



General Assembly

Seventieth session

27th plenary meeting
Friday, 2 October 2015, 6 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Lykketoft (Denmark)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Fornell (Ecuador), Vice President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 6.10 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

General Debate

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary of Relations with States of the Holy See.

Archbishop Gallagher: Echoing the sentiments of Pope Francis, who recently visited the United Nations, I wish to renew the congratulations of the Holy See to Mr. Lykketoft on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. I also wish to greet each of the participants in today's meeting and to express my hope that its work will prove fruitful and give new impetus to the commitment for creating a world of peace and security, the respect for human rights and the promotion of the necessary conditions for integral human development. Significantly, on 24 October, we will celebrate the entry into force of the Charter of the United Nations.

The recently concluded summit of the Heads of State and of Government adopted a plan of action for the prosperity of peoples and the planet and for strengthening peace in greater freedom. In the General Assembly's adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), it has undertaken the task of proposing a stable and sustainable pace for the world economy. The Holy See can only express

its satisfaction, as must the Governments that took part in the process of drawing up the new Agenda for their citizens. In that regard, I wish to mention that, even before the completion of the negotiations, Pope Francis stated that the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an important sign of hope for humankind.

In contrast to the promising hopes generated by the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (resolution 69/313, annex), adopted at the third International Conference on Financing for Development, there is the sad panorama of war. It is obvious that, unless conflicts are properly resolved, all efforts to overcome poverty will fail. The Holy See is therefore seriously concerned about the global consequences of conflicts; above all, it expresses deep regret for the countless victims of those wars and joins its voice to the plea of all those who suffer.

We must acknowledge that, over the past 70 years, the United Nations has succeeded in avoiding a great global conflict and the outbreak of many wars between Member States. At the same time, it has also halted or resolved many regional conflicts and complex instances of civil war. Nonetheless, there are at present at least 50 conflicts or situations of latent conflict, to say nothing of the actions of international terrorist and criminal organizations set up as quasi-States and as a sort of alternative international community. We have before us, unfortunately, the immense tragedy of the war in Syria with its thousands of dead, its millions of displaced persons and its tremendous consequences for the stability of the region.

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Similarly, the troubles in Libya, Central Africa, the Great Lakes region and South Sudan must remain at the centre of the international community's attention. Nor can the tragic situation in Ukraine be overlooked or many other smaller or more contained conflicts, violations of humanitarian law or the atypical warfare waged by drug traffickers and other criminal groups. Then there is the grave conflict in the Middle East, which has been going on since the first years of the United Nations. That region, a cradle of civilizations, is immersed in a situation that combines every form of conflict and every possible subject — State and non-State combatants, ethnic and cultural groups, terrorism, criminality and so on.

The atrocities and unspeakable human rights violations that characterize today's conflicts are transmitted live by the media, and with wide diffusion and repetition they risk generating a numbing familiarity and indifference. The international community, for its part, must feel a grave responsibility to act resolutely and renew its political and juridical structures, so as to limit and overcome, as quickly and effectively as possible, the consequences of the current war-related crises.

It is a bitter irony that the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations is accompanied by an exodus of peoples that is the greatest such migration seen since that caused by the Second World War. Entire populations are being displaced, as they flee from war, persecution, exploitation and poverty. Sadly, however, those waves of migrants are seen more in terms of the additional burden of unforeseen problems that they cause for the countries of passage or destination than in terms of the cost of human life paid by millions of innocent people. Furthermore, as a response to such mass migrations, the fear of terrorism and other local problems, there has been a return to the practice of building walls and barriers between peoples. That is a sad example of inhumanity, a hasty and ineffective solution to security and one that we thought the events of the late 1980s had definitively consigned to oblivion.

At the same time, the Holy See urgently appeals to States to overcome every form of nationalistic self-interest and, above all, to recognize the unity of our human family and to have faith in the human person. Distant and more recent history teaches us that migrants, even in the most dramatic situations of displacement, have always made a positive contribution to their host countries. More importantly, however, the migrants are

women and men who, by virtue of their humanity, are entitled to the universal rights to life and dignity.

In addition to offering hospitality, the present dramatic situation urgently demands a commitment to address the causes that force peoples to flee and thereby to take real, effective and generous decisions in favour of peace and integral human development. The solemn commitment to implement the 2030 Agenda is more timely than ever and must be advanced with courage. At the same time, we must recognize that, without peace between peoples and nations, it will be impossible to implement that Agenda.

To that end, the Holy See wishes to suggest four areas of reflection that should be borne in mind when considering the best possible course. They are the responsibility to protect, the respect for international law, disarmament and the protection of the environment. The first two, the responsibilities to protect and to observe existing international law are to be considered necessary instruments for discharging the immediate obligation to welcome exiles without putting up unjust barriers for the universal enactment of the 2030 Agenda, and likewise for the protection of the environment.

Today, the principle of the responsibility to protect all peoples from massive atrocities, instances of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity is recognized and accepted by all. That responsibility, as has been noted, first obliges national Governments, and then the international community and regional groups of States, to act in accordance with international law. Yet it is not always easy to carry out that duty in practice, not the least because its observance often conflicts with a strict literal interpretation of the principle of non-intervention, as sanctioned by paragraph 7 of Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations. There is also the suspicion, historically founded, that under the guise of humanitarian intervention, the principle of the sovereign equality of the Members of the United Nations, established in paragraph 2 of Article 2 of the Charter, could end up being overridden.

Nonetheless, owing to the unacceptable human costs of inaction, the search for effective juridical means for the practical application of the principle of the responsibility to protect must be one of the most urgent central priorities of the United Nations. To that end, it would be most useful if the Member States could determine clear and effective criteria for applying

the principle and for the corresponding integration of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. Furthermore, drawing on the significant experience of the United Nations and various dependent agencies in peacekeeping, peacebuilding and other humanitarian interventions, rapid and effective means should be found for implementing eventual decisions relative to the responsibility to protect.

The great purposes and principles expressed in the Preamble and in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations serve as a sure guide to the interpretation and application of all successive provisions of the Charter. Therefore, the solemn duties spelled out in the Preamble “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war” and “to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person” and in paragraph 3 of Article 1, to promote and encourage “respect for human rights and for fundamental freedom for all” not only justify the implementation of the responsibility to protect, but also bind the international community in the duty to find the appropriate means to do so. Otherwise, the great edifice of the Charter of the United Nations would be reduced to a mere tool for maintaining global equilibrium and for resolving controversies. That would betray not only those who drafted the Charter, but also the millions of victims whose blood was shed in the great wars of the last century.

The second element that today’s conflicts, and the humanitarian crises they cause, force us to consider is what we might call the responsibility to observe the existing law in responding to global and regional crises. That requires, first of all, a genuine and transparent application of Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations. The principle of non-intervention, sanctioned in paragraph 7 of that Article, together with paragraphs 3 and 4, excludes all unilateral use of force against another Member of the United Nations and demands full respect for Governments that are lawfully constituted and recognized.

Article 2 cannot, however, become an alibi for excusing gross violations of human rights. The 70-year experience of the United Nations has amply demonstrated that grave violations of human dignity on the part of Governments can be redressed and resolved peacefully through denunciation and persuasion by civil society and Governments themselves. Where gross violations of human rights persist and further intervention is considered necessary, the only other

recourse is to apply the measures set forth in Chapters VI and VII of the Charter. In addition, adherence to the Charter, as well as to the cardinal principle of international law, namely, *pacta sunt servanda*, which is no tautology but rather the affirmation of the rule of law itself, has definitively banned concepts such as that of preventive war and, even more so, attempts to redesign entire geographic areas and redistribute populations under the pretext of a principle of security. At the same time, the most evident and reasonable understanding of paragraph 4 of Article 2 of the Charter excludes any intervention by third-party States in favour of one side or another in a situation of civil conflict.

A serious examination of conscience is needed, so that we can accept responsibility for the role that certain unilateral interventions have played in the humanitarian crisis that is causing so much hurt in our world today. As Pope Francis recently said,

“[W]e do not lack for hard evidence of the negative consequences of military and political interventions undertaken without coordination among the members of the international community.”
(A/70/PV.3, p. 5)

The current crisis calls us, therefore, to renew efforts to apply the law that is in force and to develop new norms that are also aimed at combating the phenomenon of international terrorism, in full respect for the law.

Multilateral action for peace and collective security can be effectively advanced with the help of another instrument recognized by the Charter and often considered in the Assembly, namely, disarmament. Here, too, we find ourselves in an area of light and shadows, with the latter, unfortunately, prevailing. There is the telling example of the failure in May of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In view of that impasse, it is all the more important that the international community and the individual States most involved clearly signal a real desire to pursue the shared objective of a world free of nuclear arms, in full application of the Treaty, in letter and spirit, with the goal of a complete prohibition of such weapons.

As Pope Francis has noted in various forums, nuclear deterrence and the threat of mutually assured destruction are irreconcilable with and contrary to an ethic of fraternity and peaceful coexistence between peoples and between States. In the final analysis, the nuclear arms race, and indeed the arms race in

general, with its expenditure of human and economic resources, is based on a denial of the human dignity of one's potential enemies and even the denial of one's own dignity and survival. A process aimed at a deeper understanding of the grave humanitarian effects of the use of weapons of mass destruction, and nuclear arms in particular, should therefore not only be encouraged but should be considered necessary.

With regard to the humanitarian dimension, I should also mention the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, two instruments for disarmament and for adapting humanitarian law to the complexities of today's world. They are aimed at stigmatizing and banning those dreadful ordnances, which have such a devastating and indiscriminate impact on civilian populations. The Holy See joins all those who are working for their effective implementation in expressing the hope that they will soon be signed by those States that have not yet done so.

Effective and full enactment of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations calls for replacing a mindset of the rejection of others, of distrust and fear, with an ethic of responsibility. That, too, demands that we reflect on the meaning of the concept of collective security, which has to do not only with war and military actions but also with broader economic, financial, ethical, social and humanitarian dimensions.

Looking ahead, we see another grave responsibility, both for the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and for peace itself. That is the hoped-for agreement on climate change, which is to be adopted at the Paris Conference in December. The climate is a global common good, a responsibility that we all bear, particularly towards the most vulnerable groups of present and future generations. It is a responsibility that is necessarily transversal, requiring effective multilateral and interdisciplinary cooperation on the part of individuals, based on their own abilities and characteristics, but united in the face of the challenging question as to the kind of world we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up.

The Paris Conference represents an important phase in the process of re-establishing a balance between global greenhouse-gas emissions and the Earth's capacity to absorb them. To that end, we urgently need to adopt a fair, transformational and legally binding global agreement. That would send a meaningful

signal to the entire international community, by promoting a rapid transition to development marked by a low carbon footprint and by providing a powerful impetus to reinforcing the intrinsic link between two objectives — eradicating poverty and easing the effects of climate change. That link shows that the threat of climate change and our responses to it can be a promising opportunity for improving health, transportation, energy security and new opportunities for employment. An effective accord on those issues, in addition to the important value they possess in and of themselves, can only contribute to general agreements between States regarding integral human development, the responsibility to protect, peace, disarmament and respect for international law.

To acknowledge the limitations of the Charter of the United Nations with regard to new crisis situations or, sadly, in the face of evidence of a failure to observe its prescriptions, is not the same thing as stating or lamenting the failure of the Organization itself. Such limitations are rather the inevitable shadows of the great framework of the first global project for peace and international cooperation, which has, happily, endured for 70 years and is an incentive to achieving full respect for the law in force and to promoting greater trust and cooperation. The Holy See thus expresses the hope that this seventieth anniversary, marked by the solemn adoption of the 2030 Agenda, may be the beginning of a harmonious and ever fuller cooperation for the benefit of all humankind.

Pope Benedict XVI, in 2008, and Pope Paul VI, during his visit 50 years ago for the Organization's twentieth anniversary, both pointed out that the United Nations is called increasingly to serve as a sign of unity among States and an instrument of service to the entire human family, and that, consequently, the Organization represents the obligatory path of modern civilization and world peace. The United Nations must, therefore, become a place where a true family of nations and peoples can meet and prosper, a place where all forms of war and unilateral intervention will be forever prohibited, not only in words, but above all in the spirit and intentions of every governmental authority.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the representative of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

Mrs. Nguyen Phuong Nga (Viet Nam): On behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, I would like to warmly

congratulate Mr. Lykketoft upon his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. I believe that, with his wisdom and experience, he will guide our session to a very successful outcome. My delegation also applauds the important contributions made by Mr. Sam Kutesa, President of the sixty-ninth session, and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, during the past year.

Born from the ashes of the Second World War, the United Nations has grown, during the past seven decades, to embrace 193 States and has become the most representative global organization and the true centre for the coordination of global efforts to tackle common challenges. As a beacon of hope, the United Nations has indeed helped make the world a better place by playing an increasingly important role in maintaining peace and security, in protecting and promoting human rights and in advancing development and progress.

Guided by its Charter, the United Nations has worked to uphold the principles of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and of non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations. The Organization has promoted the non-use of force or of threats to use force in inter-State relations and had provided guidance for peaceful and amicable relations among nations, underlining, in particular, the importance of mutual respect, good faith and the peaceful settlement of disputes. It is in that spirit that we welcome the recent progress made in addressing the Iranian nuclear issue, which is a first step towards a long-term solution that could bring peace, security and stability to the broader region. We also welcome the normalization of relations between the United States and Cuba and call for the timely lifting of the embargoes currently imposed upon the brotherly Cuban people.

We can all look back on the past 70 years and the accomplishments of the United Nations with pride, but we must also recognize what the Organization has been unable to do and what challenges lie ahead. Wars and conflicts have not been uncommon during the past decades and still rage today. Terrorism, violent extremism, and religious and ethnic intolerance pose serious threats to regional and international peace and security. Territorial and maritime disputes endanger peace and stability in many regions. Threats to the very survival of humankind persist. Nuclear weapons arsenals, though reduced, are still capable of destroying our home planet many times over. Climate change is threatening the livelihoods of billions of people

and even the existence of many countries. Poverty remains one of the greatest challenges to sustainable development. Violence, discrimination, social injustice and humanitarian crises plague everyone's enjoyment of their human rights.

Immense challenges require equally immense efforts, and the United Nations must continue to play a central role in those endeavours. Viet Nam welcomes the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which sets the vision and creates the framework for all nations as they strive to eliminate hunger and poverty, develop more sustainable patterns of production and consumption and work for the improved preservation of our shared planet, which is faced with the threats of climate change and over-consumption. The full and effective implementation of the new Agenda, with a global partnership at its core, will address the deep-rooted causes of our present problems and guide the world towards a more sustainable future.

In order to transform our world, the United Nations needs to transform itself. The work of the General Assembly needs to be revitalized so as to make it more focused, efficient and relevant. The Security Council needs to be more representative, democratic, transparent and effective. The United Nations development system needs to be strengthened. Institutional reforms must go alongside substantive innovations, while ensuring a balance among various aspects of the United Nations work. Our experience with the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals has shown that peace and stability are the prerequisites for sustainable development. In the words of the 2030 Agenda,

“Sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security, and peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development” (resolution 70/1, para. 35).

It is therefore incumbent upon each and every State and the United Nations to do their utmost to ensure peace and security at the national, regional and international levels. Each State needs to act responsibly in accordance with the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Regional and international organizations, with the United Nations in the lead, also need to act accordingly and assist the States concerned to find amicable solutions to their differences and disputes by peaceful means, as provided for in the Charter. Only by doing so, can we

hope for a future free from violence, the threat or use of force, intimidation, coercion and inequities, which would create an enabling environment for our common development. At the same time, in order to succeed, sustainable development must truly be of the people, by the people and for the people. In other words, the people must be at the centre of the new Agenda, as the owners, drivers and beneficiaries of all development efforts.

And no agenda can succeed without a strong global partnership for sustainable development. Viet Nam has always believed that domestic resources play the decisive role in the development of any nation, but we also believe that no individual country can do it alone. We call on the developed countries to take the lead in assisting developing countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, especially in the fields of financing, technology transfer and human resources development. We also support and participate in South-South cooperation activities, which, we believe, provide an effective channel for sharing experience, technical support and capacity-building.

Like the United Nations, Viet Nam is celebrating the seventieth anniversary of its founding this year. Immediately after regaining its independence after nearly a century of colonialism, Viet Nam associated itself with the principles and values of the Charter of the United Nations. Our late President Ho Chi Minh, the founder of modern Viet Nam, wrote on several occasions to world leaders to request recognition of the new Viet Nam and its admission to the United Nations. And, since becoming a Member of the United Nation in 1977, Viet Nam has always done its best to uphold the principles and purposes of the Charter and contribute constructively and responsibly to the work of the Organization.

Viet Nam has always put people at the centre of all development strategies. Comprehensive human development encompasses physical and mental well-being, including human rights. Viet Nam has introduced laws and policies to ensure that all of the human rights of its people, including economic, social, civil and political rights, are respected, protected and promoted. Viet Nam is today party to seven out of the nine core international human rights treaties. It has most recently joined the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Viet Nam is strongly committed to the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development. At the national level, we will mobilize all available resources, engage all relevant Government agencies and other stakeholders, and involve the people and their communities in that major undertaking. Viet Nam pledges its support for the conclusion of a meaningful agreement at the upcoming meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris. For its part, Viet Nam has recently submitted its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions.

At the regional level, we have joined efforts with our brothers and sisters of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to work towards strengthening the ASEAN community. As an integral part of the dynamically growing Asia-Pacific region, ASEAN plays a crucial role in regional development. But for our region to thrive, peace and stability must come first. It is therefore of vital importance that peace and stability be maintained and that maritime safety and security and the freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea be secured. Viet Nam is working tirelessly with other ASEAN members and all parties concerned to that end, including by calling upon all parties to refrain from the threat or use of force and to settle all disputes by peaceful means in accordance with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We are also engaging with partners to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and to work for the early conclusion of a code of conduct.

At the international level, Viet Nam is prepared to further its active contributions to world peace and security and the well-being of all. That is why we are stepping up our participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations and have put forward our candidatures for the Economic and Social Council for 2016-2018, the UNESCO Executive Board for 2015-2019 and the Security Council for 2020-2021. We look forward to receiving Members' continued support.

To free our people from fear and want and to leave no one behind, let us all join our actions on this path towards a better and more sustainable future. Let the Charter of the United Nations be our source of inspiration and the 2030 Agenda be our guide in building a world of peace, security and prosperity for our people and succeeding generations.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Turkmenistan.

Mrs. Ataeva (Turkmenistan) (*spoke in Russian*): It gives me great pleasure to join previous speakers in warmly congratulating Mr. Mogens Lykketoft on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventieth session and to wish him success. Allow me also to express my appreciation to Mr. Sam Kutesa for the tremendous work that he carried out as President of the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. I also congratulate the United Nations and all delegations on the seventieth anniversary and wish our Organization continued success, universal recognition and respect.

In its approach to the major themes of the current session, Turkmenistan believes there is a need to take concrete and targeted measures aimed at supporting States and regions where, for various reasons, the issues of sustainable development are particularly acute.

With regard to Central Asia, there is currently discussion about the creation of the conditions enabling its successful integration into modern global processes and its rebirth as a region that provides a stable and strong link in intercontinental partnerships. I am convinced that that is an achievable goal, if we can ensure peace, tranquillity and security, which are key factors for the development, progress and prosperity of the Central Asian States. That has been the focus of Turkmenistan's major efforts and the projects and initiatives that it is carrying out, which it invites the international community, represented by the United Nations, to join.

One of the projects is the idea of establishing a United Nations regional centre in Central Asia for technology related to climate change. The large-scale environmental problems that exist in that region are, I think, well known. They directly or indirectly affect the overall atmosphere in the region, as well as the standard of living and the quality of life of the inhabitants, and sometimes have a negative impact on relations between States. Under those conditions, it is becoming clear that there is a need for a specialized international body that would be able, with a United Nations mandate, to carry out monitoring and an objective analysis of the environmental processes and trends occurring there and, on that basis, be able to issue relevant recommendations to the Governments of the Central Asian States. The vision for the functions and directions of the activities of such a centre already exist. Turkmenistan is ready to

provide all the necessary infrastructure for the centre in Turkmenistan and to ensure the most favourable conditions for its staff. I therefore call for an in-depth consideration of our proposal on the creation of a United Nations regional centre for technology related to climate change in Central Asia.

The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the region will not be possible without the participation of our closest neighbour, Afghanistan. The brotherly Afghan people and Government are today particularly in need of the political and moral support of the international community. They also need real, tangible economic assistance. Time has shown that the resolution of the situation in Afghanistan is possible only through peaceful, political means on the basis of a broad national dialogue with the participation of all responsible and constructive forces representing the Afghan people. Moreover, we are convinced that the process of reconciliation must be accompanied by effective international economic assistance, targeted measures aimed at creating social infrastructure and humanitarian assistance.

We believe that the most important factor in the stability, progress and prosperity of Afghanistan is the integration of the country into regional and international energy and transportation projects. Projects such as the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Pipeline and the railway from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan are designed to ensure economic growth and the creation of new jobs in Afghanistan and favourable conditions for foreign investment. Not least important, their implementation will have a significant stabilizing effect on the political climate in Afghanistan itself, as well as on the surrounding area. It will also restore the Afghan people's confidence in their own strength and capacity to build a modern, stable and dynamic State, one that is an equal and like-minded partner with neighbouring countries and the entire international community. As an initiator and participant in those international projects, Turkmenistan will continue to provide assistance to Afghanistan at the bilateral level for the construction of economic and social facilities, as well as to supply energy at a discounted rate and to provide training for Afghan professionals in our educational institutions.

In the context of Afghanistan's restoration, the support provided to both developing and the least developed countries, on which the effectiveness of today's entire system of international relations depends, is of over-arching importance. Therefore,

for Turkmenistan, the main goal and essence of post-2015 sustainable development should be to overcome the serious — and I would even say borderline dangerous — imbalance between States, regions and entire continents, in terms of industry, the economy, technology and the environment, as well as with respect to people's quality of life and in the areas of health care, education and in the standards and structures of food systems. It is obvious that humanitarian assistance alone, as well as supplies of medicine and provisions, along with one-time financial infusions by the United Nations and individual States, while extremely important, will not solve the problem.

Today, there is a need for a long-term, in-depth and well thought-out strategy for support for developing and the least developed countries that includes a wide range of political, legal, economic, social and investment measures. An action-oriented and coordinating role should be played here by the United Nations, in particular its Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Development Programme, as well as other specialized agencies. A more important factor for such support is, in our view, the participation of such countries in international economic projects, in particular in the area of the transport of energy to global markets, as well as the creation of transport corridors between regions and across continents.

Turkmen initiatives for the development of such sectors of the global economy have received unanimous approval from the General Assembly through the adoption of relevant resolutions. We expect meaningful follow-up through their implementation. I would also like to emphasize the readiness of our country to both continue and strengthen cooperation with the World Health Organization, the United Nations World Food Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and other entities.

The current session should provide us with clear guidelines for the future. It is natural and appropriate that it is the United Nations, the international entity with a universal mandate, that will act as the leader in promoting and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The tremendous potential of the United Nations, which has been acquired over seven decades of unique experience of dealing with the challenges and threats and providing solutions for many global problems, proves that only together, by joining forces, will it be possible for us to achieve the goals we have set, no matter how difficult they may be.

Turkmenistan believes that today, within these walls, significant momentum will be given to our forward movement and to the new, more humane and more just world order. Together with the family of nations we are prepared to participate in that work.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the representative of Peru.

Mr. Meza Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for me to address the General Assembly and to convey my congratulations to President Lykketoft on his election. Peru is ready to contribute to the success of his mandate.

Seventy years ago, we established the United Nations Organization so as to maintain international peace and security, promote and protect human rights and cooperate at the international level for the development of our peoples. We now renew our commitment to its purposes and principles and affirm the need to continue working to ensure that its vision becomes a tangible reality for all and that we leave future generations a sustainable planet.

My country is particularly proud to have been a founding member of the Organization and to have steadfastly been committed to its Charter and to multilateralism. We would like now to recall three illustrious Peruvians who held three high-ranking posts: Ambassador Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, who was Secretary-General; the former President of Peru, José Luis Bustamante y Rivero, who was President of the International Court of Justice; and Mr. Víctor Andrés Belaúnde, who was President of the General Assembly.

There is no doubt that the United Nations system has contributed, and continues to contribute, a great deal to the progress of humankind. We must realize that, for over 70 years, we have not seen another major war such as the ones that beset the world in the first half of the twentieth century, nor has there been an economic crisis of the magnitude of the Great Depression. However, there is no doubt that the achievements of the United Nations have not reached everyone equally. The world compels us to rethink what kind of Organization it is that we need and to redouble our efforts to ensure that peace and security, human rights and sustainable development are truly universal.

Peru attaches the greatest importance to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). We have agreed to transform the world in a single

generation in a process throughout which our people have been heard and our cultural diversity has been acknowledged as a catalyst for development. For the first time in history, humankind has a universal instrument through which we have committed ourselves to eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions and to achieving sustainable development over the next 15 years without leaving anyone behind. In fact, we have decided to strengthen and renew the global partnership for sustainable development. In line with Peru's priorities for social inclusion, we are happy to see that the 2030 Agenda reflects that same transformational character throughout. We must be inclusive in order to grow, and we must give priority to the economic and social groups that have been left behind and those that are most vulnerable, which, more often than not, include indigenous peoples, the elderly, persons with disabilities and migrants.

In order to implement the new Agenda it is essential to allocate sufficient resources. We need to increase the budgets for programmes that involve social inclusion, especially in the fields of health and education, giving priority to the care of our children, gender equality and the empowerment of women. Peru considers it vital to adopt at the twenty-first meeting of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change, to be held in Paris in December, a universally binding, ambitious and balanced agreement to address climate change. As the current Acting President of that Conference, Peru is sparing no effort to reach that goal, in accordance with the Lima Call for Climate Action. Climate change and environmental challenges are endless. The experts say that we will be facing a particularly serious situation with regard to El Niño over the next few years. We must invest more in disaster prevention and risk reduction as part of our development plans. Peru, a country of stupendous biodiversity, would also like to call attention to the great potential of biodiversity for development. In that regard, we are particularly concerned about the preservation and sustainable use of land and sea ecosystems.

As is the case with sustainable development, the United Nations must make strides in the area of international peace and security in order to ensure respect for and promotion of human rights. Peru commends the important progress that has been made towards achieving peace in the sister Republic of Colombia. We also welcome the restoration of relations between the Republic of Cuba and the United States,

and we again appeal for an end to the economic and financial blockade.

Concerning the question of Palestine, the Security Council must be proactive in promoting a dialogue that leads to direct negotiations. Palestinians and Israelis should live together in peace and should prosper in two States within secure and internationally recognized borders. The status quo is unsustainable. Peru reaffirms its commitment to defending and promoting human rights, the rule of law, the peaceful resolution of disputes and conflict prevention.

We believe that the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court should be universally recognized. We therefore encourage States that have not yet done so to fully accede to their respective statutes. We must strengthen our ability to react to humanitarian crises and prevent impunity for atrocities. No State can ignore the responsibility to protect human beings. Peru deplors the situation that has developed in Syria and the evil crimes of the so-called Islamic State.

We must ensure the continued legitimacy of the Security Council. It is vital that we work to achieve its comprehensive reform, both in its composition and working methods and by restricting the use of the veto, if we are to ensure its representativeness and effectiveness. In that regard, Peru has been working within the Accountability, Consistency and Transparency group on the adoption of a code of conduct that can guide the Security Council's action where heinous crimes are concerned.

Aware of the new tasks included in the mandates of peacekeeping operations, Peru will be sending an engineering company to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, the first time that a Peruvian company has deployed outside our region.

Peru has been working to deal decisively and effectively with the global drug problem. In that regard, we have been implementing a successful strategy with a comprehensive approach that includes actions aimed at prevention, control and interdiction, as well as sustainable alternative development programmes for farmers. In the past year, as a result of that strategy, we recorded a net reduction in illicit crops that was almost 14 per cent greater and cocaine seizures that were 40 per cent higher than the figures for 2013. In the past year alone, we expanded our alternative development

programmes to cover more than 50,000 hectares, and we have reforested about 15,000 hectares that had been affected by illicit crops. The special session in 2016 that the General Assembly will devote to the scourge of drugs should reaffirm full enforcement of the international conventions relating to drugs and the commitment to addressing the problem through national strategies.

We also consider it very important to continue promoting an environment conducive, at every level, to effective arms control, including limiting conventional weapons and enforcing the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We reaffirm our commitment to the Arms Trade Treaty and the principles of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, without prejudice to the inalienable right of all States to research and produce nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

As I noted at the beginning of my statement, the international community is taking on the ambitious task of transforming the world by eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development through its implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In order to achieve the new Agenda's Goals, States will have to significantly increase the resources that they dedicate to the implementation of the Goals and strengthen international cooperation in every way. A renewed global partnership should also strengthen cooperation in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation and promote confidence-building measures aimed at preventing conflicts, arms races and humanitarian crises, because without peace there can be no development. Seventy years after its creation, this Organization can and should contribute to making a reality of the future we all want.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the representative of Honduras.

Ms. Flores (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are speaking in the Assembly today, as His Holiness Pope Francis said, as an afterthought. The President of Honduras, Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado, appeared a few days ago in this Hall, addressing the Sustainable Development Summit (see A/70/PV.5). At this final stage of the debate we are not going to overwhelm the Assembly with long speeches, when so many renowned leaders, speaking on behalf of their States, have already delivered more informed views on the contentious issues that concern us.

All of us who have the singular privilege of using this unique platform in this unique forum, where we

discuss feelings, opinions, criticisms and reflections on the world's most important issues, are influenced by the places that we come from and our particular perspectives on the world. It could not be otherwise, for we are the products of our origins and environment. It is natural that those of us who come from places of dire deprivation, pressing needs and miserable exclusion, see things differently from those from areas of wealth, abundance, power and superiority. We even differ in how we understand the universal terms of law, justice and equity. It is even true that we can question what is the truth itself, if we are not familiar with another's perception of the truth.

We all react according to our own reality. How can victims who have to leave their homes and embark on terrible migrations for reasons of extreme poverty or situations of overwhelming violence, in search of a better life and an unclouded future for their loved ones, understand the concept of law and justice in the same way as those who enjoy all possible assurances and opportunities and who do not want their comfort disrupted by inconvenient strangers? Perhaps what we do not see in this dichotomy in the interpretation of essential human values is that there can be no peace or security for anyone unless there is peace and well-being for all. There is no stone wall, no human law, no physical obstacle that can contain the movement of human beings being compelled by the right to life.

Of course, it is our homelands that we belong to and that our hearts return to, our inalienable lands with their tears and smiles, setbacks and celebrations, hardships and riches, boundaries and expanses, reservations and dreams, gaps and opportunities. We all want to be born and die in our homelands. But for many, the cradle can sometimes also be the fence that limits us and constrains our yearning for the possible. The shadows of fear created by insecurity and the struggle for survival provoked by scarcity are powerful forces that can drive anyone to leave their homes and undertake a terrible journey to the unknown. Serious and desperate circumstances compel people to leave what they cherish the most. The urge to survive and the attachment to freedom know no borders. Mass migrations are only a symptom of other acute problems that must be addressed. And we all have a responsibility to address those problems, but, first and foremost, we need to produce results rather than just promises, because despair saps even the most long-suffering patience.

The answer to that serious dilemma is not something that we have to invent. It lies at the foundation of the natural values of civilization, in the divine principles of spirituality where all religions converge, in the doctrines of the Charter of the United Nations that inspired the very existence of the United Nations — harmonious and respectful coexistence among brothers and sisters of the same world family, where all of us are citizens of a common home, regardless of race, gender, creed or origin; and where there is, of course, universal solidarity, so that no one abuses resources that others lack, and the offer of a fraternal hand where it is needed.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the representative of the Republic of Kiribati.

Mr. Baaro (Kiribati): It is an honour and a privilege to address this historic seventieth session of the General Assembly on behalf of the President, the Government and the people of Kiribati. In Kiribati we begin all formal events such as this by conferring blessings on all. I therefore wish to begin by sharing with the Assembly all our traditional Kiribati blessing of peace and good health, “*Kam na bane ni Mauri*”.

I echo the sentiments conveyed by previous speakers in congratulating the President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session on his election and for presiding over the recently concluded historic Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, held from 25 to 27 September. On his assumption of the presidency for the first year of the implementation the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), I wish to assure him of the full support and cooperation of Kiribati. Let me also take this opportunity to acknowledge with appreciation the commendable leadership of his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, for his stewardship over the past year as the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session and for guiding the massive task of shaping the recently adopted Agenda.

I also wish to commend the unwavering commitment and hard work of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who has served as an able navigator of our family ship, steering the United Nations through the diverse and complex realities and the myriad challenges facing our peoples and nations around the world. In particular, I wish to commend his sterling leadership in guiding the development of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, recently adopted by the membership, and his personal unwavering commitment to focusing

global attention on those who are most vulnerable and who are directly targeted by the many major challenges facing us today as a global community.

We meet at a critical time in the history of multilateralism. The global community very recently endorsed a new post-2015 development agenda “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. We are also celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. In two months, leaders from around the world will meet in Paris for the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to finalize an agreement on climate change. As we celebrate, we should also reflect on the needs of the most fragile and vulnerable peoples and ensure that the premier global Organization remains responsive to them. That will be the real litmus test for its relevance.

If we as a family of nations do not act, if we fail to focus on the challenges faced by those in the front line, whatever those challenges may be, then we would have failed the millions who are looking to the United Nations to assume leadership. I would like to reiterate our deepest appreciation to the Secretary-General for his demonstrated commitment and leadership in focusing the attention of the United Nations and the world on such issues as mitigating the plight of the most needy and alleviating poverty, addressing the Ebola pandemic, hearing the views of young people and women and enabling their participation in development, ending gender-based violence, achieving peace and security, and dealing with the question of climate change.

The challenges facing us as we gather again in New York for this historic session are perhaps greater than they were a year ago. Security challenges posed by climate change, conflicts, terrorism, cybercrime, transnational organized crime and the mass movement of refugees now seen in Europe are among the looming challenges that continue to undermine our efforts as a global family to achieve sustainable development, peace and security for our communities.

If we were to ask what the root causes of those major challenges were, we would be able to find many of the answers in the fact that too little attention has been paid to the problems addressed in the Goals recently endorsed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Goals are not new. Most, if not all, are in our national development plans and strategies.

What is new is the global call for the international community to act together to do things differently in order to effect the transformational changes necessary to achieve the prosperous, peaceful, just and equitable societies that will benefit all. That is crucial in an increasingly interdependent world in which decisions made and actions taken in one country will have ripple effects elsewhere in the globe.

But in adopting the new Agenda, we must not leave undone the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Many countries, Kiribati included, do not have a strong scorecard with respect to the implementation of the MDGs, for a compelling reason. We, like all small island developing States, face major challenges in our development efforts, challenges which are well documented and which I will not repeat here. Those challenges are further compounded by climate change.

My people live on low-lying atoll islands that are no higher than 3 metres above sea level. With the changes in our climate system and with sea-level rise, our islands are now facing major challenges never before faced in our history. We have experienced climate extremes, not only from sea-level rise but also from disastrous natural events, such as cyclone Pam which hit Vanuatu and other low-lying Pacific islands, mine included, earlier this year, soon followed by typhoons Maysak and Dolphin.

High tides combined with strong winds wreaked havoc on our islands, our homes, our villages and our people. What is particularly alarming is the increasing frequency and severity of such events. In some parts of the country, whole villages have had to relocate because of severe coastal erosion and flooding. Food crops have been destroyed and the freshwater lakes, our major source of drinking water, are increasingly being contaminated by the intruding seawater. Our people are worried as they watch those events grow in intensity. The most vulnerable are the already vulnerable — women, children, the disabled, the sick and the aged.

All those events have put pressure on our already stressed national systems and limited national resources and will continue to do so. Kiribati and other low-lying atoll countries such as Tuvalu, the Marshall Islands, Maldives and Tokelau, as well as the millions of people living in coastal areas in the Pacific and around the globe, have first to address the critical and pressing here-and-now challenges from climate change, before

we can even begin to talk of sustainable development or a new development agenda.

The first real test of our commitment to the new development agenda adopted by the international community will be the Paris climate summit. The Sustainable Development Agenda will mean nothing if the Paris climate summit in December fails to come up with an ambitious and legally binding agreement that addresses the predicament of those on the front line of climate change and saves humankind by halting global warming. For us on the front line of climate change, the Paris outcome document must include a long-term temperature goal to limit global average temperature increase to below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. It must also include provisions on loss and damage as a stand-alone element that is separate and distinct from adaptation.

We must all step up our national and collective efforts to mitigate global greenhouse-gas emissions. We must urge major greenhouse-gas emitters to do their part. Last week, my country, one of the countries with the lowest level of emissions, submitted an ambitious intended nationally determined contribution to the UNFCCC secretariat. We must call with urgency on our development partners, on philanthropic partners and on private businesses to assist us on the front line of the climate calamity to deal with the impacts of climate change and sea-level rise now being experienced in our countries and to support our efforts to build the resilience and preparedness of our people as they face an uncertain future. It is high time we recognize that the new challenges require us to draw on all the resources available to the global community and to accept that sustainable development and global challenges such as climate change should not be confined to the sphere of Governments alone.

Let us call on all those with the ability to assist and with a contribution to make to join in the global dialogue and, more important, to take part in urgent action to address this major challenge. Let us bring in our young people, our women, civil society, the private sector, churches, universities, traditional institutions and indigenous populations. Let us bring everyone on board. Let us be inclusive. Let all who have a contribution to make make it.

We welcome the inclusive approach taken in developing the post-2015 development agenda. We also welcome the participation of Taiwan in the World

Health Assembly — for example, its inclusion in the fight against Ebola — and we would like to see a similar inclusive approach prevail in respect of other international institutions and United Nations processes in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and in the call for urgent climate action, where Taiwan and all who can participate and contribute meaningfully for the good of humankind must be brought in to do so. Everyone needs to be brought in.

“Business as usual” can no longer be our approach. Let us not confine ourselves to our comfort zones and our usual economic arguments; let us stop avoiding our political taboos. The challenge of climate change makes a larger demand on us. It requires that we rise above national priorities and think with a global consciousness. We must go outside the bounds of conventional thinking — outside the norm — because the challenge before us is extraordinarily serious and therefore calls for extraordinary and unconventional solutions.

It is most gratifying to note that there is an emerging glimmer of hope, that there is a shift in the wind in the dialogue on climate change. We welcome the opinion of His Holiness Pope Francis on climate change, together with the messages and expressions of commitment from a growing number of quarters, including capitals around the globe and civil society, in which climate change is recognized as posing a major challenge and requiring urgent action. We welcome this most gratifying shift as a very positive development in the right direction, implying that the international community has at last heard our messages and the stories we have shared about the plight of our people.

But hearing our story and recognizing that climate change is a major challenge is not enough; we need to act on it with urgency. We islands may be on the front line, but so are the millions of people around the world living in low-lying areas. They are just as vulnerable. So are the millions of others facing prolonged droughts, higher temperatures and melting glaciers. For them, like us, sustainable development and the recently adopted new Agenda will not mean anything, unless the global community steps up, and steps up substantially, its efforts to combat climate change.

We take full responsibility for the future of our people and we will do our part. In Kiribati, we have adopted a multi-pronged strategy to ensure the survival of our people. We have bought land offshore. We have

looked at floating and artificial islands and options for raising our islands from their current heights to heights above the predicted sea-level rises. We have embarked on a major education reform programme designed to upgrade the skills of our people in line with our programme on migration with dignity.

But we cannot do it alone. There needs to be a collective global effort. We call for new and accessible financial resources to assist the most vulnerable to adapt and build resilience to climate change. We welcome the continued assistance of our partners, including Taiwan, but much, much more needs to be done. While it is commendable that there have been significant pledges for the Green Climate Fund, there remain the challenge of accessibility and the translation of these pledges into contributions where they matter the most. We welcome the assistance provided by various agencies with the capacity to provide the needed conduit, but it is equally important that such assistance not get eroded in the process.

In celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the united family of nations, we must have confidence that, as we pledge in the preamble to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, no member nation will be left behind. It is simply not sufficient to acknowledge that climate change is an existential challenge. It is about our response as the global community and what actions we take as a community of moral human beings.

I reiterate that the real test of the effectiveness and relevance of the new Sustainable Development Agenda, and indeed the relevance of the united family of nations as it celebrates its seventieth anniversary, is in ensuring that no one is left behind. Yet my people and those on the front line of climate change face the real possibility of being left behind. I therefore call on the General Assembly to lend its support to the voice of the most vulnerable and call on the international community to craft an ambitious legally binding agreement that can begin to heal our one shared home and planet. I further call on the General Assembly to join those on the front line of climate change in requesting the Conference of the Parties in Paris to agree that the increase in global average temperature should be held below 2°C or 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The climate agreement must also include provisions on loss and damage and, most important, a special mechanism to fast-track urgent assistance to the millions of people who are at the front line of climate change and who need that assistance immediately.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Da Gama (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): His Excellency Mr. José Mario Vaz, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, has honoured me with the task of conveying his congratulations to Mr. Mogens Lykketoft on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its historic seventieth session and wishes him great success. We would also like to commend his predecessor, Mr. Sam Kutesa of Uganda, for the wise and dignified manner in which he conducted the work at the sixty-ninth session. The President's election to the General Assembly at the seventieth session takes place at a time when the nations of the world decided to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), thereby leading humankind in a new direction and promoting a more just world for all. We believe that with his extensive experience and under his leadership, we can begin effectively implementing the Agenda.

As we celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, which coincides with the forty-second anniversary of our country's own independence, Guinea-Bissau continues to experience instability. That is reflected in its vulnerabilities and its difficulties in establishing the foundations necessary for the creation of a stable State. Those foundations are primarily geared to development, in fulfilment of the dream of Amílcar Cabral, the father of the nation. While other nations in the world are able to seize this moment to strengthen their statehood and consolidate their institutions, Guinea-Bissau continues to look for solutions to our various domestic problems. The current political situation in Guinea-Bissau shows that our country is still striving to move from fragility to stability.

Despite the recurrent instability, the people of Guinea-Bissau have never doubted the viability of our country, as we believe in our ability to overcome that challenge once again. Our determination to build the viable State we dream of is and will always remain intact. Our ability to overcome difficulties and perform great feats was gloriously demonstrated by our fighters for the freedom of the homeland, who brought about our independence 42 years ago in an exemplary manner, under the wise leadership of our much missed Amílcar Cabral and in the context of his minimum programme.

Today, more than ever, we are determined to achieve the maximum programme in that glorious struggle and to promote social and economic development and environmental conservation. Since our return to constitutional normality with the installation of the Government that emerged from the April 2014 legislative elections, together with the establishment of other institutions of sovereignty, we have striven to provide the basic conditions required to relaunch our country's economy and to address the new challenges for peacebuilding and security.

To that end, the 2015-2025 *Terra Ranka* development strategy, presented in March 2015 in Brussels, was fully discussed and approved at the national level and strongly supported by the international community. It will provide continuity for the actions of the Government, which is currently led by Carlos Correia. That development strategy is also consistent with the Goals established in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted one week ago by the General Assembly. We are convinced that the full implementation of the Agenda will greatly contribute, not only to our country's sustainable development, but also to establishing, once and for all, the necessary conditions for peace and stability in our country. In that regard, once again, from this rostrum, I appeal to the partners and friends of Guinea-Bissau to honour the commitments undertaken in Brussels and not to frustrate the enormous expectations of the people of Guinea-Bissau, who have mobilized around that strategy.

Conflict resolution was one of the primary goals that led to the establishment of our Organization in 1945. And today, that same goal continues to be a priority and one of our greatest challenges. Current conflicts have emerged for a variety of reasons and taken on ever more complex forms, making them even more difficult to resolve. There is no political or geopolitical justification for the United Nations to find itself in an impasse when addressing the tragedies caused by the conflicts in the Middle East and other regions of the world, which have created one of the greatest refugee crises ever recorded. We have the moral responsibility to find a solution. In that regard, I would like to commend the European Union and other countries for the solidarity that they have shown in providing the required humanitarian assistance and welcoming those refugees.

Issues related to the African continent continue to predominate on the agenda of the Security Council, and

nine of the 16 United Nations peacekeeping operations are in African countries. Therefore, the views of that continent and its 54 countries must be heard and considered when decisions on the management of conflicts are taken. Our legitimate claim for two permanent seats and broader representation as non-permanent members on the Security Council must be heeded. We call again for a reform of the Security Council, based on our belief that the historical reasons for the establishment of the Organization are no longer valid as they do not reflect the current political reality in the world. We also express our support for permanent seats for Brazil, India, Japan and Germany.

We continue to believe that preventive diplomacy can be more efficient in preventing and resolving conflicts. We believe that the best way to prevent conflicts would be to invest more in combating poverty, promoting gender equality, education and the struggle against social discrimination, and preserving the environment.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is without a doubt a step in the right direction, and Guinea-Bissau reiterates its commitment to achieving the Agenda in accordance with its precise terms. To this end, the fulfilment of the commitments undertaken by our partners with respect to official development assistance and other funds for development becomes critical for the most vulnerable countries, including the least developed countries and small island developing States, such as Guinea-Bissau.

For many years, it has been a tradition for our country to appeal from this rostrum for the lifting of the economic and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. Today, we would like to welcome the restoration of diplomatic relations between the two countries, which had been broken off since 1961. Since the Cuban people should be able to take full advantage of their potential and freely pursue economic and financial relations with other States and peoples of the world, we encourage the United States of America and Cuba to proceed with negotiations towards the normalization of their relations and the total lifting of the embargo.

We hope and wish that the main actors in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process can draw inspiration from that example and engage in diplomatic negotiations with a view to the peaceful coexistence of two States.

We welcome the nuclear agreement between the international community and Iran and hope that it will result in the normalization of relations with the rest of world and the international community. We firmly believe that the world will be totally secure only if there is general and complete nuclear disarmament.

Climate change is an undeniable reality and is a dangerous threat to the existence of humankind. In that regard, it is important that we all pledge to fulfil our responsibilities with respect to the environment and that we all commit to protecting the planet in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The session of the Conference of the Parties that will take place in Paris in December will undoubtedly offer a new opportunity for the world to rectify its behaviour with respect to nature. We are looking for robust commitments on the part of Member States to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and providing the necessary funds for developing countries to address environmental challenges.

I cannot conclude my statement without expressing our gratitude to all our development partners, the United Nations in particular, for their continued follow-up on the situation in our country, and for the commitments they made at the Brussels round table last March on financing our strategic operational programme of development. Guinea-Bissau and its people are counting on all of you.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

I now call on those representatives who have asked to speak in exercise of the the right to reply. I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply must be limited to 10 minutes for the first statement and 5 minutes for the second, should there be one, and that delegations should speak from their seats.

Mr. Milanović (Serbia): My delegation would like to exercise its right of reply in response to the statement that was made today by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, Mr. Edi Rama,

At this historic seventieth session of the General Assembly, as the States Members of the United Nations invest maximum efforts in solving the problems and challenges that face the international community, I would like to underline that the consolidation of international peace, security and stability continue to

be a priority issue for the Republic of Serbia as well. In order to achieve those goals, my country invests maximum efforts in strengthening regional cooperation, stabilization and reconciliation, efforts for which it has been widely recognized and acclaimed.

Unfortunately, the Prime Minister of Albania again misled the Assembly in his statement today by contending that dialogue is being conducted between two States — namely, Serbia and Kosovo — and not between Belgrade and Pristina, as is really the case. Kosovo is not an independent State and is not a Member of the United Nations. Mr. Rama also called on the States Members of the United Nations to recognize the so-called independent State of Kosovo, contrary to international law and the principles on which the Charter of the United Nations and Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) are based. The call was made at a time when we are witnessing a significant improvement between Serbia and Albania, as evinced by the first visit of the Prime Minister of Albania to Belgrade after 68 years.

I would like to underline that all the outstanding issues in the process of normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina are being addressed in the dialogue conducted in Brussels, with the facilitation of the European Union. Needless to say, statements such as those made by Prime Minister Rama may jeopardize the positive results of the dialogue and set back its progress in the future.

Resolving the status of Serbia's southern province belongs among my Government's top priorities. We have demonstrated time and time again our readiness to make an active contribution in the efforts to reach a solutions that would be acceptable to all, taking into account the legitimate interests of all communities in Kosovo and Metohija.

Mr. Idrizi (Albania): I am taking the floor in response to the statement just made by the representative of Serbia in reaction to the statement that the Prime Minister of Albania, His Excellency Mr. Edi Rama, made this morning in the general debate. I wish I were not compelled to do so, but I deem it very important to say a few words to set the record straight.

Kosovo is an independent State recognized by 110 countries. It is a member and active participant in all regional initiatives in South-East Europe and, like all the other countries of the region, is part of the European Union association and stabilization process. Since its

independence in 2008, Kosovo has firmly established and strengthened its worldwide geopolitical identity and has been a much-praised contributor to peace, stability and cooperation in the region. Furthermore, Kosovo and Serbia are engaged in a successful dialogue that has enabled the two countries to find common solutions for a series of issues for both of their peoples.

There is so much to say on the fact that, with Kosovo's independence, our region closed once and for all the most bitter chapter in its modern history. That development has generated the most welcome positive energy in the Balkans, including in our own relations with Serbia, and raised the hopes of the people, especially the young, in both countries. For the sake of time, however, I will limit myself to quoting from the statement made by the Prime Minister at an earlier meeting.

“After 100 years of frozen or live conflicts and confrontations in the Balkans, no guns were pointed at anyone's window. After a century scarred by conflict, we have finally seen a year of cooperation aimed at making the peace we have achieved a peace worth living.” (A/70/PV.25)

This is what Kosovo independence has brought to our region, to our part of the world, and certainly beyond. We fully subscribe to this climate and have contributed to it with dedication and perseverance, and we will continue to do whatever we can for peace to prevail and further develop.

Ms. Demirel (Turkey): I am taking the floor in response to the base allegations made by one delegation today, which we categorically deny. I shall refrain from taking valuable time, but I would like to emphasize that Turkey will continue to stand by the people of Syria.

Mr. Li Yongsheng (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China would like to exercise its right of reply in regard to the statement made by the representative of the Philippines.

China's claim over the sovereignty of islands is based on an adequate historical and legal foundation. The illegal occupation and invasion of some islands and reefs and Nansha Islands in China by the Philippines is the root cause of the dispute between China and the Philippines. I would like to explain that another name for the Nansha Islands is the Spratly Islands.

Without the prior consent of China, the Philippines unilaterally and forcefully initiated arbitration. That

is against international law and an encroachment on the legal rights and interests of China. China is firmly opposed to the practice by the Philippines of initiating arbitration and has repeatedly indicated its position of non-acceptance and non-participation. Our position has an adequate legal foundation that will not change.

The Philippines broke its own promise to seek a settlement through consultations and negotiations directly. It unilaterally initiated and stubbornly pressed for arbitration in an attempt to deny China's territorial sovereignty over the South China Sea and China's maritime rights in an attempt to force China to compromise. That is unrealistic and will not yield any results. China's basic position on the South China Sea issue is to seek a peaceful settlement on the basis of respecting historical facts and in accordance with international law through dialogue, consultations and negotiations. China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries have already agreed on a dual-track approach in the matter; namely, settlement should be sought through direct negotiations and consultations by the countries directly concerned. The peace and stability of the South China Sea should be jointly maintained by China and the ASEAN countries. That is the most realistic and most effective way to properly address the South China Sea issue.

Internationalizing and judicializing the South China Sea issue will not be conducive to finding a settlement. On the contrary, it will only make it more difficult and will jeopardize regional peace and security. China is firmly committed to maintaining regional peace and security in the South China Sea and will remain committed to turning the South China Sea into a sea of peace, friendship and cooperation. Meanwhile, China is firmly opposed to the practice of a small number of countries of stirring up the situation for selfish purposes and jeopardizing peace and stability in the South China Sea. China urges the Philippines to return to negotiations and consultations on the right track as early as possible.

Mr. Meek (United Kingdom): I wish to exercise the right of reply to some of the comments made by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius earlier today.

The British Government has no doubt about the sovereignty of the Chagos Archipelago, which has been British since 1814 and which it administers as the British Indian Ocean territory. No international tribunal,

including the recent arbitral tribunal constituted under annex VII to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, has ever cast doubt on the United Kingdom's sovereignty over the territory.

Moreover, the United Kingdom does not recognize the claim of the Republic of Mauritius to the sovereignty of the Chagos Archipelago. It has repeatedly undertaken to cede it to Mauritius when it is no longer required for defence purposes. We maintain that commitment, although it is for the United Kingdom to determine when that condition is met. In the meantime, the defence purposes contribute significantly towards global security and are central to efforts for countering regional threats, including those from terrorism and piracy.

It is clear that the recent Arbitral Tribunal award does not have the effect of rendering the marine-protected area illegal. The tribunal found that there had been no improper motive in its creation and explicitly stated that it took no view on the substance of the marine-protected area, a measure that preserves the Indian Ocean's fish stocks and safeguards their importance for the economy and food security of the region. The tribunal's finding was actually more narrow — that the United Kingdom should have consulted the Republic of Mauritius more fully about the establishment of the marine-protected area so as to give due regard to its rights.

As the tribunal noted in its final observation, it is open to both parties to enter into such negotiations now and to do so without reference to matters of sovereignty under a sovereignty umbrella. The United Kingdom has made extensive efforts to engage the Republic of Mauritius about conservation matters. Following the award, it has once again invited the Republic of Mauritius to join in bilateral consultations. We hope that the consultations will begin shortly and are committed to working with the Republic of Mauritius to explore all aspects of its interests in relation to the marine-protected area.

Mr. Dery (the Philippines): We are exercising the right of reply. In response to China's great concern for a peaceful settlement in the South China Sea, we observe that the South China Sea is an international waterway and that that is an even stronger reason to settle any disputes at the international level, under international law, including arbitration, pursuant to annex VII of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We therefore reiterate our invitation to the People's Republic

of China to join us in the deliberations of the arbitral tribunal and to let the merits of the case be decided on the basis of international law and with transparency, rather than recourse to coercion and intimidation.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of Serbia has asked to make a second statement.

Mr. Holovka (Serbia): I will take further time at this late hour only to set the facts straight. Kosovo is neither an independent State nor a Member of the United Nations. The Prime Minister of Albania is the only speaker in the General Assembly who has called for the recognition of part of a sovereign country. That is a hostile act. We take it very seriously. It is a hostile act not only towards a neighbouring country, Serbia, but also towards his own people, some of whom inhabit the province of Kosovo. Furthermore, it is a hostile act in relation to the dialogue held under the auspices

of the European Union, where all outstanding issues in the process of normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina are being addressed. Let me be clear and stress once again that Serbia will continue to use all diplomatic means to preserve its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of China has asked to speak a second time in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Li Yongsheng (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I only wish to reiterate that the illegal invasion and occupation of some islands and reefs in the Nansha Islands of China is the root cause of the dispute between China and the Philippines over the South China Sea. Regarding the arbitration case initiated by the Philippines, China's position is that of non-acceptance and non-participation. Its position will not change.

The meeting rose at 8 p.m.