world was still just emerging from the greatest military and humanitarian tragedy of our time, a few States, joined later by others, brought the United Nations to the baptismal font. The adoption of our Organization's founding Charter inspired a great hope in the nations and peoples of the world, a hope of seeing humankind freed from the scourge of war to able to build a new world of peace, security and social progress. The theme of this year's general debate, "The United Nations at 70: a new commitment to action" offers us an excellent opportunity to take stock of the Organization's achievements in relation to its Charter, and to consider its future in a world assailed by every possible kind of change.

The United Nations enjoys enormous authority and plays an irreplaceable role in helping humankind to progress on the basis of the Organization's three essential pillars: peace, security and development. The 70 years of its existence have unquestionably been marked by its continually growing involvement in promoting democracy and the independence of nations. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, called the world's attention to cases of torture and massive violations of human rights and created unprecedented international pressure for greater respect for human rights on a global scale.

When considering the Organization's major achievements, it is also important to note the end of apartheid in South Africa, in which the United Nations was one of the main architects. It has played a similar role in promoting the rights of women, and in that regard, we should emphasize the historic World Conference on Women, held in Mexico in 1975, and the memorable Fourth Conference in Beijing in 1995, which enabled us to define priorities and standards for women's rights and gender equality.

In the area of peace and security, peacekeeping operations around the world have helped save many lives and restore stability. In that connection, I would like to reiterate the Ivorian people's gratitude for the invaluable role that the United Nations played and continues to play at our side. Thanks to its valuable support, Côte d'Ivoire has begun to make progress again, once again finding itself on the road to stability, growth and economic and social development.

The successes that have been achieved under the leadership of the United Nations should not blind us to the many challenges still facing the Organization and humankind. Indeed, peace and security are everywhere under threat. Transnational crime is expanding and threatening international trade. Incitement to extremism, including by terrorist groups, is gaining ground. Boko Haram, which has become what amounts to the Islamic State in West Africa, continues to sow desolation and terror. Cybercrime is growing, and poverty, despite efforts to eradicate it, remains an abiding concern and an obstacle to the development and well-being of peoples.

Besides such threats, we are witnessing the persistence of internal and regional conflicts in many parts of the world. The international community must be vigilant regarding the conflicts in the Middle East and the situations in Syria, Libya and Western Sahara. Concerning the issue of Western Sahara, Côte d'Ivoire would like to affirm its support for the negotiation process being conducted under the auspices of the United Nations, and we call on the parties to display a spirit of compromise in order to settle the dispute within the framework of the relevant Security Council resolutions and Morocco's autonomy plan.

Our peoples have great and urgent expectations, and they believe that it is up to the United Nations to demonstrate a new commitment to action. That commitment should be embodied in the implementation

of the programmes of the new post-2015 development agenda in the form of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which the Assembly adopted at the special Summit devoted to promoting the new Sustainable Development Goals.

The new 2030 Agenda gives us a historic opportunity to promote an ambitious development programme aimed at significantly reducing poverty and hunger around the world, improving people's health and education and fighting the adverse effects of climate change together. It should also promote good governance measures, which will help to redistribute wealth to the poor and vulnerable and bring back a genuine partnership for development so that we can build a world of prosperity, equality, security and peace, in the spirit and letter of the Charter of the United Nations.

Poverty, terrorism, epidemics, food and climate insecurity — today's new threats to international peace and security — make fertile ground for the intolerance, fundamentalism and extremism of every sort that threaten the fragile edifice of world peace to which our populations legitimately aspire.

We cannot deny that the world is facing a time of great challenges, but it is also true that we have a historic opportunity to strengthen the foundations for inclusive development and a better world for both current and future generations. I am therefore delighted that this seventieth anniversary coincides with a year that gives us hope. Indeed, the third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa from 13 to 16 July, enabled us to agree on ways to implement the 2030 Agenda that we have just adopted. We need to finish the job at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in December in Paris, in order to achieve a binding global commitment that will enable us to fight effectively against global warming.

The new development programme that we have just adopted capitalizes on the experience of the Millennium Development Goals and holistically integrates the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely the economic, social and environmental dimensions. It puts us on the right path to make the transition to a better world for all humankind.

While we are justified in celebrating the new Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals as the

new consensual paradigm for development, the most difficult task is still ahead of us. Each State needs to operationalize all of those programmes through the establishment of appropriate policies and reforms at the national level.

That is the underlying purpose of the national development plan that has been drawn up by the Ivorian Government for the period 2016-2020 with a view to making Côte d'Ivoire an emerging country by 2020. Our objective is to halve the poverty rate in our country. With regard to the economy, according to the World Bank's report *Doing Business 2015*, for the second consecutive year Côte d'Ivoire is among the 10 countries in the world that have implemented the largest number of reforms to improve the business environment.

As a result of those reforms, Côte d'Ivoire has been among the front-runners of high-growth countries in Africa and throughout the world since 2012. The average growth rate of the gross domestic product for the period 2012-2014 was above 9 per cent. During the past three years the per capita income has improved by about 20 per cent. In education, after introducing free schooling in 2011, the Government has made school attendance compulsory for all children aged from 6 to 16 years, beginning with the current school year, in order to translate into reality the right of all girls and boys in our country to high-quality education and training. With regard to health, in order to provide medical coverage for all Ivorians, we have initiated a system of universal health coverage, thereby enabling the most disadvantaged to be treated in the various health units of our country.

The year 2015, which is slipping rapidly away, is pivotal also because on 25 October our open and inclusive general elections will begin. In that connection, I welcome the decision of the Security Council in resolution 2226 (2015), of 25 June 2015, to authorize the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire to provide logistical support to Côte d'Ivoire during the elections. For its part, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, which has established a permanent framework for dialogue with the opposition, will do everything possible to ensure the credibility of the electoral process in order to consolidate the newly found peace.

With regard to the national reconciliation process, the National Commission for Reconciliation and Compensation for Victims, which the Government

established to complete the work of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, is currently in the process of compensating victims. The demobilization, disarmament and reintegration process has been successfully completed with an 85 per cent reintegration rate of ex-combatants. All those results will be sustainable only if the economy performs well. The economic recovery we have seen over the past four years, with a constantly increasing growth rate, has benefited from the support of our partners, and I would like to thank them.

I would like to conclude by emphasizing that the image of a better world conjured up by the founding fathers of our Organization is more compelling than ever. Our adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development opens up new prospects for development, for the benefit of peoples everywhere. We therefore appeal to the proven leadership of the United Nations and call for the decisive impact it can make in helping to push back the frontiers of poverty and to provide humankind with better access to safe drinking water, a rapid reduction in infant mortality, enhanced food security and a healthy environment.

Time is of the essence. The time has come for action.

The President: We have now heard the last speaker in the general debate.

I should like to make some closing remarks as we conclude our debate.

We have reached the end of a historic nine days at the United Nations and a historic, comprehensive general debate. This year we saw the highest number of Heads of State and Government ever gathered here to discuss challenges and opportunities relating to global peace, security, development and human rights. As we commemorated the seventieth anniversary, the fact that leaders recalled and reaffirmed the spirit and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and confirmed their faith in the central role of the United Nations in international cooperation was fitting and appropriate. The fact that a meeting with His Holiness Pope Francis and the Summit at which Member States adopted the universal 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) preceded the general debate was also apt. The 2030 Agenda is a truly seminal commitment by our community of nations.

At the outset, let me thank all the speakers who addressed generous words and congratulations to me

and promised their support. The seventieth session will be an exceptionally busy one, and the general debate has helped to identify the specific issues that the Member States feel deserve our dedicated attention. Since the Summit had focused on sustainable development, I suggested that the general debate should focus on the road ahead for peace, security and human rights.

One of the matters most consistently raised over the past six days was the plight of refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants right across our world. Speakers stressed again and again that this unprecedented crisis of global dimensions calls for an unprecedented global response rooted in international law and international solidarity. Building on the Secretary-General's meeting this week, therefore, I will attend the 2015 annual meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund in Lima next Friday, at which finance ministers will be present. There, I will highlight the need for an immediate focus on financing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the even more urgent need for a comprehensive financing response to the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Furthermore, in mid- to late November I will hold a meeting dedicated to the global refugee crisis.

The tragic humanitarian emergency in many parts of the world, not least in Syria and its neighbouring countries, was repeatedly highlighted in the general debate. In relation to the Syrian conflict, many called for a renewed effort from global and regional Powers to find the necessary peaceful political solution. The situation in other parts of the Middle East, including the now stalled Middle East peace process, was also highlighted as a major source of concern. In addition, many Member States stressed the need to address the particular obstacles to peace in Africa, parts of Europe and beyond that stemmed from instability, violent conflict and the spread of extremism and terrorism. The radical actions of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and other extremist groups were unanimously denounced and rejected as an affront to our common humanity.

With regard to the capacities of the United Nations itself for maintaining international peace and security, many acknowledged the Secretary-General's initiative launching a review of United Nations peace operations, stressing the importance of prevention as key to preserving peace and stability and the need to address the root causes of conflict. The growing role of regional

and subregional organizations in safeguarding peace and security was highlighted.

Numerous Member States also highlighted the critical importance of addressing challenges related to disarmament, ranging from threats posed by small arms and light weapons all the way to nuclear non-proliferation. In that connection, the nuclear agreement between Iran, the five permanent members of the Security Council, Germany and the European Union was widely recognized as an important step and a significant diplomatic achievement. Similarly, many welcomed the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States.

The pressing need to address climate change by reaching an agreement in Paris at the forthcoming twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was repeatedly raised by delegations, not least those of small island States and others particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Indeed, since the beginning of the Summit last week, more than 70 countries have submitted their intended nationally determined contributions, bringing to 146 the number of parties that have demonstrated their belief that Paris can and must succeed, and that it can and must bring hope and opportunity to millions of people across the globe.

Looking ahead, many leaders identified the need for a successful conclusion to the 10-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society. They also expressed hope that the special meeting on the global drug problem will be able to deliver concrete outcomes.

Concerning the Sustainable Development Goals, numerous leaders recalled that universal implementation is now imperative, and that financing — including the need for developed countries to meet their minimum target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for aid — as well as technology and the fight against corruption are essential pieces of the puzzle.

In the field of health, we heard encouraging news from West Africa, where the Ebola epidemic, while not yet over, has been addressed with courage and determination by the affected countries, with assistance from the United Nations and the wider world.

In the area of human rights, some recalled the challenges around the world related to discrimination against various groups and to the protection of the

space in which civil society operates. Many also noted the importance of making further progress in realizing the rights of women and girls. The high-level review and global study of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, were highlighted by many as an important process for the coming year.

Turning to organizational and institutional matters, numerous interventions stressed the pressing need to reform the Security Council if it is to be able to effectively fulfil its mandate and reflect the geopolitical realities of the world of today and tomorrow. In the same vein, hopes were expressed about the possibility of establishing a transparent process over the coming year in order to identify the next Secretary-General.

That is merely a synopsis of the many issues raised in the past six days. The breadth and depth of the discussions demonstrate once again that the task ahead of our Organization is enormous. As President of the General Assembly at its historic seventieth session, I would like to assure members that I will do all I can to help everyone make real and significant progress across each of the three pillars.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the staff of the United Nations who have made this week such a success. In particular, I would like to thank our colleagues in the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management, including the interpreters, and the security, catering and maintenance staff and others. Their professionalism has been outstanding and a credit to themselves and this great Organization.

Several representatives have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I would like to remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Gae Luna (Indonesia): My delegation is taking the floor to exercise its right of reply to statements made by the delegations of Tonga and Solomon Islands on 29 September and 1 October, respectively (see A/70/PV.18 and A/70/PV.23). My delegation objects strongly to references made in those statements to the so-called human rights issue in West Papua. They are dangerously misleading and therefore compel my delegation to set the record straight.

The protection and promotion of human rights has always been one of my Government's priorities. Indonesia's Constitution and national laws provide a solid guarantee of respect for the human rights of every person in Indonesia. It is my delegation's firm conviction that no country, big or small, developed or less developed, is free from human rights problems, and Indonesia is no exception. However, as a mature democracy, the fourth largest in the world, Indonesia has put in place a robust national human rights protection system and continues to strengthen its human rights institutions and legislation.

It has also been the long-term practice of the Government of Indonesia to work together with its vibrant national civil society and human rights institutions to promote and protect human rights. Those institutions provide the checks and independent reviews necessary to ensure that human rights are properly monitored and protected. In other words, the evolving national mechanisms in Indonesia are reliable and capable of addressing in a democratic manner any human rights issues whenever they may emerge, including those that persist. Indonesia also remains actively engaged regionally and globally, and continues to make meaningful contributions in the field of human rights, including by sharing its experiences in the areas of capacity-building and best practices in the protection and promotion of human rights.

We respect expressions of concern made by any party about human rights situations anywhere, including in Indonesia generally or in certain parts of the country. My delegation is not convinced, however, that the references in the statements by the aforementioned delegations are appropriate or have any merit. Indeed, they contain inaccurate allegations concerning the human rights situation in certain parts of Indonesia and indicate political motivation beyond human rights considerations. Furthermore, they include a misrepresentation of the facts.

The Government of Indonesia continues to invest significant resources in and to pay close attention to the development of all areas of life in its provinces of Papua and West Papua, and this includes the promotion and protection of human rights. The two provinces enjoy wide-ranging autonomy, guaranteed by national laws, including in the election of governors and other heads of regional governments. The Government continues to do its utmost to be accountable to the peoples of Papua and West Papua, including in the areas of human rights.

The Government of Indonesia attaches great importance to its relations with Pacific Island countries, as some peoples of Indonesia have strong commonalities with the peoples of the Pacific Islands region. It has been our national policy to cherish commonalities as a way of bridging diversity. Therefore, let me reiterate that the Government of Indonesia is committed to continuing its engagement, in good faith, with Pacific Island countries for common peace and prosperity in the region.

Mr. Va'inga Tone (Tonga): I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the opportunity to respond to the comments made by the representative of Indonesia.

At the outset, let me state that Tonga values its diplomatic relations with Indonesia. It recognizes the sovereignty of Indonesia over its population and its affairs. However, Tonga, having received reports of alleged human rights violations, has concerns about these reports. It proposes the holding of a friendly dialogue among Indonesia, Tonga and other Pacific Island countries to improve understanding and to conduct a fact-finding mission, with the cooperation of Indonesia, to learn more about these allegations.

Tonga holds Indonesia and its diplomatic relations with Indonesia in high regard and simply would like to register, as has been said by my Prime Minister, its concerns about the allegations concerning human rights violations. However, there is room for further dialogue. As part of the proposed solution for this and to address its concerns, Tonga would like to engage in further dialogue with Indonesia.

Mrs. Vadiati (Islamic Republic of Iran): I requested the floor to speak in exercise of the right of reply in reaction to the baseless remarks made by the representative of Bahrain in his statement yesterday in this Assembly (see A/70/PV.25). He repeated fabricated allegations, accusing Iran of intervening in the domestic affairs of Bahrain. We reject these allegations and reiterate that they are illusory and fabricated.

The accusations that the Bahraini representative levelled against Iran are all the more worthless in that they amount to desperate efforts to cover up the violation by his Government of the basic rights of the majority of the Bahraini people. In those efforts, he also sought to justify the rule of the minority on the island and the blatant trampling of the rights of the majority, who are deprived of any meaningful participation in the

running of the country. There should be no doubt that as long as a minority continues to suppress the right of the majority of the population, no attempt, including putting the blame on outsiders, will ever help to resolve the problems.

More outlandish and bizarre were the comments by the representative of Bahrain and later by the representative of the United Arab Emirates (see A/70/PV.26) in reaction to Iran's remarks about the way the Hajj pilgrimage was organized in Mecca this year and the way the pilgrims were treated. It is obvious that the statements made by those two representatives are unwarranted and certainly unhelpful, as that issue is none of their business.

A wrong appellation was used by the representatives of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates in their statements, apparently in reference to the body of water situated between the Arabian peninsula and the Iranian plateau. They should know, as the entire world does, that the historical and formally recognized appellation, including by the United Nations, for that body of water is the Persian Gulf. It has been so since the fifth century B.C. and has remained the same to the current day. The same proper name was also used by the Arab people of that time and in all Arab texts up through the political turmoil in the 1960s. It is unfortunate that, despite the fading of the political rationale behind this distortion, some Arab officials still continue to use this outdated and Cold War-tainted term. Needless to say, that politically motivated change in geographical names is rejected by the relevant United Nations committees and conferences, as it creates tension and has many other adverse consequences.

Similarly, with respect to the remarks on the issue of the three Iranian islands, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates its full sovereignty over the Iranian islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb in the Persian Gulf and underlines that decisions and measures applied in those islands by the Iranian authorities have always been based on the principle of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran. Therefore, any claims to the contrary are deemed as interference in the internal affairs of Iran, which is categorically rejected.

The Government of Iran has always pursued a policy of friendship and good neighbourliness with all neighbouring countries and, in this context, once again expresses its readiness to engage in bilateral talks with

the United Arab Emirates with a view to continuing to strengthen bilateral relations and removing any misunderstandings that may exist between the two countries. Meanwhile, it is obvious that the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran over the said islands is not negotiable.

Iran categorically rejects the allegations that the representative of Canada levelled against my country earlier in this meeting. From his remarks, it is clear how deeply Canada's conservative Government grieves the loss of the smokescreen it needed to hide its years of pursuing a policy of distorting facts directed against the Islamic Republic of Iran and how deeply they resent the nuclear deal between Iran and the P5+1, because it undermines their policy of Iranophobia. It is no wonder that Canada, with a very questionable human rights record — in particular with regard to the rights of immigrants, African Canadians and indigenous people — and also as a relentless supporter of the Israeli crimes against the Palestinians, has pursued the old, worn-out policy of the so-called champion of human rights.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): In response to the statement made by the representative of Indonesia in right of reply, Solomon Islands would like to first reiterate our deep respect for Indonesia's sovereignty and our relations with that country. We also take note of the statement made by the representative of Indonesia.

We would like to reiterate that the Charter of the United Nations is based on three pillars: peace and security, human rights, and development. My delegation also wishes to reiterate that all States have a legal duty and a moral responsibility to uphold, respect and promote human rights and, when necessary, take preventive, protective and punitive measures against human rights abuses and violations, in accordance with the Charter and applicable international law.

On the issue of human rights violations in Papua and West Papua, we have made it clear in our prior statement to the General Assembly (see A/70/PV.23) that we would like to work with Indonesia and with all members of the United Nations Human Rights Council — that is, within the multilateral system — on this particular issue. We therefore welcome what has been said by the representative of Indonesia. We welcome Indonesia's commitment to work in good faith not only with Solomon Islands, not only with the Pacific Islands Forum countries, but with all of us in

terms of addressing human rights violations wherever they may occur.

In this respect, I wish to underscore that we seek dialogue and cooperation with Indonesia, as alluded to by the leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum, and would like to work with that country in order to address some of these issues within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 8?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (continued)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Second report of the General Committee (A/70/250/Add.1)

The President: In paragraph 1 (a) of its second report, the General Committee decides to recommend to the General Assembly that an additional sub-item entitled “Appointment of the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services” be included in the agenda of the current session under heading I, “Organizational, administrative and other matters”.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this sub-item in the agenda of the current session under heading I?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 1 (b), the General Committee further recommends that the sub-item be considered directly in plenary meeting.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to consider this sub-item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like to inform members that the sub-item entitled “Appointment of the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services” becomes sub-item (i) of item 114 on the agenda of the current session.

In paragraph 2 (a) of the report, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that an additional item entitled “Observer status for the Union for the Mediterranean in the General Assembly” be included in the agenda of the current session under heading I, “Organizational, administrative and other matters”.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this item in the agenda of the current session under heading I?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 2 (b), the General Committee further recommends that the item be allocated to the Sixth Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly decides to allocate this item to the Sixth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like to inform Members that the item “Observer status for the Union for the Mediterranean in the General Assembly” becomes item 174 on the agenda of the current session. The Chair of the Sixth Committee will be informed of the decision just taken by the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.