



General Assembly

Sixty-fourth session

5th plenary meeting

Thursday, 24 September 2009, 9 a.m.
New York

Official Records

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

In the absence of the President, Mr. Salahuldeen (Sudan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

**Address by Mr. Ahmed Abdallah Sambi,
President of the Union of the Comoros**

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Union of the Comoros.

Mr. Ahmed Abdallah Sambi, President of the Union of the Comoros, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Abdallah Sambi, President of the Union of the Comoros, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Sambi (*spoke in French*): I wish to pay tribute to the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General for their dedication to their noble missions.

For once, I do not wish to conclude my statement with the issue of the Comorian island of Mayotte, as I usually do. I should like to address that sensitive issue first. It affects not only the unity and integrity of the Comoros and its history and international law, but also peace in the region of the Indian Ocean.

The General Assembly has condemned the French presence on the Comorian island of Mayotte several

times, because the Comoros was admitted to the international community with its colonial borders, which include the islands of Mayotte, Anjouan, Moheli and Grand Comore. Despite many relevant and final United Nations resolutions and several consultations held on the island, France continues to hold referendums on Mayotte to definitively anchor that Comorian island to the French Republic. Those consultations have made it possible to change the status of the Comorian island of Mayotte several times — only within the framework of internal French law — until, through the most recent consultation, the island became the 101st French department.

Moreover, it should be noted that the relations between France and the Comoros are unique. Indeed, despite the dispute arising from the separation of one island from its three sisters — thus handicapping the Comoros Archipelago by changing it into a three-legged cow, as President Ahmed Abdallah Abderemane said — the Comoros, contrary to what one might think, enjoys a special partnership with France.

France is present on the Comoros in the sense that, in the international community, it is always associated with major decisions that affect my country's future. France remains the primary economic partner of the Comoros. It is one of the largest contributors of development assistance to my country. More than 200,000 Comorian citizens live on French soil. Those are just a few examples to demonstrate that no hostility exists between our two peoples or our two countries. And we are firmly resolved not only to

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continue that special partnership, but also to reaffirm it even more.

However, this desire for harmony in no way constitutes a renunciation of our firm attachment to the territorial integrity of our country. That is why I have taken the initiative to come here to solemnly present to France, before the entire international community, a proposal to resolve this dispute.

In fact, I propose to France that it recognize that the four islands of the Comoros Archipelago remain an indivisible nation based on the principle of one country, two administrations. By that principle, I mean that France recognizes the full sovereignty of the Union of the Comoros throughout its territory while continuing to administer the Comorian island of Mayotte.

Obviously, both parties must reach agreement on the duration of the French presence on the Comorian island of Mayotte. On the other hand, we request that France actively assist in the economic development of the three other islands to achieve a certain balance throughout the Archipelago — a balance that will necessarily encourage a harmonious rapprochement among them and will enable the Comorian island of Mayotte to finally return to its natural home. This process will enable our brothers and sisters of Mayotte to maintain their social advantages and their standard of living and the other three islands to rise to the many development challenges they face.

I am convinced that with the active participation of the whole of the international community these new proposals, which should become part of the negotiations between France and the Comoros, would lead to a happy outcome. France and the Comoros have nearly two centuries of life together, two centuries of shared history, culture and language. We do not have the right to spoil that patrimony by allowing misunderstandings to persist, by continuing to let play out the tragedies that make of the sea lane between Anjouan and Mayotte one of the greatest maritime cemeteries in the world. For all of these reasons we come here, in the full view of the world, to demonstrate our good will, which we dare to hope will never be obliterated by an attitude of inflexibility or intransigence.

We meet every year in these prestigious surroundings to debate questions of peace, security and development. Unfortunately, we have to acknowledge

that our joint efforts do not always lead to conclusive results, since as of today numerous challenges remain, and their consequences for our countries and our peoples are becoming ever more dire.

Certainly, some progress can be seen here and there, yet our people continue to suffer hunger, malnutrition and sickness. Our children do not have the benefit of an education of the quality necessary to assure them a better future. Health care remains a luxury for most of our citizens. Some of our villages and even cities suffer a cruel lack of basic social services, indeed even of potable water and electricity.

Finally, many of our countries, particularly small island States like my own, are threatened by multiple natural catastrophes whose consequences only aggravate an already fragile socio-economic situation. Certain of our nations are even at risk of no longer appearing on the map of the world in a few years. That catastrophic situation, which prevails in an era when, paradoxically, every day sees enormous technical and technological advances, must challenge and incite us to redouble our efforts to find appropriate responses.

Thus a genuine international mobilization — especially on the part of those countries most equipped to face the challenges confronting us all — is required. We must take concrete, urgent and concerted action and make a determined stand against the consequences of the economic, financial and food crises that lash all our countries without distinction.

I believe now is the time to demonstrate active solidarity and pragmatism if we want our words to translate into concrete actions and if we want to rekindle hope in our peoples, who have suffered more than enough. Obviously our developing nations are not asking for the moon — at least not for now. We merely ask that we join our efforts to satisfy the legitimate demands of our peoples, who only aspire to live better and with dignity, peace and peace of mind.

Our Organization has a great role to play in the realization of that goal, and for its voice to reach as far as necessary we must all agree on the need to bring to its various branches the necessary reforms. Indeed, only an organization that is more representative, more democratic and more equitable in its various institutions will be in a position to better address the problems all countries face, to understand them and conceive the solutions most likely to produce more peace, stability and development.

Furthermore, in the framework of respect for human rights and good international governance, the abusive use of universal jurisdiction should be fought by working for a better structure for such jurisdiction, but also to put in place an organ to regulate the principle of jurisdiction itself. A better definition of the concept of the responsibility to protect should also be sought, with sufficient time allocated to seriously consider its implementation.

Peace and security remain essential conditions for the promotion of socio-economic development. Thus the conflict conditions that prevail in numerous regions of the world call out a challenge to us. We must show greater solidarity in regard to the populations of regions that for years on end have known only desolation, despair and humiliation.

We should also celebrate the initiative undertaken by President Barack Obama in the Middle East, which offers the hope of seeing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict resolved through a solution that is just, equitable and acceptable to the parties involved — notably the solidification of the two-State principle, as stipulated by the various United Nations resolutions on the matter.

Moreover, I take this opportunity to applaud the presence among us of His Excellency President Barack Obama, whose charisma, dynamism and sense of justice renew our hope to see the United States of America act with more engagement and pragmatism in the service of peace, justice and development in the world.

I will not neglect to mention Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Great Lakes region and Darfur, where fratricidal conflicts only further exacerbate poverty and underdevelopment. We therefore urge the international community to offer its assistance to those brother countries so as to put an end to that unfortunate situation.

I cannot close this chapter on crises and conflicts without wishing my Malagasy brothers and sisters complete success in the ongoing negotiations for a peaceful transition that quickly leads to peace and stability being restored in this sister island and to renewed efforts for its economic prosperity.

Here, I would also like to reiterate the unwavering support of the Union of the Comoros to the People's Republic of China and to the Kingdom of

Morocco in their legitimate efforts to recover their territorial integrity.

To conclude, I am greatly honoured to express the warm thanks and deep appreciation of the Comorian delegation to all the American authorities, in particular those of the State of New York, for the good arrangements to ensure us a pleasant stay in this great and beautiful country.

(spoke in Arabic)

I beseech God that we have a session that serves humanity.

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

Mr. Ahmed Abdallah Sambi, President of the Union of the Comoros, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. John Evans Atta Mills, President of the Republic of Ghana

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

Mr. John Evans Atta Mills, President of the Republic of Ghana, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. John Evans Atta Mills, President of the Republic of Ghana, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Mills: I bring very warm greetings from the people of Ghana. Allow me to join previous speakers in congratulating the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session on his election. His long distinguished service to his country and to Africa gives us confidence that we are in experienced and capable hands. I also wish to express my delegation's appreciation to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, for the able manner in which he presided over the General Assembly at its sixty-third session.

Last Monday, 21 September, Ghana celebrated the centenary of the birth of an illustrious son of Ghana and of Africa, our first President, Mr. Kwame

Nkrumah, under whose leadership Ghana became a Member of the United Nations on 8 March 1957, only two days after achieving independence. We recall Mr. Nkrumah's declaration before the General Assembly on 23 September 1960 that the United Nations was the only organization to hold out any hope for the future of mankind. At the same session, he called for the reform of the Security Council in order to bring it in line with a rapidly changing world. Those views were expressed almost 50 years ago, but they remain relevant.

Then, as now, Africa faced a deep crisis, with profound and far-reaching implications for international peace and stability. Today, the combined effects of climate change, high food and energy prices and the current financial and economic crisis threaten to erode the modest but hard-earned economic growth and democratic achievements of the past two decades. Africa remains volatile, and violent conflicts still persist. Therefore, it is my humble proposal that we all support the United Nations and its regional allies, such as the African Union, in living up to those and to the other pressing challenges facing the international community.

While we acknowledge that globalization has expanded and accelerated economic interdependence among States, the truth is that the benefits for many developing countries have been negligible. Indeed, the economies of many developing countries have not been transformed in any significant manner. Despite almost a decade of impressive growth of about 5 per cent, only a few countries have been able to reduce the proportion of their population living on less than \$1 per day. Consequently, most of those countries remain vulnerable to the various external shocks that continue to pose threats to their growth.

In fact, over-reliance on high commodity prices and mineral exports has not lessened, but rather exposed structural impediments to food security. That is particularly true of sub-Saharan Africa, where the ongoing world financial and economic crisis threatens to erode decades of modest growth, and thereby make the Millennium Development Goals unattainable in any meaningful way.

Ghana, therefore, reiterates its support for global integration that ensures inclusive and equitable development and also leads to a substantial reduction

in poverty, including full and productive employment and broad access to social services.

A number of developing countries have adopted various measures to mitigate the impact of the crisis on their economies, including interest rate reductions, recapitalization of financial institutions, trading reforms, and increased liquidity to banks. Ghana has also exercised fiscal restraint in response to the crisis, by cutting out all low-priority public spending and shifting the balance from recurrent expenditure to infrastructure investment.

In addressing the impact of the crisis on their economies, African countries would like to see the following: rich countries making a greater effort to meet existing commitments on aid and debt reduction; the acceleration of disbursements and improved access to existing financial facilities; the International Monetary Fund (IMF) being urged to put in place a new facility with relaxed conditions to help African development during this crisis period; a capital increase for the African Development Bank to enable it to scale up its interventions in support of African development; the sale of IMF gold reserves to release more resources to help African development during this period; and finally, the issuance of new Special Drawing Rights.

International trade carries enormous potential for poverty reduction and alleviation as well as for driving economic growth so that millions of our people can be lifted out of the quagmire of poverty. The ongoing Doha Round of trade talks promises, at least in principle, to improve market access for poor countries. This commitment, in our view, is very important, especially in low-skill and labour-intensive sectors such as garment manufacturing, from where most African exports come.

Sustained economic growth requires that poor countries increase their exports to rich countries. Unfortunately, the current system of trade discriminates against poor countries, hinders their participation in the global economy and damages the earning potential and opportunities of rural communities in those countries.

These developments do not work in the interest of our developing countries. Indeed, trade-distorting subsidies, as well as tariff and non-tariff barriers instituted by most advanced countries, discriminate against African products. Developing countries,

including Ghana, though we accept that liberalization is, indeed, required, believe that liberalization must be accompanied by predictable access to markets, elimination of the abuse of anti-dumping measures as well as the reduction of tariffs and non-tariff barriers.

In the face of all these developments, we in Africa acknowledge and recognize that all our efforts to achieve social and economic development will not yield much result unless we demonstrate our commitment to good governance. In spite of the difficulties and challenges, I can say without fear of contradiction that, leaders across the continent have embraced democratic values, except in a few cases where narrow self-interests are threatening the commendable gains that we have made in the past decade.

We are also confronted with the grave risks to environmental, social and economic development posed by climate change. The need for concrete, timely and decisive measures to enable us to deal with this largely man-made problem is obvious, and meeting that need must not be deferred any longer.

As we proceed to the United Nations Climate Change Conference scheduled for December 2009 in Copenhagen, the issue of financing mitigation and adaptation to climate change in developing countries will remain central to the deliberations. In fact, progress on these issues will be crucial in determining any outcome in Copenhagen.

The intrinsic link between security and development has been generally recognized by the international community. Despite the pivotal role played by the United Nations in identifying the threats confronting the international community and marshalling the necessary international support to deal with those challenges, humanity's hope and aspiration for a peaceful and prosperous world are weakened by a litany of unfulfilled promises and failures.

Rather than being discouraged by these shortcomings, we in Ghana are unwavering in our conviction that, though daunting, the challenge to the community of nations could be surmounted through innovative, bold, and achievable measures.

Peacekeeping operations have played a pivotal role in the Organization's efforts to fulfil its core mission of maintaining international peace and security. Ghana, as one of the oldest and most

consistent troop-contributing countries, deems it a matter of privilege and honour to be associated with this success story of our Organization. We equally acknowledge that increasing demands have placed further strain on an overstretched system.

It is for this reason that we applaud and renew our support for the reform process that is in place and also acknowledge the fruitful dividends that have come out of it, even though we admit that much more needs to be done if we are to achieve our objectives.

Ghana cannot but commend the growing cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. We call for its intensification to enable it to take advantage of the cooperative strength of the United Nations and regional organizations in a mutually complementary manner.

Next year marks the fifteenth year since the adoption, at the Fourth World Conference on Women, of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. In view of the huge gap between policy and practice and the unyielding progress in implementing that international convention on gender equality and the empowerment of women, it is our suggestion that we need to take a coherent, integrated and multisectoral approach to this problem.

Over the years, Ghana has demonstrated its commitment to implementing in an accelerated manner the goals of the Beijing Platform for Action, and we have done so by adopting concrete administrative, legal and constitutional means. Our efforts have yielded some measure of success, as clearly testified to by the appointment of our first female speaker of parliament, the first female attorney-general, and quite a number of female ministers and deputy ministers.

At its sixty-third session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 63/194, urging us to improve our efforts and join the international initiative against human trafficking and for the protection of victims. We in Ghana concur with those who view the elaboration and adoption of a United Nations global plan of action as an effective and practical way to give life and effect to the international initiative against this despicable crime. It is our expectation that the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session will make this an urgent and priority issue. I can assure him of Ghana's commitment and support.

In conclusion, I note with regret that conflicts, particularly in the developing world, have robbed us of an opportunity to improve the circumstances of our peoples. Indeed, it is well known that sustainable development can only be achieved in an international environment characterized by peace and stability.

We in Ghana therefore want to take this opportunity to renew our commitment to the ideals of the United Nations and to fulfil our Charter obligations by joining together with other Member States to assist the United Nations in playing its role in the maintenance of international peace and stability and in the promotion of fruitful international cooperation. We are convinced that the United Nations remains the ideal multilateral instrument for achieving international peace and security and promoting fruitful international cooperation. I would therefore want all of us to strengthen our resolve and muster the necessary political will to assist the United Nations to more effectively discharge its obligation to redeem our peoples from war, disease and poverty.

We in Ghana have pledged to build a better Ghana. We therefore want to assist the United Nations to build a better world. May God bless us in all these efforts.

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

Mr. John Evans Atta Mills, President of the Republic of Ghana, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Željko Komšić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Željko Komšić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Željko Komšić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Komšić (*spoke in Bosnian; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): It is a great honour for me to address the General Assembly today in my capacity as the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the very outset, allow me to congratulate the President of the Assembly at its sixty-fourth session and the other members of the Bureau on their election, and to express our full support to their future work. Furthermore, I would like to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, whom I met on several occasions, on the results achieved during his presidency of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly at a time when this body and the international community in general were facing an array of challenges related to pressing global issues.

Sessions of the General Assembly have always served as opportunities for leaders of States to gather and exchange their opinions about the situation in the world with the aim of finding the most suitable solutions for current global issues. The United Nations, like other organizations, depends upon the collective strength of its Members; that strength needs to be based on consensus among Member States. One of the most pressing issues that has marked the past year is the global economic and financial crisis, which has become the biggest threat to global peace and stability. If we miss the opportunity to tackle its negative effects immediately, it could produce unimaginable consequences throughout the world.

Even though there are indicators which show that recession in developed countries is slowly abating, it is evident that recovery will be slow and time-consuming. With regard to the developing and less developed countries, we can only imagine the harmful consequences that this crisis could produce in the times ahead. It is more than obvious that countries cannot combat these crises on their own, regardless of the efficiency of their Governments. Global crisis requires global solutions.

Ms. Koirala (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We welcome the adoption of the outcome document of the recent high-level Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development (resolution 63/303, annex). The Conference confirmed once again that the role of the United Nations — and especially of the General

Assembly, as one of the most democratic of forums — is to lead this process and find new modalities for improvement of cooperation with the aim of establishing effective mechanisms for preventing crises and alleviating and eliminating their consequences, as well as for eradicating poverty and establishing social justice in the world.

It is accurate to say that the present global economic crisis — the severest since the establishment of the United Nations — has heavily compromised and even jeopardized the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, one of the noblest tasks set by the Organization since its foundation. This applies in particular to the poorest countries, and especially to sub-Saharan African countries that had failed to achieve positive results even before the onset of the crisis. I stress that besides the responsibility borne by those countries pertaining to their activities in establishing good governance and the rule of law, which are prerequisites for achieving the aforementioned development goals, a huge responsibility lies with the developed countries.

It is exactly the developed countries that are expected to do everything in their power in order to overcome the global economic crisis. We think that during the crisis it is necessary to reform the global financial system and make it more transparent, to develop mechanisms for market monitoring and thus to avoid the mistakes that occurred in the period prior to the current decrease in the global GDP.

State institutions in my country — Bosnia and Herzegovina — have made systematic efforts to accomplish the Millennium Development Goals, and we believe that other than the difficulties caused by global economic volatility, there possibly will be no other obstacles in the context of finalizing the defined tasks by 2015. At the moment, Bosnia and Herzegovina is preparing a development strategy and a social inclusion strategy. The anti-poverty strategy was drafted earlier and has been implemented. Such projects have been carried out in cooperation with relevant United Nations agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and I wish to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for that intensive cooperation.

Climate change is one of the key issues that require an urgent response from the international community. Bosnia and Herzegovina aspires to end the year 2009 with successful completion of international

negotiations on climate change. Furthermore, we hope that the Copenhagen summit will produce an agreement that outpaces the Kyoto Protocol and that it will gain the support of the United Nations Member States.

However, it is not only island countries that are affected by this problem. It is a universal challenge and threat. Humanitarian catastrophes caused by weather conditions that have affected parts of our planet over recent years should serve as a warning to all of us. Neither economic nor political interests must be allowed to obstruct the achievement of a global consensus as the true beginning of a global struggle to prevent the loss of the natural balance of our planet.

All of us gathered here today agree that consensus and comprehensive reform of the United Nations system is necessary and that it ought to be carried out in a careful, prudent manner that ensures the broadest consensus of the Member States. United Nations reform should result in efficient and coordinated functioning of all bodies of the system. However, a widely accepted perspective is that the reform of the Security Council is of key importance for substantive reform of the entire system of the world organization.

I am convinced that the majority agree with me that Security Council reform ought primarily to result in better transparency of that body and its activities and should provide for a considerably larger spectrum of non-member States to participate in its work. That applies in particular to countries that are most on the Council's agenda, countries that are directly affected by a particular crisis, as well as countries that could use their expertise or experience gained in similar situations that contribute to following the best and most acceptable solutions.

We all have to be aware that any further delay in Security Council reform will undermine the credibility of that body, whereas the willingness to reach a compromise must be an imperative. Dialogue and compromise are the only way to ensure the broadest possible support for reforms.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is of the opinion that Security Council reform should urgently commence. In any case, we believe that in the future reformed Council, the group of Eastern European countries must have another non-permanent seat, considering that the

number of countries in that group has more than doubled in the last two decades.

I wish to emphasize that I expect the Council to engage more strongly in preventive diplomacy. We believe that taking that new course of action would mean that many issues and crises could be solved before they become aggravated, thus increasing the Council's efficiency. Ensuring timely and efficient conflict prevention, rather than reacting once a crisis has already escalated, is a more efficient and less expensive method for preserving peace and security.

Unfortunately, armed conflicts remain the reality of our world, and those most in danger are the poorest peoples and nations, who are left to fend for themselves. Therefore, it is necessary to foster additional United Nations early warning mechanisms and establish multiple sources of information in order to create a true picture of the situation and at the same time strengthen countries' abilities to resist enticements that lead to genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

Bosnia and Herzegovina remains committed to full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, since those indicted for war crimes in the former Yugoslavia must be prosecuted. Meanwhile, a legal framework has been set up in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina has begun to prosecute war crimes. That is one of the requirements for building mutual confidence and reconciliation in post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The number of refugees has been growing daily around the globe, but less effort and fewer means are devoted to finding a concrete solution to this global issue. We in Bosnia and Herzegovina are well acquainted with the destiny, pain and suffering of refugees, and thus we urge maximum effort to systematically resolve the global refugee crises. We support the joint and continued endeavours of all United Nations agencies and the non-governmental sector that directly deal with this problem. We are willing to offer cooperation in every aspect.

With regard to United Nations peacekeeping missions, we believe that, with foresight and considering the best practices, each crisis has to be carefully examined, taking into consideration all its causes, if we are to find a sustainable and justifiable solution. We believe that there are no universal

solutions applicable to every crisis, to the requirements of each particular case.

Various cultures and traditions have coexisted in the Balkans for centuries. We are willing to share both our positive and negative experiences in the post-conflict peacebuilding aspect.

The foreign policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina is aimed at preserving and improving long-lasting peace, security and stability, democratic and comprehensive social development and contributions to international peace and stability.

The presence, participation and actions of small countries in the decision-making process of the Security Council are of great importance in maintaining balance within the Council. However, apart from the views of the permanent members and world Powers, the Council needs to encourage smaller countries to present their views and participate in the decision-making process of that body, which in some ways represents global government. That is one of the reasons why we decided, after careful consideration and for the first time in our history, to run for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the period 2010-2011. Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has been the main topic of numerous debates of the international community, today wants to have the capacity to actively participate in and contribute to the work of the Security Council.

As a small but multi-ethnic, multinational and multireligious country with a rich historic heritage, Bosnia and Herzegovina is conversant with a plethora of sociopolitical systems and cultural and historical contexts. Bosnia and Herzegovina is willing to share its experience in peacebuilding in a post-conflict situation, particularly in the area of confidence-building among multicultural communities, and thus actively contribute to better understanding and long-term reconciliation in such regions.

Today, Bosnia and Herzegovina actively participates in the work of international organizations, especially the work of the United Nations. It has been a member of the Human Rights Council since June 2007, and within the Council's framework it has been working on promoting and protecting human rights throughout the world. Since 2000, members of the armed forces and police forces from Bosnia and Herzegovina have been equal participants in United Nations international military and police missions in

the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Liberia, Sudan, East Timor, Cyprus and Haiti, thus contributing to the preservation of international peace and stability. Furthermore, it supports international efforts to stabilize the situations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Finding a solution to the Middle East crisis remains one of the priorities of the world Organization. We believe that positive momentum ought to be used in the best possible manner to establish equitable and comprehensive peace in this region. After so many years of suffering, bloodshed, tension, mutual misunderstanding and conflict, we must support the latest activities of the Quartet members, as well as regional initiatives aimed at taking the crucial step forward leading to sustainable peace, which implies creation of a sovereign, independent and self-sustaining Palestinian State.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has been closely following the situation in Africa. We expect that despite the hard-hitting global economic crisis, the world's most developed countries will continue to increase the percentage of their gross domestic product that they contribute to official development assistance and to contribute the other expertise necessary for strengthening the capacities of poor African countries. We therefore welcome the efforts by the United Nations through the New Partnership for Africa's Development intended to lead Africa to stable and sustainable development and to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals.

This particularly relates to sub-Saharan countries. We support the efforts of the African Union, African Governments, the United Nations, the United Nations Office for West Africa and other regional initiatives designed to improve the rule of law and democracy and to strengthen capacities of civil society and institutions, and thus to upgrade all aspects of social life. We underline the importance of the continued provision of material aid for Africa, as well as improved use of these resources towards sustainable development.

Nowadays, when political and social processes are more dynamic than ever and we are facing challenges quite opposite from those of several decades ago, it has become more obvious that only a strong, multilateral approach can provide the right answers. The United Nations has faced numerous challenges, yet

it remains the only path leading to a better future and the only Organization able to offer adequate solutions to the array of global issues we are facing. If we work together to implement the conclusions reached here at this high-level event, we will undoubtedly live in better and more equitable conditions than is the case today.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is willing to fully contribute to the work of the United Nations. I would like to express my gratitude to all Member States who supported Bosnia and Herzegovina and who are willing to elect my country as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the period 2010-2011.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Željko Komšić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda

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

Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

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

President Kagame: This session of the General Assembly offers further opportunity to reflect on how best to reconcile what at times mistakenly appears to be irreconcilable: socio-economic development and a healthy environment. Leaders, experts and citizens the world over ask how we can grow our economies and spread prosperity to more of the world's citizens, yet not degrade our oceans, rivers and the air we breathe?

But these are also times of extraordinary scientific, technological and business innovations that can help address those challenges, if we have the courage to put into proper perspective and indeed harmonize our national, regional and global priorities.

History is replete with illustrations of how nations immersed in crises changed the underlying assumptions by which they acted, created new institutions and tools to solve problems and emerged from the process as stronger societies. While those innovations are always different, the challenges to surmount the crises are always the same: forging a shared vision, increasing the social capital required to enhance predictability, having trustful relations between peoples, being receptive to doing things in new ways and adopting an explicit moral purpose in order to achieve common goals.

We have an exceptional opportunity to simultaneously address our environmental challenges, improve our economies and reform our global multilateral institutions for better global governance. For example, the Group of Twenty (G-20) is now playing a crucial role in restoring global economic stability. But should we not even broaden the base to include many nations that are most vulnerable to the decisions of the few? All nations should be part of those important discussions and decisions, because they have valuable contributions to make. This is the time to embrace true multilateralism.

We in developing nations appreciate the corrective measures taken by the G-20 and the Group of Eight to accelerate global economic recovery. But it is evident that most of their proposals fall short of the concrete steps needed to address challenges that are specific to low-income countries.

Multilateralism has always been the key tenet in forging a fairer international community based on equitable global governance. The United Nations itself is based on that very sound and tested principle, and that should be the practice. The rise of worldwide networks of trade, industry, prosperity and social values, together with the creation of multilateral institutions to guide and harmonize those processes, has no doubt contributed to a fairer and improved global decision-making system. That is what needs to be rendered more inclusive.

Improving global governance has also to address international justice. International justice should be fair to all — rich and poor, strong or weak. We are all pleased to note that at its sixty-third session the General Assembly undertook to examine comprehensively the issue of universal jurisdiction. We

look forward to the resolutions on that matter during the Assembly's current session.

It is also fitting that we recognize the recent creation of a single entity within the United Nations to advance the work on women's rights and gender equality. Rwanda has always made that one of its priorities and has achieved good results.

With regard to socio-economic challenges in our East African Community region, we are making progress in key areas. For instance, we are preparing to inaugurate, in January 2010, the East African Common Market to facilitate greater trade, investment and the free movement of almost 130 million people. We believe that there is no better strategy for mitigating economic difficulties than building larger regional markets that bring about improved productivity, which increases purchasing power and, in turn, strengthens our societies.

With regard to the global environmental challenge, this session of the General Assembly provides an important platform for preparing for the Copenhagen climate change summit. Every nation should have co-equal status and be considered a concerned nation at the forthcoming summit. That implies that each nation has both rights and obligations and should be open to burden-sharing according to its ability. This is the time to address in a timely fashion such key issues as how much the industrialized countries are to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases, how much the developing countries are to limit the growth of their emissions, and how to finance and support strategies to conserve energy, mitigate risk and build green technologies that counteract the impact of climate change in the developing world.

We in Rwanda have been making a modest but proportionate contribution by, among other things, hosting African preparatory meetings for the Copenhagen summit in order to encourage a strong and essential African voice at that critical meeting. We have also been actively implementing national environmental policies for reforestation, terracing and the rehabilitation of wetlands that supply lake and river systems in our country, to name a few areas in which we have had good results.

On the matter of peace and security, the world faces a number of regional threats. The Great Lakes region has its share of peace and security problems, but we continue to make significant progress in

fundamentally addressing that question. The leaders of the region recognize that, most crucially, home-grown solutions, beginning with a joint regional effort, can bring about sustainable peace. It is in that context that, together with our colleagues and neighbours in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we are dealing with the root cause of instability in our area, namely, the negative forces that have been a menace since 1994.

If history teaches us anything, it is that we cannot apply the same strategies to different problems and expect satisfactory outcomes all the time. We have to think differently on the fundamental questions, including the urgent imperatives of, first, strengthening the future of all nations by fostering economic growth and development while investing in the environment. That should be our moral purpose. Secondly, we must improve peace and stability in all regions by learning from, and supporting, legitimate regional actors. Finally, we must engage and embrace the majority world in terms of multilateralism in decision-making, trade and prosperity.

These should be our shared vision. Future generations will then know how leaders of nations in the year 2009, immersed in crises, focused on the most difficult challenges, including the global economic crisis, climate change and greater peace and security, and how they acted with resolve.

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

Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Ms. Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania

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

Ms. Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Dalia Grybauskaitė, President

of the Republic of Lithuania, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Grybauskaitė: Today the international community is striving to meet challenges that the founders of the United Nations could not have envisioned some 65 years ago. At the same time, the founding principles of the United Nations have not changed. The provision of joint security and prosperity and the safeguarding of human rights remain the impetus for United Nations activities as they were 60 years ago. Countries that gather here, big and small, have a common responsibility as members of the United Nations to uphold and cherish the ideals expressed in the United Nations Charter.

The global financial and economic crisis is not the only problem today. Terrorism, the proliferation of weapons, energy challenges, climate change and many other issues must be addressed in order to make the goals of the United Nations a reality. Complex challenges require comprehensive responses. It is obvious we cannot benefit from isolationist or egoistic policies.

The United Nations must come of age. It must become the visible and credible expression of the globalization of politics. The modern world dictates that we are dependent on each other. Either we work with each other or suffer in isolation.

Today more than ever before, the United Nations has to play the leading role in strengthening our societies by promoting the shared values of humanity and tolerance. It is our responsibility to make sure that such phenomena as anti-Semitism, xenophobia and racism are eliminated from our lives. There can be no excuse for not bearing this responsibility. Countries big and small alike have duties not only towards their own citizens but also towards global society. But it is usually the poor and vulnerable who suffer the most, especially as the current crisis and the lag in donor commitments push back the hopes of implementing the Millennium Development Goals on schedule. Therefore, with all due regard for the domestic concerns and needs of national taxpayers, we need to adapt to the reality of global complexity and to respect our common responsibility and international commitments. We need to make sure that the Millennium Development Goals do not become the prime victims of the current global economic and financial situation.

What particular steps should be taken? I will mention several. First, recent United Nations peace operations show that efforts to achieve and consolidate peace entail many dimensions, ranging from peacebuilding to nation-building. Despite its current economic limitations my country is determined to meet its obligations. We will contribute to peace-keeping missions and operations working to ensure global security and stability, specifically by continued participation in the European Union missions in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Afghanistan.

Second, the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons will never be halted unless there is an international consensus to do so. The United Nations must strengthen its policy against proliferation; in particular we need to find ways to allow nations to develop civil nuclear power but not nuclear weapons. Therefore the upcoming Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons next year will provide a good opportunity to seek diplomatic solutions and work for full compliance with international commitments and requirements.

Third, better and more responsible governance at the global, regional and local levels is crucially important for a steady and sustainable economic recovery. Protectionism and isolationism have never worked and will never work in the future.

Fourth, realizing the fact that global climate change calls for global solutions, we will do our best to reach an international consensus at the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. Fully aware of the global impact of climate change, we support the ambitious European Union commitment to cut carbon dioxide emissions by 20 per cent by 2020, within the framework of an international agreement.

Fifth, I think that global responsibility has to be addressed regionally as well — this is the rule for effective implementation of the United Nations Charter. Regional organizations should assume a greater responsibility for taking care of their regions. They must share their best practices with their neighbours and other regional organizations.

Aware of being a comparatively small State, Lithuania is assuming its regional and global responsibility to promote United Nations values through the core principles of dialogue, respect, understanding and tolerance, as it assumes the

presidencies of regional and global organizations. Lithuania began its one-year presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States as well as the presidency of the Community of Democracies on 1 July 2009, and it will take on the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2011. A Lithuania representative will then assume the yearly presidency of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2012 and will complete that term as Lithuania takes on the European Union presidency in the second half of 2013.

It is an immense responsibility to guide the Community of Democracies forward at this point in time. In our view, real progress in development is linked directly to the institution of democratic norms and principles. We believe democracy to be inseparable from peace, the rule of law, respect for individual and human rights, equal opportunity and overall prosperity.

Allow me to reiterate that small or less developed States can no longer avoid global responsibility and that all of us are responsible for our common present and future. Let us all recognize from now on, in each of our capitals, that the global interest is our national interest and global responsibility is our national responsibility.

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

Ms. Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Dimitris Christofias, President of the Republic of Cyprus

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

Mr. Dimitris Christofias, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

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

President Christofias (*spoke in Greek; English text provided by the delegation*): I would like to extend to Mr. Ali Treki my sincere congratulations on his election as President of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. I would also like to express my appreciation for the excellent work done by his predecessor, Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann. I should also like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/64/1) on the work of the Organization, as well as to congratulate him on his initiative in convening the high-level Climate Change Summit.

Since its independence, the Republic of Cyprus has been committed to multilateral diplomacy and the strengthening of the role of the United Nations. World stability and welfare have been threatened by the recent global economic crisis. The crisis revealed the weaknesses of our collective oversight systems. It is only through collective international action, and not through economic nationalism, that we can overcome such challenges. The same is true of action against disease and poverty, as well as the prevention of further damage to the environment, which affects the lives of us all.

The most important lesson to be learned from the financial crisis is that the economy cannot be seen in isolation from the needs of society. Despite the remarkable development of production forces that could have secured decent living conditions for all, people in many parts of the world are still deprived of basic needs such as drinking water, health care and access to education and work. The magnitude of the financial crisis shows that it is a crisis of the system and of its most extreme manifestation, namely, neo-liberalism and market lawlessness. In its present form, globalization is not the realization of the vision of philosophers and social revolutionaries for global brotherhood and prosperity for all. That is because globalization is driven by the pursuit of excessive profits. As a result, the rich are becoming richer and the poor poorer.

More than half way to the 2015 deadline for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, the financial crisis is forcing States and institutions to reassess global priorities. The United Nations is the most important international body able to tackle the effects of the global financial crisis and to act collectively and effectively to prevent their most dire consequences.

The world today faces multiple challenges and threats, including climate change, the depletion of resources, human rights abuses, the failure to protect vulnerable populations, increased regional and inter-State conflict, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and pandemics. From this rostrum, we have heard the desperate voices of those who live on small-island States, the despairing appeal of young people and the dramatic warnings of scientists about climate change. If we do not take measures now, we face the risk of extinction. We join our voice and lend our support to the proposals for taking concrete action. We must take measures now. Tomorrow will be too late. The December meeting in Copenhagen must become a historic turning point in effectively addressing catastrophic climate change.

Since its independence, the Republic of Cyprus has relied on the principles of the United Nations in maintaining its independence, its sovereignty and its territorial integrity. After the dual crime of a military coup and the foreign invasion of Cyprus in 1974, when military forces attempted to obliterate our statehood and violated the integrity of our State, the United Nations responded with a number of important resolutions that expressed the international community's moral and legal support for the Republic of Cyprus. The plethora of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on Cyprus provided my country with the necessary support to continue its struggle for a solution to its political problem on the basis of those resolutions, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Shortly after my election to office, I undertook the initiative of bringing the stalemate to an end. As a result of that, and on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions and under the auspices of the good offices mission of the Secretary-General, a year ago we embarked upon intensive negotiations with the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, Mr. Mehmet Ali Talat.

Trusting in the sincerity of Mr. Talat's intentions, we have engaged in a common effort to bring an end to the division of our country. We agreed that the process would be in the hands of Cypriots, without arbitration or artificial timetables. Some progress has been achieved in the negotiations, but not such as to make us confident that we are close to a final solution to the Cyprus problem. Our goal is the restoration of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and

unity of the Republic of Cyprus, the common homeland of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. It is also our goal to restore the human rights and basic freedoms of all citizens of the Republic of Cyprus, regardless of their ethnic background.

We are committed to the evolution of the unitary State into a federal State consisting of two largely autonomous regions. One region will be administered by the Greek Cypriot community and the other by the Turkish Cypriot community. The fact that the population of Cyprus lived intermingled throughout the island constituted for us a great historical concession on the part of the late President Makarios to our Turkish Cypriot compatriots. We remain true to that commitment. The united federal republic of Cyprus must safeguard the unity of the State and its institutions, as well as of the economy and the people.

Unfortunately, despite our common efforts, the Turkish Cypriot side, supported by Turkey, continues to present positions and proposals that take us outside the framework of the United Nations resolutions on Cyprus with regard to the termination of military occupation, the illegal possession of properties and the presence of settlers. Acceptance of those positions would lead to acceptance of many consequences of the occupation and to violations of international conventions on human rights, basic freedoms and the principles on which federations are built. It is clear that such a solution would be neither viable nor functional and would not ensure the continuing unity of the State and the country.

We sincerely hope that during the second round of negotiations, which has just started, the Turkish positions will be reconsidered so that we can, as soon as possible, reach an agreed solution that we can then present to the people in separate simultaneous referendums. That solution must be by the Cypriots for the Cypriots. It is clear that we will not present to the people a solution that originates from outside, nor can we accept arbitration or pressure being exercised through artificial timetables.

Those preconditions were agreed with the Secretary-General, under whose auspices the negotiations are taking place. I would like to take this opportunity to thank once again the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his good offices mission and for the role of the United Nations as a facilitator in the negotiating process.

After the 1974 invasion and the occupation of 30 per cent of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, Turkey has become a key player in the solution of the Cyprus problem. The success of our efforts towards a solution of the problem depends on Turkey's political will and on the policies that it implements. It is not enough for the Turkish leadership to publicly state that it supports the negotiating process.

Turkey should contribute in a practical way to a solution that seeks a bizonal and bicomunal federation with political equality, as defined in the relevant Security Council resolutions. Instead, Turkey pursues a confederal solution. A measure of goodwill on the part of Turkey would have been the implementation of Security Council resolution 550 (1984), which stipulates the transfer of the occupied ghost town of Varosha to the administration of the United Nations and the return of its legal inhabitants to their homes and property. In addition, Turkey should proceed with normalizing its relations with the Republic of Cyprus and with recognizing it, as stipulated in the decisions of the European Union.

I ask if it is not a paradox for a country that is a member of the Security Council not to recognize the Republic of Cyprus, a State Member of the United Nations, of the European Union and of all international organizations. Is it not a paradox for a member of the Security Council to keep occupation troops on the territory of another United Nations Member State and a member State of the European Union for 35 years? Is it not a paradox to undermine the unity and the territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus by promoting the creation of a second State on the island in violation of Security Council resolution 541 (1983), which unanimously condemns the illegal unilateral declaration of independence, calling it null and void, and calls on all States to respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus?

Yes, it is a paradox, and it is also illegal. Cyprus has never sought, nor wishes, to have hostile relations with its neighbour, Turkey, but it is our responsibility to defend the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of our State.

Nevertheless, before this body, I would like to express my readiness to initiate dialogue with the Turkish leadership, in parallel to our negotiations with Turkish Cypriot leader, and to share ideas on a future

that would greatly enhance the possibility of a positive outcome to the negotiations. Cyprus has consistently supported Turkey's accession to the European Union in the belief that the entire adaptation process and Turkey's eventual membership would benefit our neighbours, our region and us. However, that support is not unconditional. Turkey should fulfil its obligations towards the Republic of Cyprus and towards the European Union.

I would like to state once again that our Turkish Cypriot compatriots are equal citizens of the Republic of Cyprus and that I personally will consistently strive for their rights and for finding their rightful place in all organs of the State. My political roots are in the progressive people's movement of my country, which has always stood by our Turkish Cypriot compatriots for peace and harmonious coexistence.

Nevertheless, the rights of our Turkish Cypriot compatriots cannot be implemented at the expense of those of the larger community, which is the Greek Cypriot one. There must be mutual respect. I want to affirm that I will spare no effort in order to achieve a balanced and just solution that would restore the rights of the people as a whole.

We have all paid a heavy price — human, political and economic — and continue to do so. The gains of lasting peace will benefit the people of Cyprus, of Turkey and of our region as a whole. True political leaders are not those who think of the next election, but of the next generation. We have the responsibility to work together to achieve a lasting peace in our region.

I wish the family of the United Nations a successful outcome to the deliberations of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session.

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

Mr. Dimitris Christofias, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Fradique Bandeira Melo de Menezes, President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

Mr. Fradique Bandeira Melo de Menezes, President of the Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Fradique Bandeira Melo de Menezes, President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, and invite him to address the Assembly.

President De Menezes (*spoke in Portuguese; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): Before anything else, allow me to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Ali Treki of Libya, a country with which we maintain excellent relations of brotherhood, for his election to the important post of President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, which role he will certainly carry out with his usual level of excellence. I would also like to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann for his excellent work on the world economic crisis during his presidency at the sixty-third session.

A year has passed since the opening of the Assembly's sixty-third session, and yet we have still not recovered from the full effects of the global economic crisis, despite enormous efforts on the part of developed countries. The same distortions in the world's economy remain.

But it is not just economic and financial problems that we face. Our biggest challenge today is guaranteeing the future of our planet, not just in the economic sense, but also resolving climate change issues that threaten the very survival of small island nations like Sao Tome and Principe. Though our carbon emissions are insignificant and our forests play a key role as part of the world's lungs, rising sea levels are already causing coastal erosion around our country.

Time is no longer on our side but has become our unforgiving judge. There is no time for more unfounded justifications for the non-fulfilment of the Kyoto Protocol. We cannot continue evading these

essential environmental issues, which are not a question of developing countries against developed ones. We need urgent measures that are global and concrete to save us from this crisis.

The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/64/1) contains some important points to which we have given considerable attention, because my country shares similar concerns. I am referring to the urgent need for reform of the United Nations system. Africa, especially its small countries on the periphery, continues mired in the deepest poverty. Our problems are particularly difficult to solve due to a combination of adverse factors that deserve an approach from the international community that is more systematic, more diligent and more coordinated.

There have been several crises in 2009, and we have to re-think together the future of the new world economic order. Those crises affect all countries and demand a global response. Sao Tome and Principe is a micro-State with a micro-economy, and thus it is poor and vulnerable. As such, it is not immune to the effects of those crises.

We need to reinforce the merits of multilateralism as an instrument through which the international community can promote peace and development. Therefore, Sao Tome and Principe wants to demonstrate its support for the institutionalization of this agenda within the framework of the United Nations. In a world confronting a global economic and financial crisis, along with the negative impact of climate changes, there is a need to guarantee food security and energy security, to deal with migrations and pandemics and numerous regional conflicts of increasing complexity and associated risks.

The only way we can face these crises is through active multilateralism, based on international law and on the principles of the United Nations Charter, and through reaffirming our commitment to achieving the goals set out in the United Nations 2005 World Summit. We are well aware that we will achieve those goals only through a renewed multilateral system, integrated in a world organization that is stronger, more egalitarian and with more solidarity.

In this framework we call for support for the oft-repeated proposal for reforming the United Nations system, and particularly the issue of permanent members of the Security Council. We believe that this issue cannot be endlessly put off. There must be more

justice in the context of the United Nations. The African States must have a voice and cannot be ignored in this process of reform of our Organization. That is why I want to state my complete agreement with what was said from this tribune yesterday, at the 3rd meeting, by the President of the African Union, our brother-leader Qadhafi, reclaiming better participation by the African countries as permanent members of the Security Council.

We are beginning the last five years in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The past five years have presented us with the biggest challenges facing global society: poverty, pandemics, environmental degradation — everything that galvanized the world's position that was translated into the declaration that we heard yesterday. The goals and hopes that this declaration embodies need attention. I can say that in Sao Tome and Principe we have made determined efforts, especially to achieve the Goals in the areas of health and education. We are almost there, although we are yet not completely satisfied.

The biggest debates related to global warming concentrate on substitutions for fossil fuels in order to reduce carbon emissions that contribute to the greenhouse effect. This debate has gone on as temperatures have risen, causing the glaciers and polar ice caps to melt, which in turn has already caused a rise in the sea level. As I mentioned earlier, that is threatening our country.

These environmental changes present a strategic challenge for countries, with increasing global insecurity caused by the effects of violent storms, droughts, massive migrations and pandemics, which lead to an increase in poverty, environmental degradation and weakening national Governments. Experts in this field call our attention to the fact that these climate changes may result in an unprecedented need to provide emergency food aid, which could cause a crisis of sustainability for the international community.

The negotiations in the framework of the United Nations are aimed at creating a substitute for the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which establishes limits on greenhouse gas emissions by 2012 for 37 countries in the developed world and is an attempt to profoundly alter the world climate situation.

We hope the 2020 objectives can be formalized during the Copenhagen summit. Even in the meetings this week, at the Assembly's current session, we have seen growing concern on the part of the international community, at the level of the Secretary-General and in the Alliance of Small Island Developing States, with regard to the success of this process.

Whenever I speak before the General Assembly, I conclude by mentioning two continuing cases of injustice: that of the Republic of China on Taiwan and that of the trade embargo against Cuba.

Despite everything, there are positive signs on the international scene, for which we are grateful. We welcome the recent positive developments between the Republic of China on Taiwan and the People's Republic of China. We continue to support increased participation at the United Nations for the Republic of China on Taiwan. In that regard, we welcome the admission of that nation of 23 million people as an observer at the World Health Organization. We hope that other United Nations agencies, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the International Civil Aviation Organization, can also take advantage of the valuable contributions that that developed country can make with respect to the urgent needs of the Organization.

Unfortunately, however, while we can express a certain satisfaction concerning the issue of the Republic of China on Taiwan, we cannot do so with regard to the trade embargo against Cuba; indeed, we are greatly disappointed in that area. But we dare to remain hopeful that the new United States Administration will have the courage and determination to shortly address this issue in the same manner as it has dealt with that of Guantánamo.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom), Vice-President, took the Chair.

I wish to stress that the road ahead of us is very difficult and long. There must be global cooperation in a context of availability and responsibility to ensure sustainable development for all countries. I therefore appeal for greater cooperation between donor and beneficiary countries and greater consultation not only with Government institutions, but also with institutions more familiar with the needs of people on the ground. I am referring specifically to rural communities, teachers, doctors, nurses, farmers, fishermen and all those in the productive sectors of our countries.

For the Government and the people of Sao Tome and Principe, the United Nations remains an indispensable Organization where there should be no differences among Member States. The United Nations must continue its mission of maintaining peace and security and promoting international development. Those are the Organization's objectives to ensure the betterment of our world.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Fradique Bandeira Melo de Menezes, President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Ernest Bai Koroma, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone

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

Mr. Ernest Bai Koroma, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Ernest Bai Koroma, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Koroma: I feel highly honoured to address the Assembly once again. I would like to start by congratulating Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session and to assure him of my delegation's support and cooperation as he performs the demanding task of presiding over our deliberations. Through him, I would also like to convey my sincere gratitude to His Excellency Monsignor Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann for the efficient and effective manner in which he conducted the previous session. In addition, my appreciation goes to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive account of the work of the Organization and his analysis of the challenges facing the global community.

The theme for this year's session is apt and timely. It is only through dialogue among the various

civilizations of the world represented in this deliberative body and the strengthening of the institutions and architecture responsible for promoting such dialogue that we can effectively meet the challenges posed by the current global crisis. Dialogue promotes understanding; understanding enhances cooperation; and cooperation gives vitality and legitimacy to the institutions and mechanisms that have been structured to meet our common challenges and goals.

Civilizations began as magnificent blueprints for meeting challenges that were specific to particular regions of the world, but advances in technology and communications have made problems no longer specific to particular regions. Climate change; the HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and swine flu pandemics; the food and fuel crises, including the present global economic meltdown; terrorism; nuclear proliferation; and drug trafficking are all beyond the capacity of any of the world's civilizations to tackle without international cooperation. While the major causes of those challenges may arise from particular regions, their impacts are global and affect the lives and fortunes of peoples of all civilizations. Dialogue among civilizations will create the synergies required to tackle the causes and impacts of the global crises.

My Government fully subscribes to and supports the promotion of dialogue, as well as the facilitation of mechanisms that will help to ameliorate the impact of the global crises. Among some population groups, that impact may be on the size of their bonuses; among others, it may be on whether they acquire a second car or not. But for the vast number of people — particularly in Africa — the impact of the crises is creating life-threatening situations.

Years of conflict had increased the number of poor and vulnerable people in my country. However, stable economic growth, remittances and international financial and security support were increasing prospects for ameliorating the situation, but the present global crisis has suddenly decreased those prospects, pushing greater numbers of our people into extreme poverty.

We in Sierra Leone are saddled with the effects of trade imbalances in international commerce. Our economy continues to be vigorously challenged by the falling prices of our exports in the international market. This includes diamonds and cash crops. The effect of

this intractable problem is that we are not able to garner enough foreign exchange to meet the basic import requirements for our sustenance. We are on the threshold of the tenth year of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and yet the prospects for achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 remain dismal for Africa.

Many countries in Africa, including mine, have in the last few years registered important improvements in the essential areas of governance and economic and social indicators. My country, Sierra Leone, is putting in place mechanisms to ensure a stable democratic regime. Worldwide indicators show that we have made extremely fast progress in political stability. Our economic growth remains strong at 6 to 9 per cent. My Government has firmed up the aspirations of our people in an Agenda for Change that sets out four clear priority areas: agriculture, energy, infrastructure and reforms to improve delivery of health and education services. We are already delivering results in our priority areas. Key roads are under construction, we have completed a hydroelectric project that is supplying clean, affordable power to Freetown for the first time, and our reforms have ensured that we are the best performer among neighbouring countries according to the Doing Business Index.

My Government could not sustain these results without multilateral support. On 18 and 19 November of this year, we are organizing a Consultative Group Meeting on Sierra Leone in London to dialogue with investors, donors and other partners, and to mobilize support for our efforts in tackling the many challenges facing our country. We see the Sierra Leone conference as a problem-solving dialogue; we aspire to a conference that will build an action-oriented multilateral framework for meeting the challenges we face. My country believes in multilateralism; we believe in dialogue among nations as the most effective means of tackling our problems. We call upon all countries to ensure that the current financial crisis does not deny the many African nations only recently removed from violent conflict the security and prospect of prosperity that we have all worked so hard to achieve.

I would like to address another issue my delegation takes very seriously, one that is interwoven with the financial crisis, poverty and development — the serious threat that climate change poses to human development in general and African nations in

particular. Despite the scientific consensus that the earth is warming at an alarming rate, progress in reducing greenhouse-gas emissions and limiting global warming to below an increase of 2 degrees Celsius per year has proved elusive. Today, the poorest nations, which contribute the least to the phenomenon, are the most vulnerable. The recent torrential rainfall in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, left scores of people dead, homeless or seriously injured. Drought, hurricanes, floods, changing rainfall patterns, rising sea levels and low crop yields rank high among the key challenges facing the world's poor. Unfortunately, those nations with the least resources are the most unprepared for such challenges.

It is our obligation to reverse the alarming rate of environmental destruction and depletion of our natural resources. It is in this regard that I wish to reiterate Africa's common position on climate change, which, among other things, urges developed countries to cut greenhouse-gas emissions by 40 per cent. This is certainly not an ambitious goal. It is the least that we, the most vulnerable, deserve.

We believe that in addition to the necessity of investing in clean development mechanisms, the world's developed countries must take a leadership role, providing adequate and predictable financial and technical support for less developed countries to foster effective adaptation as well as mitigation measures. We share the Secretary-General's vision that the Climate Change Summit in Copenhagen represents a unique and powerful opportunity at a critical moment in human history to steer humankind towards a safer, more stable and more sustainable future.

A final threat critical to the future stability of nations around the world is the increasing proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which, as former Secretary-General Kofi Annan recently emphasized, are tantamount to weapons of mass destruction in slow motion, capable of destabilizing countries and entire regions. Given that many African countries routinely face political instability and violent threats, we need to strengthen the national, regional and subregional conflict-resolution mechanisms through which it becomes possible for Africa to control small weapons. Peace and development can be achieved in Africa, in part, by exploration of the peace and security architecture evolving within the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the

Southern African Development Community and the Peacebuilding Commission.

Against this background, I wish to reiterate that collaborative efforts among members of the international community are crucial to addressing our global problems, and that international support remains critical for the consolidation of hard-won gains by nations emerging from war. It is our hope that the United Nations and our development partners will continue to be our steadfast allies in our ongoing struggle for economic progress and development. In this regard, I urge that we continue to forge enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, as well as subregional organizations, cooperation that goes beyond rhetoric and translates into concrete efforts.

As I intimated before the Assembly at the sixty-third session, we have come a long way, thanks to multilateral and bilateral efforts in favour of our survival as a nation. The ongoing peacebuilding efforts, spearheaded by the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, continue to strengthen the peace-consolidation process in the country. I am pleased to announce that, in return and in a spirit of reciprocity, Sierra Leone has joined the ranks of the troop-contributing countries of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Multilateralism is vital for international cooperation and for responding to global crises. In the bid to promote effective multilateralism, my Government has continued to urge the international community to effect various reforms aimed at strengthening our intergovernmental organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions, with a view to making them more inclusive, transparent and democratic in their decision-making processes.

An effective, legitimate and democratic United Nations cannot be achieved without a true reform of the Security Council. The ongoing intergovernmental negotiations on the question of equitable representation on, and increase in the membership of, the Security Council and other matters relating to the Council have progressed through three informal plenary rounds at the last session of the General Assembly. We in Africa have consistently demanded that the historical injustice that is rooted in our underrepresentation and non-representation in the non-permanent and permanent categories of the Council be addressed

without any further delay. It is in this respect that we have continued to negotiate in good faith and mutual trust. I am hopeful that the outcome of these negotiations will lead to a meaningful reform of this, the principal decision-making organ of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. We in Africa stand ready, willing and prepared, as always, to resume negotiations during this session.

Let us promote multilateralism and strengthen our collaborative efforts to contain the rising threats to our planet.

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

Mr. Ernest Bai Koroma, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Ricardo Martinelli Berrocal, President of the Republic of Panama

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

Mr. Ricardo Martinelli Berrocal, President of the Republic of Panama, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Ricardo Martinelli Berrocal, President of the Republic of Panama, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Martinelli Berrocal (*spoke in Spanish*): The people of Panama welcome the very sound decision to elect Mr. Ali Treki to serve as President of the General Assembly at its current session. We are sure that he possesses the vision and the leadership to guide the nations represented here today.

I should also like to thank the Secretary-General for his tireless pursuit of dialogue in the interests of peace, security and the peaceful coexistence of peoples and brothers.

Yesterday saw the conclusion of the Summit on Climate Change. I congratulate all nations for their collaborative efforts in confronting the global-warming

crisis. The beauty, resources and biodiversity of our shared heritage are in peril.

Global warming is the most serious symptom of a crisis caused by the excessive exploitation of resources. We must apply new formulas, change our behaviour and learn to value our relationship with nature. Our options are clear: we can talk or we can act. If we do not act with global responsibility, the consequences will be irreversible.

Three million years ago, the Isthmus of Panama emerged from the sea. We are one of the youngest countries on Earth. As a result of our birth, a land bridge was formed between North and South America and constituted the narrowest stretch of land between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Panama parted the seas to unite continents, and generated a new global network of ocean currents that transformed the climate of the entire planet. The whole world changed when Panama came into being.

Today, all forms of life upon this planet are the result of an evolutionary process that adapted to our birth. The great African savannahs and deserts came forth from these changes, and modern man evolved from those new savannahs.

Panamanians have always played an important role for our neighbours and for the world at large. In the next five years, it is our duty to demonstrate how our economic and governmental model can serve as an example for all who aspire to prosperity and progress.

I am an entrepreneur, not a politician. I went into politics to change how things are done. I am a simple and direct man. I believe that time is very short and very valuable. I will expand upon my experiences in the private sector and put them to work in the public sector.

I was elected to the presidency with an unprecedented mandate. Panamanians gave me a clear mandate to deliver change to our country and build a better Panama for all. We are placing the interests of the people first and foremost, above personal or partisan interests, because a country is more important than a political party.

I have selected the best people to work in our Government without regard to their political affiliations. I have plans for the nation. We want capitalism which is based on opportunities and rewards responsible entrepreneurs who show solidarity, but

capitalism which also strongly demands responsibility and solidarity from any old-fashioned entrepreneurs who do not satisfy those two criteria.

We formed this Government during a crisis. Less than a year ago, we saw the collapse of the international financial framework. The global economic model was forever changed. Our guiding light is the improvement of our peoples' quality of life. That is why, during the first 100 days, we increased the salaries of all public officials and distributed \$100 per month to senior citizens over the age of 70 who do not have a pension and require economic aid.

We will be building a modern new metro in Panama, and it will be the largest employment programme in the history of the country after the expansion of the canal currently under way.

We have launched a construction project for low-cost housing which will not only provide a safe roof over the heads of thousands of Panamanians, but will generate jobs at difficult times during a crisis.

The promises we have made meet the demands of our people. But beyond that, they are part of the plan we need to boost our economy.

America is a recently populated continent, and Panama was the bridge across which the first native Americans crossed to South America. They built great cultures and civilizations such as those of the Incas and the Chibchas. When the Spanish arrived, they made our country into the commercial hub of their colonies. When Panama separated from Spain, the first railroad in the world between the Atlantic and the Pacific was built, and that in turn led to the construction of our canal. Today, Panama is the gatekeeper of the global economy.

We are a small country, with less than 3.5 million inhabitants, and services represent more than 75 per cent of our gross national product. The United States dollar is our currency. We have a solid banking and financial centre which is very conservative and strictly regulated. The Colón Free Zone is the largest in the hemisphere, thanks to the most important commercial maritime route in the world, and this makes us the most efficient logistical hub in the Americas.

We shall soon begin the construction of a third set of locks to expand the capacity of the Panama Canal,

thereby opening an important gateway for international trade.

Panama is an ideal place to invest, to establish enterprises and also to live. We will be transforming Panama into the Hong Kong or the Dubai of the Americas. Within the new Panama-Pacific Special Economic Area, labour and immigration laws are welcoming and flexible. Throughout our national territory, there are fantastic incentives for investors. Our spirit of service and open door policy make Panama an enjoyable, exciting place of true opportunities.

And despite the crisis Panama is growing. Talent and creativity, social assistance, infrastructure and investment in human capital will allow us to weather the storm.

Panama was born to serve the world. Everyone is more than welcome in Panama. We are open for business.

We believe in free trade as a tool to improve people's lives. We want to do business with all nations and have signed free trade agreements with our strategic partners. We have already signed one with the United States. To be ratified, it just needs one small "push", and I believe that President Obama will deliver that push very shortly.

In Panama, we are proud of our history and our heritage, our freedom of expression and thought, our freedom to determine our country's direction, and our tradition of peace.

Peace is the best sentiment that any country or, indeed, the whole planet can have. Peace brings with it tranquillity, stability and growth. There is absolutely no reason why neighbouring peoples should offend one another, because no one wins and we all lose. The children of Bolívar share the same history and the same challenges. We have the same blood in our veins. We are a single nation. Here, anyone who attacks, attacks only himself. Anyone who retaliates, retaliates against himself. Anyone who bears arms does so against himself. Because here we are all siblings.

Weapons of war bring poverty. They steal the bread from our mouths and the future from our children. These weapons are not necessary, and at the end of the day they solve nothing. Let us sit down together, for there is nothing that we cannot solve together. There is nothing like peace. And peace is

what all countries of the world should be pursuing until it is achieved.

I would like to talk here about our sister country of Honduras, and the need for it to return to the rule of law, which is necessary for its well-being and that of Central America. That is why we are closely following the reconciliation in Honduras.

The San José accord constitutes the best method for formulating a consensus Government that can oversee new elections and guarantee a peaceful return to democracy. Let us allow the Honduran people to solve their destiny and future with one another. We Panamanians have the utmost trust in the Honduran society's capacity for reconciliation.

Nothing is stronger than words, either spoken or written, and through dialogue we understand one another, to paraphrase the poet. Communication is the best conduit for cultures, education, ethnicities, history, religions and politics. In Panama, we are a melting pot of races, nationalities and ideologies that, through communication and mutual respect, has created a diverse society with common interests. That is part of our idiosyncrasy and is what makes us who we are.

Tolerance is the secret to the coexistence of peoples. Nuclear tests make us all nervous, and living in a state of alert only serves to increase tensions between nations whose relations are already less than stable. That is why we live in constant fear and mistrust, which has a significant impact on dialogue between us.

In Panama, we respect the use of science as a tool for human development, but we reject its use as a front to conceal nuclear proliferation and the production of weapons of mass destruction.

A challenge to global peace and security lies in the war on drug trafficking, money-laundering and arms trafficking. Because it is a crossroads, Panama is used by organized crime for drugs and arms trafficking. But we are declaring our own war. We have become an active partner with Mexico and Colombia in the battle against narco-terrorists. Alongside President Uribe and President Calderón, we are committed to strengthening the ties of cooperation, so that Panama can be an active source of intelligence.

The many efforts and improvements that Panama has achieved in this field have been recognized in reports by the Financial Action Task Force on Money

Laundering and the International Monetary Fund. Panama has information exchange agreements with 39 countries to combat money-laundering and the financing of illicit activities.

Drugs are not good business. Those who dedicate themselves to them are destined to jail or the cemetery. They have no future.

Mr. Nasheed (Maldives), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Everyone knows Panama as a banking centre, as a place to do business, and because of our canal. But in fact, we are nature's best-kept secret in the world. Tourism is our new passion. Panama City has the highest concentration of migratory birds on the planet. We are the hub for America's flying species. The Gulf of Chiriquí has the greatest biodiversity of any spot in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean. Forty percent of our national territory is protected. This includes over 1.5 million hectares of uninterrupted forests between Chagres and Darién.

Our national parks have been declared biosphere reserves and world heritage sites, as has the island of Coiba, a natural jewel where they are still discovering new species and where whales from the Arctic and Antarctic meet to give birth to their calves.

Over 1,000 islands and coral reefs beautify our seas, and we are framed by over 2,500 kilometres of coastline, many of them as pristine and untouched as when Christopher Columbus first arrived in the Americas.

But the very best resource we have is our people. We are a multiethnic and friendly people. Our indigenous peoples of the comarcas are an example of resistance to mistreatment at the hands of nature and cultural assimilation.

All the countries represented in this Hall have their own wonders that the entire world admires. We must unite to protect and conserve our beauty, resources, biodiversity, world heritage and, first and foremost, our peoples.

I am an eternal optimist. I see my country, Panama, providing more jobs for its men and women. I see a middle class that keeps growing and earning more. I see new technologies spawning unprecedented economic growth. I see the first country in the world with free internet access for all its citizens.

I see Panama with better health care, better education, better transportation, and with families that are happier and more unified. We Panamanians can do anything we dream of. And if each and every one of us achieves our dreams, we will have a better world.

In the five years ahead of us, we are going to dream big. Our best days are yet to come.

If I had to describe Panama in just a few words, I would say we are a country and a people full of surprises. Panama will amaze you, and Panama will amaze the world.

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

Mr. Ricardo Martinelli Berrocal, President of the Republic of Panama, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Hans-Rudolf Merz, President of the Swiss Confederation

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Swiss Confederation.

Mr. Hans-Rudolf Merz, President of the Swiss Confederation, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Hans-Rudolf Merz, President of the Swiss Confederation, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Merz (*spoke in French*): We look back on a year that has been exceptional in so many respects. Twelve months ago, a bank only a few hundred metres away from here collapsed and brought the global financial system to the verge of breakdown. The ensuing turbulence in the finance sector led to a severe global economic downturn.

This illustrates the interconnectedness of our world. It reminds us that other issues, such as climate change, the food crisis, migration, pandemics, terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are not confined by national borders. Rising to these global challenges requires determined and coordinated action at the national, regional and international levels. International cooperation has

become vital. The United Nations is the place where this cooperation happens. Today, the world needs the United Nations more than ever.

The United Nations should continue along its path of reform in order to reinforce its legitimacy. At the same time, exchanges between the United Nations and other forums such as the Group of 20 (G-20) — which is meeting today — must be strengthened. The G-20 has taken over a role in discussing important global issues. This development must not take place at the expense of other nations or global institutions such as the United Nations. The G-20 lacks legitimacy; basic considerations of due process are absent in the sanctions procedures. The members of the G-20 themselves are not subject to the same scrutiny. Switzerland advocates a level playing field.

The financial and economic crisis continues to be of concern to all of us. Governments and central banks have put together vast stabilization packages. However, quantity is not everything. What counts is quality. Economic activity must revert to fundamental values and virtues. It must focus on economic, social and environmental sustainability. Through institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations has the knowledge and the instruments needed to combat the financial and economic crisis. It is important to ensure that the voices of these institutions too be heard within the G-20.

The present crisis has occasionally been used in some quarters as an opportunity to question the market economy and, indeed, globalization. I do not dispute that reform is necessary. The failures and abuses have been too big to ignore. Nevertheless, we must remind ourselves that it is also thanks to a liberal economic order and open markets that much of the world's population has been lifted out of poverty. Here, we share the concerns of those who believe that the current growing trend towards protectionism will lead us straight towards disaster. My country therefore welcomes the call made at the United Nations World Conference on the Financial and Economic Crisis for the swift conclusion of the Doha Round.

People in the developing countries have been hit particularly hard by the financial and economic crisis. There is a significant risk that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals will be delayed. As for

Switzerland, we have pledged to maintain our level of development aid despite stringent budget constraints. Developing and developed countries are jointly responsible for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Next year, the United Nations conference marking the tenth anniversary of the Millennium Declaration will provide us with the opportunity to reinvigorate this partnership and to improve the effectiveness of development aid.

Sustainable development must also be our guiding principle in the fight against climate change. This is why the climate conference in Copenhagen must be a success. Switzerland wants and is able to set a good example. We will achieve our CO₂ reduction targets for 2012. For the period until 2020, we are prepared to cut our CO₂ emissions by 20 per cent. At the global level, the costs of adaptation to climate change will amount to several tens of billions of dollars per year of which more than half will be at the expense of developing countries. Switzerland has therefore proposed the creation of a global carbon tax which is based on the polluter-pays principle, in order to deal with these emerging needs.

Violent conflicts continue to plague the planet, rendering a life in dignity, peace and security elusive for too many people. The unique legitimacy of the United Nations allows it to play an active role in conflict prevention, mediation, the protection of civilians, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. My country welcomes the greater involvement of the United Nations in these areas and especially advocates the strengthening of United Nations prevention and mediation capacities. Switzerland is also active in the area of peacebuilding. It has taken over the chairmanship of the Peacebuilding Commission's country-specific configuration on Burundi and will continue its initiative on armed violence and development.

This year we celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. Since their creation, the Geneva Conventions have set indispensable rules for situations of armed conflict. New forms of armed conflict and new means and methods of warfare make it increasingly difficult to ensure respect for these rules. It is unacceptable that civilian populations should be so often the target of deliberate attacks and that humanitarian aid personnel should be so often denied rapid and unimpeded access to populations in need.

In an effort to identify ways of improving compliance with the Geneva Conventions, Switzerland is organizing a ministerial side event on Saturday here in New York. In November we will hold an international conference of experts in Geneva, open to all State parties to the Geneva Conventions. The conference will focus on the current and future challenges faced by international humanitarian law.

Human dignity is an inalienable right of all human beings, regardless of their gender, origin or religion. The Human Rights Council is the principal forum for discussing human rights within the United Nations. Both its special procedures and its universal periodic review process have demonstrated their effectiveness. This said, a great many challenges remain. Switzerland will continue to work vigorously for an effective Human Rights Council and will present its candidacy for a second term starting in 2010.

The protection of human rights, along with the promotion of democracy and the strengthening of the rule of law will also be priorities of the Swiss presidency of the Council of Europe from November 2009 to May 2010. Under the Swiss presidency, efforts will be made to increase cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

2010 will thus be a symbolic year for the United Nations. Five years will have passed since the adoption of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document and ten years since the signing of the Millennium Declaration. Next year's summit will be an opportunity to assess the status of implementation of these declarations and to initiate new, more comprehensive reforms. These are necessary steps because only a reformed United Nations will be in a position to find appropriate responses to the global challenges.

In this context, it is my great pleasure to announce to Member States that Switzerland has put forward the candidature of Joseph Deiss, former President of the Swiss Confederation, for the presidency of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

I will conclude with the following: the challenges to be met are huge, however we must not yield to pessimism. Throughout history, human beings have demonstrated time and again that with courage, imagination and persistence they are capable of great achievements. The Swiss writer Max Frisch once said: "A crisis can be a productive state. You just have to get

rid of the aftertaste of disaster.” I absolutely agree. So let us be productive and seize the opportunity to create a prosperous, just, peaceful and sustainable world.

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

Mr. Hans-Rudolf Merz, President of the Swiss Confederation, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

General debate

Address by Mr. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain

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

Mr. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Rodríguez Zapatero (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): A little more than a year ago, we witnessed with great concern the collapse of some of the largest financial institutions of the world’s wealthiest countries. That financial fissure precipitated a global economic crisis which, despite the emerging signs of recovery, all of us continue to experience. We faced the stark reality that we lacked the necessary guidelines and rules to prevent what was occurring in the global financial system, even though it already was a global system. Now, following the G-20 summits in Washington and London, where we laid the foundations to resolve the problems, it is up to the Pittsburgh conference to finish the work.

Despite what has been said, this is not the first globalization crisis. Instead, it is the first crisis of global governance, that is to say, a crisis of an insufficiently governed globalization. We have an obligation to learn from this experience — certainly to learn a lesson with regard to the financial and economic crisis, but also about the other global

challenges that require both collective determination and coordinated multilateral political efforts. For those challenges are interrelated. We cannot aspire to economic and social development unless countries and peoples enjoy adequate peace and security. Conversely, it will not be possible to build lasting peace and security unless there is sustainable development.

That same willingness to take responsibility for both problems and solutions, which has re-emerged strongly in recent months, should ensure that we do not fail in responding to the conflicts and threats confronting world peace and security. That willingness should also ensure that we do not fail in dealing with extreme hunger and poverty; in effectively committing ourselves to combating the effects of climate change; or in tackling organized crime, terrorism and piracy. We therefore have a great opportunity before us.

Here at the general debate, one year after the beginning of the financial crisis that nearly engulfed the well-being of developed countries and dashed the hopes of many others, I would like to reiterate that Spain is a country committed to multilateralism and the need to continue to develop a system of global governance — and that applies to every one of the challenges to which I have just referred. But before turning to those challenges, I should like to begin by saying that multilateralism is not just a process for taking decisions and resolving conflicts at the international level. It is indeed that; but in order for multilateralism to be effective and lasting, it must above all include two fundamental elements.

First of all, multilateralism is intrinsically linked with the faithful observance of democratic values, human rights and effective equality between women and men throughout the world. In that regard, I very much welcome the last resolution adopted by the General Assembly at the previous session, which will make a single body responsible for all gender issues.

Today, however, standing firmly for democracy elicits a single name: Honduras. Our Latin American brothers in that country have in recent years seen the strengthening of both democracy and the prospects for the future. With the support of Spain and the international community, they have now decided that they are going to overcome the challenge before Honduras. We will not accept an anti-democratic coup. We will not accept it, and democracy must return to Honduras.

Secondly, but no less important, multilateralism requires, if not a culture, an atmosphere of dialogue, respect and acceptance between countries, regions and, more broadly, civilizations. Five years ago, I addressed the General Assembly for the first time to propose the establishment of an alliance of civilizations focused on promoting understanding and cooperation between countries and peoples of different cultures and religions, as well as on countering the forces that breed extremism and endanger peace.

We cannot be satisfied solely at the fact that the group of friends for that initiative has since grown to over 100 members, or that there are now associated networks of individuals and representatives of civil society organizations who are ensuring the continued existence of the project, or that the third forum of the Alliance will be held next year in Rio de Janeiro. Nor can we be satisfied at the fact that those developments clearly illustrate the universality of the principles underpinning the initiative. Respect for the diversity of civilizations, cultures and traditions are crucial to the effectiveness and sustainability of the multilateralism that we wish to see strengthened on the basis of human rights and the universal values that we share as responsible members of the international community.

When I launched the Alliance of Civilizations initiative from this very rostrum five years ago, it was at a less favourable time than the present. Yesterday, having heard statements by the President of the United States of America and other international leaders, I thought to myself that this effort has been worthwhile. Today the Alliance is able to deploy its full potential in order to promote the effective multilateralism we desire. We are now able to build. The initiative was worth it and — if I may put it this way — it was also right that the United Nations made it its own through Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his predecessor, Kofi Annan.

Spain is therefore pleased that the President of the General Assembly has proposed that the debate at this new session focus on “Effective responses to global crises: strengthening multilateralism and dialogue among civilizations for international peace, security and development”. We must now take a new step.

The Alliance of Civilizations, which sets out and promotes those values throughout the entire United Nations, should be a structural component of the main

bodies and all other entities of the Organization. The time has come for the General Assembly to adopt a resolution conferring that structural character on the Alliance of Civilizations through a constitutive charter. Spain will work with Turkey and the wider membership of the Alliance’s group of friends in order that such a resolution can be adopted by the end of this fall. I am convinced that it will make a very positive contribution to the work of such bodies as the Human Rights Council, the Economic and Social Council and even the Security Council. The dialogue among civilizations should be the mother tongue of the United Nations.

The new multilateralism has been essential for taking significant steps forward in the area of disarmament and arms control, such as prohibiting anti-personnel landmines and cluster bombs.

Now, the world has the opportunity to take a great step: abolishing nuclear weapons. President Obama has had the courage to put that on the table, and the United States and Russia — a country that is and will remain key to Euro-Atlantic security — are negotiating the largest cuts ever made to these arsenals. We encourage them. We are hopeful about the initiative to convene a special summit of the Security Council devoted to the fight against nuclear proliferation.

Spain, a nation that renounced the development and possession of nuclear weapons, fully shares that objective and will support it with every means at our disposal. We should immediately undertake to strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), whose Review Conference in May 2010 will coincide with Spain’s presidency of the European Union. I pledge to do everything possible, as far as Spain and the European Union are concerned, to ensure that this important conference has concrete results that will enable us to advance the perspective of a world free from nuclear weapons.

Let us continue to act with determination and without discouragement to build and consolidate peace in all areas and regions. My country is proud to have been contributing to United Nations peacekeeping missions for 20 years. Over those 20 years, we have taken part in 22 missions comprising a total of more than 100,000 troops.

Currently, we share the concern over the situation in Afghanistan. I am sure, however, that the international community will be able to find a

solution — a solution that is not and cannot be purely military. The shared conviction as to the strategic value of the region and the internal solidarity among the countries present there is stronger than ever and will be decisive in the face of the difficulties before us.

I also wish to reiterate the need to persevere in seeking formulas for peace in the Middle East because of that conflict's potential to spread and affect other regional conflicts such as those just mentioned. The world has an unresolved task: peace in the Middle East, with two secure States — the State of Israel, but also the State of Palestine, which the international community must consider and recognize within a reasonable period of time. Peace in the Middle East has been and continues to be the first strategic priority for the international community.

According to the most recent estimates, more than 1 billion people throughout the world — nearly one sixth of its total population — suffer hunger. We must say this as often as possible: figures such as that, reflecting unfathomable human suffering, assault our consciences time and again as leaders of the international community and as citizens. It is unjust and unacceptable to proceed further into the twenty-first century, as we are doing, with such a radical imbalance in the living conditions of humanity. It is unjust, unacceptable and also unsafe — a permanent source of instability. It is not possible to aspire to a secure world if the current levels of inequality and poverty persist.

That is why our commitment to international peace and security must go hand in hand with a renewed effort to eradicate poverty, using our leadership responsibly and with solidarity and avoiding the temptation, in times of economic crisis, to lessen our commitment to the world's poorest and most vulnerable.

The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals must be a central aspect of the international agenda. Five years before 2015, the Goals can still be achieved, with sustained collective effort. At the next session of the General Assembly, we must reach specific agreements that will guarantee their achievement.

I wish to strengthen the appeal for that urgent joint effort by citing the commitment of my country and its citizens. I refer in particular to Africa. The twenty-first century should belong to a continent that

has been dispossessed for too long in the history of humanity: the African continent. Spain has become the seventh-largest international donor and the eighth-largest United Nations contributor, and we have made a clear commitment in the area of food security.

Over the past few years, we have raised humanity's awareness about the seriousness of the effects of climate change. There is now sufficient awareness about the need to combat climate change and also about the opportunities it provides us to create a new model of economic development — sustainable development.

With climate change, the time for awareness-raising is over and the time for commitments has arrived. We do not need any more words; it is time for action. We must take everyone's circumstances into account, but, if we are to make collective progress, we must not delay. Although we have been able to see the effects of the economic crisis, we still find it difficult to react to the effects of a phenomenon much more devastating for entire future generations. That is paradoxical and incomprehensible — even more so when we consider that to emerge from the economic crisis means ensuring the only kind of growth possible: sustainable growth.

We have 75 days before the Copenhagen summit begins. They can be 75 days for the future or for failure, 75 days for responsibility or for impotence, 75 days for agreement or for the useless defence of selfish interests. Copenhagen should give two answers to the world, regarding what and when: an ambitious reduction of emissions — the what — and a horizon that is near and defined — the when.

In order to attain those objectives, we also need to think about how. We know that technological research, innovation and development in the area of energy assist in the fight against climate change. That is why Spain has proposed that every State should devote at least 0.7 per cent of its gross domestic product to research, development and innovation in the area of technology and energy. That is a reference figure that, as in the area of development cooperation policy, will help us determine a commitment before the international community. My country also proposes to promote, when we assume the European Union presidency in the first half of 2010, the agreements that we must all adopt at Copenhagen.

Finally, only one year ago we were struck by a financial crisis that shook every corner of the world. Since then, all of us have suffered the effects of that crisis, but we have also become aware of the need to move ahead in building global governance and have taken resolute steps in that direction. Let us continue on that path, not just to continue fighting against the crisis and for employment, but to overcome it together and successfully address the other global challenges.

Let us use this time for clarity; let us take this opportunity. Let us build a multilateralism that is effective and responsible — above all, a multilateralism of solidarity. Since 1945, there have never been such favourable circumstances for translating the desires of the founders of the United Nations into the reality of the international order. Those desires were intended for succeeding generations. And we are the first generation that has within its reach the ability to fulfil the old and beautiful dream of a world governed by all. Let us do so.

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

Mr. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Yukio Hatoyama, Prime Minister of Japan

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Japan.

Mr. Yukio Hatoyama, Prime Minister of Japan, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Yukio Hatoyama, Prime Minister of Japan, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Hatoyama (Japan): I should like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on his assuming the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. I should also like to express my respect to His Excellency Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann for his excellent leadership at the previous session. I also

highly commend the dedication and leadership of His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in tackling the various challenging issues that the United Nations faces at the present time.

It was 120 years ago, in 1889, that an electoral system, while limited, was initiated in Japan. From that time forward, the change of governments through elections has been a matter of course in Japan. Japan also enjoyed a period in the early twentieth century known as the Taisho democracy.

Japan is thus a nation with a solid heritage of democracy and elections. Since the Second World War, however, Japan has not experienced changes of power through the ballot box. Tensions between politicians and bureaucrats disappeared. It cannot be denied that as a result, Japan's foreign policy has been somewhat deprived of vitality.

However, on 30 August this year, the Japanese people finally chose, through a general election, to have a change of power. This is a triumph for democracy in Japan and a victory for the Japanese people.

Last week, on 16 September, I assumed the office of Prime Minister of Japan, and thus I stand before you today. My new Administration embodies the dynamism of democracy and will exert all efforts to address both domestic affairs and foreign policy challenges through our all-Japan agenda.

Japan's membership in the United Nations was approved on 18 December 1956. The Prime Minister at the time was Ichiro Hatoyama, my grandfather. At the eleventh session of the General Assembly, where Japan made its maiden speech, then-Foreign Minister Mamoru Shigemitsu stated:

“The substance of Japan's political, economic and cultural life is the product of the fusion within the last century of the civilizations of the Orient and the Occident. In a way, Japan may well be regarded as a bridge between the East and the West. It is fully conscious of the great responsibilities of such a position.”
(A/PV.623, para. 80)

My grandfather Ichiro, Prime Minister at that time, was an advocate of the concept of “yu-ai”, or fraternity. This “yu-ai” is a way of thinking that respects one's own freedom and individual dignity while also respecting the freedom and individual

dignity of others. There is a remarkable resonance between the concept of the bridge in Mamoru Shigemitsu's address and Ichiro's concept of "yu-ai", or fraternity.

Now, 53 years later, here before the very same General Assembly, I declare with firm determination that Japan will again play the role of a bridge. Today, the world faces numerous arduous challenges. This is not an easy era by any means, but the new Japan will not turn its back on such challenges. Based upon the spirit of "yu-ai", or fraternity, Japan will make utmost efforts to become a bridge for the world, between the Orient and the Occident, between developed and developing countries and between diverse civilizations.

Today, I should like to address the Assembly regarding five challenges that Japan intends to take on in serving as this bridge.

The first is seeking measures to respond to the global economic crisis. While the global economy appears to have emerged from the worst stage of the crisis, it is still difficult to predict its future prospects, including the issue of employment. What Japan must do in this area is, first of all, to revive its own economy. The new Japan has a plan for achieving this. Child allowances totalling 5.5 trillion yen per year will serve not only as an investment in education but also as a means of stimulating consumption and addressing the low birth rate in Japan.

The abolishment of provisional rates on auto-related taxes will provide tax relief amounting to 2.5 trillion yen per year and at the same time is expected to enhance the cost competitiveness of Japanese industries through the revitalization of the distribution infrastructure.

On a topic I will return to later, we are setting a very ambitious target to tackle climate change, which should result in the creation of new markets, including for electric vehicles, solar power generation and clean energy businesses. Furthermore, we will ensure stable potential for growth through the creation of new industries and new technologies in maritime, space, next-generation information technology and other fields.

By reviewing economic policies through this change of power, Japan is sending a clear signal of the forthcoming revival of its economy.

The new Japan will also need to respond appropriately to globalization. The deepening of worldwide interdependence described by the term "globalization" includes aspects of both light and shadow. Expanding the light while controlling the shadow has become a task on a global scale for today's world. As we advance the liberalization of trade and investment, international coordination is necessary to forge systems to rein in the issues of poverty and economic disparity — which are difficult to coordinate by simply leaving them to market mechanisms — and excessive money-making games. Japan will play a role as a bridge in international forums, including the Group of 20, towards the formulation of common rules to that end.

The second challenge is to address the climate change issue. As is apparent from the increased incidence of extreme weather events, rising sea levels and other phenomena, climate change is a danger that is already confronting us. Furthermore, efforts by one country can produce only limited effects. However, due to differences in short-term interests between developed and developing countries, and among developed countries as well as among developing countries, the path towards creating a post-2012 framework will be anything but smooth. The new Japanese Government has set a very ambitious target for a greenhouse gas emissions reduction of 25 per cent by 2020, as compared to the 1990 level.

It has also made it clear that it is prepared to provide more financial and technical assistance to developing countries than in the past, in accordance with the progress of international negotiations. This international commitment is premised on the formulation of a fair and effective international framework by all major economies and agreement on their ambitious targets. Japan has announced this ambitious pledge because it wishes to serve as a bridge among countries with varied interests and to preserve the planet for future generations. I would like to appeal strongly to the representatives present today — let us work together to ensure the success of the upcoming Copenhagen meeting.

The third challenge is that of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. I welcome the progress being made in the negotiations on nuclear weapons reduction between the United States and the Russian Federation. I also commend the United Kingdom and France for their initiatives. It is urgent

that all nuclear-weapon States take concrete measures on nuclear disarmament. There are States currently engaged in efforts to develop nuclear weapons. Furthermore, there is an increasingly greater risk that nuclear materials and nuclear technologies will be passed onto terrorists or even actually used.

In this area as well, Japan has the potential to become a promoter of nuclear disarmament and to serve as a bridge between States possessing nuclear weapons and those without them. Japan can speak with the greatest persuasiveness in urging nuclear-weapon States towards nuclear disarmament and non-nuclear-weapon States to avoid the temptation to acquire nuclear weapons. Japan can do so because it is the only country which has ever suffered the devastation of atomic bombs and, as such, has never ceased to appeal for no more Hiroshimas and no more Nagasakis. Japan has also continued to maintain its three non-nuclear principles, despite its potential capability to acquire nuclear weapons.

In April this year in Prague, President Barack Obama articulated a vision of a world without nuclear weapons, inspiring people throughout the globe. I am one of those people. In order to ensure the success of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to be held next year in May, we must take action now towards the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the early commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Here, I must touch upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Its nuclear tests and missile launches are a threat to the peace and stability not only of the region, but also of the international community as a whole, and cannot be condoned under any circumstances. It is imperative that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea comply fully with the relevant Security Council resolutions and that the international community implement these resolutions.

Japan will continue its efforts to realize the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula through the Six-Party Talks. Japan seeks to normalize relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in accordance with the Pyongyang Declaration issued by our two countries, through the comprehensive resolution of the outstanding issues of concern with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including the

abduction, nuclear and missile issues, as well as by sincerely moving beyond the unfortunate past.

In particular, regarding the abduction issue, constructive actions by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including swiftly commencing a full investigation as agreed last year, will be an avenue towards progress in relations between our two countries. If the Democratic People's Republic of Korea takes such constructive and sincere actions, Japan is ready to respond positively.

The fourth challenge is posed by issues related to peacebuilding, development and poverty. Even in the twenty-first century, the world has not been liberated from the problems of poverty, infectious diseases, health, education, water and sanitation, food and illegal drugs. The situation is particularly serious in developing countries.

I am also compelled to point out the unfortunate reality that fragile or failed States can become breeding grounds for terrorism. The global economic crisis that began last year has exacerbated the situation. The new Japan should also become a bridge in this area. Japan will work in partnership with international and non-governmental organizations and strengthen its assistance to developing countries in terms of both quality and quantity.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Japan intends to continue and strengthen the Tokyo International Conference on African Development process, and redouble its efforts towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the promotion of human security.

For the stability and reconstruction of Afghanistan, Japan has provided assistance in a broad range of fields, such as strengthening the security sector, including through assistance for police, and developing social infrastructure. Japan has also extended agricultural assistance and capacity-building support, including vocational training, through the Japan International Cooperation Agency, its aid implementation agency.

Japan will proactively support Afghanistan's own efforts to ensure its stability and reconstruction, in conjunction with the international community. It goes without saying that the primary actors in achieving peace in Afghanistan and in advancing national

reconstruction are the people of Afghanistan themselves.

As progress is made, the reconciliation and reintegration of insurgents will become critical issues. Japan will make vital contributions in these areas, including possible reintegration assistance, such as vocational training aimed at providing a means of livelihood to people who have undergone reconciliation. The stability of the surrounding region is also important, and Japan is steadfastly providing support for Pakistan and other countries in the area.

In the world in which we now live, national security and human security are becoming increasingly intertwined. The path forward that will save humanity is one which can bring about shared security in which various nations, ethnicities, races and religions coexist while acknowledging the differences among them. In other words, it is to bring about shared security through the principles of *yuai*, or fraternity.

The fifth challenge is to build an East Asian community. Today, there is no way that Japan can develop without deeply involving itself in the Asia and Pacific regions. Reducing the region's security risks and sharing in one another's economic dynamism, based on the principle of open regionalism, will result in tremendous benefits not only for Japan but also for the region and the international community. Given the historical circumstances arising from its mistaken actions in the past, Japan has hesitated to play a proactive role in this region. It is my hope that the new Japan can overcome this history and become a bridge among the countries of Asia.

I look forward to an East Asian community taking shape as an extension of the accumulated cooperation built up step by step among partners who have the capacity to work together, starting with fields in which we can cooperate — free trade agreements, finance, currency, energy, the environment, disaster relief and more. Of course, Rome was not built in a day, so let us seek to move forward steadily on this, even if at a moderate pace.

In closing, I would like representatives to recall that the United Nations is the forum in which bridging diplomacy is made manifest. In resolving various issues of international peace and stability, development and the environment, among others, the United Nations has an immense role to play. I intend to make greater use of the Organization and to work to enhance the

effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations as a whole.

I firmly believe that Japan has the capacity to play an even greater role in the United Nations, and above all at the Security Council, as a bridge between various countries. Japan will continue to participate actively in the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, pursuing the expansion of both permanent and non-permanent membership and of Japan's permanent membership in the Council. This concludes my message from the new Japan.

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

Mr. Yukio Hatoyama, Prime Minister of Japan, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey.

Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Erdoğan (Turkey) (spoke in Turkish; English interpretation provided by the delegation): It is a great pleasure for me to address and greet the General Assembly once again from this rostrum in my capacity as Prime Minister of Turkey on the occasion of the general debate of the Assembly's sixty-fourth session.

I would like to congratulate Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. I also wish to express my appreciation and thanks to Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann for his able and prudent conduct of the presidency of the Assembly at its sixty-third session. I take this opportunity also to thank all the Member States for the high degree of trust and approval shown to my country in electing it last year as a non-permanent member of the Security Council by a wide margin of support.

The global problems of our age necessitate solutions on a global scale, and we therefore need to work in a determined fashion. From wars to economic crises, from hunger and poverty to terrorism, from energy security to climate change, the problems of our world are extremely challenging. However, none of them is insurmountable.

If we are to resolve these problems, we need a fair and inclusive global order that is based on trust and regards diversity as a source of wealth. It is possible to make the transition from a conception of the world based on risk and perceptions of threats to one that is based on trust and solidarity. Indeed, this has become a necessity for all of us. To do so, however, we need a new kind of leadership. We can indeed make the twenty-first century an era ruled by peace instead of war; trust instead of fear; justice instead of injustice; tranquillity instead of terror and violence; and prosperity instead of hunger and poverty. It is our common responsibility and historic duty to participate in the construction of such a world, regardless of our differences of language, religion or nationality.

Threats such as terrorism and the proliferation of nuclear weapons have become sources of worldwide concern. Problems such as hunger and poverty, the increased frequency of pandemics, food and energy security, growing xenophobia and radicalism remain grave challenges. In addition, global warming and the financial crisis are fundamental issues that demand substantial solutions.

Against that backdrop, the relevance and indispensability of the United Nations has become even more evident. In order to establish a fair and participatory global order, we must work together to enhance the Organization's efficiency. We certainly do not despair. We maintain our hope that the achievement of global peace and stability is within our grasp. We therefore wish to see the United Nations serve as the voice and spokesperson of the global public conscience. We believe that a more representative, democratic, transparent, just and effective United Nations will be able to make a greater contribution to global peace and stability.

The United Nations must become a much more effective institution on such matters as climate change, sustainable development, the struggle against poverty, gender equality and the protection of human rights and

dignity, and we fully support reform efforts to that end. However, there is no doubt that the reform of the United Nations system will be incomplete if not accompanied by Security Council reform. I would like to underscore once again that Turkey is in favour of enlarging the non-permanent membership of the Security Council.

Another important aspect of reform that I wish to underline is the need to improve the United Nations peacekeeping system. In this context, we want the views and expectations of the United Nations troop-contributing countries, in particular, on such issues as early and effective coordination, capacity-building and enhanced cooperation with regional organizations to be taken into full account.

Turkey continues to be a force for peace and stability in its region. Especially in the course of the past seven years, we have made every effort to settle our problems with our neighbours. Thanks to this approach, which we call a zero-problem policy with our neighbours, Turkey has made significant progress in solving outstanding issues with its neighbours and has greatly improved its bilateral relations.

The problems of our region have global implications as well. Therefore, our constructive and peaceful regional policies serve not only our own neighbourhood but also world peace. However, we do not consider those efforts to be sufficient. We seek to move from a relationship of passive good-neighbourliness to one of active friendship and cooperation. The positive impact of this approach on regional and world peace is well appreciated by all our friends in the East and the West.

Another concrete example of this approach is our ongoing dialogue with our neighbour, Greece. Another case in point is our quest to normalize our relations with Armenia, which has gained fresh momentum of late and begun to bear fruit.

We also believe that the conflicts and disputes in the Caucasus, including but not limited to the problems between Armenia and Azerbaijan, are issues that need to be resolved. In this regard, we hope that our regional partners will share Turkey's vision for region-wide peace, security and stability. We believe that the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform, which we launched in the aftermath of the crisis of August 2008, can make a substantial contribution to efforts in that direction.

Another issue of great interest to us and the world is Iraq's territorial integrity, political unity and internal peace. We attach great importance to the continuation of the political dialogue process encompassing all groups in Iraq and the establishment of national unity. A clear manifestation of this importance is the neighbouring countries process regarding Iraq, which was initiated by Turkey.

In this connection, I also wish to emphasize the significance of the strategic dialogue mechanism set up between Turkey and Iraq, which is important in terms of both the fight against terrorism and other aspects of our bilateral relations. We are fully committed to maintaining and further developing this process.

Another area to which Turkey is sensitive is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In our view, the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, based on the vision of two States existing side by side in peace and security, is an indispensable element of regional and global peace. The achievement of Palestinian national unity will expedite the establishment of an independent Palestinian State. Turkey has always stood by the Palestinian people and will continue to do so.

I wish to draw the Assembly's attention to the following facts. The aggression against Gaza carried out at the end of 2008 quickly turned into a human tragedy and resulted in the deaths of nearly 1,400 people, most of whom were women and children, as the result of phosphate bombs. Over 5,000 people were injured and the infrastructure of Gaza was completely destroyed. Even United Nations buildings in Gaza did not escape this destruction. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon personally witnessed the devastation and voiced his reaction. The 575-page United Nations report on Gaza (A/HRC/12/48), released on 15 September 2009, clearly confirms this fact.

It has been eight months since the declaration of the ceasefires that ended the hostilities in Gaza and the adoption of resolution 1860 (2009). Similarly, six months have elapsed since the Sharm el-Sheikh conference, at which the international community pledged billions of dollars for the reconstruction of Gaza. However, I regret to say that the human tragedy in Gaza continues.

People are living in tents and cannot find drinking water. In the face of this situation, are we fulfilling our humanitarian responsibility? What can

the United Nations or the Security Council do? What measures have the United Nations and the Security Council really enacted? We really must think about that because the promises made in Gaza have not been fulfilled.

As at the time of aggression, Gaza has once again been left to its own devices in the aftermath of the heavy destruction it suffered. Currently, the importation of construction materials to Gaza is not permitted; only food and medication are allowed to pass through, and the suffering of the people of Gaza continues.

We demand that these obstacles be immediately lifted and normalcy restored to Gaza for the sake of the peace and security of Israelis and Palestinians alike. The Palestinian question cannot be resolved solely by satisfying the demands of one party alone. The security of the Palestinians is as important as the security of Israel. The Palestinian people's quest for freedom and peace is as legitimate as Israel's quest for stability.

The settlement of the Palestinian question, which is one of the greatest obstacles to regional and global peace, will be possible only when everyone is treated fairly and equitably. On every possible occasion, Turkey has stressed that it is not possible to turn a blind eye to the appalling conditions in Gaza, and we will continue to make that point. It is our common humanitarian and moral responsibility to ensure that the tragedy unfolding in Gaza is brought to an end and that an atmosphere of lasting peace is created in the region.

It is extremely important that the international community remain engaged in this matter and inject new vigour and momentum into efforts to resolve the problem. We call on all parties concerned not to remain indifferent to this question and not to condone further suffering.

We also believe that the resumption of the Israeli-Palestinian talks, which have been disrupted by the Gaza conflict, is of the utmost importance. We hope that the peace process will be revitalized as quickly as possible. To date, Turkey has made every possible effort to contribute to the peace process in the Middle East. The indirect negotiations between Syria and Israel, which we hosted in 2008, are a case in point. Depending on the mutual desire of both parties, we are ready to resume our active role in the future.

We have always said that our neighbouring country Syria is a very important country in our region and is in a position to play a key role in the search for regional peace, security and stability. Lebanon, too, is of critical importance to regional stability. Turkey has expended intensive efforts to ensure that a comprehensive political compromise prevails in Lebanon. We will continue to strongly support Lebanon's stability in the future.

We also believe that the dispute over our neighbour Iran's nuclear programme, which has long preoccupied the international community, should be resolved through dialogue. Turkey defends the right of all countries to benefit from the peaceful use of nuclear energy. On the other hand, we also call on all countries to act responsibly and to bear in mind the serious consequences of the proliferation of nuclear weapons for the whole world. In that spirit, we supported the adoption of Security Council resolution 1874 (2009), on North Korea's nuclear test last May.

We also closely follow the situation in Afghanistan and developments in Pakistan. We support the struggle against extremism by the peoples of Afghanistan and Pakistan, with whom we enjoy historical and brotherly ties. We are maintaining our infrastructure investments in order to help those two countries achieve the prosperity they deserve. The ministerial-level meeting of friends of a democratic Pakistan that we convened in Istanbul in late August is an indication of the importance we attach to Pakistan's stability and prosperity.

I would like to take this opportunity to announce that, in addition to becoming the lead country on Afghanistan in the Security Council in 2010, we shall also assume the chairmanship of the Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee. Our strong support for efforts to achieve security and stability in Afghanistan and to combat terrorism will continue unabated during the course of our performance of those duties on the Council.

The Balkans is another region that we follow closely. We believe that the integration of the countries of the region into Euro-Atlantic institutions is important. That perspective should be maintained.

Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus support efforts to find a comprehensive solution on the island. The basis upon which such a solution should be built is right here under the roof of

the United Nations. If all the parties to the current negotiations were to act constructively, it would be possible to reach a comprehensive solution by the end of 2009. We believe that the Secretary-General should, as he did in 2004, play a role in bridging the differences on which the parties themselves cannot agree.

It should be our common objective to submit the solution to be reached to a referendum in the spring of 2010, at the latest. However, at this juncture, I would also like to stress that, if a solution cannot be found due to Greek Cypriot intransigence, as was the case in 2004, the normalization of the status of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus will become a necessity that can no longer be delayed. It is therefore essential to realize that negotiations cannot be sustained ad infinitum, that the current window of opportunity cannot remain open forever, and that efforts must be deployed to ensure the success of the process.

I would also like to take this opportunity to emphasize once again that a comprehensive solution to be achieved on the basis of established United Nations parameters, which will secure the founding of a new partnership in Cyprus, will enjoy the open support of Turkey as a guarantor Power. A fair and lasting solution in Cyprus will make a major contribution to the transformation of the eastern Mediterranean into a zone of peace, stability and cooperation. I call upon everyone to do their utmost to help achieve that goal.

In the meantime, the Turkish Cypriot side is still subject to unfair measures of isolation, despite the fact that in 2004 it accepted all the sacrifices that the Annan plan entailed. It is not fair to expect the Turkish side to pay the price for a lack of a solution. The lifting of such restrictions on Turkish Cypriots will not only remove an unjust practice, but also accelerate the process of resolution.

Turkey continues to participate actively in peacekeeping operations around the world under the umbrella of the United Nations, NATO, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. We also strongly support least developed and developing countries in their struggle to resolve development problems.

In addition, as a party to the Kyoto Protocol, Turkey is ready to live up to its responsibilities with respect to a vital issue that concerns the future of our world. We support the determined efforts being made

by the Secretary-General in the process of devising a new climate change regime.

I should also like to draw the Assembly's attention to another very important issue that poses a threat to our world. We should not forget that each culture and civilization flourishes through the inspiration provided by the successes of other cultures and civilizations. As a matter of fact, our common values today, as well as our science, law and art, have been influenced not only by the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations, but also by ancient Eastern civilizations. From Al-Khwarizmi, the father of algebra, to Al-Farabi, who laid the foundations of music; from Ibn Sina, who ushered in a new era in medicine, to Sinan the architect, who produced the finest engineering examples of his time, many Turkish and Islamic scholars, men of learning and artists have made significant contributions to the progress of humankind.

It is therefore essential to regard and understand diverse cultures not as the other, but as individual elements of humankind's cultural inheritance, as well as to inculcate that spirit in new generations. That is the philosophy that underlies the Alliance of Civilizations, which has become a United Nations initiative that has strengthened its institutional structure under the co-sponsorship of Turkey and Spain. I have no doubt that the Alliance will make a significant contribution. We should ensure that it has a meaningful place in the Organization, as it can make important contributions to shaping a global civilization based on universal values centred on democracy, the rule of law, good governance, human rights, gender equality, young people and media.

In conclusion, I would like to express my hope that the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly will serve the best interests of all humankind, as well as the interests of peace.

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

Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of the State of Israel

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the State of Israel.

Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of the State of Israel, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of the State of Israel, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Netanyahu (Israel): Nearly 62 years ago, the United Nations recognized the right of the Jews, an ancient people 3,500 years old, to a State of their own in their ancestral homeland. I stand here today as the Prime Minister of Israel, the Jewish State, and I speak to the Assembly on behalf of my country and my people.

The United Nations was founded after the carnage of the Second World War and the horrors of the Holocaust. It was charged with preventing the reoccurrence of such horrendous events. Nothing has undermined that mission, nothing has impeded it more, than the systematic assault on the truth. Yesterday, the President of Iran stood at this very rostrum spewing his latest anti-Semitic rants. Just a few days earlier, he again claimed that the Holocaust was a lie.

Last month, I went to a villa in a suburb of Berlin called Wannsee. There, on 20 January 1942, after a hearty meal, senior Nazi officials met and decided to exterminate my people. They left detailed minutes of that meeting that have been preserved for posterity by successive German Governments. I have here a copy of the minutes of the meeting of senior Nazi officials instructing the Nazi Government exactly how to carry out the extermination of the Jewish people. Is that protocol a lie? Are the German Government and all German Governments lying?

The day before I was in Wannsee, in Berlin I was given the original construction plans for the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. I now hold in my hand the Auschwitz-Birkenau plans. They contain the signature of Heinrich Himmler, Hitler's deputy, himself. Are those plans for the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, where 1 million Jews were murdered, a lie too? In June, President Obama visited another concentration camp, one of many — the

Buchenwald concentration camp. Did President Obama pay tribute to a lie?

And what of the Auschwitz survivors, whose arms still bear the tattooed numbers branded on them by the Nazis? Are those tattoos a lie, too? One third of all Jews perished in the great conflagration of the Holocaust. Nearly every Jewish family, including my own, was affected. My wife's grandparents, her father's two sisters and three brothers, and all the aunts, uncles and cousins were murdered by the Nazis. Is that a lie?

Yesterday, the man who calls the Holocaust a lie spoke from this rostrum. I commend those who refused to come and those who left in protest. They stood up for moral clarity and brought honour to their countries. But to those who gave that denier of the Holocaust a hearing, I say on behalf of my people, the Jewish people, and of decent people everywhere: Have they no shame? Have they no decency? A mere six decades after the Holocaust, they give legitimacy to a man who denies the murder of 6 million Jews, while promising to wipe out the State of Israel, the State of the Jews.

That is a disgrace. It is a mockery of the Charter of the United Nations. Perhaps some representatives think that that man and his odious regime threaten only the Jews. If they believe that, they are wrong — dead wrong. History has shown us time and again that what starts with attacks on the Jews eventually ends up engulfing many, many others.

For this Iranian regime is fuelled by an extreme fundamentalism that burst onto the world scene three decades ago after lying dormant for centuries. In the past 30 years, that fanaticism has swept across the globe with a murderous violence that knows no bounds and with a cold-blooded impartiality in the choice of its victims. It has callously slaughtered Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus and many others. The adherents of that unforgiving creed, although it is comprised of different offshoots, seek to return humanity to medieval times. Wherever they can, they impose a backward, regimented society where women, minorities, gays or anyone else deemed not to be a true believer is brutally subjugated.

The struggle against that fanaticism does not pit faith against faith, or civilization against civilization. It pits civilization against barbarism, the twenty-first century against the ninth, and those who sanctify life against those who glorify death. The primitivism of the

ninth century ought to be no match for the progress of the twenty-first. The allure of freedom, the power of technology and the reach of communications should surely win the day. Ultimately, the past cannot triumph over the future, and our future offers all nations magnificent bounties of hope because the pace of progress is growing, and growing exponentially.

It took us centuries to get from the printing press to the telephone, decades to get from the telephone to the personal computer, and only a few years to get from the personal computer to the Internet. What seemed impossible a few years ago is already outdated, and we can scarcely fathom the changes that are yet to come. We will crack the genetic code. We will cure the incurable. We will lengthen our lives. We will find a cheap alternative to fossil fuel, and we will clean up the planet.

I am proud that my country, Israel, is at the forefront of many of those advances in science and technology, medicine and biology, agriculture and water, and energy and the environment. Those innovations in my country and in many others offer humanity a sunlit future of unimagined promise.

However, if the most primitive fanaticism can acquire the most deadly weapons, the march of history could be reversed for a time and, like the belated victory over the Nazis, the forces of progress and freedom prevail only after a horrific toll of blood and fortune has been exacted from mankind. That is why the greatest threat facing the world today is the marriage between religious fundamentalism and the weapons of mass destruction.

The most urgent challenge facing this body today is to prevent the tyrants of Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Are the Members of the United Nations up to that challenge? Will the international community confront a despotism that terrorizes its own people as they bravely stand up for freedom? Will it take action against the dictators who stole an election in broad daylight and then gunned down Iranian protesters, who died on the sidewalks and in the streets choking in their own blood? Will the international community thwart the world's most pernicious sponsor and practitioner of terrorism? Above all, will the international community stop the terrorist regime of Iran from developing atomic weapons and thereby endangering the peace of the entire world?

The people of Iran are courageously standing up to this regime. People of goodwill around the world stand with them, as do the thousands who have been protesting outside this Hall throughout the week. Will the United Nations stand with them?

The jury is still out on the United Nations. Recent signs are not encouraging. Rather than condemning the terrorists and their Iranian patrons, some here in the United Nations have condemned their victims. This is exactly what a recent United Nations report on Gaza did, falsely equating the terrorists with those they targeted.

For eight long years, Hamas fired rockets from Gaza on nearby Israeli cities and citizens — thousands of missiles and mortars hailing down from the sky on schools, homes, shopping centres and bus stops. Year after year, as these missiles were deliberately fired on our civilians, not one single United Nations resolution was passed condemning those criminal attacks. We heard nothing — absolutely nothing — from the Human Rights Council of the United Nations, a misnamed institution if ever there was one.

In 2005, hoping to advance peace, Israel unilaterally withdrew from every inch of Gaza. It was very painful. We dismantled 21 settlements, really bedroom communities and farms. We uprooted over 8,000 Israelis; we just yanked them out of their homes. We did this because many in Israel believed that it would win peace. Well, we did not get peace. Instead we got an Iranian-backed terror base 50 miles from Tel Aviv. But life in the Israeli towns and cities immediately adjacent to Gaza became nothing less than a nightmare. The Hamas rocket attacks not only continued after we left, they actually increased dramatically. They increased tenfold. And again, the United Nations was silent — absolutely silent.

Well, after eight years of this unremitting assault, Israel was finally forced to respond. But how should we have responded? There is only one example in history of thousands of rockets being fired on a country's civilian population. This happened when the Nazis rocketed British cities during the Second World War. During that war, the Allies levelled German cities, causing hundreds of thousands of casualties. I am not passing judgement; I am stating a fact, a fact that is the product of the decisions of great and honourable men — the leaders of Britain and the United States — fighting an evil force in the Second World War.

It is also a fact that Israel chose to respond differently. Faced with an enemy committing a double war crime — firing on civilians while hiding behind civilians — Israel sought to conduct surgical strikes against the rocket-launchers themselves. That was no easy task because the terrorists were firing their missiles from homes and schools, using mosques as weapons depots and missile caches, and ferreting explosives in ambulances.

Israel, by contrast, tried to minimize casualties by urging Palestinian civilians to vacate the targeted areas. We dropped countless flyers over their homes. We sent thousands and thousands of text messages to the Palestinian residents. We made thousands and thousands of cellular phone calls urging them to vacate, to leave. Never has a country gone to such extraordinary lengths to remove the enemy's civilian population from harm's way.

Yet faced with an absolutely clear-cut case of aggressor and victim, who do you think the United Nations Human Rights Council decided to condemn? Israel. A democracy legitimately defending itself against terror is morally hanged, drawn and quartered, and given an unfair trial to boot. By these twisted standards, the Human Rights Council would have dragged Roosevelt and Churchill to the dock as war criminals. What a perversion of truth! What a perversion of justice!

The delegates to the United Nations and the Governments that they represent have a decision to make. Will they accept this farce? Because if they do, the United Nations would revert to its darkest days, when the worst violators of human rights sat in judgement against the law-abiding democracies, when Zionism was equated with racism and when an automatic majority could be mustered to declare that the Earth is flat. If you had to choose a date when the United Nations began its descent, almost a freefall, and lost the respect of many thoughtful people in the international community, it was the day in 1975 it decided to equate Zionism with racism.

Now this body has a choice to make. If it does not reject this biased report, it would vitiate itself, it would recommence the process of vitiating its own relevance and importance. But it would also do something else. It would send the message to terrorists everywhere that terrorism pays: all you have to do is

launch your attacks from densely populated areas, and you will win immunity.

A third point: in condemning Israel, this body would also deal a mortal blow to peace. Let me explain why. When Israel left Gaza, many hoped that the missile attacks would stop. Others believed that, even if they did not stop, at the very least Israel, in having made this extraordinary gesture for peace, would have international legitimacy to exercise its right of self-defence if peace failed. What legitimacy? What self-defence?

The same United Nations that cheered Israel as it left Gaza and promised to back our right of self-defence now accuses us — my people, my country — of being war criminals? And for what? For acting responsibly in self-defence? For acting in a way that any country would act, with a restraint unmatched by many? What a travesty!

Israel justly defended itself against terror. This biased and unjust report provides a clear-cut test for all Governments. Will the Assembly stand with Israel or will it stand with the terrorists? We must know the answer to that question now. Now, not later. Because if Israel is again asked to take more risks for peace, we must know today that the Assembly will stand with us tomorrow. Only if we have the confidence that we can defend ourselves can we take further risks for peace.

Make no mistake: all of Israel wants peace. Any time an Arab leader genuinely wanted peace with us, we made peace. We made peace with Egypt led by Anwar Sadat. We made peace with Jordan led by King Hussein. And if the Palestinians truly want peace, my Government and I, and my people, will make peace. But we want a genuine peace, a defensible peace, a permanent peace.

In 1947, this body voted to establish two States for two peoples — a Jewish State and an Arab State. The Jews accepted that resolution. The Arabs rejected it and invaded the embryonic Jewish State with the hopes of annihilating it.

We ask the Palestinians to finally do what they have refused to do for 62 years: say yes to a Jewish State. It is as simple, as clear and as elementary as that. Just as we are asked to recognize a nation-State of the Palestinian people, the Palestinians must be asked to recognize the nation-State of the Jewish people. The

Jewish people are not foreign conquerors in the Land of Israel. It is the land of our forefathers.

Inscribed on the walls outside this building is the great Biblical vision of peace: “Nation shall not lift up sword against nation. They shall learn war no more.” These words were spoken by the great Jewish prophet Isaiah 2,800 years ago as he walked in my country, in my city, in the hills of Judea and in the streets of Jerusalem.

We are not strangers to this land. This is our homeland. But as deeply connected as we are to our homeland, we also recognize that the Palestinians also live there and they want a home of their own. We want to live side by side with them — two free peoples living in peace, living in prosperity, living in dignity.

Peace, prosperity and dignity require one other element: we must have security. The Palestinians should have all the powers to govern themselves except a handful of powers that could endanger Israel. That is why the Palestinian State must be effectively demilitarized. I say “effectively” because we do not want another Gaza, another south Lebanon, another Iranian-backed terror base abutting Jerusalem and perched on the hills a few kilometres from Tel Aviv.

We want peace. I believe that with goodwill and with hard work such a peace can be achieved. But it requires that all of us roll back the forces of terror led by Iran that seek to destroy peace, that seek to eliminate Israel and to overthrow the world order. The question facing the international community is whether it is prepared to confront those forces, or will it accommodate them.

Over 70 years ago, Winston Churchill lamented what he called the “confirmed unteachability of mankind”. By that he meant the unfortunate habit of civilized societies to sleep and to slumber until danger nearly overtakes them. Churchill bemoaned what he called the

“want of foresight, unwillingness to act when action would be simple and effective, lack of clear thinking, confusion of counsel until the emergency comes, until self-preservation strikes its jarring gong ...”.

I speak here today in the hope that Churchill’s assessment of the “unteachability of mankind” is for once proven wrong. I speak here today in the hope that

we can learn from history, that we can prevent danger in time.

In the spirit of the timeless words spoken to Joshua over 3,000 years ago, let us be strong and of good courage. Let us confront this peril, secure our future and, God willing, forge an enduring peace for generations to come.

(spoke in Hebrew)

May God bless his people with peace; may God

give strength to his people; may God bless his people with peace.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the State of Israel for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of the State of Israel, was escorted from the rostrum.

The meeting rose at 1.40 p.m.