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MINISTER DESCRIBES USE OF FORCE TO ADDRESS PROBLEMS AS 'INEFFECTIVE, MEANINGLESS

AND DESTRUCTIVE', ON FOURTH DAY OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S ANNUAL DEBATE

Speakers Hail Accord on Chemical Weapons, Resumed Israeli-Palestinian Talks

Strategies used in the global fight against terrorism came under scrutiny today as the General Assembly entered the fourth day of its general debate.

The Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation said that a common argument had been deployed recently to prove that the use of force was the most effective method to address problems, although all experience of such interventions had demonstrated that it was ineffective, meaningless and destructive. Threats of military force to ensure one's own interests in the Middle East under the pretext of the "remaining demand for leadership" were unacceptable.

He went on to emphasize that the desire to portray developments in the Arab world as a struggle for democracy against tyranny, or of good against evil, had long obscured the problems associated with the rising wave of extremism now spilling over to other regions. The recent terrorist attack in Kenya was a clear example of the gravity of that threat, he said, pointing out that groups comprising radicals from all over the world were the most combat-capable units in various opposition movements. "The goals they pursue have nothing to do with democracy," he stressed. Based on intolerance, they were aimed at destroying secular States and establishing caliphates.

From the very beginning of the turmoil, he continued, the Russian Federation had called for a common international approach. It would combine support for the Arab people in their transformation, and the understanding that objectively those processes would be lengthy and sometimes painful, and that it would be quite important not to harm them through "rude outside interference". It was important to take into account the complex developments associated with a strenuous search for compromises among various ethnic and religious groups making up the mosaic of Arab societies, he said.

The Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom said it was not surprising to hear some argue that liberal democracy had had its day. "We must be honest," he added. "The forces of insularity and isolationism have gained momentum in recent years." Making a clear distinction between open and closed societies, he pointed out that liberal democracies in Europe and across the Atlantic had weathered profound economic difficulties and yet stood strong. Whereas open societies chose democracy and freedom at home, engagement and responsibility abroad, closed societies, by contrast, suppressed the liberty of their citizens, drew a veil across their actions and withdrew from shared international life.

Democracy had not fallen in Egypt, he said, pointing out that a single set of elections had failed, and that the country must now return to the path of inclusive democracy. In Libya, the General National Congress was working towards elections in early 2014. Morocco had a new constitution and, for the first time, a Prime Minister elected by Parliament. In Syria, the international community would act in unison, he said. “Well-functioning democracy cannot emerge overnight, be exported by the West, or dropped on a country from 8,000 feet — that much we have learned from the failures of the past,” he stressed.

However, poverty was as great a threat to stability and freedom as conflict and oppression, he said, pledging that, despite financial strain, the United Kingdom would not balance its books on the backs of the world’s poorest people. It was the only country in the Group of 20 to have met its target of devoting 0.7 per cent of gross national income to development aid. “We have held true to our word,” he declared.

Pakistan’s Prime Minister said his country did not seek more international aid, instead preferring better trade, market access, investment and partnerships. Referring to the 40,000 Pakistanis killed by terrorists, he said that combating terrorism required adherence to international law, emphasizing that armed drone strikes violated his country’s territorial integrity. Terrorism had no religion, so profiling Muslims as terrorists was the “most insidious form of contemporary racism”, he stressed, adding that stereotyping must stop.

Iraq’s Vice-President stressed that there could be no development agenda — whether pre- or post-2015 — while terrorism continued to claim lives. Nor could there be sustainable development while wars continued and peaceful coexistence and security remained out of reach.

The President of Mali said his country’s situation was symptomatic of the wider situation across the Sahel, where trafficking in drugs, arms and human beings was rife. Advanced weaponry was passing through Mali, and small terrorist groups were marauding in the country. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) had countered the threat of “jihadist aggression”, and now international support was needed to continue national reconciliation efforts, particularly reform in the security and justice sectors.

Other speakers today included the Presidents of Gambia, Tonga and the United Republic of Tanzania, as well as the Vice Presidents of Angola, Honduras and the Seychelles.

The Assembly also heard from the Prime Ministers of Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Bangladesh, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, San Marino, Montenegro, Viet Nam, and the Czech Republic.

Also delivering statements were the Foreign Ministers of the Republic of Korea, China, Uzbekistan, Australia, Netherlands, Congo, Luxembourg, Greece, Niger, Sudan, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Finland and Venezuela.

Speaking in exercise of the right of reply were representatives of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea.

The General Assembly will reconvene at 9 a.m. on 28 September to continue its general debate.

Background

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

Statements

AL HADJI YAHYA A.J.J. JAMMEH, President of Gambia, said that civil strife and terrorism caused by the behaviour of some world Powers were undermining human security and even the viability of States. Poverty, hunger and disease still decimated countless communities, while the capacity to respond to man-made humanitarian crises remained discriminatory and inadequate, he stated. Noting the United Nations duties to find lasting solutions for peace and for the protection of human life, he called for informed and honest decisions, instead of “those driven by the interest of a few self-appointed gods thereby causing irreparable damage to the social fabric and economies of these countries in conflict.”

He also supported the view that regional organizations in the Middle East should be closely involved in negotiations for a solution to the Syrian conflict. Warning that attention had been diverted to the use of chemical weapons, he argued that the Security Council and all Powers behind that conflict must not only prevent the use of chemical weapons but also bring the war to an immediate end without preconditions.

As for the 2013 Millennium Development Goals report on Africa’s performance, he noted both substantial progress and remaining challenges. Among the latter was the difficulty of translating economic growth into decent job opportunities, improving service delivery and minimizing income, gender and spatial inequalities. Gambia was on track to achieve the target for net enrolment in primary education and literacy rates among those aged 15—24. Protecting African livelihoods required international, regional and country approaches to address both severe weather hazards and conflicts orchestrated by foreign Powers. Mitigating the adverse effects of climate change and putting an immediate end to the looting of natural resources by multinational companies called for a timely and decisive global response.

He identified the three biggest threats to human existence: excessive greed and addiction to material wealth, mostly through violent or immoral schemes; obsession with world domination, including the resolve to use nuclear, biological and chemical weapons; and homosexuality in all its forms and manifestations being promoted as a human right by some Powers. Greed had led not only to colonization and the plundering of African and Asian human and material resources, but also to two wars that had been wrongly termed World Wars. On obsession with domination, he argued that all forms of human tragedy and catastrophe emanated from the same Western Powers. Regarding homosexuality, he said that all living things needed to reproduce for posterity. They would become extinct when they could no longer reproduce. Any person promoting the end of human reproduction was promoting human extinction.

Turning to other matters, he welcomed the democratically elected Government in Mali and called for a lasting solution to the political impasse in Guinea-Bissau. He pointed out that the Security Council had become a barrier to progress, peace and security in some instances “where lopsided decisions can only be classified as racist and misguided, and therefore unacceptable”. Africa’s legitimate quest for full representation on the Council needed to be urgently heeded. He also urged the United States to lift sanctions against Cuba, advocated for the United Nations membership of the Republic of China (Taiwan), and supported the two-State solution for Israel and Palestine.

TUPOU VI, King of Tonga, said that energy was the “golden thread” connecting economic growth and social equity. Sustainable energy was central in reaching the Millennium Development Goals, including many of the goals that extended far beyond the energy sector including eradicating poverty, increasing food production, providing clean water, improving public health, enhancing education, and empowering women. A shift towards more sustainable energy was also essential in addressing environmental sustainability and in tackling climate change.

However, the lack of reliable and recent data hindered the true value of assistance from development partners, he said. Whereby 60 per cent of project financing was absorbed by technical assistance, pilot projects, and prefeasibility studies, only 40 per cent, and in some cases less, was allocated on hardware. Three objectives of the Sustainable Energy for All initiative — universal energy access,

increased efficiency and renewable energy — could provide a solid framework to build on further, while keeping them fully adaptable to different circumstances and priorities at the regional, national and local levels

He commended the Secretary-General for his initiative to convene a high-level summit meeting on climate change in 2014, saying that small island developing States urgently required developed countries to enhance their mitigation to bridge the pre-2020 gap in a timely and effective manner. Furthermore, it was imperative that climate change be included as a cross-cutting issue of sustainable development, especially for small island developing States. Oceans were a priority for them and must be prominently featured in the post-2015 agenda.

On a national level, he said that Tonga had adopted the United Nations Development Programme Millennium Development Goals Acceleration Framework and had chosen to apply it to the Millennium Goal on combating non-communicable diseases. In that regard, the Government prioritized key interventions in several areas such as increasing local food supply and creating income generating opportunities for women; providing curative health service; reviewing policies affecting food, tobacco, alcohol and physical activity; and advocating healthy lifestyles.

Lastly, he called for a swift and peaceful resolution to the conflict in Syria. On regional issues, Tonga endorsed the views expressed in the Marshall Islands Communiqué.

BOUBACAR KEITA, President of Mali, paid tribute to the various international organizations — including the United Nations, regional organizations, States and military forces — that had worked to find a solution to the crisis in Mali. He said that despite the “jihadist aggression” Mali was looking ahead calmly, reasonably and confidently. With the support of friendly States, Mali was ready to stand tall. A path to national reconciliation had begun, with processes launched through the Ouagadougou Accords. Recent presidential elections had completed the political transition, and the elections had been confirmed as credible and transparent. Legislative elections were slated for the end of 2013 with the aim of finalizing the process.

He understood the yearning of the people for reconciliation and development and had held meetings with the chiefs of Northern armed groups in Bamako. There, he had reminded them of Mali’s territorial integrity and the State’s secular nature. Candid, inclusive political dialogue, he said, was in the cards with everything on the table except for any form of independence for the North. Decentralization was one route to improving inter-communal relations, as local authorities would have more control over resources. Eventually, a national conference would discuss the North. International support was needed to continue national reconciliation, particularly reforms needed for the security sector and Mali’s institutions. The justice system had received particular emphasis with the aim of convincing Malians that they lived in a place where the rule of law would prevail.

He said Mali’s situation was symptomatic of the wider situation across the Sahel, where trafficking of drugs, arms and humans was rife. Some very advanced weaponry was passing through the country, and small terrorist groups were marauding. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) was deployed to counter that threat, and he congratulated the United Nations, and especially the Security Council, on a successfully-run mission. Now Mali was at a crossroads. He welcomed the report of the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy, Romano Prodi, and stressed the need for strengthened cooperation among States of the region against religious extremism and organized crime.

The Assembly’s focus on the post-2015 development agenda spoke to the uncertainties and anxieties facing the world due to economic instability, environmental deterioration and natural disasters. Ten years after adoption of the Millennium Development Goals, insufficient results had been seen. Particularly lacking had been commitment to Millennium Goal 8 on global partnerships for development.

An open and equitable trading system was vital to future progress and the new agenda needed to prioritize poverty eradication and environmental and social sustainability.

Despite the United Nations work on reform, more was needed, especially regarding the Security Council and revitalization of the General Assembly. The General Assembly was the main deliberative body and needed to occupy a central position. It needed the means to implement its resolutions. He expressed his support for the African Union's Ezulwini and Sirte Declarations, which called for two new permanent seats for Africa and five new non-permanent members. Such an arrangement would better reflect existing geopolitical realities and repair historical injustices. He underlined the fact that Africa was currently the only region lacking a seat.

KHUDHEIR AL-KHUZAIE, Vice-President of Iraq, described his country's efforts to overcome the consequences of the former regime's social and economic policies, while pursuing the Millennium Goals and sustainable development. The national budget was expected to grow, and 40 per cent of it would be used to finance basic services and infrastructure improvements. The National Development Plan for 2013-2017 saw oil remaining the main engine of economic growth, he said, adding that, with production expected to continue its steady growth, Iraq was focusing on environmental sustainability and the green economy. The National Development Plan's strategic goals included alleviating poverty, cutting and reducing unemployment, increasing per capita income, reducing infant mortality, improving school-enrolment rates and ensuring better management of deserts and water resources.

He called for strengthened cooperation between countries of the global North and the South, including the fulfilment of financial obligations, technology transfer, and help to address water scarcity as well as the fallout from conflicts and international economic sanctions. He stressed the importance of effective, accountable institutions, and the need for a post-2015 development plan underpinned by a new spirit of solidarity, responsibility, cooperation and integration. Of particular importance were education, women's empowerment and human rights, he stressed. Iraq looked forward to the completion of the tasks assigned to the working group mandated to address financing for development following the Rio+20 Conference, he said, expressing hope for a sound basis for financing the sustainable development goals of and the post-2015 development agenda.

There could be no development agenda — whether pre- or post-2015 — while organized terrorism continued to claim lives, he continued, emphasizing also that there could be no sustainable development while war continued and peaceful coexistence as well as security remained out of reach. The people of Iraq had suffered tremendously from the horrors of war caused by the “recklessness and follies of the defunct Saddam regime”, he said. Expressing deep concern over the crisis in Syria, he said it posed a threat to Iraq's security and stability, and to the integrity of its territory and people. Iraq invited the Assembly to support its peace initiative with the aim of allaying concerns that a “small spark” could trigger a large-scale regional war.

Underlining the importance of peaceful solutions to problems between peoples, nations and Governments, he said Iraq had adopted democratic political mechanisms and had an “open-door” foreign policy. A recent national conference on social peace had rejected violence, terrorism and aggression, he said, adding that it had called for tolerance, national reconciliation and cooperation. Iraq had also worked closely with the international community to overcome the effects of sanctions imposed upon the country following the invasion of Kuwait. Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) had terminated the country's obligations to Kuwait, and having consigned the crises and problems between the two countries to the past, Iraq looked forward to a prosperous future.

He said that, despite his staunch faith in all humanity, he was not precluded from siding with the oppressed, disadvantaged or vulnerable, and was not prevented from expressing solidarity with the Arab and Islamic nation. Among them, the Palestinians still suffered oppression, and it was incumbent on international institutions to stand by a people demanding the realization of their rights and independence. Calling for a Middle East free of nuclear weapons, he also emphasized the need to reform United Nations

bodies like the Security Council so they would better reflect the twenty-first century world and be more representative, transparent and responsive.

MANUEL DOMINGOS VICENTE, Vice-President of Angola, said that his country continued to contribute actively to peacekeeping efforts, assuming responsibilities at the international level, in particular with regards to Africa. The Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes Region, signed in February 2013, was both the most appropriate mechanism for peaceful resolution of the conflict in the eastern part of the country and the best guarantee for stability in the region. He reiterated the call to signatories to respect their commitments and condemned the threats posed to civilian populations, particularly in the city of Goma.

He reiterated the importance of revitalizing the United Nations, particularly in regards to reform of the Security Council, which should reflect a fair representation of all regions. Expressing concern over violence in Egypt, he called on the transitional authorities to act with moderation and urged the African Union and the international community to continue to work towards a solution. The international community must also act to find a solution to the Syrian conflict, under the mediation of the United Nations and the Arab League. On the Israel and Palestine conflict, he expressed support for mediation efforts undertaken by United States Secretary of State John Kerry. A Palestinian State with the territorial borders drawn in 1967 must coexist peacefully with Israel.

He welcomed the normalization of the legal and constitutional framework of some African countries that after periods of instability had successfully held free and fair elections and were now making strides towards building democratic States and the rule of law. He expressed solidarity to the Malian President in his process of reconciliation and reconstruction of that country. He noted that other countries had also engaged in the implementation of agreements aimed at resolving crises, most notably Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan. He stated that the international financial crisis had presented difficulties to developing countries on the continent to finance economic growth and mobilize resources to improve the lives of their people. Angola reiterated support for initiatives aimed at the liberalization of international trade in the context of fair and balanced competitiveness. The “Rio+20” Conference on Sustainable Development had provided a sound basis for policy making, and to that end strengthening international support and increasing the financial resources of the United Nations budget were critical. He called for an end to the embargo on Cuba, saying that the measure violated international law.

On a national level, Angola was experiencing a dynamic process of reconstruction and development, marked by the consolidation of macroeconomic stability through policy aimed at promoting economic diversification, he said. Having joined the programme of eligible countries to graduate from the least developed countries category, Angola reaffirmed its commitment to implement a programme of diversification of its domestic production, expand employment opportunities, and decrease its dependence on imports of consumer products and oil. Aware of the challenge to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals, the Government continued to develop programmes aimed at reducing existing social inequality and fighting hunger and poverty. He noted that upgrading social infrastructure, including the construction of roads, railways, electricity, and water supply and distribution systems, continued to be a challenge for the Government.

MARÍA ANTONIETA GUILLÉN DE BOGRÁN, Vice President of Honduras, said that her country had successfully overcome the severe political crisis of 2009 through normalizing national security, securing ties of close cooperation with over 100 countries, and restoring confidence in the foreign credit market. Membership in major regional forums had also strengthened its energy sector. In line with a process to “heal the wounds”, Honduras adopted a long-term plan on economic growth and social equality. Government, business unions, workers, farmers and civil society were working together for the same results, she said. To further strengthen democratic process, she pointed to a Government initiative to hand over to the incoming Administration a set of principles aimed at consolidating social policy and guaranteeing sustainability of social institutions.

Honduras was victim of attacks from foreign aggressors, she said, referring to drug trafficking. Noting a reduction in the number of homicides, she said the Government had undertaken reform of the security and justice sectors, adopted a tax to strengthen citizen safety, provided training to defence services and enacted policies to protect youth from falling prey to drug crime. Although halting the violence seemed like a positive sign, it was insufficient given the high level of crime Honduras experienced. The future Government would have to “stay the course with a firm hand” and continue to strengthen security and justice institutions. Effectively combating global crime required international and regional efforts as they were more decisive and effective in enforcing the principle of shared but differentiated responsibility between countries that were producers and those that were consumers of drugs.

On human rights, she noted that her Government had established new sectors that addressed justice, torture and cruel treatment and trafficking of persons. It had also ensured the signing of incoming Presidents of a pact on human rights. On the Millennium Development Goals, Honduras had made considerable progress in the food security sector with major efforts undertaken to eradicate hunger through a number of programmes. Noting the multidimensional aspect of the food security problem, she pointed out that between 2010 and 2012, her Administration reduced undernourishment by 21 per cent. To ensure that progress was sustained, she stressed the need for enhanced partnership within the alliance of the “dry corridor”, which would aim at eradicating poverty and hunger in its most vulnerable areas.

On education, she noted an increase in enrolment in pre-schools. Classrooms must never be closed, she stressed, noting the increase in the number of school days and greater quality of education. She mentioned programmes enacted on gender equality and reducing child mortality and an immunization programme that had reached more than 90 per cent of those under the age of two. On maritime space in the Gulf of Fonseca, which Honduras shared with El Salvador and Nicaragua, she underscored the need for balance between conservation and development. Since October 2012, Honduras had been requesting that the Security Council provide all necessary support to resolve the matter. She reiterated the importance for coastal States to respect the decision made by the International Court of Justice to avoid any territorial and maritime claims that would move away from the goal of making the Pacific Ocean, as well as the Gulf, productive and prosperous.

DANNY FAURE, Vice-President of the Seychelles, looked ahead to 2014 when the year of small island developing States would be marked. As such a State, Seychelles’ economy was based on connectivity to the rest of the world and its security and environmental safety depended on many factors beyond the Government’s control. International partnerships were vital to addressing both the opportunities and risks Seychelles faced and he stressed that small island developing States should help to shape the post-2015 development agenda.

In formulating the sustainable development goals, States should recall that if the islands were safe, the planet as whole could be sustained. Having hosted a preparatory meeting, he looked forward to the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, which the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and the President of the General Assembly would attend, showing their commitment to the concerns of islands. Discussions had underlined the need for a United Nations “resilience index” accounting for the evolving needs of islands.

Rio+20 had identified both the “green economy” and the “blue economy” as tools by which States could develop more sustainably. He called for more emphasis to fall on the “blue economy” and harnessing the sustainable development potential of oceans. Under the current status quo, the planet’s resources were consumed with no long-term protection, while climate change continued to grow and threaten “our economies, our way of life and our existence”. He was organizing a high-level event on the “blue economy” in the United Arab Emirates in January 2014 to help reflection and mobilize action on the issue. He called for more focus on the sustainable development of Africa’s coastal areas and oceans. Africa’s oceans could transform from sources of raw products for distant nations to spaces where Africa’s trade needs were prioritized. Security of those spaces was vital and partnerships were needed. Seychelles had set-up a regional anti-piracy prosecution and intelligence coordination centre and hosted an anti-piracy

cell of the Indian Ocean Commission. The region was now better able to deter other criminal activities such as trafficking and illegal fishing.

Turning to peace and security, he expressed solidarity and sympathy to the people of Kenya following the Nairobi terrorist attack, and saluted Somalia's efforts to eradicate extremists. He was also encouraged by the first round of presidential elections due to be held in Madagascar in October. He condemned any use of chemical weapons or any other weapons of mass destruction and urged all nations to sign the Arms Trade Treaty. Reiterating his stance that the embargo against Cuba should be removed, he said he would use the current Assembly session to seek to reduce the marginalization of island States, and in that connection was planning to stand for non-permanent membership of the Security Council for 2017-2018.

MUHAMMAD NAWAZ SHARIF, Prime Minister of Pakistan, said he felt exonerated after long years of "exile, exclusion and State oppression". Pakistan could now boast a strong parliament, an independent judiciary, a free media and a vibrant civil society, but there was no room for complacency. Democracy needed constant vigilance and strong institutions.

He ardently supported the United Nations, calling for reform in the interests of all Members. The Security Council needed to be equipped to face a dynamic future and the role and authority of the General Assembly also needed restoration and revitalization. The latter body's influence had improved for responding to peace and security, development and climate change issues. The United Nations was vital to resolving "festering disputes", like Jammu and Kashmir, which was first presented to the Security Council in 1948. Kashmiris had the right to self-determination and to decide their own futures peacefully, in line with Security Council resolutions. He looked forward to re-engaging with India, highlighting his plan to meet India's Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh in New York.

He said he had recently met President Hâmid Karzai of Afghanistan and expressed support for an inclusive, Afghan-led, Afghan-owned peace process, aimed at national reconciliation. He would not interfere in Afghanistan's internal politics and said Pakistan's commitment to Afghans was clear in its continued hosting of millions of refugees. Turning to the Middle East, he looked forward to Palestine becoming a full Member State of the United Nations and expressed solidarity with the Palestinian people. Syria's Government and opposition needed to move to the negotiating table in Geneva to prepare for national reconciliation and political transition, he said, condemning the use of chemical weapons and welcoming the recent Security Council resolution. Pakistan would continue its policy of Credible Minimum Deterrence on nuclear weapons and his position on the Fissile Material Treaty was based on strategic stability in South Asia.

He condemned terrorism, citing the 40,000 Pakistanis who died through terrorism, and the colossal damage done to social and physical infrastructure. He would use any means to combat terrorism but preferred dialogue. Winning hearts and minds, particularly of the youth, was important. Combating terrorism required adherence to international law and armed drone strikes violated Pakistan's territorial integrity. He added that terrorism had no religion, so profiling of Muslims as terrorists was the "most insidious form of contemporary racism". Stereotyping had to stop.

He said the post-2015 development agenda should set benchmarks on poverty alleviation, sustainable development and social inclusion, and address climate change. Pakistan had the natural resources to drive an economic revolution but challenges like overcoming the volatile security environment, correcting structural imbalances in the economy and ending energy shortages needed tackling. He did not seek more international aid, instead preferring better trade, market access, investment and partnerships. Education was vital to driving socioeconomic development and a new National Health Service would improve that sector. Women's participation and rights needed to expand, while investment was needed in education and skills for the youth, who made up 63 per cent of Pakistan's population, and tolerance was needed for minorities. Due to Pakistan's susceptibility to natural disasters, he had launched a ten year National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy, characterized by its proactive and anticipatory approach.

DENZIL L. DOUGLAS, Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, said that his country's formerly sugar-based economy had been transformed into a service-oriented one driven by tourism, offshore education, agriculture and the manufacture of electronic components. Saint Kitts and Nevis had also made tremendous strides towards meeting the Millennium Development Goal on eradicating poverty through solid and expansive social safety infrastructure providing health care, education subsidies, housing and food to the most vulnerable segments of society. However, cognizant that poverty eradication was intrinsically linked to sustainable development, a balanced approach was needed to blend economic growth, equity, social inclusion and environmental sustainability, he said.

No discussion of development could progress without reference to health, he continued. Health systems must be reoriented and reinforced to ensure equitable access to high-quality care, thereby advancing development. The high incidence of non-communicable diseases placed an increased burden on economies that were already highly vulnerable to external shocks and natural disasters, diverting resources that could be allocated to building quality infrastructure and precious human capital. Despite the efforts of the World Health Organization (WHO) in testing, the post-2015 development framework must give greater prominence to combating them, he said. "A nation's wealth lies in the health of its people."

On peace and security, he emphasized that crime in any society was a destabilizing threat. He also joined in condemning the atrocities recently perpetrated in Syria and Kenya, through the use of chemical as well as conventional weapons. He applauded the Arms Trade Treaty and the United States for the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, which addressed the illicit flow of foreign-made small arms. He also commended the Republic of China (Taiwan) for working to advance the economic interests of countries like his own, adding that its participation in international agencies such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) would be meaningful. As for the embargo on Cuba, he described it as a contravention of the tenets of international law regarding the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in their internal affairs, and harmonious coexistence. Saint Kitts and Nevis therefore urged the Assembly to explore new ways to convince all involved to find a solution. "There must be change in 2015."

NICK CLEGG, Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, said that open societies chose democracy and freedom at home, engagement and responsibility abroad. By contrast, closed societies suppressed the liberty of their citizens, drew a veil across their actions and withdrew from shared international life. "We must be honest, the forces of insularity and isolationism have gained momentum in recent years," he said. It was not surprising to hear some argue that liberal democracy had had its day and that the multilateral system was becoming obsolete, but those who made such claims were wrong.

Liberal democracies in Europe and across the Atlantic had weathered profound economic difficulty, he pointed out. The euro zone had not fallen over as many had said it would. Democracy had not fallen in Egypt; a single set of elections had failed, and that country must now return to the path of inclusive democracy. In Libya, the General National Congress was working towards elections in early 2014. Morocco had a new constitution and, for the first time, a Prime Minister elected by Parliament. "Well-functioning democracy cannot emerge overnight, be exported by the West or dropped on a country from 8,000 feet — that much we have learnt from the failures of the past," he stressed.

Turning to Syria, he called upon the international community to react in unison, noting that his Government hoped that the Security Council would later today adopt a resolution establishing binding obligations on the regime for the removal and destruction of its vast chemical weapons arsenal. Yesterday, the United Kingdom had announced a further \$160 billion in humanitarian support for the Syrian people, bringing the country's total funding to \$800 million. Most importantly, all parties in Syria must allow humanitarian agencies to operate without hindrance or the threat of violence. Unless that urgent access was provided, no amount of money could alleviate the scale of the Syrian people's suffering, he emphasized.

Poverty was as great a threat to stability and freedom as conflict and oppression, he said. Despite financial strain, the United Kingdom had devoted 0.7 per cent of its gross national income on development assistance, he noted. "We are the only country in the Group of 20 to do so." Following the global

economic crisis, the Government had said it would not balance its books on the backs of the world's poorest people, he recalled. "We have held true to our word." Earlier this week, the Government had announced its intention to contribute \$1.6 billion to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria — 10 per cent of the Fund's replenishment — so long as others joined. As for climate change, the United Kingdom would continue to cut emissions, in addition to giving more than \$6 billion to help developing countries do the same.

SERGEY V. LAVROV, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, said that many problems of today's world were reflected in the tragic situation of Syria and the ambiguous developments in the Middle East and North Africa. From the very beginning of the turmoil, the Russian Federation had called for a common international approach, combining support for the Arab people in their transformation and the understanding that, objectively, those processes would be lengthy and sometimes painful, and that it would be quite important not to harm them through "rude outside interference".

He said there was a need to act in a balanced way, taking into account the complex developments associated with a strenuous search for compromises among various ethnic and religious groups making up the mosaic of Arab societies. The desire to portray developments in the Arab world simplistically as the struggle for democracy against tyranny, or good against evil, had long obscured the problems associated with the rising wave of extremism that had spilled over to other regions. The terrorist attack in Kenya was a clear example of the gravity of that threat, he said, pointing out that groups comprising radicals from all over the world were the most combat-capable units in various opposition movements. "The goals they pursue have nothing to do with democracy," he stressed. Rather, they were based on intolerance and aimed at the destruction of secular States and the establishment of caliphates.

While describing the use of chemical weapons as inadmissible, he said that did not bestow the right to accuse and pass judgement. All incidents associated with the use of chemical weapons, by whomsoever that might be in Syria, must be investigated in a professional and unbiased manner, he emphasized. He recalled that a common argument had been used recently to prove that the use of force was the most effective method to address problems, although all experience of such interventions had demonstrated that it was ineffective, meaningless and destructive. That was an extremely dangerous path, leading to the erosion of the foundations of today's world order, he warned. Threats to use military force to ensure one's own interests in the Middle East under the pretext of the "remaining demand for leadership" were unacceptable.

Syrians continued to die needlessly every day, with religious minorities, including Christian communities, falling victim to the conflict, which was increasingly acquiring a sectarian character. The only possible way to end the turmoil was to move away from the deadlock in the political process. At the same time, the Syrian conflict must not overshadow the question of Palestine, he said, calling on Israeli and Palestinian leaders to shoulder their responsibilities. The Quartet remained the internationally recognized mechanism of assistance to the peace process, alongside the Madrid Principles and the Arab Peace Initiative. On the Iranian nuclear programme and the Korean peninsula, he mentioned President Vladimir Putin's *New York Times* article, which called for an end to using the language of force and a return to the path of civilized diplomatic and political settlement.

YUN BYUNG-SE, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, underlined his country's global engagement globally in peacekeeping and reconstruction as well as in its membership of the Security Council and the Human Rights Council. However, the rise of new global challenges such as climate change, terrorism and cybercrime called for global cooperation that transcended the existing inter-State system. The Republic of Korea's new Administration had put forward its foreign policy vision for building on two fundamental objectives — happiness of the people and happiness of the global community.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction posed serious threats to international peace and security, he said, strongly condemning the use of chemical weapons in Syria. He welcomed the agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation on elimination of those weapons and called on the Syrian Government faithfully to implement its commitments in that respect. He also called for concerted

international efforts to roll back the nuclear weapons programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Alongside the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism also presented a grave threat to international peace and security, he said, strongly condemning the terrorist attack in Kenya.

Noting that the number of refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide had risen, worsened by the conflict in Syria, he emphasized the need to protect civilians in conflict situations, especially from sexual violence, and called for responsible measures to restore the victims' honour and soothe their pain. The next set of common development goals should therefore be people-centred, taking standards of well-being beyond traditional income levels and seeking to build partnerships with newly emerging development actors as well as striving for a united response to climate change. "The deepening of global interdependence has led to the rise of challenges requiring a common response, and therefore, expectations of the United Nations are now higher than ever before," he said.

WANG YI, Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, noted that this year had been an unusual one in China's development, with the new central leadership putting forward the concept of the "great renewal" of the nation. The Government was leading the country's 1.3 billion people in an effort to finish building a moderately prosperous society in all respects by 2020 and to turn it into a modern socialist country by the mid twenty-first century. China would, he declared, stay firmly on the path of peaceful development. China's rapid development over the years had given rise to worries that it might follow the old pattern of wealth breeding arrogance and strength leading to hegemony. The outdated cold war era mentality had no place in the new era of globalization. In history, the Chinese people had always embraced international exchanges and trade, not foreign aggression and expansion, and had adhered to the patriotic resolve to defend its homeland rather than the colonialist doctrine to seize new territories. Nearly 40 years ago, the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping declared from this podium that the country would never seek hegemony in the world. "Today, his statement remains our unchanging commitment and conviction," he said.

As China grew in economic output and changed its growth model, it had entered a phase of high-to-medium growth, he noted. Its future growth would deliver four major dividends, namely: by industrialization resulting in new information technology applications and new types of urbanization and agricultural modernization; by reform and innovation; by structural readjustment; and by further opening up. In the coming five years, China's imports of commodities would exceed \$10 trillion, its overseas investment would reach \$500 billion, and Chinese tourists would make more than 400 million outbound visits. Those would give stronger impetus to the world economy and bring more tangible benefits to other countries.

China would play a more proactive and constructive role in addressing global and regional hotspot issues, he said. It would increase participation in the United Nations peacekeeping operations to contribute more to peace and security in Africa and other regions. It called for an immediate end to hostilities and violence in Syria and hoped to see an early adoption of a Security Council resolution supporting the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in launching the verification and destruction of such arsenal. China sought no self-gains in Syria and did not take sides. On the Iranian nuclear issue, China had been working to promote a peaceful settlement through dialogue. A negotiated solution through dialogue was the right way to solve the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, and the Six-Party negotiation was an effective platform to that end.

ABDULAZIZ KAMILOV, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, said the 30-year-long war in Afghanistan remained a serious threat to regional and global security. The situation was unpredictable and uncertain, and the withdrawal of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops in 2014 could lead to an escalation of confrontation. It could also stir up terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking, while provoking an interregional standoff. The only way out of the crisis was a political solution through negotiations between the main forces, he said. Uzbekistan's open and clear policy on Afghanistan was based on good neighbourliness and non-interference in internal affairs, he said. It would continue to develop mutually beneficial and friendly ties with the neighbouring country on a bilateral basis, while supporting the Government elected by the Afghan people.

The new global development agenda being elaborated at the United Nations reflected the interconnection of human beings with the environment, he said. Uzbekistan attached priority attention to sustainable development and ecological safety, as confirmed by its recently adopted Action Programme on Environmental Protection for 2013-2017. Describing the loss of the Aral Sea as one of the largest global ecological disasters in contemporary history, he expressed gratitude for the assistance provided by the United Nations and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in addressing that catastrophe. Such support gave countries in the region confidence that they would not be left alone in their struggles.

Ensuring the reasonable use of water resources was an acute problem, he continued. Noting the shortages of potable water in the region, he expressed concern over plans by Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to construct new hydropower stations on the Amudarya River, which fed the Aral Sea. It was unacceptable to construct hydropower facilities in international watercourses without preliminary endorsement by all the countries involved, he emphasized, citing the 1992 United Nations Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.

JULIE BISHOP, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, described her country as “an open, liberal democracy”, saying it had an unbroken record of peaceful democratic transition dating back to 1901. The new Government would put economic diplomacy at the centre of its foreign policy, she said, noting that Australia’s economic success and high living standards were anchored in reform efforts over many years. It had liberalized its economy and unilaterally dismantled trade barriers and protectionist policies.

Noting that other economies had opened up and living standards improved around the region as well, she said that in South-East Asia, about 145 million people would be considered middle class in 2015, up from 95 million in 2010. More broadly, the middle class in Asia would reach 3 billion people by 2030. Indonesia was on track to become the world’s seventh-largest economy by 2013, up from the sixteenth today. China and India were projected to become the largest and third-largest economies by 2030, she said, pointing out that more than 290 million people in China had been lifted out of poverty between 1999 and 2009.

Turning to the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda, she stressed the importance of financing infrastructure. According to the Asian Development Bank, Asia alone required \$750 billion a year over the next decade to meet its infrastructure needs, far more than the \$130 billion in annual global aid flows. Only the private sector had the capacity to mobilize such an amount of money, she emphasized. “We firmly believe that the economic growth of developing countries can be unlocked through trade.” The Australian Government was committed to promoting trade liberalization through the World Trade Organization, regional and sector-specific deals, and bilateral free trade negotiations.

FRANCISCUS CORNELIS GERARDUS MARIA TIMMERMANS, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, remembered that during the imminent centennial of the Peace Palace in The Hague, seat of the International Court of Justice, violence and conflict perpetuated in Syria and in Kenya. He also sadly informed that Dr. Elif Yavuz, a pregnant Dutch doctor, had been killed in the Nairobi attack. Quoting Baruch Espinoza, who said that “peace is not the absence of war, it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition of benevolence, confidence and justice,” he underlined the Netherlands’ call on the international community to put an end to abuses as in Syria. He also called for a coherent agenda to strengthen the international legal order, and announced Netherlands’ candidacy to the Security Council in 2017-2018.

On Syria, he called on the Security Council to take concrete actions to address the threat of chemical weapons, as well as for the Security Council’s permanent members to refrain from using their vetoes in votes on intervention to stop the mass atrocity crimes, but rather to search for a peaceful solution. He also affirmed his country’s support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. On the risk of further proliferation of nuclear weapons, he strongly supported the United States suggestion to make substantial reductions in the number of United States and Russian non-strategic weapons in Europe. On justice, he said that there is need to recognize the importance of mediation as a means of preventing atrocity

crimes by encouraging countries to recognize compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, but also to strengthen the national legal systems. He said that 2013 marked the sixty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and on this occasion he wished for a more focused protection of human rights defenders and promotion of LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender] and women's rights.

Believing that without development there can be no global peace and security, he said that the post-2015 development agenda would benefit from a single, unified framework, where the plight of the world's poorest people could not be discussed in isolation from the environmental problems endangering the planet. "It is crucial to ensure that development is sustainable, so we can balance and integrate its economic, social and ecological dimensions," he noted. The key words, he said, for the post-2015 development agenda, should there be one, were better aid, more trade and stronger policy coherence for sustainable development. He concluded by saying that investing in the United Nations is investing in our common future.

BASILE IKOUEBÉ, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Congo, firmly condemned the terrorist attack in Kenya, saying that the lesson to be drawn from it was the need to avoid creating fertile ground for subversive groups. Congo welcomed the intervention of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in the Central African Republic aimed at avoiding such a situation there. Referring to the Arab spring, he reminded the Assembly of his address of two sessions ago, when he had cautioned against the belief that the overthrow of a political regime would immediately confer freedom and democracy.

Strongly condemning the use of chemical weapons in Syria, he welcomed that country's decision to place its chemical weapons arsenal under international control with a view to their eventual destruction. As for the issue of nuclear weapons, he invited nuclear-weapons States as well as countries in possession of other weapons of mass destruction to implement measures to eliminate their arsenals and proceed towards disarmament.

On the Millennium Development Goals, he said his country had made progress on education and maternal health through initiatives aimed at eliminating school fees, opening school cafeterias and providing free vaccines and antiretroviral drugs. The pursuit of the other Millennium Goals was supported by investment programmes favouring the health-care system, education and professional training, as well as by Congo's modernization and industrialization efforts. Congo welcomed the consensus on a universal agreement on the REDD+ mechanisms, which would allow each country, on the basis of their respective capacities, to contribute to the fight against deforestation and land degradation, he said.

JAKAYA MRISHO KIKWETE, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, noted significant national progress in implementing the Millennium Development Goals of achieving universal primary school enrolment, reducing HIV/AIDS and child mortality, and improving the potable water supply in urban areas. He welcomed the discussions on Council reform. Africa would not relent in demanding that it be enlarged to give Africa a permanent seat. He regretted that conflicts worldwide continued to impede development. The recent use of chemical weapons in Syria, as confirmed by the United Nations inspections team, was distressing. He condemned such flagrant, senseless killing of innocent people, among them children. He commended the Secretary-General and the Council for the way they handled the matter. "I believe the doors for a peaceful solution to the Syrian problem are not closed and that a military solution should be the least resort," he said.

He regretted the suffering of the people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, stating the conflict had gone on far too long. He hoped the Secretary-General's initiative that led to creation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Great Lakes Region would bring lasting peace and development. Armed groups with varied interests that were exacerbating the conflict in that country should be neutralized and disarmed. To that end, he welcomed creation of the Force Intervention Brigade to bolster MONUSCO (United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the

Congo). His Government had agreed to contribute troops to the Brigade because the latter could help deter belligerence and create an environment conducive for a political process.

Since 2007, the United Republic of Tanzania had contributed troops to various United Nations peacekeeping operations, he said. With more than 2,500 troops in Lebanon, Darfur and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it was Africa's sixth largest military and police contributor. It was disturbing that armed groups and peace spoilers were increasingly attacking peacekeepers. There was no justification for such attacks; they were a crime under international law. He called for ending the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. He was deeply encouraged by recent developments in Cuba-United States relations, particularly the removal of restrictions on family travel, cash remittances and telecommunication services.

It was "high time" the Organization took bold action to give the Saharawi people the opportunity to decide on their fate, he said. It was incomprehensible that the Council, which had handled bigger security challenges, had yet to decide on Western Sahara for almost 40 years. He regretted the rift between the International Criminal Court and Africa, which perceived the Court as irresponsible to the African people's legitimate concerns. The Court continued to ignore the African Union's repeated requests and appeals. Legitimate requests concerning the timing of the trials of Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta and Deputy President William Ruto had gone unanswered. "This attitude has become a major handicap that fails to reconcile the Court's secondary and complementary role in fighting impunity. Indeed, the Court's rigidity has proven counterproductive and stands to undermine the support it enjoys in Africa," he said.

He strongly condemned last week's cowardly terrorist attack at the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, noting it was a heart-breaking reminder of the threat that terrorism posed to humanity. It was vital to increase vigilance, enhance regional and global cooperation and scale up the fight against terrorism. He stressed the need to take advantage of the current scientific and technological innovations; information and communications technologies; and lessons learned from development programmes to build a world without poverty, hunger, disease and deprivation.

RALPH E. GONSALVES, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, said the failure to achieve the Millennium Development Goals was rooted in the shortcomings of developed countries, 16 out of 25 of which had reduced their aid budgets in 2012. Official development assistance had contracted for the second consecutive year and the global financial crisis had rendered the Millennium Goals unattainable for many countries. However, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was one of 18 countries recognized for having met Goal 1 — halving the proportion of hungry people. Hunger was now below 5 per cent and the country had set its sights on eliminating hunger altogether, he said.

Recalling that his country had hosted the first-ever Regional Conference on Reparations for Native Genocide and Slavery, he called on European nations to partner in a focused way on repairing the historical wrongs of native genocide and African slavery. "It promises to make both Europe and the Caribbean more free, more human, more good-neighbourly." He also called on the United Nations to apologize and take immediate steps to provide compensation to victims and families of the 2010 incident in which United Nations peacekeepers were accused of having contaminated drinking water with cholera in Haiti.

He said some countries had disregarded international law and taken illegal actions that had shaken the very foundation upon which the United Nations had been established. The United States must end its economic blockade against Cuba and remove that country from its list of countries supporting terrorism. In addition, he expressed hope that serious negotiations on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict issue would result in a sustainable peace.

Turning to the crisis in Syria, he said all parties would need to make compromises to end the conflict. Regarding allegations of surveillance by the United States, he declared: "We strenuously reject any such activity as illegal, a violation of diplomatic conventions and an affront to the comity of nations." He described the Arms Trade Treaty as an important first step towards regulating the illicit flow of small

arms and light weapons around the world, particularly in the Caribbean, where they were often accompanied by drugs.

TUILAEPA SAILELE MALIELEGAOI, Prime Minister of Samoa, said climate change was perhaps the greatest threat facing the world today. Climate change was a security risk of far greater proportions than many people were prepared to admit, he said, explaining that it could well lead to the eventual extinction of some low-lying Pacific islands. While its root causes and solutions to address them were widely known, the “continued triumph of vested interests in preventing and delaying the action that must be taken” was saddening. Samoa looked to Member States in leadership roles to rise to the challenge and lead by example in ensuring that the post-2020 climate change convention currently under negotiation would effectively address the mounting fears of countries under threat.

Regarding his country’s signing of the Arms Trade Treaty two days ago, he welcomed the fact that more than 100 nations, including the United States, had now signed the instrument. “For small island countries like Samoa, it only takes a few small arms and light weapons in the wrong hands to cause instability,” he noted. Indeed, those so-called small arms had fuelled conflicts in the Pacific region and disrupted the lives of communities, impeding national development. Signing the Treaty was testimony to Samoa’s commitment to “general and complete disarmament” that would contribute significantly to saving lives, stopping human rights abuses and avoiding crises. It was also an important step towards reducing and eventually eliminating the human cost of conventional arms altogether.

Samoa looked forward to next week’s High-Level Meeting on Migration and Development, he said. International migration provided both challenges and opportunities for origin, transit and destination countries. Its contribution to sustainable development would, therefore, ultimately depend on the willingness of source and destination countries to work out imaginative and human arrangements beneficial to both as well as to migrants. In that regard, Samoa was working closely with New Zealand and Australia, through their seasonal workers schemes, to ensure that such important initiatives resulted in mutual benefits for the sending and receiving parties.

Recalling yesterday’s high-level on nuclear disarmament, he said it had highlighted yet again the urgent need to conclude a treaty banning nuclear weapons, given the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of their use. “Such weapons represent the great paradox of our time,” he declared. “While nations desire peace and talk peace, far more of the national wealth goes towards the development and acquisition of ever more sophisticated and destructive weapons of mass destruction.” He reaffirmed Samoa’s continued support for a nuclear-free world. Samoa also had faith in the rule of law and the vital protection it offered to all States, especially weak and small ones without armed force or affiliation with any military grouping.

SHEIKH HASINA, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, said rapid technological innovation was transforming the world and causing conflict in and among States, with repercussions for the poor and most vulnerable. She hoped this year’s Assembly would help design a pragmatic strategy for the Millennium Development Goals. Past experience would be useful in shaping the post-2015 development agenda, she said. Bangladesh had submitted a draft of that agenda comprising the global environmental and economic resources for achieving it. The Dakar Declaration placed the human individual at the centre of the development agenda. Bangladesh — having slashed poverty from 56 per cent in 1991 to 26 per cent today — aimed to become a middle-income country by 2021. Remittances, foreign currency reserves and power production capacity had risen significantly over the same period. She noted that Bangladesh was known as the “standard bearer” of South Asia due largely to implementation of a people-centred development model.

Real national development could only be achieved through education and women’s empowerment, she said. Bangladesh’s education and women’s empowerment policies had led to significant gains, with girls’ school enrolment on the rise and women occupying posts in the highest levels of Government. She cited social policies such as monthly pensions, food programmes for rural people, and aid to people with disabilities, among others, that had improved people’s well-being. Due to global warming and sea-level rise, Bangladesh faced a calamitous future, adding that

a 1° C temperature rise would result in vast numbers of climate migrants in Bangladesh. She called for creation of a climate change trust fund and a climate change resilience fund for least developed countries. She thanked the United Nations for producing a website and radio programmes in Bangla.

Her Government had set up two war crimes tribunals, in line with the 1973 International Crimes Tribunal Act, to investigate and try suspects deemed responsible for committing genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity in Bangladesh during its liberation war in 1971, she said. She urged the international community to support that process. Her Government was entrenching democracy to defeat terrorism. It had strengthened its elections commission. Bangladesh had amply proven that it could hold free, fair and credible elections. Bangladesh aimed to cement peace by resolving outstanding issues and maintaining good relations with its neighbours.

Bangladesh was a top contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations and Vice Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, she said. During her first presidential term, Bangladesh ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Mine Ban Treaty and she had signed the Arms Trade Treaty. Bangladesh had acceded to remaining instruments on close combat weapons. The promotion of intercultural and interfaith dialogue was essential for peace and development. She had proposed to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and at the Assembly's High-level Dialogue on Culture and Development to include culture and development in the post-2015 development agenda.

For Bangladesh to achieve the Millennium targets by 2015 and beyond, development partners must continue contributing 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product (GDP) for ODA (Official Development Assistance), she said. She urged partners to give least developed countries duty-free and quota-free access to markets, an equal voice in the Bretton Woods institutions and international financial institutions, and free movement of labour. Implementation of mode 4 of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade was also important for both sending and receiving countries. She stressed the need for unity in building a common development agenda in which no person or nation was left behind. A strong judiciary was vital to remove threats to freedom, democracy, human rights and the environment.

NIKOLA GRUEVSKI, Prime Minister of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, said that South-East Europe had entered a phase of positive development in which the primary objectives of nations and the region at large were either fulfilled or within reach. But although regional cooperation was expanding in a number of new fields, unresolved bilateral issues had a clear negative reflection on the present and the immediate future, a serious obstacle to his country's agenda for integration into international organizations. The country was celebrating the twentieth anniversary of its United Nations membership, but the issue of its name remained unresolved.

He went on to emphasize that the issue was about the identity of his people, but Greece opposed the country's chosen name, which was its "fundamental, individual and collective right". The overwhelming majority of Member States had recognized the country's constitutional name, which clearly showed that most did not believe the dispute had a justified political basis. There was no basis in international law for preventing a country from naming itself as it wished, he said, adding that without international law, the United Nations would become a "debate club" without any fundamental competencies, stressing that his country was "entitled to decide on its own name", according to international law.

The problem extended to the naming of the country's language and the national identity of its citizens, he continued. "It is the same as if somebody denied you to speak French, German, Polish, English, Dutch, Portuguese, Japanese, Hindi or any other language." Putting off a resolution of the dispute created more challenges in the country and the region, inflaming tensions, he said, emphasizing that his people would nonetheless never accept the renaming of their country. He recalled that he had proposed a higher-level meeting for direct talks to the Prime Minister of Greece two months ago, citing the examples

of Serbia and Kosovo as well as Croatia and Slovenia, where political representatives at the highest level had managed to overcome their differences.

Where progress lagged, the United Nations must not stand still and be satisfied with the status quo, he stressed. Rather, it should use the General Assembly and the Security Council to “unlock the perspectives” of his country, otherwise it would again be faced with failure. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was confident that the international community had the capacity to respond jointly to all challenges by taking decisions, changing habits and strengthening cooperation and prosperity, he said.

PASQUALE VALENTINI, Minister for Foreign Affairs of San Marino, noted that the visit the Secretary-General paid to his country this year had marked a significant moment in the history and political life of his small State. In setting the fundamental objectives of the post-2015 development agenda, three top priorities had to be set, he said, on account of their magnitude and urgency: peace and security, the elimination of inequalities and environmental sustainability. Development could only be built on peace, he added. The search for dialogue, therefore, as a tool to solve conflicts, should be pursued with determination. When crimes against humanity are committed a united action is needed, such as in the case of the elimination of chemical and nuclear weapons.

He said peace, in turn, could only be founded on the respect for human rights, social justice and inclusion of the most vulnerable. His country had paid special attention to the latter, in particular to women, children and disabled persons. The issues related to these groups must, again, be given high priority at the United Nations. San Marino hoped for the universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, and for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In regards to environmental sustainability and prevention of and response to natural disasters, he expressed appreciation for the work of the Secretary-General, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Central Emergency Response Fund.

The finalization of the post-2015 development agenda could not transcend from strengthening a global governance mechanism, as set in the annual General Assembly resolution entitled “The United Nations in global governance”, which San Marino had traditionally co-sponsored, he continued. His country also believed that the United Nations had the duty to retain the leadership of the global governance management. Against this background, the Organization “must be adjusted”, he added, reinforcing the political role and authority of the General Assembly and reforming the Security Council. San Marino believed in the “force of dialogue”, as shown by its century-old history of peace. The post-2015 development agenda needed to be established in this perspective, he concluded.

MILO ĐUKANOVIĆ, Prime Minister of Montenegro, said achieving the Millennium Development Goals would be one of the biggest challenges facing the United Nations and that poverty eradication and other unmet Millennium Development Goals should be at the heart of the post-2015 development agenda. Sustainable development goals should be clear, universal, flexible and coherent. He reported that as a member of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, Montenegro was working on defining goals that took into consideration national characteristics, capacities and the individual country’s development priorities.

The global economic and financial crisis had affected Montenegro, he said, but his country had adopted a medium-term development plan modelled on the European Union 2020 Strategy. Montenegro had based its sustainable development on three pillars: smart growth, sustainable growth, and inclusive growth. His country had also set up a Centre for Sustainable Development and remained committed to efforts to address the issue of climate change. Montenegro had full support for the Secretary-General’s initiative to convene a conference on climate change in September 2014.

He expressed his deep concern for the situation in Syria and condemned any form of violence, civilian deaths and human rights violations. “We believe that a political solution and a democratic transition is the only way to stop the tragedy and conflict.” Montenegro also believed that direct

negotiation was the best way to reach a comprehensive and sustainable settlement in the Middle East, he said.

Montenegro would seek a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council for the 2026-2027 term, he reported. He said his country recognized the importance of the rule of law and protection of civilians and was one of the first 65 countries to sign the Arms Trade Treaty. Human rights were also a top concern, particularly as Montenegro had recently chaired the Roma Inclusion Decade.

United Nations reform and reorganization of the Security Council would be necessary, as well as the revitalization of the General Assembly. He stated that membership in the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization were also top priorities for his country, as would be the recently launched initiative of the Western Balkans 6+2, which would speed up European integration and improve citizens' quality of life.

NGUYEN TAN DUNG, Prime Minister of Viet Nam, expressed grave concern over the violence in the Middle East and North Africa. The use of chemical weapons in Syria should be strongly condemned. It was vital to give peace every possible chance, and to eliminate such weapons, in line with international law and United Nations resolutions. The Korean peninsula was fraught with unpredictable developments, and territorial disputes continued in the East China Sea and the East Sea of Viet Nam. A single incident or ill-conceived act could trigger conflict or, worse, war, he warned.

Trust among nations must be fostered through honesty, sincerity and concrete actions, such as the lifting of the arms embargo against Cuba or the recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, he said. The Security Council's role must be promoted as the fulcrum for building consensus in order to prompt all nations to join hands in preserving peace. He expressed regret that the gap between rich and poor continued to widen, and that more than 1 billion people still lived in extreme poverty. Global warming, rising sea levels, unpredictable weather and natural disasters caused by deforestation, the exhaustive exploitation of natural resources, and pollution had made poorer nations further destitute. "We must rally together to escape poverty, fight disease, protect the environment, respond to natural disasters and build a greener and more just world," he said.

Urging the global community to craft an ambitious post-2015 development agenda and a road map to enable poorer nations to participate in international agreements and institutions, he said that his country had integrated the Millennium Development Goals into its national development strategies. It had balanced economic development with social security, and received an award from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for outstanding achievements in poverty reduction. In tackling poverty, Viet Nam had focused on improving health care, education and communications, particularly in remote, underdeveloped communities. The country was also working with other Asian nations to bolster the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) community.

Viet Nam stood ready to join United Nations peacekeeping operations, he said. It was also willing to share its resources and experience as a tribute to friends everywhere who had helped in its struggle for independence, unification and poverty reduction. Viet Nam had transformed itself from a country plagued by chronic hunger into a leading rice exporter. It had achieved food security and was helping other nations such as Cuba, Mozambique, Angola, Mali, Madagascar and Myanmar become self-reliant in food production, he said, asking developed countries and international organizations to support similar programmes.

JIRÍ RUSNOK, Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, outlined a number of the most pressing and significant challenges facing the world today: the state of the world economy, the international security situation, the danger of nuclear conflict and the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor, among others. While the world economy remained fragile, it appeared slowly to be entering a new phase towards steady economic recovery and growth, he noted. However, the security situation in many parts of the world was also witnessing many local conflicts that endangered the overall regional balance. Syria was one

example, he said, adding that the conflict there called for a negotiated political solution because a military one was not possible.

Thanks to the decreasing number of nuclear warheads and carriers in the possession of nuclear Powers, the danger of a nuclear conflict was diminishing too, he said. Yet, the currently “blocked negotiations” on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was a source of concern. Similarly, fundamental human rights and freedoms remained at risk in many countries, just as the gap between the rich and poor was widening despite efforts to alleviate world hunger and poverty. The confirmed use of chemical weapons in Syria was deeply worrying, as any such use was unacceptable and in violation of the principle of responsibility to protect civilians. “This constitutes a war crime and a crime against humanity, and its perpetrators should be held accountable before the International Criminal Court,” he declared.

He acknowledged the transformation of Myanmar and strongly encouraged that country’s leaders actively pursue the process of amending the national Constitution to improve democratic standards, in keeping with their public pronouncements. Highlighting the important role of the United Nations in resolving armed conflicts, he said its peacekeeping operations were indispensable for sustained and durable solutions to violent conflict worldwide. To that end, the Czech Republic, having participated in relatively small numbers, was ready to increase substantially the presence of its military personnel in United Nations peacekeeping, he said. He expressed appreciation that the international community had finally concluded the Arms Trade Treaty, adding that the upcoming Group of Government Experts on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty would also be a step in the right direction.

JEAN ASSELBORN, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg, called for immediate assistance for the people of Syria, saying they were entitled to it under the most basic criteria codified in international humanitarian law. As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Luxembourg had worked to give a voice to the humanitarian crisis gripping Syria and neighbouring countries, and had increased its humanitarian aid to the affected populations to €7.6 million. He said he was encouraged by the new direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. “We all know that this initiative is perhaps the last opportunity we have,” he noted. “We must not let it slip away. The consequences could be dramatic.” The time had come to implement the two-State solution and all violence must stop.

He said the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic of the Congo and the Region signed in February 2013 was a turning point for peace, consolidation and regional stability in that country. The parties should implement all their commitments in good faith and with due diligence. The international community must urgently turn its attention to the conflict in the Central African Republic where the humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate. He welcomed the decision by the African Union Peace and Security Council to authorize the deployment of the International Support Mission to the Central African Republic.

Describing the Arms Trade Treaty as a significant step forward for international law, international humanitarian law and human rights, he said his country was proud to have been among its sponsors from the very beginning. Luxembourg was also committed to working alongside Somalia in helping that country to free itself from the threat of Al-Shabaab. It also supported substantial negotiations that would result in a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear issue.

He urged Member States to speed up the march towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and ensure that the post-2015 agenda would be built on the international norms and principles of human rights. Luxembourg continued to pledge 1 per cent of its gross national income to development assistance, and reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable development. With its European partners, Luxembourg had made binding commitments to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change, he said.

EVANGELOS VENIZELOS, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, aligning his statement with that made on behalf of the European Union, said there had been a positive impact on migration both for home countries and destination countries, and the upcoming meeting on that topic was a good opportunity to participate in the common efforts of that theme. Greece and southern Europe felt the pressures of migration, and his country had reviewed its national action plan of asylum and migration. Dealing with these issues was among the priorities of the Greek President.

Greece was determined to contribute actively to the Human Right Council, and was submitting its candidature, he said. Despite financial constraints, his country remained committed to peacekeeping operations and contributed troops and funds, particularly to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). He said that the launching of peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine was a positive step towards security in the region, as now was the time to take bold and concrete steps towards peace. He further condemned the use of chemical weapons in Syria, and lent support to the United Nations actions on that front. He hoped this would be a crucial turning point in the Syrian crisis that could bring about a viable and political resolution.

Greece continued to support a European future for the Balkan region, he said. The process of European integration meant leaving behind old, divisive mentalities and moving towards an era of close cooperation on the basis of shared values and principles. Belgrade and Pristina had concluded a historic agreement on 19 April 2013, which was a major development towards consolidating peace and stability in the Western Balkans and advancing both sides' European integration.

His country sought to develop its relations with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia based on the United Nations principles of good neighbourliness, he said. Greece was committed to the ongoing United Nations process to find a solution on the name issue, and he noted that a clear distinction must be made between that neighbouring country and the region with a similar name in the north of Greece.

He said that 39 years since the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, the problem remained first and foremost an issue of illegal military occupation of well over a third of the territory of a United Nations and European Union member State. He hoped that Turkey would pursue a new policy and normalize its relations with Cyprus, as this would re-launch negotiations. As for Greece, relations with Turkey were set on a positive note, but the relationship would nevertheless also be determined by the full respect of a just and viable solution to the Cyprus issue within a framework of international law.

MOHAMED BAZOUM, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Niger, said that his country would not be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, despite the efforts undertaken in different sectors. The Renaissance Programme implemented by the country's presidency had set as a priority the development of the agriculture, health-care and education systems, with the ultimate goal of improving the human development index. The number of people chronically undernourished or living in extreme poverty had been drastically reduced, thanks also to the help of bilateral partners and non-governmental organizations, among others. He stated that ambitious programmes and policies had been launched to foster economic and social development and food security, as well as to lend to the effectiveness of public institutions and promote social development.

At a time when the United Nations had to deal with troubling issues in terms of peace and security, his country encouraged the General Assembly and the Security Council to seek negotiated solutions. In the Sahel, a major concern had been the situation in Mali. The establishment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) had, therefore, been very welcome, as a sizable mobilization of the international community had taken place. An essential role had been played by the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union, through its Peace and Security Council, and by the United Nations. However, in a region so affected by terrorism, the unjustified stalling of action in regards to some terrorist groups had only given them ground to implement their criminal plans. The situation in Mali had ultimately yielded positive results, as the country was now free and fair elections could be held, he noted. Now MINUSMA should complete its task to eradicate terrorists, he added.

The problems of the Sahel were not only security related, he continued, as this region was affected also by drug trafficking and transnational crime, climate change, desertification and recurrent droughts, which also required the mobilization of the international community.

He then turned to matters affecting other countries. On the Central African Republic he called for an international intervention to “put an end to the martyrdom” of the country’s people. On Palestine, he asked how a people could be denied of its basic rights. Echoing many other countries, he encouraged a two-State solution. On Syria, he said the world was witnessing the “crumbling of a millenary civilization”. He expressed his country’s condemnation of the use of chemical weapons. Concluding, he asked for the lifting of the embargo on Cuba, as its people had already endured decades of commercial and economic hardship.

ALI AHMED KARTI, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sudan, expressed great uncertainty about the future of the United Nations and the relations among its Member States. A statement of Sudan had been expected, however the authorities of the United States had refused to give entry visas to the President and his delegation, and because of this denial he was not able to participate in the General Assembly. The fact that the authorities of the host country did not grant a visa to the President was a serious violation of the principles of the Charter, and a violation of the host country Headquarters Agreement. President Bashir was known throughout Africa by those who hold peace dear, and was known for putting an end to a blood-thirty war inherited from the days of colonialism. The birth of the republic of South Sudan was evident proof of his commitment to the comprehensive agreement, despite the tremendous sacrifice made by giving up the part of the territory that was rich in natural resources. That denial of the legitimate right of a Member State led him to call on the Secretary-General of the United Nations to do his duty to protect the rights of Member States under the Headquarters Agreements signed with the host country, he said. He hoped that negotiations during the session would nevertheless be successful, as the theme of sustainable development post-2015 that was chosen was very important.

Sudan had begun a political process that would lead it to adopt a final constitution. After the peace efforts proved successful vis-à-vis South Sudan, Sudan had accepted the choice made by the people. His country was working to create a strong economic system, even though it had to deal with the economic sanctions imposed upon it. On the matter of human rights, Sudan was pursuing greater participation of women in Government, and in 2010 had adopted a law on the rights of the child, and had accepted the principles in the Convention on the Rights of the Child so as to provide protection of children from violence and exploitation.

He said he hoped for strong and healthy relations with South Sudan, and trusted that the international community would be supportive of those efforts. The humanitarian situation was now stable, and so that humanitarian needs could be met his country had reached an agreement with United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) as part of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Sudan, like other member States, was committed to development and combating poverty, and had adopted policies on reducing poverty. Unemployment was not as low as hoped, and the sanctions made it particularly difficult, especially for young people. He said that the Security Council did not currently reflect the realities of the world, and did not function in a democratic or transparent way, and comprehensive reform was necessary.

ERLAN A. IDRISOV, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, strongly condemned the use of chemical weapons in Syria and hoped that the country’s accession to place such weapons under international control would contribute to the end of the conflict. On nuclear disarmament, he reminded that by closing the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site in 1991 and renouncing the fourth largest nuclear arsenal, Kazakhstan had contributed to a nuclear-weapons-free world. The treaty on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons in Central Asia in 2009 was believed to be an important contribution of the Central Asian countries to international peace and security. He then expressed concern over the nuclear programmes of Iran and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

Stating that Kazakhstan was strongly committed to the fundamental principles of international law and the respect of human rights, he called for appropriate budgeting and strengthening of the United Nations Human Rights Council. In this regard, he asked Member States to implement civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights at national, regional and global levels, paying particular attention to vulnerable groups. He then turned to the global financial and economic crisis, which he said led to the conclusion that the world needed a common policy of global governance, as highlighted in the General Assembly resolution on Global Economic Governance, which recognized the value of cooperation and interaction between the United Nations and regional and subregional groups.

On Rio+20, he stressed Kazakhstan's transition to a "green" economy, as well as its voluntary contributions to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and investing in low-carbon emissions. On the Millennium Development Goals, he said that they should be included in the post-2015 development agenda, in conjunction with the objectives of sustainable development. International partnerships must be strengthened for South-South and triangular cooperation, to complete the activities of official development assistance. Strengthening resilience to withstand external factors, such as climate change and financial and food crises, needed to gain priority on the new agenda, he said. Kazakhstan also announced its candidacy to the Security Council for 2017-2018. Acting as a geographical and political bridge between North and South, Europe and Asia, Kazakhstan wished for the establishment of a United Nations multi-country centre in the city of Almaty, whose cost of construction, he noted, would be covered by the country.

MARTY M. NATALEGAWA, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, said his country had an enduring belief in the efficacy and effectiveness of diplomacy, in maintaining peace and security, in advancing social progress and economic prosperity, and in promoting democracy, human rights and tolerance. The conflict in Syria had long demanded a political and diplomatic solution, because despite the undoubted complexity of the situation, three key needs remained compelling. The international community must halt the violence, facilitate humanitarian relief, and begin an inclusive political process. The recent breakthrough on chemical weapons in Syria was evidence that diplomacy worked, and further diplomatic momentum was needed. The Security Council must make a forceful case for a peaceful solution, and get the parties to the negotiating table by convening the Geneva II Conference.

Similarly on the issue of Palestine, the full weight of diplomatic pressure must be brought to bear and General Assembly and Security Council resolutions must be implemented, he said. He welcomed the resumption of direct negotiations, which was a result of relentless diplomatic efforts. The same diplomatic pursuit must be applied to the common interest of all: the eradication of poverty, the promotion of sustainable development and inclusive finance, and overcoming the challenge of climate change. The development agenda must work for all countries — large or small, developed or developing — and each must share responsibility. The pursuit of a diplomatic path becomes fraught with challenges in a complex and fast changing world where the issues of governance, human rights violations, extremism and intolerance within countries can quickly obtain inter-State dimensions, he said. As countries embarked on a process of democratization and promoted the protection of human rights, the United Nations must contribute to a conducive atmosphere for their peaceful transformation. For its part, he noted that Indonesia was steadily developing a regional architecture conducive for the peaceful promotion of human rights and democracy called the "South-East Asian Nations Political-Security Community".

The primacy of diplomacy and of the peaceful settlement of disputes over war and conflict was never more evident than in the quiet and fundamental transformations that had taken place in Southeast Asia, he said. Indonesia believed the dividends of peace and stability were self-evident, and these were economic and social progress. The continued stability and security of the region was therefore key to secure prosperity. Indonesia was working with its partners to promote common security, prosperity and stability for all in the region.

ZALMAI RASSOUL, Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, illustrated the journey that Afghanistan had undertaken in the past twelve years, by painting two contrasting pictures of the reality of Afghanistan in 2001 at the time of the collapse of the Taliban regime, and 2013 as the country went through a historic period and a process of transition. During the little more than two decades leading up to November 2001,

the people of Afghanistan had experienced and suffered incalculable pain, deprivation and losses through three distinct periods between the communist coup in 1978 and the subsequent invasion of the country in 1979 and the fall of the communist regime.

During that time, more than 1 million Afghan men, women and children were killed, more than 2 million were made orphans or left with severe war wounds and over 5 million were forced out of their villages and towns into refugee camps in neighbouring countries. The international community was only mobilized to take action against the Taliban regime in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States. Today, Afghanistan was a forward-looking young democracy with functioning State institutions, an elected president, an elected parliament and elected provincial councils in each of the 34 provinces, backed up by a powerful civil society movement, he stated. Additionally, the country's per capita income had increased from \$100 a year to over \$600 a year, the national currency had been consistently stable, and trade ties with the outside world were rapidly expanding. "Afghanistan today is a proud and active member of the international community while managing our ever-expanding relations and cooperation with countries and organizations around the world through a network of some 70 diplomatic and consular missions", he said.

In the security area, he said the transfer of security responsibilities from international forces to Afghan national security forces would be complete by the end of 2014. He expressed confidence that with the continued financial assistance of the international community for equipment and other requirements, Afghan national forces would be able to provide security to the Afghan people and defend the country against external threats. Parallel to ongoing efforts to enhance the capacity and capabilities of its national security forces, the Government was pursuing a political process of peace and reconciliation with the Taliban. In that regard, he said that Pakistan and other countries in the region could play a key role in supporting his country's peace efforts. Continuing, Mr. Rassoul observed that as far as the economic component of the transition was concerned, the presence of a large international military force over the past ten years had generated employment and income opportunities for thousands of citizens. He stated that his Government was keen to reduce the negative economic impact of international military withdrawal and to strengthen its national economy by focusing on the development of the agriculture and agribusiness sector; promoting the investment of foreign and domestic companies in the country's natural resources; and by utilizing over \$16 billion pledged at the Tokyo conference last July to help his Government fill its projected fiscal gap through 2015. He added that as the country moved forward in implementing the transition agenda and preparing for the "Transformation Decade", another key factor of its long-term success would be the strategic partnerships it had forged with its allies, including India, the United States, Germany, Australia, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Poland, the European Union, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.

ERKKI TUOMIOJA, Minister for Foreign Affairs of [Finland](#), said the General Assembly was convening at a time that posed enormous challenges to the authority and credibility of the United Nations, firstly because Member States were at a crossroads whereby they must decide how to attain sustainable development, and secondly because they faced the Organization's failure to act on its core domain — maintaining international peace and security. Some 110,000 people had been killed and 2 million forced to leave their homes in Syria, where a tragic civil war had been going on for two years. The United Nations had been unable to end that appalling bloodshed, he said. "This is another major challenge to the credibility of the United Nations."

Elaborating on those challenges, he said that with a more than threefold increase in the world's population since the Organization's founding, and with unprecedented technological progress and ever-increasing exploitation of natural resources, the world had changed irrevocably. Alarming changes in climate underlined the urgent need to heed the limits of ecological sustainability, he said, calling for a comprehensive climate agreement by 2015. The consequences of climate change were already seen worldwide, and its impacts were predicted to intensify in the coming decades.

Considerable progress had been made in reducing extreme poverty, but it could only be eradicated in the context of sustainable development, he said. Development must be ecologically, economically and socially sustainable, and firmly anchored in human rights and the values encapsulated in the Millennium Declaration. Peace and development were a precondition for sustainable development, and the post-2015 process must include a financing strategy, he said, explaining that financing must be based on mobilizing and managing national resources. Nations should mobilize their own resources through inclusive economic action and responsible international trade and investments, he added.

Specifically on security challenges, he said the Syrian conflict had seriously undermined the Organization's authority, and both the Syrian Government and the international community had failed to implement the responsibility to protect. The use of chemical weapons on 21 August could be a turning point for the conflict, amid universal condemnation of their use as a war crime for which those responsible must be brought to justice through referral to the International Criminal Court. Finland welcomed the agreement reached on the adoption of a strongly-worded Security Council resolution on collecting and destroying Syria's chemical weapons under international supervision.

All the international community's failures and disappointments notwithstanding, however, there had also been one true success story for the United Nations this year: the Arms Trade Treaty adopted in April after decades of effort. The importance of that Treaty had been confirmed by the growing number of signatures after 3 June, when it had been opened for signature, he added, expressing hope that the signature of the United States would be followed by those of all the other permanent members of the Security Council.

ELIAS JAUA MILANO, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Venezuela, said that President Nicolás Maduro Moros was not present because of a range of delays, conditions and a lack of guarantees imposed by the United States in flagrant violation of the United Nations Headquarters Agreement. However, he was present to speak on behalf of the people of the Liberator, Simon Bolivar, and convey lessons learned from the late leader Hugo Chavez. He wished that there could be a place where the noble ideals enshrined in the United Nations Charter could be carried out. However in the United States, various military interventions had been allowed that engulfed whole countries or regions of the world in long wars and instability. The Security Council had been taken hostage by the hawks of war. When they could do so, certain countries would justify the attacks from their seats at the United Nations. However, the purpose of the world Organization was to preserve international peace and security. But this could not be accomplished by arming terrorist groups such as Al-Qaida, which were linked to terrible acts such as the destruction of the twin towers in this very city. He asked why members of the Security Council would sponsor and support such groups, window-dressing them as political opposition.

Violent groups should not be given a voice at the United Nations, he said. The preamble of the United Nations Charter stated that the goal of the Organization was to promote social progress and raise the standard of living for all. But poverty, hunger and injustice were growing, and the standards of freedom were falling. There was a neo-fascist and neo-liberal model at work. For its part, Venezuela had worked to implement a true democracy within a socialist system. It was an additional irritant that the President of the United States was a Nobel laureate and yet threatened to bomb this or that country to remove a Government that the United States did not like. He then proceeded to ask the Assembly whether the United States was not equal with the other Member States. In doing so, he questioned why sanctions were not imposed on the country that had a military base in Cuba where torture was being meted out and that had admitted to illegal espionage activities against the Heads of State and Government convened in New York. Furthermore, he was curious as to why the international community had not considered the unpiloted drones that had taken the lives of innocent people in northern Africa and the Middle East and parts of Asia as crimes against humanity.

The United Nations and the diplomatic process had been kidnapped by imperialism, he said. Hugo Chavez had called for a genuine transformation of the United Nations, and seven years ago said that there was a bit of a "whiff of sulphur" at the United Nations rostrum. He was sad to say that that whiff was

still present. He hoped that Edward Snowden would one day be able to walk freely among a generation of free Americans. He had showed the world that the right to privacy had been violated by the most complex spying system that humanity had ever been able to come up with. The world awoke to find that George Orwell's 1984 was now here. But the United Nations was not trying to stop this, and the Security Council did not provide answers. The Secretary-General should set up a body within the United Nations to ensure the right to privacy and the right to communicate without being tapped, for every inhabitant of the world. Protecting the dignity of human beings should be the guiding star of humanity. He said that the leaders of the United States and those that followed them blindly should realize that if they wanted to be "exceptional" then they should find exceptional ways to bring about peace in the world.

Right of Reply

The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that this morning his counterpart from the Republic of Korea had made disagreeable references to his country. He rejected as misleading the legality prevailing in the Korean peninsula, saying he wished to clarify those remarks about his country's possession of weapons of mass destruction. The delegate had "missed the other part of the story", which was that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had been living with the threat of weapons and bombs hanging over their heads for decades. In 1957, the United States had brought nuclear weapons to the Korean peninsula and by the 1970s those weapons had numbered 1,000. In 2002, the United States Government had proclaimed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea a member of the "axis of evil", which meant that it should be eliminated, and was listed for a "nuclear pre-emptive strike". Under that situation, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had to prevent nuclear weapons from falling on the heads of its people, and was thus prepared to have nuclear deterrence. In reference to the so-called "nuclear test this year", he said that the Republic of Korea delegate had been referring to the launch of a peaceful satellite launched not this year, but last December. He said that exercise was within the full sovereignty of his country, which was "equal" under the United Nations Charter, yet the document adopted was in flagrant violation of his country's sovereignty. That was an abuse of power by the so-called permanent member of the Security Council, the United States. It undermined the credibility of the United Nations and the Council. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was the only country brought before the Council for launching a satellite, and it rejected the resulting resolution as illegal, he said. Nuclear development and safeguarding the peace and security of a people was the best way to ensure an environment for peaceful economic development. Regarding the cancelation of family visits, he said that was because the South had taken a confrontational approach. Since family reunions were a fundamental key to reconciliation and reunification of the peninsula, the North "kindly recommended" that the South take into consideration the 15 June North-South Joint Declaration that had been unanimously welcomed by the General Assembly.

Responding, the representative of the Republic of Korea said on the issues of the nuclear programme and missile launch that the North had claimed that there was another part of the story to its nuclear development programme. It was very clear that there were no nuclear weapons in the South. Tension in the region had its roots in the North's continued nuclear launches and tests, he said, describing his Northern counterpart's argument as "only a ridiculous attack". On the claim the North had only launched a satellite, he emphasized that Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009), 2087 (2013) and 2094 (2013) clearly demanded that the North not conduct any launches using ballistic missile technology. Given its track record of nuclear tests and missile launches, the North had no right to claim any peaceful uses of outer space. Furthermore, it was bound by its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions, he pointed out. On the parallel policy of economic development and nuclear disarmament, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had provided a rationale for its policy, but the pursuit of nuclear weapons was a violation of international law. That country's Government received \$10 million from the United Nations annually, and it was a pity that it squandered those resources on nuclear development when it should instead use them to improve the lives of its people, he said. Regarding family reunions, he expressed regret that the North had unilaterally cancelled them just four days ahead of the event, which had been planned as a humanitarian event intended to heal the people's pain. The cancellation had shattered the hopes of 200 separated families selected for the occasion from among

10 million people. They had been eagerly anticipating meeting their estranged kindred, he said, urging the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to reverse its inhumane decisions and help heal the wounds inflicted on the peoples and soothe their anguish.

The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea said that the South had again made misleading remarks in talking about nuclear weapons in the Korean peninsula, whereas it was the presence of nuclear weapons in the South that had undermined the region's peace and security for decades. The South's delegate had said that the nuclear weapons were not there, but if that was the case, then international law required verification by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Also, the South had launched a satellite immediately after the North's satellite launch, but because it was an ally of the United States, the issue had not been taken before the Security Council. That was a double standard, he said. Regarding family reunions, he said the South had opened a joint military exercise and had gone ahead with provocations by arresting political figures favouring Korean reunification. The 15 June North–South Joint Declaration should be given priority as the only way forward, and the South should answer to the international community, he said.

The representative of the Republic of Korea said he did not feel the need to get entangled in his Northern counterpart's claims. The North denied that it was bound by any of the obligations by which all other Member States abided in a faithful and consistent manner, he said. According to Article 25 of the Charter, all Member States must accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council, and it was highly regrettable that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea delegate had reiterated his "irrational" argument.

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