



General Assembly

Sixty-seventh session

8th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 25 September 2012, 6 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Jeremić (Serbia)

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

The meeting was called to order at 6.15 p.m.

Address by Mr. Carlos Mauricio Funes Cartagena, President of the Republic of El Salvador

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

Mr. Carlos Mauricio Funes Cartagena, President of the Republic of El Salvador, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Carlos Mauricio Funes Cartagena, President of the Republic of El Salvador, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Funes Cartagena (*spoke in Spanish*): I bring cordial greetings to the authorities of the United Nations and to all the Heads of State and representatives here with us. This session of the General Assembly, which will address the theme of the settlement of disputes by peaceful means, offers us an opportunity to reflect on the course of the history of our countries and humankind, and to showcase the issues that the world's peoples need to solve. The peaceful settlement of conflicts is an essential part of how we strengthen our democratic institutions and the rule of law in a world that has not yet consolidated peace.

For various reasons that we need not go into, we are witnessing violations of the principle of non-interference — through various mechanisms that are not necessarily military — of our countries' constitutions and our own international treaties, as well as various manifestations of intolerance, xenophobia and other attitudes that provoke violence and foment conflict. Hard as it is to believe, we still see political parties, leaders, intellectuals and representatives of the media who continue to see global realities through Cold War eyes, as if the last half-century had not produced enormous changes in the international political map.

Such outdated positions hinder the progress of our peoples and nations in strengthening and broadening their democratic borders. My country, El Salvador, is a clear example of such contradictions, finding itself as it does stuck between a process that is strengthening the rule of law and the persistence of conservative forces that still entertain the fantasy of communism.

I bring these thoughts to this forum because I believe that El Salvador's young democracy is a good example of how to settle disputes through dialogue. It is also a good example of structures that are mired in backwardness, privilege and the Manichaeian view that belongs to the Cold War. As is well known, El Salvador endured a long armed conflict that lasted 12 years and cost more than 80,000 lives. Our emergence from that conflict has been a model of the effectiveness of dialogue and negotiation for my country and the entire world.

We took a giant step forward as a nation 20 years ago when, on 16 January 1992, we signed the

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Chapultepec, Mexico, peace accords that brought the armed conflict to a definitive end. The United Nations itself acted as mediator; the then Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuellar, in consultation with the Security Council, appointed the Peruvian diplomat Álvaro de Soto as mediator. I would like, if I may, to pay tribute to Mr. De Soto's work, as it is an example of how even exceedingly difficult disputes can be settled through dialogue. In that regard, he proved to be a true architect of peace. We can say that, beginning in 1992, Salvadorans launched a new process that has gradually consolidated our democracy and created modern institutions.

Three years ago El Salvador passed another milestone signaling a step forward in the strengthening of our democracy. After 20 years of Governments led by the same political forces, we witnessed a political change that brought in the current Government to administer the State. This was not simply a change of political party; it opened the way to a movement of renewal that has been expressed in various issues of enormous importance for the rule of law and for reinforcing the work of our democratic institutions. The long-term control of our country's Government by a single political party for two decades gave absolute power to a small group over the organs of State — executive, legislative and judicial — and over other institutions such as the Court of Accounts, the Office of the Prosecutor General and the Public Ministry, among others.

As change and the break with absolute control took place, they began to permit genuine independence in the branches of Government, which in turn began to lead to the genuine flowering of democracy that the people had demanded. Those changes, far from changing the rules of the game, effectively guaranteed judicial certainty and eliminated the privileges that had protected Governments in the past. On behalf of the State, the Government asked for forgiveness for the crimes committed by State agents during the armed conflict, and has undertaken and continues to undertake concrete efforts to make moral and material reparations to the victims of barbaric atrocities and their families. This was a debt to the Salvadoran people and the international community that had not been settled by previous Governments.

Not long ago, our country experienced an institutional crisis whose nature and scope were very different from those of the armed conflict, but nonetheless put Salvadoran democracy to the test.

I am referring to the recent crisis that arose between the constitutional chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice and the Legislative Assembly in my country. At no time did the crisis cause political instability; rather, it brought two State bodies in conflict and, in that respect, it was an example of the independence of those two branches of Government in our country today.

The conflict, arising from different and conflicting interpretations of the Republic's Constitution, lasted almost five months. It was a protracted crisis that generated opposing positions within our country, and the lack of agreement between the parties drove the Legislative Assembly to call for a settlement through the Central American Court of Justice. The conflict and that decision of the parliamentary majority set off strong reactions from groups on either side. Unfortunately, it was also exploited by foreign groups, including by campaigning United States senators who blew the conflict out of proportion without understanding it fully.

Therefore, with no agreement to resolve the crisis, the President of the Republic offered to mediate and facilitate the dialogue. After 17 long days of meetings with representatives of the different political camps in the Legislative Assembly, the longed-for agreement was finally reached. In the end, that agreement led to the appointment of a new President of the Supreme Court of Justice and the normalization of the administration of justice in our country.

I wished to share with the Assembly this brief sketch of events in order to underscore that once again El Salvador was able to find a felicitous solution to an institutional crisis through dialogue and as the fruit of negotiation. In short, it was a new triumph of the young and ever-stronger Salvadoran democracy. Of course, many challenges lie ahead, such as that of promoting a process of constitutional reform that will lead to an unequivocal interpretation of our Magna Carta so that we do not once again suffer conflicts such as the one we saw recently. We also must move to update State institutions in the light of what we have learned over the past two decades.

El Salvador resolved on its own an institutional conflict that in other eras would have led to coups d'état and breaches of constitutional order with serious human, economic, political and social consequences for countries that suffered such situations. We found the solution through dialogue, which is a fine example of the theme for this session of the General Assembly. At

the same time, we are aware that the strengthening of democratic processes — which, happily, is the one-way road on which Latin America is now travelling — should bring profound changes in the economic and social structures of our countries, which must clearly be based on the rule of law.

The fact that there are people who are marginalized and excluded from the progress and goods that only a small portion of humankind is able to enjoy remains an open wound that we cannot and should not continue to tolerate. We live from crisis to crisis, ever more frequent and ever deeper, which lead to a system and models based essentially on the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a tiny minority, leaving large majorities in poverty and backwardness. The phenomenon of migration, which we once addressed in this forum, is the child of that planet-wide inequality and an striking reflection of the need to change and change quickly.

Latin America has taken important steps in that direction. We are leaving behind a perverse model that had impoverished our people and turned our region into the most unfair of the planet — not the poorest, but the most unfair. Today, we are aware that no model is successful if it leaves out vast majorities. With all the people involved we can achieve much, but without the people we can achieve nothing. That is the road that we have begun to travel in our region. Without a doubt, it will be a difficult and long road, full of progress and setbacks, but in the end, and I stress this, it is the only road that will allow for certain success.

The unfair distribution of wealth and goods, the constant aggression against the environment, and the lack of global control over financial flows that leads to recurring crises — which are always paid for by the people and never by those who are responsible — are realities that do not arise from any ideology. The problem is not one of ideology. These are realities that we must change in order to establish a climate of peace and security in which we see the domestic changes that give our peoples better living conditions and access to the material and cultural goods that produce progress in our global society.

I do not wish to conclude without first alluding to a topic that we have also addressed in this forum and that is a source of ongoing concern for the international community. I am referring to civic security and the fight against organized crime and all forms of violence. El Salvador is today the focus of the region, multilateral organizations and the countries that historically have

close ties to my country. That is due to a phenomenon that we have been experiencing for more than half a year and that has brought a significant drop in violence and crime. El Salvador was the second most violent country on the American continent until a few months ago. We had 15 murders per day on average, as a result of violence, crime and infighting among criminal organizations, in particular among gangs. By September, the average had fallen to 3.8 murders per day. We have seen drops in other crime rates that, while less significant, are still steady and substantial.

For the past three years, El Salvador has been undertaking a policy of civic security that has been bearing fruit. Recently, a truce signed between rival gangs, with the Catholic church as intermediary and facilitated by the Government, contributed decidedly to that crime reduction process. However, let me also say that if violence and organized crime are to disappear in our countries, we must modify the conditions for millions of young people who live without hope and without opportunity. These are tasks that are incumbent upon the Governments and societies of each of our countries.

However, there is more. As we have said on other occasions, without the strong and decided support of the drug-consuming countries, and without an unequivocal commitment from those large markets, we cannot wage this good fight successfully. Central America, together with Mexico and Colombia, have agreed upon joint policies to wage that battle. We need the support of the Government and people of the United States in that battle. It is essential.

El Salvador has launched a massive campaign to raise awareness and mobilize our people against gender violence in the understanding that violence against women is violence against all of society. If gender-based violence is a problem throughout all of our societies, it is one that we should address and that is even more pressing in societies where there is a strong tradition of tolerance of violence and chauvinism against women.

Governments bear the biggest responsibility, but societies should also show solidarity and commit to those efforts. We are certain that the differences that divide us within our countries can be overcome only through dialogue. That is the manner in which we must resolve conflicts. Dialogue, consensus and agreement are the guidelines for the road maps that will lead to societies that are more fair and prosperous.

I should therefore like to conclude my remarks by sending along a warm greeting to the people and Government of Colombia for their efforts to attain a definitive peace in their country. For several decades, our sister Republic of Colombia has suffered an armed conflict that has limited its possibilities and clearly hindered its economic growth and the well-being of its people. For that reason, the dialogue and negotiation that have been launched by President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón deserve the full support of the international community, and in particular of the Latin American countries. We congratulate the Colombian people and wish them the greatest success on the road that they have taken towards peace and national concord.

Along the same lines, we hail the process of economic reforms undertaken by the sister Republic of Cuba, which is bringing about a transformation that is worthy of our support and encouragement. We therefore reiterate the call we made last year in this Hall. The blockade against Cuba must be lifted. It is an anachronism from a past that has been overcome in our America.

Peace, unity and change are essential values when it comes to working for the happiness of our peoples.

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

Mr. Carlos Mauricio Funes Cartagena, President of the Republic of El Salvador, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Joseph Kabila Kabange, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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

Mr. Joseph Kabila Kabange, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

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

President Kabila Kabange (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to join previous speakers in congratulating Mr. Vuk Jeremić and the other members of the Bureau on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. I should like also to congratulate Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser for the work that he accomplished during his mandate, and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his commitment to defending the ideals of our Organization.

The holding of a session of the General Assembly offers each of us an opportunity to participate in a collective process of reflection on ways and means of ensuring the success of efforts aimed at peace, security and development in each of our States and throughout the world.

President Jeremić has rightly recommended that interventions during this general debate focus in particular on the adjustment or settlement of international disputes by peaceful means. That recommendation is particularly wise because this is an issue whose relevance and timeliness are immutable and which is part and parcel of the process of tirelessly seeking peace through means other than the use of force.

World history makes clear the operational validity of the principle of the peaceful settlement of international disputes. It also teaches us that processes of dialogue and negotiation, in order to remain credible as ways of resolving conflicts and disputes, must be based on truth and respect for the law and the values and universally recognized principles. They should guard against both hasty action and stalemate, and they should demonstrate effectiveness by producing the hoped-for results, even if this is done in a gradual manner.

It must be noted that more than 60 years after the founding of the United Nations, the world continues to witness many situations of war and instability. Terrorism is increasing instead of decreasing. Maritime piracy, which we thought had been eradicated, is once again becoming one of the main threats to peace and security. The Middle East is today a hotbed of tension. Syria is in the throes of bloodshed, and Mali is witnessing attempts at separatism.

More broadly, as peace is more than just the absence of war, many scourges still affect humanity. Many are devoting their creativity and energy to destabilization and destruction, by means of drug trafficking,

trafficking in persons and other violations of the rights and freedoms of human beings, instead of working for the prosperity and for individual and collective well-being.

In addition, for the sake of more than two thirds of humanity, there is an increasingly urgent need to fight poverty, ignorance, violence, injustice and diseases of all kinds, particularly HIV and malaria.

After years of difficulties, my country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is in the process of consolidating of peace and security. To that end, no effort has been spared, and remarkable progress has been made. Begun for the first time only 10 years ago in a country that has had independence for 50 years, tireless efforts towards democratization, the building of a State based on the rule of law, the development of the socioeconomic infrastructure, and the improvement of the living conditions of our people continue, which is proof of the determination of the Congolese people and of its leaders to be a factor of peace and stability.

That momentum, unfortunately, is now under threat by the enemies of peace. Since March 2012, the province of North Kivu, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the concepts of peace, stability, reconciliation, work and human dignity had begun to regain a foothold, has, sadly, once again gained notoriety, not because of the incomparable beauty of its landscape or the extraordinary richness of its biodiversity, but as an example of the profound evil that selfishness, extremism, communal violence and the philosophy of “might makes right” can wreak on a society.

Even as I address the Assembly today, hundreds of thousands of children, women and men in North Kivu are deprived of peace and are being subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment by negative forces, led by unrepentant elements with a vast capacity to do harm and who benefit from external support. Children are unable to attend school and are forced to carry and use firearms to kill other children, even their own brothers and sisters. That situation is unacceptable. It should be condemned and should give rise to sanctions. We expect that the community of nations will shoulder its responsibilities in that respect and that the Security Council will ensure compliance with its resolutions. That is a condition for those resolutions to be effective and remain credible.

We are aware that it is up to us, the Congolese people, to defend our country and ensure law and order and security throughout our national territory. We are determined to assume that responsibility and we intend to dedicate all of our human, material and financial resources to that end, even sacrificing our legitimate ambitions for the emergence of Congo. We also remain determined to guarantee national cohesion and ensure equal protection for all Congolese citizens.

At the same time, it is my hope to see the Organization encourage all Member States, in particular those that are tempted by violence, to respect the guiding principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all those who, from afar or from close by, bilateral or multilateral partners, including the United Nations, have assisted us in our efforts to build at the centre of Africa a Congo that is united and prosperous and that lives in peace with itself and with all of its neighbours. I would like to assure the Assembly of one thing: the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a safe investment.

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

Mr. Joseph Kabila Kabange, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Address by Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic

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

Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Bongo Ondimba (*spoke in French*): I warmly congratulate the President on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh

session. His election demonstrates the esteem in which he and his country, Serbia, are held on the international scene. I can assure him that he has the support of my country, Gabon. I also commend the outstanding work done by his predecessor, Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, during his presidency of the Assembly at its sixty-sixth session. And I would like to reiterate our confidence in the efforts that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is undertaking as the head of the Organization.

Our world more than ever needs a dialogue of civilizations and cultures. In order to build a more peaceful world, it needs more tolerance, more understanding and more respect among peoples. During this session, we are called upon to redefine the outlines for better management of global challenges. I would like to welcome the theme chosen by the President for this session, namely, "Bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means", which will remain at the heart of our common efforts and is indeed an ongoing quest.

The debate we held yesterday on the rule of law at the national and international levels was also a discussion of the conditions for peace in our countries and around the world. By maintaining our focus on that goal and working together, we can better tackle the challenges of an international context that is still marked by multifaceted crises, illustrated by many hotbeds of tension around the world. That is shown by the situations in the Middle East and Africa, which are still of concern to us.

The Syrian crisis, which arose as an extension of the Arab Spring last year, is having a destabilizing impact on several countries of the Middle East region. We hope that the efforts undertaken by the Joint Special Representative, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, will help put a stop to confrontation and will open up a dialogue.

With respect to the situation in Mali, we condemn the attempts to divide the country and the destruction of the World Heritage sites in Timbuktu. Gabon supports the efforts of the new transitional Government, the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union to try to re-establish territorial integrity.

I urge the Security Council and Member States to support the United Nations integral regional strategy on the Sahel, which addresses issues of security, governance, development, human rights and humanitarian concerns.

When we served on the Security Council, we joined other members in responding to the appeals of the Libyan people. The situation there is still dire, and we encourage the United Nations to continue to work to promote political stability and reconstruction efforts.

We reiterate our condemnation of the attack on the United States Consulate in Benghazi.

With regard to the ongoing tensions in the eastern part of our brother country the Democratic Republic of the Congo, our collective support for the Congolese State must be maintained in security, political and humanitarian matters.

I welcome the progress made in Somalia with the adoption of its provisional Constitution and the election of the new President, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, whom I congratulate and commend. Gabon will continue to help Somalia, as it did last year with humanitarian contributions. I commend United Nations and African Union involvement in Somalia. Thanks to the African Union Mission in Somalia and to Government forces, security is improving even far outside Mogadishu. I have the highest praise for the country, whose troops pay a heavy price on the ground.

I honour the memory of the first Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi, who passed away on 22 August. All of us know of his work for peace in Somalia and the Sudan, his commendable tenures as Chair of the New Partnership for Africa's Development Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee and his focus on climate change.

It goes without saying that the crises and conflicts that continue to ravage the world constitute a profound betrayal of the cry-from-the-heart aspirations of all peoples for peace and security, justice, development and the equal sovereignty of States. Those cries come from the people of Palestine and Cuba, who long for a better future. One wants recognition of a State living in peace and security with its neighbours, within secure, internationally recognized borders, while the other wants an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo it suffers under. The General Assembly has many times spoken out on the side of those two peoples' aspirations, through numerous resolutions, which my country has unequivocally supported.

To fulfil the aspirations of all peoples, we need global governance that is more balanced, more democratic, better structured and based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Such governance must

be founded on the primacy of international law and respect for the sovereignty of States in their quest for democracy and development.

Throughout the coming sixty-seventh session we will focus on certain priority issues, starting with various reforms of the Organization, especially the revitalization of the General Assembly, to make it better able to play its part given the changes and current realities in the world. We must strengthen the Assembly's role as an active force and as the premier forum for global democracy. Likewise, in its commitment to Security Council reform, Gabon continues to support permanent and equitable representation for Africa.

As we did during our recent tenure on the Council, we will continue our focus on mediation, prevention and the peaceful resolution of disputes and conflicts. We believe action must be taken before disputes escalate into armed conflict, sparing the heavy expense of peacekeeping operations. But current realities force us to focus also on new, cross-cutting threats to peace and security, including trafficking in small arms and light weapons and maritime piracy, which is ravaging the Gulf of Guinea.

That is why we are working along with other countries in Central Africa to put in place confidence-building measures, including the early warning mechanism for Central Africa. We greatly appreciate the support offered by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, which my country hosts, in promoting peace.

During my tenure as Acting Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States, I will emphasize regional integration as a means to common economic development and strengthening peaceful connections among member States.

We know that the conflicts shaking the world have numerous and complex causes. Any lasting settlement of those crises requires an approach that combines support for institution-building and governance in the affected countries with initiatives to revitalize their economies. Gabon will therefore follow with great interest the issue of an increased role for the Economic and Social Council.

Many countries remain concerned with economic conditions. We must therefore rethink our approaches to sustainable development initiatives. We must reflect clearly on the post-2015 development agenda, especially on how to coordinate the Millennium Development

Goals and the sustainable development goals enunciated in the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) (resolution 66/288).

It is also crucial to break the impasse in the World Trade Organization by rethinking the basis for negotiations. We will thereby be better able to promote the tripartite model of aid together with investment and trade towards sustainable development.

During last year's session I referred to work in progress in my country towards the goal we set for ourselves to become an emerging country by 2025. Since then that initiative has begun to produce results in the creation of strategic infrastructures, strengthening the rule of law and social, political and economic reforms. We continue to take steps to diversify our economy through local promotion of the natural resources we export, which encourages wealth creation and employment. Those efforts must be based on sustainable management of our forests and their biodiversity, which plays an important role in the global environment. In that vein we are fighting poaching and the illegal trafficking in protected species.

I am also pleased at the adoption, on 21 June, of the outcome of the Rio+20 Conference, which reflects the international community's recognition of the need to work together to promote sustainable development through the joint efforts of individuals, Governments, civil society and the private sector. Along those lines I have instructed my Government to rethink our country's institutional framework for sustainable development, with an eye to enacting legislation on the subject. Gabon is also pursuing the opportunities offered by a green economy in eradicating poverty.

We are also continuing to develop our human resources, our financial services capabilities, new information technologies and ecotourism. Given current economic challenges, I recently instituted measures to improve the daily lives of my fellow citizens by tackling the cost of living — for instance, by suspending customs duties and the value added-tax on several basic items and building materials.

In the social arena, we have put in place a national system of health coverage for all strata of Gabonese society. That coverage, which is part of our fight against HIV/AIDS, includes free antiretrovirals and prenatal and maternal care for all infected pregnant women.

At the political level, we have introduced biometrics to improve the organization of the next elections. We

continue our efforts to talk with all leading players in the nation, in particular through the National Council for Democracy.

Together, those actions strengthen the climate of peace bequeathed to us by my illustrious predecessor, thereby creating an environment conducive to the well-being of citizens and to the security of investments needed for the development of the country. We are therefore ready to welcome diversified and mutually beneficial partnerships and look forward to doing so.

Our countries and the international community as a whole must today overcome considerable challenges. Our efforts can fulfil the aspirations of our peoples only if we cooperate to achieve global governance based on respect for the rule of law, dialogue among peoples, conflict prevention, protection of the environment and biodiversity. Our ultimate goal must be, above all, the well-being of our peoples.

It is in that spirit that my country will continue to make its contribution both in our Organization and in our common work for peace, security, development and prosperity for all.

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

Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Ivan Gašparovič, President of the Slovak Republic

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

Mr. Ivan Gašparovič, President of the Slovak Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Ivan Gašparovič, President of the Slovak Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Gašparovič (*spoke in Slovak; English text provided by the delegation*): At the outset, I wish to convey thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General for his true commitment to the fulfilment of the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

The United Nations and its General Assembly are a unique tool, the one and only global forum that provides room for dialogue to discuss strategic visions and to seek policy-level solutions to the problems that we are jointly confronted with at the international, regional and national levels. It is our obligation and moral duty to search together for ways of bringing peace and prosperity to all humankind. Conflicts do not stop at borders. The world we live in is so interconnected that every problem is a problem for all of us and every threat is a threat faced by all. At the same time, every success is of benefit to all of us.

Besides numerous indisputable benefits, the process of globalization introduces new challenges. I will mention just three challenges encountered in the early twenty-first century: the global economic crisis, environmental change and man-made threats, including terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. We need global partnership and cooperation. We need strong multilateralism. We need a proactive United Nations that can lead effectively on all fronts: political, economic, military, social and civil. We need a trustworthy United Nations that people can rely upon to save them from the scourge of war. We need to work together towards our common goal: peace, security and dignity for all.

The Organization's primary objective is to preserve peace and security in the world. We have been through an extremely challenging year full of unexpected twists and turns, including some severe new conflicts, grave violations of human rights, disease, famine, terrorism and extremism, as well as other threats to peace and security, which, unfortunately, we cannot always successfully prevent. Attacks have even occurred against diplomats and diplomatic missions, which we resolutely condemn as totally unacceptable.

It is the way we go about resolving constantly occurring conflicts and the effectiveness of our responses to new threats that tells us how successful we are in meeting the objectives of the United Nations. Violence can never be the right way to settle a dispute. Open dialogue, respect for mutual differences and a joint search for solutions by peaceful means is the only way to proceed; there is no alternative. Therefore, we appreciate the appeal to concentrate specifically on that crucial aspect of international relations. We are all obliged under the Charter of the United Nations to resolve disputes by peaceful means so that peace and security are not at risk.

The Charter provides us with a range of options, including negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and other peaceful means, which must be used effectively. Mediation under the auspices of the United Nations is key to resolving conflicts by peaceful means. Reinforcing United Nations mediation capacities, confidence-building, improved implementation of the Charter and enhanced respect for its provisions are central.

While the nature of conflicts evolves and changes, their essence remains the same — achieving goals by violence. I refer not just to military battles. Famine and thirst have even more devastating consequences than weapons. Unfair distribution of wealth, social imbalances, poverty and the feeling of injustice remain breeding grounds for conflicts and disputes. Persons whose basic needs are met do not seek conflict; rather, they seek ways of making the best of their lives. In that context, I think that prevention is the most effective tool for ensuring peace, sustainable growth and a life of dignity.

It is crucial to eliminate the primary causes of conflicts, including through poverty reduction, sustainable development, respect for human rights, the rule of law and respect for its instruments, building of democratic institutions, and arms control. Those are the basic building blocks of peace and prosperity. The United Nations, with its multipurpose focus, possesses the potential to effectively assist its Members in all those areas. But it must be adequately empowered to do so.

However, we still differ considerably on what the United Nations should do, and how. Terrorism poses an imminent threat to every one of us, yet we are unable to find common grounds to describe its characteristics. Climate change has brought about crucial changes with concrete impacts on agricultural production, yet the production of greenhouse gases and emissions does not decline. The gap between the wealthy and the poor has been growing. An increasingly important role is being played by non-State actors — multinational corporations and speculative investors.

The crisis has shown that even the strongest economies are vulnerable. They are vulnerable when they live on credit, when the moral hazard goes beyond what is sustainable. The crisis has shown that peace has its limits in every society, whether that society is more or less advanced. It is important for the global economy that the strongest economies are stable and,

in particular, that they are aware of their responsibility for global development and the sustainability of social stability in the world. This is not only about the application of the principle of social solidarity; it is about the self-preservation of humankind.

We therefore have to pursue a common target: to transform the United Nations into an effective Organization with a leading role in a new international environment. We need a political willingness on the part of all Members and a clear vision to adapt the United Nations to the global demands of the twenty-first century.

One of the instruments for preventing conflicts is the elimination of poverty and ensuring sustainable development for all, and in all aspects. The United Nations has the necessary tools in its hands. At a time of fiscal constraints, we have to use the existing tools more effectively. We do not need to create new parallel or duplicate structures.

At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), we agreed that we needed an inclusive, strong multilateral system that will be able to effectively address threats in the area of sustainable development. Such a system is crucial for enduring peace and, of course, for security.

We support Sustainable Energy for All, an initiative launched by the Secretary-General. In the spirit of the initiative, we emphasize, among other things, the positive aspects of the use of nuclear energy in the energy and health care sectors. I am convinced that priority investments in research to increase the operational safety and security of nuclear power plants would be more useful than massive investment in the closure of functioning power plants.

Slovakia is prepared to intensively and constructively cooperate with partners in order to maximize the effective functioning of the United Nations system in the economic, social, environmental and other areas. We support strengthening the Economic and Social Council and more effective cooperation of the Council with the General Assembly and other entities across the United Nations system.

Slovakia takes seriously its moral duty to help developing countries and countries in distress. We have less than three years to go to accomplish the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. We need to step up our efforts. As a donor country, Slovakia contributes its share to addressing the pressing problems

of global development. Despite its tight budget, Slovakia increases its total contribution to official development assistance every year.

A secure and stable environment conducive to development cannot be achieved without effective arms control and universal disarmament as the fundamental instruments of conflict prevention. Slovakia is an advocate of a comprehensive, universal and binding arms trade treaty. Our objective is to curb irresponsible dealing in arms and to prevent their transfer to the hands of terrorists, criminals and other illicit groups. I regret that the years-long efforts of States, in cooperation with civil society, were not crowned with success at the July 2012 Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty. I believe that further negotiations will lead to a consensus on an effective agreement.

A world free of nuclear weapons is one of the priorities long pursued by the international community. Although we have made some progress in this respect in recent years, there are still countries that are not parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

We appreciate that a conference on a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction has been scheduled for December 2012 in Helsinki. We believe that despite the regrettable turmoil in the region and the unwillingness of some countries to cooperate, we will overcome the differences and jointly bring the conference to a successful conclusion, for the sake of our common goal, namely, peace and security in the Middle East without the fear of nuclear weapons.

Success of the conference would also support long-lasting efforts to drive away concerns over the Iranian nuclear programme. Rocket tests performed by Iran do not contribute to belief that its nuclear programme serves a peaceful purpose.

With regard to further improvements in the work of peacebuilding missions and increasing their effectiveness, I would like to mention three aspects that I consider crucial: first, cooperation among United Nations missions; secondly, the protection of civilians and the contributions to monitoring human rights; and, thirdly, the need to prepare a strategy for the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, that is, increased effectiveness in the implementation of security sector reform. More intensive cooperation among peacekeeping missions will allow for effective sharing of funds, equipment and personnel between neighbouring

missions, as well as contribute to improving the capabilities of United Nations peacekeeping forces to adequately respond to unforeseen situations. The protection of civilians is one of the main objectives under the mandates of peacekeeping operations. It will enable the restoration of political processes in a country, including the implementation of measures aimed at the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants, as well as of ordinary people affected by the conflict, including children. As the road from conflict to enduring peace is complicated, it is important that we prepare strategies for the peacekeeping forces to anticipate and transfer responsibility for peacekeeping in a host country with the aim of eliminating duplicate instruments and procedures.

Last year, the international community devoted considerable attention and funds to support Afghanistan on its road towards responsibility for its own security and for meeting its obligations. Afghanistan remains the top-priority foreign military operation for Slovakia. Our troops will stay in Afghanistan as long as necessary.

Security and stability also depend on a stable economy. Therefore we also wish to intensify our involvement in the area of development assistance. Afghanistan remains one of the three primary recipients of Slovakia's official development assistance. At the same time, we support the central role of the United Nations and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in capacity-building and stabilization in Afghanistan. Wherever in the world human lives are at risk, the international community should be prepared to take resolute action.

Allow me to express my deepest regret over the thousands of victims of the conflict in Syria. The Slovak Republic has joined the initiative requesting that the most serious crimes under international law committed in Syria be investigated by the International Criminal Court. The primary responsibility for the protection of its citizens is always borne by the Government and democratic institutions of a country. The aim is to build a country governed by the rule of law, respecting international principles and at the same time reflecting traditional common law.

Slovakia is committed to the United Nations principles set out in the Charter. We believe that the key to resolving global problems in today's interconnected world is an inclusive and effective multilateralism. Global threats to security, the economy, the environment

or society know no borders and are so extensive that no country and no regional organization can alone respond to or defend against them effectively.

We believe that, together, we will make progress on our agenda during the current session of the General Assembly. That is what our citizens expect from us.

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

Mr. Ivan Gašparovič, President of the Slovak Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

**Address by Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan,
President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Jonathan: Let me start by congratulating Mr. Jeremić on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. I have no doubt that under his able leadership the work at this session will progress to a successful conclusion. I also wish to acknowledge the excellent work of his predecessor, Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, who guided the affairs of the sixty-sixth session with diligence and consummate skill. I must seize this opportunity to applaud Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for the able manner in which he has continued to guide and lead the Secretariat of our Organization.

When I addressed the Assembly last year on the theme of the role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means (see A/66/PV.11), the world was witnessing important and dramatic changes. The Arab Spring had broken out, setting new political standards for social contracts between Governments and the governed. Also, South Sudan, today sitting at the family table of the United Nations, had just gained independence.

Since then, we have witnessed considerable progress and also some setbacks. Knowing that the future remains uncertain and perilous, we have always believed that much more needs to be done to protect our gains, including developing new strategies for preventing and resolving conflicts.

The situation in Syria, which continues to weigh on the collective conscience of the world, is a case in point. Every day since the conflict began, innocent people continue to lose their lives and livelihoods, while tens of thousands of others flee into neighbouring countries seeking refuge. I seize this opportunity to call on the Syrian people, in the face of a seeming lack of concerted positive international action, to pause and find a solution to the crisis in a way that will benefit the Syrian nation.

Indeed, it was in the context of tackling the many crises that plagued our world that I proposed the establishment of a conflict mediation commission, under the Secretary-General's Office, to further strengthen the early warning and peacebuilding initiatives of the United Nations. Experience elsewhere gives us reason to believe that there is value in the creation of such a mechanism. Nigeria stands ready to work with other countries to make the protection of innocent civilians caught in conflict situations a priority of the United Nations.

I see a consonance between the theme of the sixty-sixth session and that of sixty-seventh session — the adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means. Both are concerned with the peaceful settlement of disputes. This consonance, in my view, is evidence of the United Nations continuous and justifiable preoccupation with issues of peace and security.

Membership in the Security Council in 2010 and 2011 afforded Nigeria an opportunity to work with others to promote the complex peace and security agenda of the United Nations. It was indeed a privilege for us to contribute to the United Nations and international efforts to make the world a safer and better place.

Nigeria and other emerging nations continue to demonstrate the capacity to add value to the work of all the organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council. For that reason, we must now commit ourselves to accelerating the long-overdue reforms of the Security Council. They will no doubt make the Council more equitable, more inclusive and more

effective. Nigeria believes that a reformed Security Council with expanded permanent membership would benefit from the unique experiences and capacities that regional representatives could bring to bear on its work.

It is a matter of great concern that many regions of the world, including the West African subregion, are plagued by political crises and insurgency. In some parts of my own country, for instance, we are experiencing threats from extremist and militant activities with quasi-terrorist tactics. Our response has been multifaceted, as we seek to address the root causes of those threats, exploring opportunities for dialogue and improving law enforcement to ensure public safety and security.

International cooperation has also been a key factor in tackling our security challenges. We have signed bilateral agreements with our neighbours: Cameroon, the Republic of the Niger and Chad. On the multilateral front, the Lake Chad Basin Commission has been an excellent platform for cooperation. Those efforts are aimed at safeguarding the security of our individual countries and denying extremists the use of our region as sanctuary. We are confident that those measures will stem the flow of and access to small arms and light weapons, which have indeed become Africa's weapons of mass destruction and the most potent source of instability. Indeed, the free flow of small arms and light weapons from the developed countries that manufacture them to Africa is one of the greater challenges the continent is facing in the contemporary world.

Nigeria continues to regard the General Assembly as a veritable platform for collective action to address issues of common interest to all nations. One such issue deserving the serious attention of the United Nations is the adoption of a legally binding arms trade treaty. I believe that important instrument could galvanize the international community to regulate the transfer of conventional weapons and curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. There is no doubt that the absence of a global consensus on controlling the flow of such weapons, including small arms and light weapons, is fuelling conflicts, constraining growth and development and increasing human rights violations.

A ray of hope was offered early this month with the successful conclusion of the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms

and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, including the unprecedented adoption of an outcome document under Nigeria's presidency. We expect that those positive achievements will have an impact on the entire United Nations disarmament process, including the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and other disarmament mechanisms.

The correlation between disarmament, peace and security, and development is axiomatic and self-evident. The work of the United Nations Commission on Life-saving Commodities for Women and Children — which I have the honour to co-chair with Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of Norway — recognizes the need to serve and improve the health of women and children for the benefit of the future progress of the world. That is indeed a laudable achievement, for which we commend the vision of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon. The Commission's overarching objective is to provide medical resources and other life-saving commodities in a more affordable, accessible and timely manner, thereby saving the lives of at least 4 million women and children worldwide by 2015 and helping to achieve the health-related targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Concerned with the unflattering statistics on maternal and child mortality in Nigeria, my Government has adopted measures for reversing that unhappy trend, in close collaboration with the Commission and the related Every Woman Every Child movement.

We believe, therefore, that it is time that the world looked beyond 2015 to the post-MDG era. The year 2015 is not a destination but only a milestone on the long journey to a better, safer, healthier and more caring world. It is in that spirit that Nigeria will participate in the forthcoming intergovernmental process to consider the development of specific and action-oriented sustainable development goals beyond 2015.

Sustainable development and progress are two ultimate aspirations of any nation, and they cannot be achieved without peace and security. Guided by that realization, Nigeria has committed and shall continue to commit itself to the attainment of regional and international peace and security, in close collaboration with the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Recently, however, our subregion has suffered some setbacks in terms of unconstitutional change of

Governments and the emergence of insurgency, among others. In Mali, the political crisis stemming from that reality has escalated to an insurgency that is threatening the unity of the country. Nigeria and ECOWAS are working in concert to address that threat, which has the potential to spill over into neighbouring countries and destabilize the entire region. Guinea-Bissau is another flashpoint of instability in the subregion in which Nigeria and the Economic Community of West African States are engaged. Indeed, the contact group, headed by Nigeria, was set up by the authority of the Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS to help establish a transitional Government with a view to returning that country to political and constitutional order. In furtherance of that objective, Nigeria provided the sum of \$10 million to the interim Government in Guinea-Bissau to assist in the stabilization of the country.

The overall security situation in the West African subregion should continue to be a matter of interest and concern to the rest of the international community. I believe I speak for many in the Assembly when I state that West Africa can ill afford renewed insurgency. Although ECOWAS is taking measures to address the situation in Mali, particularly in the north, the urgent assistance of the United Nations and the support of other partners will be needed to build on recent gains to secure peace and stability in Mali and across the subregion.

Nigeria's long-standing commitment to the promotion of issues of particular concern to Africa is widely acknowledged. Nigeria has stood firm and played critical roles in all the recent developments in Africa, including the struggle for independence and self-determination and the fight against apartheid, colonialism and discrimination.

Today, we are in the vanguard of the fight against extremism, terrorism and all forms of mindless violence. We shall remain undeterred and unflinching in our resolve to protect our citizens and other persons living within our borders and to extend such protection wherever we can to other countries in our region.

We know that no country has unilaterally defeated the dark forces of violence and terrorism. They evidently represent an evil that requires international collaboration. We therefore call upon the international community and all like-minded stakeholders to address the matter with all the seriousness it deserves.

I cannot end my statement without alluding to the importance of the support that Nigerians are continuing to give to the United Nations in not only advancing but also upholding international peace and security. We shall strengthen and deepen our cooperation with the United Nations in peacekeeping operations around the world. We shall remain focused and committed to ensuring a meaningful and effective contribution to its presence and, if need be, to crucial peacekeeping operations, particularly in Africa.

The events of recent weeks have demonstrated how increasingly interconnected our world has become and the extent to which an incident in one area can cause reverberations in others. The lesson is that freedom of expression should not be construed as a licence to incitement. The freedom that we all hold dear and true should be exercised wisely and consciously. Freedom of expression and religious tolerance must not be mutually exclusive but should be complementary to each other. We eschew violence and deplore needless loss of lives and destruction of property. We condemn the deliberate denigration of religious and cultural beliefs and sensitivities, which in turn leads to counter-reactions.

As the world grows in knowledge and prosperity, so must humankind grow in maturity and wisdom. Care and compassion for our fellow beings must inform all our actions. We must ensure that no nation and no part of the world is left behind in terms of human progress. Working together with commitment and common purpose, we can succeed in building an inclusive, safer and prosperous world for present and future generations. The United Nations must lead that effort with renewed commitment.

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

Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

**Address by Mr. Christopher Jorebon Loeak,
President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands**

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Mr. Christopher Jorebon Loeak, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Christopher Jorebon Loeak, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Loeak: I bring the Assembly the warm greeting of “Yokwe” from the Marshall Islands.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands was born first in the hearts and minds of the Marshallese people, but we also forged our nationhood under the auspices of the United Nations flag. The United Nations is truly our second home. Our unique story, from United Nations Trust Territory to Member State, deserves reflection by the international community, two decades after we were welcomed as a United Nations Member.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will be reviewed in three years' time. The Marshall Islands is now firmly committed to making stronger progress, especially with regard to achieving full access to adequate education and decent employment and to ensuring a sustainable environment. The MDGs are not distant figures or statistics. The MDGs are in the faces of our Marshallese children; the MDGs are in our classrooms and hospitals. One of the most immediate and necessary steps is to better integrate our bilateral and regional development pathways with the MDGs, to ensure that all efforts move in the same direction and towards the same common goals.

As the Asia-Pacific region rises in the global spotlight, so also must the Marshall Islands. Our national future is still within our grasp, and our future need not be so difficult if we and our partners undertake the hard actions needed to change it.

Today, the Marshall Islands commits to being a key success story in the Pacific. We will move with specific actions to make firm and measurable progress towards the MDGs and towards economic independence resting on an expanded private sector, especially in regard to our primary drivers of fisheries and tourism. We simply have no other alternative but to rewrite our future.

We look to the future with targets in mind instead of generalities. I have asked my Government for specific, quantifiable development goals. I have also asked my Government to list the necessary actions, to be taken by ourselves and by our partners, needed to achieve them. Today I am encouraging bilateral partners, especially our closest partners, as well as the Secretary-General

and the Pacific Islands Forum and its regional agencies, to respond. Next year I hope to present the Assembly with a report not about our plight but about our progress.

It is easy, and indeed rightful, to place blame on the international community, especially concerning climate change and fisheries, spheres where the open political assurances of our partners too often fall victim to their own self-interest once the negotiating doors close. Yet the ultimate burden for achieving greater national success must be on the Marshall Islands Government and the Marshallese people. However unfair multilateral outcomes may be to the smallest nations, we must and will do whatever is in our national power to assure a viable future. Nothing will stand in our way.

The Marshall Islands is far from alone. Many nations in the Pacific islands region share similar challenges. Our collective Pacific progress must be a key pillar of the 2014 global conference on small island developing States, to be held in the Pacific. The next summit of the Pacific Islands Forum will be held next year in the Marshall Islands, and this meeting will reveal firm and dramatic progress not only towards basic social and environment goals, but also how a very real expansion of public-private partnership will be jump-started in the Pacific.

Since 1954, Marshallese leaders have visited the United Nations to address the ongoing impact of the 67 nuclear tests conducted on our lands during our status as a United Nations Trust Territory. That is our first foreign policy issue, and it is more than a historical legacy. It is a contemporary reality for our local communities. The United Nations authorized many of those tests through two resolutions, in 1954 and 1956, which also made assurances of our basic human rights and our full and safe return to our land, while today too many Marshallese remain nuclear nomads, still unable to safely resettle. While I acknowledge the important efforts taken to date, the half-life of radioactive material remains for generations, and much more needs to be done.

But today, for the first time since the trusteeship resolution of 1956, the United Nations has finally spoken. Earlier this month, Mr. Calin Georgescu, Special Rapporteur on human rights and toxic wastes, presented his report regarding the nuclear testing programme in the Marshall Islands (A/HRC/21/48/Add.1) to the Human Rights Council in Geneva. The Special

Rapporteur has presented significant findings that indicate that the pain, mistrust, progress and failures of the Marshallese people over decades have a human rights dimension and that the international community must respond with more than silence. The Marshallese people have paid too heavy a price for the only instance in which the United Nations explicitly authorized the use of nuclear weapons.

I urge all relevant actors — the United States and the wider international community and its agencies — to join with the Marshall Islands and the Pacific Islands Forum members in welcoming the Special Rapporteur's specific recommendations as a way forward to ensure progress on regaining the very human rights that should never have been lost. The Special Rapporteur's report must not be allowed to only collect dust on the shelf; it should instead be a foundation for new efforts, particularly with key international agencies. We have no more time for well-worn accusations. The Marshall Islands must not fail to advance the human rights of its own citizens. Where old solutions have not worked, we must not fail to find new ones.

We are not only a small island State, but truly a large-ocean nation. Our sustainable fisheries represent a primary pathway to the very economic strength and social development I have just called for today. Yet our aspirations are too often undermined by the narrow commercial self-interests of those nations at the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission that might otherwise seek to embrace us as close political partners. For us, our collective Pacific development is not an isolated issue bound in technical jargon. It is the very hope and economic survival of our entire nation, and indeed the whole Pacific region. We realize only a penny of true benefit for every dollar of fishing activity, and despite scientific warnings, pressure on key fish stocks has only increased, not diminished. Decades of global lip service at the United Nations to sustainable development seems to be lost on some of our fishing partners.

The parties to the Nauru Agreement have become a watershed political movement, recently achieving certification of a sustainable fishery by the Marine Stewardship Council, which is perhaps the largest such fishery in the world. In the Pacific, we are already deep into advancing the very sustainable development measures agreed to at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), and we are growing our own Pacific-driven commercial brand. It remains

to be seen if key distant-water fishing nations will continue to join us in forging a landmark sustainable fishery or if they will choose to be left on the sidelines.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands is among the low-lying nations in the world, and sea-level-rise projections of more than a metre pose complex risks to our future statehood, risks that we are only beginning to unpack and address. Last year's watershed agreement on the Durban Platform, prepared at the 2011 United Nations Climate Change Conference, has moved the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) into a new chapter of a single, legally binding protocol applying to all nations by 2020. It has also redoubled urgent efforts needed to close the global mitigation gap. The time for endless North-South division is now over, and the all-too-predictable finger-pointing must end.

But the world can no longer wait for negotiators. We must do more than pat ourselves on the back if we are serious about reducing the risks to our future. More action is needed by all nations and all actors in all possible settings and negotiation forums. As the Marshall Islands, we have a national energy plan and UNFCCC target to cut our own emissions, boost our efficiency and pursue new technology, such as ocean thermal energy conversion, which can make us a carbon-negative nation. I ask the rest of the world, will it also meet us in increasing that ambition? Will it come soon enough?

Climate adaptation poses perhaps the most complex challenges for a low-lying nation, but we must overcome them nonetheless. We cannot rely only on an uncertain architecture of global climate finance to address the very critical adaptation efforts that will be necessary for our continued survival. In the large scale — up to \$100 billion a year — of the future Green Climate Fund and other efforts, our relatively modest needs can easily be overlooked. Our increasingly urgent needs on the ground can no longer be met with paper studies and disconnected pilot projects. Yet the Marshall Islands is at present heavily reliant on international assistance. We have little other means to provide for adaptation. The growing belief, however wrong, that we must finance some of our own adaptation efforts is perhaps the most compelling reason to rapidly expand our private sector. We must also create financial security through the debt for adaptation swap being pursued by the Marshall Islands and other small island nations.

The United Nations cannot fail the needs of the most vulnerable nations and must better harness the efforts of all necessary actors. The Marshall Islands urges other nations to facilitate the meaningful participation of Taiwan within the United Nations system and the international community. Taiwan should be able to participate as an observer in the UNFCCC and the International Civil Aviation Organization, as it does in the World Health Assembly, and its potential for meeting the MDGs should be recognized.

The international community must not fail to act, not only to address long-term threats, but also to ease the most immediate security concerns. Recent tension in the broader Pacific Rim is an important matter for the Pacific Islands region, which can grow only when there is security and stability. I urge that those issues, including that of the East China Sea, be peacefully addressed through an inclusive dialogue involving all key actors.

The smallest nations in the world, many of which are in the Pacific, are beginning to play important and unique roles on the international stage. But nations such as the Marshall Islands also depend greatly on firm multilateral action. Accordingly, they must be able to rely on the United Nations and its Members for more than symbolism. It is decisive and bold leadership that are so urgently needed in this international hour.

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

Mr. Christopher Jorebon Loeak, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

**Address by Mr. Sprent Arumogo Dabwido,
President of the Republic of Nauru**

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

Mr. Sprent Arumogo Dabwido, President of the Republic of Nauru, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Sprent Arumogo Dabwido,

President of the Republic of Nauru, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Dabwido: Allow me to congratulate Mr. Jeremić on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session and also to commend his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, for his effective leadership during the sixty-sixth session. The President can be assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation during his tenure.

This body was a very different place when Minister Paul-Henri Spaak, another presidential predecessor, opened the first session of the General Assembly. The world had just emerged from the most devastating carnage it had ever seen, and the United Nations had the enormous task of stitching civilization back together again. Finding common purpose among the original 51 Member States promised to be a Herculean effort — a similar endeavour had faltered only a decade earlier — but the stakes were far too high for failure to be an option. Accordingly, the Organization embarked in earnest on the long process of strengthening the rule of international law based on the principles of non-aggression and the sovereign equality of all nations.

It is a testament to the success of those early efforts that the membership of the United Nations has swelled to 193 countries and the past 67 years have been a period of relative stability. While the benefits of multilateralism during this time were often shared unequally, as were the costs, the promise of a more stable and secure future for all imbued the United Nations with the legitimacy it needed to pursue its ambitious mandate. But we must never forget that the legitimacy underpinning our essential work here is not a birthright; we must earn it. When our words become hollow, that legitimacy is threatened.

The work of our early predecessors was one of construction. The task at hand today, perhaps even more challenging, is one of restoration. We are awash in unfulfilled promises stretching back decades. Barring a brief resurgence in the early 1990s, multilateralism has for the most part deteriorated into a scramble for finite resources, a destructive fight for a bigger piece of the economic pie, sugarcoated with empty rhetoric. Look at the beginning of any international agreement and you will find reaffirmation upon reaffirmation of our non-binding commitments to live up to our lofty ideals. Perhaps their greatest value is as a reminder

of how often very little has been achieved. Our words must have meaning if our multilateral institutions are to remain effective in addressing emerging global challenges. Once again, the stakes are too high for failure to be an option. That dynamic could not be more evident than it was in the climate change negotiations. This summer, we were treated to a new round of truly terrifying news. Arctic sea ice dropped to its lowest extent in recorded history, shattering the previous record by a jaw-dropping 18 per cent. Some scientists are now predicting that the Arctic Ocean could be ice-free during summer in as little as five years. The ice melt is already wreaking significant havoc on weather patterns around the globe and has probably contributed to the historic heat waves that struck many places this year.

Just last week, a new study found that half of all coral reefs could be lost with a temperature rise above 1.2 degrees Celsius. The scientists further concluded: "There is little doubt... coral reefs will no longer be prominent within coastal ecosystems if global average temperatures exceed 2 degrees Celsius..." That would be devastating for the economies of small islands and coastal communities around the world, not to mention the staggering and irrevocable loss of biodiversity that would be incurred by our shared natural heritage. More and more studies are concluding that the door to limiting temperature rise to even 2 degrees is rapidly closing, if it has not closed already.

Meanwhile, greenhouse-gas emissions continue to climb higher each year, with no end in sight. Small islands may be the canary in the coal mine, but we all are staring a global catastrophe right in the face.

It is revealing just how much our ambition to address the crisis has been downscaled in just three years. The fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Copenhagen, was the conference to save the world. The United Nations Climate Change Conference, held in Cancún, Mexico, was the conference to save the process. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, held in Durban, South Africa, it seems, was the conference to save the rest for later.

Instead of increasing the urgency of our work to respond to the growing climate crisis, we have instead seen the steady dismantling of the international regime and a concerted effort to delay additional

action until 2020. Such an outcome is unacceptable. If multilateralism is to have any credibility, then we must move to an emergency footing, and those countries with the greatest capacity must immediately begin mobilizing the significant resources necessary to remake the energy infrastructure that powers the global economy. That must begin at the eighteenth session of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Doha with the reprioritization of pre-2020 mitigation ambition and the mobilization of means of implementation, including finance, technology and capacity-building.

Nauru's delegation will arrive in Doha prepared to make its contribution to the global effort. We have adopted a very ambitious renewable energy goal of 50 per cent by 2015. We think we can achieve it, but we will need climate financing from international sources to do so. As with most developing countries, obtaining the means of implementation will be the key to unlocking our ambition.

The ultimate objective of the Convention on Climate Change is to stabilize greenhouse gases at a level that averts dangerous interference with the climate system so that ecosystems can adapt naturally, food production is not threatened and economic development can proceed in a sustainable manner. We should stop pretending that this is still within reach.

We must realize that we have polluted the atmosphere so much that many dangerous climate change impacts are now unavoidable. Therefore, the United Nations system must begin analysing and addressing the security implications of climate change. Climate change will become an increasing driver of conflict in the future if we do not take steps now. Increased competition over dwindling natural resources, food and water insecurity, and forced migration are just a few of the security issues that climate change is expected to exacerbate. For that reason, the Pacific small island developing States (SIDS) have called for the appointment of a special representative on climate and security, supported by adequate resources, to begin analysing the security threats of climate change and to work with interested Member States to build their resilience. In addition, the Secretary-General of the United Nations should be requested to conduct an assessment of the United Nations system's capacity to respond to the various security implications of climate change. Member States, particularly the most vulnerable, must have confidence that the international

community has the tools and resources to respond to the crisis.

Some countries have been sceptical of Security Council involvement in climate change. That is understandable because the Council's current composition does not accurately reflect the diversity of United Nations membership. The time has come for this to be remedied. However, reform should not be limited merely to membership. The Council must also provide a forum for addressing the security challenges of all countries, not just those of concern to the most powerful.

The United Nations sustainable development initiatives have been graced with an abundance of lofty rhetoric but few resources. Many countries, including my own, are not on track to meet their Millennium Development Goals, and in some cases have suffered setbacks because of the recent global economic downturn. At the same time, the flow of official development assistance from some channels has diminished, further jeopardizing our ability to achieve our MDGs.

We often forget that oceans cover 70 per cent of the Earth's surface and that healthy marine ecosystems are vital to the sustainable development and sustainable livelihoods of small islands. For many of us, the only valuable natural resource we have is our fish. It forms the cornerstone of our efforts to eradicate poverty and provide livelihoods for our people. For us, fishing is not just another economic sector — it is often the only significant economic sector, and we must jealously guard our modest natural wealth so that it can provide for many generations to come.

While the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio had few concrete deliverables, it did capture the Pacific SIDS vision of a blue economy. If fully implemented, the new provisions could help stem the steep decline in fish stocks. We welcome the recognition of ocean acidification as an emergent threat, and we must work collectively to build the resilience of marine ecosystems to climate change impacts. The commitments made in Rio must be backed by real resources so they can be translated into concrete results on the ground.

Rio also infused new energy into making islands a model for sustainable development by agreeing to convene the third Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, which

is to be held in the Pacific in 2014. The Conference will provide an opportunity for the international community to make good on the promises of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation by setting specific goals and mobilizing real resources. We call on the international community to provide support for the Conference and to summon the political will necessary to make it a success. It was agreed at the first Earth Summit that the sustainable development of SIDS would be the first test of the global partnership. We must demonstrate to the world that this partnership means something.

A central aspect of that work must be enhancing the international system to better target the unique combination of challenges faced by SIDS, which should include the creation of a formal SIDS category at the United Nations. It is clear from 20 years of experience that the current arrangements for improving the sustainable development prospects of SIDS are ineffective. We must demonstrate that the multilateral system is nimble enough to evolve in response to the shortcomings that have been identified.

Nauru welcomes the attention that the theme of this year's general debate brings to the need to address disputes by peaceful means, and it commends the efforts made by Taiwan and China to reduce tensions and increase cooperation. I call on Member States to support continuing dialogue between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait and the parties concerned in the East China Sea dispute to recognize Taiwan's positive role in consolidating peace and stability in East Asia. Nauru urges a rapid and peaceful settlement of the situation in South Ossetia and Abkhazia in a manner that treats those affected with dignity and that respects their rights as a sovereign nation.

Nauru continues to support the right of Israel to live free from the fear of terrorism. We also acknowledge Palestine's right to statehood as part of a two-State solution, which can be achieved only through peaceful means.

The challenges facing the international community are great and can be solved only by concerted multilateral action. President Jeremić's task and ours is to begin the process of rebuilding the Organization. That process must restore the integrity of the institution entrusted with the protection of human dignity. It was accomplished once before in the aftermath of a catastrophe. This time, our goal must be to prevent one. I pledge Nauru's full support in that endeavour.

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

Mr. Sprent Arumogo Dabwido, President of the Republic of Nauru, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic

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

Mr. Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Klaus: I would like to congratulate President Jeremić on his election to serve as the highest representative of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. In recent decades, his country has gone through a difficult period. I am sure his experience as the Serbian Minister for Foreign Affairs who saw the consequences of one kind of peacefully negotiated settlement and armed international intervention will benefit this year's General Assembly and contribute to making our deliberations less formal and more practical.

Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Czech Republic firmly believes that international disputes and conflicts can and should be settled by peaceful, not military, means. We have been systematically demonstrating that for a long time. When the division of Czechoslovakia was taking place 20 years ago and the situation was emotionally strained and painful for us, it never crossed the mind of any of our politicians that the problem should be addressed by any other than peaceful means. The difficult negotiations, undertaken solely by our own representatives, resulted in achieving a settlement that political representatives and, especially, citizens in both the newly established States considered then and still consider to be a positive solution.

Our experience affirms that it is the domestic politicians, in particular, who should be the driving

force of negotiations rather than international teams or former political figures from abroad. The mandate of the negotiating parties must be rooted as firmly as possible in domestic conditions and local traditions. External observers must not succumb to the temptation of imposing the settlement that they themselves regard as the right one, but which is not in line with long-term natural developments in the country or region in question. For a number of reasons, those inevitable preconditions are often not met in attempts at peaceful conflict resolution. It is therefore no wonder that we often see the opposite results to those that the architects of a particular settlement would have wished.

We must ask ourselves what successful peace talks and international missions are. Do external interventions improve the situation or do they make it worse by hindering spontaneous processes that could reintroduce stability in the region, possibly with smaller sacrifices compared to the price paid through external intervention? For instance, are the developments in Iraq, the unresolved Cyprus issue or the independence of Kosovo a success of the United Nations or not?

Let me say a few words about Syria. As a country that has recent historical experience of a transition to democracy, the Czech Republic wishes Syria to be able to take the same path. However, we do not see a feasible solution now. Our immediate effort must focus on helping the people affected by the current tragic situation in the country. The Czech Republic has already sent humanitarian aid to Syria and to Syrians fleeing into neighbouring countries. We have set up a medical evacuation programme for wounded Syrian refugees. Czech experts took part in the United Nations observer mission in Syria. Our Embassy in Damascus is also providing assistance. Two months ago, the Czech Republic accepted the request of the United States for representation in diplomatic and consular matters in Syria.

There is no doubt that we must look at the situation in Syria from a broader and longer-term perspective. We should know what needs to be done tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. I am afraid that that is the most important lesson learned from other similar issues, such as the recent military intervention in Libya.

Allow me to affirm that the Czech Republic will continue to be an active United Nations Member. The Czech Republic observes and applies the principles and standards of international law in its foreign policy

and promotes their international application. We will support United Nations activities in the fields of disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Those issues are among our security policy priorities. The Czech Republic will continue to take part in United Nations peacekeeping operations, as well as in humanitarian and development programmes. It also supports efforts to reform the United Nations, including the Security Council, which in 2005 began to work towards responding to our changed international environment and promoting a more balanced representation of individual regions and States.

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

Mr. Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Hâmid Karzai, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

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

Mr. Hâmid Karzai, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Hâmid Karzai, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Karzai: As we speak today, the world is being shaken by the depravity of fanatics who have committed acts insulting the faith of more than 1.5 billion Muslims. We strongly condemn such offensive acts, whether they involve the production of a film, the publication of cartoons or indeed any other insults and provocations. Such acts can never be justified as manifestations of freedom of speech or expression. Equally, they cannot become a reason for genuine protests to be used to incite violence and terrible losses of innocent lives.

It is a matter for grave concern that our world remains strewn with daily outbreaks of violence, hatred and injustice. In particular, the menace of Islamophobia is a worrying phenomenon that threatens peace and coexistence among cultures and civilizations. I call on

leaders in the West, both among politicians and in the media, to confront Islamophobia in all its many forms and manifestations. It is incumbent on us all to advance the cause of dialogue and cooperation, to fight the forces of division and hatred and to fulfil the promise of a better and brighter future for future generations. We must work to defeat the forces that foment conflicts among civilizations, and to support the voices of tolerance and understanding.

My country, Afghanistan, is testament to the benefits of multilateral cooperation and international solidarity. It was a little over a decade ago that many countries from around the world joined the Afghan people in our struggle for peace and against the forces of extremism and terrorism. At the time, Afghanistan was a country decimated in every way. For decades we had suffered, unnoticed, from violence, deprivation and sinister foreign intervention. Long before terrorism became a security threat to the whole planet, Afghans were victims of atrocities inflicted by terrorist networks from various parts of the world that had made Afghanistan their haven.

Looking back 10 years, Afghanistan has undergone a remarkable transformation. Democracy has taken root; health services are accessible to the majority of the population in every corner of the country; millions of students, boys and girls, are enrolled in primary and higher education. Our achievements have not come about easily, though. The aspirations of the Afghan people for security and peace have yet to be realized. As the global fight against terrorism continues unabated, the Afghan people continue to pay a bigger price than any other nation, in both life and treasure.

Terrorism is not rooted in Afghan villages and towns; it never was. Its sources and support networks all exist beyond Afghanistan's borders. Thus while the security of the international community is being protected from the threat of terrorism, the people of Afghanistan must no longer be made to pay the price and endure the brunt of the war. It is in deference to the immense sacrifices of the Afghan people, and to the precious lives lost from the international community, that the campaign against terrorism must be taken to the sources of terrorism and be results-oriented.

Today in Afghanistan, we are pursuing the cause of peace and an end to violence as a matter of great urgency. Since peace is the greatest desire of the Afghan people, and since we are convinced that military efforts alone are not an adequate strategy for ensuring security, we

have initiated a peace and reconciliation process, which aims to induce all elements of the armed opposition to take up peaceful lives in our country.

At this time last year, my visit to the General Assembly was cut short by the tragic assassination of Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, the then Chairman of the High Peace Council. A terrorist posing as a peace emissary took his life, and by doing so dealt our peace process a serious blow. This year, however, and fortunately, the late Professor's son, Mr. Salahuddin Rabbani, who stepped up to take the Chair of the High Peace Council, is part of the Afghan delegation and present in the Assembly today.

I have often said that our hand of peace and reconciliation remains extended not only to the Taliban but also to all other armed opposition groups who wish to return to dignified, peaceful and independent lives in their own homeland. What we ask of them in return is simple: bringing an end to violence, cutting ties with terrorist networks, preserving the valuable gains of the past decade and respecting the Constitution of Afghanistan. To help facilitate the peace process, I am asking the Security Council to give its full support to our efforts. In particular, I urge the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), the Taliban sanctions committee, to make more active efforts to delist Taliban leaders, as a step towards facilitating direct negotiations.

In pursuing the path of peace, we remain hopeful about the critical role that our fraternal neighbour the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has to play. Over recent years, we have engaged our brothers in Pakistan in a close dialogue in support of the Afghan peace process. It is a dialogue that we believe is critical for Pakistan's own security and for the security of the wider region and beyond. We are deeply committed to our brotherly relations with Pakistan, but we are aware of the challenges that may strain our efforts to build trust and confidence. Such incidents as the recent shelling of Afghan villages risk undermining the efforts of both Governments to work together in the interest of our common security and prosperity.

For the past two years, our national priority has been to have Afghanistan's own security forces assume full responsibility for the security of our country and our people. The transition process will be completed by mid-2013 and NATO and International Security Assistance Force forces withdrawn from our country by the end of 2014.

Apart from advancing transition and pursuing the peace process, the past year has been one of significant progress for consolidating international commitment and partnership. In Chicago in May, we received the long-term commitment of NATO and other countries to training, equipping and ensuring the sustainability of the Afghan National Security Forces. In Tokyo this past July, the international community reaffirmed its strong commitment to Afghanistan's social and economic development during the transformation decade, for which we are grateful.

The Mutual Accountability Framework adopted in Tokyo sets in place a clear structure for a more results-oriented partnership and cooperation. We welcome the international community's readiness to align aid with our national priorities and channel assistance through the Afghan budget. For our part, we have reiterated our determination to improve governance and to collaborate with our international partners to wipe out the cancer of corruption, whether it is in the Afghan Government or the international aid system.

We recognize that Afghanistan's destiny is tied to the region that surrounds it, with respect both to our common threats, such as terrorism, extremism and narcotics, and to the opportunities we must grasp to grow and prosper. In that context, the Istanbul Process presents a new agenda for security, confidence-building and cooperation across the region of which Afghanistan is the centre. We will spare no effort to build strong and lasting relations with our neighbors near and extended.

Turning to the international arena, Afghanistan views the situation in Syria with much concern. Over the course of the past year, thousands of our Syrian brothers and sisters have lost their lives due to an escalating cycle of violence. We welcome the appointment of the new Joint Special Representative for Syria of the United Nations and League of Arab States, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi. We know him very well. Mr. Brahimi is well respected in Afghanistan, and he brings vast experience and a unique ability to the task before him. Here, I say to the people of Syria that we Afghans have experienced violence ourselves, and we know what it takes to rebuild a country. I hope very much, on behalf of the Afghan people, that the Syrians will sit down together as soon as possible and find a way to end the violence, since it will be not easy to repair.

The continuing plight of the Palestinian people has been a source of deep distress for Afghanistan and the rest of the international community. The people of Palestine have suffered immensely for far too long. We remain in full support of the realization of the rights of our brothers and sisters in Palestine, including their right to an independent Palestinian State. The time has come for an end to the occupation and for realizing the just aspirations of the people of Palestine.

Finally, reform of the United Nations remains an important item on the international agenda. Since its inception in 1945, the United Nations has exercised a key role in promoting a safer and more secure world, improving the lives of citizens worldwide, and safeguarding and promoting human rights. Nevertheless, in view of our ever-changing world, we cannot deny the fact that the Organization is in dire need of comprehensive reform, enabling it to better reflect the new challenges and realities of our time. The reform of the Security Council is long overdue. Achieving a reformed Council that is more inclusive, representative and transparent must remain a priority. We welcome the ongoing progress within the framework of the intergovernmental negotiations.

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

Mr. Hâmid Karzai, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

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

Agenda item 8 (continued)

General debate

Address by Mr. Edward Kiwanuka Ssekandi, Vice-President of the Republic of Uganda

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

Mr. Edward Kiwanuka Ssekandi, Vice-President of the Republic of Uganda, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Edward Kiwanuka

Ssekandi, Vice-President of the Republic of Uganda, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Ssekandi (Uganda): Uganda joins other delegations in congratulating Mr. Jeremić on his election as President of this body. My delegation has full confidence in his ability to steer our deliberations, and he can count on our support. I also wish to commend Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser for his effective leadership during the last session.

The international community has made significant progress in reducing conflicts around the world over the two decades since the end of the Cold War and the eventual freedom of South Africa from apartheid. However, we still face challenges arising from conflicts that take a heavy toll on nations and people around the world. The theme for this session's debate is therefore timely and pertinent. We are again seeing an increase in conflicts brought about by unconstitutional changes of Governments, disputed elections, social tensions, extremist ideologies and territorial or border disputes, among other causes. We must redouble our efforts to resolve conflicts and disputes through peaceful means and in conformity with justice and international law, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

From Uganda's experience over the years, conflicts are best handled, first and foremost, by the political actors and citizens of the countries in question, following democratic principles and guided by the principle of equality of all persons before the law. In cases where national actors for some reason cannot resolve the problem, then subregional organizations should step in. In the case of Africa those include the East African Community, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of West African States and others. The United Nations and the international community would then provide the necessary support to subregional and regional initiatives.

Our recent achievements in the peace processes in Burundi, the Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia, among others, attest to the progress we can achieve by working together. The advantages of such an approach include the use of local actors who have more discerning knowledge of the problems and those in close proximity and with a greater stake in getting the problems resolved. In addition, there is the international support

and legitimacy that the United Nations provides. The current ICGLR initiative on the situation in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is based on such experience. We call upon the Security Council and the international community to give the necessary support to the decisions of the ICGLR summit held in Kampala on 8 September. That regional initiative is aimed at addressing the root causes of the conflict in eastern Congo, deploying a neutral international force and responding to the humanitarian crisis.

Our preference for home-grown solutions is premised on the realization that external influences or interventions do not necessarily offer sustainable solutions for the resolution of conflicts. On the contrary, external interventions often contribute to a cycle of destabilizing tendencies — which is why we are still grappling with situations like the one in eastern Congo.

The African Union (AU) has shown strong political will to resolve conflicts on the continent peacefully and to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. We call upon our partners to support the dispute resolution mechanisms, as well as the peace and security efforts of the AU and subregional organizations. Uganda's participation in and contribution to conflict resolution in our subregion, on the African continent and on the international scene are guided by that approach, which has proved to be largely successful in resolving conflicts and wars.

Regional initiatives need to be complemented by international support, including assisting countries emerging from conflict to build the requisite capacities for the consolidation of peace. It is also important that such support include provision of immediate post-conflict humanitarian assistance and material input for reconstruction and development. We welcome the continuing deepening of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the resolution of conflicts and the maintenance of peace and security. This positive trend should continue, and every effort should be made to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

Uganda strongly believes that conflicts that might arise between and within countries should be resolved through dialogue among all the parties concerned. In the recent past we have witnessed regrettable instances in which peace initiatives have been frustrated through the intransigence of the parties, with support from some members of the international community. That can only

be a recipe for long-term turmoil and instability in the affected countries and neighbouring regions.

In our view, in situations of armed conflict the first priority should be securing a verifiable ceasefire, followed by a political process involving an all-inclusive dialogue without preconditions. It is up to the parties, with the assistance of a mediator or facilitator, to reach a settlement that addresses their interests.

There is no doubt that resolving conflicts requires identifying and addressing their underlying causes, which include social, political and economic factors that are often deeply entrenched and interwoven. In seeking to resolve any conflict, national, regional and international actors need to adopt approaches that take into account the following complexities.

First, it is important to address the substantive issues that give rise to conflicts in the first place, such as lack of access to or inequitable distribution of resources, social or political exclusion and other grievances. The linkage between development and security in peacebuilding is now widely recognized, and once conflicts are resolved, the affected communities need peace dividends in terms of delivery of basic services such as health and education as well as opportunities for employment.

Secondly, efforts should be made to defuse the fear, hatred and other negative emotions that make conflicts intractable and often violent. We must collectively speak out against intolerance and extremism in order to advance mutual respect and understanding of the values and beliefs of others. Uganda condemns all acts of terrorism and violence. We strongly condemn the recent spate of violence and attacks, including targeting diplomatic missions of the United States and other Member States.

Thirdly, political leaders and all actors need to forge national reconciliation, including through transitional justice mechanisms, as well as establishing truth and reconciliation mechanisms, which play a key role in promoting durable peace. We would also like to reiterate the need to increase the role of women and youth in the peaceful settlement of disputes, given the significant contribution they can make.

On the Israeli-Palestinian question, Uganda continues to call upon both parties to negotiate and reach a peaceful settlement based on a two-State solution, with a Palestinian State living side by side with Israel in peace, security and mutual recognition.

Finally, we affirm our commitment to the peaceful settlement of conflicts and to fostering international cooperation based on the principles of sovereign equality, justice and adherence to international law.

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

Mr. Edward Kiwanuka Ssekandi, Vice-President of the Republic of Uganda, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Mariano Rajoy Brey, President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain.

Mr. Mariano Rajoy Brey, President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Mariano Rajoy Brey, President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Rajoy Brey (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin by congratulating Mr. Vuk Jeremić on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. I am convinced that with his leadership and drive, this lofty institution will be capable of facing the numerous challenges that will arise in the next 12 months.

I also wish to express my gratitude to his predecessor, Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser. I join others in congratulating him on his work and wish him all the best in his new endeavours.

Spain believes that the United Nations has a fundamental role to play. That is why I wished to participate in this general debate, the first since I took the oath of office as President of the Government of Spain. It is always an honour for a Head of Government to address the General Assembly. I do so today on behalf of a country that is committed to the international community and to the pursuit of joint solutions to the problems we face.

The result of that commitment is our desire to serve once again in the Security Council for the period 2015-2016. In my statement, I shall refer to the reasons for

Spain's resolve to work in the Council with an open and constructive spirit, committed to peace and international security, the promotion and protection of human rights, and the search for sustainable development for all.

In addition to the serious economic and financial situation, the international community is facing today more numerous and more complicated challenges than ever before. The Organization and its General Assembly are key if we are to confront them. Year after year, we discuss those problems here and their possible solutions. For that reason, I believe that we should ask ourselves today if we have improved since last year. While it might seem otherwise, I believe we have.

In one year, we have witnessed the unbreakable will of the Arab citizens to consolidate democratic systems in their countries. In Spain, we went through a difficult but successful transition to democracy. Hence, we know that the road is not and will not be easy. Our experience can be useful for all Arab countries that are going through transition processes. I reaffirm our commitment to building open, inclusive and democratic societies whose institutions satisfy the yearnings for dignity and for the development of its citizens. In those processes, there is no room for movements that promote violence, whatever its justification. Any attack or aggression against people or institutions is unacceptable and deserves our most full-throated condemnation.

Last year, we also dedicated our efforts to finding solutions to the crisis in the Horn of Africa, and especially to the situation in Somalia. The difficulties persist, but Somalia is advancing towards normality. Cooperation in the fight against piracy in the Indian Ocean is stronger than ever, and during our recent presidency of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, we moved forward in the search of an international response to that criminal phenomenon.

Similarly, humanitarian efforts in that region have allowed for an improvement of the situation. Four months ago, Spain and the World Food Programme (WFP) signed an agreement to locate the largest food storage facility in the world in the Canary Islands. The WFP facility will allow faster and more efficient responses to food emergencies on the African continent.

Afghanistan continues moving forward in the direction of stability — a road that Spain has pursued together with the Afghan people for more than a decade. In that effort, we have bequeathed resources, infrastructures and, unfortunately, the life of many

of our fellow citizens. My country will continue to contribute to the development of Afghanistan and its search for much-needed stability and security.

This year, in Rio de Janeiro, we reaffirmed our common vision in favour of an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future. Since their conception, Spain has been committed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with the largest cooperation programme in its history, valued at almost \$1 billion, implemented through the Spain-United Nations Development Programme MDG Achievement Fund. Negotiations are under way to set new goals for sustainable development and to bring the institutional structure in step with that commitment. Spain will maintain an active and constructive presence in the process.

The fight against international impunity has also seen important advances this year. The International Criminal Court initiated its first case against a Head of State, demonstrating that the international community is closer than ever to ending impunity for serious crimes. I would like to reiterate today the call for the universal ratification of the Rome Statute.

I would like to make special mention of the valuable and increasing role that Latin America has played in the development of the multilateral system. The achievements and progress that the region has attained in the consolidation of democracy, economic growth and regional integration are reflected in its greater international presence.

Latin America has shown its potential by strengthening the multilateralism promoted by the Organization. Spain is proud to share in that spirit at the Ibero-American summits and will be hosting this year's summit in Cádiz, Spain. That forum reflects the Ibero-American community's wager on the promise of dialogue, equality and mutual respect, with our eyes firmly set on the future.

I believe that those steps forward, among others, attest to an encouraging year, despite its difficulties. It is proof that the multilateral system is responding to the present crisis and promoting respect for and the active protection of human rights, as well as the presence and participation of women in all areas regions. But, of course, there are problems on which there has been little or no progress at all or that have emerged throughout the present year. Those problems deserve as much if not more of our attention in the 12 months that lie ahead.

First of all, I would like to mention the crisis in Syria. A year ago, in the General Assembly, an urgent appeal was made to the Syrian regime to halt the abuses and crimes against its people. Despite the international community's efforts, the situation has not ceased to deteriorate. Thousands of innocent victims, the unbearable suffering of the civilian population and the serious risk of the conflict expanding to neighbouring countries compel us to act. Today, I reiterate the call to end all violence in Syria and urge President Al-Assad to accept his responsibility and make way for a political process that will allow a peaceful resolution to the conflict. We support the efforts of the Joint Special Representative, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, to reach this goal. The international community, the United Nations, the League of Arab States and the European Union continue to be prepared, through different mechanisms, to come to Syria's aid.

In this uncertain regional scenario, Lebanon has so far managed to keep itself on the margin of the spiral of violence, an achievement that has been reached in good measure thanks to the contingent of United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, in which Spain is an active participant.

Another year has passed without progress in the Middle East peace process. We defend the idea that the solution to the conflict in the Middle East lies in the existence of two States, the Israeli State and the Palestinian State, living in peace and security. Any delay in achieving that goal leads to growing frustration that will affect the rest of the world. The international community, and, above all, the actors involved must have the courage to adopt the measures and decisions needed to achieve that comprehensive, just and durable peace that responds to the legitimate yearnings of both peoples. My Government, committed to the goal of peace, is convinced that the creation of a viable Palestinian State is a key element in the solution of the conflict. It will bring beneficial effects for the security and welfare of Israel, for the normalization of regional relations and, finally, for the international community as a whole. Until then, the parties must avoid endangering the viability of a two-State solution.

The situation in Mali and the entire Sahel region is particularly serious. The humanitarian crisis has been aggravated by political instability and an armed revolt, which has deteriorated into terrorist movements that have caused considerable harm to the population in northern Mali. Spain unreservedly condemns

violence and supports the efforts of the United Nations, the African Union, and the Economic Community of West African States to reach a solution to the crisis. Those efforts must count on the decisive support of the countries of the region, whose people also endure insecurity caused by the situation. And above all, the process must be led by the people of Mali themselves, who need to overcome their institutional crisis and re-establish the territorial integrity of their country.

On other matters, I would like to highlight the efforts of the international community in general and of the E3+3 Group in particular to relaunch conversations with Iran with the goal of eliminating all doubts raised by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regarding its nuclear enrichment programme. Those conversations are sustained by the desire to reach a political and diplomatic solution and are an opportunity that we hope all actors involved will take advantage of. We reiterate our appeal to Iran to comply with the relevant resolutions without delay and to ratify and observe the additional protocol of the IAEA's comprehensive safeguards agreement.

I would also like to express our support for the Six-Party Talks as a framework for finding a diplomatic solution to the crisis raised by the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We consider that the country must put a stop to its nuclear activities with military aims in a complete and verifiable manner, and it must comply with all Security Council resolutions on the matter and respect its commitments to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

This year we have moved towards a more peaceful, just and sustainable world. However, as reflected in the cases I have just mentioned, much remains to be done. To achieve this, Spain will continue to work with the United Nations, for we believe that only through a concerted effort of the international community can we find solutions. My country's wish to serve on the Security Council in 2015 and 2016 responds precisely to the conviction that in the Council Spain can continue playing an active role in the search for joint solutions to common problems. That conviction is supported by Spain's accomplishments to date, by our demonstrated commitment to multilateralism and by the initiatives led by our country in the search for international understanding and sustainable development.

Spain will continue to contribute, to the best of its ability, to peacekeeping operations by providing

troops and through the United Nations operational field support base at Quart de Poblet, in Spain. Our commitment to the United Nations will remain firm, as we actively participate in those initiatives that we have been supporting in the past few years because we believe that they are key to achieving the future we desire.

Disarmament and non-proliferation must be shared objectives for the entire international community. We believe that it is necessary to reactivate the Conference on Disarmament with an ambitious programme of work. Spain also supports renewing the General Assembly mandate to proceed with the negotiations of an arms trade treaty. We will continue to work for a solid, effective and legally binding document that reflects the defence of human rights and international humanitarian rights.

As a member of the Human Rights Council, we will continue to defend the undeniable link between respect for human rights and peace and security in the world. We will also continue to work towards a universal moratorium on the death penalty.

My country will continue to support negotiations within the United Nations of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. Terrorism is a vicious trait that unfortunately Spain knows very well. I would like to take a moment today to remember and pay tribute to all the victims of terrorism. In July, a High-Level Conference on Victims of Terrorism was held in Madrid in the framework of the Global Counterterrorism Forum. There we reiterated that victims can play an important role in the complete delegitimization, in both social and moral terms, of terrorism. I wish to acknowledge the support of the Secretary-General and of the President of the General Assembly in this task.

We will continue to promote the goals of UN-Women, after a first year full of work and results. In that regard, Spain, which has been the biggest donor to this entity during its first year, maintains its commitment to equality between men and women and to the efforts to put an end to violence against women and girls.

My country is a firm defender of dialogue and the use of peaceful means to resolve controversies. For that reason, next Friday, together with Morocco, we will present an initiative to promote mediation and to develop national and local capacities in the

Mediterranean basin. The initiative will be the first embodiment in that region of resolution 65/283 and of the work of the Secretary-General and the Group of Friends of Mediation.

Spain maintains its active commitment to a just, enduring and mutually acceptable political solution to the dispute in Western Sahara, a solution that provides for the self-determination of the Saharan people in accordance with the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations. As a member of the Group of Friends, Spain firmly supports the work of the Secretary-General, his Personal Envoy and the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara.

Between countries that are friends and allies, as is the case between Spain and the United Kingdom, a direct and sincere dialogue should make it possible to overcome any differences. Therefore, I would like to call upon the United Kingdom to renew the bilateral dialogue on the decolonization of Gibraltar in accordance with the parameters indicated by the United Nations and enshrined in the Brussels Declaration of 1984. We have already lost too many years.

The efforts of the Member States of the United Nations will not be sufficient if they are not accompanied by the necessary adaptation of the United Nations to the current world. The Secretary-General has launched a process aimed at reforming the Organization, which my country is following closely. I would like to reiterate that Spain supports his efforts, and we call upon the rest of the Member States to continue their open dialogue on his proposals, analysing them without any prejudices and showing sufficient courage to break with the status quo when necessary.

In that regard, I should like to reiterate our support for the reforms of the Secretary-General in the area of peacekeeping operations. Likewise, Spain is a strong driving force behind the Delivering as One initiative, which is an essential undertaking aimed at modernizing the United Nations system, improving its effectiveness and efficiency in the fight against poverty and inequality, and thereby making it possible to do more with less. Proof of Spain's commitment to that initiative is the fact that my country has been the largest donor thereto, providing more than half of the total funding.

Lastly, the Security Council must also adapt, as quickly as possible, to the realities of the twenty-first century, which are very different from those that existed when it was created. In the coming months,

we will continue to be open to dialogue on this issue, and we hope that, under the leadership of President Jeremić, we will be able to find common ground among the different positions on the issue on which we can build a new Security Council that is more effective, inclusive, representative and responsible to the General Assembly.

We are facing many challenges. Spain is strongly determined to contribute to those efforts so that in 12 months, when we meet here again, the list of problems before us is shorter and we can have a United Nations that is more effective and efficient than it was a year previously. The United Nations will continue to be a guarantor of international peace and security, and a driving force for the protection of human rights and the promotion of sustainable development for our future and that of our children. The General Assembly can count on Spain to participate in that endeavour with the same determination as always.

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

Mr. Mariano Rajoy Brey, President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Gusmão (Timor-Leste) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation*): It is a great pleasure for me to address this great General Assembly for the second year in a row.

Last September, I tried to convey to the Assembly a message of progress and hope. Today I bring from the people of Timor-Leste a message of both joy and thankfulness.

The United Nations has been in Timor-Leste since the difficult times of our emancipation, having led the popular consultation of 1999. Since then, it has been enormously challenging to build from scratch the foundations of a new State under the rule of law, based on democratic governance and respect for human rights. As such, after the United Nations Mission in East Timor, we had missions such as the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor, the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste and the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) accompanying us in this crucial journey of State-building, as well as in the creation of an atmosphere of reconciliation and harmony, with a view to achieving peace and stability.

In our still-brief existence as a State, we have been trying to learn from the errors of the past. Today I can say that we have decisively moved away from the difficult circumstances that characterize post-conflict countries or, in other words, countries with recent histories of conflict and violence.

We have come to understand — along with several countries — that peace and stability are essential prerequisites for State-building. This year, 2012, therefore marks not exactly the end of a chapter in our history of peacebuilding but, more particularly, the start of a new one — a chapter of ongoing institutional strengthening with the goal of boosting national development.

After two rounds of presidential elections, in March and April, our people elected as the third President of the Republic Major-General Taur Matan Ruak, a historic figure in the struggle for liberation, who has been serving the motherland since 1975. Taur Matan Ruak led the armed resistance and became Chief of Defence Forces in 1999.

In May, we had the pleasure of hosting five heads of State and many delegations from friendly countries to celebrate with us the tenth anniversary of the restoration of our independence. That took place within an atmosphere of peace, stability and confidence in the future.

The landmark moment of the celebrations was the constitutional transfer of power from the then President of the Republic, Mr. José Ramos-Horta, to the new head of State, in a highly dignified manner for our young democracy.

On 7 July, the Timorese people were called to vote once again, and on 30 July, the new Parliament took office. As a result of those elections, three parties were chosen to ensure the governance of Timor-Leste from 2012 to 2017. Consequently, on 8 August the Fifth Constitutional Government was sworn in and given the mission of continuing to consolidate the vital institutions of a peaceful and democratic nation. In that way, we will also be continuing the work done by the previous Government, which consisted of a five-party coalition and undoubtedly sowed the seeds for national peace and stability, in addition to boosting our economy.

During the course of this year, we have also been honoured with visits by several eminent personalities, including two high-level dignitaries: in August, the Secretary-General, His Excellency Ban Ki-moon, decided to see for himself the changes that had taken place in our country since his last visit five years ago. His visit was a magnificent gesture of support by a man with a broad vision of peace and development, a vision that is shared by the Timorese people. The Secretary-General acknowledged the progress made and spoke words of encouragement regarding the strengthening of the ties of cooperation between the United Nations and Timor-Leste in an important undertaking, Education First, which is part of his global education initiative.

More recently, we also had the pleasure of hosting the United States Secretary of State, Mrs. Hillary Clinton. That was the first time that a senior representative of the United States Government had visited our young country. Mrs. Clinton also conveyed an important message of confidence and solidarity, praising the strong commitment by Timor-Leste to the values and principles of democracy and good governance. Those events are even more important given that UNMIT and the International Stabilization Force will withdraw by the end of 2012. That will mark the end of peacekeeping operations in Timor-Leste.

All this has instilled in the hearts of the Timorese people a very special feeling of accomplishment and national pride. I would like to convey that feeling of joy and thankfulness to all countries Members of the United Nations and to the various international organizations

that have provided us with ongoing support in terms of consolidating peace, democracy and human rights.

The President of the Republic, Taur Matan Ruak, has asked me to make public that on 20 May 2013 the Timorese State will be honouring, with the highest insignia of Timor-Leste, all countries and parties that have taken part in missions in Timor-Leste, starting with the General Assembly and the Security Council. For our people, that will be an act of profound recognition, expressing the wish that from now on the United Nations will pay more attention to our brothers and sisters in need. The success of Timor-Leste belongs to everyone — to the international community for their dedicated support and solidarity, and to the Timorese people for the courage to acknowledge their mistakes and for their firmness and determination in correcting them.

Throughout the past four years, our people have clearly said no to conflict in order to fully embrace the aspirations of their own development. The Timorese people were also able to display a high degree of political maturity by expressing, in a peaceful and constructive manner, renewed confidence in their elected leaders and in State institutions. All of this is essential for reaffirming that, today more than ever, we are ready to continue leading the national development process, including the full establishment of our democratic State under the rule of law and the gradual implementation of the Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030.

However, we want to maintain strong ties with the United Nations and other partners under a new cooperation framework, taking as a starting point the current needs of the country in both institutional strengthening and in the development sector. Based on the principles of the New Deal, which are advocated by the group of seven plus (g7+), we hope to see relationships of cooperation being established in an innovative, dynamic and effective manner.

After overcoming the main obstacles in terms of State-building, Timor-Leste is now looking to the future with optimism. Consequently, the Government's programme for the 2012-2017 mandate, which has already been endorsed by Parliament, establishes short-term — five years — activities, lists sectors where activities can be started in order to have impacts in the medium term of 5 to 10 years, and includes objectives for the long term of 10 to 20 years, to be implemented according to priorities and execution time.

We will continue to invest in social capital with the aim of building capacity and of dignifying Timorese citizens by maximizing the quality of and access to health, education, professional training, information, social justice and culture. We will invest in basic infrastructures, which will be the driving force of the country's development. We will develop the economic sector to make better use of our potential and to create employment. We will encourage the growth of the private sector, both local and foreign. We will continue our efforts to consolidate the institutional framework so as to improve the functioning, management and implementation of programmes. That includes a strong public sector, good governance and a credible system of justice.

Meanwhile, we will improve the social programmes that cater to our most vulnerable citizens, including the disabled, the elderly, and women and children at risk, in order to ensure that no Timorese citizen is marginalized or socially excluded. We will also continue to dignify our veterans.

Today we have a plan, a vision and a goal: to transform Timor-Leste from a low-income country to a medium-high-income one by 2030. We want to be a prosperous and safe nation with a healthy and educated population, a country that provides skilled employment for all.

However, in the short term, by 2015, Timor-Leste will not meet the Millennium Development Goals. The current major challenge for Timor-Leste is the fight against poverty — a challenge that we share with over one billion people in our planet. Regrettably, around 20 per cent of the world's population live in conditions of extreme poverty. Hunger and the lack of access to water sources will remain insurmountable challenges. Mothers and children throughout the world will continue to die tragically due to lack of access to services to meet the most basic needs.

Unfortunately, those are the current projections for 2015. For that reason, it was very timely of the Secretary-General to create a high-level panel to help establish new guidelines for beyond 2015. Here, I must confess that we were proud to see a Timorese woman — our Minister of Finance, Emilia Pires — deservingly chosen as a panel member. Timor-Leste wants to contribute to the debate on that issue in a clear and constructive manner. It is urgent to address the structural factors

that have hindered the efforts that so many people of goodwill have made without obtaining tangible results.

We have a historical opportunity to change things. We can learn from the lessons of the Millennium Development Goals process, analysing what worked and what did not, in order to do better in the future. Strengthening the role of the United Nations is essential. However, it will require the courage to break with the old way of handling things. We need new action paradigms and new coordination mechanisms so that programmes may truly benefit the people of the more affected countries.

The g7+ was created in April 2010 in Dili, during the preparation for the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, which took place in Timor-Leste. Prior to the creation of the g7+, there was no mechanism whereby fragile States with common concerns about peace and development could discuss such matters in a less subservient way than in their relationships with donors and development agencies.

It is quite common for recipient countries to consider that the international assistance they receive is not the most appropriate to meet their real needs. Countries complain of the lack of an accountability system in relation to the money that is actually spent on the poor, compared to the amounts spent to improve the well-being of those who manage the projects and those who manage the reports on the projects, long documents that are irrelevant because they are out of touch with the reality on the ground. For those reasons, in a true spirit of openness and sharing, with a common desire to improve the living conditions of their people and to contribute to sustainable peace and development, fragile countries created the g7+ as an international group through which they could speak with one voice. Yes, we say one voice. Speaking as one, we will be able to demand responsibility from the leaders of beneficiary countries and also accountability to the taxpayers of the donor countries.

Those are the same reasons why we are advocating the New Deal, which seeks to ensure better coordination and ownership of international assistance by recipient countries. We want assistance to have genuine impacts on the people and to correspond better to the true needs of the beneficiary populations.

Timor-Leste is fully committed to leading the g7+, bringing the same commitment it showed when moving from a situation of conflict and fragility to a situation

of social and political peace and stability. We want to contribute in a way that is sound and based on actual experiences in the g7+ itself. We are a small country that is still fragile in some aspects, but we share the same huge concerns of the 17 nations that make up our group, with a total population of more than 300 million people.

We have seen how intolerance causes irreparable destruction in several parts of the world, particularly in the daily lives of innocent people. The brunt of the impact is borne by women, mothers, children and the elderly, making them even more vulnerable. Intolerance breeds hatred and the desire for vengeance. The world is not changing so much as it is destroying itself.

Consolidating the gains of the Arab Spring is proving to be difficult. Syria is a terrible example of internal conflict. Iraq and Afghanistan do not present better perspectives of being able to solve their internal differences, which are becoming deeper.

My good friend Mr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the President of the Republic of Indonesia, has been hosting the Bali Democracy Forum, which has been attracting greater interest each year, along with an increasing number of participating countries. We have always maintained in that Forum that democracy cannot be imposed upon people, for the same reasons that solar panels cannot be imposed on homes without food, which therefore have no prospect of sustainability. Democracy must be an internal process. The process is sometimes long, but it is vital for a lasting solution.

The most recent, dynamic and inspirational example comes from Myanmar. I commend Aung San Suu Kyi, a woman with an unshakeable character, a born leader, a resolute democrat and a defender of peaceful solutions, who is today an advocate for internal reconciliation. I also commend the leaders of Myanmar for their courage in making changes in the country. On behalf of the people of Timor-Leste, I also salute the people of Myanmar and wish them prosperity, and I appeal for dialogue, reconciliation and tolerance.

Today's world faces very serious problems and is sliding towards an increasingly dangerous lack of control. In addition to a recent atmosphere of regional instability, environmental threats continue to grow, hindering the legitimate aspirations of emerging and developing countries to benefit from their natural resources. In the Pacific region, some island States see their very survival at risk.

Food security concerns are also coming to the foreground as a further result of climate changes, requiring careful thought and an immediate and broad strategy. In several parts of the world we see an immoral increase in inequality, with a rich and powerful elite dominating the globe with impunity while the poor become even poorer and eternally dependent on wasteful assistance. What is more, it is difficult to know from where that assistance will come.

In order to meet these challenges, we need a strong and efficient United Nations that cooperates more effectively with international and regional organizations and that operates with great respect for the sovereignty of each State. The United Nations, which consists of all of us here today, has a duty to humanity. We should all acknowledge that we are the privileged agents of the necessary collective change to a better and safer world. Our collective efforts to preserve peace, security and human dignity must be translated from altruistic idealism to a more interventionist plan. That in turn means replacing a reactive agenda with a proactive one. It also means reducing the dominance of political and economic interests in favour of social and humanitarian interests. That requires the mobilization of public opinion around the world through dialogue about the values of peace and harmony among civilizations and cultures, mutual respect among societies, and tolerance among groups.

We can also start with the reform of the Security Council, which should be more representative. There is an imperative need to renew mindsets by the incorporation of new members, so as to energize new

commitments and responsibilities reflecting the current situations in today's world.

Timor-Leste has been walking the corridors of the United Nations for 38 years. In the beginning, we wanted to mobilize public opinion in favour of our cause and to warn the world that our fundamental rights were being violated. Today, we are informing the international community of our setbacks and achievements in the construction of a sovereign State. When we were guerrilla fighters in the mountains, we heard about a new world order. Today, many people are still oppressed because they suffer in one way or another. We are here to speak in favour of dialogue and fair decision-making. Human dignity must be at the core of decisions on problems affecting our planet. We must have an overall sense of the existence, the fears, the suffering, the despair and the fight for survival of men and women around the world.

Today we are here to ask for honest, constructive and unceasing dialogue to solve the problems that trouble the world — a dialogue encompassing problems large and small, conflicts large and small and nations large and small.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, was escorted from the rostrum.

The meeting rose at 9.50 p.m.