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12th plenary meeting

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Official Records

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

General debate

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I call on Her Excellency Ms. Naha Mint Mouknass, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

Ms. Mint Mouknass (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset, on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania as well as on my own account, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to preside over the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session and to wish you every possible success in your serious and noble mission. I have a great deal of confidence that your efforts will bear fruit and enable the Organization to continue to achieve the success attained under the presidency of your predecessor, Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann.

I should also like to convey my gratitude and appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for the efforts he has devoted to consolidating peace and security throughout the world, to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and to promoting the fight against climate change.

This session is being held at a time when my country is extricating itself from a political and institutional crisis that lasted for a few months and was resolved, with the help of the efforts of the International Contact Group on Mauritania, through a

consensus reached by the political parties of Mauritania and enshrined in the Dakar Accord. This agreement provided for the elaboration of an electoral agenda supervised by a Government of national unity in which minority parties in Parliament enjoy half of the number of seats, including among the sovereign ministries, such as the Ministries of Home Affairs, Information, Defence and others.

The normalization of the constitutional process led to the election of Mr. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz as President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. He received 53 per cent of the votes during the first round of the elections held on 18 July and all national and international observers attested to the transparency and fairness of this election.

On behalf of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, I convey my special gratitude to the International Contact Group, and especially to the President of the African Union, the Leader Muammar Al-Qadhafi, who was one of the first to call for a domestic solution, thus enabling Mauritanian stakeholders to normalize the political situation in their country. I also convey my gratitude to His Excellency Abdoulaye Wade, President of the brotherly country of Senegal, who accompanied the signing of the Dakar Accord and ensured its follow-up implementation.

Mauritania, under the presidency of Mr. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, is determined to consolidate democracy and institutions and uphold the rule of law in a spirit of calm and stability, thereby

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providing for the progress and well-being of the people of Mauritania.

Aware of the need to integrate peoples and States, Mauritania reiterates its attachment to the Arab Maghreb Union as a strategic choice for the people of the region. It also affirms its attachment to joint work within the framework of the League of Arab States, as well as its commitment to the African Union and to United Nations purposes and principles,

We reiterate our support for efforts aimed at reforming the United Nations, especially the expansion of the Security Council, where a permanent seat should be granted to the African continent and another to the Arab Group, whose people make up more than 11 per cent of the world population.

The tremendous efforts undertaken during the sixty-third session of the General Assembly are praiseworthy, whether we are referring to the Doha Review Conference or the conference on the world financial and economic crisis and its impact on development. Despite these commendable efforts, the world continues to be wracked by a stifling financial crisis that has undermined development efforts, especially in the least developed countries (LDCs). The impact of the financial crisis on the economies of the LDCs is disastrous. While the rich countries of the North have achieved economic and social progress during these past few years, the least developed countries will face many obstacles that will have an impact on programmes aimed at achieving their Millennium Development Goals.

The international community must act rapidly to confront this disaster that threatens the global economic order. It must take concrete measures aimed at restoring confidence, achieving economic progress and creating jobs. Commerce, trade and investment must be revitalized to provide the necessary financing to poor countries and to maintain achievements made thus far in the fight against poverty and in strengthening the role of the United Nations Development Programme in countering the economic crisis and its adverse impact on development.

In this respect, we urge rich countries to fulfil the commitments made in London in early April towards financing development in developing countries, and their pledges to allocate \$1 trillion to revitalize the global economy, including \$50 billion devoted to the

low income countries. I pay tribute to all of those steps from this rostrum.

The economic, social and environmental dimensions of development are all closely interlinked. For that reason we call upon all countries to fight against climate change. My country is one of the ten countries most affected by global warming, which could lead to a rise in sea level. Here, we request that industrialized States limit their greenhouse gas emissions. We also welcome the meeting on climate change that was convened by the Secretary-General and await the outcome of the international conference on climate change to be held in December in Copenhagen, with great interest.

My country follows the issue of the Western Sahara with great interest and reaffirms its backing for the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy aimed at finding a final solution to this issue, which would strengthen security and stability in the region.

The Arab-Israeli conflict is a source of ongoing tension and a threat to international peace and security in a sensitive and vital region of the world. For that reason, we support peace efforts aimed at finding a solution to the conflict that will, on the one hand, guarantee the brotherly Palestinian people all of their rights, including the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the right to live in peace and security side by side with Israel; and on the other hand, will restore all occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan and the Lebanese Sheba'a farms.

Turning to the situation in the Sudan, we wish here to underscore our categorical rejection of the International Criminal Court's arrest warrant for the Sudanese President, because it undermines peace efforts under way in that country and runs counter to international norms.

The culture of peace, tolerance, justice and respect for peoples and civilizations is the best possible way to uphold international peace and security. Outstanding issues are still without an available solution; the chasm between the rich and the poor and the turbulent international economic infrastructure have led to tension, extremism and terrorism. Here I reaffirm that the Islamic Republic of Mauritania rejects terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and reiterates its commitment to Islamic values, which

reject violence and extremism and call for tolerance and fraternity. We believe that it is the duty of the international community to consider seriously the causes of this phenomenon and to devise ways to confront it and eradicate it once and for all.

Fulfilling the commitments that the international community made in creating this Organization will only be possible if all peoples and all countries share the available resources and possibilities for successful development, and if the policies of the countries of the North are rooted in a vision of dignified, free and equal existence for all. In my view this is the only way to reach the objectives that this Organization was created for.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Peter Power, Minister of State for Overseas Development of Ireland.

Mr. Power (Ireland): Let me begin, Mr. President, by warmly congratulating you on your election and extending the best wishes of the Irish Government and the Irish people for a successful term in office.

It is indeed a very great honour to participate in this general debate and to share this unique global platform. Ireland cherishes its membership in the United Nations. We believe strongly in the purposes, the principles and the potential of this great global Organization of ours. And we are proud of the role we have ourselves played in developing that potential over the past five decades. We are determined to maintain this role and to remain steadfastly at the service of the United Nations.

Rarely have the challenges facing the global community been as formidable, or as pressing, as those of today. And rarely has the need been greater for collective action and for the facilitating framework that is uniquely provided by the United Nations. Our discussions in New York over the past week have highlighted some of the most urgent issues on the Organization's agenda at present, including climate change, global poverty and hunger, and nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We are also confronted with the global financial and economic crisis — the most severe in a generation — which is leaving its mark on every family and community across the world. Governments everywhere are facing a daunting task, as they work to mitigate the

effects of global recession and economic turbulence and to limit the impact of the crisis on those in greatest need. Once again, the United Nations provides a framework for the development of collective responses and solutions.

The summit of world leaders hosted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in New York last week on climate change displayed the strength of international commitment on this issue. The Secretary-General has been a powerful advocate of collective action to tackle this major threat to our planet and our future generations. It now falls to us, the Member States, to redouble our efforts to ensure a successful outcome to the Copenhagen Conference in December.

The promise that the United Nations embodies to tackle all these global threats can only be realized through continuing efforts to make this a stronger and more effective Organization. Ireland has played, and will continue to play, an active role in championing the reform agenda at the United Nations.

In the area of system-wide coherence, the reform agenda is already producing good results and helping to deliver a more effective and relevant United Nations. The One United Nations Initiative is delivering improved development performance at the individual country level. Ireland warmly welcomes the progress being made in the General Assembly and, in particular, the recent decision to establish a new gender entity to promote gender equality. I encourage early action to make the new entity operational during the Assembly's current session.

The need for greater progress on other parts of the United Nations reform agenda still remains. A positive start has been made to the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. But more urgency is required in transforming the Council to make it more representative and reflective of twenty-first century realities, as well as to improve its functioning and increase its transparency.

I would like to devote some time today to discussing the critical issue — indeed the scandal — that is hunger in our world today. Tonight, over one billion people will go to bed hungry and malnourished. That is one in seven people inhabiting the planet today. This scandal represents perhaps the biggest collective failure of mankind. In the last few days — during the past week in the General Assembly — world leaders have come together to discuss the most complex and

daunting of global challenges, including climate change and non-proliferation. Yet, the simple challenge of putting food into the mouths of everybody on the planet still remains beyond us.

I speak today as the representative of a country that has experienced famine and hunger and whose population was decimated by the Great Famine in Ireland in 1847. A year ago this week I accompanied our Prime Minister — our Taoiseach — here to the United Nations Headquarters to present to Secretary-General Ban the report of our Hunger Task Force. The key recommendation in that report was a call for global leadership to tackle hunger. I was therefore greatly encouraged last Saturday to see such leadership by Secretary-General Ban and United States Secretary of State Clinton aimed at constructing a road map to translate rhetoric and commitment on hunger into real action — and real action on the ground. The Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security initiative holds the promise of contributing to a world free from chronic hunger.

It is clear what we must do. We must tackle hunger in a comprehensive way and address the fundamental causes of hunger. We need to invest in agriculture and agricultural research and, in particular, to support women farmers. We need to invest in rural infrastructure, enhance nutrition and support national and regional plans. Ireland has placed food security and related sectors as a cornerstone of our aid programme. By 2012 we will ensure that 20 per cent of our aid programme is hunger-focused. We are well on our way to meeting this objective. But above all we need, at a global level, to summon the political will to end this scandal. Nothing short of the complete eradication of hunger on the planet should satisfy us.

Peacekeeping and the maintenance of international peace and security have always been central to the role of the United Nations. Ireland is deeply proud of the long-standing contribution that we have made to United Nations peacekeeping operations across the world. For over half a century, there has been a continuous tradition of Irish peacekeepers serving the cause of peace under the United Nations blue flag somewhere in the world. This goes to the very heart of our commitment to the United Nations and the values it represents — a commitment that is, I should say, an integral part of our foreign policy and that helps to define us as a nation.

It is clear, however, that both the Organization and contributing countries are being severely stretched in terms of the demands made by a steadily escalating number of peace support operations around the world. The Secretary-General's paper, "A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for United Nations Peacekeeping", is therefore a very welcome initiative, and we look forward to contributing to its early consideration by the General Assembly.

Regional organizations, such as the European Union and the African Union, play a vital role in helping the United Nations to fulfil its peacekeeping responsibilities. As the Secretary-General acknowledged when he visited Dublin last July, without the unique contributions of regional organizations such as the European Union, United Nations operations would not be able to achieve their goals and could, in fact, fail entirely. The successful transition earlier this year from the European Union-led force in Chad and the Central African Republic (EUFOR) to the United Nations Mission there shows how important and effective this partnership has become, as does the similarly successful transition to the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo.

In Ireland we have known the terrible human cost of conflict. The Irish Government has been developing over the past years a focus on conflict resolution work, building on our own practical experiences with the Northern Ireland peace process.

Complementing the work of others, especially the United Nations, we hope that we may be able to make a distinctive contribution to conflict resolution efforts in other parts of the world. As one example, we are engaging actively in Timor-Leste, using lessons derived from our own peace process to help increase confidence in policing and security arrangements in that country. I am also proud that, in relation to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the Irish Government is sponsoring a major lessons-learned exercise involving interactions between women from Timor-Leste, Liberia and Northern Ireland.

Building peace and ending conflict cannot be accomplished without also removing the very means of conflict. Last year, Ireland was proud to host the diplomatic conference that adopted the Convention on Cluster Munitions, a historic agreement aimed at banning the production and use of these most destructive of weapons. I warmly welcome the

considerable progress that has been made this year towards the Convention's entry into force. We now need fewer than 10 further ratifications to achieve this, and I urge all Governments that have not yet signed and ratified the Convention to do so at the earliest opportunity.

Ireland has always been strongly supportive of the leading role played by the United Nations in working to promote non-proliferation and remove the threat posed by nuclear weapons. Indeed, Ireland was the first country to sign and ratify the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Next year's Review Conference will be of critical importance for efforts to help strengthen the international non-proliferation system, at a time when the threats it faces have perhaps never been greater. We encourage all Member States to work actively and constructively to achieve a successful outcome, and Ireland will engage fully in that effort itself. Ireland also applauds and welcomes the renewed focus on nuclear disarmament. We encourage the United States and Russia particularly as they work towards a legally binding follow-on arrangement to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which expires at the end of this year.

Ireland would like to see the active engagement of the United Nations in monitoring human rights situations around the world maintained and strengthened. The Human Rights Council and other human rights mechanisms must be enabled to address the most difficult human rights situations in a timely and effective manner. Continued support will also be needed for the International Criminal Court and the international tribunals in their efforts to promote justice and combat impunity. Ireland urges the fullest cooperation by all Member States in this regard.

At the 2005 World Summit, the Assembly endorsed the important concept of the responsibility to protect. It is now imperative to take that work forward to put this concept into practical effect, based on the consensus resolution at the end of the sixty-third session (resolution 63/308).

Let me turn now for a moment to the situation in the Middle East. Ireland very much welcomes and supports the renewed international efforts made in recent months to reinvigorate the Middle East peace process with a view to bringing about a comprehensive and lasting peace settlement. Particular praise is due to the United States Administration and to the United

States Middle East envoy, George Mitchell, for their intensive engagement aimed at achieving the resumption of peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, as well as the promotion of peace between Israel and all of its neighbours. We are of course fortunate in Ireland to have had the benefit of first-hand experience of George Mitchell's formidable skills, patience and tenacity as a peacemaker, and we hope he can bring these unique skills to this particular process.

With our European Union (EU) partners, we stand ready to work closely with our Israeli and Palestinian partners and to support the United States and the Quartet in their efforts. It is vitally important that all parties contribute to confidence-building by fully honouring their commitments and obligations under the Road Map. This must include real efforts to halt all settlement activities and improve the living conditions of civilians on the ground in the Palestinian territories. Ordinary people must see in their daily lives the benefits that will derive from peace and must be encouraged to take risks for peace.

Nowhere is this more urgent than in Gaza. We wish to see all border crossings fully and immediately opened to normal commercial and humanitarian traffic. We have all been shocked by the violence and widespread civilian casualties that took place during the conflict in Gaza at the start of this year. There must be some form of accountability for the most serious violations of international law that occurred at that time. The Human Rights Council is now addressing this issue in considering the comprehensive report prepared by Justice Goldstone and his team (A/HRC/12/48).

Like many others in the international community, Ireland has followed recent events in Iran with mounting concern. We urge Iran to comply fully with all of its obligations and commitments in terms of protecting the basic human rights of its own citizens. It is equally urgent that Iran respond to the demands of the international community to cease uranium enrichment and to answer satisfactorily all questions regarding its nuclear activities, particularly in the light of the latest revelations regarding the previously undisclosed nuclear site at Qom. The international community is ready to engage with Iran and has made generous offers to do so. It is for Iran now to decide whether it wishes to pursue the path of engagement or to opt for increasing isolation. We very much hope that

the forthcoming discussions with Iran, to begin on 1 October, will mark the start of a constructive engagement on the major issues of international concern.

The continuing humanitarian tragedy of Darfur horrifies world opinion and simply cannot be ignored. I want to pay tribute to the United Nations and international humanitarian staff, who are working tirelessly and selflessly under the most difficult of circumstances. I think in particular of Sharon Commins and Hilda Kuwuki, two brave and dedicated aid workers with the Irish agency GOAL, who were kidnapped in Darfur on 3 July. The Irish Government is grateful for all the assistance we have received from the United Nations and others in our efforts to secure the release of these two women. We fervently hope that the day of their release from captivity is not far off. The people of Darfur and of all Sudan richly deserve peace. We must all collectively continue working to promote the United Nations-African Union mediation in Darfur, to support full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and to ensure that justice and the defence of human rights prevail throughout Sudan.

In Burma/Myanmar, Ireland condemns the recent conviction of Aung San Suu Kyi and again calls for her immediate release and that of all political prisoners and for the launching of a genuine, inclusive political dialogue. International pressure is needed on Burma's leaders, notably from other countries in the region, to change course and move to democracy.

In Sri Lanka, there remains an urgent need to improve the humanitarian situation of those fleeing the recent violence in the Tamil areas. The Sri Lankan Government must cooperate fully with the United Nations to alleviate the plight of those affected. It must also work for a political settlement which meets the aspirations of all communities in Sri Lanka.

Let me say in conclusion that, as the international community faces a formidable array of challenges, there has never been a greater need for the United Nations itself. With each new challenge that appears, the value of common action to address it at a global level becomes ever more apparent. There is a much clearer appreciation of this Organization's potential to deliver an effective response to these challenges. Let us seize the moment and work together to ensure that the

opportunity we have at present is transformed into real achievement on the ground.

We can all be justly proud of the record of the United Nations over the past half century. The challenge for us, the Member States, is whether we can mobilize the political will needed in order to ensure that the United Nations can deliver even more in the future. Ireland, for its part, commits itself to doing everything in its power to realize the full potential of the United Nations, this unique voice of the international community, in the pursuit of a much better and a much safer world.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Abubakr Al-Qirbi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Qirbi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Mr. Treki, permit me on behalf of Yemen and on my own account to congratulate you on your well-deserved election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. I am confident that your long experience in the area of diplomacy, in particular Arab and African diplomacy, will ensure your skilful and able conduct of our proceedings. I wish you every success in carrying out your noble mission. I also wish to congratulate Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-third session, on his efforts, which ensured the success of the various Main Committees of the Assembly. In addition, I thank the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts to consolidate international peace and security and advance the work of the Organization.

The Republic of Yemen is facing complex socio-political and development challenges, to which a number of factors have contributed, including the world financial crisis and its impact on Yemen's economy, as well as an acute shortage of resources as a result of declining oil production and low prices on international markets. We also face a growing population, combined with water shortages and limited commitments by our development partners to help us combat poverty by providing employment opportunities and decent livelihoods for the Yemeni population. Despite those difficulties, the Yemeni citizen has the smallest share of official development assistance when compared with citizens of other least developed countries. Undoubtedly, lack of development and rising unemployment and poverty

rates have created many challenges and difficulties for our Government.

The Government also faces other challenges, including, in particular, the rebellion by the Al-Hothi elements in the Sa'ada governorate, who abandoned the Zaidi doctrine, which is the second most prevalent religious sect in Yemen, to embrace the beliefs of the Shi'ite Twelvers sect. Although they had the right to do so as Yemenis, they exploited it to gain Shi'ite support and sympathy after they had carried out an armed rebellion against the Government. These subversive groups have committed terrorist and violent acts against citizens, targeted State institutions and facilities and hampered the work of local councils, calling for changes in our democratic republican system in order to return Yemen to the days before the 26 September revolution. The Government has been compelled to deal with these destructive groups, channelling a portion of its limited resources allocated for development towards fighting the saboteurs and re-establishing governmental authority and the rule of law throughout Yemen. The destructive acts carried out by these rebellious groups before the recent military operations against them caused the displacement of tens of thousands of citizens from areas affected by violence, which has recently increased as a result of military clashes.

As a result of its concern about the situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs), the Yemeni Government has addressed that humanitarian situation responsibly and in cooperation and coordination with international and civil society humanitarian relief organizations, providing secure camps and meeting the needs of IDPs for food and health care. Here, I wish to recall that our Government has declared two cessations of hostilities during the most recent military operations, the second of which was in response to the appeal made by the Secretary-General and humanitarian and international organizations for the opening of safe corridors for the provision of relief to refugees. However, the saboteurs exploited that ceasefire by increasing their attacks on our military forces, cutting off roads, planting mines and spreading false rumours about Government forces attacking the IDPs. The Government has established a committee to investigate the situation, although it is aware that there was no IDP camp in the area but rather a camp used as a supply centre and meeting place by the saboteurs,

who have violated five previous agreements and returned to violent actions.

I wish to highlight our commitment to the principles of guaranteeing human rights, protecting civilians from the effects of military operations and upholding the sovereignty of the Constitution and the rule of law in dealing with an internal situation caused by a group that is committing violent and terrorist acts in violation of the law and the Constitution.

This challenge is growing, as can be seen from the activities of Al-Qaida elements in Yemen and their attempts to consolidate their presence in Yemen and to target our country and other States in the region. Al-Qaida is supporting the saboteurs in Sa'ada, seeking to make their acts of violence and rebellion serve the interests of Al-Qaida in Yemen and to spread anarchy and instability. This highlights the need for continued Yemeni efforts to uproot terrorism and for continued international coordination among security and intelligence organs, so that extremism and terrorism can be defeated.

Meanwhile, a number of separatist elements are exploiting the atmosphere of democracy and freedom of thought and expression, the Government's respect for human rights, and economic difficulties and a low standard of living to promote their separatist agenda — which was rejected by the Yemeni people in 1994 — in an invitation to reject constitutional legitimacy and to conspire against the unity, security and stability of Yemen.

The level of expenditure required for our Government to impose the rule of law and combat terrorism has reduced the number of employment opportunities, decent livelihoods and educational opportunities for our young people and the chance to fight poverty. Therefore, we urge the international community, donor countries, international organizations and Yemen's partners to join an international alliance to combat terrorism. Once again, we call upon them to shoulder their responsibilities and provide generous support to Yemen in order to strengthen our development programmes to combat poverty and provide job opportunities, since development and economic growth are important elements in combating terrorism, reducing unemployment and achieving development. From this rostrum, we call on Yemen's partners and donors to

fulfil the pledges that they made at the November 2006 London conference in support of development.

The Republic of Yemen continues to strengthen the democratic principles of its political system, reflected in political pluralism, the peaceful handover of authority, freedom of expression, respect for human rights, growing decentralization, building local government with broad powers, electoral and constitutional reform and improving partnerships with civil society organizations. Those involved in political work in Yemen agreed to postpone for two years the parliamentary elections that were to be held next April in order to reform the election law and to introduce some constitutional changes with a view to reforming governance. For its part, the Government has introduced a system of broad local government involving the election rather than the appointment of governors with a view to bringing about further decentralization of authority.

The difficult humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation should remind all in this Hall that the international community has failed to secure the legitimate demands of the Palestinian people and to assist it in establishing its own State, and that it has ignored the suffering of the Palestinian people, the systematic violation of their human rights and the increase in illegal settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories. The unjust blockade imposed on the Palestinians in Gaza makes life a tragedy for the entire population of Gaza owing to the complete disregard of the practices of the Israeli occupation in violation of the relevant international resolutions and instruments, and in the light of the recalcitrance shown by the Israeli Government and its rejection of all initiatives aimed at moving the peace process forward, in particular with regard to the course adopted by the United States Administration to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. We call upon our Palestinian brothers to show a spirit of national responsibility towards their people living under the yoke of occupation by unifying and putting an end to their differences so as to benefit the Palestinian issue and achieve their goals.

The situation in Somalia calls for the international community to take more effective measures to achieve peace and security and to rebuild the institutions of the Somali State by urging the Transitional Federal Government to act in such a way as to contribute to the strengthening of peace and

stability in the Horn of Africa. Here, we welcome the efforts of the Transitional Federal Government to secure peace and to extend its administration throughout Somali territory. However, it urgently needs further support to enable it to serve the Somali people. We call on all Somali parties without exception to end their differences, to participate in national dialogue and to achieve reconciliation, putting the interests of the Somali people above all else.

We call on the external parties to stop interfering in Somalia's internal affairs. Instability in Somalia is adversely affecting all States of the region. The phenomenon of piracy and the increasing flow of refugees to neighbouring States, resulting from the instability in Somalia, are creating socio-economic and health difficulties for Yemen, as it bears the burden of caring for hundreds of thousands of those refugees. We call on the international community to help the Somali coast guard to protect the coasts and international maritime trade.

With regard to the situation in the Sudan and in Darfur, we welcome the mediation efforts of Qatar, Libya and Egypt to achieve peace in the Sudan. We support the efforts of the international community in bringing about the reconciliation of all opposing factions, and we reiterate our call for the decision of the International Criminal Court with regard to President Omer Al-Bashir to be overturned as it does not respect the sovereignty of the Sudan and hinders the efforts for peace in the Sudan.

Yemen condemns all acts of terrorism to which the Iraqi people are subjected, and we call on them to overcome their differences and to strengthen their national unity.

Yemen welcomes the efforts of the Secretary-General towards reforming the Organization. We reaffirm our position that the United Nations and its system should be reformed in order to achieve equitable representation and a better decision-making process that places the required emphasis on development, fighting pandemics, easing poverty and addressing environmental issues, which have a direct impact on the standard of living of millions of people. We must strive to bolster the Security Council's role in the maintenance of international peace and security; at the same time we must reform the Council and expand it to make it more representative, ensure that its deliberations are more transparent and rationalize the

use of the veto so as to avoid its abuse and double standards.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Government of Yemen, I would like to extend our appreciation for the good work of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in managing this Organization and in improving its work. I reiterate my congratulations to you, Mr. President, and wish you every success.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Norov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Mr. Norov (Uzbekistan): This session is being held at a time of unprecedented efforts made by States and international institutions to overcome the global financial and economic crisis. Unfortunately, the present state of regional and national anti-crisis programmes and the huge cost of their implementation do not yet guarantee the stabilization of the world financial market, growth of demand and the revival of economic activity in the industrial sphere.

In our opinion, effectively overcoming the global crisis and mitigating its consequences largely depend on the effectiveness and coordination of measures taken within individual States and by the world community as a whole — as well as, in particular, on the development of new rules to regulate financial markets that meet modern requirements, and on ensuring stricter control over the efficient use of enormous State and corporate financial assets by transnational and national banking institutions in order to avoid a new wave of inflation and economic bubbles and a collapse in the commodities and stock markets.

I would like to say a few words about the measures taken in Uzbekistan to mitigate and neutralize the impact of the world financial and economic crisis. Our own model of transition from a centralized plan and ideological system to a free market, which is based on five well-known principles, has played a key role in those measures and in ensuring stability during the 1990s as well as the balanced development of Uzbekistan's economy. Another element of success is our 2009-2012 anti-crisis programme, which is being carried out at this time.

Thanks to the measures taken, macroeconomic stability, steady annual rates of economic growth averaging 8 to 9 per cent, low rates of inflation, the wide-scale attraction of foreign investments and an

increase in the real level of income of the population have been ensured in the country in recent years. For the first half of 2009 and continuing throughout, gross domestic product growth amounted to 8.2 per cent.

From this high rostrum, I would like to speak briefly about problems related to the growing threats to environmental security. Those include not only the threats arising from global warming, but also the serious problems of possible technological accidents and risks posed by gigantic hydropower installations in the region, which could seriously undermine the fragile ecological balance of Central Asia.

We speak of these problems while keeping in mind the human-caused accidents at the world's largest hydropower stations and hydraulic installations caused by their inadequate design and operation — for example, the accident at the Sayano-Shushenskaya hydropower station in Russia. We who live in Central Asia are seriously concerned about similar large hydro-installations operating today in watersheds of the largest transboundary rivers — the Amu-Darya and the Syr-Darya — and providing water to the populations of all of the countries of the region.

The active manipulation of public opinion and attempts to attract wide-scale investments to build the two newest and largest hydropower stations — Rogun on the Amu-Darya river and Kambarata on the Syr-Darya river — are occurring today without taking into account the fact that the glaciers on the Pamir and Tian Shan mountains, which are the basic sources of water for these rivers, are shrinking every year. In addition, and of particular importance — even without considering the possible tragic consequences of potential technological accidents at these installations — is the knowledge that these territories have seismic ratings ranging from 9 to 10 on the Richter scale and are more prone to strong earthquakes.

In this regard, Uzbekistan will continue to insist that all planned construction of large hydropower installations in Central Asia be implemented only after impartial evaluation by international experts under the auspices of the United Nations in order to avoid possible catastrophic consequences. There is also an urgent need to re-evaluate the existing large hydropower stations on the Amu-Darya and Syr-Darya rivers that were constructed in the Soviet period.

The war in Afghanistan, where tensions are currently growing, is one of the main sources of

concern to the world community today and in particular of security threats in Central Asia. This problem and ways to resolve it are, without exaggeration, the focus of attention of the world's largest Powers and the international community today. It is no longer a secret that the Afghan problem, which began 30 years ago, has no military solution. The overwhelming majority of countries involved in settling the conflict agree on this.

It is impossible to improve and radically change the situation in the country without solving such urgent issues as the reconstruction of Afghanistan's economy, communications and social infrastructure destroyed by war; without involving the Afghan people in this process; without a thoroughly considered and seriously organized negotiation process and the achievement of consensus between the conflicting parties; and without strengthening the vertical power structure.

It is extremely important to pay full respect to the deep historical and ethno-demographic roots of the multinational people of Afghanistan, including the traditional values of Islam and of all confessions, which should be the main condition and guarantee of the negotiating process.

The settlement of the Afghan problem could be facilitated by the creation of the six plus three contact group under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of the plenipotentiary representatives of the States neighbouring Afghanistan plus Russia, the United States and NATO. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, has repeatedly emphasized that the implementation of this initiative involving neighbouring countries would allow the achievement of an accord both in and around Afghanistan.

The interdependence of regional and global problems necessitates close cooperation between the United Nations and such regional structures as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. In its capacity as the current Chair of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Uzbekistan intends to intensify interaction between the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization by turning the cooperation into a real partnership.

In the absence of the President, Mr. Christian (Ghana), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In our opinion, interaction between the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization should develop in such priority areas as security and stability and economic, social and humanitarian development, as well as other spheres of mutual interest. We believe that the effective combination of the United Nations great experience and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's potential will strengthen regional and international security and promote sustainable development in the countries of the region. In this regard, we call upon Members of the United Nations to support a draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, to be considered during the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

In conclusion, I would like to confirm Uzbekistan's commitment to developing constructive multilateral cooperation within the framework of the United Nations for solving the most topical issues on the international agenda.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Oldemiro Marques Balói, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique.

Mr. Balói (Mozambique): It is a great honour for me to have this opportunity to address the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session to share the views and offer the contribution of the Republic of Mozambique on some of the challenges facing the world today.

I would like, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on his unanimous election to preside over this session of the General Assembly. I assure him of the full support and collaboration of Mozambique for the successful discharge of his noble mission.

We pay tribute to his predecessor, Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann — a great sponsor of popular liberation — for the resolute manner in which he presided over the General Assembly at its sixty-third session, and for his tireless efforts in favour of and devotion to the poorest and most disadvantaged. Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann's engagement as an advocate for those suffering in the Palestinian territories and his strong leadership, demonstrated by bringing together the 192 Member States of the United Nations to address the financial and economic crisis, have given us a vivid example of how commitment and generosity, combined with vision and resolve, can

make a difference in bringing the international community together in the search for solutions to current global problems.

I wish to convey to this gathering the warmest greetings of His Excellency President Armando Emilio Guebuza, who could not be present today due to pressing national commitments. Indeed, on 28 October this year, Mozambique will hold its fourth general election. There will also be elections for provincial parliaments for the first time in the country's history. These elections attest to our strong political will and commitment to further strengthening democracy in the country, where the rule of law and the promotion and protection of the human rights of all Mozambicans unite us in our fight against absolute poverty and for peace, stability and sustainable development.

As a result of this enabling political environment, Mozambique has recorded steady economic performance and signals of economic stability over the past five years, with an average gross domestic product growth rate of 7.8 per cent. Poverty levels decreased from 69.4 per cent in 1997 to 54.1 per cent in 2003. As a result of our discernible progress in education, health, water and sanitation, we expect to reduce poverty to 45 per cent by the end of the current year. However, the current global financial and economic crisis is constraining our progress towards that goal; it was recently forecast that our economic growth may slow to 4.3 per cent in 2009.

In this context, the Government's focus is to ensure that the effects of the crisis, combined with cyclical natural disasters, as well as diseases like pandemic HIV/AIDS and endemic malaria and tuberculosis, are not deepened and do not create conditions that would prevent our return to the economic and social growth I just described. Mozambique welcomes the launching, here at the United Nations on 23 September 2009, of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance, and pledges to play an active role in support of this new mechanism aimed at coordinating our responses to the scourge of malaria.

Climate change is another pressing challenge. Therefore, we cannot afford to fail to seal the deal in December at the fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in Copenhagen. It is our hope that the commitments made during the Summit on Climate

Change, held on 22 September, will inspire the deliberations in Copenhagen.

In southern Africa, we continue our efforts towards regional economic integration, the consolidation of democracy, good governance and political stability. It is within this framework that progress has been made in the implementation of the Free Trade Area in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and that free and fair elections have been held in a number of countries in the region.

In spite of these advances, we continue to face challenges in many areas that still demand our attention, in particular those of peace, security and stability. In this regard, Mozambique, in its capacity as chair of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, will strive to ensure the success of the common regional efforts to eradicate pockets of instability so as to enable our countries to concentrate on achieving the social and economic development goals that our peoples are longing for.

We are encouraged by the progress made in the implementation of the Global Political Agreement in Zimbabwe, which is enabling the country to move towards an atmosphere of political and social stability conducive to permanent dialogue, reconstruction and economic recovery. The economic challenges facing Zimbabwe, associated with the current global economic crisis and the continued sanctions applied by some international development partners, make the desired rapid economic recovery hard to achieve. We therefore reiterate the SADC call for the removal of all sanctions against Zimbabwe.

We are concerned by the attempts to undermine the agreements signed in Maputo by all Malagasy political movements on 9 August 2009, and we condemn any unilateral decision that violates the spirit of the agreements. We reaffirm our support for the ongoing political dialogue in Madagascar and urge all political stakeholders to fully implement the Maputo agreements.

In addition to the subregional efforts to address the current situation of conflicts in Africa, a special session of the African Union was convened in August in Tripoli to consider a wide range of conflicts with a view to finding solutions and establishing consolidated and sustainable peace, security and stability on the continent. It is in this spirit that Mozambique commends and supports the ongoing initiatives at the

regional and continental levels aimed at promoting durable and sustainable peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Darfur and Somalia, among other areas.

With regard to the Middle East, Mozambique is encouraged by the prospects for an effective, viable and durable two-State solution for the Palestinians and Israelis, as well as for broader Arab-Israeli normalization as a result of the commitments made by relevant stakeholders during this general debate.

The time has come for us to act together at the national, regional and international levels to ensure the speedy and full implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. We reiterate our recognition of the vital role played by the United Nations in coordinating international efforts in the search for sustainable responses to the problems facing the world today.

In this regard, it is worth recalling the urgent need to accelerate the ongoing reform of the United Nations, including the reform of the Security Council, the revitalization of the General Assembly, and the process of reforming the United Nations system to make it more effective, efficient and coherent and thus more responsive to the development needs of developing countries. Indeed, as one of the eight pilot countries testing the Delivering as One initiative, Mozambique is fully engaged in the reform of the United Nations system at the country level.

Mozambique strongly believes in multilateralism, and that the United Nations is at the centre of it. We also believe that the United Nations is a special forum that brings together the universal aspirations for a peaceful, secure, stable and prosperous world, where the values of tolerance, respect for human rights and international cooperation for development are upheld.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate Mozambique's commitment to continuing to engage in international efforts to address issues of global concern, in particular the fight against poverty, the negative impact of climate change, and the promotion of sustainable development.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Edward Nalbandyan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia.

Mr. Nalbandyan (Armenia): I should like to warmly congratulate Mr. Treki on his election as

President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. We express our readiness to work with him to achieve the ambitious agenda ahead of us during this session. I should also like to extend our thanks to outgoing President Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann for his hard work during the previous session.

Each new session of the General Assembly provides an opportunity for us to share our achievements and concerns with each other, and to join our efforts in moving the global agenda forward. We are going through a truly challenging period. In the past year, we were all devastated by the impact of the financial crisis. The crisis left no corner of the world and no economic sector untouched. Many countries experienced unprecedented economic decline, which seriously challenged their hard-earned advances and prospects for attaining the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Armenia was not spared the dramatic effects of the ongoing financial crisis. However, the Armenian Government has done best to safeguard the socially vulnerable. No budget cuts have been made in the social sector.

We believe that our endeavours must be guided first and foremost by the need to mitigate the human costs of the crisis in order to avoid serious consequences for human security. We believe that an equitable global recovery requires the full participation of all countries, irrespective of their size and level of development, in shaping appropriate responses to the crisis. And we have to come together here, in this universal body, to take decisions that will help us overcome the past and build for the future, because there are still painful gaps separating the dreams of our people and their prospects.

In accordance with their respective mandates, the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies have an important role to play in advancing development in accordance with national strategies and priorities, and in assisting countries in achieving the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals. We understand that achieving these goals, the deadline for which is 2015, will require enormous efforts. The General Assembly will continue to address this issue during its sixty-fourth session, and Armenia is ready to contribute to the preparatory process for a high-level meeting on this topic in September 2010.

We have embarked on the process of United Nations reform in order to ensure that this forum can

better reflect present-day realities and to enhance its capabilities and effectiveness in addressing modern challenges. Armenia commits itself to strengthening the institutional capacities of the United Nations, supports the process of United Nations reform and is ready to make its contribution.

We have successfully agreed on several vital decisions, including the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council. We aspire to further advance the protection of human rights, in conformity with the obligations of Member States, and we see honest discussion within the Human Rights Council on outstanding issues and the sharing of experiences on how to overcome them as the true path to success in this respect.

We regard the prevention of genocide and the responsibility to protect as the key principles and cornerstones of the overall human security system. In this respect, we commend the report of the Secretary-General on implementing the responsibility to protect (A/63/677), which charts a course for the United Nations to prevent genocide, war crimes and ethnic cleansing by bolstering the capacities of the Organization.

As is rightly stated in the report, genocide does not happen all of a sudden. The instigators propagate intolerance and hatred, preparing the ground for violence. As survivors of genocide, we Armenians welcome all efforts to prevent and combat racist and xenophobic attitudes. We have done and will continue to do all we can to provide for continuous advocacy in favour of the prevention of genocide. The international community must be vigilant to the development of such situations and events, and demonstrate its ability to act in a timely fashion to prevent future tragedies.

We consider achieving the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation to be major elements of global and regional security systems. We must shoulder our responsibilities and work towards not only non-proliferation and the elimination of nuclear weapons, but also the elimination of the militaristic aspirations of some States. It is totally unacceptable that threats to resolve disputes by military means are made at the highest level, and that they are left unchallenged by the international community.

The Nagorny Karabakh peace process, which is mediated by the co-chairs of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

(OSCE), is moving forward. The Presidents and Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet regularly to discuss the principles of a comprehensive resolution of the conflict. Armenia is convinced that, in order to create an opportunity for progress in the peaceful settlement of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, the parties should commit to refraining from taking steps that could hamper dialogue and the peace process.

Azerbaijan consistently misrepresents the essence of the Nagorny Karabakh problem in the international arena, as it did two days ago in this forum, trying to downplay ethnic cleansing and its policy of violence against the people of Nagorny Karabakh. The international community will recall Azerbaijan's open aggression, large-scale hostilities and war against Nagorny Karabakh, in which it was also aided by mercenaries closely linked to terrorist organizations. These events ultimately claimed lives of tens of thousands of civilians.

We believe that there is a serious basis for the settlement of the Nagorny Karabakh problem if the provisions contained in the declaration signed by the Presidents of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia in November 2008; the declaration of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the co-chair countries of the OSCE Minsk Group; and the declaration adopted by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of all 56 OSCE member States in Helsinki in December, are met. Pursuant to these documents, the parties must commit themselves to the peaceful settlement of the problem through negotiations based on the Madrid principles of the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group.

The basic principles around which negotiations are currently being held are anchored in benchmark codes of international law as incorporated in the Charter of this Organization, the Helsinki Final Act and other relevant international documents. The international principles of the non-use and non-threat of use of force, of the self-determination of peoples and of territorial integrity are equally viable.

Some have long attempted to downplay the importance of the notion of the self-determination of peoples as a second-rate principle in the system of international law and as inferior to that of territorial integrity. I have to disappoint the advocates of double standards. The right to self-determination is an unconditional clause of international law; it is a

principle of liberty and of the freedom of any people to choose its future and fate, and to defend its collective rights whenever those rights and that future are jeopardized. If self-determination were a principle inferior to territorial integrity, there would have been only 52 Member States of the United Nations, instead of the current 192.

Trust and accountability among neighbouring States are guarantees of sustainable cooperation and durable security in any region. We in the South Caucasus have yet to witness that. Our region, in fact, is among the most sensitive hot spots on the world's political map, overloaded with a plethora of security threats and challenges. The region is devastated by conflicts and inter-State tensions, dividing lines and economic blockades. Closed borders and ruptured ties have become the norm of life.

However, a courageous act and a courageous response hold the promise of changing the situation for the better. The process of the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations was begun in September by the President of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan. That initiative on his part — known as football diplomacy — promises to bear fruit despite all difficulties. Over the past year, with the help of our Swiss mediators and other international partners, we have made progress towards opening our shared border, one of the last closed borders in Europe, and the normalization of our relations with no preconditions. We trust that the necessary political will shall finally overcome the mentality of the past and that the wisdom and courage necessary to taking the last decisive steps will prevail.

We have been most encouraged by the support of the international community. We are well aware of the fundamental and positive implications of the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations and of the opening of the border for the security and stability of the region.

We must reinforce the bridges between United Nations Member States, working out mutually beneficial and comprehensive security and cooperation plans. Our common objective should be the shaping of an environment that is safe and prosperous for all. To meet the political, economic, environmental and social challenges, we have to jointly muster our efforts, resources and political determination. Only together

can we successfully confront these challenges and push forward the international development agenda.

The Acting President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Maxine Pamela Omata McClean, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados.

Ms. McClean (Barbados): On behalf of my delegation, I am pleased to join the speakers who have preceded me in congratulating Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. He may rest assured of the full support and cooperation of Barbados as he carries out his important duties. I wish also to take this opportunity to express appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, for his leadership of the sixty-third session.

We meet at a pivotal moment in the history of the United Nations. Never since the founding of this Organization has our community of nations been tested by a confluence of so many devastating crises as we have witnessed in the recent past. It is therefore with a sense of honour, fully recognizing the responsibility entrusted to me and to all of us here, that I address this General Assembly for the first time in my capacity as Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados.

Barbados commends Mr. Treki for his choice of theme for this year's general debate, given the myriad crises that we face and the need for effective global responses. Indeed, the world is facing major economic, political and social upheaval. The threat of food and fuel scarcity, the worst economic and financial crisis in decades, the challenge of climate change and the influenza pandemics have all assumed an international and multidimensional character. Together, these have undermined the very foundations of our multilateral system, exacerbating already existing disparities.

The approach of the developed economies to this crisis has been to create national stimulus packages and to bail out their failing industries — in short, to turn to policies which address their domestic interests almost exclusively. Developing countries are suffering the brunt of the effects of the financial crisis created by greed and poor regulation in developed countries. Faced with stagnating or falling economic growth due to factors beyond our control, we are now left to deal with declining economic activity and a resulting rise in unemployment along with its resulting problems at a

time when we are forced to battle increasing debt and decreasing external trade and foreign investment revenues.

While we welcome the initiatives to create rescue packages for the least developed countries, there is a clearly demonstrated need to expand these initiatives to include a wider group of developing countries. Barbados is one of a small group classified as small, highly indebted middle-income countries, which has been overlooked, but which is deserving of international attention and assistance from bilateral partners and the multilateral institutions alike. As we discuss the effects of the global crisis and propose assistance for affected countries, there is a need to ensure that countries like Barbados are recognized within the broad category of small vulnerable economies.

Multilateral agencies such as the World Bank have established through empirical research and their ongoing interventions that these countries are unique in the openness of their economies and in their susceptibility to external shocks. However, this group continues to be excluded from concessionary financing and debt relief. Focus continues to be placed on per capita income data, which is a poor indicator of economic sustainability and national vulnerability. Our countries are in need of adequate support mechanisms with revised eligibility criteria in order to prevent the derailment of our development processes.

This crisis presents an opportunity for the developed economies and the international financial institutions to address the existing failures and shortcomings of the current financial system. The time is right for the crafting of a new, more transparent architecture that is supportive of development objectives.

Barbados, for its part, is extremely proud that despite its handicaps it has managed — through good governance and the observance of democratic principles, human rights and the rule of law — to provide an adequate standard of living for its people. However, this does not negate our inherent vulnerabilities, our limited resources or our restricted capacity to respond to the vagaries of the economic environment.

One of the major positive consequences of the current crisis is the increase in South-South cooperation, which has played a quiet but important

role over the years in promoting trade and investment among developing countries. This has served to enhance the value of such cooperation and presents great potential for future growth and development.

At the national level, an important lesson learned is that development requires the active involvement of communities, the public and private sectors and civil society. This has been clearly demonstrated in the implementation of our social partnership agreements, a strategy that has been very successful in the Barbadian context since the early 1990s and has been used as a model in other developing countries.

Recent world events have highlighted the importance of taking a multilateral approach to solving global problems. The United Nations is perhaps the institution best suited to the task of mobilizing global responses. Regrettably, over the past year the United Nations has been relegated to a subordinate role in the search for solutions to the ongoing economic and financial crisis.

Barbados will not be complicit in any effort to marginalize the United Nations, which has a unique and legitimate role in global economic decision-making and rule-setting. We will not join the sceptics in questioning the relevance or legitimacy of this vital multilateral organization. However, we will continue to be at the forefront of calls for its reform to ensure that it is fully equipped and empowered to assist Member States in confronting global challenges.

To date, efforts to reform the United Nations have been piecemeal in nature, largely uncoordinated and at times even conflicting. The extraordinary challenges we face demand comprehensive reform. This will require a level of transformation that equips the United Nations for the twenty-first century. At this session, priority needs to be given to securing commitment at the highest level to finalizing the reform agenda.

Security Council reform must be prioritized if effective change within the United Nations system is to be achieved. It is evident that the structure, composition and working methods of the Security Council fail to reflect current global realities. Barbados believes that membership in the Security Council should be expanded in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories. Our goal must be to ensure that the Council is more representative, democratic and accountable to the full membership of the United Nations without placing its effectiveness in jeopardy.

The reality of global interdependence is that our destinies are inextricably linked. We cannot retreat to isolationism or radicalism. We must, with a sense of urgency and purpose, create the multilateral infrastructure necessary to manage a complex and interdependent world. This new quest for a better and more effective multilateralism must be shared by all. Our collective effort must also seek to restore the role of the United Nations envisaged by its founders: "to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations".

In his address to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session, the Prime Minister of Barbados (see A/63/PV.12), The Honourable David Thompson, reaffirmed his belief in the positive role that small States can play in advancing the cause of international peace and equitable social and economic development and emphasized the importance of building an international system that operates on the principle of multilateralism and that respects the sovereign equality of States and the tenets of genuine non-alignment.

Barbados is concerned by the growing tendency of limited-membership groups to assume decision-making powers on issues affecting the entire international community without the consent or involvement of that community. We stand to squander the opportunities to create a fair and more equitable system of global governance if responsibility for rule- and decision-making remains vested in limited-membership groupings which are accountable only to themselves. No exclusive group of countries, no matter how big, powerful or rich, has a monopoly on solutions.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the International Criminal Court were all championed by some of the smallest members of the United Nations and represent just a few examples of the invaluable contribution that small States have made to strengthening multilateralism and providing solutions to complex global problems. Small States can be effective partners in the search for global solutions to the ongoing crises, and those countries must have a seat at the table when decisions are being made on issues of global concern.

In this regard, the targeting of small offshore jurisdictions in the wake of the global financial crisis on the pretext that these jurisdictions in some way contributed to the crisis represents an injustice worthy

of the strongest possible condemnation. For those who would wish to rewrite history, we must recall that the financial crisis had its origins in the developed world and resulted from excessive risk-taking, corruption, fraud and ineffective regulatory controls and oversight in those countries.

Barbados fully supports the proposal of the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to build upon the existing programme already in place within the United Nations to address issues related to international financial services. Specifically, we call for the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation on Tax Matters to be transformed into an intergovernmental subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council. The central goal of the proposed intergovernmental committee would be to give developing countries an effective voice when issues of cooperation on tax matters are being decided by the international community.

Small democratic States like my own are convinced of the need to ensure adherence to the rule of law and respect for constitutional norms. We are therefore compelled to register our deep concern at any interruption of the constitutional order of any sovereign State and the dangerous precedent this could create if left unchallenged by the international community. Barbados fully supports the position of CARICOM and the Organization of American States, which calls for the immediate reinstatement to office of the legally elected President of Honduras.

Barbados is equally concerned to ensure that, in our hemisphere, the relics of a past cold war era give way to a new spirit of regional partnership, in which diverse political systems can coexist in harmony. We are therefore heartened by the positive developments with respect to the reintegration of our sister Republic of Cuba into the mainstream of hemispheric affairs. We are hopeful that the renewed dialogue between the United States and Cuba will lead in the near future to the complete removal of the embargo and the normalization of relations between those two countries.

Barbados welcomes the support provided by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), which has been a vital tool for capacity-building in Haiti in the key areas of governance, the strengthening of the rule of law, and human rights. We therefore call upon the Security Council to extend the mandate of MINUSTAH so that

the international community can continue to provide support to the people of Haiti in their quest for sustainable peace and development.

As a small island, Barbados is aware of the grave dangers posed by climate change. The damage done to our coastline and coral reefs illustrates the potential threats that flow from the phenomenon of global warming. Such threats are not peculiar to Barbados, but are posed in myriad ways to nations across the globe, both developed and developing.

In three months we will meet in Copenhagen to decide on a course of action to address this global threat of unprecedented proportions. We know the catastrophic consequences of failing to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. What is required is a massive transformation of the way energy is generated and used to propel economic growth and development.

In Barbados we have committed to reducing our dependence on imported oil and have significantly increased our use of renewable energy. Furthermore, we have identified transitioning to a green economy as a national priority. We have established a number of key milestones and indicators to assess progress towards the achievement of that goal. We have undertaken those activities with minimal support from the international community, utilizing our own resources. We have been forced to divert an increased share of our national budget to finance adaptation measures. According to World Bank estimates, the total annual impact of potential climate change on all CARICOM countries is estimated at \$9.9 billion a year, or around 11.3 per cent of the total annual gross domestic product of all CARICOM member States and associate members.

The international community has a moral and ethical responsibility to support urgent and ambitious global action to provide adaptation funding for small island developing States. In the Caribbean, our ability to address climate change has been severely hampered by the effects of the global financial and economic crisis. An essential measure of success at Copenhagen, therefore, will be the extent to which the decisions that we take serve to ensure the survival and continued viability of small island developing States.

Before closing, permit me to seek the support of the General Assembly on an issue that has emerged as a crucial health challenge for many countries, including those of the Caribbean. Chronic non-communicable

diseases have become one of the major causes of morbidity. We believe that that issue must be included in the global discussions on development. We therefore support the call made by the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago for a special session of the General Assembly on that issue (see A/64/PV.5).

Finally, in these difficult times we have a number of challenging issues before us for consideration. Despite our various agendas and differing priorities, we share an ultimate common goal: to achieve peace, security and development for all the peoples of the world. Until that becomes a reality, no country is truly secure. I reaffirm Barbados' commitment to working with other Member States to attain that goal.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Chad.

Mr. Mahamat (Chad) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of my delegation and in my own name, I would like to offer the President our warmest congratulations on his brilliant election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. It would be remiss not to express our pride and our pleasure at the election of the representative of a neighbour country, brother and friend of Chad. I am referring to the brother Ali Treki of the great Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. With his qualities and his long and rich diplomatic experience, he will find it easy to lead our work with tact. Through me, the Chadian delegation assures him of its full cooperation in discharging his difficult but very lofty task.

I would also like to express our gratitude to his predecessor for having led the work of the sixty-third session with skill and perception. Allow me also to pay due tribute to our Secretary-General, His Excellency Ban Ki-moon, for his tireless commitment to the work of defending and promoting the ideals of our Organization.

From this rostrum, delegations at the sixty-third session deplored the food, energy and financial crises that had struck our countries, the consequences of which were felt differently according to each country's level of development. What conclusions should we draw after a year of intense mobilization, cooperation and work to overcome those crises?

For us poor States, those crises remain genuine obstacles to achieving the Millennium Development

Goals to which we all committed, in particular for the financing of our development strategies. Despite the great international mobilization, there is a risk that the poor countries will fail to meet the 2015 deadline. That is all the more worrying as the situation persists and remains the focus of international debates. The situation continues to also generate consequences that endanger the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, in particular official development assistance, commercial trade, the debt of the countries of the South and world trade.

We cannot say it often enough: the developing countries will continue to pay dearly for an economic crisis that they did not cause. The international community must therefore urgently step up its efforts to alleviate the difficulties that those countries face.

Another major issue of concern, one no less significant, is the negative impacts of climate change on the world in general and on developing countries, in particular the most vulnerable. There too our countries are victims of a phenomenon caused by the major greenhouse gas producers, which are the industrialized countries. We feel those effects daily as the greatest disaster for our environment, our agriculture, our livestock farming — in short, for the life of our populations in the form of famines and all kinds of illnesses.

The most significant example is the risk of the complete disappearance of Lake Chad if the international community does not resolutely commit to helping us save its world heritage. In 40 years, the surface area of Lake Chad has shrunk from 25,000 to less than 3,000 square kilometres. The countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission expect the international community to come to the support of their plan to save the lake, including by implementing the project to divert the waters of the Oubangui River in the Central African Republic to feed Lake Chad.

At the initiative of His Excellency the President of the Republic, the Head of State, Chad has committed to planting 10 million trees a year to fight desertification. That programme, which is part of the transcontinental project of the Green Great Wall initiated by the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States, needs the international community's support.

Turning to the issue of the settlement of disputes, while we welcome the progress made here and there, that is unfortunately not the case for the situation

prevailing in Darfur, which is of serious concern to my Government. Regarding the African continent, we reaffirm our support and our readiness to contribute to all joint actions of the African Union and the United Nations for the peaceful and lasting settlement of those conflicts. Indeed, we welcome the initiative recently undertaken by the Leader of the Libyan Revolution, President of the African Union, to convene in Tripoli a special meeting devoted to the consideration and settlement of conflicts in Africa.

With respect to the question of Palestine, we urge and encourage our Organization to continue with greater resolve its efforts towards backing the conclusion of a peace agreement providing for the peaceful coexistence of two sovereign States, in accordance with the principles of international law and of the United Nations Charter. This is an opportunity to welcome the commitment of the new American Administration, under the leadership of President Barack Obama, to restoring peace to that region long torn by war.

The new approach to international relations adopted by the American Administration should also lead to a new attitude towards Cuba, burdened for decades by an economic, trade and financial embargo that is no longer justified today. That is why Chad wishes the United States of America to rapidly lift the embargo, which runs counter to the new vision of the world and to the great principles championed by our Organization.

Turning now to the crisis in Darfur and our relations with the Sudan, we would again like to draw the Assembly's attention to the seriousness of the situation, which hangs over the security of our borders and threatens regional peace and security. The repercussions of that crisis for security in the camps for refugees and displaced persons in the east of my country, for the environment, which is already vulnerable in that part of the country in particular, and, in general, for the social and economic development of my country are quite evident.

The other consequence of that crisis, and not a minor one, is the phenomenon of child soldiers, who are very often recruited against their will by the various armed groups that hold sway in the region. During its various campaigns, the Chadian national army succeeded in freeing hundreds of such children and entrusted them to UNICEF for care and reinsertion

into civilian life. An inspection and awareness-raising campaign has been undertaken in varying barracks throughout the country in collaboration with UNICEF, the United Nations and a number of diplomatic missions present in N'Djamena to prevent this phenomenon and curb it where it already exists.

These are the reasons that lead Chad to cooperate closely with the United Nations and the international community to find a solution to that situation, which has lasted much too long. At the same time, this shows how wrong it is to believe that my country fuels the war in Darfur by giving support to Sudanese rebels there.

Additionally, we would like to reiterate our complete availability to cooperate with the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) for the fulfilment of its mandate in the east of our country. We condemn the delays in its full deployment in the field and the ensuing difficulties in ensuring effective security for vulnerable populations such as refugees, displaced persons and humanitarian workers. It is essential that parties involved in this Mission step up their efforts to make up for those delays, whose prolongation means daily danger for the populations that all of us must protect. We are very concerned by the uncertain future of MINURCAT, and we wonder what the national capacities might be to remedy the situation by strengthening the operations for maintaining order and security in zones covered by its mandate.

Regardless of MINURCAT's efforts, or the efforts of my country to improve the security of camps for refugees and displaced persons, a genuine settlement of the Darfur crisis can be only political in order to enable refugees and the displaced to return to their ancestral homelands.

That is why my country welcomes all initiatives undertaken by the international community in this regard. My Government has backed, and continues to back, the Qatar process and welcomes the untiring efforts by brother-leader Muammar Al-Qadhafi to secure a political settlement of the crisis and, more recently, to relaunch the Doha process. Along the same line, we also welcome the recent American and Egyptian initiatives.

The efforts of the international community to normalize relations between our country and the Sudan are also welcome. A great many agreements have been

signed by my country and the Sudan. All that remains now is to implement them.

The fact that we have welcomed refugees fleeing the war in Darfur and have facilitated actions of the international community to assist them should not be used as an alibi by our neighbour in any attempt to destabilize us.

At the national level, the Government of Chad, on the impetus provided by Mr. Idriss Deby Itno, President of the Republic, Head of State, continues political dialogue with the democratic opposition on the basis of the 13 August 2007 agreement. In this climate of shared trust we have just concluded a population census with a view to organizing free and transparent elections. A national independent electoral commission composed of representatives of the Government and the opposition has just been formed and has already started its work.

Despite repeated attacks by mercenaries and armed movements with support from abroad against our territorial integrity and the democratically elected institutions, the Government continues to advocate reconciliation and national understanding. A number of armed groups have regained legal status through implementing the Sirte Agreement of 25 October 2007. A great many others have committed themselves to this path, which we welcome.

In conclusion, I would like to express the support of my country for the appeal to this Assembly by the President of the African Union for a just and fair reform of the Security Council, a reform that would take into account the legitimate aspirations of the African continent and the evolution of the history of relations among States.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Alexandre Cécé Loua, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Guineans Living Abroad of the Republic of Guinea.

Mr. Loua (Guinea) (spoke in French): At the outset, on behalf of the Guinean delegation, which I have the honour of leading, I would like to pass on to the President, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, Secretary of African Union Affairs of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the congratulations of the Guinean people and Government on his brilliant election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. I would also like to convey the

congratulations of Captain Moussa Dadis Camara, President of the Republic, Head of State, President of the National Council for Democracy and Development and Commander-in-Chief of the Guinean armed forces.

My delegation is convinced that because Mr. Treki is a seasoned diplomat, our work will be crowned with success. We assure him of our full cooperation. I would also like to tell his predecessor, Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, how much my delegation appreciates his wisdom and the devotion with which he led the work of the Assembly at its sixty-third session. The Republic of Guinea salutes the remarkable work that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has accomplished at the helm of our Organization in favour of peace, development and prosperity in the world.

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

On 23 December 2008, all the people of Guinea enthusiastically welcomed the arrival of the National Council for Democracy and Development, the CNDD. Guinean armed forces decided to take the destiny of the country into their hands after the death of President Lansana Conté on 22 December 2008 in order to avoid the social implosion that would have damaged peace, security, stability, unity and harmonious development in the country.

Poor political and economic governance and its related effects of corruption, impunity, the consumption of and trafficking in drugs, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, organized crime and the abdication of republican institutions had considerably weakened the authority of the State. The National Council for Democracy and Development, faithful to its commitments, has undertaken specific actions, the results of which are encouraging.

Such actions include, inter alia, the preparation of a timetable for transition, designed and accepted by all parties involved on the basis of a participatory and inclusive dialogue, which should lead to democratic, free and transparent elections with a view to returning to constitutional order. There is also the fight against drugs and narcotics, against the embezzlement of public funds, organized crime and other social ills. Additionally, there will be a special programme to meet the basic needs of the population, including water

and electricity, as well as the beginning of reform of the security and defence sectors.

In this context, the National Council for Democracy and Development enjoys a close working relationship with national stakeholders. This synergy of activities has allowed for the establishment of an ad hoc committee that has evaluated and revised the transition timetable. Following the new timetable, the presidential elections will be held in January 2010 and the legislative elections in March of that year. In parallel, a relationship of trust and cooperation has been established with the International Contact Group on Guinea, whose mission is to accompany this process of transition.

The CNDD and the Government attach particular importance to the fight against drugs and narcotics in our country, which, unfortunately, in recent years has become one of the hubs of this trade in West Africa. The recent discovery of toxic substances and underground laboratories in certain towns of our country illustrates the seriousness of the situation. The bold operations undertaken by the new authorities have led to arrests within the highest echelons of the security and defence forces and the civil service.

The Republic of Guinea is seeking the support of the international community in this stabilization effort. We call for the application of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem adopted by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its fifty-second session, held in Vienna in March 2009.

The Guinean Government has also carried out activities to bring ethical management to the handling of public finances. In this area, audits have revealed many cases of financial misappropriation at high levels within the State. The funds recovered so far have been used to partially finance the programme to provide water and electricity for all, launched by the CNDD to improve the living conditions of the population. My delegation renews its call to development partners for increased material, financial and technical support during the period of transition in Guinea.

On behalf of the CNDD and the President of the Republic, His Excellency Captain Moussa Dadis Camara, the Guinean Government expresses its profound gratitude to all those who support its efforts in the framework of a peaceful, consensual and

successful transition. The Guinean authorities wish to thank all those who have shown their goodwill, in particular the leader of the Libyan Revolution and His Majesty the King of Morocco, as well as Their Excellencies the Presidents of Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Mali, for everything they have done in favour of unity, reconciliation and stability in Guinea. The Guinean authorities also express their thanks to all leaders from Africa and elsewhere who have been prepared to provide various kinds of help to ensure the historic and exemplary success of the transition process in our country.

The agenda of the Assembly's present session includes several recurrent questions, real challenges to the construction of a new world order founded on justice, solidarity and sustainable development. Realizing these aspirations remains dependent on the international community fulfilling its commitments to developing countries, which are bearing the brunt of the global economic and financial crisis. This is yet more necessary because, despite the progress that has been made in the fight against pandemics, illiteracy and extreme poverty, immense efforts are still needed for the full and harmonious achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Therefore, the establishment of a partnership that prioritizes the development of Africa through substantial increases in aid and investment flows is clearly indispensable. The question of foreign debt, which seriously compromises our efforts to eradicate poverty, merits particular attention. Furthermore, the low prices we receive for basic commodities, together with the unpredictability of nature, the harmful effects of human activity on the environment and climate change, all contribute to rendering African economies fragile and lead to precarious agricultural and food production.

With regard to peace and security, significant progress has been made in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. However, areas of tension still exist here and there, with the associated loss of human life, unspeakable suffering, destruction of property and flows of refugees and displaced persons.

In Africa, the peace and reconciliation process at the national level is making progress, thanks to concerted actions on the part of the African Union and subregional organizations, supported by the international

community, despite human rights violations and bad economic and political governance. In the Mano River basin, the success of the vigorous peacebuilding measures in Sierra Leone and Liberia gives us cause for comfort and hope. Through the implementation of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement, Côte d'Ivoire is consolidating its reunification and is in the process of organizing free elections. The Republic of Guinea supports this process.

Elsewhere on the continent, the successful holding of presidential elections in Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania augurs well for a new era, conducive to national reconciliation, peace, stability and progress. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations, the African Union and neighbouring countries are engaged in a dialogue that will without a doubt lead to the re-establishment of peace in the east of the country, which is a yardstick for stability, security and development in the Great Lakes region.

With regard to Somalia and the situation in Darfur, the international community must step up its efforts alongside the African Union in order to bring about a rapid and durable political solution.

Regarding the Western Sahara, while we welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy, my country welcomes the Moroccan initiative for the negotiation of an autonomous status for the Sahara region. We urge the parties concerned to find a mutually acceptable political outcome to this dispute.

With regard to the Middle East, Guinea remains convinced that solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict necessarily requires a comprehensive solution, leading to the creation of an independent, sovereign and viable Palestinian State living side by side and in peace with Israel within secure and internationally recognized borders, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the road map of the Quartet. The international community has a duty to ensure that this comes about.

In Asia, Guinea reaffirms its commitment to the principle of one China and to the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula.

Terrorist acts are proliferating throughout the world, indiscriminately affecting innocent victims, including women, children and the elderly. Those forms of barbarism and intolerance must be condemned in no uncertain terms. My delegation welcomes the

adoption by the United Nations of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We remain in favour of developing a comprehensive international convention against terrorism and hope that consultations on this issue will continue in a spirit of full cooperation.

My country continues to pay great attention to international efforts in the area of disarmament and weapons control. We express our support for the banning and total destruction of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, as well as the eradication of the trade in fissile materials. In Africa, the illicit and uncontrolled circulation of small arms and light weapons is a source of instability for States and of insecurity for the population. The Economic Community of West African States has adopted a convention on this issue with the objective of establishing a climate of peace through a framework for cooperation between member States for the systematic control and elimination of these weapons, which fuel civil wars. The success of this programme requires the commitment of all member States and the support of bilateral and multilateral partners.

The world finds itself facing a grave and unprecedented financial and economic crisis. Africa has not been spared the contagious effects of this crisis. The report of the Secretary-General details how our continent has seen setbacks in such crucial areas as economic growth, agricultural development, the eradication of poverty and the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

The time has come to rethink the international financial architecture in order to adapt it to the realities of the twenty-first century in terms of its representation of Member States and its working methods, as well as the equitable distribution of resources.

Innovative initiatives are essential in the areas of trade, official development assistance, debt alleviation, technology transfer and financing for developing countries in general and least developed countries in particular to enable them to benefit as much as possible from globalization. In that context, the commitments made at Monterrey, Johannesburg, Doha, London and Pittsburgh within the framework of the Group of 20 are grounds for hope. It is important that the Doha Round negotiations swiftly lead to an agreement on measures to promote development and put an end to abject poverty.

My country attaches the greatest importance to increasing and improving official development assistance and making it more predictable and more aligned with national priorities, in accordance with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

Guinea welcomes the progress made in implementing the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. Given the debt burden, we urge donors to work to strengthen resources and national and international capacities to support the strategies put in place to make the requirements for reaching its completion point more flexible.

The international community must fully support the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which commits the continent to developing infrastructure and promoting human rights, the rule of law, democracy and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The problems related to climate change have drawn the attention of all States because of the threat that phenomenon poses to humanity. Guinea, which occupies a central place in the implementation of policies and strategies for sustainable development and the restoration of ecological balances in West Africa, is aware of the seriousness of the situation and the urgent need for action. My delegation strongly calls for concerted and courageous international action to put an end to the paradox wherein countries and populations that have contributed least to global warming are suffering its most serious consequences. We hope that the forthcoming Copenhagen summit will meet the great expectations of humanity.

In addition, particular attention must be accorded the problems related to migratory flows and the many issues underlying them. It is only by promoting effective solidarity that we will be able to manage migratory flows.

Today's world is beset by swift, complex and profound changes. Peace, development and the interdependence of nations remain undeniable realities and factors essential for a prosperous world of solidarity. Therefore, multilateralism is the only viable alternative for addressing the global challenges facing humanity. My delegation remains convinced that the present session will further strengthen the role and the activities of our universal Organization in the defence of just causes.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Rufus George Bousquet, Minister for External Affairs, International Trade and Investment of Saint Lucia.

Mr. Bousquet (Saint Lucia): I wish to express the warm congratulations of the delegation of Saint Lucia to Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on his election to serve as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. With his vast diplomatic experience, we are most confident that this session will yield significant results in advancing the agenda of the international community through this most universal of institutions, the General Assembly, which has been rightly described by his predecessor, Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, as the "Group of 192". We express our appreciation for the work of Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann, who succeeded in further elevating the Assembly so that it could regain its rightful place as the parliament of the world. We pledge to work with Mr. Treki in the furtherance of that approach. We also thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless efforts on behalf of us all.

When developing countries agreed to the ambitious but necessary Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the internationally agreed development goals, few, if any, foresaw that the winds would be contrary, the storms fierce and the course ahead so challenging. We are more than halfway to the 2015 deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and Governments in the developing world are still struggling to meet their objectives. That situation, of course, is the result of developing countries facing unforeseen economic hardship as a result of crisis after crisis that for the most part are not of our own making. While the developed world appears to be in the infant stages of recovery, the developing countries are still in the wake of this crisis and are struggling to find calmer waters.

In that connection, it is important that the Doha Round of trade negotiations be reshaped as a development round, with emphasis on substantially reducing the tariff and non-tariff barriers that have been imposed by developed countries, especially regarding agricultural products.

The matter of substantive debt relief to permit the developing countries to utilize their limited resources for national development must also be given the most serious consideration. The MDGs are still achievable,

but the developed countries must meet their agreed commitments if those objectives are to be attained in a manner consistent with the global timetable.

While all of the MDGs are relevant to the development aspirations of the people of my country and of the region, we believe that education, poverty alleviation and the strengthening of institutions for good governance are pivotal to this process. These must form the bedrock for overall development. So, despite sluggish advancement towards the achievement of all the Goals, we have made significant progress in the areas of poverty and hunger, universal education and gender equality. My own country boasts gender parity in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, a long-standing problem in our region.

Despite such progress, continued improvement is required in the other priority areas of reducing child mortality and promoting maternal health. Unfortunately, as I speak here, my Government is grappling with the loss of a hospital on the southern part of the island that burned down two weeks ago, with loss of life. We have launched an appeal for assistance and hope that those most able to do so will help generously.

We in Saint Lucia are observing the current global state of affairs through bifocal lenses; we see both challenges and opportunity — an opportunity to take bold new steps and think outside the box in tackling the issues that confront us. The right mix of appropriate policy interventions, strong political will and strategic partnerships supported by development stakeholders is certain to help countries such as Saint Lucia achieve the Millennium Development Goals in a timely manner. Therefore, hope is not completely lost.

Higher prices for food, fuel and other essentials forced most Governments of developing countries to divert already scarce resources in order to subsidize those commodities for the poorest in our societies. That then put pressure on their ability to repay debts and, together with mismanagement within the world financial sector, triggered a global financial and economic crisis.

The world conference held here at United Nations Headquarters last June to assess the worst global economic downturn since the Great Depression succeeded in identifying immediate and long-term measures to mitigate the impact of the crisis, especially on developing countries, and to begin the necessary

international deliberations on the restructuring of the international financial architecture. Saint Lucia and the rest of the Caribbean Community welcomed the initiative, and we participated fully in the deliberations.

Saint Lucia therefore supports the measures called for in the outcome document (resolution 63/303, annex) to sustain the initiative while also providing the machinery necessary for the continued monitoring of the world economy. To that end, we emphasize the importance of strengthening the capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations and of making the international financial institutions more compassionate in their responses and their assistance to national development strategies. We look forward to analysing the report of the ad hoc open-ended working group of the Assembly on the implementation of the mandate, as well as the reports of the Secretary-General on the global food security crisis, the International Labour Organization report on the Global Jobs Pact and the contributions of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to the new development financing agenda.

The most pressing issue and challenge facing Saint Lucia, and indeed the rest of the world, is climate change. It has emerged as the most serious developmental challenge facing mankind today — hence, the demands for collective action and an urgent response. We are extremely concerned that the adverse effects of climate change are constantly altering access to basic resources such as land, water and food. Decreased accessibility threatens social security, a daily reality for many of us around the world. We may not disappear, as the Maldives will, if nothing is done, but it will certainly be expensive to survive.

On 21 September 2009, heads of member States of the Alliance of Small Island Developing States (AOSIS) adopted a declaration on climate change that spelled out some of the pressing issues that need to be addressed by all States. Before that we had the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action; the final communiqué of the 1999 AOSIS Heads of Government Meeting; the outcome document of the General Assembly's special session held in 1999 to review and assess the Barbados Programme (resolution S-22/2), and the adoption in 2005 of the Mauritius Strategy for Further Implementation. All represented extensive legislative authority for concerted international action and clearly set forth the position of the most vulnerable States.

That extensive mandate provides the framework for a strategy to arrest the impact of climate change that can lead to the emergence of a sustainable world for present and future generations. The 2007 high-level event on climate change, held to discuss “The future in our hands: addressing the leadership challenge of climate change”, was also instructive in reinforcing the mandates of earlier sessions. Alas, it seems the rest of the world has not seen the urgency for action.

For our part, Saint Lucia and other Caribbean States have pledged to take voluntary mitigation measures to ensure our collective survival. We are working assiduously to formulate policies and review legislation to develop our renewable energy potential in wind, solar and geothermal power. We will intensify efforts to preserve our limited forest cover, which serves to protect our water supply and biodiversity and is an important factor in carbon sequestration. For us these are critical survival measures.

Saint Lucia has joined with other CARICOM member States to establish early-warning systems for predicting disasters such as floods and hurricanes. CARICOM heads of Government have also adopted the Liliendaal Declaration on Climate Change and Development, which expressed the commitment to protect the region's marine resources and ecosystems and work towards fulfilling the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change objectives.

While these sustainable development practices have long-term benefits, the financial investment required to support them is very onerous for small island developing States. We have indicated that our Governments have been proactive; however, the small island developing States still need financial support to enhance their capacity to respond to challenges brought on by climate change. Let me reiterate that these problems are not of our doing. Lack of access to cost-effective, affordable and environmentally sound technologies significantly threatens to stall or reverse progress already made. Nor will mitigation be enough if not supported by adaptation measures. We therefore urge States to fulfil their commitment to the Adaptation Fund, which will help us cope with changes that have made life difficult for many peoples.

We the small island developing States and least developed countries have joined together to demand, appeal and even beg, if necessary, that the new Copenhagen climate agreement limit temperature

increases to the attainable level of 1.5 degrees Celsius, as it is possible that anything above that will be devastating to our very existence. We urge other inhabitants of planet Earth to be understanding and cooperative as we work to seal the deal in Copenhagen. If we cannot reverse or slow the effects of climate change, all other activities, as noble as they may be, will be useless to mankind.

Our efforts to advance our own development progress are sometimes derailed because of a lack of resources and a peculiar grouping that excludes many States from access to certain types of aid, loans and/or development assistance currently available only to least developed States — ironically, because of our success in managing our affairs. It would appear that we are being punished for being prudent in the management of our limited resources.

Middle-income countries like Saint Lucia continue to face significant challenges in reducing poverty, servicing debt and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. My Government is pleased to note that the United Nations and the international financial institutions have recognized that there is a need to address the development needs of middle-income countries and to reinforce global support for their development efforts. We are cognizant that this group of countries is not homogeneous and that individual economic and social circumstances must be taken into account. However, as a group, we deserve greater attention from the donor community and the United Nations system. We hope our pleas do not fall on deaf ears, and that assistance will not come too late.

While we bemoan the slow pace of assistance from the North, we appreciate the efforts of our traditional friends — the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, France, the European Union, Japan, to name a few — to meet their official development assistance targets and agreed commitments. However, the significance of cooperation among developing countries cannot be overlooked. South-South cooperation has become an effective tool for economic development and foreign policy and constitutes one of the most important dimensions of international cooperation for development, particularly in the context of globalization and liberalization. South-South cooperation is also an imperative to complement North-South cooperation and strengthen the institutional capacities of the countries of the South to engage in sustainable development practices. An ever-

changing global landscape has impelled developing countries to take initiatives to safeguard one another's common interests, since they possess diverse assets that can nonetheless be complementary.

That has been our goal within CARICOM, and we thank the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for so often leading the way on such matters. The Government of Saint Lucia also wishes to express its gratitude for the assistance provided by the Republic of Cuba, whose international medical assistance programme has served the people of the region, the wider hemisphere and beyond. And we express our appreciation for the support we have received from other countries in our region, including the Latin American States of Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela, to name a few.

The historic cultural ties between Africa and the Caribbean are well known, and cooperation between our two regions is being strengthened through recent developments such as the African Union Diaspora Initiative and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States Secretariat. We in Saint Lucia have received support from the Kuwaiti funds to assist in infrastructure development. In short, we are reaching out to the world for cooperation and collaboration in the advancement of our development efforts, within the framework of respect for each other and for humankind.

That is why the Government of Saint Lucia joins with other delegations in extending our deep condolences to the Government and people of Taiwan following the devastation and loss of life caused by the disastrous Typhoon Morakot in August. Taiwan has assisted Saint Lucia in the areas of education, agriculture, health and other fields critical to our development efforts. Their assistance in agriculture, especially, has enabled us to improve our output and position ourselves for breaking into the food export market. Taiwan has extended a helping hand to all those who have requested it. It seeks only to be part of the family of nations and to share its knowledge and expertise with the rest of the world. That is not too much to ask. We are pleased to note that some positive steps have been taken in this respect, and we hope they will continue, with other agencies opening their doors to participation and thus to enable 23 million people to make their contribution to their fellow human beings and to realize their aspirations, as we in Saint Lucia did 30 years ago.

We also extend our sympathies to the Government and people of the Philippines for the loss of life and destruction caused by Typhoon Ketsana three days ago.

Saint Lucia joins with other CARICOM countries in expressing profound concern and deep disappointment with the decision by the Administering Power to dissolve the Government and legislature in the non-self-governing territory of the Turks and Caicos Islands, an associate member of CARICOM. We call for a speedy return to democratic governance, without which the territory's participation in the regional integration process will be in jeopardy.

Economic diversification for small States is critical to their ability to remain competitive in an ever more globalized economy, and many small States have developed vibrant financial service industries that have evolved as clean, competitive industries in a world economy increasingly dependent on services. Clearly, the competitiveness of tax rates and international tax compensation are fundamental tools of globalization and represent one of the few areas where small States have been able to enter this new economy from a competitive position. To this end Saint Lucia joined with other CARICOM States last July in adopting the Liliendaal Declaration on the Financial Sector: A New Framework for Financial Regulation and Supervision in the Region.

It is important to note that the regional policy contains provisions for continued improvement in standards for disclosure, transparency and corporate governance for both public and private companies. However, despite our best efforts, international financial centres in the Caribbean and elsewhere have recently been under intense pressure from high-tax nations. Saint Lucia joins our regional partners in continuing to enhance transparency by the strengthening of regulatory frameworks. We stand with our CARICOM colleagues in calling for equitable treatment in accord with that granted to the developed countries and other preferential jurisdictions.

It matters little if we are rich if we are insecure in our homes and our country. And that is why in recent years the issue of small arms and light weapons has emerged as a major source of concern to us. Small developing States like Saint Lucia continue to be threatened by the disturbing spread of small arms. The illicit introduction of those weapons into our societies

has created a heavy burden in our region, which has seen the emergence of an unacceptable level of gun violence, worsened by the social distress caused by the economic and financial crisis. Saint Lucia reiterates its support for the implementation of relevant General Assembly resolutions addressing the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, most recently resolution 63/72 of 2 December 2008. Saint Lucia wishes also to express its continued support for the full implementation of the international instruments to enable States to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons in a timely and reliable manner.

On top of all our financial problems it seems we are asked to bear an unfair burden in relation to world peace and security. While ensuring an effective funding mechanism is the collective responsibility of the membership, we concur that the future scale of assessment should be constant, simple and transparent. We fully support the view of the Committee on Contributions that the scale should be based on gross national income data, as that is the most accurate reflection of one's capacity to pay.

In the face of all the challenges outlined above and in this present state of world affairs, it is no longer pragmatic to utilize attenuated financial and technical assistance schemes designed many years ago. They have given way to development challenges that are often of astronomical size as well as nebulous, necessitating long-term, cumulative responses. In short, the world is in crisis-management mode, and that is seriously affecting the ability of developing countries to move forward and onward to progress.

However, crisis management must be undertaken with sustainable development in mind and integrated into the policymaking processes by both donor and recipient countries. Coordination and collaboration, therefore, are essential within and among Governments, organizations and local communities if a sustainable and forward-looking approach is to be achieved.

We chose as our theme for this session of the Assembly "Effective responses to global crises: strengthening multilateralism and dialogue among civilizations for international peace, security and development". I hope that this body, made up of a diverse group of countries, will work together towards achieving the goals to which we all aspire.

Like Jason in his good ship the Argo, fair Helen — Saint Lucia — will brave the seas, chart a new course and take our people to the heights of development and dignity that befit a country that has produced two Nobel Laureates.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Fander Falconi, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Integration of the Republic of Ecuador.

Mr. Falconi (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ecuador hails the choice of Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. We believe his broad experience in the international scene augurs success in the work of this Assembly. Ecuador wishes especially to commend the former President, Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, for his determination in democratizing this Organization and for his unswerving commitment to the poor and the voiceless of this planet.

The central theme of this general debate — strengthening multilateralism — is the very purpose of the United Nations. This Organization is called on to be the expression of horizontal, democratic and respectful relations among the countries of the world, under the strictest observance of the principle of equal sovereignty among States.

However, with its current structure and operations, the Organization has not been able to respond to the great challenges of the twenty-first century. For that reason, it is urgent to strengthen its structural reform. The Security Council must be more representative, democratic and efficient. To achieve that, we call on all Member States to make a commitment to achieve true substantial transformation this year in the Council's composition and its working methods. Likewise, our country believes that the General Assembly, as the most democratic and universally representative body, must fully assume the role established for it in the United Nations Charter. It is essential to move forward on substantial agreements that can lead us to a real revitalization of the Assembly.

Along the same lines, Ecuador is committed to regional integration processes as mechanisms of coordination, cooperation and solidarity among peoples. We therefore take on with great dedication and enthusiasm the pro tempore presidency of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), as an opportunity to contribute to integration through a welcome

mechanism to promote democracy and collective welfare in a coordinated and consensual manner.

Latin America and the Caribbean have understood that the best way to face today's challenges is through effective multilateral action. Our region is undergoing an intense process of integration based on solidarity and cooperation. That process is demonstrated in such vital regional forums as the Rio Group, UNASUR, the Bolivian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) and the Caribbean Community. Those groups engender the most diverse proposals and initiatives designed to construct common agendas on social, cultural, political and economic matters, in order to build a new development strategy that is more inclusive and less predatory.

Every integration effort requires the recognition of the principles of equality and sovereignty of States. Therefore my country applauds the reversal of the unfair exclusion of our sister Republic of Cuba from the Organization of American States (OAS). We have settled part of Cuba's debt, but despite repeated calls on the part of this Assembly over the past 17 years, the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against that brother country remains in place. The blockade is contrary to the great principles of international law, and its continuance is still severely affecting the well-being and dignity of the Cuban people.

Latin America and the whole world have taken a stand with the historic General Assembly pronouncement (resolution 63/301) condemning the coup d'état against the legitimate Government of the Republic of Honduras. The international community has categorically and unanimously rejected this attack against democracy and against all the practices of peaceful coexistence between peoples. We therefore insist on the immediate restitution of President Zelaya, as well as on the protection of his physical person and an immediate end to the repression of the Honduran people. We echo the resolutions of the United Nations, the OAS, the Rio Group, UNASUR, the European Union, ALBA and the many other international organizations that have made decisive statements on this subject.

I would also like to mention the declaration made by the 61 heads of State and Government of South America and Africa who met on Margarita Island, Venezuela, on 26 and 27 September, in which we

condemned the coup d'état in Honduras. In that document, we also express our support for the Security Council meeting held on 25 September 2009, which highlighted the issue of the security of the Brazilian embassy in Tegucigalpa, where President José Manuel Zelaya has legitimately been taking refuge since 21 September and which has been subject to an unjustifiable military and police barricade.

We call on the international community to act together to adopt strong measures that guarantee the restitution of democratic order in Honduras in order to promote an election process of some kind and recognize the authorities that are elected as a result of such a process.

Today, we are facing a systemic and multidimensional crisis that jeopardizes not only the balance of an economic system but also the very survival of human beings. The food crisis, the energy crisis and the scandalous financial crisis are clear symptoms of the fact that the system does not work and must be re-invented.

One of the most obvious facets of the overall crisis is the economic and financial crisis. Although this crisis originated in the main speculative markets of the rich countries of the North, that is, the casino economy, its effects have been multiplying and expanding in developing countries.

Nevertheless, the current financial crisis is only a symptom of a larger crisis — the crisis of a system that favours the financial and speculative economy over the real economy. It is also the result of an international financial architecture that is unequal, non-inclusive and inefficient and that must be reformed urgently. Ecuador proposes that the crisis does not require merely technocratic reform but a profound change of our economic model.

For that reason, my Government strongly supported the decision of the General Assembly to hold, this past June, the high-level Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development. At the Conference, Rafael Correa, President of the Republic of Ecuador, became the main voice of the countries of the South advocating for a comprehensive reform of the current world economic order, which jeopardizes the life and the well-being of millions of people around the planet. President Correa also proposed to democratize and redefine the international financial architecture.

At that Conference, important steps were taken in recognizing the fundamental role of the United Nations in the reform of the international financial system and architecture. We welcome the fact that the Conference acknowledged regional and subregional agreements as integral parts of multilateral responses to the current crisis.

I have the honour of announcing one such response in this forum. This past Saturday, 26 September, at the South American and African summit that took place on Margarita Island, our countries signed the constitutive act of the Bank of the South, which will start out with a declared capital of \$20 billion and a subscribed capital of \$7 billion. The Bank will be a multilateral financial entity aimed at supporting human development in South America. This agreement was reached at the summit of South American and African countries. This important event was part of the proposal put forward by my country on the creation of a new international financial architecture based on a series of regional responses.

In addition to this achievement, we must mention initiatives such as the creation of a common Latin American reserve fund, the establishment of a regional system of payments as a prelude to the creation of a regional central bank and the consolidation of a common monetary system that will create an electronic currency to facilitate our trade. The good news is that we have begun to take fundamental steps in the establishment of the Centralized Payment Compensation System, called SUCRE, which will soon enter into force within ALBA.

We reiterate our reservations concerning the actions undertaken by international credit institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, since they have collaborated actively to take strong economic and political measures against certain nations. We also reject, on the basis of the principle of sovereignty, the relationship between the World Bank and arbitration centres such as the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes, which has only served to pass judgment on and penalize certain parties and to benefit transnational interests over national interests.

For our countries, the restructuring and relief of our external debt is more urgent than ever. We cannot continue to give higher priority to paying off external debt than to financing a recovery in production and development.

We have an enormous task ahead of us with respect to the effects of the crisis. The General Assembly working group on the financial crisis will be the ideal mechanism through which to follow up on the implementation of the commitments and tasks that arose out of the Conference last June.

This crisis has shown that capitalism as a model for economic and social relations is not viable. It has also highlighted the imbalances in the relationships between society, nature and the economy. One of the most obvious examples of this is the imbalances that are to be found in the way that the issue of climate change is dealt with.

This past week, a high-level Summit on Climate Change was held in this very Hall. I must frankly state that it was a great disappointment. Empty rhetoric abounded, and no commitments were undertaken, with few exceptions. As a result, our response to the issue has been nothing more than inadequate and, at times, irresponsible. Even worse, we heard repeatedly last week that the major challenge is how to maintain economic growth without affecting the environment — that is, how to preserve the current system, with a few cosmetic adjustments. We believe, however, that we need to completely transform the means of production and consumption and not simply promote further growth without stopping to take stock of where we are.

The principle of shared but differentiated responsibilities, as contained in the Framework Convention on Climate Change, recognizes that rich nations and the elites who consume too much are the major causes of this scourge and that they must therefore assume a large proportion of the costs of reducing emissions. Wealthy countries must make additional efforts to decrease their greenhouse gas emissions, beyond the reductions already brought about by the economic crisis.

Reducing emissions is urgent but not sufficient. Adaptation measures must be identified, in particular in vulnerable countries and countries that lack the economic resources to deal with the impacts of climate change. We are not speaking about donations or credit being offered for adaptation efforts. Reparations must be made that recognize the ecological debt and take into account the historic responsibility for the excessive emissions of the past several decades, when the greenhouse effect was already recognized. Serious studies on the subject estimate that this would amount

to at least \$50 billion dollars a year over 20 or 30 years.

We demand that the countries of the North comply with and strengthen the commitments they undertook in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and Kyoto Protocol regarding measures for adaptation and mitigation, the development and transfer of technologies and their financing. However, we recognize that we have a shared responsibility to provide responses to the climate crisis. For this reason, Ecuador has offered significant proof of its commitment to this issue. I would like to briefly mention four initiatives that my country has undertaken.

The first initiative, and the one that provides the guidelines and foundation for Ecuador's international environmental policy, is the Yasuni Ishpingo-Tambococha-Tiputini (Yasuni ITT) initiative, an innovative project that was introduced by President Rafael Correa at the 2007 United Nations Climate Change Conference and that breaks with traditional discredited approaches. Ecuador has decided to keep a considerable amount of its proven oil reserves underground — about 850 million barrels of crude — in order to pursue three important goals. The first goal is to prevent the pollution that would result from the emission of 410 million tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. The second is to protect the indigenous peoples who live in the Yasuni National Park, the Taromenane and Tagaeri peoples. The third goal is to preserve biodiversity. In that connection, an international trust fund will be established in the coming weeks as a financial mechanism to enable us to receive international contributions and invest them in conservation and sustainable development initiatives for the country, in line with the development goals laid out in our national development plan.

The second initiative is the Forest Partners Programme, which is an initiative that provides economic incentives to indigenous peoples and rural farmers to protect our forest. This will enable us to protect 20 per cent of our total forest areas until the year 2015.

The third initiative is a programme to transform the energy grid, aimed at ensuring that the main sources of energy used in the country are renewable and sustainable. One of the projects undertaken under

this programme is being carried out in the Galapagos Islands, a world heritage site for humankind, with the goal of achieving 100 per cent clean energy sources on the archipelago by 2015.

Our fourth initiative would take place in the context of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and proposes the introduction of an eco-tax of approximately 3 per cent on oil prices, in order to bring about a decrease in demand and thereby a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. This proposal was first put forward by Herman Daly, an environmental economist, and subsequently taken up and presented to OPEC by President Rafael Correa. The revenue from the proposed eco-tax would facilitate, under the administration of a body such as the United Nations, projects to facilitate the conversion of the energy grid to using renewable energy.

Ecuador believes that this time of crisis represents an opportunity to make radical changes that will allow us to transform our societies from their current model, which is based on competition and on irrational and unsustainable habits of consumption that prioritize merchandise over people, into societies based on human beings living in harmony with themselves, with their fellow human beings and with nature.

For us, land, nature and the physical environment are essential components of the fundamental principle of our constitutional ordering of well-being, or “sumak kawsay”. This principle of well-being implies living with dignity according to our cultural values and in harmony with nature and is the basis for the economical and social policies that my Government is embracing in order to overcome social inequalities.

We would also like to highlight, once again, the gravity of the food crisis. In an era where the technology to produce sufficient food exists, there is hunger in the world. This is due to the fact that access to food is dominated by the large transnational agricultural companies that control the global market. In addition, subsidies and other distortions on trade have a serious impact on agriculture in countries of the South.

We firmly support the convening of the World Summit on Food Security, which will take place in Rome during the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly and is aimed at reaching agreements on assigning priority to the right to food security and

sovereignty over the pursuit of profit and the drive to maximize gains.

In order to achieve the targets defined by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as the minimum required for survival and well-being, those Goals must be complemented by decisive support from the countries of the North aimed at increasing official development assistance and international cooperation without imposing any kind of conditions.

Review of the progress made in achieving the MDGs will take place in the year 2010, as mandated by the Assembly, and must serve to lay the foundation for efforts to correct the errors and omissions of these Goals. They include, in particular, the failure to consider the structural causes of the problems, the lack of attention paid to human rights, the absence of any goal dealing with the generation of valuable employment, the exclusion of our ancestral peoples from the process of drawing up public policies and the absence of a multicultural approach in defining the Goals.

At this session, the General Assembly will be taking important strategic decisions regarding Ecuador. We are sure that all Member States will strive to make the Organization's efforts more effective in the promotion and defence of the rights of differently abled persons, the recognition and implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples, gender equality, and efforts to combat human trafficking, among other important issues.

I would like to refer in particular here to my country's commitment to combating the scourge of illegal human trafficking. We firmly support the need for a global plan of action, and we offer to the Organization our national experience in terms of legal and control issues.

Another subject we consider essential for the agenda of this Assembly is that of international migration. In the current Ecuadorian Constitution, one of our most transformative principles is based on the recognition of universal citizenship. We do not impose any restrictions on the freedom of movement of people around the world. We believe we are all citizens of the world. There is no such thing as illegal human beings. There are, however, such things as illegal and immoral practices of exclusion and exploitation. In this twenty-first century, merchandise and capital are not bound by any borders, but walls are being built to restrict the

movement of human beings. Ecuador will continue to work towards a constructive multilateral dialogue on migration and the adoption of a comprehensive approach on the issue of the human rights of migrants and their families, in accordance with the mandate set by the heads of State in the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

As a country that prioritizes respect for and the guarantee of all human rights, Ecuador currently receives more refugees than any other country in the Western Hemisphere. Without belittling the support that we receive from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, we must stress that we have allocated significant economic resources to assist people who are in need of international protection. We have implemented pioneering measures and policies with respect to the protection of refugees. We have one of the most advanced programmes in terms of refugee management, namely, the Expanded Registration programme.

Ecuador, as a founding member of the United Nations, accords priority to dialogue and international cooperation in the resolution of conflicts and believes that military action alone cannot bring about lasting and sustainable peace in any conflict zone in the world.

The commitment of Ecuador to the stabilization process in the brotherly Republic of Haiti is internationally recognized. Because of this, since the beginning of the Haitian crisis in February of 2004, we have actively participated in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, in terms of a mostly civil contingent. This endeavour was undertaken in accordance with our foreign policy of complete support for and attention to humanitarian crises and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

I cannot conclude this statement without mentioning Ecuador's satisfaction at having renounced, a few days ago, any solution that is not in accordance with international law. We hope to achieve very shortly a normalization of diplomatic relations with the brotherly Republic of Colombia, which will be of great benefit for both of our peoples. This was made possible thanks to the opportunity for dialogue and meetings offered by the General Assembly each year.

Finally, I extend once again the affectionate and hope-filled greetings of the Ecuadorian people, the revolutionary citizenry of my country, and my

President, Rafael Correa, to the rest of the world's people and to their representatives here.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on Mr. Assunção Afonso dos Anjos, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Angola.

Mr. Anjos (Angola) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): First of all, allow me to take this important opportunity to congratulate Mr. Ali Treki on his election to preside over the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. I would like to assure him of the unconditional support of the Republic of Angola in fulfilling his important mission. The delegation of Angola is absolutely positive that under his auspicious leadership, the sixty-fourth session will reaffirm the importance of the General Assembly in the search for consensual solutions to the burning issues affecting humanity, thereby greatly contributing to creating an increasingly safe, free and fair world.

I would also like to express my delegation's deep appreciation to Mr. Treki's predecessor, Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, for the high degree of efficiency and vast expertise with which he conducted the work of the presidency.

Guided by the most elementary sense of justice, on behalf of the Republic of Angola, I express my deepest appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for the excellence with which he has managed to consolidate reforms and ensure the fulfilment of the decisions of the Millennium Summit and other major United Nations conferences, as well as for the commitment that he has consistently shown in placing the needs and development of Africa at the centre of the international agenda. I would also like to praise the Secretary-General for his timely initiative to convene the high-level meeting on climate change.

The Assembly's sixty-fourth session is taking place in a political, social and economic context of enormous complexity. Ensuring international peace and security, fighting poverty, protecting the environment, ensuring a better future for generations to come, ensuring the rule of law in relations among the members of the international community and promoting and safeguarding human rights — all of these issues are clearly among the major challenges confronting us. Combating organized crime and the implementation of the Anti-Terrorism Strategy are also factors of extreme importance that require the steady

attention of the United Nations as it calls for more effective measures and a greater commitment from the international community.

These challenges must be added to the list of others to which our Organization must also devote great attention, especially the lack of decisions on disarmament, the persistence of armed conflicts and the consequences of these conflicts for the lives of people, and finally, the issue on the agenda for all Member States — the reform of the Security Council of the United Nations.

We live in a more globalized world, one that is increasingly characterized by substantial economic and social inequality. Hunger and poverty, aggravated by the fact that they are linked to endemic diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis, cause millions of deaths every year and in Africa are devastating an entire generation, dramatically jeopardizing the development and progress of our continent. It is therefore urgent that we reverse this situation, which is consuming our people, putting men and women at the mercy of inducements that inevitably lead to violence and crime and, to some extent, are the cause of some of the serious problems that humanity currently faces.

Food security thus seems to be one of the main concerns of the African continent, due to its importance to health, productivity, social and political stability and economic growth. Angola believes that it is possible to substantially reduce the food security deficit in Africa if the international community comes together around the following fundamental issues.

First, reserves of food and medicines for emergency aid and for people in need should be maintained. Secondly, national and regional integrated strategies and programmes in agriculture, trade, transport, water and vocational training — which can be implemented with the support and experience of the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and other United Nations specialized agencies — should be adopted.

Action plans within the framework of regional initiatives are also extremely important and can contribute to reducing food shortages and combating disease. Among other initiatives, I would like to highlight the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the 2004 Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action on employment and the eradication of extreme poverty, the Maputo Declaration proposing the

allocation of 10 per cent of public expenditure to agriculture and rural development, the Sirte Declaration on agriculture and water, the Abuja Resolution on food safety, and the Abuja and Maputo Declarations on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other related diseases.

The economic and financial crisis, though of exogenous origin, has also been seriously affecting the growth of African economies, due, among other reasons, to the reduction in asset values and financial assets held abroad, and mainly due to a marked decrease in the price of raw materials that are exported by countries on the continent. Rather than finding interim solutions in order to overcome immediate problems, the entire current economic and financial system should be reviewed. We need to identify ways of restructuring the world so that it serves the interests of all peoples and countries from a global perspective.

My Government welcomes the initiatives that, though insufficient, have been taken in the context of trade liberalization, and we support the idea of reforming the regulatory institutions of the financial and economic world. We also call for greater fluidity and transparency in the transfer of capital to less developed countries.

Similarly, Angola welcomes the various multilateral initiatives, emphasizing the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the Africa-South America Conference, the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, the Africa-Europe summit, the India-Africa Forum, the South Korea-Africa summit, and, more recently, the Turkey-Africa summit. The Angolan Government considers that all of these initiatives are of fundamental importance for the development of the least developed countries, which include most countries in Africa, and Angola in particular.

The Secretary-General presented an important report to the high-level meeting on Africa's development needs (A/63/130), particularly on the implementation of commitments made by partners of the African continent, which took place on the margins of the Assembly's sixty-third session. Angola shares the relevant concerns raised by the Secretary-General in that report, especially the references to the importance and urgency of moving from mere expressions of political will to concrete actions, with a comprehensive and vigorous pursuit of the goals envisaged.

The Secretary-General gave conclusive examples: a reduction of aid levels and commitments; cancellation of the foreign debt of African countries, which is taking a long time to materialize; and the negative effects arising from the failure to complete the World Trade Organization round of negotiations, which will result in fewer opportunities for the African continent. Angola shares all those concerns. As we conclude from all the eloquent statements by the speakers before me, there are no magic solutions or one-size-fits-all models to enable the least developed countries to find easy and immediate answers to development overnight.

As the President is certainly aware, economic growth in Angola has been quite encouraging. The invitation to my country to participate in the summit of the Group of Eight, held in L'Aquila, Italy, on 10 July — which greatly honoured the Angolan Government and people — was unquestionable proof of the international community's recognition that Angola is on the right path towards promoting sustainable development. Between 2004 and 2007, the national economy accumulated growth of 92.4 per cent in real terms. In barely four years, the value of the gross domestic product almost doubled, with an average annual real growth of approximately 17.8 per cent. In that same period, the country saw a sharp rise in the level of public and private investments, which generated a large number of jobs, in particular in the agricultural sector.

Angola is firmly committed to achieving universal education, as demonstrated by the fact that we have tripled the number of students in our education system. In 2005, as a result of the investments that the Government directed towards the social sector, Angola moved up five positions in the United Nations human development index ranking. And the country is committed to efforts towards achieving the eight Millennium Development Goals. In the area of sports, Angola recently won its tenth African basketball championship, and next January it will host the African Cup of Nations, having built the necessary infrastructure for that significant event for our continent.

Those major accomplishments, achieved in such a short time, fill all Angolans with pride and strengthen their confidence in the future. However, such achievements are possible only in peace and social harmony and when States themselves take on the

primary responsibility for the development, progress and well-being of their populations.

Despite the progress already made in Africa in the areas of good governance and the institutionalization of the organs of the African Union, as well as in growth and economic and social development, we must be aware of the difficulties and the long way still to go. I am referring, for example, to the burning issue of promoting peace and security, essential conditions for the development and promotion of human rights.

In that regard, it is important to add that it is essential that the Security Council continue to fund operations for peace and security in Africa and to support the efforts of African States to combat drug trafficking, the illicit arms trade, piracy and terrorism. In addition, I believe it important to emphasize that the strategy of conflict prevention and resolution, in particular the mandates of peacekeeping missions, cannot be separate from measures to combat organized and transnational crime and the relationship between the illegal exploitation of natural resources and the illegal trade in small arms. Moreover, the conflict prevention and resolution strategy should be complemented by measures to combat the financing of terrorists, another major challenge facing the entire international community.

Speaking for a country that has chaired the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, I am particularly pleased to note the progress in the peace processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The inclusion of Guinea-Bissau on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission is also very important. In that regard, without false modesty I stress here the role played by Angola, not only in the negotiations that led to the holding of free and fair elections in that country, but also in consolidating peace and political, economic and social stability of that brother country.

The active participation of Angola in resolving the conflicts that have plagued several countries in various regions of Africa has clearly raised the expectations of the entire international community, in particular the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairman of the African Union Commission. Allow me to reaffirm my Government's commitment to continuing to work within the African Union and the

United Nations in the search for lasting solutions for peacebuilding and national reconciliation.

It is fitting to refer here to another issue of utmost importance that is a consequence of armed conflict. That is the humanitarian situation — the maintenance and protection of refugee camps and identifying durable solutions for the millions of refugees whose rights must be protected and respected.

The United Nations is unquestionably the principal forum of multilateralism, and its credibility should constantly and increasingly be enhanced by the adoption of effective, creative and practical measures. Thus, the Government of Angola welcomes the new format and functions of the Economic and Social Council, especially the Annual Ministerial Review and the Development Cooperation Forum. Among the reforms that have already taken place, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and of the Human Rights Council should also be highlighted.

My country's Government, despite welcoming the progress in the evolution and functioning of the United Nations system, cannot help note that the United Nations was created a long time ago — over half a century ago — at a particular time in the international community's history that we all hope will never reoccur.

The world today is substantially different. The industrial, economic and social development of a large number of countries has narrowed the gap between the most developed countries and the least developed countries. Communications have advanced; technology has progressed; transport is much more sophisticated; and Internet surfing occurs throughout the world. Given this new reality, the Government of Angola believes that the structure of the Organization, which brings together people from around the world, cannot remain indifferent to those developments and should, therefore, adapt to the modern world.

Specifically, the Government of Angola considers that the fact that the reform of the Security Council, particularly aspects related to its composition and the democratization of its decision-making mechanism, has not evolved since 2005 suggests that this is a situation that must be corrected with urgency.

In that context, my Government hopes that the process of ongoing negotiations within the General Assembly will be conclusive.

Furthermore, the Government of Angola attaches great importance to the effort led by the United Nations to implement the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and disarmament in general, and recognizes that it deserves the utmost attention of all its Members.

Angola also believes that the United Nations should strengthen its monitoring of the implementation of its Programme of Action on Small Arms and develop initiatives to promote the universalization of the Ottawa Convention on Landmines.

At the end of my statement, I would like to avail myself of this golden opportunity to launch an appeal for the lifting of the economic, trade and financial embargo on Cuba. It is fair and imperative to abolish that embargo, because it violates the principles of international law, in particular Articles 1 and 2 of the United Nations Charter.

Angola is fully convinced that the United Nations will not refrain from once again taking a clear and fair position on that embargo, a position that is also consistent with the principles of the Charter.

Finally, I would like to reiterate my conviction that with effort and determination, our Organization will be in a position to correct asymmetries and provide solutions to problems that still exist in the international community in order to build a world that is more fair, stable, and secure and able to provide current and future generations with a standard of living consistent with human dignity.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Zacarias Albano da Costa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Da Costa: Let me start by expressing my sincere congratulations to Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on his assumption to the presidency of the United Nations General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session.

This year marks important milestones for Timor-Leste. Ten years ago, the United Nations sponsored the popular referendum held in my country, marking the transition to full independence. Seven years ago, we attained full sovereignty with the restoration of our independence and began, for the first time in the history of our nation, the challenging process of nation-building.

We have been assisted by successive United Nations missions, which began by exercising, for the first time in the history of the United Nations, full administrative powers in Timor-Leste. This process has been undertaken a very limited number of times in this new millennium.

Naturally, there are always failures and successes in decisions taken and policies adopted, and those form part of our collective challenge on the nation-building road. This is true for both established and newly established States. Timor-Leste has been both showcased as a success story of the United Nations and hastily characterized by some as a failed State.

I stand here today, not to argue on behalf of one view or another, much less to duel over the past. I am here to describe what Timor-Leste is today, what we have been able to do, our modest achievements and remaining challenges, but most importantly, how we, as a new and small nation-State, situate ourselves in the community of nations.

We also want to be part of the solutions to the unprecedented challenges facing humanity in this new millennium. Today we talk about global problems that are the responsibility of all of us, requiring concerted and collective action, and Timor-Leste is ready to assume its part of that responsibility.

Let me also stress, however, that I am able to be here today because it was through the United Nations that a solution was found to what was then termed the "Question of East Timor". It was the United Nations that shouldered the responsibility of finding a just solution to that question and that was, indeed, successful in doing so.

The decision to engage with the United Nations was a wise one, taken by the then leaders of the resistance, who are today our elder statesmen, our esteemed President of the Republic, Mr. José Ramos-Horta, and the Prime Minister, Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão.

The underlining policy of seeking to resolve conflict through peaceful means and of deferring to the United Nations Charter so as to enable the exercise of the universal right to self-determination is a fundamental principle embraced by the new generation of Timorese leaders. The engagement with the United Nations continues to be the policy of Timor-Leste today.

Timor-Leste has benefited greatly from this engagement, through the dedicated work of successive United Nations missions and through the presence and work of various United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. The United Nations administrative role in Timor-Leste under the capable leadership of our dear friend, the late Sergio Vieira de Mello, was without precedence. Could the United Nations have done things differently in those earlier and subsequent years and how can we best use this partnership to move forward?

Without a doubt the most valuable contribution of Timor-Leste to lessons learned and how to apply those lessons for future situations involved United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding. One of the most important lessons is that it takes time to build national capacities and sustainable institutions.

Young nations like ours have to evaluate and balance many priorities among various pressing socio-economic requirements, including the provision of basic social services, building State institutions and developing capacities. We have to balance justice with peace and reconciliation. This involves prioritizing many urgent demands and sequencing actions. There are no quick fixes or short-term solutions.

Timor-Leste has been the subject of a staggering number of evaluations and studies, about three thousand in number, including some on United Nations work in the country. As our contribution to the lessons learned for the United Nations, I have proposed that Timor-Leste, as the beneficiary of what has been done and in order to provide a country-based perspective, should itself conduct an evaluation of all that has been done in the country by the international community, and of how the benefits of these actions, or otherwise, have been experienced and felt in the country by the Timorese themselves.

The experience of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) has shown the need for a longer term engagement by the United Nations. The crisis in Timor-Leste in 2006 was an unfortunate reminder of the fragility of peace when State institutions are still weak, capacities still need to be strengthened, and all competing social, economic and political needs cannot be met. The cost of dealing with the regression to violence in 2006 has been high for the international community, including the United Nations and our development partners, as well as for the Timorese Government itself. UNMIT's mandate to help

reconstruct our security forces and provide support for our justice system is central, and the Mission is still needed to ensure long-term peace and stability in our country.

The Government of Timor-Leste has continued to make significant achievements, although we still face challenges. Some of the main problems from the 2006 crisis have been resolved. Internally displaced persons have been peacefully reintegrated into their communities, the security forces are being reconstituted, although they still require capacity-building and strengthening, and gang violence has been stopped. Our State institutions are fully functioning, and the Government can now concentrate more on development.

I wish to emphasize the importance that we continue to place on relations with Indonesia, where we have taken a pragmatic approach and base our relations on reconciliation and the principle of looking forward. We cannot deny, or undo, what has happened in the past we share, but we are determined to be reconciled with that past, because we know we can progress and do much for the future. I am part of a new generation of leaders in Timor-Leste, and neither we collectively nor I personally have been spared the grief and loss experienced by most of Timor-Leste's population. But I know that my responsibility is to prevent what happened in Timor-Leste in the past from ever happening again. Timor-Leste and Indonesia are both countries in transition, and we should be allowed to search for our own path, as President Obama has said, conscious that our path may not be perfect.

This is a complex process that requires a Timorese solution. I am sure that other countries that have been in conflict have appreciated the long-term support of the international community as they tackled the same problems that we are facing. Timor-Leste has not in any way turned its back on justice. Our Constitution enshrines the rule of law in our country, and the Government's policy is to fully strengthen the justice system. We are being aided in this by the international community, and we are fully cognizant that we will continue to need its assistance in years to come. Our Government has been severely criticized, both internationally and nationally, on some positions that we have adopted and some decisions that have been taken. However, they were taken in the conviction that we need to be reconciled with our past and ensure

peace for current and future generations, and we stand by those decisions.

Timor-Leste today has its own set of challenges, which may appear distant from the emerging challenges facing humankind in general and presented at this forum. Timor-Leste continues to be concerned with alleviating and reducing poverty and high unemployment, addressing the needs of the rural population and establishing and consolidating State institutions so they can better respond to the needs of all of our people. But that does not mean that Timor-Leste has its head in the sand and is unaware of other challenges. Our young nation will need time to address and overcome all of these challenges.

As part of the community of nations and humankind, Timor-Leste is also concerned with all that threatens life on this planet, and has expressed its views. In fact, as a Member of the United Nations, Timor-Leste has expressed its position in the General Assembly on a number of important issues. We wish to reiterate our opposition to the economic sanctions imposed on Cuba by the United States, and we reaffirm our support for the General Assembly resolutions of the past 17 years that have called on the United States to lift those sanctions.

It is not Timor-Leste's intention to develop nuclear capacity or become a nuclear power, and we have therefore ratified the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We counsel caution in the development of and use of nuclear capacity. With regard to climate change, Timor-Leste, although an island State, is fortunate not to be immediately threatened by rising sea levels, nor is it responsible for large carbon emissions. But we are affected by changing weather patterns and we are following the climate-change debate. At the national level, we are naturally concerned with the preservation of our environment and consider reforestation and protection of the environment important issues.

As far as the financial and economic crisis is concerned, Timor-Leste has been fortunate to have experienced only partial impact. However, we are also concerned with the causes of the crisis, and we are looking to learn the lessons about what to avoid in building our financial systems and institutions. In light of this, we support the decisions taken at the recent meeting of the G-20 in Pittsburgh on taking preventive measures for the future.

In conclusion, allow me, on behalf of our Government, to express our gratitude to the United Nations and our international partners for their continued support of Timor-Leste. We stand resolutely with you to contribute to solutions to our collective challenges, and we are resolved to find solutions to our own national challenges.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Datuk Anifah Aman, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia.

Mr. Aman (Malaysia): I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Treki on his presidency and to assure him of Malaysia's full support.

There is a difference in the General Assembly this year. In light of some of the greatest challenges ever faced by any generation, we have resolved to work more closely together, to strengthen the ties that bind us as members of a human family, to fulfil our responsibilities and to overcome distrust and discord. Malaysia will continue to do its part in this cooperative endeavour. We do so knowing that we are a country in the middle, not too large nor too small, not too rich nor too poor, not too strong nor too weak. We do our part knowing that our actions have consequences for ourselves and our children. We do so in the belief that hope will triumph over adversity.

I believe that the developing world is not shirking its responsibilities to address the entire spectrum of challenges facing us. But our efforts will be far more effective if done in tandem with the developed world. So allow me to say this on behalf of the developing world — give us fair terms and we will seal the deal. Give us the tools and we will help to finish the job. Invest in our common future, and all our children and humanity henceforth will reap the rewards.

A few days ago we deliberated on the issue of climate change, among the most pressing and urgent issues facing us today. Therefore, I hope that we are now more firm in our resolve to act immediately. In Malaysia's case, we are, in the context of mitigation action, protecting and preserving our rainforests through sustainable forest management measures. We are increasing the use of public transportation as part of the relevant Ministry's key performance indicator. We are also increasing the usage of renewable energy sources and promoting greater energy efficiency. The Ministry of Energy, Water and Communications has

been transformed into the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water.

However, it is the developed world that must play the leading role in the global effort to combat climate change. Sadly, such leadership has been lacking. Developed countries' pledges to cut greenhouse gas emissions fall short of what is required to tackle increasing global temperatures.

We have to seal the deal in Copenhagen. However, that cannot be achieved if the developed world continues to attempt to reinterpret and renegotiate key principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. Let me be absolutely clear about this: there will not be a deal in Copenhagen if some are keen to "steal the deal".

I need to state what I believe to be a very important fact. Tackling climate change entails making difficult choices, given the competing interests of so many constituents and needs in developing countries. More important, there is a need to balance development, food security and poverty eradication, on the one hand, and environmental considerations, on the other. Let us not make the glib statement that one perfectly complements the other.

For example, agricultural production, the bedrock of efforts to address the food crisis, produces 14 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions. Let us not forget that the world food system is still in crisis. Although the prices of major food grains have declined since last year, they are still above average. Hunger afflicts more than 1 billion people. Addressing the food crisis requires more than increasing food production; it demands nothing less than a transformation of market systems so that they work better for the poorest and hungriest. It is for those reasons that we believe that climate change must not be treated as a stand-alone subject; it must be seen as part of the broader sustainable development challenge.

The United Nations has been in existence for more than 60 years, yet peace and security continue to elude us in many parts of the world. Malaysia has played and will continue to play its role in achieving global peace and security. We have committed our troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations since 1960.

Closer to home, Malaysia has been playing a role in fostering peace within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations region. We are actively involved in peace efforts in the southern Philippines. We will continue to work towards greater progress in the democratization process in Myanmar.

Often, grave injustices are the cause of breaches of peace and threats to security. In that connection, we must accept the fact that the Palestinian issue epitomizes everything that is unjust and unfair in international relations. It has taken on a symbolic value that colours cultural and political relations well beyond its geographical scope. This issue has bedevilled the international community for too long. We must do all that we can to address the Palestinian issue, as resolving it will have a major impact in our efforts to achieve peace and security in the Middle East and beyond.

For far too long, the unstinting support given to Israel has resulted in an impasse. In the interest of global peace, Israel, Palestine and the affected countries in the region must work together to resolve the conflict. We look forward to the United States undertaking the role of an honest broker. We hold much hope for a more even-handed approach by the United States on the Middle East. We expect to be able to be part of a just and comprehensive solution and that the action of the United States will match its rhetoric. After all, history is littered with examples of the fury and vehemence that result when hope turns into despair.

Non-proliferation and disarmament are cornerstones of peace and security. We agree that at the heart of such efforts is a basic bargain comprising these elements: first, all nations have the right to peacefully use nuclear power; second, nations that have nuclear weapons must move towards disarmament; and third, those without nuclear weapons must renounce their acquisition.

In that regard, Malaysia draws hope from any action by major Powers such as the agreement between the United States and Russia to reduce their nuclear stockpiles. We also look forward to other measures to strengthen that bargain, including the strengthening of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and other international instruments related to disarmament and non-proliferation. By the same token, we view with grave concern any attempt

aimed at the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

For our part, since 1996, we have introduced the draft resolution on follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, and we will continue to do so at this session of the General Assembly. The resolution, *inter alia*, calls on all States to fulfil their obligation by commencing multilateral negotiations leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention. Malaysia's efforts in that regard will not cease here. We will also participate actively in the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT and play our rightful role as President of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

For many, efforts to achieve peace and security begin at a more commonplace level. Given Malaysia's multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, we are especially conscious of the need to continuously promote interaction among peoples of different religions, races and beliefs. For that reason, the Malaysian Government has introduced the "one Malaysia" concept, which builds on previous efforts to promote national unity yet takes present realities into account. It aims to foster appreciation and respect for all races, seeing diversity as a source of strength. It envisages unity that arises from true acceptance instead of mere tolerance, based on the legal principles set out in the Constitution, and has social justice for all at its heart.

If our collective efforts to create a better world are to succeed, the global governance structure must be improved. Decisions are still made by the few for the many. The prime example of that is the Security Council. We continue to believe that reform of the Council, including the eventual abolition of the veto, is critical if the aspiration to the equality of States is to be fulfilled.

The same situation is reflected in the economic sphere. Perhaps the most important result of the recently concluded summit of the Group of 20 (G-20) is the Group's designation as the premier forum for international economic cooperation. That point was made twice in the Leaders' Statement. Further, G-20 representatives are to report back to their countries with recommendations on how to maximize the effectiveness of their cooperation.

It may be said that the G-20 is far more representative than the Group of Eight, given the participation of the leading emerging economies. However, questions remain as to how representative and inclusive it truly is. Therefore, the challenge of the G-20 process is how best to make it more legitimate and more effective.

I would like to make the following points and proposals in this regard. First, many of the main thrusts of the G-20's work, such as reform of the Bretton Woods institutions and strengthening the international financial regulatory system, were first articulated by Malaysia in the wake of the Asian financial crisis. Secondly, while claiming no particular credit for Malaysia, that means that ideas and solutions are not the monopoly of the large and powerful. Thirdly, the choice between legitimacy and effectiveness is often a false one. Fourthly, in addressing ways of maximizing cooperation among themselves, the G-20 must simultaneously address ways of improving links with the broader international community. Finally, there needs to be greater clarity on the involvement of regional organizations.

On the issue of global governance, as in many others, Malaysia stands ready, willing and able to make a meaningful contribution. We aspire to equality for all States, large and small. We dream a dream of a true Parliament of Man, a Federation of the World.

But we are not content to be idle dreamers. We intend to make full use our presidency of the Economic and Social Council next year to address these issues. We will do so in a cooperative and action-oriented manner.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), Vice-President, took the Chair.

History has shown that a state of virtue or vice is often the result of human endeavour and activity. Vices that have existed since time immemorial have been eradicated by dint of human action. Slavery is one such example, apartheid another. Inspired by the hope that these examples provide, I believe that we can yet overcome the grave challenges that we face. However, there must be a willingness to collectively bear our common burdens.

I would therefore like to end where I began, with an expression of hope that in the light of some of the greatest challenges ever faced by any generation of

Man, we will finally be able to work more closely. This hope is that we may strengthen the ties that bind us as members of a human family, fulfil our responsibilities and overcome distrust and discord.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Rangin Dâdfar Spantâ, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Mr. Spantâ (Afghanistan): First, I would like to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Treki on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. Afghanistan looks forward to working with him over the next year and to strengthening international responses to the crises that we are facing today.

Since its inception the United Nations has been instrumental in addressing the world's challenges, particularly in the global South. But significant challenges remain unresolved. The growing gap between and within nations in terms of opportunity and prosperity reminds us that we are still far from meeting the ideals and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations for creating a just and secure world.

Strengthening and restructuring United Nations agencies remain pivotal in closing the gap between the objectives of the Charter and the realities of the world. The United Nations is not a forum for lip service. It must embody the ideals of the Charter by providing political and moral direction and leadership. In our increasingly interdependent world and the multilaterally oriented international system, the United Nations must assume greater responsibility for finding collective solutions to our challenges.

The world, and in particular developing nations, is faced with the threat of poverty, underdevelopment, environmental degradation, extremism, fundamentalism, terrorism, culturally based racism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the arms race. Rather than just managing and reacting to problems, the United Nations must find ways to address the structural causes of the world's problems and conflicts. To this end, closer cooperation between the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, international financial organizations and global civil society is vital in moving towards more just and friendly relations among nations.

Our efforts to address new challenges must be followed up by redoubling our commitment to resolve

remaining historical conflicts, chief among which is the conflict in the Middle East. Afghanistan reiterates its call for the full implementation of United Nations resolutions and regional initiatives for bringing an end to the suffering of the Palestinian nation and creating a safe region for all Middle Eastern nations.

On the eve of the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Islamic world faces a number of important internal and external questions and issues. Addressing those issues and reviving the prominent role of Muslims in contributing to the progress of humanity and civilization can be achieved only if we, members of the Islamic world, collectively confront the current intellectual stagnation that many of us suffer from. As was the case during the golden era of Islamic history, intellectual freedom and creativity must be elevated to our highest social and political priorities. The Islamic world is in urgent need of an intellectual renaissance. Islamophobia and associating Muslims with a violent minority are additional issues that call all of us, particularly Western nations, to seek effective ways to confront them.

Let me now turn to the situation of my country, Afghanistan. Unfortunately, negative coverage of the situation by international media has overshadowed the many positive trends and developments since the collapse of the Taliban regime in 2001. Alongside our challenges, a new Afghanistan is emerging. That Afghanistan includes an emerging democracy, ascendant State institutions, a nascent civil society, a growing private sector and strong international solidarity.

I can refer to many examples of how that new Afghanistan is advancing. In the fields of education, health, infrastructure, media and economic growth, the generous support and sacrifices of the international community have been vital in our joint and proud achievements in Afghanistan, for which we Afghans remain grateful.

The Afghanistan presidential and provincial elections in August demonstrated the many positive changes. It was the first time in the modern history of Afghanistan that Afghan institutions were tasked with organizing and holding a nationwide election. Taking into account the socio-historic realities of Afghanistan, we passed that national test successfully. In addition to it being our first experience, we were faced with

dangerous enemies who did their utmost to disrupt and derail the process by terrorizing Afghan voters. By braving Al-Qaida, the Taliban and other terrorist groups, Afghan voters demonstrated their determination and desire to have a modern, moderate and democratic political system.

As in any emerging democracy, undoubtedly there were irregularities. But one should not assess a young, terrorist-inflicted democracy with the criteria used for old, stable and prosperous democracies. In passing judgement we should be conscious of the context, the process and the full picture, rather than of only one aspect or issue.

In due course, the Independent Election Commission and the Electoral Complaints Commission will announce and certify the final results of the elections. For the sake of the stability and consolidation of our young democratic institutions and processes, it is imperative that all of us respect and support their decision. Continuing efforts to delegitimize and undermine the integrity of the process and our institutions will certainly result in worsening the situation not only for Afghanistan but also for the international community.

Afghanistan still faces significant challenges. Chief among them is terrorism, which enjoys safe havens and institutional support beyond our borders. As long as terrorist infrastructure, including the Taliban leadership, and sanctuaries remain protected, Afghanistan, the region and the world will be at the mercy of terrorists and their totalitarian ideology and objectives. Only by pursuing a comprehensive strategy with adequate resources, effective implementation and, more importantly, strategic patience, can we address our interconnected challenges. The main pillars of such a comprehensive strategy are security, good governance, economic development, regional cooperation and international solidarity.

Afghanistan fully endorses President Obama's new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan and the new assessment by General McChrystal, in particular their emphasis on the need for a comprehensive and long-term strategy. The forthcoming international conference on Afghanistan will be an opportunity for us to review and reiterate our mutual commitment and determination to address Afghanistan's remaining challenges. We must renew the sense of partnership

and cooperation between Afghanistan and the international community.

The principles of good governance, mutual accountability and regional cooperation are of the highest priority. There must be a zero tolerance for any drug-related activity or corruption by the Afghan Government or our international partners.

What the Afghan nation expects and deserves from a renewed partnership with the international community is assurance of a long-term commitment and solidarity. Afghans are rightly fearful of being abandoned once again to lawlessness, extremism and external interference. Abandoning the Afghan nation will undermine the spirit of collective cooperation and the ideals of the United Nations and will weaken the moral credibility of those who fail to honour their promises and commitments to Afghanistan for many generations. Furthermore, it will embolden extremists in the region and beyond.

I have full confidence that with the full support and commitment of the family of nations, Afghanistan will be able to overcome the legacy of decades of violence and suffering. We will restore our historic position as a model of cooperation between different cultures and as a regional crossroads and hub for trade, transit, transportation and tourism on the Asian continent.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Chief Ojo Maduekwe, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Chief Maduekwe (Nigeria): On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, I wish to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on his election as the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. I have no doubt that the Assembly will benefit from his wealth of experience and wisdom. Let me therefore affirm the full support and solidarity of my country. Similarly, I wish to commend the President of the Assembly at its sixty-third session, His Excellency Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, for the able and effective manner with which he conducted the affairs of that session.

Last year when we gathered here, we were hopeful that the world would soon put behind it the devastating impact of the various global crises in the energy, agriculture and financial sectors. However, in spite of the efforts by the international community, the

developing world is yet to experience any serious relief. There is no doubt that more than ever before the international community needs to fulfil its commitments to the developing world if more than half of humanity is to avoid an imminent calamity.

In this connection we welcome and applaud the efforts of the United Nations, in particular the outcome of the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development held in New York last June. We call for the support and implementation of the recommendations of the conference and hope they will receive the unconditional support of the developed nations.

Equally important is the need for global efforts to boost food security. We need to increase food production, whether for domestic consumption or for export, which requires collaboration among investors, organizations and Governments. It is relevant here to reiterate our call for the removal of the enormous agricultural subsidies that developed countries continue to give their farmers, a practice that defies the logic of a free market economy and remains unfair to millions of poor peasant farmers across the world.

As we approach the countdown to 2015, a convergence of many factors, including the global economic crisis, is threatening not only the achievement of the targets for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but also the substantial gains already made. Unless we act fast, our dream of lifting the vast majority of humanity out of extreme poverty, hunger and disease will remain an illusion. Donors and recipient countries alike should make more effort to fulfil their commitments under the programme. For our part, we are determined to do all we can in order to attain the MDG targets, and we are calling on the international community to continue to provide support.

The African Summit on Roll Back Malaria, which was held in Abuja in 2000, adopted the Abuja Declaration and the Plan of Action to reduce malaria by 50 per cent in Africa by 2010. To achieve this goal, African countries affected by malaria were expected to devote 15 per cent of their public expenditures to the health sector.

Although considerable efforts have been made by the affected countries, as well as by donor agencies, the goal of Roll Back Malaria has not been realized. Malaria remains by far the biggest killer disease for

children under 5-years old in Africa. This should weigh heavy on the global conscience.

Africa is committed to the goal of eliminating malaria, and to this end, Nigeria intends to host the Abuja-Plus Ten Summit on Roll Back Malaria in 2011. We would therefore appreciate the support of the Secretary-General, not only to make the proposed summit possible, but also to facilitate the realization of its objective.

The quality of participation at the just concluded 2009 Summit on Climate Change was a testimony to the global realization that climate change has truly become seen as a genuine existential threat to humanity. I commend the Secretary-General for his consistent engagement with this most important issue of our time, and call on all Member States to rededicate themselves to reversing the worst effects of this phenomenon.

For us in Africa, as the continent where, unfortunately, 15 of the world's 20 countries most vulnerable to the impact of climate change are situated, we hope that the outcome of the fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change coming up in Copenhagen later this year will be an acceptable response to this global threat.

Even in the middle of this tale of global economic and financial woes, there is a silver lining. We are gratified and greatly encouraged by the increasing rapprochement between the United States and Russia on nuclear disarmament. The idea of a nuclear-free world, the architecture of which is now being put together, has great appeal for many of us.

Such an outcome, probably achievable in our lifetime, would not only result in a safer and better world, but would free resources for use in sectors that would benefit humanity. Nigeria encourages all nuclear Powers to identify with this great initiative, this dream, and to embrace any and all initiatives that promote the achievement of the goal of a world free of nuclear armaments and the apocalyptic nightmare.

It is in this connection that Nigeria applauds the conclusion and bringing into force of the Pelindaba Treaty, the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, which bans the testing, manufacturing, stockpiling, acquisition and possession of nuclear weapons in Africa. This is a commendable testimony to Africa's

total rejection of the proliferation, and indeed the existence, of nuclear weapons. We call on all other regions to follow suit. The Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons coming up next year provides an opportunity that should not be missed.

While we applaud this development, let us not forget that there are weapons still being produced that have killed far more people than nuclear arms in the tragic history of humanity. I speak, in particular, about the production of small arms and light weapons and their illicit export to regions like my own, Nigeria and West Africa, where these small arms and light weapons have become the real weapons of mass destruction — destroying many lives of innocent children, men and women, destroying property, economies and dreams — as well as the undermining of national and regional efforts at development.

We are all aware of the close link between such weapons and organized crime, drug trafficking and, in the case of Nigeria, piracy and oil smuggling in the Niger Delta. The proliferation of such weapons in West Africa is fast turning the region into a major transit point for illicit drugs, thus also facilitating the growth of criminal syndicates, some with enough firepower to challenge a nation's military forces. This cannot be just a West African problem. It should be seen as a global threat.

This is why we continue to call on the international community to demonstrate greater commitment to keeping this threat in check by implementing existing initiatives, as well as developing new and legally binding ones, where necessary, geared towards achieving the goal of preventing, combating and eradicating illicit trade in small arms, and regulating the transfer of conventional weapons in general. The full implementation of the United Nations Programme on Small Arms would be a very good beginning.

Although over the past decade, West Africa has made considerable progress by way of building or strengthening democratic structures in our various countries, the job is far from done, and this is not the time to rest on our laurels. Peace and security challenges remain daunting in some parts of the subregion. As current Chairperson of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,

Mr. Alhaji Umaru Yar'Adua sent a special envoy, in fact a former Head of State, the former President of Nigeria, to President Mamadou Tandja of the Republic of Niger with a view to establishing a line of communication with him in favour of a peaceful resolution of the political problems of our esteemed neighbour to the north. A delegation of ECOWAS Foreign Ministers undertook a similar visit with the same objective. Our role is largely mediatory, but we are waiting with cautious optimism for the democratic imperative in the Republic of the Niger to be upheld.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau is somewhat more cheerful. Guinea-Bissau held successful elections last July and, as members may already be aware, President Malam Bacai Sanhá was sworn in on 8 September. Because of the strong commitment on the part of all stakeholders in Guinea-Bissau, this peaceful transition to democratic, constitutional rule has taken place. We are indeed very proud of what the Government and the people of Guinea-Bissau have been able to achieve. Guinea-Bissau can now look forward with hope to a peaceful and bright future, and Nigeria will continue to stand side by side with that country as it charts its destiny for the future.

In Guinea-Conakry, where elections have again been slated for next January, we continue to impress on the authorities the need for the country to return to democratic rule through manifestly transparent, free and fair elections. We hope that these efforts will yield dividends in the form of an elected civilian government early next year. Our own experience and history in Nigeria leave us with no other choice than to remain unwaveringly and unambiguously on the side of the consolidation and maturation of constitutional democracy and to strongly repudiate even the slightest prospect of democratic reversal in the subregion. It is our national interest to do so.

ECOWAS has proven over and over again its willingness and capacity to come to the aid of its members in their hour of need. In that spirit, we will continue to make our best efforts to ensure that peace and stability reign in the region and to facilitate the realization of the objectives implied in the Community's name. We continue, as usual, to count on the support of the United Nations system.

Nigeria continues to make great strides in our efforts to build a peaceful, stable and prosperous nation, able to provide the best possible life for its

citizens and able to fulfil its international commitments and obligations. We have made great progress in laying a solid foundation for democracy, and we are seeking to build on this foundation to grow an economy that will see Nigeria take its rightful place among the world's economic powerhouses. However, there are challenges. Some we can deal with by ourselves. Others require the help, support and cooperation of our friends and allies and of the United Nations family.

Those who have been watching events in our country in the past few months will testify to the progress we have made in the Niger Delta in finding durable solutions to the political, social and environmental problems of one of the most strategically important regions of our country. Today, relative peace has returned to the Niger Delta, largely on the back of an amnesty deal which the Government and erstwhile militants forged and are implementing together. The return of peace to the region would provide the platform for meeting the aspirations of the people, as well as allowing the resumption of full economic activity there.

Nigeria is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to the majority of other international and regional human rights instruments, and we continue to remain focused and committed on the issue of human rights.

In our endeavour to overcome the constraints brought about by the present gap between our nation's increasing demand for power to drive its development and the available supply, we join others in pursuit of reliable, cheap and environmentally friendly alternative sources of energy. In this regard, we are gratified by the support and assistance that we, as a non-nuclear State, continue to receive from the International Atomic Energy Agency in exploring alternative sources of electricity generation, as well as in the areas of radiation control, waste management and training. We will continue to collaborate closely with the Agency, as well as to rely on the assistance of our allies and friends.

Nigeria welcomes the ongoing reform and democratization of the United Nations system and notes the progress made in the intergovernmental negotiation process. We encourage all parties to continue the negotiations with renewed vigour with a view to achieving the desired objectives. Of particular importance to Nigeria is the enlargement and

democratization of the Security Council. It is unacceptable that Africa, with 53 countries, is not represented in the permanent seat category of the Council. We call upon Member States to demonstrate the necessary political will to bring about the long-awaited reform, in order to make the Security Council more legitimate, more democratic and more transparent and inclusive.

Nigeria's commitment to the United Nations and the international system has been demonstrated over the years. This commitment accords with the provisions of our Constitution, which enjoins us, inter alia, to promote international cooperation for the consolidation of universal peace and to promote respect for international law and treaty obligations. Our international behaviour has always been guided by those noble foreign policy objectives.

Nigeria has been the fourth-largest contributor in the world to peacekeeping operations, and the role we have played — and will continue to play — in peacekeeping in the subregion, the African continent and, with the United Nations, around the world is a clear testimony to our unflinching commitment to joining hands with others, especially the United Nations, in laying solid foundations upon which human prosperity can be built. This is why we welcome the new strategy by the United Nations to strengthen the partnership between troop-contributing countries and the United Nations, especially in the provision of adequate resources and the capacity to strengthen regional peacekeeping initiatives.

Finally, as usual, Nigeria will continue to draw on its vast experience and commitment in its efforts to contribute to the realization of the objectives and values of the United Nations. We assure all our allies and friends that Nigeria will continue to be a responsible global member of the United Nations, subscribing to all the norms, conventions and values of this human family and providing leadership, especially on issues concerning West Africa and indeed the rest of the world.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on Her Excellency Patricia Isabel Rodas Baca, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Honduras.

Ms. Rodas (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): For the past three years the President of Honduras has come to this global forum to propose simple, honest,

straightforward ways of responding to the great challenges that face our societies, because of the need to do more to contribute to the survival of the human species and to decrease the injustice of the immense asymmetries among nations and between rich and poor. From this very rostrum, President Zelaya urged respect for the human rights of our migrants and the forgotten ones of the Earth — those who draw on the strength of hurricanes from their poverty to produce wealth to which they hardly ever have access and that does not relieve the anguish caused by their unsatisfied needs.

Our constitutional President, José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, with simple and effective proposals, has always called for a more just and more equitable world that would lighten the burden of the shame created by the existence of the astonishing wealth of a few alongside the outrageous misery of the majority. He has also called for a world of tolerance in which we could exchange opinions, ideas and diverse ways of seeing the world, respecting and cooperating with one another to build a better world.

But today, another fate has forced us to represent our President and our people here. In our country, criminal hordes have made us revisit old issues — ones that we had believed to be mere vestiges from the distant past. Today, from this rostrum, I should like to tell the members of the Assembly that, as I address them, our President is being besieged by military forces at the diplomatic mission of the sisterly Republic of Brazil in Tegucigalpa. He is being threatened, and every moment that passes could bring a tragic outcome that would have a paralysing effect on history and on all Hondurans, all Central Americans and the entire world. As I speak, our President's life is in peril, and the lives of our people are also in peril.

I should like to prove this to the members of the Assembly. In my hand, I have a telephone with President Manuel Zelaya Rosales on the line. He wishes to address the Assembly and to reclaim his rightful place in the presence of the members of the international community. Here, with them, is our leader, our President, the hero of democracy, which he is defending today with his life alongside our people.

President Zelaya (*spoke in Spanish via telephone*): Greetings to the United Nations. For those who had any doubt that a dictatorship was being installed here, I believe that all that has occurred during the past 93 days of repression have dispelled

those doubts. In Honduras, in addition to a coup d'état having taken place, a fascist dictatorship has been installed that has suppressed the freedoms of Hondurans and is violently repressing the Honduran people.

Today, the broadcast frequencies used by the only two media outlets opposed to the dictatorship — a national radio station, Radio Globo, and a national television network, Channel 36 — have been shut down, their offices invaded and their transmission equipment confiscated. Surely, a serious crime is being committed when the voice of the people is silenced — a people that is being suppressed.

I ask the United Nations for cooperation to restore the rule of law and the freedom that Hondurans deserve. I ask the United Nations for support, so that the civilized nations of the world can continue to stand firm against force and barbarity. I also ask the United Nations to give us guarantees for our own personal integrity and the lives of those being besieged with chemical gases and electronic interference at this diplomatic facility of the sisterly Republic of Brazil. With great courage, President Lula is demonstrating his interest by supporting democracy and fighting against coups d'état. I ask the United Nations for its support to reverse this coup d'état, so that democracy will really be an asset of all civilized societies throughout the world.

Ms. Rodas (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our President is surrounded and isolated by military forces. The Embassy of the Republic of Brazil is under threat of invasion. We have heard the forceful call of President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, and we are here to tell the Assembly about the scale and the terrible impact of the repression being visited on our people today.

Free transit through airports and land borders has been halted. A state of emergency has been decreed, with the indefinite suspension of absolutely every constitutional guarantee. In addition, independent news media have been shut down, destroyed and dismantled and their operators persecuted, and two journalists were tortured today in our country. Women have been raped during demonstrations, and sport centres have been turned into concentration camps in Tegucigalpa and other cities.

Honduras is becoming an enormous prison camp. They have imprisoned national journalists and expelled

international media. Furthermore, the entire country is militarized. There are constant reports that highly dangerous hired assassins are being freed from prison, as military contingents move forward and mass around the place where our President is now located, together with his family, officials of the Embassy of the sisterly Republic of Brazil, journalists, priests and a large group of people who are accompanying him. We have made major efforts together, inside and outside of Honduras, aimed at enabling our country to regain its constitutional rights, which were forcibly taken from it just three months ago to the day. We have done this, convinced that it will benefit not only Honduras, but the entire world, where there are still people fighting for freedom and self-determination, so as not to be punished for their ideological differences or for their efforts to improve society and transform the economy, so that our peoples may finally look forward to a brighter future with greater possibility.

Our countries, our peoples deserve this, because they have fought their entire lives — first against conquest, then against colonization, then against the major differences created by economic dependency; and today, we continue to fight peacefully and without weapons for our democratic freedoms. Our only weapon is the truth we carry in our hearts, which we have openly expressed to the world.

In the meantime, while we are faced with all of this, our President is being punished for trying to give more freedom and more well-being to our people and for joining in the concert of nations to ensure that our diversity and ways of thinking are viewed as equal to those of the greater countries of the world. Because no matter how small our economies or populations may be, we deserve no less than any other society. Dreaming the impossible dream makes it possible for us to attain what is indeed possible. But our President, our people, all of Honduran society, the international community and the solidarity that gives life to our struggle are shamefully punished day after day by the weapons and brute force of the regime of putschists, which is quickly transforming itself into a dictatorship in the best tradition of what occurred three and four decades ago on our continent.

There is no civil war in Honduras. There are no armed forces facing each other. There are no subversive groups. Hondurans are people who walk tirelessly. They continued walking forward for 90 days, peacefully, silently and determined, with bravery and

heroism. And with their silence, children, young people, men, women and the elderly told the world: as long as the Honduran people have the unwavering support of the international community, it will be possible to take back our democratic path — the path we shed blood for throughout our history, until the victory at the ballot boxes, until the guns and cannons were lowered — and now those weapons are raised again with bayonets aimed at our defenceless people. It is a dreadful state of siege: every single conceivable constitutional guarantee has been suspended, which threatens the life of every Honduran man and woman every night and every day.

But every day, tirelessly, our people come out to the street and march in small groups, large groups or in masses. They mobilize in whatever way they can around their houses, their blocks, their neighbourhoods or on big plazas. It does not matter how they do it; wherever they are, they mobilize actively. They put their feet on the ground, on the soil that gave birth to them, and assured of regaining our territory — with freedom and democracy — they do not feel tired, they simply walk, as Gandhi did a long time ago and as our migrants and poor have done thousands of times to harvest their simple everyday sustenance.

In this way our people do not use their energy for violence. They are determined to conquer the world by force of will alone, without raising a gun or shooting a single round, even if they risk joining the ranks of the dead, or being tortured or jailed. The brutal coup d'état expelled our President, persecuted his Cabinet and kidnapped his Minister, but finds itself humiliated under the feet of a people who walk their way around the world every day. Their steps cross imaginary bridges to all of the countries of the world, and the world responds with its solidarity.

But, we have been able to present many shared efforts inside and outside our country, including mediation initiatives that have arisen with the aim of implementing resolutions of this General Assembly, such as resolution 63/301 of 30 June 2009, in which the Government of putschists was repudiated and the only constitutional president of Honduras was recognized to be José Manuel Zelaya Rosales. Forums for dialogue have been created, along with efforts at mediation such as the San Jose Agreement, all of which have been systematically rejected by the intransigent putschist regime, which causes those efforts to fail,

even when the world attempts to revive those efforts every day.

Those who wished to join the constitutional President have been replaced and prevented from returning to the country, even though they wanted to find the path to reconciliation. Ambassadors who were summoned for consultations following the military coup d'état cannot return to the country without first bowing to the boots of the military who are trampling on our country today.

All of these initiatives, as important and essential as they are in attempting to give strength to the struggle of my people, all of the efforts of the international community in searching for rational, peaceful solutions have made it clear that we are facing forces that are able to unleash the most perverse form of violence and irrationality. Civilization is being brought to a halt by barbarism there in Central America — in the centre of Central America — that narrow strip that joins the two halves of our hemisphere.

Given this new situation in which the President's return unleashed the fury of the dictators, the initiatives needed in order to find a solution today call for specific actions to be taken: the tyrant and the military must be forced to step back. The military forces who disobeyed their President and oppressed their own people have become an occupying army — irregular forces serving only to repress and oppress. They uphold the executory arm of a coup d'état that found its support in a sector of the powerful, old economic class, which is responsible for crushing, exploiting and stripping bare our people and has done so throughout our history.

That is why, in those new conditions, when we need strength to consolidate the proposals and assemble global intelligence and the feeling of a continental home in the midst of the conspiracy of the imminent danger that today confronts not only our President, an embassy and a diplomatic mission the inviolability of which is threatened, but also, in fact, our humble people who walk, who at any moment can be assassinated, imprisoned or tortured; at this time when we hear that military units are moving towards the Embassy of Brazil to continue attacking our President, I appeal to this Assembly. With the authority derived from our peaceful and heroic people and with the moral authority of those who resist the bullets with

their bodies and flesh, we fervently but resolutely call on the United Nations and its highest bodies to use the strength of their authority to avert and ward off the danger that hovers over Honduras. It is increasingly imminent, ever closer and more and more terrifying. We can avert that danger together with the will and solidarity garnered so far, but with resolute joint actions that will succeed in pushing back that shame.

I must say that, first of all, we must demand respect for the life of our President, his physical and moral integrity and the dignity of his high office. That gives our people strength and determination because we are and wish to be a sovereign, free and independent republic with a solid lasting democracy that will also help make the injustices and inequalities subside. We must also request unconditional support for the dialogue that our President began once he had entered the country unarmed and peacefully so as to be able to sit with the different sectors of Honduran society and thereby open the way to restoring trust, reconciliation and the fabric of the Constitution, because all that depends on reinstating the constitutional President of the Republic of Honduras, José Manuel Zelaya Rosales.

It is also important to bolster efforts to set specific dates, precise mechanisms, ultimatums and frameworks for action to be signed by the body for dialogue and mediation that has been set up, and those that may emerge in its support, to restore peace to our people and to continue building the path of transformation. Furthermore, we must say that as long as there are no constitutional guarantees, a permanent state of siege is imposed on our people and citizen rights are absent, the conditions to prepare free, transparent and universal elections do not exist.

The international community has spoken out by not recognizing that regime of the coup or those Governments or regimes that arose from spurious elections launched into history by cannon or at the point of a bayonet. We therefore urge this General Assembly to call an urgent extraordinary session of the Assembly to keep under review the situation developing in Honduras, that country so close to this land and all countries of the world, neighbour of the Panama Canal and at the centre of all America, so as to be able to keep monitoring the pace of events and, of course, the necessary resources to urgently respond to relieving whatever needs arise there.

It is important that the vital issues that we have presented here be addressed at that Assembly, but it is even more important and more urgent that we urge the Secretary-General of the United Nations to appoint an urgent special diplomatic mission, comprised of the various countries that make up this world forum, to go as soon as possible and pay a working visit to Honduras. It can assess in situ the situation prevailing there and help seek solutions for the region, together with our President, in conjunction with the efforts of the Organization of American States (OAS). The OAS special missions sent to Honduras to prepare a meeting of its Secretary-General with other foreign ministers was recently expelled from the territory.

Thirdly, we should impress on this Assembly and its appropriate authority the need for it to continue analysing and constantly review the situation of violence and the danger of violation of the Vienna Conventions, which prevail over everything pertaining to the inviolability of diplomatic missions and the upholding of international law. For the lives of our President and of our entire people, the consideration, review, analysis and ongoing attention of the Security Council is essential in order to find formulas to avert a greater tragedy that later, once out of control, we could not address.

To conclude, I must state here that, with the awareness of and support for the presence of our President, José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, in our land — in the country where he was elected President by a large majority in free and democratic elections, which today makes him the leader and hero in defending the democratic rights of our peoples — the need to restore to José Manuel Zelaya Rosales to his functions as President of the Republic is more urgent than ever, so that he can take on the duties bestowed on him by our Republic's constitution and the sovereign mandate of our people. Right now, tonight and in the days following, the leaders of the coup should be urged to respect the life of our President and the inviolability of Brazilian territory in Honduras in its diplomatic mission.

We must not neglect this grave political and institutional crisis, a crisis that affects the entire world and democracy around the globe. I therefore request that the Secretary-General present to the special session of the General Assembly a report analysing compliance with resolution 63/301, and resolutions that might stem from it, for a return to constitutional rule,

the restoration of our President, ending violence and repression and violations of the international law, for a return to international peace and concord, to our people's freedom to hold elections without the constant threat of violence and coups d'état, and, finally, for respect for human life. The most humble may not be known to the international community, but every night their lives are in danger under the skies of our country.

We declare our solidarity with all those suffering from lack of freedom and of democracy, from lack of development, from poverty and inequality, those suffering from a lack of respect for the freedom that every society must have to organize itself as best it can, without being attacked, blockaded or, much less, expelled from any international entity. I express the solidarity of Honduras with those people suffering from discrimination and despoliation and those whose hope is crushed beneath the terror of military force, and our bottomless gratitude for the solidarity expressed by the entire international community. In an extraordinary, unprecedented way, they joined hands and forgot their profound differences to unite with our people and jointly confront this crime, which, in the twenty-first century, has once again stained our democracies.

We give our thanks for the prayers and the solidarity of all the peoples of the world, to those who accompany us daily on the long road back to democracy, and to those who will never forget the words of our President calling out for respect for life, integrity and freedom of speech, and that never again will this sad story of persecution and death be perpetrated against an innocent, unarmed and peaceful people.

These, then, are the initiatives I have set out. Along with that I express our gratitude to all peoples of the world, representatives of whom fit into this small space, just as all the freedom and the hope of democracy of the entire world fits into that tiny country of Honduras.

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

Mr. Pak Kil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (*spoke in Korean; English text provided by the delegation*): On behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would like

to congratulate Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. At the same time, I wish to express my hope that his skilful stewardship will lead the current session to success.

The sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly will mark an end to the first decade of a new century, which humankind has ushered in with a great deal of anticipation and aspiration. One of the major tasks facing the Assembly this year is to conduct an impartial review of this first decade and set the correct path ahead.

Humankind has yet to realize its long-cherished desire to thrive in a peaceful and equitable world free from war, while its hopes are confronted with a host of serious challenges one after the other. The Afghan war is in escalation and the Iraq war is still undecided. The cold wind of a nuclear arms race is blowing, even before negotiations on nuclear disarmament have been opened. Avian influenza is not completely subdued, yet a new strain of H1N1 flu is sweeping the world. The world is undergoing a much greater degree of global warming this year than last, and we are witnessing more stagnant economies and many more people out of work everywhere.

The United Nations Security Council has become more arrogant, resulting in further inequality and double standards in international relations. We need to direct serious attention to this prevailing reality when we review the first decade of the new century.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, under the leadership of the great General Kim Jong Il, has now entered a phase of State-building. A great, prosperous and powerful nation is a country in which national power is strong and everything thrives and whose people live happily, with nothing to envy in the world. To build such a country was the lifelong wish of the great leader of our people President Kim Il Sung, and it is the firm intention and wish of the Government and people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that such a thriving nation will be a reality by 2012, the centenary of Kim Il Sung's birth.

The main task facing us over the next three years is to concentrate all our efforts on building an economic power, which is the last height we need to scale in building a great, prosperous and powerful nation. The Korean peninsula remains as ever in a state of armistice. But now that we possess a dependable

nuclear deterrent, we may be able to prevent war and defend peace. For more than half a century our country was compelled to produce guns rather than butter, as we suffered under nuclear threats and the danger of war posed by hostile forces. But today we have settled down to channel our efforts into building a great, prosperous and powerful nation. To all intents and purposes, this is completely the result of the Songun-based politics instituted by the great General Kim Jong Il. And, when our country becomes an economic power, that will create new impetus to the economic development of the region. Our efforts to build up the economy will constitute a significant part of the international community's efforts to attain the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

We have never opposed the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and the rest of the world. Denuclearization was the wish of President Kim Il Sung, and a nuclear-free world is a long-cherished desire of mankind.

The Korean people are more devoted to the sovereignty and peace of their country than any other people or nation in the world, as a result of the characteristics of their country's historical development. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has done its utmost to bring about the peaceful reunification of the country, to eliminate nuclear threats and grounds for war and to secure peace and stability on the Korean peninsula. We initiated the denuclearization of North-East Asia and of the Korean peninsula and put forward the proposals for the Armistice Agreement to be replaced by a peace agreement and for the adoption of a non-aggression pact between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States.

However, our efforts have not received an appropriate response from the United States. The United States considers the Korean issue only in the light of its Asia strategy and does not want to see the entire Korean peninsula denuclearized. That has resulted in a greater nuclear threat facing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The arbitrariness of the United States can be seen in the claim that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is not allowed to launch even a peaceful satellite. The Security Council is being manipulated by that arbitrariness.

We have concluded that, as long as the United States does not change its existing nuclear policy, we have no option but to rely on our nuclear capability in order to ensure the nuclear balance in the region and preserve peace and stability in North-East Asia. The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula depends on whether or not the United States changes its nuclear policy towards Korea. In order to realize the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, the United States Administration must discard its long-standing policy of confrontation and put into practice the change that it has recently talked about on several occasions.

We are not engaged in a nuclear arms race. The purpose of our nuclear weapon is to deter war. We will only possess a nuclear deterrent so as to avert a military attack or the threat of such an attack against our country. Deterrence will be directly proportional to the threat on the Korean peninsula, as in Europe and elsewhere. As long as it possesses nuclear weapons, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will act responsibly with regard to their management, use and non-proliferation, and to nuclear disarmament. We share the position of all peaceful countries, including the non-aligned countries, in opposing nuclear war, the nuclear arms race and the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

United Nations sanctions have now been imposed on us on the grounds that we had a nuclear deterrent. It may be recalled that the United Nations was set up in the country that produced the first nuclear weapon and that all five permanent members of the Security Council are nuclear Powers. If those countries had demonstrated their commitment to nuclear disarmament a long time ago and had refrained from arbitrarily and selectively opposing the peaceful satellite launch of another country, the nuclear situation in the world might have developed differently.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea attaches importance to the principle of sovereign equality enshrined in the United Nations Charter. The principle of sovereign equality is also the reason why we became a Member of the United Nations. Unjust and selective sanctions will never be recognized or accepted. The position of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is to respond to dialogue with dialogue and to sanctions by strengthening nuclear deterrence. If the United States brings sanctions to the talks, we will, for our part,

participate in such talks by bolstering our nuclear deterrence.

Thanks to the far-sighted bold decision of the great General Kim Jong Il, North-South relations on the Korean peninsula have entered a new phase. Just over a year ago, the North and the South had to adapt to changes owing to the differences in the positions of the two parties towards the historic joint declaration of 15 June and the declaration of 4 October, which were recognized and supported by the General Assembly.

However, our sincere and noble efforts paved the way for a turning point so as to reach a common understanding of those grand programmes for reunification. Inter-Korean economic cooperation, including the operation of the Kaesong industrial complex, is back on track and separated families can be reunited. In the future, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will also continue to make all possible efforts to achieve national reconciliation and unity and to bring forward the independent and peaceful reunification of the country under the banner of "by our nation itself".

All Member States have accepted the need for United Nations reform, as the new century requires. Currently, the Security Council is the most anachronistic organ of the United Nations. An imbalance in relations, by which the strong nations have ruled the weaker ones for the past half century, remains part of the structure of the Security Council, and it is precisely in the rules of procedure of that Council that democracy is least developed. Today, the General Assembly is the only place in the United Nations where the views of the international community can be properly reflected and democracy ensured.

In order to strengthen the role of the United Nations in line with the requirement of the times and the new situation, it is important to thoroughly democratize the Security Council and to substantially increase the authority of the General Assembly. In restructuring the Security Council, we should first consider the issues that can be resolved, such as the expansion of non-permanent members of the Security Council on the principle of ensuring the full representation of non-aligned and other developing countries, which make up the majority of the United Nations Member States.

In enhancing the authority of the General Assembly, we need to discuss the issue of submitting decisions of the Security Council to the General Assembly for approval, in particular all decisions relating to the principle of sovereign equality laid down in the United Nations Charter. The United Nations is required to have the proper criteria and principles in order to examine human rights issues. The United Nations Charter recognizes the rights of national self-determination and choice and the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, and all international human rights instruments contain the basic principle of the non-politicization of human rights.

However, these days some debates in the United Nations contradict that. Any attempt to bring into question the systems of specific countries and to interfere in their internal affairs under the guise of the protection of human rights is, in itself, a violation of human rights, denying the right of the people of those countries to choose their own system. The United Nations should pay attention to the fact that its human rights agenda covers only the situations found in small countries, with no mention of large ones, the West and European countries. Due attention should also be given to how to boost the role of the non-aligned and other developing countries in the international arena.

International efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals and to address the central issues of the United Nations, such as the global economic crisis and climate change, urgently call for the active participation of a wide range of developing countries, including the Non-Aligned Movement.

The foreign policy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been, is and will be based on the principles of independence, peace and friendship. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will actively strive to further strengthen and develop friendly and cooperative relations with all United Nations Member States under those principles, and to fully discharge its commitment towards defending the peace and security of the Korean peninsula and the rest of the world.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. João Gomes Cravinho, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Portuguese Republic.

Mr. Gomes Cravinho (Portugal) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): I wish the President all the best for this General Assembly. Along with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, he can count on Portugal's firm support in his work. Allow me to begin by endorsing fully Sweden's intervention as the country holding the presidency of the European Union.

Fighting climate change is both a moral imperative and a matter of survival. This is no longer a long-term issue. Its consequences are evident everywhere; from the small island States to Portugal, we can all witness it. The time to act is now. I congratulate the Secretary-General on the timely high-level meeting on climate change. The objective of mobilizing political will and vision for the climate negotiations has been fulfilled. The process of political consciousness-raising is done. Governments are now better prepared to take the decisions necessary for an ambitious agreement in Copenhagen. At December's Climate Change Summit, every State should take on bold commitments, to the extent that their respective responsibilities and capacities allow, so that the post-2012 world can meet the challenge. If, however, we leave Copenhagen with limited results and small, insignificant reforms, we will be failing in our historic responsibilities.

We are all affected by climate change, but it is obvious that the consequences are not equally distributed. The least developed countries and small island States, despite being the lowest polluters, suffer the most from the effects of climate change, and their greater vulnerability imposes a larger responsibility on the international community. Being part of a community means having a responsibility to the other members of the community; so, when we talk about the international community, we automatically imply that it is our duty to support these countries in their adaptation and mitigation efforts.

The General Assembly's resolution 63/281, on the impact of climate change on global security, is a good step forward. But it must be followed up. The United Nations should promote in-depth debates on this matter at all relevant levels during the session we are now starting. Portugal is a country that has built its history through an extraordinary relationship with the sea. It is, therefore, natural for us to promote the sustainable development of oceans and their resources with a coherent and coordinated approach. We see this

as a strategic issue for the whole world. In this regard, Portugal has contributed in multiple contexts, including to the maritime policy of the European Union and the ocean strategy of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP).

The preservation of the environment must also tackle the energy question. Climate change brings challenges but also great opportunities. Fully conscious of this, Portugal is strongly committed to renewable energy sources: solar, wind, hydro, biomass and wave power. In 2010 we plan to produce 45 per cent of our energy from renewable sources. By 2020 we will reach 60 per cent. Furthermore, Portugal has one of the lowest carbon-emission rates per capita in the European Union, and we are ready to share our experience in this area with all interested Member States.

A year ago, when we gathered in this Hall for the opening of the sixty-third session of the Assembly, the world was waking up to an economic and financial crisis that we are still dealing with today. Recent positive signs bear witness to the results of international cooperation in the face of this common threat, but we are aware that the effects of this crisis continue to be felt in the daily lives of millions of people all over the world, and that the most vulnerable are once again the main victims. We are convinced that the international financial system must be guided by principles of responsibility and transparency, and that regulation and supervision must be strengthened. We can and should make sure that international markets are based on the values, principles and standards of conduct that we share.

We should also ensure that the benefits of economic globalization have a more universal impact. The United Nations Global Compact is an important contribution to this end. The solution to this issue was not, is not and will never be protectionism. Closing the door on our neighbours and partners means leaving people in poverty and failing to solve our medium- to long-term domestic problems. It is therefore crucial that we bring the Doha Round to a rapid conclusion in a way that corresponds fully to the sustainable global development objectives that have been outlined. At the same time, we renew our firm commitment to the Millennium Development Goals. We cannot allow the economic crisis to affect the gains we have achieved through this process. A State that forgets the common good will sooner or later find instability, poverty and

insecurity knocking at its door. Portugal, with its sense of collective responsibility and international cohesion, will continue to contribute to the limits of its capacity.

We concentrate a large part of our action on development aid in Africa, where poverty is most marked. In this regard, I would like to mention that Portugal is currently a co-president of the Africa Partnership Forum and, in this capacity, in concert with our African partners, we have communicated to the G-20 the specific concerns and interests of the continent in areas such as the response to the economic and financial crisis and climate change. In the context of Africa, we continue to be firmly committed to implementing the first European Union Action Plan and Common Strategy, adopted at the second European Union and Africa Summit in Lisbon in December 2007.

Allow me at this point to salute the people of Guinea-Bissau for their conduct of the recent elections in their country. It is now up to the Guinean institutions to maintain and consolidate peace and stability, and it is up to the international community to increase its assistance in order to strengthen the building of institutions and security sector reform in Guinea-Bissau. Portugal will continue to be strongly committed to this process, bearing in mind the wishes expressed by the democratically elected institutions of Guinea-Bissau.

This month we celebrate the tenth anniversary of the self-determination referendum of Timor-Leste, and we take this opportunity to pay a heartfelt tribute to the East-Timorese people. The referendum was the corollary of the affirmation of Timor-Leste's identity and its admirable will towards peace and development as a sovereign nation.

Guinea-Bissau and Timor-Leste are two countries that demonstrate the growing involvement of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries in promoting peace, democracy, human rights, political stability and social and economic development. One of the fundamental pillars of that organization, over which Portugal currently presides, is the promotion of the Portuguese language, one of the five most widely spoken languages in the world and the vehicle of communication for more than 250 million people, connecting States and peoples in all corners of the world. It is therefore ever more pressing and fair that Portuguese be made an official or working language in international organizations. Portugal is also assuming

the pro tempore presidency of the Ibero-American Conference on Culture, whose summit will take place this year in Estoril, Portugal, with innovation and knowledge as its theme.

In this regard, I wish to emphasize that, as President of the CPLP and the Ibero-American Conference, Portugal has, through regional institutions and organizations, supported the participation and involvement of emerging economies and developing countries in the debate over the reform of the international financial system.

Regarding the situation in Honduras, we call for the speedy re-establishment of democratic and constitutional legality, and we recall the inviolability of the diplomatic mission of Brazil, under the principles of the Vienna Convention.

The CPLP and the Ibero-American Conference are true paradigms of intercontinental cooperation, based on a communion of cultures and values. We also consider these paradigms to be the spirit and the essence of the Alliance of Civilizations. Thus, it is with great satisfaction that we witness the enormous progress in the work of the Alliance and that we shall participate in the Third Forum of the Alliance, to be held in Brazil in 2010, which will be an event in which the CPLP will have a special role. I take this opportunity to congratulate the High Representative of the Secretary-General for his Office's valuable work.

Portugal is proud to have been among the first signatories of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which has just been opened for signature. We call on all States Members of the United Nations to do so as well, so that this new international human rights instrument may enter into effect and bring about respect for all human rights for every human being.

Equally fundamental in the defence and promotion of human dignity is the continuous action of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as the recent appointment of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children. In both cases I would like to highlight the committed, tireless and effective way in which they have assumed their responsibilities.

Terrorism and the proliferation of nuclear weapons are the greatest challenges to international peace and security. In combating these threats it is

essential that we implement the respective international regimes and continue to invest in international cooperation, in particular in the framework of the United Nations. All States that signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty must honour their obligations without reservations.

Regarding the maintenance of international peace and security, we have never demanded so much from the United Nations. If peacekeeping operations are to have the outcome that they deserve, clear, credible and achievable mandates are absolutely necessary, as is the engagement of all Member States through contribution of personnel.

Portugal has assumed its share, with both financial and operational contributions. More than 20,000 members of Portuguese armed forces and 3,000 from the Portuguese police forces have participated so far in peacekeeping operations. Today, we have peacekeepers in Timor-Leste, Lebanon, Afghanistan and Chad.

One of the main challenges to international peace and security is the conflict in the Middle East. Portugal reiterates its support for a two-State solution, with the creation of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State, to exist side by side in peace and security with the State of Israel. But to attain this objective it is paramount that Palestine have a territory that enables it to exist as a State.

In this context, Portugal will continue to support all efforts, in particular those of Egypt and the United States, for the return to the negotiation process in accordance with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) and in accordance with the principles contained in the various peace initiatives, particularly the Arab Peace Initiative. We are living in a time of opportunity, and it is fundamental that the increasingly united opinion of the international community be fully listened to by the parties.

In Iraq and in Afghanistan, we welcome the progress achieved in the past few years, but we recognize the need for the continued commitment of the international community. I hereby affirm the guarantee that Portugal will continue to assume its share of the burden.

Climate change, the financial and economic crisis, sustainable development, human rights, threats to the international peace and security: to face such a

vast array of global challenges, there is no more appropriate forum than the United Nations, no other strategic agent that may transmit our collective response.

Today, more than ever, the collective interest reflects the national concern of each of us. Today, more than ever, I subscribe to Dag Hammarskjöld's vision of a United Nations as a dynamic instrument to develop means of executive action that is not limited to being simply a mechanism consisting of static conferences for the resolution of conflicts of interests and ideologies. To ensure that the multilateralism we profess is truly effective, to ensure that the primacy of the United Nations in international politics and the respect for international law is not mere rhetoric, to ensure that this Organization is increasingly more like the dynamic instrument that Dag Hammarskjöld envisioned, we must further the reform of the United Nations. We must seek in this General Assembly a broad consensus that will enable what we all know is necessary to take place, namely, the reform of the Security Council.

In so doing we should ask ourselves whether a Security Council without Brazil and India as permanent members, and where Africa is not represented with that same status, is a truly representative Council. Is it consistent to defend a more efficient and transparent Organization and yet to have a Security Council without reform of its working methods?

Let us not be satisfied with merely a discussion of a better Organization. Let us build together a more efficient, transparent and representative United Nations.

Since 2000, Portugal has been a candidate for a non-permanent seat in the Security Council for the biennium 2011-2012. Our candidacy is consistent with the history of our engagement with the United Nations, our capacity to listen and dialogue with other peoples and cultures, and our commitment towards fair and balanced solutions in international issues. We are a candidate in the name of representativeness and the right of all countries, including those of small and medium size, which constitute the majority of the Members of this Organization, to be present in the Security Council. We are a candidate for the benefit of sustainable development and on behalf of the human values that bind us together, of the inalienable rights of

all human beings and of our common aspiration for a more just and peaceful world.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Thomas Matussek, chairman of the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Mr. Matussek (Germany): In these tumultuous times marked by manifold crises, we are more than ever in need of a global Organization that all Members make use of and support. We need the United Nations. The comprehensive, universal system of the United Nations forms the heart of the global system of crisis prevention and mitigation. Now more than ever, Germany pledges its active and extensive support to this world Organization.

This past year taught us bitter lessons, and today it seems clearer than ever: we must secure the sustainability of the economic recovery. That applies not only to the financial sector, but also, and in particular, to the most vulnerable in the world — the poorest of the poor in the developing countries — as well as to our environment and the world's climate.

The consultations on a charter for sustainable economic activity point in the right direction. The United Nations should be actively involved in that process. We must turn the crisis into an opportunity for development and a truly green recovery.

The aftermath of the financial crisis is jeopardizing our progress on the path towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Therefore, we must do our utmost to avoid any setbacks in that regard. Donor States must continue their efforts for development, all the more so in times of crisis. Germany has continually increased its official development assistance contributions in recent years. In 2008, my country was the second-largest donor of official development assistance. We will also significantly increase our contributions to the multilateral development banks.

All of this underscores one thing: Germany, as one of the world's largest economies, stands by its global responsibility. But developing countries must also live up to their responsibilities. Responsible governance, respect for human rights, environmental protection, the fight against epidemics, the strengthening of the rights of women — those are the

challenges that each country has the responsibility to meet.

Climate change is the pre-eminent challenge of the twenty-first century. It threatens our well-being, our security and our economic development. It will lead to uncontrollable risks and dramatic damage, if we do not take resolute action — not in some distant future, but right now.

I can assure the Assembly: Germany will continue to be a leader in climate protection. But we will be successful only if we act together. We need an inclusive process in which those countries directly affected by climate change, such as the small island States, can also play a part. The United Nations is the only reliable framework for this. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his very timely initiative in convening a United Nations summit last week addressing this key issue.

Disarmament and arms control can help create better conditions for global cooperation and increase security and stability. We warmly welcome the new dynamic in the area of nuclear disarmament. The call for a nuclear-weapon-free world enjoys widespread support, including that of Germany. We must seize this opportunity for progress in all areas of disarmament. Germany has underlined that sub-strategic nuclear weapons must also be incorporated into the continuing process of disarmament. Our clear commitment to ridding the world of all nuclear weapons is the best way to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime.

We need a new international consensus at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the launching of negotiations in Geneva on a fissile material cut-off treaty and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In order to avoid a conflict of objectives between non-proliferation and peaceful uses, Germany supports multilateral solutions to nuclear-fuel supply and has put forward its own proposal on that issue.

The international community must not relent in its commitment to banning all weapons of mass destruction. A model in that respect is the Chemical Weapons Convention, which outlaws a whole category of weapons of mass destruction. Its implementing organization needs strong and dynamic leadership. Germany has always had a particular commitment to

the Chemical Weapons Convention, and we stand ready to accept greater responsibility in that organization.

We view the ongoing nuclear programme in Iran with great concern. The belated admittance by Iran concerning the construction of a second enrichment plant underlines the fact that our concerns are more than justified. Even before this latest event, the report by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director-General El Baradei emphasized the urgency of the matter. Unfortunately, the Iranian Government still refuses to cooperate fully with the IAEA and to remove serious doubts concerning the peaceful character of its nuclear programme. We urge Iran to grant an IAEA verification team access to the newly disclosed site without delay.

We sincerely hope that Iran will use the opportunity of the upcoming talks between it and the E3+3 — the United Kingdom, France and Germany, plus the United States, the Russian Federation and China — to demonstrate its willingness to engage in honest and speedy negotiations. If Iran's leaders continue to stall, the international community will have no other choice but to take additional measures to emphasize the seriousness of our common concern.

Iran has a long and great history. It witnessed the origins of civilization. It can become an anchor of stability in its region — a respected member of the international community. But that involves, in addition to a diplomatic resolution of questions regarding its nuclear programme, a responsible foreign policy towards its neighbours. The key to this is the recognition of Israel's right to exist.

Since the escalation of violence in the Gaza Strip at the beginning of the year, we have seen some encouraging signs of a return to the peace process. The resumption of negotiations aimed at the two-State solution is still possible. Germany strongly supports President Obama's intensive commitment and regional approach. Together with the partners of the European Union, we are prepared to support efforts towards peace through concrete contributions. What we now need, however, are courageous gestures of goodwill on all sides to create the conditions for serious talks.

The successful holding of elections in June was an important milestone towards the continuing stabilization of Lebanon. What is now important is that a new Government soon be formed. The successful United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)

mission remains a crucial contribution to securing the ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel, and thus to the stabilization of the region. By again assuming command of the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force on 1 September, we further strengthened our commitment to UNIFIL.

For Afghanistan, 2009 is a pivotal year. The presidential elections — the first elections in decades that were free and organized by the Afghans themselves — determined who will control the fate of the country over the next five years. They were an impressive sign of the resolve of the people of Afghanistan to take part in the political process.

Against the backdrop of the difficult security situation, the further build-up of Afghan security forces assumes even greater importance. We will, therefore, continue to increase the number of German police instructors in Afghanistan, we will support the further build-up of the European Union Police Mission, and we will help to advance the training of the Afghan army within the framework of the International Security Assistance Force.

Despite all the criticism, there are also encouraging accomplishments, especially in the field of economic growth and in the reconstruction of the country's infrastructure. The basic prerequisites for Afghanistan's sustainable development are good governance, a resolute fight against corruption and an improvement in State services. These are essential if the population is to once again nurture hope for the future. As one of the largest troop-contributing nations and one of the main bilateral donors, Germany will continue to play an instrumental role in the reconstruction of the country.

Following the presidential elections, we are now entering a new phase of cooperation between the international community and Afghanistan. For that reason, Germany, together with the United Kingdom and France, has taken the initiative to hold an international conference that will set out concrete, realistic and measurable goals for the future political and economic development of Afghanistan. To that end, the Afghanistan Compact, which will expire in 2010, should be further developed.

In 2010, we will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the independence of no fewer than 17 African States — a fitting moment to also look to the future. Despite the global economic crisis, the overall outlook

for Africa and its people is positive. We must succeed in utilizing the continent's enormous potential in terms of people, creativity and resources. It remains our challenge to support the development of that potential while, at the same time, respecting African ownership.

African ownership should by no means be equated with a withdrawal from our neighbouring continent. On the contrary, it means that we should cultivate relations with the States of Africa in a spirit of partnership — a partnership in which each side introduces its ideas, and in which we work together to master the challenges we face, whether locally or globally.

One major common challenge remains the containment of violence and the protection of people in conflict areas. Germany will continue its extensive engagement in Africa, be it in the area of development cooperation, peace and security, business and technology, the environmental and energy sector or educational and scientific cooperation. This also applies to cooperation with the African Union, which has been expanding increasingly in recent years.

United Nations peacekeeping missions are a central pillar of the international security architecture. Reform of United Nations peacekeeping is an urgent issue, and Germany is ready to actively contribute to such reform.

It is absolutely essential that the cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations be further intensified. The European Union has just shown that, with its peacekeeping missions in Africa — those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Chad, to name just two examples — it is a reliable partner of the United Nations when it comes to crisis management.

We are facing a multitude of global challenges. Today, no country is strong enough to tackle those challenges on its own. We need a universal forum for joint global action. That is why we need a strong United Nations that is capable of taking effective action.

A long chain of high-level meetings — from the 2005 High-level Event to the Secretary-General's Summit on Climate Change last week — has emphasized how urgent it is to adapt the United Nations to the challenges of today's world, for threats have become global. Our responses, however, are still

not always global, and that is true for the United Nations as well.

Reforms must start with simple questions. Does a particular body effectively fulfil its tasks? Does its composition reflect the world of today? Where that is not the case, reform must have a clear objective: to make the United Nations more effective, more credible and more assertive.

However, we must not limit reforms to the United Nations. If we want to deal effectively with the current crisis and effectively prevent future crises, we must also reform the international financial institutions. Isolated reforms of individual institutions will not get us anywhere. Reform of the financial institutions and of the United Nations must intermesh as a broader reform of global governance — a reform that, more than six decades after the founding of today's world order, is long overdue. Germany, incidentally, is advocating at a high level the improved representation of newly industrialized and developing countries as part of the reform of the international financial institutions. This is our understanding of global governance: fair participation for everybody.

In 2000 and 2005, heads of State and Government called for reform of the Security Council. They did so out of the realization that we can meet the threats of today only if the Council reflects the world of today. One thing is clear: if the Security Council does not reform itself, there is a risk that other bodies will attempt to take its place. Such a rivalry would be detrimental to us all. Let us therefore attempt, at this sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly, to bring about concrete results.

Germany has been and remains willing to take responsibility. That includes assuming a permanent seat on a reformed Security Council. We also underline this readiness to take responsibility with our candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Council for the period 2011-2012. Through our work in the Security Council, we want to contribute to the success of the United Nations, just as we are already contributing to worldwide United Nations missions, to development funds, humanitarian aid and the United Nations Environment Programme. Now and in the future, we will work to find common interests, to overcome divisions and to strengthen a global partnership of responsibility.

The meeting rose at 9.10 p.m.