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# General Assembly

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Sixty-eighth General Assembly  
Plenary  
12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> Meetings (AM, PM & Night)

### **AFRICA NO LONGER PREY TO DIVISION BY THOSE BENT ON DISRUPTING ITS PROGRESS,**

### **DECLARES PRESIDENT OF GHANA, AS GENERAL ASSEMBLY CONTINUES DEBATE**

#### **World Leaders Highlight Development, Growth, Need to Reform Security Council**

Today's Africa would not be divided or deterred by those wishing to disrupt its progress, the President of Ghana told the General Assembly today as it continued its annual debate.

President John Dramani Mahama recalled his country's cooperation with its neighbours to maintain regional stability and restore security in Côte d'Ivoire and Mali. In Ghana itself, the result of his recent election had been contested and formally challenged in the Supreme Court. "What made this situation noteworthy was the reliance, by all parties involved, on the rule of law," he noted, pointing also to the transparency of the process and the overall strengthening of democratic institutions in Africa.

He said that 6 of the world's 10 fastest-growing economies were in Africa, stressing the need to translate that growth into jobs for young people. Ghana had met the Millennium Development Goals on poverty and hunger-reduction well ahead of 2015, but still needed to focus on women's empowerment through education and control over reproductive rights. "African women have always been the backbone of our societies," he pointed out. "Imagine the change they could effect in our countries if only we'd help them reach their full potential."

President Hifikepunye Pohamba of Namibia also addressed the Millennium Development Goals, saying that the 2015 deadline offered a good opportunity to question whether the commitments made in 2000 had been fulfilled. The theme of the new Assembly session echoed the preamble of the United Nations Charter — "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom" — he said, adding that leaders were challenged to ensure that the post-2015 development agenda would promote sustainable development and secure futures. Namibia believed in an inclusive, people-centred post-2015 development framework, he said. It should focus on several key areas like education, food security and energy, climate change and environmental conservation, with the world committing to new global partnerships characterized by solidarity, cooperation and mutual accountability.

Also stressing the importance of the United Nations promoting multilateralism, was President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, who said the post-2015 agenda must go beyond the social development agenda of the Millennium Goals, with the aim of affecting a structural transformation of the global economy to deliver inclusive and sustainable growth. "We expect a shift that would bring about industrialization, decent jobs and qualitative change to the lives of our citizens," he said, adding that Zimbabwe could not do so in isolation from other partners.

He strongly condemned "illegal" economic sanctions imposed on his country by the United States and the European Union, saying they were in violation of the fundamental United Nations principles of State sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs. Causing economic deprivation and suffering to all Zimbabweans, such sanctions "in the eyes of our people" constituted a form of hostility and violence imposed simply for taking back control of land through Zimbabwe's land reform programme, he said.

Also featuring prominently in the debate was a call for United Nations reform, especially with regard to the Security Council.

President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea said the Organization “simply looked on” as democracy was imposed on certain peoples against their wishes. The result was civil disorder, loss of human life, social divisions and destruction of basic infrastructure that were difficult to rebuild, he added. The role of the United Nations in such circumstances was being “violated by special interests”, and must be remedied by making the Organization’s organs, particularly the Security Council, more democratic in order to protect the interests of all nations.

Sierra Leone’s Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Samura Kamara, also called for urgent reform of the Security Council, emphasizing the need for equitable geographical representation. The African Common Position on the matter was articulated in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, he said.

Mexico’s Secretary for Foreign Affairs, José Antonio Meade Kuribreña, said the Security Council must truly represent the international community, not merely by extending privileges to the few, but by ensuring transparency in its working methods and limiting the exercise of veto power when faced with genocide and crimes against humanity.

Along similar lines, President Borut Pahor of Slovenia said that decisive progress on Security Council reform was required to improve the organ’s efficiency, transparency and accountability. As part of the reform effort, the Council’s five permanent members must consider refraining from using the veto in situations of genocide, crimes against humanity and serious violations of international humanitarian law. The Council must also refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court in order to ensure accountability and an end to impunity.

Regarding the world body’s peace and security agenda, the Presidents of Cyprus and the State of Palestine provided updates on latest developments.

President Nicos Anastasiades of Cyprus called on Turkey and on his Turkish Cypriot compatriots to work in partnership for reunification. He welcomed Turkey’s decision to respond positively to his proposal to hold meetings with the negotiator of the Greek Cypriot community.

President Mahmoud Abbas of the State of Palestine, addressing the Assembly for the first time since the upgrade of Palestine’s status to non-member observer State, underlined his determination to reach a peace accord with Israel in nine months. There would be no “eternalized” transitional or interim agreements, he said, emphasizing that the aim was a permanent and comprehensive peace treaty.

Other speakers today included the Heads of State of Guyana, Mongolia, Slovenia, Lithuania, Nauru, Guatemala, United Republic of Tanzania, Croatia, Marshall Islands, Equatorial Guinea, Somalia and Guinea-Bissau. The Vice-President of South Sudan also delivered a statement.

The Assembly also heard from the Prime Ministers of Malta, Japan, Central African Republic, Republic of Moldova, Lesotho, Belgium, Haiti and New Zealand.

Also speaking were the Foreign Ministers of Algeria, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Mexico, and Benin.

The General Assembly will reconvene at 9 a.m. on Friday, 27 September, to continue its general debate.

#### Background

The General Assembly today met this morning to continue its annual general debate.

#### Statements

DONALD RABINDRANATH RAMOTAR, President of Guyana, expressed his deepest condolences to Kenya over the recent terrorist attacks there, before pointing out that the international community faced several challenges which threatened the hard-earned socioeconomic gains of the last decade. At the very core of those issues was a need to address inequality, he said, pointing out that income distribution continued to be skewed in favour of rich nations, and rich people, in all countries. The gap between the “haves and have-nots”, which had grown dangerously wider in recent years, was at the heart of many current conflicts, but that was not readily visible because the struggle for social and economic justice was often clouded by inter-ethnic, inter-religious, and other types of conflicts.

On Syria, he said it would be an illusion to believe that military intervention would bring peace. What was badly needed was a political dialogue between the parties concerned. Expressing support for the agreement

between the Russian Federation and the United States to facilitate the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons, he called on all nations in possession of such weapons to do the same. He said some of the forces fighting in Syria were terrorists. "They cannot be terrorists when they are fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq, but freedom fighters when fighting the Syrian Government," he added. "A terrorist is a terrorist."

Regarding the coup in Egypt, he said it was a blow against democracy that had led to violations of human rights and more social unrest, yet major Powers had chosen to refrain from condemning it. As for the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, the latter had a right to their own independent and viable State, he emphasized. Turning to his own region, he condemned the United States' blockade against Cuba, saying it imposed a needless burden on the island nation's people. Regarding the Arms Trade Treaty, he said it was critical not only to the safety and security of the region's citizens and their fight against transnational crime, but also to the very pursuit of sustainable development. The funnelling of guns was a menace to the Caribbean and must be curbed for the preservation of the region's youth and future, he stressed, calling for the Treaty's early entry into force.

Outlining various national accomplishments, he said 30 per cent of his country's expenditure went to the social sector, contributing to the achievement of several Millennium Development Goals, including universal primary education. Guyana was also close to achieving universal secondary education and, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), was one of the few countries to have slashed poverty by more than half while improving nutrition. However, the effects of the global financial crisis on the region had been devastating, he stressed.

As a middle-income country, Guyana was no longer entitled to concessionary financing, a situation he described as a recipe for reversing the gains of hard work, he said, calling for greater consideration of the region's special vulnerabilities. A country "can see one hurricane wiping out its entire [gross domestic product]", he added. Climate change had especially severe effects on small island developing States, he said, welcoming the designation of 2014 as the International Year of Small Island Developing States.

HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBA, President of Namibia, said the theme of the new Assembly session echoed the preamble of the United Nations Charter — "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom" — and he stated that leaders were challenged to ensure that the post-2015 development agenda promoted sustainable development and a secure future. The Millennium Summit had emphasized the urgency of improving the world for humanity. The Millennium Development Goals had brought hope to millions living in poverty; however the 2015 deadline for achieving them had prompted the question as to whether the commitments made in 2000 had been lived up to.

He believed in a people-centred post-2015 agenda that was inclusive, focusing on health care, education, food security and nutrition, energy, water, gender equality and the empowerment of women, youth and people with disabilities. Climate change and environmental conservation should continue to receive attention and the world should commit to a new global partnership, characterized by solidarity, cooperation and mutual accountability. The Rio+20 [United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development] outcome document had identified poverty eradication as the greatest global challenge, making it central to sustainable development.

He said the eleventh Conference of Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification was concluding its deliberations in Windhoek, and the Conference's outcome could strengthen the Convention's role in mitigating the effects of drought and desertification, particularly in Africa. Despite commendable advances by developing countries in social and economic development, challenges remained and the post-2015 agenda should account for the valid concerns of middle-income countries, such as access to grants and concessional funding. It should also embrace protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, the rule of law and international peace and security. Adequate and predictable financing was also vital.

Expressing his concern over growing instability worldwide, he welcomed signing of the Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. He urged signatories to show good faith in implementing it and commended the Intervention Brigade to restore peace in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, calling on the international community to fully support the success of what was an important mission. Humanitarian assistance was also needed for those affected by the conflict, he noted.

Responding to other facets of the global agenda, he welcomed news that elections would be held in Madagascar, calling for international support, and welcomed the results of votes in Mali, where he commended the Economic Community of West African States for its resolution of the crisis there, and in Zimbabwe, where he said the Southern African Development Community and African Union Election Observer Mission had found those elections to be free, peaceful and credible. As a result, he said sanctions against Zimbabwe should be lifted unconditionally. The

economic blockade against Cuba should also be lifted. Promising his continued support for the African Union's work in Somalia, he expressed support for self-determination in Western Sahara and Palestine, going on to condemn chemical weapons use in Syria. Meanwhile, he stressed the urgency of Security Council reform to make it representative and democratic.

NICOS ANASTASIADES, President of Cyprus, expressed deep concern over recent global events that threatened the sovereignty of States, as well as regional and global security. He acknowledged that in such a world, it would be difficult to fully implement the core United Nations principles and values. "However, what is happening today risks to overthrow the current world order, calling into question the relevance and effectiveness of this international organization," he stated.

He said his country had been violently divided for nearly 40 years, despite numerous United Nations Security Council resolutions. He said it is his belief that the current status quo is unacceptable, and called on Turkey and Turkish Cypriot compatriots to work in partnership for the reunification of Cyprus. He welcomed Turkey's decision to respond positively to his proposal to hold meetings with the negotiator of the Greek Cypriot community. He noted that he had submitted a package proposal that would include the return of the ghost city of Famagusta, under the auspices of the United Nations, and in line with United Nations Security Council resolution 550 (1984).

Prior to the start of negotiations, he said it would be essential to agree that the solution adhere to the relevant United Nations resolutions, the high-level agreements, and would make Cyprus a bi-zonal, bi-communal federal State, with a single international personality, single sovereignty and single citizenship. He said the settlement should support Cyprus' capacity as a European Union member State and address the issue of missing persons.

He also stated that Cyprus could have a positive and stabilizing role in the Eastern Mediterranean, particularly with regard to combating terrorism, fighting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and providing humanitarian assistance. Cyprus could also serve as a reliable and interconnecting bridge between Europe, North Africa and the Near and Middle East. He reported that Cyprus had assumed a leading role in bringing neighbouring countries together through recent hydrocarbon exploration in the Levantine basin.

In regards to the Millennium Development Goals, he said that three of the eight goals had been achieved ahead of deadline, but much work remained. Cyprus had recently received unprecedented international attention due to the country's economic crisis, but it was on the path to recovery and growth.

JOHN DRAMANI MAHAMA, President of Ghana, strongly condemned the terrorist attack in Kenya and remembered Kofi Awoonor, a Ghanaian poet, professor and former civil servant killed during the assault. Today's Africa, however, would not be divided or deterred by the heinous crimes of those wishing to disrupt its progress, he emphasized. In that regard, he recalled his country's cooperation with neighbouring countries to maintain regional stability and restore security in Côte d'Ivoire and Mali. The former was now in a rebuilding stage, and the latter had made a return to democracy by conducting an election hailed as free, fair and peaceful. Desiring lasting peace and security in the subregion, Ghana was committed to strengthening the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), he said.

Ghana also supported the Arms Trade Treaty, believing that the international trade in conventional arms and ammunition must be regulated, he said. The world had become a "global village", in which it had become easier for warmongers and terrorist groups to recruit new members, expand their cells, create intercontinental networks, obtain weapons and conceal their identities and locations. Cooperation between developed and developing countries was vital in addressing that "borderless" problem, he stressed.

Turning to democracy, he highlighted the recent elections in his country, including the contested result, which had been formally challenged and heard by the Supreme Court. "What made this situation noteworthy was the reliance, by all parties involved, on the rule of law," he said. The proceedings had been televised for the sake of transparency, an indication that Accra's democratic institutions were growing stronger. The balance of power in Africa was shifting from the authority of a sole individual to the more equitable processes of a properly designed system, he affirmed.

He said 6 of the 10 fastest-growing economies were in Africa, pointing out, however, that the growth had not yet translated into sustainable employment opportunities, especially for young people. Africa had a fast-growing population, more than 50 per cent of whom were below the age of 35. The imperative need, therefore, was to create jobs for their growing numbers. "It all comes down to value," he stressed. "We must value our resources, including our human resources." Rather than relying on the export of raw materials, African economies could benefit from industry, which could create new jobs for young people, he said, urging partnerships between local and foreign investors.

Regarding the Millennium Development Goals, he said that his country had met the poverty and hunger-reduction target far ahead of 2015. But, despite Ghana's great progress on other Goals, it still needed to focus on women's empowerment through education and control over reproductive rights. "African women have always been the backbone of our societies," he pointed out. "Imagine the change they could effect in our countries if only we'd help them reach their full potential." On the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, he confirmed his Government's support for an independent Palestine State existing side by side and in peace with a secure Israeli State. He also called for the lifting of the embargo against Cuba, as well as for reform of the Security Council to ensure that it reflected the current international status quo.

ELBEGDORJ TSAKHIA, President of Mongolia, noted that progress had been made since the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals, as globally more than 70 million people joined the middle class each year. However, despite this achievement, 200 million people remain jobless; 50 million children do not attend school and one in eight persons goes hungry. Climate-wise, he said, the environment was changing rapidly and global consumption far exceeded the planet's capacity, resources were exhausted and mankind endangered.

Defining the country as "an old nation with a young heart", he highlighted that Mongolia was one of the world's fastest developing countries, which was able to achieve universal primary education, reduce child mortality, and improve maternal health. To achieve the remaining unmet Millennium Development Goals, national stakeholders, the private sector, research institutions, civil society and media were working cooperatively.

On the issue of the environment, he said that the country had promoted a green development policy, creating and preserving national parks to curb desertification, as well as exploring the potential of renewable energy. In light of the many environmental challenges, such as land degradation, deforestation, natural disaster and pollution, Mongolian people, especially its youth, were fully committed to building a better environmental future. Turning to the issue of corruption, he stated that Mongolia had a zero-tolerance policy at all levels of Government, which had resulted in the country advancing 26 places in the Transparency International ranking of Member States. Convinced of transparency being key in the fight against corruption, he pointed out the country's "glass account" system, which ensured that all funds were accounted for openly and transparently.

He noted that, as the country held the chair of the Community of Democracy, Mongolia placed great importance on democratic development. Promoting freedom and democracy, as well as fostering civic engagement would strengthen democratic institutions and improve human rights, because "knowledge is power", he said. The move for greater democracy was pursued nationally and regionally, as displayed by the country's efforts to share the lessons of parliamentary democracy and legal reforms with Kyrgyzstan, as well as other initiatives, including providing trainings for diplomats and public servants from Afghanistan. He concluded by asking Member States to support Mongolia's 2015 candidacy to the United Nations Human Rights Council.

On Syria, he said that people were distressed by the endless cycle of conflict, military force, weapons and loss of life. In this regard, he said that Mongolia would not tolerate the use of chemical weapons and strongly condemned the violation of the universally accepted international law. As a country with internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zone status, and uniquely situated between two nuclear weapon States, also permanent members of the Security Council, Mongolia had been working hard on disarmament and non-proliferation issues. "This is Mongolia's contribution to greater confidence and non-proliferation in the region," he said. He concluded by highlighting Mongolia's commitment to peacekeeping through the deployment of military officers and troops to maintaining international peace and security.

BORUT PAHOR, President of Slovenia, recalled that fewer than 20 years ago, the world had witnessed events that had shocked the human conscience, from the genocide in Rwanda to the massacres in Srebrenica and Darfur. "We should have learned lasting lessons from these horrific events," he said, reminding the Assembly that, with the establishment of the United Nations, the international community had taken collective responsibility to protect human beings from mass atrocities and gross violations of human rights.

"And yet we failed again," he continued, pointing to the crisis in Syria, where innocent civilians had endured brutal violence for more than two years and more recently the unconscionable use of chemical weapons. That was not only a war crime, but a direct assault against "our common humanity", he asked. "Has peaceful diplomacy failed again, and will the only way to stop the violence now be military intervention?" Sovereignty did not give States "a licence to kill their own citizens", he emphasized. The international community had a responsibility to react when States hid their atrocities behind such a veil. When faced with mass atrocities, indifference was not and would never become an option.

The Agreement on the Framework for the Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons between the United States and the Russian Federation must be implemented without delay, he continued. Syria must comply immediately and fully, or face the consequences, and the Security Council must take all appropriate measures to address the situation through a political solution, he stressed, expressing support for the proposed Geneva II conference.

He went on to say that decisive progress on reform of the Security Council was required to improve the organ's efficiency, transparency and accountability. As part of the reform effort, the Council's five permanent members must consider refraining from the use of veto power in situations of genocide, crimes against humanity and serious violations of international humanitarian law. The Council must also refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court to ensure accountability and an end to impunity.

He warned that the consequences of inaction far outweighed the risks of timely prevention and response, both in terms of money and, more importantly, human suffering and lives, a lesson his region had learned from the conflict in the Western Balkans. Slovenia and Croatia had, therefore, launched the Brdo Process as a forum for high-level dialogue to strengthen relations and promote reconciliation in the region. The last century was a dark chapter in European and human history and "we cannot let that repeat itself" in the twenty-first century, he said, underlining the unique opportunity that today's leaders had to influence the future for years to come.

MOHAMED MONCEF MARZOUKI, President of Tunisia, recalled the fact that his country was the first country to experience the "Arab Spring". Now, in some countries, what was happening suggested that the dream was turning into a nightmare. The entire agenda of the uprisings could not be achieved overnight, but States were on a road to brighter horizons, even if it would take considerable time, possibly even several decades, to take full control of the revolutions and give them direction. He acknowledged that it was possible that the Arab Spring could stumble and might indeed fail, but it was the international community's duty to insist on supporting the current path. The difficulties of building democracy and peace could not lead to backs being turned.

He was committed to fighting extremism and replacing it with positive patriotism, though he accepted that various political and ideological forces were pushing countries in various directions. The building of democracy and civil institutions was replete with difficulties. In connection with that, he called on the authorities in Egypt to release Mohamed Morsi, as that would help to end the political tensions and stop the violence, returning all parties to dialogue. Similarly, the issues that faced Gaza — let alone the rest of Palestine — showed the immense difficulties caused by Israel's occupation and colonization.

He listed three particular challenges that he was facing in Tunisia. The first was terrorism, which was a major political challenge. The second challenge was the slowing of investment, and the third, the need to learn democracy at the same time as trying to build and defend it. It had not yet taken root in Tunisia's society or political traditions. There were many elements pointing to success for Tunisia, such as its responsible political class and its peaceful and politically aware people who knew their own interests. He was confident the project would succeed, stating that elections were scheduled for the coming spring. Expressing support for the role of transitional justice, he said he aspired to expanding democracy, favouring coalition governments that took into account the needs of those whose politicians did not win.

The Arab Spring was suffering most in Syria, he said, pointing to violence that had astonished from the outset and which was escalating day by day. He was strongly opposed to the current Syrian Government and had expelled their Ambassador from Tunis. He warned all sides against sectarianism and stated his concern about the involvement of Tunisians in the conflict. He said that the nightmare continued to be real for the Syrian people and a political solution was vital.

He supported the intervention of the International Criminal Court to protect the people against dictatorship, stating that Syria's dictators provided the worst example of how amoral a regime could become in its actions, and such brutality had never been seen in a civil war. Syria had gone further than the most brutal regimes in history. He added that a preventive arm of the International Criminal Court could take up such situations from the very beginning, and if such a court existed, the regime would not have tried to establish hereditary rule or to kill its opposition. If such a court had existed and been able to intervene in support of human rights, the nightmare could have been avoided. He called on all influential States to express a new spirit of the international community and to support the project of such a court.

DAHLIA GRYBAUSKAITE, President of Lithuania, called for a review of the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and for work to begin in setting future guidelines. She said it was a job for the international community as a whole because development was a global challenge. Sharing allowed every State to learn and to choose the best path that suited its own experiences, culture and needs. As long as that path did not infringe on the

rights of others, the international community had an obligation to offer support based on the principles of ownership and empowerment. Development could not be imposed but must be promoted. Free choice, democracy and fundamental rights were key to the success of the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda.

There were still those who wished to enforce a specific course of development on others through economic pressure, energy levers or cyber tools, by distorted information or threats. While she supported internationally approved sanctions for sending a message to those who were producing weapons and not jobs, for human rights violators, or for those who use national resources to satisfy individual rather than societal interests, the use of economic, energy or information tools to demonstrate power, or to establish zones of influence, was unjustifiable. She called for solidarity, equality and sustainable development, not power shows, zero-sum games or buffer zones. A return to those times would impede development in the modern world, but power games still existed.

Addressing her own region's experience, she said members of the European Union's Eastern Partnership countries would visit Vilnius in November to confirm their commitment to the painful but vital economic, political and social reforms they had undertaken. Those countries had worked hard to reach a national agreement on the scope and direction reforms, learning from past mistakes and mobilizing resources to build modern twenty-first century States that were open, transparent and collaborative, not dominating. The tough choices could have been made easier if those that could have provided support did so. Instead, she said they had applied restrictions, banned goods, manipulated prices on energy supplies, used pressure and displayed "open disrespect displayed in information space".

She stated that Lithuania, the current President of the Council of the European Union, was under similar pressure. Citing "hot examples", she said barriers to travelling had been imposed, there were unreasonable delays of cargo transportation and a "milk war". It was difficult for nations to make important decisions or to implement reforms when under such pressures and empowerment of society and the State-building process were compromised by such pressures. The post-2015 development agenda needed to provide instruments that empowered development based on free will. She said there was no place for enforced choice, open threats or demonstrations of power. The international community, especially the United Nations, should empower such self-determination.

BARON DIVAVESI WAQA, President of Nauru, stressed the challenges facing small island developing States, caused by the global financial crisis and the rise in food and fuel prices. He welcomed the more prominent role given to sustainable development in many United Nations processes and argued that transformational change required making fundamental reforms in the global economic system. He highlighted that the rules of economic governance had been increasingly written to serve the interest of a shrinking few, whose risky activities competed with more productive investments in infrastructure, renewable energy, health services and sustainable development. "Reclaiming the global economic system and putting it to work for the good of all people will be a long and difficult process, but it might be the only way to reach sustainable development goals," he noted. The discussion on global economic governance at the United Nations, he said, should restart and the governance of the Bretton Woods institutions should be made more inclusive.

Acknowledging that the systemic barriers to sustainable development were formidable, he underlined Nauru's efforts to seek practical solutions implementable in the short term. He quoted the Nauru Case Study on Climate Change, which identified several initiatives to make official development assistance (ODA) more effective. Project-based finance, domestic institution building and designing sustained programmes with a significant in-country component were therein explored.

He said that the Alliance of Small Island States, chaired by Nauru, had proposed a very practical and collaborative approach to rapidly increase the implementation of policies and deployment of technologies that not only reduced greenhouse gas emissions, but also advanced sustainable development priorities. The proposal, however, wasn't meant to relieve developed countries of their international obligation to take the lead in addressing climate change. He urged that they be held fully accountable for implementing best practices to reduce their own emissions, while also providing the means of implementation for adaption and mitigation actions in developing countries.

"Climate change is the greatest challenge to sustainable development of small islands," he said. He called for the appointment of a Special Representative on Climate and Security, which would facilitate regional cooperation on cross-border issues, as well as evaluate their security situation and develop action plans to increase the resilience of their institutions. He also requested the Secretary-General to lead a joint task force of all relevant organs and specialized agencies to immediately assess the capacities and resources of the United Nations to respond to the anticipated security implications of climate change.

On Syria, he called for an immediate move towards global peace and security, especially in light of the more than 100,000 people killed during the conflict. On the country's bilateral relations, he thanked Nauru's development partners for the contributions made towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. By correctly diagnosing the problems and choosing the appropriate tools to begin the work, satisfactory outcomes that benefit all could be reached, he concluded.

ROBERT MUGABE, President of Zimbabwe, said that, due to a lack of capacity, mainly financial, his country's progress had stalled in the areas of eradication of poverty and hunger, child mortality, universal access to maternal and reproductive health, and access to potable water and sanitation. The post-2015 development agenda must go beyond the social development agenda of the Millennium Goals, to structurally transform the global economy to deliver inclusive and sustainable growth. "We expect a shift that would bring about industrialization, decent jobs and qualitative change to the lives of our citizens," he said, adding that Zimbabwe could not do so in isolation from other partners.

He commented that Member States must collectively address challenges that developing countries faced in their pursuit of development. Commitments aimed at supporting Africa in achieving development goals must be adhered, and the United Nations must promote multilateralism to deliver efficient development cooperation, he said. The democratic transformation of the international financial system would also help reform the international trading system responsible for "hugely burdening developing countries for too long".

He said that the Security Council's increasing encroachment on issues that traditionally fell within the General Assembly purview was unacceptable, especially in the area of norm setting. Indeed, recent events had revealed that the Assembly's formal decisions had provided "camouflage to neo-imperialist forces of aggression", seeking military intervention in smaller countries. Such was the case in Libya, where, in the name of protecting civilians, forces were deployed with an undeclared mission to eliminate Colonel Muammar Qadhafi. Such illegal action was reminiscent of a similar campaign undertaken to invade Iraq in the name of eradicating weapons of mass destruction which it never possessed, he said.

On Syria, he supported consultations on the destruction of chemical weapons and applauded Russia and China for their "principled stand". Syrians, he said, must sit to discuss peace and desired political reform, but western countries pretending to be advocates of democracy in pursuit of hegemony must be resisted. Calling on reform of the Security Council, he asked: How long must Africa be denied the right to play a pivotal role in the organ as it decided measures on conflicts within its own borders? The Council must be democratic, transparent and accessible to the wider membership of the United Nations. Africa's case of the glaring historical injustice of being unrepresented and underrepresented had been made clear in the Ezulwini Consensus.

Further, he strongly condemned the economic sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe by the United States and European Union, saying they violated United Nations fundamental principles on State sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs. Causing economic deprivation and suffering to all Zimbabweans, constituted a form of hostility and violence for taking back control of land through the land reform programme, he said. Zimbabwe was for the Zimbabweans, he declared, calling on the United States, United Kingdom and its allies to remove sanctions. He noted that Zimbabweans took up arms to achieve freedom and democracy, which the United States and the West preached about daily, yet the United States tried to affect regime change in his country, most recently with the rejection of last July's fair elections. The African Union and other regional organizations had legitimized the results, he said. Western detractors would not define democracy for Zimbabwe, he stressed. Having paid the ultimate price for freedom, Zimbabwe would never relinquish its sovereignty and would never be a colony again.

OTTO FERNANDO PÉREZ MOLINA, President of Guatemala, noting the link between the battle against hunger and education, spoke of the progress his country had made on improving the nutritional status of infants and children. In order to turn boys and girls into skilled workers and active citizens, Guatemala paid special attention to promoting dignified employment and the competitiveness of the economy, and had begun witnessing positive results. He said that Guatemala was linked to the economy of Mexico and it wanted a tripartite alliance that included the United States that would serve as a solid link with Central American and Caribbean countries. Since integration between the three economies was already a reality, he said attention should now focus on establishing rules that allow for capitalizing on those achievements.

Stressing that the quest for prosperity was related to Guatemala's commitment to building peace and combating impunity, he went on to enumerate his Government's progress towards fighting crime and violence, upholding the law and respecting human rights. Thanking the General Assembly and donors for supporting Guatemala's efforts to fight impunity, he spoke of a country without hunger, with education, prosperous and integrated with its neighbours.



Turning to the war against drugs, he called for more effective policies that emphasized health, reduced social violence, respected human rights and curbed the flow of illegal arms and funds that financed criminal networks. He praised United States President Barack Obama for respecting the voice of some Americans to pursue “innovative experiences” that addressed drug issues that focused on public health, prevention and respect for human rights.

He also lauded the examples provided by Uruguay and the leadership of the Organization for American States (OAS) in this effort, adding that each country must experiment with new models to address the drug problem without abandoning international cooperation against transnational crime.

Recalling Guatemala’s tenure as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, he said his Government sought international action on Syria in consonance with the concepts of the “right to protect”, punishment for those responsible for mass killings and political and diplomatic dialogue. Stating that the United Nations had made a singular contribution to humanity by launching the Millennium Development Goals, he urged the international community to define the reduction of violence against women and children and universal access to justice as a priority of the post-2015 global development agenda.

MAHMOUD ABBAS, President of the State of Palestine, said he was honoured to address the Assembly in its name for the first time, after the Assembly had upgraded Palestine’s status to that of non-member observer State. The quest for higher status was not aimed at delegitimizing Israel, affecting the peace process, or substituting for serious negotiations. On the contrary, it had “revived a comatose process”, he said, assuring the Assembly that the State of Palestine would uphold its responsibilities in the international system in a positive and constructive manner that would reinforce peace.

He said that he had begun the latest round of negotiations in good faith and with an open mind, strongly determined to reach a peace accord within nine months. The negotiations had not started from point zero, “nor are we lost in a labyrinth without a map, nor do we lack a compass”. Rather, the foundations of peace were long-standing and within reach. That overarching goal was embodied in redressing the “historic, unprecedented injustice” that had befallen the Palestinian people in 1948. Palestine refused to entertain transitional or interim agreements that could become “eternalized”, and aimed instead for a permanent and comprehensive peace treaty, he said. The international consensus on the terms and parameters of the negotiations were to be found in the decision to upgrade Palestine’s status, and in countless resolutions of the General Assembly, the Security Council and other international organizations.

Noting that 20 years had passed since the Oslo Accords, he recalled the Palestine National Council’s “extremely difficult decision” to accept the proposed two-State solution based on the 1967 borders. Simultaneously, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) had committed to peace, repudiating violence and rejecting terrorism. Despite that dynamism and the hopes and expectations that the agreement had generated, the picture today appeared “dispiriting and bleak”, with its goals out of reach, its provisions unimplemented and its deadlines disregarded. Settlement building continued, compromising the two-State solution, he said, emphasizing the need for international vigilance against such actions throughout the resumed negotiations. In that regard, he welcomed the European Union’s position on products originating from the settlements.

Wars, occupation, settlements and walls may provide temporary quiet and momentary domination, but they could not ensure real security, he warned, pointing out that such policies did not create rights or provide legitimacy. What was required was heeding the lessons of history, abandoning force, recognizing the rights of others and dealing on an equal footing to make peace. Palestine was confident that the Israeli people wanted peace and supported a two-State solution, which was why it continued to reach out, trying to build bridges instead of walls, and to sow the seeds of good neighbourliness. Palestinian refugees were paying a particularly high price for conflict and instability, and thousands had abandoned their camps and fled in another exodus.

Meanwhile, Israeli settlement construction continued and Palestinians were forbidden from cultivating or irrigating their own land, he continued. The wall and checkpoints continued to tear their lives apart and to destroy the economy. Settlers had committed 708 terrorist attacks against mosques and churches. Still, Palestinians worked to build institutions and internal unity, working for reconciliation through a return to the ballot box, while opposing occupation and oppression by peaceful means. Assuring the Assembly that he was working for a just peace, he warned that the current round of negotiations seemed like the last chance, and urged the international community to seize it. “The hour of freedom for the Palestinian people has rung,” he declared. “The hour of peace has rung.”

JOSEPH MUSCAT, Prime Minister of Malta, said there had been remarkable successes in efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, particularly those relating to extreme poverty, clean water, urban slums, health and education. The challenge now was to push those targets even further beyond 2015 and to ensure that, they

became part of the sustainable development goals and left no one behind. The post-2015 development agenda was of critical importance and should not be sacrificed in the face of national budget cuts and political life cycles, he emphasized. "The poor have no luxury to afford us time to take our decisions."

He said he was proud of Malta's long-standing history of solidarity with other countries around the world and its accession to the European Union, the world's largest donor of development assistance. With 2013 marking 25 years since Malta had brought its concerns about climate change to the United Nations, he reiterated his country's commitment to engaging with international partners in developing a post-2015 global agenda that would accord a prominent role to sustainable development.

Malta was also highly concerned about the plight of "irregular immigrants", given the large number who routinely landed on its shores, he said. However, it could not deal with that challenge on its own, and needed the international community to do more. When taking the post-2015 agenda, it was important to understand how sustainable development was closely linked to peace, corruption, human rights and economic equality.

Turning to events in North Africa in recent years, he said the United Nations should do more to support the fragile democracies that had taken root there. The peoples of the Mediterranean deserved better, and the status quo was not acceptable. The same was true of Syria, where a human catastrophe was unfolding, he said. "The Mediterranean Sea basin remains awash with promise, but polluted with pain and prejudice," he declared. Malta believed that "peace truly in our time" must be the overriding goal, and that the United Nations must think "inclusive" and "holistic". He called on the United Nations to be the "force field" towards which all nations gravitated in order to solve problems.

SHINZO ABE, Prime Minister of Japan, strongly condemned the conflict in Syria, saying that Japan's people were shocked and angered at the use of chemical weapons against civilians. As a matter of urgency, he said that his country called for an immediate cessation of violence, initiation in political dialogue and an improvement in humanitarian conditions. He said that Japan would continue to extend a helping hand to the internally displaced persons and refugees, as well as provide medical equipment and training of medical staff. He noted that Japan would provide approximately \$60 million in additional humanitarian assistance to Syria and neighbouring countries.

Repaying the good fortune of being selected to host the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Japan sought to rebuild its economy in order to make it a "dependable force for good in the world," he said. As a proactive contributor to peace, Japan had been also actively promoting the concept of "human security" in United Nations collective security measures, including peacekeeping operations. Since national interests were firmly connected to the stability of open seas, changes to the maritime order through the use of force or coercion could not be condoned under any circumstance, he said. Preserving public spaces ranging from outer space and cyberspace to the skies and the seas as global commons governed by rules and laws were imperative for Japan.

As a country that understood the horror and devastation wrought by atomic weapons, Japan could not condone North Korea's nuclear and missile development and demanded that North Korea returned every Japanese national it had abducted. As for Iran's nuclear issue, Japan hoped that the new administration would take concrete actions to address it. On Japan's involvement in the development of Africa, he highlighted the outcome of the fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development, where African leaders repeatedly expressed great eagerness to welcome private sector investment. He then mentioned the need to reform the Security Council and emphasized Japan's aspirations to become a permanent member.

On restarting the country's economy, he said that the answer lied in the theory called "womenomics", which asserted that the more women are advanced in society, the higher the growth rate would become. Creating an environment in which women find it comfortable to work and enhancing opportunities for them to be active in society, he continued, would create a "society in which women shine". He pledged financial and diplomatic support to United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), especially on the issue of sexual violence against women, as well as protection of women in natural disasters. To clarify the country's development concept aimed at creating a "society in which women shine", he provided three examples. First, he spoke of Ms. Tokiko Sato, a Japanese aid specialist, who dedicated her life to improving maternal, newborn and child health in a remote village in Jordan. Being these three areas where attainment of the Millennium Development Goals had been slow, Japan promised greater efforts in the field of health and medical care for women. His second example was Ms. Nilufa Yeasmin, from Bangladesh, who, working as a salesperson and instructor on the use of a Japanese water depurative system, showed the benefits of promoting women's participation in society. He continued by citing that inventive efforts, as well as launching start-up businesses in Africa, became consequently a priority area in Japan's policy. The last example was Ms. Islam Bibi, an Afghan police officer who guarded polling stations in order to monitor elections and who was recently assassinated. Her example showed the importance of women's participation and protection in the areas of peace and security.

He stated that: “ Japan intends to make efforts towards measures that will ensure the participation of women at all stages, including the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as peacebuilding, safeguarding the rights and physical well-being of women who are exposed to danger in times of conflicts.” He concluded by saying that, in establishing these three pillars, Japan would implement ODA in excess of \$3 billion over the next three years.

IVO JOSIPOVIĆ, President of Croatia, said this year, the Assembly was focused on an issue of paramount importance for the planet's future. However, peace and security were prerequisites for sustainable development. The global community continued to witness a plethora of deadly and prolonged international crises and the security and humanitarian catastrophe in Syria was foremost in the international community's minds. The United Nations findings regarding chemical weapons there were appalling, and he condemned those weapons in the strongest possible terms and said the United States and Russian Federation Framework of 14 September must be implemented promptly and fully. The United Nations had emerged from a period that witnessed the worst atrocities of the twentieth century and was built to ensure that such atrocities were not repeated.

January of 2013 had marked the fiftieth anniversary of the completion of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Sirmiummission in Croatia, which was considered one of the most successful peacekeeping operations in United Nations history, he said. However Croatia had undertaken the journey from a site for peacekeeping missions to being a peacekeeping contributor, and now supported operations and missions around the world. Further, marking the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, he said this had paved the way for the International Criminal Court, and he called on those countries that had not yet decided to adopt the Rome Statute to do so as soon as possible.

Maintaining peace often entailed long-term and comprehensive commitment from the international community, he said. Preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially to non-State actors, was a global security priority. As for the uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons, the Arms Trade Treaty was a milestone, and he urged universal adherence to that treaty and its expedited entry into force. In any armed conflict, women and children often paid the highest price, and Croatia would continue to focus its donor activities on gender and child-sensitive issues, on maternal health and prevention of mortality in children aged five, as well as enhancing girls' education. He expressed satisfaction with the establishment of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, and stressed the importance of education, especially of women and girls, in fostering innovative growth.

In July, Croatia became the twenty-eighth member of the European Union, he said. This was achieved in order to secure a safe, democratic and stable future for Croatians and their forthcoming generations. The Union's enlargement policy should be continued with respect to the countries of the Western Balkans, based on their individual merits, as the best option for long-term stability in the region.

CHRISTOPHER J. LOEAK, President of the Marshall Islands, opened his remarks expressing concern over the fact that the General Assembly “poetic ritual too often buries the true degree of necessary political will”. The two key priorities outlined by the Secretary-General — addressing climate change risks and the growing insecurity within Syria — were falling short. He said that leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum expressed “strong concern at the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Government”, and called for leadership by Security Council members to stem this threat. The common international voice, however, had come too little and too late and much suffering could have been averted: the tragic human cost of inaction was very high, he added.

Turning to climate change, he said that Pacific Islands Forum leaders had adopted this month the Majuro Declaration for Climate Leadership, as the common responsibility to act escaped no Government, irrespective of its size. The Marshall Islands was well on track to achieve solarization of the outer islands with the help of Japanese funds, as well as assistance from the European Union, Taiwan, Italy and France, among others. The whole region had also drastically cut its own emissions through a Pacific energy drive, and he hoped that the message for the world's large emitters was clear: “If we can do it, so can you,” he added. Climate change required direct political ownership and true statesmanship. It was time for new solutions, he said. Global efforts on climate change were falling short, so he urged world leaders to act not only out of economic convenience, but also out of a common responsibility.

The Pacific legacy the Marshall Islands and other regions' countries had was not as small island States, but the depositories of a “truly global resource”: oceans and fisheries. Local and global impacts affected food security, he reminded. He, therefore, joined other Pacific leaders in urging dedicated treatment of the issue of oceans as a post-2015 United Nations sustainable development goal. Pacific nations were leading the world in changing fisheries, but the responsibility to safeguard fisheries was global. Progress, however, could not be forged through

political will alone, he added. The United Nations was already playing a valuable role in working with the Marshall Islands to recover from a climate-driven drought and coastal flooding emergencies. But, more could be done to increase collaboration between the Organization and regional and bilateral partners.

Improved progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals was no less a priority, he continued, and he highlighted the contribution that Taiwan had played in helping the Marshall Islands towards this end. His country also encouraged positive interaction between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait in the international arena.

Concluding, he said that he was strongly encouraged by the Secretary-General's commitment to address the ongoing impacts of nuclear testing in the Pacific, without ignoring, however, the role played by the United Nations during the cold war in authorizing such testing in the region and whose legacy would stay with the Marshall Islands for generations.

TEODORO OBIANG NGUEMA MBASOGO, President of Equatorial Guinea, said he brought the fervent desire for peace and prosperity for all countries of the world during these trying times. He condemned the attack on Kenya, as this slowed its development and violated its freedoms, and called on the United Nations to take the harshest measures against crimes of that nature. Although the international community had become increasingly conscious of the importance of peace, the United Nations had still not achieved a peaceful and developed world that ensured dignity and prosperity for all peoples of the world.

He expressed concern at the disturbing situation in the world and spoke of an increase in natural disasters, wars, terrorism and acts of violence that took human lives and displaced populations. Hunger, he said, affected almost three quarters of the peoples of the world, and there were still major endemic diseases that lead to many deaths in less developed countries, affecting those most vulnerable.

He said that there is a kind of cold war between those that claim moral authority and those who want freedom of action, so they can determine the future of their peoples. The question of peace and security of States should be given full priority of the United Nations, because if there was no peace, there could be no development, and without development, there could not be freedom for human beings. For this reason, he stated he supported mediation and arbitration of conflicts.

The political, economic and social condition in his country was a positive one, and it was encouraging, he said, because it enjoyed peace and stability. People benefited from this, and therefore, supported current changes in the country. He was concerned, however, by the so-called "humanitarian" interference by the United Nations, which, in fact, imposed political systems and democracies on the basis of hidden interests, disregarding the sacred principles of national sovereignty and the dignity of peoples.

He said that democracy was the maximum expression of natural law, and an act of the sovereign will of the peoples. We had never seen an instance of democracy then being imposed on a people, and them accepting it, he added. To impose democracy was an imposition, and a deception in the name of democracy, giving rise to civil disorder which brought the loss of human life, division in society, and the destruction of basic infrastructures that were difficult to rebuild. Security and human rights were intrinsically linked, and there could not be indiscriminate destruction planned so that "reconstruction" and "reconciliation" could be planned for later at someone else's cost, he said. He said that the United Nations' role was being violated by special interests, and that the Organization should be reformed to make it more democratic and protective of the interests of all nations.

HASSAN SHEIKH MOHAMUD, President of Somalia, said he was honoured to address the Assembly for the first time and expressed appreciation for the "unwavering support" for his country, which had a permanent Government for the first time in 22 years. As the goal of the United Nations was to maintain international peace and security, it was imperative that Somalia, and other countries still suffering, had the full support of friends and allies to ensure a world free from conflict. The international community must work jointly to bring about peace and stability.

The fight against Al-Qaida, and its offshoots in the Horn of Africa, like Al-Shabaab, was far from over, as the recent attack in Kenya showed, he continued. Somalia's Government was determined to defeat them "in the deserts and in towns, on digital and social media", on the airwaves and the newspapers. Only by standing together, strengthening international resolve and remaining focused, could the international community weak and uproot terrorist bases. The African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Ethiopia needed help in fighting such enemies.

In just one year, major milestones for a new Somalia had been successfully and peacefully set forth in security, public finance management, reconciliation and good governance, he said. A compact signed in Brussels

earlier in the month represented a paradigm shift in how the international community would deal with Somalia. This “new deal” aimed to help his country lay a strong foundation for building reliable, transparent, accountable and functioning State institutions. There was a pressing need to transform the lives of Somalia’s people, to reconnect with its citizens and enhance their well-being. He pointed to major steps, such as the provision of health care, access to clean water and the launch of a campaign to enrol 100,000 school children during the current academic year.

Concerted efforts were needed to finalize the Constitution, establish a federal system and prepare the ground for elections, he said. Agreements had been reached and negotiations initiated with the authorities of Puntland, Somaliland and Juba, setting the basis for a system of governance where unity would ultimately be achieved not by coercion, but through dialogue. Still, the challenges were immense, as the Vision 2016 Conference convened earlier this month in Mogadishu, had pointed out. Al-Qaida and piracy in the Gulf of Aden were, indeed, threats to the future not only of Somalia, but of the region and the entire world.

He expressed appreciation for the courageous support of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union and welcomed creation of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), all of which aimed to bring peace and stability to Somalia. “It is much easier to start a war than to end one,” he added. In that regard, he condemned the use of chemical weapons in Syria. As a Somali who had experienced war first hand, he urged the international community to send a powerful message to those responsible. He also encouraged both sides in Syria to seek negotiations as the “only way out of this tragedy”. “Impunity has no place in this world,” he said. He regretted, however, that the trials of the International Criminal Court of African leaders had become “politically motivated”.

MANUEL SERIFO NHAMAJO, Transitional President of Guinea-Bissau, said two days earlier, his country celebrated the fortieth anniversary of its independence. A military coup had ousted its previous leader in April 2012. The Government was able to avoid political mishaps that could have thrown the country into a political and military tailspin. With the support of the Council and ECOWAS, Guinea-Bissau’s Constitution was never suspended. Parliament also had remained intact, allowing him to be installed as Transitional President.

Since then, the Parliament had approved the revised Transitional Pact and corresponding Political Agreement, and later on the Programme and General Budget for the State, he said. He said he signed a presidential decree declaring 24 November the date for legislative and presidential elections. But, funds were still needed to create reliable voter registries once an accurate census or voter registration process was carried out.

Poverty and political instability were the two biggest challenges facing Guinea-Bissau, he said. Consequently, it would not be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by the target date. Progress in education, health care, gender equality, poverty eradication and environmental policies to support sustainable development had been moderate and “below satisfactory levels”. Guinea-Bissau would do everything it could to achieve its Rio+20 commitments. He expressed hope that more developed countries would help fight poverty — one of the greatest scourges afflicting fragile, vulnerable States like his that still suffered from the results of armed conflict.

He supported creation earlier in the week of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the holding in September 2014 third Conference on Small Island Developing States. He expressed concern for many countries, including Mali, which had demonstrated a great level of maturity with its recent elections, as well as neighbouring Guinea, which would soon complete its electoral process. He repudiated the recent terrorist attacks in Nigeria and Kenya. He expressed hope that the dialogue and diplomacy would prevail in Egypt and Syria, while stating unwavering support for the Palestinian cause.

He also expressed gratitude to former Timor-Leste President José Ramos-Horta, Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Guinea-Bissau. He praised France for aiding Guinea-Bissau’s efforts to overcome its political crisis and the current President of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries for appealing to the international community for financial support for Guinea-Bissau’s general elections. He also thanked Spain, Timor-Leste, Cuba and China for their support. He called for the end of the embargo against Cuba.

JAMES WANI IGGA, Vice-President of South Sudan, expressing condolences to the people and Government of Kenya, condemned all acts of terrorism and pledged full cooperation and support to all efforts to cleanse the region and the globe of terrorism. He thanked the United Nations, the Council, IGAD countries, the Troika and others for diplomatically helping South Sudan bring an end to the conflict that had devastated the country for decades. Given the complexity of the issues involved, the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was relatively successful, but the protocols of the states of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, the contested area of Abyei and the demarcation of the borders between South Sudan and Sudan continued to impede full implementation of the peace accord.

South Sudan was well endowed with abundant natural resources, but relations with Sudan had recently involved unexpected tension with regard to the intermittent suspension of oil flow through Sudan, he said. Inside South Sudan, age-old quarrels among some communities over cattle grazing and water points had resurfaced. The task at hand was to literally build a country from scratch, with non-existent physical and social infrastructure. This had led his country to have the worst human development indicators in the world, including high maternity and infant mortality rates, and high illiteracy rates among a population of over 8 million.

There had been some improvements, however, he said. Ten States with popularly elected governors and democratic legislatures had been set up as a nucleus of good governance. Women's literacy, which was as low as 18 per cent in the 1950s, was rising. Women's political participation, currently 25 per cent, was also increasing. Government spending had been reduced, and non-oil revenue collection had considerably increased.

On national security matters, he expressed deep regret over the loss of the Indian peacekeepers, the Russian helicopter crew and the Kenyan and South Sudanese relief workers in Pibor County. Further, he regretted the security impediments in Jonglei, but assured the international community that South Sudan was determined to transform its army, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), into a professional national army that respected human rights and the rule of law, and was committed to protecting civilians. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other humanitarian agencies had been given unhindered access to all parts of the country, including Jonglei State. Another urgent security demand was to train a police force capable of eliminating the country's high crime rate, he said, noting that UNMISS had helped transform hundreds of former combatants into a police force conscious of the rule of law.

The relationship with Sudan had been a mixture of cooperation and squabbles, he said. Fundamentally, both sides acknowledged that given their shared history, there was no alternative to lasting peace other than harmony and cooperation. He called on the parties at war in Sudan to find a durable political solution to the conflict, and a situation for which the Comprehensive Peace Agreement had provided a workable remedy. He urged the international community to play a positive stepped-up role to narrow the gap between both parties. South Sudan remained steadfast in its vision of a country at peace with itself and with its neighbours; a country which was growing in security, rule of law, human rights and progressing to justice and prosperity.

NICOLAS TIANGAYE, Prime Minister and Chief of Government of the National Transitional Government of the Central African Republic, said that his country could not focus on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals because of the crisis it was experiencing. He stated that it was his painful duty to take the floor as the Head of Government to share the human tragedy being experienced by the Central African people, even though their suffering seemed to have been forgotten by the international community.

In a half century of independence, the Central African Republic had gone through recurrent crises which had created constant instability and had made the State fragile and vulnerable to many threats, such as tribalism, nepotism and exclusion policies. A new challenge had surfaced along with the old ones, he said, which was inter-ethnic and interreligious tensions. This, in turn, had led to the circulation of a large number of weapons and to gross violations of human rights, such as massacres of civilians, summary executions and mass rapes and pillages, among others. The need to restore security throughout the territory, particularly for the most vulnerable, was greater than ever. This return to security, peace and constitutional order and cohesion needed to be seen in all sectors of political and social life in the country.

In accordance with the political agreements made at the beginning of the year, he said the Central African Republic had established a Government of Transitional National Unity, a Council of National Transition and a Constitution Transitional Charter, among others. The leaders of the country had also embarked on establishing different sets of measures against the Séléka coalition and worked to disband the Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace, through demobilization, réintégration and regular trials.

Still, he called the humanitarian situation "utterly catastrophic". Food insecurity affected 10.5 per cent of the population, 3,500 children had been recruited by armed groups and 60,000 children were at risk of dying of malnutrition. As for the new stabilization mission in the Central African Republic, he thanked troop-contributing countries, including Cameroon, Gabon, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Chad, as well as Burundi, which was soon set to send a battalion.

The Central African Republic was "crumbling", he said, but he, nevertheless, appreciated the strong signs of solidarity. That multinational force needed a robust mandate from the Security Council in order to match the crisis, but the international community needed to provide logistical support. Across the country, there was an "avalanche of problems"; the rainy season was starting, and arms were proliferating throughout the country. He said that security was the keystone to transition, and financial, technical, material and humanitarian assistance was needed. He

beseeked the international institutions to provide expertise in a coordinated manner, because a failure to conduct his country's transition would mean a collapsed State and the heart of Africa would be disrupted.

IURIE LEANCĂ, Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova, said the High-level Dialogue on Sustainable Development would enforce and put into action the three pillars of sustainable development, which were economic prosperity, social equity and environmental protection — along with the commitment of Member States to deliver in those priority areas. It was important to achieve economic development and solve the problems of energy security and make the environment healthy, he said. And the Government was partnering with stakeholders, including the European Union. Equal access to jobs and education, as well as protecting nature needed to be given priority at the United Nations in the coming years, and it was for this reason that all stakeholders should work hand in hand with Governments and the United Nations to channel funding towards projects that were results-based, he added.

Regarding migration, he said that it could be beneficial to both the countries of origin and destination, with international cooperation, if strengthened, and appropriate policies were in place. In Moldova, migration had contributed to macroeconomic stability over the years. Investing in human capital was certainly a way out of demographic volatility and was an essential condition for the growth of a country, however, Moldova wished to reduce the dependency between development and migration flows.

Moldova was pursuing an intense and comprehensive programme of reform that was political, institution, legislative, demographic, judicial and more, he said. Moldova was committed to building a State based on the rule of law, good governance, transparency and accountability, and had embarked on a new course of technological modernization to enable direct public access to Government services. Such systems would ensure transparency in the relationship between citizens and public officials, combat corruption and reduce bureaucracy. Such reforms were in line with the country's strategic objective and ongoing efforts towards European integration within the European Union.

However, he said that the protracted conflict in the Transnistrian region was a constant challenge as it undermined development efforts in his country. The political settlement of the conflict and the reintegration of the country was a strategic priority, and he envisaged uniting the populations from both banks of the Nistru River, and Moldova was fully committed to dialogue through all channels. His country would continue with a renewed impetus to seek solutions in order to ensure the freedom of movement, improved transportation links and new and real opportunities for business on both banks of the Nistru.

On world matters, he said the refugee crisis in Syria magnified the woes of war, as hundreds of thousands of people were displaced. Moldova had offered protection to a number of Syrian refugees, in recognition of the significant burden Syria's neighbours and other receiving countries faced as they sought to alleviate the Syrian refugees' suffering and offer them a better chance for survival. He said it was time for all sides to take a step back, find a peaceful solution and build the future for their people rather than pursuing fleeting, treacherous and deadly political goals.

MOTSOAHAE THOMAS THABANE, Prime Minister of Lesotho, observed that little progress had been made in many countries in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. For that reason, he welcomed the current Assembly session's theme: "The Post-2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage". That agenda must be an integral framework that would build upon the success and failures of the Millennium targets. "It is time for this august body to come together and exercise its collective responsibility to finalize this shared goal of articulating and shaping a development agenda that is inclusive and people centred," he said. The new agenda must be premised upon the sovereign equality of all States, while recognizing their interdependence and mutually reinforcing roles.

Equally important, in his view, was the need to pay special attention to the perils of climate change on the physical world, as well as the destruction of its ecosystems, all of which resulted in land degradation and contributed to the decline of agricultural productivity. Agriculture was the mainstay of small economies, such as Lesotho. In order to address that challenge, agriculture and food security must be given the necessary prominence in the envisaged development agenda. Likewise, sustainable mountain development was an imperative for people's survival in countries like Lesotho, where more than 60 per cent of the land area was covered by mountains.

The state of peace and security in the world was gradually getting worse, he said. Possession of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction remained the principal threat to humanity's survival. The widespread sectarian strife in the Middle East and elsewhere, coupled with xenophobia, were some of the great challenges to global peace. "Sadly, discord remains among UN Member States on how to overcome these problems," he said. Of particular concern in that regard, was the situation in Syria, which posed a serious and

growing threat to international peace and security. That crisis had the potential to engulf the whole Middle East region with global ramifications. The international community must find a quick and lasting solution to the conflict.

“Whether in Syria or anywhere else, perpetrators of crimes against humanity must be held legally accountable for their actions”, he asserted. A decade had passed since the responsibility to protect concept had been initiated. But, it had yet to become a reality. The fact that crimes of mass atrocity continued to be committed around the world was a stark reminder that now was the time for a collective approach to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. From the Horn of Africa and across the Sahel Region to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Africa was facing a rise in lawlessness and conflicts. When celebrating the jubilee of the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), African leaders had resolved to build a safe, secure and peaceful Africa from now into the future.

With the presence of extremist groups and terrorist entities in the Middle East and elsewhere, terrorism continued to pose a serious threat to world peace, security and development, he said. He condemned the recent “barbaric” killings of innocent people in Nairobi by Al-Shabaab. In face of the numerous global challenges, promotion of a more effective global governance must be at the forefront of the international agenda. “We, the membership of the UN should strive for an international organization with improved efficiency and effectiveness,” he said.

ELIO DI RUPO, Prime Minister of Belgium, said that it was in his country that chemical weapons had been used for the first time during the First World War. The world, however, had made the same mistake, as the Syria crisis had shown. Since his last address to the General Assembly, he said that he wondered how many hopes had been fulfilled, but also how many atrocities had been committed over the course of those past 12 months. He thought that world leaders had to be as courageous as those women and men who were fighting everywhere in the streets for their dignity. “There must be a veto against tyranny,” he added. The only possible way forward was multilateralism. Belgium, in fact, was the fifteenth contributor to the budget of the United Nations. The “responsibility to protect” was crucial, that is why his country had convened in 2014 a conference in Brussels on the prevention of genocide, he added.

“We obtain results when we act together,” he continued, but results were not always permanent: in order to be steady, peace must be nurtured. He welcomed the efforts undertaken in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, such as the strengthening of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), through which the Security Council and the Secretary-General had shown their commitment to protect civilians, to reduce the suffering of the Congolese people after years of massacres, mass rapes and the recruitment of child soldiers by armed groups. He said that to stabilize the region as a whole, territorial integrity was crucial. All foreign interference in the country must come to an end, he added, and structural reforms must be initiated to establish the rule of law and the well-being of the Congolese people.

He said that “declaring wars is easier than building bridges”, and that “building walls is easier than building schools and hospitals”. Expressing his support to the endeavours of the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi, to bring the parties to the negotiation table, he strongly believed that any solution to this kind of conflict must be political, implemented through the law. It was the law that organized human society, he added, and protected the vulnerable. It was the law that was essential to regulate life, as without it, human beings were left exposed to other fellow human beings. It was the law that avoided impunity and enabled people to emerge from dictatorships and oppression. It was the law that guaranteed freedoms like the right of women to study, the right to choose a religion or the right to be in a homosexual partnership, among others. Belgium guaranteed all these fundamental freedoms, he said. Turning to the Palestinian question, his country welcomed the resumption of the negotiations and supported the two-State solution. It, however, stood firmly against the establishment of settlements.

He welcomed the United Nations initiative to convene in New York a forum on sustainable development. All countries, one way or another, were affected by the depletion of natural resources, he said, so “we must remain mobilized”. He said that his country hoped the work of the post-2015 development agenda could be combined with the goals of Rio+20 in a single negotiation framework.

Mentioning espionage and cybercrime, he expressed his support to the question posed by Dilma Rousseff, President of Brazil: In the name of security and the fight to terrorism, was it possible to flout the right to the protection of private life everywhere, but particularly on the Internet? A framework needed to be created, so that the web could remain an instrument of freedom, where everybody could securely communicate. Finally, he reminded that, in 2014, his country would solemnly commemorate the centenary of the First World War, to honour the youth of 50 countries who had died to save Belgium and to educate the youth of today to become militants of peace.



LAURENT SALVADOR LAMOTHE, Prime Minister and Minister for Planning and External Cooperation of Haiti, recalled that his country had been in critical condition following a devastating earthquake in January 2010. The natural disasters following the earthquake had only exacerbated the situation, and today, the country was facing the future with optimism. The implementation of constitutional mechanisms pertaining to the rule of law was an ongoing Government priority, he said, adding that, following reforms in the security sector, Haiti now enjoyed a good climate for investment, which was critical for economic growth. And despite a lack of resources, the Government had allocated significant funds to the body responsible for ensuring wide participation in upcoming elections, signalling a democratic shift.

On education, he said more than 1.8 million children enjoyed the free school programme established by the Government, and now the goal was to improve the quality of education and implement a programme to combat illiteracy. \$150 million had been allocated for social assistance, a first for Haiti as it sought to help its most vulnerable citizens. On food security, he said the Government had defined a national policy focused on short-term goals aimed at stabilizing the prices of basic consumer goods and providing basic assistance, he said. Medium- and long-term goals aimed to increase national production to reduce dependence on imported food.

Social programmes aimed at helping the poorest had already assisted more than a million people — thousands of mothers, students, persons with disabilities and disaster victims, he said. Moreover, of the 1.5 million refugees displaced by the earthquake, who had been living in terrible conditions, more than 1.2 million had been relocated and re-housed. With the prevalence of certain diseases, as well as high child mortality rates, millions of Haitians did not enjoy access to adequate quality health care, he said. The October 2012 cholera outbreak had killed 8,000 people and infected 600,000 others. While the United Nations supported Government efforts to combat the disease, more support was needed, he said, proposing the establishment of a joint committee with the United Nations to find the means to eradicate cholera. Meanwhile, the Government, with national and international partners, had managed to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS, reducing the number of those infected to 2.2 million from 5.5 million in 2000. However, treatment must be more affordable and the network of health-care officials strengthened, he emphasized.

Expressing “extreme” concern over climate change, he noted that a large area of vegetation cover had disappeared. Programmes had been set up and others drafted with the aim of replanting, reforestation and ensuring quality drinking water. In addition, significant efforts had been made to ensure gender equality through initiatives to provide women with access to highly coveted positions in Government, he said, pointing out that 35 per cent of the current Cabinet members were women. However, much remained to be done to ensure women’s full emancipation, particularly among the most vulnerable in terms of education and access to health care. Haiti had done a great deal with too little, he emphasized, adding that if the international community had respected all its financial commitments, the results would have been much better.

JOHN KEY, Prime Minister of New Zealand, said the lack of agreement among the Security Council’s permanent members had permitted the dreadful humanitarian crisis unfolding in Syria. The Assad regime had been shielded through the use of the veto in the Council, but given the evidence of chemical weapons use, it was imperative for the Council to act immediately in holding the regime accountable and protecting civilians.

Reflecting on his country’s long relationship with the United Nations, dating back to the founding conference in San Francisco, he said New Zealand had a strong preference for a rules-based multilateral approach. It drew strength from global agreements and internationally set rules and standards. New Zealand would continue to negotiate bilateral and regional trade agreements, but could see an important role for the World Trade Organization (WTO), whose rules were applicable worldwide, regardless of a country’s size or wealth.

He said climate change was a challenge for his country, although it had taken concrete actions, including the introduction of an extensive emissions trading scheme. It had also invested in the Global Research Alliance in order to manage agricultural greenhouse gases and reduce emissions by 5 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020. New Zealand had taken that initiative under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change rather than the Kyoto Protocol because the latter covered only a small percentage of global emissions and the world needed to unite under a single legal framework.

Welcoming recent efforts to resume the Middle East peace process, he said that, as long as the problem was left unresolved, there could be no assured peace in the region. New Zealand would also watch with interest and hope for the reinstatement of democracy in Fiji, he said. Earlier this year, New Zealand had withdrawn the bulk of its forces from Afghanistan, but only after it had provided support for the construction of schools and hospitals, as well as expertise to ensure significant improvements in the agricultural sector. He applauded the work of the African Union and its subregional bodies, and said he recognized the importance of the Arms Trade Treaty. New Zealand

looked forward to the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to be held in Samoa in 2014, and would be a major supporter of that important event.

BRUNO RODRÍGUEZ PARRILLA, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, spoke on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), and reaffirmed the region's commitment to international peace and security, as well as to reinforcing the climate of peace prevailing in Latin America and the Caribbean. The region was also committed to consolidating a zone of peace in the entire region to ensure that differences between nations would be resolved peacefully, through dialogue and negotiation, in conformity with international law. At the recent high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament, CELAC had reiterated its deep concern over the threat to humanity posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use. There was an urgent need to advance towards the priority objective of nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

CELAC member countries had also presented, for the first time, a joint initiative at the Human Rights Council on the right to peace, he said, expressing hope that the General Assembly would approve it after it evolved into a declaration. He reiterated CELAC's strong support for the "legitimate rights of Argentina in its dispute over the sovereignty of the Malvinas Islands", and the region's permanent interest in the resumption of negotiations between Argentina and the United Kingdom for a peaceful and final solution to that dispute. CELAC also reiterated its support for the current dialogue between the Colombian Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, intended to end the internal conflict which had affected that sister nation's political, social and economic development for more than 50 years.

Turning to the question of terrorism, he declared: "We reiterate our absolute condemnation of terrorism, and reaffirm our commitment to combat it in all its forms and manifestations." He added: "We strongly reject the unilateral and illegitimate assessments, lists and certifications made by some developed countries which affect countries of the region, in particular those referring to terrorism, drug trafficking and other related measures." Directly citing Syria in that regard, he reiterated CELAC's call for peace and the observance of the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law, including international humanitarian law, and demanded the creation of the necessary conditions to move towards a negotiated political solution to the conflict in that country.

On other issues of interest to the region, he denounced "global espionage" against CELAC member countries, saying it was in violation of international law. Regarding reform of the international system, he renewed CELAC's commitment to multilateralism and comprehensive reform of the United Nations system, and to the democratization of international decision-making, particularly in the Security Council. Finally, he welcomed the formal adoption of the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, despite the lack of political will on the part of several developed nations, which had prevented agreement on predictable financial resources and mechanisms for the effective transfer of technology to developing countries.

RAMTANE LAMAMRA, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria, said that overcoming poverty was a long-standing endeavour. It required appropriate public policies, coupled with effective international cooperation and the consistent productive flows of investment, along with a greater complementarity between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions in the context of the "peace, security, and development triad". A global approach must reflect the disparity among countries and regions, good governance, the fight against corruption and the preservation of the environment. With this year's debate topic, it was a question of reaching a global, ambitious agreement for the promotion of sustainable development goals that contained concrete agreements, on the principle of differentiated but shared responsibilities.

Algeria would achieve most of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, he said. His country was also projecting its own development within the coherence of the "Great United Maghreb", a project initiated by the country's President, aimed at making all Algerian men and women free from fear and need. Algeria was participating in the shared destiny of the African peoples, and was gratified at Africa's steady progress towards conflict prevention and settlement. He also welcomed the achievement of good governance, human rights and pluralist democracy on the continent. This was particularly welcome in the north of Mali which had been liberated from the hold of terrorist and criminal groups, and constitutional order in the country had been restored with the clear success of the presidential election.

Algeria was the target of international terrorism, and was making an effective contribution to joint efforts to promote collective security in the Sahel and Saharan region in that regard, he said. Algeria was harmoniously blending its voice and initiatives to those of the African Union, and was resolutely committed to the right of peoples to self determination. In that light, Algeria supported the Special Envoy to the Secretary-General, Christopher Ross, in bringing Morocco and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro to the table, so that the people of the Western Sahara could freely determine their own future.

His country was also supportive of other Arab peoples who were experiencing difficult transitions across the region, he said. Those peoples were confronting many challenges in political and socioeconomic transformations that were particularly delicate. But military solutions were neither possible nor desirable, because they exacerbated partisan interests and dissent. He rejected the threat and use of weapons of mass destruction, and condemned the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian conflict, regardless of who the perpetrators were and regardless of the circumstances. He welcomed the Russian Federation's initiative, and the United States' agreement, and called for the holding of the Geneva II conference and the attainment of a political solution for the parties in Syria. Further, a just settlement of the State of Palestine remained at the heart of any question of achieving regional stabilization, and he hoped the international community would redouble efforts.

SAMURA KAMARA, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone, pointed out that inequality was on the rise, particularly in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, where food insecurity and malnutrition were still prevalent. In other regions, access to health and education had been expanding, although the quality of those services remained questionable. Hence, the theme for the current Assembly session was appropriate, since as the sustainable development goals must be at the very core in addressing the causes and consequences not only of poverty, but also of conflict, violence and natural disasters.

Describing the Arms Trade Treaty as a significant and historic achievement, he expressed hope that it would halt the illegal transfer of conventional weapons into the wrong hands. The escalation of conflicts in the developing world, particularly Africa, could now be largely regulated and minimized, he said. November's presidential, parliamentary and local government elections had signalled the country's readiness to move into a more developmental phase of peacebuilding. With support from the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office, as well as international partners and treaties, Sierra Leone would continue to make gains in good governance, human rights and gender equality.

He said the "Agenda for Prosperity", launched in July, was Sierra Leone's road map to the post-2015 development agenda. Building a sustainable future for all Sierra Leoneans required sound macroeconomic management and fiscal policies for a society with strong institutions. As a post-conflict country, Sierra Leone had good credentials and was a deserving candidate for continued international support, he said. Sierra Leone had recently established a commission for persons with disabilities, enacted the Sexual Offences Act 2012 to address sexual violence against women and girls, and was currently promoting a bill that would enhance women's participation in decision-making processes.

LAURENT KAVAKURE, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burundi, gave an overview of his Government's achievements in reference to the Millennium Development Goals, as well as of its stance vis-à-vis different international questions. Burundi was preparing the general elections for 2015, ensuring that they would be conducted in a transparent and free manner. A truth and reconciliation commission was about to be established, as envisioned in the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. In December 2012, his country had adopted the "Vision Burundi 2025", which sought to promote economic growth and regional integration, among other things, he continued. Also in 2012, a strategic framework for growth and combating poverty had been launched, which focused on peacebuilding, increase of agricultural production and a more dynamic private sector, among other things.

Since the central theme of this Assembly was the Millennium Development Goals, he provided details on each of them. The Goals were the promise leaders had made to the poor, he said. Goal 2 on ensuring primary education for all could be achieved by 2015, as in 2010, the net enrolment rate had been of 96 per cent. Regarding Goal 4 on decreasing the mortality rate of children under the age of five, instead, his country was far from the target, but progress had been made, particularly thanks to an easier access to health-care facilities. Burundi's position vis-à-vis the post-2015 development agenda should focus on governance, inequality, energy, water and access to basic social services, among other things, he continued.

As for peacebuilding, important progress had been made, so he hoped that his country could gradually withdraw from the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission in order to leave the spot to countries more in need. Burundi had also played an important role in the international arena, as it had been one of the first two nations to contribute troops to AMISOM, he continued. Furthermore, it had participated in missions in Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti and the Sudan, and was about to deploy troops to Mali and the Central African Republic. He touched upon questions, such as the security situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Egypt, Syria, where he encouraged the parties to go to the negotiation table, and hoped for the realization of the two-State solution in regard to Palestine and Israel.

"Terrorism has become, in various forms, a source of daily concerns," he said. Burundi firmly condemned the heinous attack that had taken place in Kenya and supported the global anti-terrorism strategy adopted in 2006.

Concluding, he expressed its hope for a review of the functioning of the International Criminal Court, as well as of the Rome Statute.

JOSÉ ANTONIO MEADE KURIBREÑA, Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Mexico, said that in the past two weeks, his country had experienced an unprecedented and simultaneous arrival of two hurricanes, Ingrid and Manuel, one on its Pacific coast and the other on the Atlantic. Such increased vulnerability underscored the urgency to act. He welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to hold a climate change summit in September 2014. He also condemned the attacks against civilians in Nairobi and expressed condolences to the families of the victims, saying such acts demonstrate the need to remain vigilant in the fight against terrorism.

He noted that Mexico supported a political and peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis through diplomatic initiatives, in accordance with the agreement reached between the United States and Russian Federation to eliminate all chemical weapons in Syria. On Security Council reform, he said, the organ must truly represent the international community by not merely extending privileges to the few. In confronting the world drug problem, he said that a more effective and comprehensive response that encompassed a health perspective and a framework for respecting human rights was needed. He welcomed the Antigua Declaration in OAS, as a first step towards the United Nations' 2016 Special Session. On the fight against organized crime, he stated that it must follow the rule of law. In that context, when the privacy rights of any citizen by any Government were invaded, a full investigation must be undertaken and violator held accountable. On free trade and building mechanisms that facilitate the free movement of people, goods and capital, he referred to the Pacific Alliance, which had a spirit of plurality and transparency.

Despite the success of the Millennium Development Goals, inequality and a lack of participation and access to development continued to affect the poorest, both in developing and highly developed countries. The post-2015 development agenda must address the gap between the haves and have-nots, he said. He also underscored the importance of issues relating to persons with disabilities, migrants and indigenous peoples. On a national level, he noted that Mexico was undertaking initiatives to democratize access to quality education, telecommunications, the financial system and social security.

NASSIROU BAKO ARIFARI, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration, La Francophonie and Beninese Abroad of Benin, said that, two years from the 2015 deadline established to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, States had made major efforts to meet their targets. Assessments had shown, however, that least developed countries were falling far behind, despite significant progress. Meeting the Goals had become a crucial Government priority, and it had mobilized many resources. Benin expected to achieve at least five of the eight Goals.

It was important to ensure that the post-2015 agenda included and prioritized those Goals that had not been achieved on time, he said. There was a galvanizing vision to build a unique programme covering all points to ensure that everyone on the planet could be on a sustainable development path, so that they could all have access to shared prosperity. It was important that situations deemed most worrisome receive the most attention, he said, expressing strong support for the "a life of dignity for all", as cited in the Secretary-General's report.

He said Istanbul Programme of Action should be perceived as an integral part of the post-2015 agenda. It would ensure the transition of half of the least developed countries out of extreme poverty. The project already enjoyed strong support from the United Nations and some development partners, he said, calling upon the Assembly to assist in that proactive initiative to help those countries make the jump towards industrialization. That would enable them to create decent jobs and make the most of their demographic resources, he said, welcoming the Secretary-General's Education First Initiative.

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