



# General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

**23**<sup>rd</sup> plenary meeting  
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New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Errázuriz (Chile), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

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

## Agenda item 8 (continued)

### General debate

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Mariyam Shakeela, Minister of Environment and Energy and Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Maldives.

**Ms. Shakeela** (Maldives): I wish to begin by extending my heartfelt congratulations to the President of the General Assembly on his assumption of office at the sixty-eighth session. I also wish to commend the Secretary-General on his leadership during what is a trying and testing time around the globe. We are confident in his leadership and in the Organization's resolve in tackling the many unprecedented challenges of our time.

Challenges, old and new, seem to be a recurring theme during this general debate, and it is only right that it be so: it is when we face enormous challenges and when we feel most uncomfortable, vulnerable, unhappy and unfulfilled that we are most likely to think above and beyond and seek new answers to old questions.

The most pressing challenge for the United Nations is definitely that of remaining relevant, given the realities of the twenty-first century, as the Organization remains the ultimate guarantor of the sovereign equality

of nations and the only international institution to which all countries, big and small, can look to ensure justice, freedom and peace. The Maldives, along with other States, has been calling for the reform of the Security Council to make it more inclusive, and thereby more credible and reflective of the voices of not only the powerful but also the weak, and more representative of the global population and its geographic distribution. In addition to the Council's composition, its working methods must also be improved — only then can the United Nations restore its credibility, authority and legitimacy.

Global challenges are of significant importance to the Maldives. The situation in the Middle East is particularly close to the hearts of Maldivians. We are appalled at the human cost of the conflict in Syria. The use of chemical weapons at any time, by anyone, and for whatever purpose must not be tolerated. In that regard, the Maldives welcomes Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), on the destruction of the chemical weapons in Syria, which was adopted unanimously. The Council's decision will, we hope, take us a step closer to ending the atrocities taking place there as we speak. Violence begets violence. We therefore call on both sides of the conflict to choose the path of dialogue, not of violence.

The Maldives also calls on the General Assembly to recognize the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. We urge the Assembly to support a two-State solution through the establishment of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the lands occupied in the 1967 war. Is it fair that Palestinian children grow up without a country of their

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own? Is it fair that the Palestinian needs for security, stability, prosperity and development go unanswered and unfulfilled because of the continued violence? We have discussed that issue enough. It is time for action. We are encouraged by the renewed United States-led Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. It is our earnest hope that those talks will ultimately lead to a peaceful and secure future for future generations of Palestine and Israel.

With the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) fast approaching, the focus of the world and the Assembly has turned to the post-2015 agenda. However, accelerating the achievement of the original Millennium Development Goals remains an urgent necessity. The Maldives therefore calls on all nations to fulfil their official development assistance (ODA) commitments and thereby help the most vulnerable populations overcome the challenges they face in achieving the MDGs.

We in the Maldives have made remarkable progress on the MDGs, having achieved five out of the eight ahead of the deadline. Although we have not achieved three of the MDGs, we are proud of the work we have done towards achieving them, in particular on the advancement of women. Our country has shown promise in addressing gender equality, especially in the area of health and education. It has nearly achieved universal access to basic health care for women and is proud of high literacy rates among boys and girls alike. The Maldives regards improving the socioeconomic rights of women as an integral part of national development and a core component of sustainable development. Unfortunately, we are facing setbacks on some of the MDGs that have been achieved, and are even regressing, owing to emerging issues, especially the loss of ODA as we graduate from the status of a least developed country (LDC), while persistent challenges hinder the achievement of the whole set of MDGs. Therefore, achieving and sustaining the progress on the MDGs will remain the key development challenge for the future.

In formulating the post-2015 developmental agenda, we should be mindful of the fact that MDGs are multidimensional and interconnected. They are not an end in themselves or a final solution, but merely a beginning.

The Maldives is encouraged by the multi-stakeholder mechanisms that are ongoing within the United

Nations. It is our hope that all of those mechanisms will be considered holistically and not in isolation, as we move towards a more concrete post-2015 development agenda.

It is also our sincere hope that the Millennium Development Goals will not be left non-fulfilled and that the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals (SDGs) are not seen in isolation from the MDGs. We hope that the sustainable development goals will be seen as a continuation of the MDGs. The formulation of the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda should complement the achievement of the MDGs and reflect any gaps therein. We also hope that no nation will be left without an avenue towards progression and that no small island developing State (SIDS) is left behind.

As we talk about the development agenda that we set for ourselves at the turn of this millennium, I cannot help but wonder whether the Maldives and other low-lying island States will survive to see another century, let alone another millennium. The Maldives is a small nation with meagre resources that faces numerous challenges when it comes to food, water and energy security — a nation that has, despite our small size, advocated loud and clear for international actions to address climate change. We have sought to help the world to see that the right to a safe and secure environment is a basic human right.

I urge all United Nations institutions to solidify and strengthen all standards and move towards the creation of an international mechanism. We need to strengthen institutions and cultivate a more dependable and consistent approach towards climate change and the consequent human rights issues that will become the most pressing challenges facing humanity.

For example, the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change presented to world leaders just last week underscored the need for urgent action on the issue of climate change. The report concludes that, in the event of a business-as-usual scenario, low-lying nations will face grave existential threats.

What does that mean for the Maldives? With 80 per cent of our small nation barely 1.5 metres above sea level and with more than 45 per cent of settlements within 100 metres of the coastline, all facets of our lifestyle, culture and economy depend almost exclusively on coastal and marine biodiversity. At present, our biodiversity contributes to 70 per cent of our national

employment, 49 per cent of public revenue, 62 per cent of foreign exchange, 98 per cent of exports and 89 per cent of our gross domestic product. Any loss of that biodiversity will result in catastrophic consequences for the Maldives.

Those are facts, but we have known those facts for a long time. What we need now is action. Our inaction speaks louder than words.

As a nation, Maldives has witnessed the trials of graduation from LDC status without due consideration for the inherent vulnerabilities of small island nations. Simply having a high gross national income or a high standing in the human development index does not make SIDS less vulnerable to external shocks, including emerging threats such as climate change; nor does it remove the difficulties associated with their smallness and remoteness, and in achieving economies of scale.

The Maldives is a perfect example of a SIDS graduating from LDC status based on distorted data and geographically disassociated global aggregates and indices. Even upon graduation, our country continues to face numerous economic, social and climate-change challenges. That must be a lesson to learn from as we develop the post-2015 development agenda.

SIDS require differential treatment because of their unique inherent vulnerabilities. That is why the Maldives and other countries in the same plight have been advocating relentlessly to find a comprehensive definition for SIDS. SIDS need to be given full recognition within the global governance regimes and multilateral and financial institutions, and adequately integrated and institutionalized within the United Nations system. Doing so would help to target assistance more effectively. That is also why we support the inclusion of a SIDS-focused goal in the post-2015 development agenda.

All of the challenges I have outlined are key to the Maldives. However, the most pressing challenge to the Maldives remains democracy consolidation and concerted efforts by external forces to prevent the emergence of an indigenous democratic system of governance in the Maldives.

A few weeks ago, the Maldives held its second multiparty elections. It was one of the most competitive elections in the country's history, yet it did not produce a clear winner. Some of the parties that competed in the election have identified serious issues with the conduct of the elections and have asked the Supreme Court of

the Maldives for a ruling. We are expecting the Court to hand down a ruling in the coming days. The integrity of the second round of our presidential election cannot be maintained without ensuring the integrity of the first round through constitutional means. We await the Supreme Court's verdict to continue the electoral process, allowing for a new President to be sworn in on November 11.

However, some external forces are attempting to shape the outcome of what in effect is an internal issue. The Maldives is small. Our democracy is in its infancy. Our institutions are young. That does not, however, mean that larger countries have a right to intervene and attempt to dictate outcomes in the domestic affairs of the Maldives.

Non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States is a core principle of the Charter of the Organization. Yet small States have frequently been the victims of the predatory designs of larger countries. It is for that reason that the Maldives initiated resolution 44/51, on "Protection and security of small States", in the Assembly in 1989. The call for protecting small States from external threats is further reiterated in resolutions 46/43 and 49/31, recognizing the particular vulnerabilities of small States to external threats and acts of interference in their internal affairs. The resolutions also call on all nations to respect the principle of territorial integrity and national sovereignty. Therefore, my delegation trusts the United Nations to be the ultimate guarantor of the security of small States such as the Maldives.

Democracy consolidation is not just about holding elections. Nor is it about having a democratically sound Constitution. In the Maldives, too, we quickly found that changing the Constitution, or having a multiparty election, did not instil democratic values within our society.

For democracy to be cultivated and consolidated, the supremacy of the Constitution must be upheld above all. The institutional deficiencies we face must be addressed within constitutional provisions, and the political leadership must sustain an unshakeable commitment to the principles and values of democracy. The rule of law must prevail.

Our institutions are young. Therefore, institution-building and reform remain a key challenge for the Maldives. More importantly, cultivating a culture of respect for human rights, tolerance, pluralism

and freedom remains incredibly important as we move through the democratic journey.

Those are the reasons why the Maldives decided to present its bid for re-election to the Human Rights Council. Our membership in the Council over the past three years has helped the country to take some unprecedented and bold measures to bring the country's national human rights mechanisms up to international standards. The Maldives believes that its continued membership would help it to further accelerate ongoing efforts in modernizing institutions and in promoting a culture of respect for human rights and democracy in Maldivian society.

Without democracy, the rule of law, human rights and peace we would have nothing, we would achieve nothing, and we would sustain nothing. In order to tackle the many challenges confronting the Maldives, we must adopt an inclusive form of governance where the voices and opinions of even the most vulnerable and the most disadvantaged in our society are heard. Without equality and justice, societies cannot prosper at all.

Democracy consolidation is a long and arduous journey, but it is one worth making. Our pace may not be as fast as the international community desires. But the Maldives is in the process of solidifying the foundations of our society for development, for democracy and for the protection of human rights. But that does not mean that we do not need the international community's assistance.

We know better than most that to be an emerging democracy is to be constantly challenged by volatile, new and emerging issues. There is no leeway to stumble, no room to hesitate, and we will not falter in our resolve. We will strengthen and redefine our institutions. We will adhere to our Constitution. We will work with our international partners, and we will move forward as a nation and as a sustainable society.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Phandu Skelemani, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Botswana.

**Mr. Skelemani** (Botswana): Allow me, on behalf of the Botswana delegation, to join previous speakers in congratulating President Ashe most sincerely on his assumption of the presidency of the Assembly. His election demonstrates the confidence and high esteem in which he personally and his great country, Antigua

and Barbuda, are held by the States Members of the Organization. We particularly admire his deep passion and proven record of leadership here at the United Nations on issues of sustainable development and climate change. We are therefore confident that the vast knowledge and experience of multilateral diplomacy which he brings to this position will contribute significantly to the success of this session. May I also congratulate his predecessor, Vuk Jeremić, for his effective guidance and sterling leadership of the sixty-seventh session.

My delegation fully endorses the theme he has proposed for this session, namely, "The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage", including overcoming poverty and insecurity as well as ensuring the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

This is quite relevant and fitting given the fact that the international community is on the brink of two major interrelated developments in the global arena: the imminent target date of 2015 for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the evolution of the sustainable development goals, which will constitute a significant part of the post-2015 development agenda. We therefore pledge our full support and cooperation to President Ashe in his efforts to usher in a new development paradigm.

There is no doubt that the challenges of extreme poverty, disease, lack of access to affordable energy, potable water and sanitation, climate change and gender inequality will continue to haunt millions of our people, especially in developing countries.

It is on account of this that my delegation is of the strong view that the formulation of the sustainable development goals should be predicated on the outcome of the current review of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. To that end, we believe that the sustainable development Goals should complement the Millennium Development Goals rather than replace them wholesale.

Botswana has made impressive achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, and we have mainstreamed them into our national development planning process. A substantial portion of our national budget is allocated to health, education, infrastructure, human resource development and the empowerment of women and young people.

I am proud to report that we have achieved universal primary education, as well as universal access to

HIV/AIDS treatment, care and support services. We have drastically reduced the mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS. We are working tirelessly towards achieving zero new infections and zero HIV/AIDS-related deaths by 2015.

We reaffirm our commitment to the fight against HIV/AIDS. Central to our efforts is the commitment to ensuring respect for human rights and expanding access to prevention, treatment and care support services for affected populations, including those most at risk. In addition, we remain committed to providing a good quality of life for all of Botswana. In that regard, we give the utmost priority to the implementation of poverty eradication programmes, with particular focus on vulnerable communities and vulnerable groups, such as women, youth, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Despite all of the achievements we have made to date, serious challenges remain. Permit me to briefly address the vexing subject of climate change and the situation of countries in special categories, including middle-income countries. Botswana is among the sub-Saharan African countries that suffer the most from the adverse impact of climate change. Some of the notable manifestations of climate change are extreme temperatures, water shortages, land degradation, desertification and persistent drought. Climate change also has adverse impacts on health and food security.

While it is gratifying that progress continues to be made in many countries in the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, my delegation believes that more needs to be done, particularly to assist vulnerable countries in arid and semi-arid areas and landlocked and transit countries, such as my own, that are also susceptible to drought and desertification. Financial support, technology transfer and capacity-building need to be generously extended to that special category of countries in order to assist them in adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change.

Last year, Botswana hosted the Summit for Sustainability in Africa, whose outcome declaration calls upon Governments to ensure that the contributions of natural capital to sustainable economic growth and the maintenance and improvement of social capital and human well-being are quantified and integrated into development and business practices. We wish to commend the work done by non-governmental environmental organizations worldwide in their

unremitting efforts to save the planet from climate change and its negative effects.

Botswana welcomes the adoption earlier this year of the long-overdue Arms Trade Treaty. The Treaty establishes common international standards for the regulation of international trade in conventional arms, ammunition and parts and components, with a view to strengthening international peace and security. In that regard, I am delighted to report that arrangements are under way to facilitate our signing and ratification of that vital instrument in the very near future.

Botswana remains firmly committed to a strong and effective international criminal justice system — hence our continued strong support for the mandate and work of the International Criminal Court. We believe that the Court has a vital role to play in the fight against impunity, genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression.

In that regard, last April, Botswana hosted a regional workshop for African States parties to the Rome Statute. The workshop was aimed at encouraging African States parties to ratify the 2010 Kampala amendments to the Rome Statute, which deal with the specific question of the crime of aggression. I am pleased to say that, following the workshop, Botswana became the first African State party to ratify the Kampala amendments. We can only hope that other State parties will follow suit so that we can secure the requisite number of ratifications for the amendments to enter into force.

Turning now to issues of international peace and security, it defies logic that, throughout the course of history, humankind has unleashed untold suffering on humankind. Conflict is raging in many parts of the world, where innocent lives are being lost needlessly. My delegation wishes to reiterate that States have a duty and a responsibility to protect their populations from war crimes and crimes against humanity and to see to it that the perpetrators of such crimes do not benefit from impunity. In situations where it is clear that States have failed or are unwilling to exercise their responsibility to protect, it is only fair and proper that the international community should intervene. In that regard, I refer mainly to the responsibility of the Security Council.

For slightly over two years now, the people of Syria have been engulfed in a brutal civil war whose end seems nowhere in sight. We remain deeply concerned that Syria continues to be soaked in the blood of its

citizens. We therefore wish to note our disappointment with those permanent members of the Security Council that continue to frustrate resolutions authorizing interventions seeking a lasting solution to the ongoing carnage in Syria.

It is a cause for extreme sadness that, despite the ever-worsening humanitarian situation in that country, the international community continues to turn a blind eye to the situation. We fear that, if the current state of affairs continues, a humanitarian catastrophe of epic proportions will unfold and haunt humankind for many generations to come. Accordingly, we wish to reiterate our position that punitive action in some form should be taken against the Al-Assad regime for committing crimes against humanity. We appeal once again to the Security Council, the organ with responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security, to take decisive action, once and for all, to end the human suffering in Syria.

Let me take this opportunity to commend all credible human rights and humanitarian organizations for their efforts to relieve human suffering around the world. We equally wish to commend those countries in the region, especially Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon, for accommodating and positively responding to the plight of refugees from Syria and trying to meet their needs.

The political upheaval in Egypt is also a cause for grave concern. Naturally, we believe that former President Morsi contributed to the present crisis by attempting to promulgate his undemocratic and divisive agenda, which resulted in an unfortunate military coup. Urgent action is therefore required to restore constitutional rule in that country.

We note with deep concern that, shortly after celebrating the second anniversary of its independence, Africa's newest sovereign State, South Sudan, has experienced developments in its relations with the Sudan that seriously threaten its security and territorial integrity. At the same time, we remain deeply concerned about the further deterioration of the political and humanitarian situation in Darfur. We therefore appeal to the international community to assist in all ways possible to restore peace and stability in that region.

My Government strongly condemns the recent spate of terrorist attacks in Kenya, Nigeria and Pakistan, which have resulted in the loss of many innocent lives. We wish to convey our sincere condolences and

sympathy to the affected countries and the families of the deceased. Those acts of terror are a threat to international peace and security and militate against the international community's efforts to build a secure, peaceful and prosperous world.

Such terrorist acts are transnational in nature and call therefore for a global response. To that end, we appeal to the conscience and resolve of all members of the international community to remain united and steadfast, if we are to win that fight. There can be no doubt that, if left unchecked, international terrorism has the potential to undermine our global development agenda.

We find it opportune to commend Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for the vanguard role he continues to play in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as in addressing issues of human suffering across the globe. The Secretary-General should also be applauded for his continued efforts to coordinate international efforts to advance the post-2015 development agenda.

Let me conclude by reaffirming Botswana's continued commitment to playing its part in the quest for international peace and security as well as in the international community's unrelenting efforts towards making the world a safer, peaceful and more prosperous place for both present and future generations.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, Secretary for Relations with States of the Observer State of the Holy See.

**Archbishop Mamberti** (Holy See) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, on behalf of the Holy See, I have the honour to congratulate Ambassador John Ashe on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. I am also pleased to convey to the President and to other participating delegations the warmest greetings from His Holiness Pope Francis, who assures the Assembly of his kind thoughts and prayers that the session will be crowned with success.

In the first days of his pontificate, Pope Francis inspired enthusiasm and hope for a new horizon based on a culture of togetherness that should form the basis of all personal, societal and international relations. That culture specifically recognizes the value of others: the individual, social groups and States. It is founded on human dignity and transcendence. It acts to reaffirm faith, which is perceived with fear in certain segments

of contemporary society and wrongly accused of leading to intolerance — when in fact it promotes understanding and unity among peoples and peace.

It is my hope that this session of the General Assembly will be inspired by the same spirit of universal solidarity that was demonstrated during the international day for prayer convened by the Pope on 7 September, which brought together religious leaders of all faiths. May the session follow that path and inspire a new dynamism such that all nations will take action to resolve the ongoing conflicts and heal the wounds of humankind.

The choice of the theme for this session — “The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage” — is a timely one. The process of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including the progress made and the limitations and difficulties encountered, has demonstrated the importance of establishing common goals for all members of the international community that will bring them together, galvanize them and assess their efforts — including the United Nations and its specialized entities, regional organizations and States. In that regard, it is important that at this session the Assembly revisit the fundamental concepts that make up the heart of the United Nations, as they remain relevant to setting new goals for the post-2015 agenda.

In the context of comprehensive human development, the foregoing should be guided by promoting the family, based on the union of a man and a woman and the protection of the rights of the family as the basic social nucleus and the foundation of all stable and sustainable development. Those goals should also promote a dignified life for all humankind, from the oldest to the youngest child still at home, as well as those living in the most difficult social situations or most isolated areas.

As the deadline set to achieve the Millennium Development Goals approaches, it is easy to see that they have not been universally achieved. That is due, in part, to limitations and lack of clarity, including along ethical lines, and especially due to the difficulty in creating an efficient consensus on the implementation of Goal 8, in view of the resources necessary to achieve the seven others.

In terms of that Goal, the decisions made following the 2008 crisis aimed to find an equitable way to manage the international financial sector and reform

the international financial institutions. Nevertheless, it is regrettable to note that discussions on measures to control the global economy took place among small, limited groups of States, such as the Group of 20 (G-20); they did not include the poorest or least populated States. While that was justified from a practical point of view, such an approach does not legitimize its decisions, which could have important consequences for other States Members of the United Nations that are neither direct nor indirect participants in the G-20.

In order to guarantee the future implementation of common goals for the post-2015 agenda, international legal mechanisms must urgently be devised to ensure the participation of all States in drafting and implementing sweeping shared economic decisions. At the same time, it will be insufficient to create financial or business structures that are recognized as fair and equitable by all States if we do not assess the results of the goals in the long term, with the aim of guaranteeing that the lives of those in need are clearly improving.

The future development goals of the post-2015 agenda should therefore identify monitoring and adjustment mechanisms to deal with economic trends and promote the elimination of hunger worldwide, the gradual disappearance of slums, universal access to drinking water and improved sanitation for all, among other things.

That framework would be incomplete without considering an external development factor that is essential to the implementation of the MDGs, namely, peace. While it is true that injustice and excessive social and economic inequalities among peoples and nations represent a constant threat to peace and lead to war, it is also true that war, terrorism, organized crime and other forms of armed violence at the national and international levels represent the most significant obstacles to development. Therefore, the matter of the post-2015 development agenda should today be viewed in the context of the serious conflicts under way — first and foremost the conflict in Syria.

In facing such wars and massacres, it is crucial that the international community choose the path of development, with greater determination and courage. If peace is considered the *sine qua non* of comprehensive human development, it is important to return to certain basic principles that the international community solemnly swore to follow nearly 70 years ago.

The United Nations was created, at that time, “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war” and “to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest”. The right to wage war, which authorized the political and autonomous use of military force, was replaced by providing the Security Council with the power to authorize the use of force which, under the Charter of the United Nations, includes only one exception, namely, legitimate self-defence, the conditions and limitations of which are described in Article 51 of the Charter.

In that context, it is possible to consider that following the tragedies of the First World War and the Second World War, States created an international set of norms that provide legal instruments that establish the law based on the highest sense of justice. Indeed, international law is no longer synonymous with the laws of the international community, that is, laws based on the traditions and customs of various States. Based on the Charter of the United Nations, States sought to reaffirm that international law was a legal system whose fundamental objective, even if it is not the only one, was to control the use of violence between States, and in which the limitation of the use of force to cases and under the conditions stipulated in the Charter itself represents a fundamental constitutional norm. Therefore, the limitation of the use of force is the primary and essential principle in terms of the ultimate goal of any legal system aimed at the protection of individuals and their fundamental rights.

It is tragic that today, in spite of the valuable United Nations legal principles, the implementation mechanisms and procedures have not managed to prevent serious civil and regional conflicts or protect people. The African continent has many real or potential situations of conflict, with dozens of armed groups that sow death and suffering throughout the population. In that regard, I would particularly like to refer to the situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the Central African Republic.

The Middle East continues to be a subject of great concern, and in some countries of the American continent drug trafficking has reached the level where traffickers can wage war against States. There are also significant hotbeds of tension in many regions of Asia. In many of those conflicts, there have been or are still United Nations peacekeeping operations working in coordination with regional organizations. In that

regard, a tradition of great merit has been established, which dates back to the origins of the Organization itself. However, history has also shown that, when the necessary means are insufficient or the prevailing national and international interests weigh too heavily, United Nations intervention cannot be realized or, if it is undertaken, has only limited success.

Despite those difficulties, the whole experience of peacekeeping and peacebuilding developed by the United Nations should be seen as positive, including those operations that have had weak immediate results, because it is itself a concrete expression of the two key principles of natural law, namely, the rights intrinsically linked to human dignity. The first requires that we do everything reasonably possible to avoid war, given the evils and injustice that war leads to; and the second affirms the permanent validity of moral law during armed conflict. In that regard, acts deliberately contrary to individual’s rights and those universal principles are crimes, which in the most serious cases can be described as crimes against humanity.

It is clear that, in the lives of people, armed conflicts have led to deep divisions and serious harm that require many years to heal. Today the example of greatest concern to the entire world is the serious conflict that has developed in Syria, which has already led to 110,000 dead, 4 million internally displaced persons and more than 2 million refugees in neighbouring countries, including in Lebanon and Jordan. It risks becoming an international conflict at any moment. In addition to the terrible loss of life, the conflict is destroying some of the richest heritage of history, culture and human coexistence, strongly linked to the three monotheistic religions and the whole European culture heritage. In recalling the long history during which, together, the different parts of society built that heritage and sewed the fabric of human relationships, I would like to note the deep concern of the Holy See for the fate of the Christian communities and other minorities, who should not be forced in any way into exile, but rather should be given a leading role in the future configuration of their country, given their contribution to the common good.

The most recent report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry, established by the Human Rights Council, demonstrates that massacres and other serious violations of human rights have been committed by the parties to the conflict. The same experts vehemently affirmed that there was no possible military solution. In that context, the Holy See would

like to reaffirm that any action that might aggravate or even extend the conflict and increase the unspeakable suffering of innocent people should be avoided.

In his recent letter to the Group of 20 leaders meeting in Saint Petersburg, the Holy Father, recalling the responsibility of the international community with regard to Syria, described as regrettable the fact that too many partisan interests had prevailed since the Syrian conflict began and had prevented the finding of a solution to the pointless massacre we are witnessing. In recalling his words, I would like to urge the leaders of States not to remain indifferent in the face of the tragedies that have been afflicting the Syrian people for far too long. To each and every one of the leaders, in repeating the Pope's words, I would like to make a heartfelt appeal that they find ways to overcome their differences and give up any useless attempt at a military solution. On the contrary, there should be a new commitment to seek, with courage and determination, a peaceful solution through dialogue and negotiation between the interested parties with the firm support of the international community. Moreover, all the Governments of the world have the moral duty to give priority to any initiative that would promote the provision of humanitarian assistance to those who are suffering on account of the conflict within and outside the country.

We would also note that, during the Syrian crisis, the bodies and agencies of the United Nations system have sought to deploy all available means to protect civilians. Member States have, for far too long, shown a lack of the courage needed to give priority to the international resolution of the conflict. The Secretary-General recently spoke of the collective failure of the international community's ability to prevent and avoid the atrocities committed in Syria. Along those lines, I would like to recall the concept of the responsibility to protect, which the Secretary-General also referred to, and I would also like to underscore the importance of that responsibility for the Holy See. The adoption of a political and legal concept of the responsibility to protect during the 2005 World Summit, held from 14 to 16 September 2005, was a great step forward by the international community. Unfortunately, the responsibility to protect has sometimes been erroneously understood to be a justification for the use of arms, but in reality it means something quite different. It is a profound and urgent spirit of solidarity that calls upon everyone, starting with heads of State, to understand their responsibilities with regard to serious

humanitarian crises wherever they occur and to commit to ensuring that all emergency measures are put in place — diplomatic and economic measures and those related to public opinion, as well as the mechanisms stipulated by the Charter of the United Nations — to arrive at an effective solution. To provide continuity to the ongoing debate on the responsibility to protect, it would be a good idea to consider ways to explicitly include that concept in the mandate of the Security Council, under Article 24 of the Charter, and possibly under Article 39.

In that context, the Syrian tragedy is both a challenge and an opportunity for the United Nations to breathe new life into all its bodies, mechanisms and procedures in a specific, creative and positive manner. In that regard, we must welcome the unanimous adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2118 (2013), on 27 September. My delegation hopes that the agreement that was reached on that document will provide a definite impetus to the Geneva process, so as to make it finally possible to restore stability and bring about reconciliation in the country.

A peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Syria would set a significant precedent for the upcoming century and would indicate the path to be taken in addressing other conflicts that the international community has not yet been able to resolve. It would greatly facilitate the inclusion of the principle of the responsibility to protect in the Charter of the United Nations. And, more generally from the point of view of economic and social development, it would be the most clear demonstration of the will to undertake, with honesty and effectiveness, a path of sustainable development post-2015.

Pope Francis, through his prophetic words and actions on 7 September, launched a huge global movement of prayer for peace, the results of which were immediately clear in the public's spontaneous and sincere support for that goal. The scope of that effort went beyond differences of religion, culture, nationality or geographical origin, and exerted a strong influence on world leaders. Accompanying the Holy Father and under his leadership, the competent authorities of the Holy See also took diplomatic action aimed at stopping the violence and promoting dialogue between the parties involved in the conflict, thereby putting into practice one of the main goals of their international presence. Along with the Pope and in line with the theme for this session, we would like to reiterate here at the general

debate that war is the specific refusal to commit to the achievement of the major social and economic goals that the international community has set for itself. Indeed, there can be no economic development without peace. Armed conflict never leads to peace, which is crucial for that development.

The Holy See believes, in line with the theological and ethical teaching of the Catholic Church, that because of the evils and injustices that any war entails, we must do everything possible to avoid it. This is also why the Church strongly urges everyone to pray and act so that divine goodness frees us from the ancient bondage of war.

My delegation, recalling those ethical principles that inspire and animate the international activity of the Holy See, has no ambition other than to make a contribution of a moral nature to this session of the General Assembly, while at the same time expressing its recognition for the work done by various bodies and United Nations agencies to relieve the suffering caused by the Syrian crisis and other conflict situations. We encourage them to continue their humanitarian work.

My delegation also strongly appeals to all Member States to exercise responsibility. Peace will come about, and the objectives of comprehensive human development for each inhabitant of the Earth, especially for the weakest and those who have no voice or representation, will be achieved if, and only if, every State is capable of fully assuming its own responsibilities for the common good of all.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Pak Ui Chun, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Pak Ui Chun** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (*spoke in Korean; English text provided by the delegation*): First of all, on behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, allow me to congratulate Mr. John William Ashe on his election as the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. I am convinced that his competent leadership will lead this session towards success.

The Millennium Summit, held in 2000, advanced peace and security, sustainable development and the protection and promotion of human rights as the three key objectives of the United Nations. Ever since the inception of the United Nations, humankind has aspired to build a new, peaceful world, free from war, while at

the same time aspiring to achieve common prosperity and development based on cooperation among Member States. That aspiration, however, is far from coming true, even after a new century and the passage of the first decade of the new millennium.

A high-handed and arbitrary approach is becoming ever more rampant in international relations. Infringements upon sovereignty, interference in internal affairs and regime change continue unabated under the pretexts of non-proliferation and the protection of human rights, for which the United Nations is being abused. Confrontation between forces with different interests, States and civilizations, and wars large and small, keep taking place in different parts of the world, severely damaging the credibility of the United Nations, whose primary mission is to ensure peace and security.

Those developments clearly demonstrate that sustainable development and the real protection of human rights will remain a figment of our imagination as long as there is no peace and security as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations. International relations should reject any State's high-handed and arbitrary approach on the part of a State that undermines peace and security in order to achieve genuine cooperation and development among countries based on the sovereign equality of States. The unjust intervention, pressure and use of force that is unfolding in Syria by way of infringements on its sovereignty and territorial integrity, which further breach peace and stability, should not be allowed under any circumstances, and the United States blockade against Cuba should be brought to an end at the earliest possible date.

The international community unanimously demands the elimination of all nuclear weapons and encourages the building of a nuclear-weapon-free world through nuclear disarmament. As agreed at a High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament held during the current session, on the initiative of the Non-Aligned Movement, negotiations on nuclear disarmament should begin without further delay to work on universal legal instruments that codify negative security assurances and the prohibition of nuclear weapons, among other things.

The choice of "The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage" as the theme for the current session serves to highlight the importance of sustainable development for world peace and our common prosperity. We have little time left before the 2015 deadline for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals,

including poverty reduction in particular. However, much to our regret, international efforts in that regard have not produced the long-overdue results. By identifying and successfully attaining the post-2015 sustainable development goals, practical measures need to be taken to address issues such as establishing fair international economic relations, transferring environmentally sound technology to developing countries and strengthening financial support.

Despite international efforts towards the protection and promotion of human rights, high-handedness and double standards are becoming ever more visible in United Nations human rights forums, targeting developing countries as selectively as in the past. Politicization, selectivity and double standards should be put to an end in such forums, and no one should be able to justify or allow the continuation of a situation where the human rights situation in some countries is either called into question or simply ignored in accordance with the political purpose and interests of the West and Western values.

The reform of the United Nations is becoming an issue that brooks no further delay in achieving the major United Nations goals to which I have referred in the twenty-first century.

In addressing key international issues, the General Assembly should be empowered to have the final say, since it represents the overall will of the entire membership. In particular, Security Council resolutions pertaining to peace and security, such as those on sanctions and the use of force, should be made effective only under the authority and with the approval of the General Assembly. Instances of the Council being abused by a certain State as a tool of strategic interest should never go unchallenged.

Last January, under the manipulation of the United States, the forcible adoption of an unfair resolution on sanctions took place (Security Council resolution 2087 (2013)) by making an issue of our legitimate satellite launch for peaceful purposes — something that was conducted and recognized under international law. That represents a typical example of how and for what purpose the power of the Security Council is being abused. The reform of the Council, which is a key component of reforming the United Nations, should be undertaken on the basis of principles for ensuring accountability, transparency and impartiality in its activities, thereby ensuring the full representation of developing countries in its composition.

Today in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the entire population is engaged in an all-out campaign to build a thriving socialist State in the nearest possible future, under the wise leadership of the dear respected Marshal Kim Jong Un. Marshal Kim Jong Un, the supreme leader of our people, gives continuous on-the-spot guidance across the country, offering direction and innovative ways for speeding up economic development and the improvement of people's livelihoods.

Practical measures are being taken, one after another, to revitalize the overall national economy, bringing about success in the fields of economic development and improving people's welfare. Nothing is more precious than creating a stable and peaceful environment for the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Korean people, who helped build economic power and improved people's livelihoods as part of the Government's overall objective. Although our efforts for peaceful development are faced with grave challenges, the Korean people will surely bring about the day of final victory by advancing with full confidence and optimism, united single-handedly around Marshal Kim Jong Un and under his wise leadership.

Sixty years have passed since the gunfire that ended a fierce three-year-long war and the signing of the Armistice Agreement in the Korean peninsula last century. Yet there is still no mechanism in place to guarantee peace, resulting in the continuation of the unsustainable situation — one of neither war nor peace — on the Korean peninsula.

With the aim of achieving military domination of North-East Asia, the United States, using the Korean peninsula as a stepping stone, has designated the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as its primary target of attack and is beefing up its military presence in South Korea and the vicinity. Furthermore, it stages a series of war exercises against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea every year, with massive build-ups of hundreds of thousands of troops and modern military equipment, continuously escalating confrontation and fuelling tensions.

The United Nations Command, the outdated legacy of the Korean War, continues to serve the United States military strategy by abusing the name of the United Nations. The United Nations Command, which has nothing to do with the United Nations, continuously conducts military actions threatening the Korean

peninsula and its surrounding area in the name of the United Nations under the baton of the United States. That shows that resolution 3390 (XXX), which the Assembly adopted at its thirtieth session and which calls for the dissolution of the United Nations Command, remains nothing more than a piece of paper. It also shows to what extent the credibility of the United Nations has been undermined.

The repeated vicious cycle of mounting tensions on the Korean peninsula has its roots in the hostile policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United States designated the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with its different ideology and system, as its enemy from the very day of its foundation and has refused to recognize its sovereignty and has imposed all sorts of sanctions, pressure and military threats on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for more than half a century.

The only way to ensure lasting peace on the Korean peninsula is to bring the hostile United States policy to an end. The United States should abolish its hostile policy by, among other things, respecting the sovereignty of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, replacing the Armistice Agreement with a peace mechanism, dismantling the United Nations Command without further delay and lifting all sanctions and military threats.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains consistent in its stance and in its efforts to put an end to the tensions on the Korean peninsula by peaceful means through dialogue and negotiations, and to contribute to ensuring peace and security in the region. In order to achieve genuine peace and ease tensions on the Korean peninsula, we are making every possible effort and displaying maximum patience.

Reunifying the country is a long-cherished desire and the most pressing task of the Korean nation. As we entered the new century, North-South summit meetings were held on two occasions, with joyful enthusiasm shared by all our countrymen, adopting the 15 June North-South joint declaration and the 4 October declaration, thus providing a milestone for reconciliation, collaboration and reunification between the North and South of Korea.

Thanks to the active and generous efforts of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, a window of opportunity has opened for improving North-South relations after a long period of deadlock. However, the

outdated confrontational approach we are coming up against from the South Korean authorities risks driving relations back into a destructive stage.

As clarified by the 15 June joint declaration and the 4 October declaration, the only way to achieve the peaceful reunification of the country and to open the way forward for the nation is to promote dialogue and cooperation between the North and South of Korea by joining hands in the spirit of the Korean nation itself.

We will work hand in hand with anyone who truly seeks reconciliation and the reunification and prosperity of the nation. We will strive to accomplish the historic cause of national reunification through the concerted efforts of the nation under the 15 June joint declaration and the 4 October declaration.

In conclusion, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue to strengthen and develop friendly and cooperative relations with all States Members of the United Nations, support the placing of the situation on the Korean peninsula under stable management as a member of the international community, and fully exercise its responsibility and role in ensuring world peace and the common prosperity of humankind, pursuant to its foreign policy of ideals, independence, peace and friendship.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. José Manuel Trullols, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic.

**Mr. Trullols** (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to express my congratulations to the President of the General Assembly upon his election to preside over the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. I wish him the greatest of success in his task and in his efforts to promote the initiatives proposed for his term.

I am here as a representative of the Dominican Republic, which was one of the signatories in 1945 of the Charter of the United Nations, which entrusts the Organization with the monumental task of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war. In the 68 years since its inception, there has not been another world war, but today we are facing a cataclysm that is just as lethal and destructive as a war of planetary dimensions: global poverty. It is a war with casualties in the millions, which calls for a radical change in the economic paradigm and for the forging of a new culture — the culture of sustainability. As I address the

Assembly, there is no doubt in my mind that to triumph over such a daunting challenge, all nations must make difficult decisions, which will require the full weight of our collective responsibility.

Allow me to refer to the extensive and detailed document adopted at the Rio de Janeiro United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) last year (resolution 66/288, annex), entitled "The future we want". In that text, Member States renewed their commitment to sustainable development and to the promotion of a future that is sustainable in economic, social and environmental terms for our planet and for present and future generations. That declaration shows that the leaders of the world's nations are committed to doing what is needed to attain that future. We therefore have a road map with profound implications.

Let us acknowledge that we are taking on an overwhelming responsibility, because we are committing ourselves to building a reality that is totally unprecedented in the modern world. Let us acknowledge that development to date has not been sustainable in any way. It has not been sustainable either socially or economically. It has been even less sustainable in environmental terms. The systems of production that we have used to achieve economic growth have been based on methods that have proved to be harmful to the environment, and the systems that we have used to distribute the wealth produced have created deep chasms of social inequality and exclusion.

Over time, we have reached a situation that we now consider to be intolerable: a world in which more than 1 billion people are living in a state of extreme poverty and hunger; a world in which many millions of human beings lack adequate health care, drinking water, good-quality education or decent employment; and a world in which extreme malnutrition and social exclusion prevail to a morally unacceptable extent. If we aspire to a world where development is sustainable, we must first accept our shared responsibility for all parts of all societies, and agree that it is time for actions, not words.

To translate a commitment of such a magnitude into reality, it must be based on achievable actions and attainable goals, and we must be prepared to take bold action, as we are doing in the Dominican Republic, on several unprecedented fronts. We are putting citizens at the centre of our policies and making the fight against poverty and inequality our top priority. We are implementing a new development model based on a long-term national strategy built on the pillars of

three fundamental social pacts: a fiscal pact, a pact for education and a pact for electricity. We are building transparency into Government actions and establishing citizens' groups to oversee and monitor purchasing and contract systems. We are making support for small-scale agricultural producers a priority. We are doubling the budget for free and compulsory public education. We are extending the school day, and we are putting a permanent end to illiteracy.

Following the commitments made at the Rio+20 Conference, we have taken a few steps forward and are moving towards an agreement on a road map that will lead us to sustainable development and to the eradication of extreme poverty. We have implemented a process to determine as accurately as possible what the sustainable development goals for the post-2015 international development agenda should be.

We are pleased to note that we all agree that the greatest challenge the world faces is to eradicate poverty and, for that reason, that goal has been given top priority on the agenda of our people and our Organization.

Our countries have common problems, but our economic, social, historical, geographical, demographic and cultural realities are different. Each of those dimensions plays a role in how those problems may or may not be addressed and resolved. Moreover, our responsibilities for the creation of or the aggravation of those common problems, such as climate change, are clearly differentiated.

My country, the Dominican Republic, suffers the consequences of climate change, because of its geographical location in the path of annual hurricanes and tropical storms. For that reason, we are working to strengthen and improve our preparedness for the management of risks associated with natural disasters. We are building a collection centre for emergency assistance and are working on the creation of a centre of excellence, dedicated to the education and training of human resources for assistance in disasters, which will serve the nations in the entire Caribbean region.

Next month, from 18 to 20 November, the Dominican Republic will host the third International Conference on the HOPEFOR initiative, to which all Members of the United Nations are cordially invited.

Universal sustainable development is a goal that requires a new vision and approach on the international stage. In order for development to be sustainable in our nations, we must undertake structural reforms that

will change many of our policies and our economic and social systems, turning them inside out, the way a sock is turned inside out. With sustainable development, we have taken on a commitment of biblical proportions, a universal commitment to care for our brothers and sisters, especially for those who most need to be elevated to the conditions required for dignified human life.

The Organization is helping to point the way with the launch of parallel processes of study, discussion and analysis; panels of eminent persons; consultations with regional economic commissions; the Leadership Council of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network; and the open-ended working groups that are contributing to marking the path.

We would therefore like to take the opportunity to express our appreciation for the work done by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in putting documents in the hands of Member States that will serve as a guide for our debates and our decisions. One such document, *An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development*, a report prepared for the Secretary-General in June by the Leadership Council of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, is a bold and optimistic platform. It is an exhaustive and practical plan that requires a collective commitment that we cannot shirk. All reports agree that we cannot continue treating the part of the planet that each of our nations occupies as if the resources that nature has generously put within them were inexhaustible. The world's forests, water supplies and mineral resources are decreasing, and animal species are endangered. At the same time, we continue to use methods of cultivation that poison or impoverish the Earth and methods of industrial production that poison the air we breathe.

We must revise the very methods by which our economic growth is driven. That is not a new concern for the United Nations. We have been talking about sustainable development for decades. What is new now is that the situation has become a matter of urgency.

The time for words and promises is over. The time for action is now. We must step up the pace to establish the foundations of sustainable development, because time is running out. We must address the purpose, knowing that what we do or do not agree upon in this session of the General Assembly may determine whether the future of our peoples, or rather, the future of humankind, will be promising or miserable. That presumption may seem exaggerated to representatives of larger or more highly developed nations. If so, we

invite those nations to look beyond their borders and to consider the peoples of the nations from which they seek cheap labour. They must look at the peoples whose human resources they employ to produce their goods and services. They must look at the peoples in the countries that need the industries of the developed countries to process their mineral exports and at the peoples in the countries where they want to market their products.

For many of those people, the situation is intolerable. That is why we are pleased to note that the documents that have already been written and which are intended to serve as a platform for our debates and decisions have an optimistic tone. They give us, for example, the assurance that if we act now, the problems we face will not become insoluble.

Universal sustainable development, which addresses the challenges that have been so clearly identified, will translate into social justice in the world. It will also translate into peace, international peace, the achievement of which is a strategic goal of the Organization.

To speak of eradicating extreme poverty, measured in terms of living on an income of less than \$1.25 a day, sounds like an enormous goal, especially because it is estimated that some 1.2 billion people in the world suffer from poverty. In reality, that is just one step in a long journey. If those who are now below the income level of \$1.25 per day are elevated to an income level of \$2 per day, we will have eliminated what we now call extreme poverty. However, we all know that human beings cannot meet their basic needs on an income of \$2 per day. The difference in hardship between the one income range and the other is not very noticeable. What happens is that talking about poverty in statistical terms does not allow us to visualize, much less feel, the reality of the human misery and desolation behind the numbers and the percentages. How can we understand the pain of a father and mother who have suffered the loss of their child when the words in which we are informed about that family tragedy are that every 10 seconds a child dies from hunger-related causes in the world?

Let us put ourselves in the place of parents of families living in a state of extreme poverty. They have to raise their children in extremely unsafe living conditions, without sanitation or safe drinking water, without sufficient resources to buy medicine or to provide each child with food to ensure proper nutrition,

without resources, without a bed or mosquito net to protect him from insects that transmit serious diseases. They have to decide which of their children can go to school and which cannot, or which of their children have to work and which do not.

We know that a difficult road still remains ahead before we can agree on a satisfactory arrangement for all in regard to the post-2015 international development agenda and the most effective ways to implement it. Let us remember that what we need is not a new commitment. We have had many commitments to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. We have had the World Food Summit of 1996, the Millennium Summit in 2000, another World Food Summit five years later in 2002, and the recent Rio+20 Conference in 2012. What we need now is for those commitments to finally be translated into political action.

Although sustainable development may sound like an economic concept, it really is a political concept. That is why we are discussing it here, at the Organization, which is a forum of States and therefore a political forum. Economists measure the dimensions or the pillars of reality in economic terms. Economists and other specialists can set the goals that must be reached for a sustainable development that meets their exact specifications. But political decisions are the driving force. Political decisions are what ultimately determine whether or not the goals are achieved.

We therefore have the primary responsibility. It depends on us to put the declarations of good intentions into action.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Kosal Sea, head of the delegation of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

**Mr. Sea** (Cambodia): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Mr. John Ashe on his election as the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. My delegation has full confidence that under his able leadership the new session will draw to a successful conclusion. The President can rest assured of Cambodia's full support and cooperation throughout his presidency.

This year session's theme, "The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage," is very timely as we have less than 1,000 days to reach the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets. That development agenda will be one of the most ambitious projects undertaken by the United Nations, in which all

nations will be called upon to galvanize efforts to help the world live up to its commitments to end poverty, educate children, empower women and provide health services for all.

While the overall picture is encouraging, we must also recognize that the progress made towards attaining the MDGs has been insufficient and uneven. Poverty is still widespread, with more than one billion people living in extreme poverty. High maternal and child mortality rates are still seen in too many places throughout the developing world. Most developing countries still face many obstacles to the achievement of all the MDGs within the allocated time frame of 2015, owing to their vulnerability to the global financial crisis, their debt burdens and the failure of some developed countries to meet official development assistance (ODA) commitments.

It is high time for donor countries to fulfil their ODA pledges. In addition, debt relief is one of several financial-assistance instruments which can enhance the developing countries' ability to eradicate poverty. Furthermore, facilitating the transfer of technology from the developed to the developing world plays a critical role in helping countries to further their development efforts and accelerate their economic growth.

In the case of Cambodia, the MDGs are firmly embedded as the cornerstone of the country's development policies and strategies. In a country whose entire population once faced abject poverty and hunger after emerging from war and genocide in 1979, the number of people living below the national poverty line dropped steadily, reaching 19.8 per cent in 2011. The country is well on track — if not ahead of schedule — in terms of attaining its poverty-reduction goal of 19.5 per cent. In fact, Cambodia received a United Nations award for reducing hunger by half well ahead of the MDG target. In general, my country is well positioned to meet most of the Goals on schedule by the end of 2015, thanks not only to the Government's sound approach and firm commitment but also to sustained peace and political stability.

In adopting the MDGs, we acknowledged that sustained and inclusive economic growth in developing countries was a key requirement for eradicating poverty and meeting the targets. In that context, my delegation highly appreciates the far-sighted report of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, which is entitled *A New*

*Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development*, and which sets forth a universal agenda to eradicate extreme poverty from our world by 2030 and to deliver on the promise of sustainable development.

Cambodia believes that the post-2015 development agenda should carry forward the spirit of the Millennium Declaration in various ways: first, by setting out a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions for sustainable development; secondly, by aiming at the completion of the work started under the MDGs, particularly the goal of eradicating extreme poverty; thirdly, by emphasizing inclusive, equitable and sustainable development and economic growth aimed at effectively addressing inequality and any associated factors; and, fourthly, by focusing not only on the global dimension of development, but also on its regional dimension, while taking into account the particular challenges of the least developed countries.

With regard to the nineteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Warsaw in November, my country has high hopes that the Conference will ratify the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol by 2015. Cambodia greatly appreciates the developed countries' continued commitment to providing funds and technology to help developing nations tackle climate change, in accordance with the United Nations principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Global and regional peace and security are currently threatened by conflicts, armed confrontation and transnational organized crime, which take a heavy toll on many development efforts. Against that backdrop, Cambodia welcomes the signing of the Arms Trade Treaty, the first ever international treaty to regulate the trade of conventional weapons.

Another security issue is the presence of landmines and other explosive remnants of war, which continue to pose constant threats to human security and safety and hinder national development. To counter those threats, last year in Phnom Penh the leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) decided to establish the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center and to base it in Cambodia.

For its part, Cambodia has spared no effort to address the issue of landmines. To that end, it has established

demining and clearance of other unexploded ordnance as an additional MDG of its own. Substantial progress has been made in realizing that goal, as is demonstrated by the sharp decline in the number of mine explosion accidents in Cambodia, from over 300 cases in 2008 to 186 in 2012. As Chair of the Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty, or Ottawa Treaty, Cambodia made a strong commitment to work towards a world free of landmines and unexploded ordnance. Since 2006, Cambodia has contributed to United Nations peacekeeping operations by sending mine-clearance experts to a number of countries in Africa and the Middle East, including the Sudan, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Chad and Lebanon, and very soon to Mali.

On the situation in the Korean peninsula, we welcome the positive developments between North Korea and South Korea, which, I hope, will lead to a significant improvement in inter-Korean relations and the resumption of the Six-Party Talks. We encourage the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply fully with its obligations to cease its nuclear programme, as spelled out by the relevant Security Council resolutions.

My country reaffirms its support for the Palestinian people's just demand for a sovereign and independent State of Palestine and for the two-State solution to the Palestine-Israel conflict. We urge all parties to play a constructive role in the efforts aimed at resuming peace talks and to remove any obstacles standing in the way of such resumption.

With regard to the Syrian situation, Cambodia strongly condemns human rights violations and the use of chemical weapons. My delegation fully supports Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), adopted on Friday with the aim of destroying Syria's chemical weapons.

My delegation also calls for an end to the unilateral embargo on Cuba, which has caused the Cuban people decades of untold suffering.

We are seriously concerned about the extensive levels of sexual violence inflicted on innocent women and children in armed conflicts around the world. My country endorses the declaration of commitment on ending sexual violence in conflict, issued on 24 September at a side event during the general debate.

*The President took the Chair.*

Since the establishment of the United Nations, in 1945, the world situation has changed so dramatically that there is an urgent need to strengthen global diplomacy. In that context, the reform of the United Nations should be comprehensive and include not only the Security Council but also other organs, so as to maintain the Organization's relevance as a global governance institution that can cope effectively with world reality. The General Assembly should be empowered to play a greater leading role in strengthening the wider United Nations system, improving international governance and enhancing multilateralism. At the same time, the Economic and Social Council should also be strengthened, so that it can effectively coordinate international cooperation and efforts to tackle social and economic challenges. Both the permanent and non-permanent membership categories of the Security Council should be expanded in an equitable manner, so that the Council represents both developed and developing countries. A comprehensive reform of the Council to make it a body where real negotiations and compromises can take place is acutely needed.

**The President:** I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Vince Henderson, head of the delegation of Dominica.

**Mr. Henderson (Dominica):** I would like to begin by congratulating you, President Ashe, from our sister island of Antigua and Barbuda, which is also a member of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), on your well-deserved election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. The Government and the people of the Commonwealth of Dominica are proud of your appointment and wish you success in presiding over the General Assembly. We also express our appreciation and gratitude to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, for his guidance during the sixty-seventh session.

Thirteen years after collectively committing to meeting the needs of the poorest among us by attaining our noble Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we have made some progress globally, but we are still far from fully reaching our targets. Despite the challenges brought about by an increasingly hostile global environment, Dominica has made meaningful progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Government of Dominica has accepted that it is through the development of our human resources that we will be able to truly attain

development that is inclusive and sustainable. As a result, our Government has kept our people at the centre of development.

We have been able to bring significant improvements in the lives of our people and to attain all the Millennium Development Goals, despite our limitations. We have reduced poverty and hunger by more than half. Our children, boys and girls, now have universal access to both primary and secondary education, as well as expanded access to post-secondary education and training. Our girls and women are not only being treated as equals with boys and men but have received tremendous support in improving their living conditions. Our elderly people and children enjoy free access to public health care.

Dominica has continued to maintain its coveted title of "nature island of the Caribbean" by adhering to self-imposed sustainable environmental practices over the past several decades, a model that we hope more States around the world can emulate.

As we approach 2015, we must resolve to take stock. We must be forever mindful that those who are condemned to poverty still await our intervention. The more than 1 billion people who have known only darkness at the end of each day long for at least one light bulb in a rural home so that their children can have opportunities for a brighter tomorrow. We have run out of excuses for why we are still waiting to act or cannot act. Rest assured that our people will judge us harshly for failing to make a difference in their lives.

Despite the current global challenges, South-South cooperation continues to play a significant role in helping small countries like Dominica to achieve their Millennium Development Goals. The Government and people of Dominica express their sincere gratitude to the Governments of the People's Republic of China, Venezuela, Cuba, Morocco, the European Union, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America and other bilateral and multilateral partners for the tremendous contributions they have made, and continue to make, in the development of our human-resource capacity and infrastructure and in the implementation of our public-sector investment programme.

Our commitment to the MDGs should consist of a redoubling of efforts towards a post-2015 agenda that will bring about development that is inclusive and sustainable. The outcome of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (resolution

66/288, annex) initiated an inclusive intergovernmental process for preparing a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs). My delegation believes that in order to arrive at a global development agenda for the post-2015 period, there must be close linkages between the processes of the MDGs and the SDGs. The Commonwealth of Dominica therefore aligns itself with the theme set by you, Mr. President, "The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage".

It is imperative that the development agenda beyond 2015 remain the focus of the United Nations, particularly in terms of relieving poverty and protecting our planet. A meaningful agenda must take into account the significance of the need for an international legally binding commitment to combating climate change, the development and deployment of sustainable energy, the sustainable use of the oceans and marine resources, sustainable industrial development, and international peace and security.

My delegation applauds the leadership and vision shown by the Secretary-General in declaring sustainable energy to be one of the priorities of his second term. We also congratulate the Secretary-General's Advisory Group on Energy and Climate Change, as well as colleagues within and outside the United Nations system, for their timely recommendations and for bringing needed visibility to the subject of sustainable energy. Their recommendations form the basis for one of the most important initiatives ever launched by a Secretary-General, namely, the Sustainable Energy for All initiative, launched in 2011. Through that visionary step, the Secretary-General has closed the gaping energy-poverty gap in the MDGs.

Actions that will benefit our peoples should be at the heart of the functions of the Assembly. The Commonwealth of Dominica and other small and low-lying developing States that are members of the Small Island Developing States Sustainable Energy Initiative are grateful to the Secretary-General for his dedication, personal commitment and actions in helping to make the Sustainable Energy for All initiative a reality. That initiative stands to benefit our people across the developing world and to contribute to more efficient energy systems in developed countries.

The Commonwealth of Dominica maintains that sustainable energy is the foundation for long-term socioeconomic development. For that reason, Dominica is pleased to have joined the Sustainable Energy for All partnership. My Government, with assistance from

its development partners, is committed to increasing renewable energy generation from the current 30 per cent from hydro to 100 per cent by adding geothermal energy to the mix. Our goal is to become not only carbon-neutral but carbon-negative by 2020. That ambition will be achieved by exporting renewable energy to our neighbours, Guadeloupe and Martinique, via submarine cables. We thank our partners, and especially the Clinton Climate Initiative, part of the Clinton Foundation, for their support in this endeavour.

That transformation to a sustainable energy sector will deliver multiple significant benefits for Dominica, including increasing employment from new energy-service companies, minimizing foreign-exchange transfers for petroleum imports, reducing the cost of energy and minimizing the volatility and unpredictability of energy prices. Recognizing the inextricable link between energy and development, we expect that sustainable energy will find its rightful place on the agenda of the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to be held in Apia, Samoa, in 2014.

The Commonwealth of Dominica is privileged to be the chair of the 31-member Steering Committee of the Small Island Developing States Sustainable Energy Initiative, which is charged with guiding the development of the Initiative. I would therefore, on behalf of our members, like to express our sincere appreciation to the Governments of Denmark and Japan for their recognition and their financial support to the Initiative. The Initiative is well positioned to help tackle the effects of climate change while at the same time transforming energy sectors in small island developing States such as Dominica.

Our Danish partners took the first bold move to support the Initiative, which was the catalyst for support from the Government of Japan. Assistance from Japan will be invested in the first-ever ocean thermal energy feasibility study in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Ocean thermal energy is a resource common to all SIDS and represents a vast sustainable energy resource that, once developed, could also address a number of key climate-change adaptation challenges for islands, specifically in the area of fresh water and improved food security.

About two thirds of the world's surface is covered by oceans and seas connecting almost 90 per cent of the world's population. Oceans and seas remain the source of food and livelihood for nearly 1 billion people. A post-

2015 agenda must address the important role of seas and oceans to the survival of peoples throughout the world, especially those who live on islands. A sustainable development goal on oceans should therefore ensure that all fish stocks are harvested sustainably and preserve the health of the marine environment. That will require the protection of marine areas, the reduction of ocean acidification, the elimination of marine pollution and the cessation of disruptive fishing practices.

There is general consensus that sustainable development and poverty eradication should form the core of the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda. We cannot address the issue of poverty eradication without addressing the issues of wealth creation and economic growth. Developing countries, SIDS in particular, will be able to secure inclusive and sustained economic growth only through the development of the energy, agriculture and tourism sectors and associated industries. Broad-based job creation and the achievement of social goals, such as education, women's empowerment and health care, require sustainable industrial development.

It must be underscored that, in the twenty-first century, industrialization must be inclusive and sustainable if all our present and future generations are to benefit. It must incorporate all citizens and be strategically tailored to preserve livelihoods for future generations.

Sustainable development goals, however, cannot be achieved in the midst of wars between or within nations. The Commonwealth of Dominica condemns the act of terrorism at the Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi. We extend our condolences to the Government and the people of Kenya and to the families of the Kenyans and the foreign nationals who met their deaths at the hands of those who have no respect for human life. We must continue to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

The economic embargo against our brothers and sisters in Cuba continues to be a concern for us in the Caribbean. Unilateral actions by the United States of America continue to be the root cause of the suffering of our brothers and sisters in the Republic of Cuba. Our region of the Caribbean continues to witness the unheeded call for the lifting of a half-century economic embargo on our brothers and sisters. We call on the Government of the United States to support the full integration of the Cuban people into the global trading system. That will help to improve their lives and allow

the world to benefit from the tremendous contributions they are capable of making, especially in the areas of science and technology.

The ongoing civil war in Syria continues to present a major challenge to the international community. The Commonwealth of Dominica joins CARICOM in unreservedly condemning the use of chemical weapons, which is a gross violation of international law. We call on all parties involved in the conflict to bring an end to the hostilities, which have claimed the lives of far too many innocent civilians, especially children. The world is watching. The role of the United Nations is central to resolving the Syrian conflict. My delegation supports the call of the Secretary-General for resolution through dialogue and not through the use of military force or any other such action. Lasting peace can be achieved in Syria only through a negotiated political settlement that will facilitate reconciliation. What is required is the will of the international community to further that process. We commend the efforts of the United States of America and Russia in attempting to eliminate chemical weapons in Syria and move towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

As we prepare for Samoa 2014, the Commonwealth of Dominica is keen to make concrete progress for SIDS aimed at creating a future of prosperity and opportunity for all of our peoples. In that regard, my Government calls for a renewed political commitment by all countries to effectively address the special needs and vulnerabilities of SIDS. We believe that this will require consolidated effort focused on pragmatic actions for the further implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. Dominica laments the fact that international financial mechanisms have failed to fully recognize and support the vulnerabilities of SIDS, which must be allowed access to financing for development. The United Nations system needs to be strengthened to implement the Barbados Plan and Mauritius Strategy.

On 2 April, the Commonwealth of Dominica was one of an overwhelming majority of Member States that voted in favour of the first international treaty to regulate the trade of conventional weapons — the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Today, we are pleased that the ATT is now a reality. That is a significant milestone, as such regulations will serve to curb the illicit international sale of conventional weapons to unscrupulous parties. Moreover, the Commonwealth of Dominica is satisfied that the ATT will close loopholes that allow terrorists

and other criminals to arm themselves and endanger innocent lives. To that end, my delegation is pleased to announce that Dominica has added its name to the list of signatories to that Treaty.

Dominica, the nature island of the Caribbean, continues to navigate through waters made turbulent by a hostile international financial and trading system, the continued impact of climate change, the movement of small arms and light weapons from North to South, and the international trade in illegal drugs and the violence that they visit upon us. For those reasons, we again reiterate the importance of international support for SIDS. A post-2015 global development agenda must continue to build on the gains achieved under the Millennium Development Goals. It must focus on the sustainable use of resources to reduce the impact of climate change, to protect our seas and oceans and to promote the transition from fossil fuels to renewable sources in the generation of energy able to power sustainable industrial development.

The International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to be held in Samoa in 2014, presents an ideal opportunity for the international community to collectively chart a path towards the sustainable development of SIDS and to set the stage for the post-2015 development agenda. The Commonwealth of Dominica remains committed to the progress made thus far, and it looks forward with eager anticipation to the forging of durable and sustainable partnerships.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the chair of the delegation of Togo.

**Mr. Menan (Togo)** (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like, on behalf of the Head of State, the Head of Government and the people of Togo, to congratulate the General Assembly on the occasion of its sixty-eighth session. I wish to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly and to assure you of Togo's full willingness to support your actions throughout your mandate. I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who continues to take bold initiatives to enable the Organization to effectively fulfil its mandate in promoting peace and sustainable development.

The theme that you have chosen for the sixty-eighth session, "The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage", is indicative of the particular attention that the countries of the South give to development issues. At the same time, it is an invitation to the United

Nations not only to keep sight of that concern, but also to implement a sustainable development programme for all countries. The Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) set forth specific Goals that each country should attain by 2015 in order to usher in a world in which every individual can live in dignity. On the eve of that deadline, it is appropriate to reflect on the progress made since the Millennium Summit and to discuss new prospects for shoring up the progress that has been achieved in combating hunger, malnutrition and disease.

The United Nations has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. However, those objectives can be sustainably achieved only if abject poverty does not become a breeding ground for all sorts of societal ills. That is why, when we embark on a collective discussion of what should happen post-2015, we must think above all about ways to increase the economic and social development and prosperity of nations and to prevent conflicts before they even occur. That applies to all countries, but particularly to African nations that have been weakened by recurrent crises and are now facing various threats.

More than a decade after the launch of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), when efforts have been made to achieve the Goals, it is clear, as the deadline of 2015 approaches, that many challenges remain, in particular for developing countries. For those countries continue to experience the impacts of the financial, energy and food crises of previous years, given their economies' dependence on external sources — crises that unfortunately have been exacerbated by climate change. The net result is to reduce their chances of achieving the Millennium Development Goals within the set time frame.

Moreover, the various initiatives and commitments undertaken by the leaders of this world in the context of the great international forums are far from achieving the desired results. The arrival of official development assistance in pledged proportions has been delayed. That is the reason why, at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the international community was called upon to uphold its commitments, in particular those made in the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the United Nations declarations on the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

At the same time, the Heads of State and Government reiterated the need for their States to adjust

their policies in order to further integrate economic, social and environmental factors at all levels and across all disciplines, to ensure sustainable development across the board. And indeed, to achieve sustainable development, there must be, at the national and international levels, conditions conducive to continuing and strengthening international cooperation in areas such as debt, trade, technology transfer, innovation and entrepreneurship and capacity-building .

Achieving the MDGs is one of the Togolese Government's priorities. Enormous efforts have been made to significantly reduce poverty in the country. In the field of education, the introduction of free primary education since 2008 has encouraged an increase in school enrolment, especially among young girls.

With regard to health issues, the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate has been reduced by half. The care of infected people has improved considerably, and more than 26,000 patients are cared for by the State. The integrated programme providing vaccination, the distribution of insecticide-treated mosquito nets and improved nutrition has yielded promising results in the area of maternal and child health.

In addition, significant progress has been made in other areas of development, including agriculture, which, thanks to a far-reaching and ambitious national agricultural investment programme and food security, has contributed to reducing poverty, hunger and food insecurity.

The progress achieved by Togo received recognition from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the form of an award made by that Organization during the thirty-eighth FAO Conference in June in Rome.

On the social front, for some years now the Government of Togo has been taking proactive measures enabling us to tackle in a sustained way the problems of joblessness and underemployment among young people and their marginalization in decision-making. Among them I can point to a national youth council, a national volunteer programme, the creation of a support fund for youth economic initiatives and a support programme for the integration and development of employment opportunities.

The Government of Togo, aware of the great challenges of the twenty-first century, is continuing to work with faith and determination to gradually build

a democratic society capable of guaranteeing to every citizen, without exception, the peace, harmony, well-being, justice and freedom that are prerequisites for our society's full flourishing and that must go hand in hand with our economic and social development goals.

For nearly a decade, the Government of Togo has adopted a policy of dialogue and consensus in managing State affairs. It is in that context that it has continued to urge the country's political class to engage in dialogue in order to ensure that election processes are definitively free of violence and that the new cycle of peaceful political life becomes more solidly entrenched. Thus, in addition to the reshuffling that has taken place since May 2012, following the recommendations of the electoral observation missions, particularly that of the European Union, new measures have been adopted. They have to do with the reorganization of the national independent electoral commission, the new electoral code and laws on electoral districting, the financing of political parties and the status of the opposition. Those measures enabled us to hold free, democratic, transparent and calm elections to the legislature on 25 July.

This is the moment for me to thank all the partners who supported my country throughout the process, as well as the various observation missions, which, on the completion of their work, expressed their satisfaction with the good conduct of the elections. The new Parliament that emerged from the elections will continue with the institutional and constitutional reforms stipulated in the global political agreement signed in Lomé in August 2006 between the Government and the political parties, in order to ensure that Togo will finally possess an institutional framework that strengthens democracy and the rule of law and consolidates our economic and social gains. Similarly, the Government elected in the legislative elections of 25 July has been given the primary mandate of stepping up its work in priority social areas such as health, education, access to safe drinking water and sanitation, and youth employment.

That road map keeps the 2015 deadline in view as it seeks first and foremost to continue Togo's efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals in the established time frame. Our new frame of reference for development in the medium term, the strategy for accelerated growth and job promotion, reflects that determination to focus squarely on the MDGs. Togo is fully aware that effective achievement of the

MDGs requires resources. That is why we are actively committed to promoting good governance.

Under that heading fall our strategic plan for mobilizing the Togolese diaspora, our accession to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, the establishment of a regulatory authority for public contracts in order to improve the business climate, the restructuring of public enterprises and the finance sector and especially the establishment of a revenue office responsible for the collection of both customs and tax receipts. None of this progress and success would have been possible for Togo without the support of our development partners, whom we would like to thank once again, and to whom we turn for increased support within the framework of the partnerships that bind us together.

Togo remains deeply convinced that our efforts to meet the targets we set ourselves through the MDGs cannot succeed in isolation. While every State has its own challenges, the international community must commit to working on them collectively, owing to the interdependence that is the hallmark of today's world. In the face of accelerating global change, worsening insecurity and the urgency of finding a collective solution to the challenges our Organization is dealing with, I can assure the Assembly that Togo remains committed to seeking a vision of a united, integrated world where every State must cooperate to promote peaceful coexistence and good neighbourliness and to combat poverty and underdevelopment in all its forms, as well as political, ideological, ethnic and religious intolerance.

Here I would like to touch on the case of Mali, where the danger represented by terrorist groups and extremist jihadists, coupled with a serious humanitarian crisis, prompted the United Nations to action with a speedy military intervention and peacekeeping operation. In that regard, the adoption of an integrated United Nations strategy for the Sahel, in the months after Security Council resolution 2100 (2013) established the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), has been crucial. The holding of the presidential elections on 28 July and 3 August was an unquestionable success not only for the Malian people and their leaders but also for the international community.

Togo is pleased that regional and subregional organizations, along with the international community, were able to speak with one voice and coordinate their

actions in order to achieve the results we welcome today. From this rostrum, Togo, which is currently chairing the West African Economic and Monetary Union, of which Mali is a member, would like to reiterate the community's pleasure at this success of the highly diverse Malian people, who demonstrated their political maturity and the ability to overcome their differences in the national interest.

In accordance with its ongoing commitment to peace, security and stability, internationally and in the West African subregion in particular, Togo continues to work within the entities and institutions of which it is a member and, through its MINUSMA contingent, to contribute to helping the Government of Mali. That is why my country invites the community of nations to continue to support Mali on the road to rebuilding both the infrastructure that was destroyed in the north of the country and its economic development, which was severely damaged in the crisis.

There are other situations in Africa that deserve our close attention by reason of the degree to which they contribute to the continent's insecurity and undermine our efforts to achieve the MDGs. The Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya and many other countries are currently sources of concern, since peace and security are still tenuous in those brotherly countries. While we commend the bold actions that have already been taken to halt those conflicts, we would like to urge the international community to continue to work to that end alongside the African Union, which has made extraordinary efforts to overcome all the obstacles to the continent's economic rebirth.

Among the scourges that have the potential to slow African States' development is that of transnational organized crime, whose pernicious impact on our economies is clear. Where the States of the Gulf of Guinea are concerned, piracy and armed robbery on the high seas have recently become a new type of scourge that is more and more worrying and whose seriousness demands general involvement and a strong, firm and uncompromising response on the part of the international community as a whole, as well as the countries concerned.

In that regard, my country, which is currently a member of the Security Council, welcomes the commitment whereby the Council has included the issue in its agenda, on the initiative of our States. The Council's position has enabled the United Nations

Office for Central Africa and the United Nations Office for West Africa to be a strong presence in the quest for solutions to the problem, through the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of Central African States and the Economic Community of West African States on maritime safety and security.

The summit that was held in Yaoundé on 24 and 25 June led to the adoption of a code of conduct for the prevention and suppression of acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships and illegal maritime activities. The fight against those scourges calls for enhanced international cooperation, in particular among United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, in line with the Charter of the United Nations. However, regional and subregional organizations will not be able to effectively tackle those current major challenges if they are not granted substantial resources.

The Syrian conflict continues with its atrocities and daily tragedies, which culminated in the use of chemical weapons on 21 August. The international community has long stood by, powerless, as the conflict has taken its gruesome toll. However, we express the hope that Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) will open up promising new prospects for peace and an inclusive political transition in Syria. That means that the international community must do more on the humanitarian front by providing aid to Syrians in need, both inside and outside the country. In that regard, we ardently hope that the holding of the “Geneva II” conference will provide an opportunity for ending the crisis through the establishment of a transitional Government based on consensus and an inclusive process.

I cannot fail to mention the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by welcoming the resumption of direct negotiations between the two parties, thanks to the sustained efforts of President Barack Obama. Togo calls on the Israeli and Palestinian authorities to negotiate in good faith to reach, in the shortest possible time, an agreement that finally allows for the creation of two States living side by side in peace and security and within internationally recognized borders.

The challenges facing our States are numerous and vast, but we believe in the ability of the United Nations to deal with them. It is therefore important that we re-establish the United Nations on the basis of the values that led to its creation, which are, essentially, the maintenance of international peace and security and the strengthening of international cooperation.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize, with regard to the MDGs, the need to stay the course, regardless of the results achieved by each individual State. Better yet, the international community must be more ambitious in the goals that it will establish for the post-2015 period, because, given the challenges of the contemporary world, it is no longer simply a matter of reducing the proportion of persons suffering from hunger, malnutrition and endemic diseases. Our aim must be to eradicate them. Only by mobilizing all our efforts in the pursuit of those very important goals will we increase our chances of actually achieving them.

**The President:** I now call on His Excellency Mr. Xavier Lasso Mendoza, head of the delegation of the Republic of Ecuador.

**Mr. Lasso Mendoza (Ecuador)** (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour, Mr. President, for me to address the General Assembly. Things have changed since I was first here, and not only because time has passed and we have all become a little older — not that old age is a problem. The problem is how we approach it and, indeed, how we approach disability. That is why Ecuador believes that, in the context of the 2015 and post-2015 development agenda, we should include quantitative targets with measurable goals for persons with disabilities, together with international cooperation. Let us never again adopt a development agenda that fails to take account of persons with disabilities and their families. We must take specific measures to incorporate disability at the global, regional and national levels with a view to achieving verifiable results.

As I was saying, things have changed since my first visit to the General Assembly Hall. Many words have reverberated within its walls, and ended up where. Much has been said, and perhaps even the most patient among us is becoming a little exhausted. Our address, which may contain many impromptu comments, states things as we find them. I see, as others perhaps have, that every day it is becoming increasingly difficult to reach this colourful, cosmopolitan city. I do not think that is what its inhabitants want, for with their clamour they seem to be celebrating the diversity of the world that is characteristic of New York. It is in fact the bureaucrats that put obstacles in our way, drawing lines that are frequently difficult to cross.

What shall we do in future years in the face of the obstacles that sometimes isolate the United Nations Headquarters? How can we, with the agreement of all, ensure that the Charter of the United Nations is

respected? The host country, which is well aware how diverse the Organization is, wants to be the sole arbiter of who can come and who cannot, on the basis of its own likes and dislikes.

That very powerful State has also taken it upon itself to spy on us, on the pretext of safeguarding its own security. It is true that human beings everywhere have lived through times of fear and terror. There is good reason to be vigilant. But the history of humankind, and consequently of the Organization, is in part the recording of an evolution in the rights of every one of us. We have been building and reinforcing rights that we consider to already have been established, such as the privacy and inviolability of communications. It is therefore regrettable that, at a time when technological advances have enabled every man and every woman to communicate with every other man and every other woman throughout the world, an Administration has set up a global surveillance system that knows no borders, that does not differentiate between friends and enemies and that fails to distinguish between criminals and law-abiding citizens.

Let us be frank: it is not the existence of a system that intrudes upon the private life of every person in the world that surprises us. We all in fact suspected that such a system existed. No, it is its sheer scope that confounds us — a global espionage system that knows no limits, without even respect for the bounds of common decency, and without regard for the sovereignty of States and the right to privacy and freedom of expression of all citizens.

It cannot be denied that the bonds of trust between States and Governments, which underpin negotiations, among other things, and effective agreements to combat international organized crime, including terrorism, have been seriously compromised by the unrestrained actions of the United States, which has taken it upon itself to spy on our communications. Many of the countries affected have requested, on behalf of their Governments and citizens, that the United States Government account for its universal espionage programmes, but have not to date received a satisfactory response.

On numerous occasions, we have heard the representatives of the United States Government express to the United Nations their readiness to discuss the issue. My delegation is willing to initiate such a discussion forthwith, in a frank, clear and open fashion, and believes that there is no better forum for doing so than the Assembly and its Committees, without

excluding such other entities as the Human Rights Council.

Because we believe that this is the forum in which to defend the right of all peoples to be respected, beginning with respect for their territorial integrity, we are reiterating, for the umpteenth time, that the time has come for the Israeli settlements to cease and for Palestine to be respected and recognized within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Along the same lines, we would like to make a democratic appeal: 188 of the Organization's 193 Member States have clearly stated that it is time to end the unjust embargo that the United States has imposed on Cuba. Cuba is part of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our Americas. Cuba is a member State of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. Cuba is part of the international community, and its people cannot continue to suffer the harmful consequences of that embargo.

We also would like to reiterate our belief that dialogue can resolve the Malvinas Islands conflict. The United Kingdom must accede to what has been called for at the United Nations so often, that is, to sit at the negotiating table and leave the history of overseas territories to the shameful past. The Malvinas lie very close to Argentina, and quite far from the United Kingdom.

Allow me briefly to mention that, in my country, we have recognized the rights of nature. We have to wager on different things. We must rein in the capacity to devastate of those who want unlimited growth even at the cost of ecological balances. Once disrupted, nature itself will restore those balances and all of us will be cast out, with not even a trace remaining of what we arrogantly call civilization.

We have therefore decided to raise our voice against the high-handedness of some multinational firms — and in that regard have had the support of other Governments — whose unbridled pursuit of unlimited profit subjugates human beings for the sake of capital, damages the environment and violates human rights, all the while having us believe that it is possible to bring a State and its people to its knees.

Ecuador has stood up to the defamatory campaign of one such company. In 2011, Chevron was ordered to pay \$19 billion in response to the claim lodged by 30,000 inhabitants of my country who were affected by the devastating pollution that firm left behind in the

Amazon. I should make it clear that it was not the State of Ecuador that sued the corporation, it was our people.

We must also denounce the overwhelming statistics showing how arbitration tribunals fail countries such as mine, which, paradoxically, can serve to shed light on the web of intersecting interests among businesses, arbitrators and lawyers associated with such tribunals. We in South America have undertaken various initiatives, such as the establishment of a dispute-settlement centre within the Union of South American Nations. The centre will play a key role in reconfiguring the balance between national public interests and multinational private profits.

My country condemns the violence being experienced in Syria, as well as serious violations of international law and human rights, regardless of their source. From the outset, Ecuador has argued that a military solution is not a way out of the crisis in Syria. We must always address armed conflicts head-on, setting aside any manipulation in sole pursuit of outside interests. We should allow comprehensive solutions based on international law to bear fruit and flourish.

In that context, the situation in Syria, a millennial nation facing a terrible period, deserves our sincere and sustained attention, for hundreds of thousands of human lives have been lost and thousands of others constantly confront danger.

Ecuador welcomes as a positive step Syria's recent accession to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. We look forward to the final results of the investigations by the United Nations on all claims of chemical weapons in Syria, because only on the basis of those results can the international community be confident of having a sufficiently broad and much more credible overview.

As an executive member of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Ecuador joined the consensus on the adoption of the decision on chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. We did so because we believed that decision reflected the endeavours of the international community to preserve peace, defend the lives of Syrian citizens and move towards a political solution to the crisis.

We also note, and we consider it very important, that the Security Council's decision should not be interpreted by any State as a justification for unilateral action that violates international law, which prohibits

the use or the threat of the use of force and calls for respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States. As a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, we condemn the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic by any party. We also reiterate the obligation of States to refrain from providing any type of military support to non-State actors.

Those are some of the topics that cause us major concern. There will be more, voiced by others, so that we can ultimately approach the world with hope and restore our human capacity to be able to continue believing in what inspired the establishment of the United Nations: dialogue for the sake of peace, as well as democracy, justice, inclusion and equality and as an antidote to war.

**The President:** I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Carlos Filomeno Agostinho das Neves, head of the delegation of Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

**Mr. Das Neves** (Sao Tome and Principe) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): On behalf of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, the country that I have the honour of representing in the highest forum of international diplomacy, where all States have an equal voice regardless of size or geographic location and which was created as a result of a pressing need for communication and dialogue among the peoples of the world, I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. Your experience as a diplomat gives us confidence that you will masterfully conduct the work of the General Assembly. In the Assembly we anticipate pertinent debates concerning issues of the greatest concern to the international community on which we hope to achieve consensus and identify the best paths to lasting solutions.

We also wish to express our appreciation and esteem to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his dedication and his efforts in conducting the work of the Organization, and we thank His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić for his positive contribution as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session.

Today, unfortunately, we are forced to begin our statement by expressing the strongest condemnation of the bloody terrorist attack in Kenya. The Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe offers its most

profound sentiments of sorrow and our solidarity with the people of Kenya, their Government and the bereaved families.

The current international environment does not seem to have changed significantly since the previous session. Indeed, new bloody conflicts and violence seem to break out almost on a daily basis everywhere, revealing the deep disagreements and antagonisms that exist both within each State and among various States in the community of nations. The profound imbalance in international relations, the injustice of the trading system, the enormous divide in access to goods and in cultural values and the glaring disparities in information access and knowledge among the peoples of our planet do not contribute to improved living conditions for millions of human beings. Rather, they lead to increased conflict and threats to international peace and security.

As it has done each year, the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe reaffirms, in accordance with its principles, its desire to see the United Nations assume a more active role in righting the imbalances and in efforts to mediate and resolve international conflicts.

The fight against poverty, the struggle against injustice and promoting greater dissemination of knowledge must, in our view, remain ongoing concerns of the Organization, so as to ensure that all peoples achieve satisfactory development and dignity, in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals, thereby reducing the level of conflict and hostility that is prevalent in the world today.

Along those lines, my country has implemented extensive political and institutional reforms in various areas, in order to engage all of its citizens in building a more democratic and transparent Government and a more participatory society in the pursuit of solutions to help fight poverty. We have not forgotten the need to provide the entire population with easier access to education, basic health care and safe drinking water, as well as modern communications, as a means to increase knowledge and improve living conditions. That requires an enormous effort from a country with scant economic and financial resources; it therefore requires international aid to achieve sustainability and the established development goals.

My country congratulates and commends you, Sir, for the relevance and timeliness of the theme

proposed for the current session of the General Assembly — “The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage” — which remains relevant despite the ongoing financial and economic crisis the world is facing. My country remains firmly convinced that addressing that important theme in its various dimensions during the current session and through 2015 will encourage each and every State Member of the United Nations to contribute more effectively and dynamically towards the future we want.

In addition to identifying the progress made in implementing the eight Millennium Development Goals, the debate and reflection on the post-2015 development agenda allows us to explore ways and means of building a more promising future for our nations and our peoples.

The sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly is taking place at a time when the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe has completed two important phases of public consultation aimed at guiding the country in re-charting its course to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and enabling our positive contribution to the new post-2015 development agenda.

Good governance, economic development, developing human capital, food and nutritional security, as well as peace, tranquillity and security, are among the areas in which Sao Tome and Principe must improve its performance in the near future and represent the basic requirements to drive the country’s development.

The citizens of Sao Tome and Principe are of the view that a new development agenda must offer a framework to consolidate the significant progress made in implementing the eight Millennium Development Goals — especially in the areas of education and health — as well as an opportunity to advance international political participation and exchange aimed at development in the context of a continuously evolving political and economic environment and increasing global challenges. We therefore thank the various development partners of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe for their valuable contributions towards the achievement of our goals.

Since its establishment, in 1945, in accordance with the principles and objectives enshrined in its Charter, the United Nations has been called on to play an important role in building and maintaining peace and security in the world as an essential condition for

promoting development on a global scale. However, all agree that the Organization must adapt to the new challenges of the times. Its operational and functional structures must become more dynamic, with greater flexibility, so as to meet the increasing demands of the new era.

The ongoing reform of the entire United Nations system must be completed, and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe urges acceleration of that process. We believe that a broad and consensual reform of the United Nations will provide the Organization with the greater flexibility, representation, effectiveness, capacity and legitimacy that it requires to continue to ensure peace, security and development for its Members.

Unfortunately, the bloody conflicts that appear to proliferate almost everywhere and emerge where they are least expected are not decreasing in number. Whether caused by social antagonisms resulting from the poor distribution of wealth or from ethnic or religious intolerance, the fact is that they persist.

There has been no significant progress in resolving the continuing conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, despite the laudable efforts of the international community — namely, the United Nations and the African Union — towards finding a solution that leads to peace and stability in the region. Therefore, we cannot fail to appeal to the neighbouring countries of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for constructive forms of cooperation and trust in their relationships.

We welcome the progress made in Guinea-Bissau following the many initiatives undertaken by the international community, namely, the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP). We congratulate the United Nations and African Union representatives to Guinea-Bissau for their efforts as mediators in the country, in cooperation with other stakeholders. Those efforts created conditions conducive to promoting further progress in stabilizing and preparing the country for the general elections and in restoring it to constitutional and democratic normality — the profound aspiration of its people.

My country is counting seriously on the stabilization process and encourages all parties involved to do their best to achieve the established goals. In coordination with the other States members of the CPLP, we will

continue to exert every effort to contribute to the success of that process, so that peace and happiness may return to the people of our sister nation.

Mali, another country tormented by a fratricidal war, seems to have finally reached an encouraging point, as it recently held presidential elections with results that have been peacefully and universally accepted. We congratulate the new President and hope that he may find the best path towards maintaining peace and inclusive dialogue among all Malians.

The Central African Republic is today experiencing one of the worst moments in its history. Indeed, we have observed barbaric acts there, such as summary executions and widespread pillage. Public services are crumbling. The humanitarian situation has already been determined to be catastrophic by United Nations specialized agencies, thus requiring vigorous and urgent action. Therefore, the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, out of concern for the suffering of the tormented people of our sister nation, appeals to the entire international community for a more vigorous intervention to mitigate their suffering, preserve national sovereignty and help national political actors to promote national unity and political stability.

The longstanding issue of the Western Sahara calls for our attention and requires greater involvement from all in the search for a definitive solution to the protracted negotiation process. We therefore welcome with satisfaction the willingness expressed by the Moroccan Government to support the efforts of the international community to achieve a negotiated political and mutually acceptable solution, and encourage both parties to return to the negotiation process.

Currently, our attention is focused on the issue of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, which greatly affects the safety of navigation and may destabilize countries in the region. That would prevent them from taking advantage of their natural resources, causing great harm to their population. The territorial waters of Sao Tome and Principe are 150 times the size of our land mass. Therefore, we are extremely concerned about the risks of acts of piracy spreading in the Gulf of Guinea. Recently, the Heads of State and Government of countries that form the Commission of the Gulf of Guinea, which we seek to expand, held a summit to adopt measures aimed at combating that scourge. But our firm action in that regard will be successful only if we can also count on the efforts of the entire international community.

The Gulf of Guinea is a point of reference in navigation routes that connect the northern and southern hemispheres, as well as other important economic regions of the world. Its protection deserves everyone's attention. Combating piracy requires the establishment of an environment that is conducive to global security. Since piracy is normally associated with transnational crimes such as the trafficking of arms, drugs and persons, which Sao Tome and Principe condemns emphatically, my country has joined other States in the region to combat such activities and has taken steps at the national level that make it more difficult for our territory to be used for the purpose of money laundering or the financing of other illicit or criminal acts.

With regard to the bloody conflict that is ravaging Syria and causing a humanitarian tragedy of great proportions, the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe vehemently condemns the use of chemical weapons in violation of all international agreements. We also take this opportunity to welcome recent developments towards dismantling the Syrian arsenal of chemical weapons and urge both parties to the conflict and the international community to pursue a compromise that will lead to the cessation of hostilities, thereby paving the way for open dialogue and negotiations within a multilateral framework aimed at a political solution to establish lasting peace.

As for the Israeli-Palestinian issue, we urgently appeal to both Israel and Palestine to move towards resolving their differences through dialogue, based on respect for the integrity of the State of Israel and the right of a Palestinian State to exist.

The Republic of Cuba, whose internal reforms we welcome, has the right to choose its path freely, without any restrictions imposed by an embargo that penalizes its economic and social development, with grave consequences for the country's population.

We also acknowledge the climate of constructive dialogue between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China, which serves to send a positive signal that tensions are decreasing in the region, which we welcome and encourage. Both parties along the Formosa Strait must work peacefully towards reaching an agreement on the normalization of their relations. For our part, we continue to support the integration of Taiwan within international organizations.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm my country's commitment to contributing, with the United Nations, towards a peaceful and negotiated solution to international conflicts, and hope that the post-2015 development agenda will translate into programmes that can help improve the living conditions of all people on our planet.

**The President:** I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ib Petersen, head of the delegation of Denmark.

**Mr. Petersen (Denmark):** In the twenty-first century, old distinctions between North and South, and developed and developing countries are beginning to lose their meaning. We are witnessing significant shifts in the geopolitical balance, in population dynamics and in economic power between Member States. As documented in this year's United Nations *Human Development Report*, many developing countries are experiencing faster economic growth. Emerging economies now produce the majority of the world's goods and services, and three quarters of the world's economic growth is said to depend on their dynamism.

Today, emerging economies and middle-income countries are an important part of reshaping the global economy. In a globalized world, with dramatic shifts of power and influence, a strong United Nations is more relevant than ever before. We need the United Nations, with its unique legitimacy and its universal membership. We need a United Nations that can contribute to global challenges with common solutions. We need a United Nations that reflects the changing political landscape, including through a reformed Security Council. Above all, we need a United Nations that can help to mediate, prevent and resolve armed conflicts. For the United Nations to be able to contribute effectively to resolving armed conflicts, it is crucial that the Security Council show leadership and prove that it can fulfil its primary purpose and responsibility of cooperating to resolve international crises and to promote universal respect for human rights.

Today, the total number of people uprooted by conflict or persecution is close to 45 million, the highest level in 18 years. That illustrates the human suffering and costs of conflict, which we must do our utmost to prevent and resolve. An integrated approach to preventive diplomacy, peacebuilding, peacekeeping and the prevention of atrocities is crucial. The cure for armed conflict and instability is to invest in democratic

structures that protect civilians and their human rights and contribute to socioeconomic progress. In recent years, the Security Council has increasingly integrated the rule of law, human rights and the protection of civilians into its mandates for United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. That is an encouraging development that Denmark supports fully.

Denmark agrees with the Secretary-General that building societies that are resilient to crimes of atrocity increases the prospects of long-term peace and stability. The unacceptable human suffering in Syria is a tragic reminder of the consequences when no early action to prevent crimes of atrocity is undertaken. Advancing the primary responsibility of States to protect their populations should be a concern for all Governments. The responsibility to protect is consistent with existing obligations and international human rights law, humanitarian law and refugee law, which are binding on all States. Denmark calls on Member States to join the global network of responsibility-to-protect focal points, which works to integrate the prevention of atrocities in national policies, and to engage with other Member States and regional organizations in order to build capacity and cooperation before crises and conflicts break out.

At the same time, we must ensure accountability for human rights violations and for crimes of atrocity in the past. The perpetrators of those crimes must be brought to justice. While the Security Council last Friday took an important step to address the crisis in Syria, Denmark reiterates its call on the Council to refer the case of Syria to the International Criminal Court.

Sexual violence in conflict is one of the most persistent injustices in the world today, and often one of the most neglected. We must combat sexual violence as a method of warfare. Likewise, we must promote the participation of women in peacebuilding and in social and economic recovery. Denmark strongly believes that no durable peace can be attained without the full and equal participation of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes.

Building sustainable peace and long-term stability remains one of the most difficult challenges for the international community and the United Nations. But the investment is well worth it. We must support country-led and country-owned transition strategies in building paths towards resilient societies. Conflict and violence have devastating effects on development. The complex situation in fragile States represents

perhaps the greatest challenge to combating poverty, as low-income fragile States are those most off-track in terms of reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is therefore essential that the central roles of State-building and peacebuilding be duly reflected in the post-2015 framework.

The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, led by the G7+ countries, provides peacebuilding and State-building goals that call for a global effort to strengthen people's security, to reduce violence, to increase people's access to justice, to generate employment and to improve livelihoods. We urge that the experiences and lessons learned from the New Deal become a source of inspiration for discussions on the post-2015 development framework.

The process of establishing the post-2015 development agenda should result in a single universal framework with one set of goals that can unite the world in a strong effort to eradicate extreme poverty, promote sustainable development and ensure all people the right to a better life. Denmark welcomes the outcome document of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other Internationally Agreed Development Goals for Persons with Disabilities (resolution 68/3), adopted last week, which provides a first important step towards that vision.

At the same time, unfinished business from the MDGs must figure prominently in the post-2015 development agenda. The focus should be on ending extreme poverty in one generation while promoting sustainable development in all its dimensions. The empowerment of women and girls and access to basic services, such as health and education, must not drop off the agenda. On the contrary, we must commit to doing more to close those gaps.

Denmark is committed to shouldering its share of collective responsibility. In 2012, Denmark provided 0.83 per cent of its gross national income as official development assistance, and it has been fulfilling the international target of 0.7 per cent since 1978. Also, we are strengthening our efforts to work in partnership with private business and other non-State actors to increase investments in developing countries, especially in Africa.

As also highlighted by the Secretary-General and the High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda in their reports, a new, coherent post-2015

framework must be firmly anchored in human rights as universal values and enablers for sustainable development. Such a framework must build on the core principles that underpin the international human rights framework, namely, participation, accountability, transparency and non-discrimination. It must address the human rights of all groups in our societies and pay special attention to the rights of indigenous peoples.

We are losing ground when it comes to inequality within countries where we see a widening gap between rich and poor people. The 1.2 billion poorest people account for only 1 per cent of world consumption, while the billion richest consume 72 per cent. Inequalities and their underlying causes must be addressed in the post-2015 development agenda in order to effectively eradicate extreme poverty, underpin socioeconomic progress and prevent instability.

Gender-based discrimination, including the denial of the rights of women and girls, remains the single most widespread driver of inequalities in today's world. For Denmark, it is critical that gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights be reflected in the post-2015 agenda. That was also underscored by the High-level Panel report.

Macroeconomic policy is essential in addressing inequalities. Equitable socioeconomic progress and a fair distribution of resources are important for developed and developing countries alike.

Scientific evidence, as just presented by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, makes it clear that climate change has become a threat multiplier. More frequent natural disasters impact on the most vulnerable people and add another layer to fragility, inequality and instability. Unsustainable production and consumption increase the stress on natural resources and ecosystems. The level of carbon dioxide emissions today is 46 per cent higher than the 1990 level. The United Nations and its Member States must promote innovative technologies and new solutions to water, food and energy scarcity, deforestation and high carbon emissions. Jointly, we must push the transformation to a green economy.

Green growth is necessary if we are to deal effectively with increased demands for resources over the next 15 to 20 years as the global population grows. Green growth is about opportunities for all, not about obstacles for some. The access to and management of energy and water resources are two important elements.

Governments cannot do it alone. We need active involvement and a close partnership with the private sector, including businesses and private foundations, as well as with civil society and public institutions.

We welcome the Secretary-General's invitation to a summit in September 2014 that will serve to maintain the momentum of the climate negotiations. It is crucial to set an ambitious international agenda for tackling the consequences of climate change. Denmark's long-term energy policy goal is clear: our entire energy supply should be covered by renewable energy by 2050. Denmark stands ready to support a global agenda towards limiting global warming to 2° Celsius. Our contribution to the Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative is part of that support, including the establishment of an energy efficiency hub in the new United Nations City in Copenhagen. Denmark will also work for an ambitious and operational outcome of the the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to take place in September 2014.

At the country level, Denmark supports a United Nations that can inspire change and deliver concrete results that will benefit populations, strengthen their confidence in political processes and pave the way for long-term stability and development.

We condemn the indiscriminate violence that we witness in Syria. Not only does it harm civilians in the most tragic way, it also undermines regional stability as a whole. With the conflict in Syria, we are confronted with a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented proportions. Last month the world witnessed a further escalation of the conflict with the horrendous chemical attack in Ghouta. Denmark strongly condemns all use of chemical weapons, and we are convinced that a strong international reaction is required. It is crucial that those responsible for that grave violation of international law be brought to justice and that future use of chemical weapons be effectively prevented.

From the very outset of the tragedy in Syria, Denmark has emphasized the need for a political solution to end the human suffering. We welcome the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2118 (2013), on the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. Denmark continues to strongly support the efforts towards the "Geneva II" conference.

In Egypt, an already fragile situation has worsened significantly over the past months, during which tragic events have led to a heavy loss of civilian

lives. Democracy and dialogue must return. Progress in Egypt can come about only through a peaceful, inclusive process. Many challenges still lie ahead with regard to the implementation of the road map for a return to democratic and civilian rule in Egypt. We urge the Egyptian authorities to accept the support of the international community for that process. The United Nations can play an important role in supporting respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Progress in the Middle East peace process remains critical for improving regional stability. Denmark welcomes the United States initiative aimed at resumed direct negotiations. All parties must now truly seize the opportunity for peace and work constructively for a sustainable two-State solution.

In Afghanistan, we welcome the process towards full national ownership, which is crucial for the long-term future of the country. Afghan authorities are taking over still-greater responsibility for security and institutions. There is, however, a clear need for a continued, strong political commitment from the international community in order for Afghanistan to succeed in that goal. The Afghan Government and its international partners must live up to the July 2012 Tokyo declaration on partnership for self-reliance in Afghanistan. Denmark will remain a strong partner to Afghanistan on its way to democracy and improved livelihoods. The United Nations assistance to Afghanistan in managing the transition process, including the upcoming electoral processes, will be essential now and in the years to come.

Peace and security in the Sahel region have lately been challenged by violent extremism, the presence of armed groups, the expansion of transborder organized crime and increasing environmental and climate-change pressures, which jeopardize development gains. Denmark supports the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. Throughout the Sahel, the influence of civil society on national and international decision-making warrants attention in order to deepen and consolidate the ongoing stabilization and peace efforts.

Together with the United Nations, the African Union and African and international partners, Denmark is committed to supporting the efforts in Mali and the Sahel to facilitate reconciliation through inclusive dialogue and the active engagement of civil society. We also support the United Nations Multidimensional

Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali as a strong United Nations peacekeeping Mission.

Somalia's New Deal Compact will be crucial for reconciliation and peacebuilding and will set the priorities for the next three years. It is important that peace and development be dealt with in an integrated way, and that there be mutual commitment to develop and follow up on the Compact for Somalia. We welcome the explicit use in the Compact of the peacebuilding and State-building goals from the New Deal Compact, and the strong ownership by Somalia to implement the principles of the New Deal.

The unregulated and irresponsible international trade in arms has had devastating effects. Earlier this year, the General Assembly made history by adopting the Arms Trade Treaty. Denmark supports the swift entry into force and effective implementation of the Treaty. Denmark is committed to assisting States, on their request, to meet their obligations under the Treaty.

We once again call upon Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions. We welcome all efforts to resolve the issue of Iran's nuclear programme.

The United Nations is more relevant than ever at a time when strong multilateral cooperation is needed to cope with global challenges that transcend national borders. No country can confront those challenges on its own. Seen from the perspective of Denmark as a small State, the United Nations could and should inspire change and help States take action when moving forward towards 2015 and beyond.

**Address by Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister of Public Affairs and the Diaspora of the State of Israel**

**The President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister of Public Affairs and the Diaspora of the State of Israel.

*Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister of Public Affairs and the Diaspora of the State of Israel, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime

Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister of Public Affairs and the Diaspora of the State of Israel, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Netanyahu** (Israel): I feel deeply honoured and privileged to stand here before the General Assembly today representing the citizens of the State of Israel. We are an ancient people. We date back nearly 4,000 years to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We have journeyed through time. We have overcome the greatest of adversities. And we re-established our sovereign State in our ancestral homeland, the land of Israel. The Jewish people's odyssey through time has taught us two things: never give up hope and always remain vigilant. Hope charts the future, vigilance protects it.

Today our hope for the future is challenged by a nuclear-armed Iran that seeks our destruction. But I want members to know that that was not always the case. Some 2,500 years ago, the great Persian King Cyrus ended the Babylonian exile of the Jewish people. He issued a famous edict in which he proclaimed the right of the Jews to return to the land of Israel and rebuild the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. That is a Persian decree, and thus began a historic friendship between the Jews and the Persians that lasted until modern times.

But, in 1979, a radical regime in Tehran tried to stamp out that friendship. As it was busy crushing the Iranian people's hopes for democracy, it also led wild chants of "Death to the Jews!" Since that time, presidents of Iran have come and gone. Some presidents were considered moderates, others hard-liners. But they have all served that same unforgiving creed, that same unforgiving regime — that creed that is espoused and enforced by the real power in Iran, the dictator known in Iran as the Supreme Leader, first Ayatollah Khomeini and now Ayatollah Khamenei.

President Rouhani, like the presidents who came before him, is a loyal servant of the regime. He was one of only six candidates the regime permitted to run for office. Nearly 700 other candidates were rejected. What made him acceptable? Rouhani headed Iran's Supreme National Security Council from 1989 through 2003. During that time, Iran's henchmen gunned down opposition leaders in a Berlin restaurant. They murdered 85 people at the Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires. They killed 19 American soldiers by blowing up the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia. Are we to believe that Rouhani, the national security adviser of Iran at the time, knew nothing about those attacks?

Of course he did — just as 30 years ago Iran's security chiefs knew about the bombings in Beirut that killed 241 American marines and 58 French paratroopers.

Rouhani was also Iran's chief nuclear negotiator between 2003 and 2005. He masterminded the strategy that enabled Iran to advance its nuclear-weapons programme behind a smokescreen of diplomatic engagement and very soothing rhetoric. I know that Rouhani does not sound like Ahmadinejad. But when it comes to Iran's nuclear-weapons programme, the only difference between them is this: Ahmadinejad was a wolf in wolf's clothing, Rouhani is a wolf in sheep's clothing — a wolf who thinks he can pull the wool over the eyes of the international community.

Like everyone else, I wish we could believe Rouhani's words, but we must focus on Iran's actions. And it is the brazen contrast — that extraordinary contradiction between Rouhani's words and Iran's actions — that is so startling. Rouhani stood at this very rostrum last week and praised Iranian democracy (see A/68/PV.6). Iranian democracy, he said. But the regime that he represents executes political dissidents by the hundreds and jails them by the thousands. Rouhani spoke of "the human tragedy in Syria". Yet Iran directly participates in Al-Assad's murder and massacre of tens of thousands of innocent men, women and children in Syria, and that regime is propping up a Syrian regime that just used chemical weapons against its own people. Rouhani condemned the "violent scourge" of terrorism. Yet in the past three years alone Iran has ordered, planned or perpetrated terrorist attacks in 25 cities on five continents. Rouhani denounced "attempts to change the regional balance through proxies". Yet Iran is actively destabilizing Lebanon, Yemen, Bahrain and many other Middle Eastern countries. Rouhani promises "constructive engagement with other countries". Yet two years ago, Iranian agents tried to assassinate Saudi Arabia's Ambassador in Washington, D.C. Just three weeks ago, an Iranian agent was arrested while trying to collect information for possible attacks against the American Embassy in Tel Aviv. Some constructive engagement!

I wish I could be moved by Rouhani's invitation to join his "WAVE" — a world against violence and extremism. Yet the only waves Iran has generated in the past 30 years are waves of violence and terrorism that it has unleashed on the region and across the world. I wish I could believe Rouhani, but I do not because facts are stubborn things. The facts are that Iran's savage

record flatly contradicts Rouhani's soothing rhetoric. Last Friday, Rouhani assured us that in pursuit of its nuclear programme, Iran had "never chosen deceit and secrecy." Never chosen deceit and secrecy?

In 2002, Iran was caught red-handed secretly building an underground centrifuge facility at Natanz. In 2009, Iran was again caught red-handed secretly building a huge underground nuclear facility for uranium enrichment in a mountain near Qom. Rouhani tells us not to worry. He assures us that all that is not intended for nuclear weapons. Does any here believe that? If so, here are a few questions to ask.

Why would a country that claims to only want peaceful nuclear energy build hidden underground enrichment facilities? Why would a country with vast natural energy reserves invest billions in developing nuclear energy? Why would a country intent on merely having civilian nuclear programmes continue to defy multiple Security Council resolutions and incur the costs of crippling sanctions on its economy? And why would a country with a peaceful nuclear programme develop intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) whose sole purpose is to deliver nuclear warheads? You do not build ICBMs to carry TNT thousands of miles away. You build them for one purpose: to carry nuclear warheads. Iran is now building ICBMs that the United States says could reach this city in three or four years.

Why would they do all that? The answer is simple. Iran is not building a peaceful nuclear programme. Iran is developing nuclear weapons. Last year alone, Iran enriched three tons of uranium to 3.5 per cent, doubled its stockpile of 20 per cent-enriched uranium and added thousands of new centrifuges, including advanced centrifuges. It also continued work on the heavy-water reactor in Arak in order to have another route to the bomb — a plutonium path. Since Rouhani's election — and I stress this — that vast and feverish effort has continued unabated.

Underground nuclear facilities? Heavy water reactors? Advanced centrifuges? ICBMs? It is not that it is hard to find evidence that Iran has a nuclear-weapons programme; it is hard to find evidence that Iran does not have a nuclear-weapons programme. Last year, when I spoke here at the United Nations (see A/67/PV.12), I drew a red line. Iran has been very careful not to cross that line. But Iran is positioning itself to race across that line in future, at a time of its choosing. Iran wants to be in a position to rush forward to build nuclear bombs

before the international community can detect it, much less prevent it. Yet Iran faces one big problem, and that problem is summed up in one word: sanctions.

I have argued for many years, including from this rostrum, that the only way to peacefully prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons is to combine tough sanctions with a credible military threat. That policy is today bearing fruit. Thanks to the efforts of many countries, many represented here, and under the leadership of the United States, tough sanctions have taken a big bite out of Iran's economy. Oil revenues have fallen. The currency has plummeted. Banks are hard pressed to transfer money. As a result, the regime is under intense pressure from the Iranian people to get the sanctions removed. That is why Rouhani got elected in the first place. That is why he launched his charm offensive. He definitely wants to get the sanctions lifted — I guarantee the Assembly that — but he does not want to give up Iran's nuclear-weapons programme in return.

Here is the strategy to achieve that: first, smile a lot. Smiling never hurts. Secondly, pay lip service to peace, democracy and tolerance. Thirdly, offer meaningless concessions in exchange for lifting sanctions. Fourthly, and most important, ensure that Iran retains sufficient nuclear material and sufficient nuclear infrastructure to race to the bomb at a time that it chooses to do so. Why does Rouhani think he can get away with that? This is a ruse, a ploy. Why does Rouhani think he can get away with that? Because he has gotten away with it before. Because his strategy of talking a lot and doing little has worked for him in the past. He even brags about it. Here is what he said in his 2011 book about his time as Iran's chief nuclear negotiator: "While we were talking to the Europeans in Tehran, we were installing equipment in Isfahan". For those here who do not know, the Isfahan facility is an indispensable part of Iran's nuclear-weapons programme. That is where uranium ore called yellowcake is converted into an enrichable form. Rouhani boasted: "By creating a calm environment, we were able to complete the work in Isfahan". He fooled the world once; now he thinks he can fool it again. Rouhani thinks he can have his yellowcake and eat it too.

He has another reason to believe that he can get away with that, and that reason is called North Korea. Like Iran, North Korea also said its nuclear programme was for peaceful purposes. Like Iran, North Korea also offered meaningless concessions and empty promises

in return for sanctions relief. In 2005, North Korea agreed to a deal that was celebrated the world over by many well-meaning people. Here is what a New York Times editorial had to say about it:

“For years now, foreign policy insiders have pointed to North Korea as the ultimate nightmare ... a closed, hostile and paranoid dictatorship with an aggressive nuclear-weapons programme. Very few could envision a successful outcome. And yet North Korea agreed in principle this week to dismantle its nuclear-weapons programme, return to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, abide by the Treaty’s safeguards and admit international inspectors.

“Diplomacy, it seems, does work after all.”  
(*New York Times*, 20 September 2005)

A year later, North Korea exploded its first nuclear-weapon device.

Yet as dangerous as a nuclear-armed North Korea is, it pales in comparison to the danger of a nuclear-armed Iran. A nuclear-armed Iran would have a chokehold on the world’s main energy supplies. It would trigger nuclear proliferation throughout the Middle East, turning the most unstable part of the planet into a nuclear tinderbox. And for the first time in history, it would make the spectre of nuclear terrorism a clear and present danger.

A nuclear-armed Iran in the Middle East would not be another North Korea. It would be another 50 North Koreas. I know that some in the international community think that I am exaggerating that threat. Sure, they know that Iran’s regime leads these chants: “Death to America!”, “Death to Israel!”. Then it pledges to wipe Israel off the map. But they think that wild rhetoric is just bluster for domestic consumption. Have those people learned nothing from history? The last century has taught us that, when a radical regime with global ambitions gets awesome power, sooner or later its appetite for aggression knows no bounds. That is the central lesson of the twentieth century. And we cannot forget it.

The world may have forgotten that lesson; the Jewish people have not. Iran’s fanaticism is not bluster. It is real. That fanatic regime must never be allowed to arm itself with nuclear weapons. I know that the world is weary of war. We in Israel know all too well the cost of war. But history has taught us that to prevent war tomorrow, we must be firm today.

That raises the question: Can diplomacy stop that threat? The only diplomatic solution that would work is one that fully dismantles Iran’s nuclear-weapons programme and prevents it from having one in the future. President Obama rightly said that Iran’s conciliatory words must be matched by transparent, verifiable and meaningful action; and to be meaningful, a diplomatic solution would require Iran to do four things; first, cease all uranium enrichment, as called for by several Security Council resolutions; secondly, remove from Iran’s territory the stockpiles of enriched uranium; thirdly, dismantle the infrastructure for a nuclear-breakout capability, including the underground facility near Qom and the advanced centrifuges in Natanz; and, fourthly, stop all work at the heavy water-reactor in Arak aimed at the production of plutonium. Those steps would put an end to Iran’s nuclear-weapons programme and eliminate its breakout capability.

There are those who would readily agree to leave Iran with a residual capability to enrich uranium. I advise them to pay close attention to what Rouhani said in a speech to Iran’s Supreme Cultural Revolutionary Council published in 2005. This is what he said:

“A country that can enrich uranium to about 3.5 per cent will also have the capability to enrich it to about 90 per cent. Having fuel-cycle capability virtually means that a country that possesses this capability is able to produce nuclear weapons.”

Precisely: that is why Iran’s nuclear-weapons programme must be fully and verifiably dismantled. That is why the pressure on Iran must continue. Here is what the international community must do. First, keep up the sanctions. If Iran advances its nuclear-weapons programme during negotiations, strengthen the sanctions. Secondly, do not agree to a partial deal. A partial deal would lift the international sanctions that have taken years to put in place, in exchange for cosmetic concessions that will take only weeks for Iran to reverse. Thirdly, lift the sanctions only when Iran fully dismantles its nuclear-weapons programme.

The international community has Iran on the ropes. If it wants to knock out Iran’s nuclear-weapons programme peacefully, do not let up on the pressure. Keep it up. We all want to give diplomacy with Iran a chance to succeed. But when it comes to Iran, the greater the pressure, the greater the chance. Three decades ago, President Ronald Reagan famously advised “trust but verify”. When it comes to Iran’s nuclear-weapons

programme, here is my advice: distrust, dismantle and verify.

Israel will never acquiesce to nuclear arms in the hands of a rogue regime that repeatedly promises to wipe us off the map. Against such a threat, Israel will have no choice but to defend itself. I want there to be no confusion on this point: Israel will not allow Iran to get nuclear weapons. If Israel is forced to stand alone, Israel will stand alone. Yet in standing alone, Israel will know that we will be defending many others.

The dangers of a nuclear-armed Iran and the emergence of other threats in our region have led many of our Arab neighbours to finally recognize that Israel is not their enemy. That affords us the opportunity to overcome historic animosities and build new relationships, new friendships and new hopes. Israel welcomes engagement with the wider Arab world. We hope that our common interests and common challenges will help us forge a more peaceful future.

And Israel continues to seek a historic compromise with our Palestinian neighbours, one that ends our conflict once and for all. We want peace based on security and mutual recognition in which a demilitarized Palestinian State recognizes the Jewish State of Israel.

I remain committed to achieving a historic reconciliation and building a better future for Israelis and Palestinians alike. I have no illusions about how difficult it will be to achieve. Twenty years ago, the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians began. Six Israeli Prime Ministers — myself included — have not succeeded in achieving peace with the Palestinians. My predecessors were prepared to make painful concessions. So am I.

But so far, Palestinian leaders have not been prepared to offer the painful concessions they must make in order to end the conflict. For peace to be achieved, the Palestinians must finally recognize the Jewish State and Israel's security needs must be met. I am prepared to make a historic compromise for a genuine and enduring peace. But I will never compromise on the security of my people and of my country — the one and only Jewish State.

One cold day in the late nineteenth century, my grandfather, Nathan, and his younger brother, Judah, were standing in a railway station in the heart of Europe. They were seen by a group of anti-Semitic hoodlums, who ran towards them waving clubs, screaming, "Death

to the Jews!" My grandfather shouted to his younger brother to flee and save himself. And he then stood alone against the raging mob to slow it down. They beat him senseless. They left him for dead. Before he passed out, covered in his own blood, he said to himself: "What a disgrace! What a disgrace! The descendants of the Maccabees lie in the mud, powerless to defend themselves." He promised himself then that if he lived, he would take his family to the Jewish homeland and help to build a future for the Jewish people.

I stand here today as Israel's Prime Minister because my grandfather kept that promise. So many other Israelis have a similar story: a parent or a grandparent who fled every conceivable oppression and went to Israel to start a new life in our ancient homeland. Together we have transformed a bludgeoned Jewish people, left for dead, into a vibrant, thriving nation, defending itself with the courage of modern Maccabees, developing limitless possibilities for the future.

In our time, the Biblical prophecies are being realized. As the prophet Amos said,

"They shall rebuild ruined cities and inhabit them. They shall plant vineyards and drink their wine. They shall till gardens and eat their fruit. And I will plant them upon their soil never to be uprooted again."

The people of Israel have come home, never to be uprooted again.

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister of Public Affairs and the Diaspora of the State of Israel for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister of Public Affairs and the Diaspora of the State of Israel, was escorted from the rostrum.*

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

Several representatives have requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first statement and to 5 minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Dabbashi** (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am taking the floor today to respond to Mr. Evo Morales

Ayma, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia. Since the victory of the revolution over dictatorship in Libya, Mr. Morales Ayma has been mentioning the name of Libya in his dispute with the United States — specifically, at this rostrum. We did not initially consider that important, as it was only political propaganda directed against another party that is more entitled to respond to it. However, in his statement of 25 September (see A/68/PV.10), he raised two specific questions that merit responses. I am pleased to respond with full objectivity.

Mr. Morales Ayma asked who had Libyan oil belonged to and who owns Libyan oil today. I tell him that Libyan oil belonged to Muammar Al-Qadhafi and his family. He distributed the oil to members of what he called, “the international forum to fight imperialism”, a terrorist organization founded by Al-Qadhafi and including leaders of terrorist organizations. Mr. Morales Ayma is very familiar with that organization, as he was a prominent member of it. Today Mr. Morales laments the loss of the dictatorship, because he has lost an excellent source of financing.

Yes, the revenue from the Libyan oil — the oil of Al-Qadhafi — was distributed by Al-Qadhafi to support his aides and corrupt entities around the world, to sow instability and chaos and to kill innocent people. I am not exaggerating and I am not being unfair to the tyrant Al-Qadhafi. Any one who does not believe me could listen to him and view his videos. He said that Libyan oil was not directed to funding salaries, but rather to spreading the philosophy of his so-called Green Book. It contained the corrupt ideas of a single individual wielding absolute power, who aimed to destroy State institutions. That is how the revenue from Libyan oil was spent during the reign of the tyrant, Al-Qadhafi.

Today Libyan oil is in the hands of the Libyan people, who use it to repair what was destroyed by Al-Qadhafi over four decades, to build a robust infrastructure and to provide the best basic services possible to Libyan citizens.

I do not blame Mr. Morales Ayma, because he knows the truth only about what concerns him — the millions of dollars that he regularly received from the tyrant Al-Qadhafi. Mr. Morales Ayma definitely knew that Libya was one of the richest States on the African continent, but I imagine that he did not know — perhaps he did not care to know — that more than a quarter of the Libyan people lived below the poverty line; that

the salaries of Libyan civil servants were the lowest salaries among State employees in the region; that the health and education systems in Libya were the worst in the region while Al-Qadhafi was in power; that Libya was one of the most corrupt States; and that most of the towns in Libya did not have a sanitation system. There was no public transportation in Libya, neither between towns nor between cities. Libya is probably the only country in the world where there is no post office or postal code. Most city streets do not even have names.

That is the situation that prevailed while Al-Qadhafi was in power. Al-Qadhafi was Mr. Morales Ayma’s friend because the revenue from Libyan oil was distributed outside Libya to people like Mr. Morales, while the Libyan people lived in poverty, while the infrastructure was crumbling and while basic services were worsening from day to day.

Mr. Morales Ayma also spoke about what he called the shelling of Libya. No, Sir, Libya was not bombarded. The international community helped Libya and bombed the troops of the despot who were bombing the towns and villages and were killing innocent people indiscriminately. It is regrettable that Mr. Morales Ayma still does not want to acknowledge the atrocities committed by the security forces of his friend Al-Qadhafi against the Libyan people. He would have wanted the international community to continue to look at the tyrant, to watch the tyrant kill Libyans while others looked on. No, Mr. Morales Ayma must respect the will of the Libyan people. If he has a problem with a State or with a party, he should not use Libya to harm others. The Libyan people know who helped them and who had helped their executioner. Despite that, the Libyan people extend a hand to all of those who wish to have their friendship and who respect their will.

**Mr. Seifi Pargou** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to make the following points regarding allegations made against the Iranian nuclear programme.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has an inalienable right to peaceful nuclear energy and is fully committed to its non-proliferation obligations. All Iranian nuclear activities are and have always been exclusively for peaceful purposes. Iran continues to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and all its nuclear activities are carried out under the surveillance of the Agency’s cameras and of its resident inspectors, who regularly visit all nuclear sites and measure and seal enriched-uranium containers.

Some of Iran's cooperation with the Agency has exceeded its legal obligations. It is carried out to build more trust and confidence. As a result, the non-diversion of declared nuclear materials in Iran has always been confirmed by all reports of the Agency. The latest IAEA report, dated 28 August 2013, states that "the Agency continues to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material at the nuclear facilities ... declared by Iran under its Safeguards Agreement" (*GOV/2013/40, para. 67*).

While fully supporting the peaceful use of nuclear energy by all nations, we strongly reject the possession of nuclear weapons by any nation. This is our principled position: nuclear energy for all, nuclear weapons for none. We fully support addressing genuine non-proliferation concerns. However, we reject equating the peaceful uses of nuclear energy with the development of nuclear weapons.

Iranian officials at all levels have stated time and time again that, in addition to our international obligations, Islamic teachings also oblige us not to pursue a nuclear-weapon programme. Likewise, from a security point of view, we believe that those inhumane weapons have not and never will bring about security. They are the greatest threat to the security of both the nuclear-weapon "haves" and the "have nots". There is not a single acceptable reason to possess nuclear weapons, but there are many acceptable reasons to abolish them all. For those reasons, nuclear weapons have no place in the defence doctrine of my country.

Despite all of that, some countries still express concerns over the Iranian nuclear programme. At the same time, there exist deep mistrust and concerns among the Iranian nation over the policies and intentions of those countries. Therefore, there is a need to build mutual trust, which is possible only by resorting to the force of logic, not the logic of force. In our time, the golden rule is to resort to diplomacy alone. A sustainable solution is attainable only through respectful negotiations. For its part, Iran has already expressed its full readiness to faithfully engage in a meaningful, time-bound and result-oriented negotiation process.

Iran stands ready to ensure that its nuclear programme will continue to be exclusively peaceful. That can remove the concerns of other parties. In return, and as a first step — in addition to acknowledging the inherent right of Iran to peaceful uses of nuclear energy,

including a full national nuclear fuel cycle — they should dispel Iranians' concerns. All sanctions should be annulled, be they multilateral or unilateral. It goes without saying that good faith, genuine political will, mutual respect and equal treatment with the interest of all parties in mind are essential for a win-win solution. Therefore, other parties also need to adopt the same approach. Moreover, I should underline the important contribution that other countries can make through that process by supporting diplomacy and helping to sustain the current positive atmosphere that is necessary for the effectiveness of diplomacy.

I take this opportunity to sincerely thank all countries that continue to support our sovereign right to peaceful nuclear science and technology and those that, over the past several days, have supported the ongoing process in regard to the Iranian nuclear programme. Despite that fact, we have just heard an extremely inflammatory statement by the last speaker in the general debate of the General Assembly, in which the Israeli Prime Minister made allegations against the peaceful nuclear activities of my country.

I do not want to dignify such unfounded accusations with an answer other than categorically rejecting them all. The Prime Minister tried to mislead this organ about the Iranian nuclear programme, but unlike last year, he did so without cartoon drawings behind him. The most ironic part of his comments were when he tried to be more royal than the king by setting standards for the type and scope of Iran's nuclear activities, the level of its uranium enrichment and plutonium production, and so on and so forth. He must know that no one can dictate to Iran what to do or not to do.

As a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Iran is fully aware of its rights and is fully committed to its obligations. The party that is badly in need of education about those issues is Israel, which is the only non-party to the NPT in the Middle East. To that end, Israel has no choice but to accede to the NPT without further delay and condition, and place all of its nuclear activities under IAEA comprehensive safeguards.

We have talked a lot about weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East without mentioning that Israel is the only country in the region that, although it possesses all types of weapons of mass destruction, is not a party to any of the treaties banning them. Moreover, the Prime Minister also did not talk about

the 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, which was not convened due only to Israeli objections.

Like last year, the Prime Minister also continued sabre-rattling towards Iran by abusing the Assembly for threatening a founding Member of the Organization, which was established first and foremost for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace and the suppression of acts of aggression and other breaches of the peace, according to its Charter. Definitely, he enjoys full freedom to be proud of all the atrocities and more than 10 wars waged during the past 65 years by the Israeli regime against not only all its neighbours but others as well. He also may wish to apply for an international award certifying the ability of Israeli forces in never-ending savage attacks against peoples under occupation, in particular defenceless women and innocent children.

However, the Prime Minister should seriously avoid miscalculations about Iran. Iran's centuries-old policy of non-aggression must not be interpreted as its inability to defend itself. Unlike Israel, Iran has not attacked and would not attack any country. That is not because of inability, but due to its principled policy in rejecting the use of force. Iranians are proud of being the best at exercising their inherent right of self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. Therefore, the Israeli Prime Minister had better not even think about attacking Iran, let alone planning for such an attack.

In conclusion, I would like to refer to a point made by my Foreign Minister some days ago. We have been accused of launching a charm offensive, and he said that a charm offensive is better than a military attack. A charm policy is much better than lying.

**The President:** I remind members that in exercising the right of reply delegations are limited to 10 minutes.

**Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan):** I would like to exercise my right of reply to the statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia in the general debate on 28 September (see (A/68/PV.19).

As can be noted from that statement, Armenia is denying the facts that point to its policy of aggression, hostility, hatred, outright lies and falsification. According to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia, his Government welcomed the joint statement on the conflict settlement made on 18 June by the

Presidents of the three co-Chair countries of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. However, merely welcoming declarative statements is not sufficient for achieving progress in the conflict-settlement process, especially when the commitments and deeds of Armenia have always been at odds with that goal. Thus, for example, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia tried to assure the United Nations community of his Government's adherence to the principles of international law, in particular those reflected in the aforementioned joint statement of 18 June.

In reality, Armenia has grossly violated those and other principles of international law by seizing and continuing to occupy and control Nagorno Karabakh and other areas of Azerbaijan. There can be no doubt that, in contrast to Armenia's interpretation of international legal norms and principles, the primary objective in the context of the ongoing conflict settlement process must be first and foremost to ensure that the occupied Azerbaijan territories are liberated, that forcibly displaced people return to their homes, and that Armenia and Azerbaijan establish relations on the basis of respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Armenia rejects that understanding, thus preventing the achievement of the negotiated settlement of the conflict and continuing to violate international law. In the words of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia, "Azerbaijan keeps misinterpreting the 1993 Security Council resolutions". Such a deduction is obviously not only unproven, but is also easily refuted by numerous facts and documents testifying to Armenia's non-compliance with the requirements of the Security Council's resolutions and to its determined efforts to undermine the process of settling the conflict on the basis of international law.

The head of Armenian diplomacy got so carried away that he accused Azerbaijan of committing aggression. Such an irresponsible allegation is nothing other than utter falsehood. Otherwise, he would have noticed that the Security Council has not only not mentioned aggression on the part of Azerbaijan in any of its relevant four resolutions and presidential statements, but rather that it has condemned the use of force against it and the occupation of its territory.

The arguments of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia are also in apparent contradiction with the statements made by the most senior leaders of his own

country, however surprising that may seem. It has been publicly acknowledged at the highest level in Armenia that the war was started by the Armenian side and that the aim of the war was to implement the long-nurtured plan of seizing Azerbaijani territory. Yerevan has also admitted that, during the active military phase of the conflict, it was the Armenian side that intentionally ignored the demands of the Security Council for the immediate cessation of all military activities and hostile acts.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia further noted that, after the ceasefire agreement signed in 1994, the mediator countries, which are three permanent members of the Security Council, allegedly have never made any reference to its 1993 resolutions. To prove the absurdity of this view and the conclusions based on it, it is sufficient to recall the presidential statement of 26 April 1995 (S/PRST/1995/21), in which the Council reaffirmed all its previous statements and resolutions. The resolutions of the Security Council have also been recalled by the mediator countries and other States and international organizations on a number of other occasions.

By claiming that Azerbaijan is allegedly rejecting the implementation of confidence-building measures, the Armenian side falls into its usual forgetfulness. Otherwise, the officials of that country would recall that Armenia deliberately denies the right of almost 1 million Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their homes and undertakes efforts to alter the demographic situation in the occupied territories and remove any signs of their Azerbaijani cultural and historical roots.

Armenia's speculations on confidence-building are also curious insofar as it persistently opposes direct contacts between the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of Nagorno Karabakh. Likewise, the undisguised promotion by the leadership of Armenia of the odious ideas of ethnic and religious incompatibility with and hatred of Azerbaijan and other neighbouring nations can hardly contribute to building confidence. Furthermore, regular ceasefire violations and deliberate attacks by the armed forces of Armenia against Azerbaijani civilians and civilian objects have become more frequent and violent in recent times, resulting in the killing and wounding of many inhabitants residing near the front lines. Besides, in apparent disregard of its obligation under international law and of its respective commitments under the existing arms control regime,

Armenia continues to build up its military presence in the occupied territories. Moreover, comparative analyses show that, in relation to its population, territory, annual budget and gross domestic product, Armenia is the most militarized country in the South Caucasus.

Instead of lecturing other countries about what is good and what is bad, it would be useful if the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia would recall the direct involvement of the current political and military leadership of his country in brutal massacres during the conflict, which claimed the lives of thousands of Azerbaijani civilians, including children, women and the elderly.

Evidence of a special relationship in Armenia with terrorists and war criminals can also be seen in their glorification at the State level, including by raising them to the status of national heroes and bestowing State decorations on them. Speculations on fictitious anti-Armenian hate speeches in Azerbaijan are also beneath all criticism. Suffice it to say that, unlike Armenia, which has implemented a policy of total ethnic cleansing of both its own territory and the occupied territories of Azerbaijan of all non-Armenians and thus succeeded in creating a uniquely mono-ethnic culture in those areas, Azerbaijan has preserved its ethnic and cultural diversity to the present day.

The conclusion is self-evident. In reality, by disregarding the resolutions of the Security Council, by challenging the peace efforts led by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, by continuing to illegally occupy the territories of Azerbaijan, by deliberately denying the right of 1 million Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their homes, and by misinterpreting the norms and principles of international law, Armenia clearly demonstrates who is actually endangering regional and international peace.

**Mr. Ri Tong Il** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): With regard to the nuclear issue relating to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would like to draw attention, on behalf of my delegation, to our unique security environment, which is that of being threatened and blackmailed by the largest nuclear-weapon State. In this regard, I would like to draw attention to the following facts.

First, in 1957 the United States introduced the first nuclear weapon into South Korea and thereby began the

presence of nuclear weapons in the country. Secondly, in the 1970s the number of nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula topped 1,000 and thereby made the Korean peninsula the most densely populated zone full of nuclear weapons. Thirdly, in 2002 the United States Administration named the Democratic People's Republic of Korea part of the axis of evil and thereby sent the strong message to the entire international community that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a country to be eliminated. Fourthly, the same Administration added the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the list of targets of a nuclear pre-emptive strike.

In addition to all these nuclear weapons, every year the United States and South Korea hold military drills, as has been mentioned several times in the current session. In March 2013, the situation was on the brink of war, and the international community realized how dangerous the situation was — and when I say dangerous, I mean a possible outbreak of nuclear war — with a massive arms build-up of nuclear weapons, advanced and carried by the *USS George Washington* Nimitz-class aircraft carrier, and other weapons and means, including nuclear-powered submarines and B-52s, brought from the mainland across the Pacific Ocean.

This blackmail is culminating in a threat to the survival of the Korean nation as a whole, including the North and South of Korea. In this unique security environment, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has had no other option but to go nuclear in order to defend the country and its people and to not allow nuclear weapons to drop on our people. That nuclear deterrent served us and made a great contribution to lasting peace and security on the Korean peninsula, the region and the world.

I would like to make three points concerning the last speaker's remarks in the general debate this morning. First, that country has no justification for talking about somebody else, as it is a full-fledged nuclear-weapon State. Secondly, it is a cancer in the Middle East, disturbing peace and security and shifting the blame on all other countries of the region. Thirdly, there are two issues, one concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the other Israel. While the United States makes a lot of noise regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it is mum, quiet and silent with regard to the nuclear weapons of Israel.

**Mr. Llorentty Solíz** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia feels compelled to take the floor after listening to the representative of Libya, who made a set of bold and absurd statements divorced from reality.

First, in a very fraternal manner, I would draw attention to a violation of the procedure whereby, according to our norms, replies to a Head of State must be made in writing. In his instance, they have exploited the good faith of the President of the General Assembly to proffer unacceptable insults against President Evo Morales, against the Plurinational State of Bolivia and against their people.

Bolivia has condemned, continues to condemn, and will always condemn any imperialistic attack committed anywhere in the world. We will continue to draw attention to the true motives of those imperial aggressions motivated by the appropriation of natural resources and by geostrategic interests. Lies are not going to silence us, especially when they come from those who until a few years ago defended Muammar Al-Qadhafi and who now call him a tyrant.

Furthermore, we believe that it is crucial to point out very clearly to those who write the scripts attacking President Evo Morales that we are not going to fall into the trap that seeks to divert the attention of the General Assembly from the main issue, which is the ongoing struggle in the defence of the interests, values and principles of the Charter of the United Nations — a struggle to ensure that no more unilateral attacks are committed in any part of the world, that international law is not violated, and the natural resources of our peoples are not looted.

While the Bolivian people have great respect and great admiration for the Libyan people, in the case in question, given the words of the representative of Libya, we reserve the right to take any legal action in our power to deliver a public response to the shameless lies spoken by the representative of Libya. As I said, these lies were aimed at diverting attention from the very courageous and dignified statement delivered by President Evo Morales in this Hall (see A/68/PV.10). President Evo Morales highlighted the need for those who violate international law and the Charter of the United Nations and threaten to bomb other States to stand trial for their crimes. Bolivia will not be silenced or, I reiterate, allow such absolutely groundless attacks on the dignity of my people and my country.

Likewise, Bolivia endorses the decision to promote the prosecution of the Government of the United States for crimes against humanity and war crimes. We know who defends the interests of the United States. It does not surprise us, but at least they should have the dignity to do so on the basis of truths, and not on the basis of lies or fallacious statements. I reiterate categorically that the insults proffered here will not go unanswered or remain confined to the records of the General Assembly. Once again Bolivia has condemned, condemns and will continue to condemn such attacks and offences against the sovereignty of peoples and international law.

**Mr. Kazhoyan (Armenia):** I apologize for taking the floor. It was not my intention to do so. However, I am compelled to take the floor to reply to the comments made just now by the representative of Azerbaijan. Those comments were based on even more lies, in addition to the statement made earlier by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan (see A/68/PV.18). As usual, it did not contain a single true statement. It is probably easy to make statements when nobody is verifying what one says, or what is true and what is a lie.

I will not go into too much detail in explaining that whatever happened back in 1988 was the expression of the right of self-determination by the people of Nagorno Karabakh or the fact that the realization of their absolutely legal, constitutional right was responded to by hostilities, massacres and war by Azerbaijan against a peaceful population. That is how it all started, from the aggression of Azerbaijan against the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh.

Nothing that Azerbaijan tells the world from any rostrum can be considered factual. On the contrary, it is a constant barrage of lies combined with anti-Armenian, racist rhetoric. I guess that the strategy is to recount so many unbelievable lies and to repeat them so often that sooner or later people will get used to them. In fact they have repeated those lies so often that they do believe they are true. But I assure the Assembly that that is just wishful thinking. What can one expect from a country whose president openly declares that the Armenians of the world are the enemy of Azerbaijan? I believe that is called xenophobia and is punishable by law, at least in the civilized world that I am from and that we all represent.

Azerbaijan is the only country in the world that boasts of its astronomical military expenditures. I

believe that raising the defence budget is not something to be proud of, especially as the rest of the world is thinking about development goals and many countries do not have the required resources to do so. But the President of Azerbaijan makes proud and loud declarations about that, threatening Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh with war by declaring:

“Today, our state budget is almost 10 times that of Armenia. Our military spending alone is about 30 to 50 per cent higher than the entire State budget of Armenia.”

Azerbaijan is a country where someone who has killed a foreigner — an Armenian, let us say — is considered to be a national hero, and the name of that hero is Safarov. In any democratic country, a murderer would have received what is prescribed by law. The murderer of a person who is sleeping would have been branded a coward, a murderer down the generations. But, in Azerbaijan he is glorified and declared a national hero.

Azerbaijan uses the tactic that the best defence is a good offence, hoping that it will be saved by putting the blame on everybody else for what the world condemns it for. However, no one — not even Azerbaijan, rich in oil dollars — can manipulate world and public opinion. Therefore, no Azerbaijani, especially no Azerbaijani official, has any historical, moral or legal right to tell the people of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic how to live, where to live or how independent to be.

The Azerbaijani leadership speaks two different languages. On the one hand, it calls for peaceful dialogue and resolution of the conflict while putting the blame for each and every thing on Armenia and Armenians. On the other hand, the President of the country declares:

“We can never allow Armenia to join any political, economic, energy and transport projects. We have isolated them and make no secret of that. In the future, our isolation policy must be continued. It is paying off.”

Security Council resolutions also call on Azerbaijan to stop hostilities against the peaceful population of Nagorno Karabakh. Despite the ceasefire agreement that Azerbaijan signed back in 1994 with the de facto authorities of Nagorno Karabakh, it continues the sniper shooting on the line of contact,

killing soldiers and civilians alike and rejecting the withdrawal of snipers, which could be a positive and effective confidence-building measure. If Azerbaijan's willingness to return refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes is truly sincere, they just need to follow up on the principles proposed by the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. I think that would pay off in a real and right way.

**Mr. Dabbashi** (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your patience. I only wanted to reassert my second right of reply, but, out of respect for your person, I will only say that, in my entire life, I have never lied and that, in this life, I will never lie. Those who are interested in seeing our documents are welcome to see them.

**Mr. Musayev** (Azerbaijan): It is unfortunate that the delegation of Armenia has once again used the opportunity of our debate to make groundless, propagandistic statements. In reality, we have witnessed yet another unsuccessful attempt by that Member State to mislead the international community.

The remarks just made by the representative of Armenia—full of lies, distortions and misinterpretations, which we categorically reject—demonstrate how that Member State is far from engaging in a constructive search for peace in the region. In fact, the delegation of Armenia has introduced nothing new and once again abused its right to speak from the high rostrum of the General Assembly. As a result, we have heard irrelevant and out-of-context comments that obviously failed to respond to our arguments. The comments just made by the delegation of Armenia are also illustrative of that Member State's uninterrupted attempts to create a false impression of the real situation on the ground and to deflect the attention of the international community from the urgent need to address the main problems caused by its continuing aggression against Azerbaijan.

We consider the stance of Armenia to be an open challenge to the conflict-settlement process and a serious threat to international and regional peace and security. The sooner the officials of that country realize that their unconstructive and dangerous political agenda lacks any prospect of fulfilment, the sooner our peoples will be able to benefit from peace, stability and cooperation.

**Mr. Llorenty Solíz** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We regret the fact that this forum

is being used in violation of our norms to attack the dignity not just of a President but also of a people and a State Member of the United Nations. We regret that attempts are being made to draw attention away from the central theme that was raised a number of days ago in the worthy and courageous statement of President Evo Morales Ayma (see A/68/PV.10). Bolivia stands by every word not only in President Morales Ayma's statement, but also in the statement I just made in my capacity as Permanent Representative.

Bolivia will not play the game of trying to draw attention away from the core issue, namely, the appropriation of natural resources, interventionist wars, the plundering and the geostrategic military interests of the United States of America. It is up to each of us to decide whether we will follow and stand up for the scripts that have been written. I repeat that the lies, distortions and the manipulations of the representative of Libya are totally rejected by Bolivia, and that Bolivia will take the appropriate steps that we, of course, have the right to take.

**Mr. Kazhoyan** (Armenia): The only gauge for measuring the sincerity of Azerbaijan's words is the results of its participation in the negotiations under the auspices of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and its acceptance of the documents on the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict adopted in the framework of the OSCE summits and the statements of the Presidents of the co-Chair countries in the framework of the Group of Eight and Group of Twenty summits. Armenia's position is in line with those documents. Armenia and the international community are speaking in one language regarding the Nagorno Karabakh issue. It is time for Azerbaijan to listen to the voice of the world—the world of the United Nations.

I wonder how memory works with the delegation of Azerbaijan. I would just remind them of a couple of important dates. In 1988, the people of Nagorno Karabakh peacefully asked for independence. They were attacked by Azerbaijan. Armenians organized their self-defence. Azerbaijan unleashed a full-scale war from 1992 to 1994, but the people of Nagorno Karabakh stopped the Azerbaijani aggression and declared the independence of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic. Those are the brief historical events that took place not so long ago, and it is not very difficult to remember such basic textbook facts and to stop

turning everything upside down and retelling history in a manner that they would prefer to hear.

Listening to the statements of the Azerbaijani leadership, one comes to the obvious conclusion that it is a most racist and xenophobic State. The latest manifestation of such an attitude took place a few days ago. On 18 September, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan said the following:

“... the national flag of Azerbaijan must be raised in Shusha and Khankandi, and the Azerbaijanis should live on all of their historical lands in the future. Our historical lands are the Erivan khanate, the Goycha and Zangezur Mahals. The time will come when we Azerbaijanis will live there. I believe in and am sure of that. Time is passing. We simply want it to happen soon.”

Let me just clarify for the Assembly that all those geographic names cited by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan are distorted Azeri versions of Armenian names, “Erivan” being “Yerevan”, the capital of an independent State, the Republic of Armenia, a proud State Member of the United Nations. I ask the Assembly, what is that if not an aggressive militaristic xenophobia? Is that what the rest of the world expects from a member of the Security Council?

Tomorrow, the Azerbaijani delegation will brief non-Security Council members on the programme of work for this month, the month of its presidency. I am pretty sure that it will speak of the importance of peace. No one in his right mind will trust or believe those words. One cannot simultaneously advocate war against one’s neighbour and another nation and preach for peace.

It sounds more like a wolf in sheep’s clothing. I do not buy that kind of preaching. Nor do I think anybody should.

**Mr. Lim Sang Beom** (Republic of Korea): In response to the statement made in right of reply by the delegation of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, I would like to clarify that the joint exercises of the Republic of Korea and the United States are a legitimate part of our defence against the provocations and daily threats made by North Korea against the Republic of Korea. The joint exercises, which are purely defensive in nature, are designed to enhance our combined readiness against North Korea’s military

actions. They have contributed to the deterrence of war on the Korea peninsula for the past several decades.

On the North Korean nuclear issue and the missile threat, under the relevant Security Council resolutions and the 19 September 2005 Joint Statement, North Korea has the obligation to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, including its uranium-enrichment programme. Further, resolution 2094 (2013) of 7 March 2013, the most recently adopted Security Council resolution on the issue, made that very clear.

**Mr. Ri Tong Il** (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea): The representative of South Korea has just made some very absurd remarks to the 193 Member States, which we totally reject as misleading. It is telling distorted truths.

With reference to the joint military exercise, the representative of South Korea said that it was routine and defensive, but if one really looks at it one can easily see that it is offensive, aggressive and targeted at the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Last month, half a million troops and reserve forces were mobilized and the most sophisticated means of delivering nuclear weapons, from B-52 bombers up to aircraft carriers, were deployed. As to the B-52, we all know its capabilities. It is armed with nuclear-weapon-tipped Tomahawk missiles and carries nuclear-weapon gravity bombs to be dropped. They came into South Korea to attend the drill, and a dropping exercise in real conditions was conducted on the doorstep of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, threatening the peace and security of the Korean peninsula and the region as a whole and undermining the climate of peace and development that is the major trend in the Asia-Pacific region.

With regard to resolution 2094 (2013), the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea wishes once again to make it very clear that our country has been selected to be manipulated by the United States purely out of its hostile policy towards us. It is an abuse of power by the United States, a so-called permanent member of the Security Council. Therefore, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea has never recognized the Council’s resolutions. If peace and security is the mandate of the Security Council, the joint exercise of the United States and South Korea should be cited as the gravest threat to the peace and security of the region and the Korean peninsula.

**Mr. Lim Sang Beom** (Republic of Korea): Once again, North Korea has a habit of blaming others for

its illicit activities and provocations. Needless to say, tension in the region has its roots in North Korea's continued missile launches and nuclear tests. North Korea's argument is nothing more than an irresponsible pretext. Let me also stress that not only the Security Council but also more than 80 Member States have issued a statement condemning North Korea's third nuclear test and urging it to abide by the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The North Korean delegation has denied the authenticity and credibility of the Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, a core function of the United Nations. Let me point out that all resolutions regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have been unanimously adopted, with votes in favour being made by all the Council's permanent members.

**Mr. Seifi Pargou** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to make a point of clarification, actually. I have been informed that I unfortunately misquoted my Foreign Minister. What he actually said is that a charm offensive is better than a lie attack. I should have memorized that then and I will keep repeating it until I do. A charm offensive is better than a lie attack.

**The President:** Believe it or not, we have come to the end of the general debate of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, one in which Member States gave voice to their distinct needs and diverse challenges, as well as individual and shared concerns. I truly thank each and every one of them for sharing their priorities, concerns, hopes and expectations for our sixty-eighth session.

Permit me to reflect on the major issues that speakers have identified so as to have a guide for our deliberations going forward. Many will recall that I chose as the theme for the sixty-eighth session "The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage". I also outlined a number of priority areas for deliberations by Member States in the form of either high-level events or thematic debates. Virtually every delegation that referred to the theme commended the choice and pledged full support and cooperation for its further elaboration. That heralds a sense of promise about what is to come over the next year. I trust that we will all be able to work collectively and creatively during the sixty-eighth session.

Building on the achievements of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, many

delegations stressed that we now need to begin work towards defining a universal development agenda that is inclusive of sustainable development goals based on common but differentiated responsibilities. We heard appreciation for the launch of the high-level political forum as the guardian and catalyst of that agenda.

Throughout the week, a number of items were mentioned that countries wish to see in our new agenda, including, *inter alia*, culture, education, climate change, job creation, sustainable energy, social inclusion, equality for all, access to water, sustainable agriculture, the use of ocean resources, food security, health care, including maternal care, non-communicable diseases and the fight against HIV/AIDS. Some delegations reminded us that democracy, human rights, peace and security must also be part of a sustainable development agenda, and some emphasized the role and empowerment of women, youth, indigenous communities and persons with disabilities.

We heard emphasis placed on the role of partnerships in development, which, coincidentally, will be the focus of one of our thematic debates. There were reminders that, while South-South cooperation has become an important part of development cooperation, it is a complement to North-South cooperation, not a replacement for it. Partnerships are also needed among State and non-State actors. The means of implementation, the need for adequate resources and funding, innovation and technology transfer were further recurring themes.

A number of delegations reminded us that the specific needs and vulnerabilities of the small island developing States are an important consideration for the post-2015 development agenda, and they welcome the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States to be held in 2014 as a vehicle for making contributions.

As we begin to focus on the new agenda, many delegations made reference to the collective responsibility of the international community to accelerate progress towards the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals, ahead of the 2015 target date. In that context, partnerships and financing were also emphasized. Reforming the global economic governance architecture to reflect the weight of emerging and developing countries was also a concern.

A number of delegations condemned the use of chemical weapons in Syria and called for the

perpetrators to be held accountable. Many delegations expressed concerns about the dire humanitarian situation there. They welcomed Syria's decision to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention and call for an immediate application of its provisions. While many welcomed the unanimous decision of the Security Council on Syria (resolution 2118 (2013)), they nevertheless called on that body to uphold the rules of the Charter with regard to further action. Many expressed a desire to find a negotiated solution at the upcoming "Geneva II" conference.

On the issue of Palestine, a number of delegations repeated their call for a two-State solution and welcomed the resumption of direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

With respect to the African region, we heard praise for the progress that has been made in countries such as Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. At the same time, concern was expressed for the situations in Guinea-Bissau, the Central African Republic, the Sudan and the Sahel. On Somalia, there were words of both encouragement and caution.

There were calls for the international community to take action against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. In that regard, strong condemnation was registered about recent terrorist attacks in Kenya, Pakistan and Iraq. Sadly, we can add Nigeria to that list.

In addition, Member States underscored the need to protect women and children in conflict and end sexual violence in conflict and the enrolment of child soldiers, support the transition processes following the Arab Spring and address the issues of cybersecurity, with suggestions for the United Nations to play a greater role in that area.

Some nations expressed reservations about the International Criminal Court, which they feel had demonstrated bias against a particular geographical region.

The need for disarmament was emphasized with concerns about the use of weapons of mass destruction and the risk of proliferation. Calls were made for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Similarly, the use of small arms was reviled for their negative impact on peace and security. Delegations welcomed the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty and called for its prompt entry into force.

Delegations also highlighted the need to make progress on the important issue of reforming the primary organs of our institution. Many called for a more balanced, fair, representative and accountable Security Council. Many mentioned how the use of the veto has had a paralysing effect. Most also want revitalization of the General Assembly and better coordination between the two bodies. Based on the strength of the sentiments expressed in that regard, it is now up to the States Members of the United Nations to move with purposefulness on the required reforms and revitalization.

The general debate provides a useful measure of stock-taking on the issues at the forefront of our lives within the mandate of the Organization. It is the only mechanism by which the 193 Member States can make their voices heard. Key issues raised by leaders in the general debate are those that affect our countries and our people and those that require concerted effort from the entire international community.

We are oftentimes accused of being an Organization that is all talk and no action. Perhaps that is so, but I submit that our general debate, which occurs at this time each year, serves an important purpose. Our debates help us to mark where we are as a global community and provide guidelines for where we need to go. They serve as a useful point of peer review and general accountability. Moreover, our debates also show that despite any negative comments about the United Nations, faith in the Organization's value as the world's forum of countries continues to be high.

With the guidance we received this past week, it is now up to us find common ground among our priorities as the basis for moving forward with decisive action. In the real world in which we live, such healthy compromise is the best outcome of our joint effort. We are the ones responsible for finding that common ground, and, with the directions and the reference points laid before us this week, it is now up to us to identify our common ground and move forward on it.

We are responsible for the implementation of action by working to create a post-2015 development agenda. During the months to come and throughout the session, I look forward to working with the Assembly and to realizing meaningful changes and progress.

Let me conclude by expressing my deep appreciation and thanks to the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly as well as the Department for

General Assembly and Conference Management for their unstinting support, long hours and incredibly hard work during this period of the session. I thank them.

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

*It was so decided.*

*The meeting rose at 1.55 p.m.*