



General Assembly

Sixty-ninth session

Official Records

14th plenary meeting
Friday, 26 September 2014, 6.30 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa (Uganda)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Imnadze (Georgia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 6.30 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

General debate

Address by Mr. Sushil Koirala, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal

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

Mr. Sushil Koirala, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Sushil Koirala, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Koirala (Nepal): I bring with me warmest greetings from the people of Nepal and their best wishes for the success of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly. I congratulate the President of the Assembly on his unanimous election and wish to express our deep appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his commitment and dedication.

We commend the Secretary-General for convening the Climate Summit. The momentum generated at the Summit should pave the way next year for a binding

agreement on climate change, with long-term and comprehensive global commitments for climate solutions based on the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities, equity and respective capabilities. It is an irony that the world's most vulnerable countries happen to be the worst victims of climate change through no fault of their own. There should be special provisions for climate financing, separate from regular official development assistance, so that the mitigation and adaptation needs of the least developed countries and small island developing States can be addressed.

Terrorism is anathema to humankind. It is a serious threat to peace, security and development. Nepal unequivocally condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We share the concern about the growing scourges of terrorism, extremism and religious fundamentalism. In that context, we welcome the convening of the Security Council summit meeting earlier this week (see S/PV.7272) and support the adoption of resolution 2178 (2014), on foreign terrorist fighters. We appeal for an early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism and the effective implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Nepal believes that terrorism can best be tackled under the auspices of the United Nations with a coordinated global response.

Peacekeeping has emerged as the central activity of the United Nations and an innovative tool for dealing with challenges to peace and security. Nepal is proud to have contributed to the maintenance of

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international peace and security through United Nations peacekeeping operations in troubled parts of the world. Nepalese Blue Helmets have been commended for their professionalism and commitment in trying circumstances. We are currently the fifth-largest troop contributor to that flagship activity. With ever-greater commitment and dedication, Nepal will continue to participate in peacekeeping operations and to promote gender equality through the increased participation of women in peacekeeping. We urge this world body to give due consideration to the safety and security of peacekeepers. Nepal calls for equitable leadership opportunities, commensurate with Member States' troop contributions, to be made available both at Headquarters and in the field.

Nepal stands for general and complete disarmament, covering all weapons of mass destruction, in a time-bound, verifiable and effective manner. We call upon Member States, especially nuclear-weapon States, to halt militarization in all spheres and step up measures for disarmament in order to free up much-needed dividends for development. We wish to see an enlarged role for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia, which is based in Kathmandu.

As a least developed and landlocked country, Nepal faces structural constraints and pervasive and complex development challenges. My delegation underlines the urgency of addressing the special needs of the least developed countries (LDCs) and supporting them with the provision of enhanced resources for inclusive development.

Nepal calls upon the international community, particularly donors, to fulfil all the commitments made in favour of LDCs. We underline the timely, full and effective implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs. Nepal aims to graduate from LDC status by 2022. An enhanced level of international support to build our productive capacity, improve supply-side capacity, minimize shocks and vulnerabilities and, above all, bring about structural transformation will be critical to meeting that target.

Nepal remains fully committed to the protection and promotion of human rights and has put the required institutional mechanisms in place. We remain constructively engaged with all United Nations human rights mechanisms and the international community in the protection and promotion of human rights. We

reject politicization and selectivity in the application of human rights standards.

My Government is determined to bring about a dignified closure of the past dating back to the armed conflict. We believe the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Commission on Disappearances will help put our past behind us and prevent a recurrence of grave violations of human rights. I want to reassure the international community that there will be no blanket amnesty for grave crimes. We underline the need to ensure the rights and well-being of migrant workers.

Nepal has always supported the call for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and an end to the spiralling conflict in the region. We recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people on the basis of United Nations resolutions and encourage Israel and Palestine to live as neighbours within secure and recognized international boundaries.

The situation in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria demands a more proactive United Nations engagement. While supporting the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of those countries, we urge the United Nations to play an active role in finding a political settlement and helping those countries move towards national unity, reconciliation and reconstruction.

We hold the view that the people of Ukraine should enjoy the right to freely decide their destiny without any outside interference.

Our unwavering faith and long struggle for a democratic system of governance has given us the strength to mainstream the armed Maoist rebels into a peaceful democratic process and lead a successful transition from autocratic monarchy to democratic republican order, thereby setting up unique models. The political parties in Nepal, including the Maoists, are now working together to have a democratic Constitution promulgated through the elected Constituent Assembly. My Government remains committed to bringing the parties both within and outside the Assembly on board within the framework of constitutionalism, political pluralism and the rule of law, to put the country on the path of peace, stability, development and a democratic system of governance.

We greatly appreciate our neighbours, India and China, the United Nations, our friends and well-wishers in the international community for their

support for and solidarity with our peace process and development efforts. We firmly believe that democracy is indispensable for peace, progress, stability and prosperity. Peace, democracy and sustainable development are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing. Development is not possible in the absence of peace, which, in turn, cannot be attained in the absence of democracy.

The post-2015 development agenda becomes truly transformative only when the pressing needs and priorities of the most vulnerable and marginalized countries and societies are faithfully integrated into the broader global agenda and are provided with sufficient resources to achieve them. A holistic development process does not leave an unfinished agenda behind, so the remaining tasks of the Millennium Development Goals should be fully incorporated in the post-2015 agenda.

We consider corruption to be the biggest enemy of the people and a threat to peace, stability and development. My Government has underlined the importance of transparency, accountability and zero tolerance for corruption as prerequisites to improving the quality of governance and delivering results to the people.

Nepal's foreign policy is inspired by the purposes and principles of the United Nations. People's aspirations for peace, stability, progress, decency, dignity and prosperity are firmly embedded in it. We strongly believe that peaceful coexistence, mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, and equality and mutual benefit should constitute the fundamental tenets of inter-State relationships.

Reforms of the United Nations, including the Security Council, need to reflect contemporary realities for making it more effective, representative, responsive and capable of handling increasingly complex global problems. We support the expansion of membership in both permanent and non-permanent categories. The seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, next year, should be an occasion to ensure the representation and increase the voices of developing countries in the Security Council. In that context, Nepal reiterates its support for the desire of India, Japan, Germany and Brazil to serve as permanent members in the expanded Security Council. We also believe that the African continent and Member States that have contributed to

the maintenance of international peace and security should also be given due consideration in any expansion.

In seven decades of the United Nations, it has been found to be most successful when we honour the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and the decisions we make. B.P. Koirala, the first elected Prime Minister of Nepal, while addressing the General Assembly at its fifteenth session, in 1960, said,

“The real solution of the world's problems, including the problem of world peace and prosperity, lies in the direction of strengthening and extending the authority of the United Nations. This authority will be strengthened and fortified if the decisions of the United Nations are respected faithfully and loyally by all Powers, great and small.” (*A/PV.878, para. 235*)

In conclusion, my Government reiterates its profound commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations as the embodiment of peace, progress and prosperity.

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

Mr. Sushil Koirala, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Irakli Garibashvili, Prime Minister of Georgia

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

Mr. Irakli Garibashvili, Prime Minister of Georgia, was escorted to the rostrum.

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

Mr. Garibashvili (Georgia): It is a great honour for me to represent my country here at the United Nations. In recent years, the world has witnessed Georgia's unwavering transformation to freedom, democracy and economic development. We have experienced tremendous advances, and occasional challenges, on our journey to a fuller and more open democracy. We are a vastly stronger nation than we were 20 years ago,

and we are a much stronger nation than we were just two years ago. While we have made significant progress in a few short years, we are still a young democracy, and much remains to be done.

I am fortunate to be part of a new generation of Georgians who grew up in the years following the Cold War. My entire life is one of being part of remarkable change. Our tremendous progress is due to the commitment of the Georgian people to democratic values and their embrace of international cooperation. Because our democratic transformation has been so hard, we do not take anything for granted. To paraphrase President Kennedy: we do not do these things because they are easy, we do them because they are hard. During difficult times, the Georgian people took to the streets in peaceful protest and made their voices heard at the ballot box to ensure that our democratic path continued. I want to express my sincere admiration for the people of Georgia and for their energy and commitment to securing our democratic progress.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the international community, our partner countries represented in this Hall and international organizations, especially the United Nations, for supporting Georgia and listening to the Georgian people. Despite all the challenges that we have faced, the citizens of Georgia are full of hope. The support from the international community and international organizations continues to play a crucial role in Georgia's progress. On behalf of the people of Georgia, we thank them. Georgia's success is their success. Georgia's journey is a testament to the good work done by the United Nations and our international partners.

In the past two years, we have taken concrete steps to break the vicious cycle of Government corruption, impunity and an economy that benefited only a few. We have created a true democracy with a system of governance that is more open, more transparent and more accountable and that upholds the rule of law. We have established a social compact that rewards work and enterprise, while offering support for those in need.

As recognized by various international organizations, the Georgia of today is another world compared to that of two decades ago, or even just two years ago. Every sector of our country has advanced dramatically, from health care and education to the economy and the rule of law. We are now at the dawn of a new day for Georgia. Our democratic institutions

are stronger. Our foreign policy is making us more secure. Our growing economy is working to benefit all Georgians.

We are strengthening and consolidating Georgia's democracy. The parliamentary, presidential and municipal elections held in Georgia during this two-year period are truly something to celebrate. Because Georgia's democracy was hard-won, there is no going back. The Georgian people will hold the Government accountable at the ballot box. My Government must earn every vote by serving the people faithfully and by achieving progress for the country.

We are strengthening democratic institutions and establishing stronger checks and balances. Our new Constitution decentralizes executive power and creates greater accountability at all levels of Government. Our Parliament now functions as a true legislature. Laws are proposed, debated and amended. Committees hold hearings and question ministers. The old rubber stamp has been thrown away. We now guarantee the protection of human rights through a new human rights strategy and action plan. In addition, we are equally proud to have enacted a new anti-discrimination law that extends the protection of human rights to all Georgian citizens.

We have restored the rule of law by establishing an independent judiciary and by instituting more rights for defendants. We have ended impunity by Government officials and torture and abuse in our prisons. All Georgians are now equal before the law. No one is above the law. Everyone will have the benefit of a judicial process that meets the highest international standards.

We are committed to building truly strong, independent and high-quality media. The media, like civil society, are essential to a strong democracy. While I may not always agree with what the media say or write, I will always fight to make sure that they have the right to the freedom of speech.

Such reforms will benefit all citizens of my country. Our goal is to unify our society through the rule of law and democracy. Our commitment to aligning more closely with the United States and Europe goes hand in hand with our commitment to continued democratic transformation. The United States is a key strategic ally of Georgia. The relationship between our countries at all levels of Government has never been stronger.

Increased Euro-Atlantic and European integration is our way of returning to the family of European

nations, with whom we share a history, a culture and, most important, common values. Our new Association Agreement with the European Union and our steadfast movement towards NATO membership form the foundation for that relationship and provide an umbrella for greater engagement. As German Chancellor Angela Merkel said at this very rostrum, there is no development without security and no security without development (see A/65/PV.5). Our Association Agreement is the master plan for the gradual establishment of European political, economic, social and legislative norms and standards. My country has embarked on a demanding path of wide-ranging reforms. We will deliver on our commitments.

I believe that Georgia's democratic transformation can serve as a model for other countries in the region. Today, we pledge to share our experience with nations going through similar transitions. As we deepen our European and Euro-Atlantic integration, we are also becoming a truly open and globalized economy. We are making important investments and reforms to unlock the full potential of the Georgian economy and the Georgian people. From universal health care to investments in clean energy, Georgia is becoming a twenty-first-century nation. As we pursue those reforms, we seek to implement the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015. We have become a leader in sustainable development, taking the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development seriously. We are ready to work together with the international community to define a post-2015 development agenda that is inclusive and people-centred. That agenda will address the need to achieve economic stability, sustained economic growth, the promotion of social equity and the protection of the environment. At the same time, we are committed to enhancing gender equality, women's empowerment and equal employment for every Georgian.

The future belongs to the next generation, so the protection and development of our children to achieve their full potential must be based on greater investment in their education.

A top area of concern for Georgia is the issue of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. There are hundreds of thousands of IDPs in Georgia as a result of Russia's military aggression. Yet Georgia is still taking in refugees from other conflict-torn regions. Sadly, the sources of new refugees are increasing, not

decreasing, especially in the light of current conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East.

We are also doing everything we can to help our friends in Ukraine by providing humanitarian assistance, political support, technical help — such as sending doctors and medicine — and serving as a safe refuge for children affected by the conflict. We are also helping them implement reforms and strengthen their democratic institutions. The ongoing developments in Ukraine tear at our hearts. We strongly support Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. We hope that the recent peace treaties will put an end to the military operations once and for all and mark the beginning of an irreversible peacemaking process.

The international community has spoken with increasing support every year for the right of return by adopting the General Assembly resolution on the "Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia". It is essential that the General Assembly continue to retain this humanitarian issue on the agenda and support the rights of the forcibly displaced with strength and conviction.

I should now like to address my brothers and sisters in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. I say to my dear brothers and sisters, I dream of the day when we shall all live together in peace and prosperity. We are committed to the path of reconciliation and restoring Georgia's full territorial integrity and sovereignty. We must work to find a way for them to participate in our success, including the benefits of our new European Union Association Agreement.

I also call on the Russian Government to fulfil its obligations under the 2008 international ceasefire and join in the search for peace, prosperity and reconciliation. Our history and our values are a source of strength. When combined with our strategic location, this allows us to offer something unique to the world and serve as a driver of peace and security.

Beyond our borders, we aim to contribute to global security as a supplier of security, not just a consumer. My country's dedication to becoming a security contributor to the world is evident in our aspirations for European and Euro-Atlantic integration, which are the main pillars of Georgia's foreign policy. Building on the achievements of the past two years, my country has made significant progress that reinforces our path to eventual NATO membership. The historic NATO

Summit reaffirmed that Georgia will be a member of NATO in the future, and our people remain committed to this ultimate objective. As a result of the decisions taken at the Wales Summit, NATO will significantly increase Georgia's integration and provide tangible cooperation initiatives that will increase Georgia's capabilities and overall security.

We are the largest non-NATO contributor to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF), and we are committed to taking part in the post-ISAF mission. From the operation's outset, our troops, including medical personnel, staff officers and training instructors, will be ready for deployment. We also plan to contribute to institution-building in Afghanistan.

We stand with our allies in combating all forms of terrorism and organized crime, anywhere in the world.

We are also proud to contribute to the European Union's efforts under the Common Security and Defence Policy to build peace and security worldwide. In that context, as the second-largest participant, a Georgian battalion and a light infantry company have already started a mission under the EU-led operation in the Central African Republic.

Our willingness to serve shoulder to shoulder with our allies is not the only way Georgia is serving as a global security provider. We are also taking a rational approach to reducing regional tensions and preventing conflict.

Let me be clear, Georgia will never sacrifice its territorial integrity and sovereignty. However, we will continue to look for pathways to reconciliation with our brothers and sisters in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

We Georgians want a good relationship with Russia, but never at the expense of our sovereignty and independence, which we fought so hard to achieve. To that end, we are pursuing a new approach, different from that of our predecessors, in dealing with Russia. We are pursuing a two-track engagement strategy based on our being a responsible, pragmatic and constructive neighbour. On the first track, we started an unconditional dialogue with Russia on the resumption of trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian relations. On the second track, we have continued to seek a peaceful settlement of the August 2008 war and the end of Russian occupation of Georgian territory, based on the fundamental principles of international law.

The first track has produced significant results and has helped reduce tensions between Georgia and Russia. Trade has reopened and Georgian exports to Russia have increased over 300 per cent. People-to-people exchanges have also increased dramatically. We are coexisting more calmly as neighbours. This approach has also increased stability in the entire South Caucasus region.

However, Georgia's efforts to reduce tensions and extend an olive branch to Russia have not been met with the same spirit of cooperation. We have taken every constructive step. Now it is time for the Russian Government to stop the occupation and start on a path to lasting peace.

My country is committed to using its strategic location to connect Asia, Europe and the Middle East, thereby expanding trade from one end of Eurasia to the other. The reopening of the Silk Road is one of the greatest achievements brought about by the end of the Cold War. The Silk Road region accounts for two thirds of the world's population and 60 per cent of its gross domestic product. If its potential is fully tapped, it will become a key force for the expansion of trade, the development of new energy resources and supply chains and the promotion of cultural exchanges. To fully unlock that potential, the international community must redouble its efforts in three key areas: trade and transport, energy, and people-to-people contacts.

We have deepened cooperation with Turkey, China, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan to integrate transportation corridors and open new routes that will bring goods from Asia to Western Europe in record time. Energy resources are a key driver of Silk Road economic development and integration.

We support a key route for Caspian Sea oil and gas to travel to Europe. Last year, the Shah Deniz Consortium announced a massive expansion of the South Caucasus Pipeline through Azerbaijan and Georgia, which will bring 16 billion cubic metres of new natural gas to Europe and Turkey and thousands of new jobs to Georgia. Several days ago, I was in Azerbaijan to break ground and lay the first segment of that new pipeline. The expansion will lead to approximately \$2 billion in new investment by the Consortium in Georgia alone. Of course, that will result in Georgia receiving significant quantities of natural gas to improve our economic development and security.

Clean, renewable energy can also be a driver for regional energy cooperation. In Georgia, we are utilizing our massive hydropower resources to become a carbon-neutral country and to export renewable energy to our neighbours. The potential of the region is great, but more is needed to turn such potential into reality. Georgia is ready to use its location as a strategic crossroads and to do its part to fully revitalize the Silk Road. To that end, I intend to establish a Silk Road forum in 2015, and in Georgia we plan to launch an annual high-level meeting of all States and international organizations that are interested in the future of the Silk Road. The forum will discover new ideas for enhancing cooperation in the fields of transport, energy, trade and people-to-people contacts across the Silk Road. The forum will move beyond discussion to action.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm that I am so very confident that our best years are ahead of us, and that our worst are now part of history. I am confident that Georgians have come together to move our nation forward and to fulfil the promise of a strong, independent and free, great Georgian nation. Working together, there is no limit on what Georgia, the region and the world can achieve. I look forward to seeing many present here today in Tbilisi.

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

Mr. Irakli Garibashvili, Prime Minister of Georgia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Elio di Rupo, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Elio di Rupo, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium.

Mr. Elio di Rupo, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Elio di Rupo, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Di Rupo (Belgium) (spoke in French): Myriam Riva, Emmanuel Riva, Dominique Sabrier, Alexandre Strens — these are the names of the four people brutally murdered on 24 May in Brussels. Four people were killed just because they were in a Jewish

museum, an institution dedicated to culture, knowledge and intelligence. I named these four victims, but I do not forget the thousands of anonymous victims of barbarism around the world. For the abject act that took place at the Jewish Museum in Brussels is connected to the events sweeping the world right now. In Syria and Iraq, as well as in countries like Algeria, terrorists kill innocent people every day.

Syria and Iraq are of special concern to us. There, defenceless people, women and children are victims of massacres, persecution, destruction and the theft of all their possessions — all because they belong to cultures, including the Muslim culture, that the terrorists do not agree with. Yet, no religion, and certainly not Islam, asserts that we must kill those who think differently. We have to say this over and over again in order to remove any excuse for these criminals who sow terror.

The personal history of the alleged perpetrator of the attack against the Jewish Museum in Brussels resonates with all of us. It is that of a French jihadist who visited Syria in the ranks of the so-called Islamic State. This jihadist then moved across Europe before committing the irreparable. It is common trajectory for many of these foreign fighters. These foreign fighters are a threat to every country in the world. Security Council resolution 2178 (2014), adopted the day before yesterday, is an important step towards a coordinated global response. We must and we shall put these terrorists in a position where they can no longer inflict harm.

Beyond the humanitarian support it has already brought to the Iraqi people, Belgium recently decided to send six F-16 fighters in support of the fight against terrorism in Iraq. My country also wants to strengthen cooperation among States. Belgium wants to intensify the exchange of information at the European level and within NATO. As required by the Security Council resolution, a major preventive effort must also be made to prevent jihadist aspirants from reaching the combat zones. We must prevent the recruitment, training and transportation of our citizens who may be tempted to join terrorist groups. For minors in particular, each country must demonstrate a total vigilance regarding border control.

The battle we are waging against terrorism reflects a conflict between two understandings of life: respect for human beings, which we have and the terrorists do not; defence of freedom everywhere and always, which the terrorists do not want; tolerance, while the terrorists

preach and impose intolerance. For us, life is priceless; for them, it has no value.

We know that military actions alone are not enough. Here, as there, what is needed is to focus on education, educational support, openness to others and the world. Our goal should be to deradicalize violent radicals. I cannot help but think that the human disaster we are witnessing is also the result of a crushing defeat — that of politicians who favoured military solutions and the notorious so-called preventive war.

A few years ago, Belgium refused to participate in such an operation in Iraq. How can we not see that frustration and humiliation have further strengthened radicalism? Things being what they are, we must now deal with the emergency, and act, including militarily. But we must also consider the future and invest sustainably in civil action. Everywhere, the establishment of a State that protects its citizens must be the priority. Strengthening the rule of law and improving living conditions is the best crisis prevention. Such responses are also much less expensive than the day-to-day management of uprisings and violence. In many crises today, we see the States concerned in a position of great weakness or even virtual failure.

The appointment of a new Prime Minister in Iraq sends the right signal of inclusion and tolerance. Let me mention other illustrations of this principle. With regard to the Middle East, this summer we watched in despair the launching of rockets in Israel and the massive bombing of Gaza. More than 2,100 Palestinian and 67 Israeli lives were lost in combat. War is not a solution. There is no other way to achieve peace — one based on two States coexisting in security — except by returning to negotiations. The status quo is obviously not an option. We must put the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict back at the top of the international agenda. That settlement will also constitute an important factor in the stabilization and peace of the entire region and the world. Therefore, we welcome the efforts of President Obama in that regard, and we hope that he will continue up to the last day of his mandate to work in that direction.

The Arab Spring is another example of what I am talking about. It was a legitimate revolution and it speaks to true aspirations for democracy and prosperity. We must note that in some countries, chaos and terror have long reigned over democracy, while in others we are witnessing a return to State totalitarianism. In that

regard, the international community must do everything possible to encourage democracy peace and prosperity.

With regard to Africa, with which Belgium shares a long common history, it is in constant forward motion and far removed from common clichés. We must strongly support its economic, educational and political development. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular in the east of the country, putting armed groups where they can no longer do harm is an urgent necessity. In Sahel, Mali and the Central African Republic, the fight against religious extremism is where our priorities should lie. We must also mobilize to support populations in Africa that are dealing with the horrific Ebola epidemic.

On the fringes of Europe, we are seeing a broad destabilization. Internationally recognized borders are being violated, and Ukraine is facing a major challenge to be inclusive and representative for both the minorities and the majority of the population in Ukraine.

With regard to Flight MH-17, in which six Belgian citizens died, the currently known facts are incriminating and we eagerly await the final report of the independent experts, who must have free access to the site and responses to all of their requests.

We will have peace only if tolerance triumphs over barbarism. And we must act together. Therefore, I welcome the American initiative to launch a process of reflection on the role of the United Nations in peacekeeping. The role of the United Nations in the prevention and settlement of conflicts is irreplaceable. It is the only place where the representatives of the entire world can talk to each other. To be sure, the functioning of the Organization should evolve and recognize that the right to veto has sometimes been used to prevent action from being taken. I am open to the consideration that has begun in that regard. However, the common house that is the United Nations should be preserved at any price and encouraged to act. That is why I would like to thank our Secretary-General for his unwavering efforts to further improve its functioning.

Our world continues to present us with insufferable contrasts. Too many human beings are today living in extreme poverty. They do not have safe access to water or basic health services and they suffer from malnutrition. Who can believe that people will resign themselves to such a situation and that there will not be yet another scandal if they do? The international community — the Group of Seven and the Organization for Economic

Cooperation and Development — are beginning to deal with tax evasion. That is extremely important, as is the fight against corruption. There will not be great human progress without a moralization of finance at the global level. Our responsibility in that regard is huge.

Too many women and men do not have access to a job or to housing, only because they are of foreign origin. Too many women are subject to moral or physical violence only because they are women. Too many people — lesbians, homosexuals, bisexuals and transgender people — are persecuted and rejected only because they are different or they love differently. It is also our responsibility to denounce and combat all together and systematically those injustices and attacks on human rights.

As a crossroads of many cultures, Belgium has always been one of the most open countries in the world. It has a high standard of living. And although I think they are still too great, the inequalities there are the smallest in Europe. That is largely due to the civil support, which is organized by the Belgian State. In particular, our health system is exceptional and is accessible to everyone. Moreover, Belgium is a multicultural country both through its demography and its abundant and diverse migration. In our country, the respect for the other and the culture of compromise are part of our cultural heritage.

Belgium, like the European Union, is moving on a path of solidarity with peoples who are encountering difficulties. We want to help them to achieve their legitimate aspirations for a more just world. We must also remain vigilant so that we do not fall into the trap of social regression and increasing inequalities. All the ethical progress that we have achieved is precious and must be preserved.

I will conclude by saying that human fraternity is not a utopia. It is what has often allowed us to make great progress. We must go beyond borders to form new types of cooperation, reduce inequalities and bring about new hope. The most powerful obstacle to war and violence is human fraternity. It is that fraternity that will enable us tomorrow to better share the planet's resources, to offer a future to each and every child and to make sure that peace reigns everywhere and for everyone. Members of the Assembly may rest assured that my country will continue to do everything it can to bring peoples together. We believe in sharing and solidarity, and we thus find it entirely natural to

continue to support Member States in their many struggles for peace and justice.

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

Mr. Elio di Rupo, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

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

Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming Her Excellency Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and inviting her to address the General Assembly.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar (Trinidad and Tobago): I would like to thank and congratulate Mr. John Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda, who during his time as President laid the foundation and established the conditions for formulating a new development agenda geared to influencing the sustainable development of the members of the General Assembly.

I would also like to congratulate the new President on his election to the presidency of the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. His tenure comes at a time when the global family is facing very serious threats from the Ebola virus and from what I call the terrorist virus, threats that demand that we all marshal our human, financial and other resources in a global partnership aimed at combating these modern plagues. The President's tenure also comes as we are about to commence the second phase of our formulation of the post-2015 development agenda. I am confident, as I am sure we all are, that he will administer and lead with distinction.

Today it is a privilege for me to share with the Assembly the perspectives of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago on our priorities for delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda, according to the President's

aply selected theme. Last year we considered how we would set the stage for the process to be launched during this sixty-ninth session on finalizing the post-2015 development agenda. I noted then that when we adopted the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and introduced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a new chapter opened for the United Nations (see A/68/PV.10). That chapter would see the United Nations positioned as a vehicle for assisting developing countries, especially the most vulnerable, in their efforts to reduce poverty and hunger, and for providing an environment that would enable States to develop their economies and thus help their people rise out of persistent poverty.

Measures must now be put in place to spur a proactive rather than reactive approach to the issue of development in this transformative post-2015 agenda. With the experience of the challenges and lessons encountered in the past 14 years in the implementation of the MDGs, we are now at a critical juncture in putting into operation the elements we agreed to at the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) so that they will constitute the future we want. The current model was built on what we agreed to at the Millennium Summit, but in some ways it has fallen short of the expectations of many developing countries.

However, the Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago have been able to achieve this objective because it formed an integral part of our 2011 medium-term policy framework, through which we incorporated and aligned the MDGs and their targets with Trinidad and Tobago's medium-term national priorities. Consequently, some of the goals, targets and indicators were modified in the light of Trinidad and Tobago's unique development circumstances and its achievement of several of the MDGs. That approach resulted in, for example, modified targets for education, including achieving universal early-childhood education and a 60 per cent participation rate in tertiary education.

However, I am delighted to say that we have surpassed many of our own targets, as well as some of the MDGs. So in Trinidad and Tobago we now have universal free primary- and secondary-school education, and, as I said, we have surpassed our target of 60 per cent in the tertiary sector and have 65 per cent participation. That too is free. I am also pleased to underscore that my country is well poised to achieve 70 per cent of the 43 targets across the eight goals that

are considered relevant to the national context. That percentage consists of 42 per cent of targets that have already been met and 28 per cent that are likely to be met by 2015. So we say that with good success, and lessons learned, we know what we still have to work on.

I now turn to a short discussion of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Trinidad and Tobago, as part of the CARICOM region and the global community, welcomes the outcomes of the various milestones in the process we have achieved to date. As a member of CARICOM, we have been an active participant in the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals. We have therefore been witness to the sweeping and unprecedented global participation and interest in that process and its outcome. As a collective effort, the crafting of the sustainable development goals undoubtedly captured a spirit of openness, inclusiveness and partnership, all of which underpin this new phase of policy design and implementation. Along with the report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing (A/69/315), the 17 goals adopted in July form a solid foundation.

It is my respectful view that in delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda we must and should prioritize key issues for this session of the General Assembly. I have identified four such priorities. The first, I believe, is for us to renew our commitment to achieving the MDGs. Even in the one year we have left, with more dedicated effort we can make further advances on our original objectives. As the *MDG Gap Task Force Report, 2014: The State of the Global Partnership for Development* highlights, although progress has been made in some areas, the gains must be accelerated and in some areas a renewed effort is needed to close the glaring gaps that still exist. Some of those gaps are in important areas such as access to affordable essential medicines, and in long-term debt sustainability, particularly for small States, which is an essential element of the global partnership for sustainable development. Implementation will be a key measure of our commitment to the aspirations for the post-2015 development agenda.

The second priority is operationalizing "The future we want" (resolution 66/288, annex). In the Rio+20 Conference in 2012, we agreed on many of the foundation elements for the post-2015 development agenda. Coming out of that, we now have several key documents to further inform and guide us on the way forward. We have, for example, the report of

the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Global Sustainability (A/66/700); the sustainable development goals; the report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing; the outcomes of the structured dialogues on a technology facilitation mechanism (see resolution 68/310), and the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production.

"The future we want" also outlines some key emerging challenges that we need to urgently address in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. Some of those issues, as the Assembly will recall, include non-communicable diseases, the increasing urgency to address climate change, and the imperative of addressing the needs of marginalized groups, including women, youth, children and persons living with disabilities. Those are the building blocks of the future we want to form the basis of the post-2015 development agenda. Together with the institutional support of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, the reformed Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Environmental Assembly, we have a solid foundation for fashioning a global partnership in support of poverty eradication through sustainable development.

We look forward to the Secretary-General's synthesized report, which should place all of those elements in the context of a fully integrated post-2015 development agenda and give due consideration to the needs of countries in special situations, including small island developing States, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and Africa. As a specialized conference mandated in "The future we want", the outcome document (A/CONF.223/3, annex) of the recently concluded Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States — the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action — should also be appropriately addressed in the upcoming Secretary-General's report.

The third priority is for us to revitalize the global partnership in support of sustainable development. The 8 August 2014 draft report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing has highlighted that current financing and investment patterns will not deliver sustainable development. In fact, it goes on to say that

“[w]hile design and implementation of policies will be on the national level, achieving sustainable

development will require international support and cooperation”.

Those are the core prerequisites for a global partnership in support of sustainable development. However, in order to make such a partnership meaningful, it is my respectful view that it must also include the following four particular elements.

First, it must include reform in the international financial institutions, targeting on systemic failures and focusing on building resilience that can sustain growth in open and vulnerable economies.

Secondly, it must include the successful completion of the Doha Round of trade negotiations, which will ensure that the rules of trade and commerce do not continue to operate so as to slow, impede or negate development gains and aspirations in our very small and vulnerable economies. I note that the third International Conference on Financing for Development is scheduled to take place in July 2015. That will be critically important to ensuring that a meaningful and effective global partnership for development will become a reality for the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

Thirdly, on the point of a revitalized global partnership in support of sustainable development, I wish to strongly reiterate the support of Trinidad and Tobago for an end to the economic embargo against Cuba. The perpetuation of those measures against a developing country undermines our collective aspirations for a post-2015 development agenda in which no one should be left behind.

Fourthly, our priority should be for us to address the mitigation gap for achieving the target of below 2 or 1.5°C target for limiting the increase in global greenhouse gas emissions and achieving an ambitious, legally binding agreement on climate change in 2015 to be applied from 2020. That agreement should set the world on track to achieving carbon neutrality by 2070, and by so doing ensure that the global climate will support the sustainable development of present as well as future generations.

Our collective action on climate change should take into account the survival of the most vulnerable States in particular, such as our small island developing States, as the front line of increasingly severe impacts of climate change. It should also be firmly rooted in the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities,

recognizing that developing countries' finance needs for mitigation and adaptation to climate change cannot be met exclusively from domestic resources, given the competing demands on public finance. I believe that every Head of Government and every Head of State would recognize those competing interests in their own nation States.

It is therefore essential to put the Green Climate Fund into force early. It is my hope that the partnerships and announcements made at the United Nations Climate Summit 2014 on Tuesday, 23 September, will serve to catalyse more ambitious action on climate change in the near as well as in the long-term and build the momentum necessary for a successful Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Lima in December and in Paris in 2015.

Those are the elements of the global framework, which should occupy our full attention and commitment over the course of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Those elements will be supported by critical enabling actions at the regional and national levels. For us in the context of the Caribbean Community, we have been doing our part as a subregion of small island and low-lying developing States to foster regional integration in support of the sustainable development of all of our peoples. CARICOM Heads of State and Government have agreed on the vision of

“a Caribbean community that is integrated, inclusive and resilient; driven by knowledge, excellence, innovation and productivity; a community where every citizen is secure and has the opportunity to realize his or her potential with guaranteed human rights and social justice; and contributes to and shares in, its economic, social and cultural prosperity. A community which can be a unified and competitive force in the global arena”.

That vision is the collective ambition of the States members of CARICOM, agreed in the context of a strategic framework plan for period 2015-2019. That plan will come through the implementation of six integrated strategic priorities, which include building economic, social, environmental and technological resilience through a coordinated foreign policy and research and development innovation.

In support of the implementation of those six priorities, CARICOM Heads of State and Government have called for a post-2015 development agenda that

will work in tandem with what we are discussing at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly and needs to focus on the eradication of poverty as a central pillar, the adoption of a people-centred approach through an intergovernmentally agreed agenda, and an agenda that incorporates broader measures and appropriate approaches and criteria to complement the gross domestic product per capita as a measure of development. Importantly, those broader measures must foster an enabling global policy environment that is more conducive to the achievement of development objectives and affords greater policy coherence across institutions, including those in the areas of trade, finance, environment and development.

Those regional initiatives in support of advancing the sustainable development of the people of CARICOM are being designed and implemented in the context of a broader strategy for mitigating the vulnerability inherent in countries as small and open as ours. In the context of a limited and narrow resource base, the focus is on nurturing and developing our human resources through an emphasis on innovation and entrepreneurship. It is an approach that focuses on the full realization of the human rights to development and a life of dignity.

Consistent with this approach, I turn to another matter close to our hearts in the region as we continue to advance the global cause of truth, justice and reconciliation, within the context of reparatory justice for the victims and the descendants of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. As a region we are determined to engage in reparatory dialogue with the former slave-owning European nations in order to address the living legacies of these crimes. This is a critically vital element of the socioeconomic development aspirations of the region as the victims of these crimes and their descendants were left in a state of social, psychological, economic and cultural deprivation. In addition, they have been left in a state of disenfranchisement that has ensured their suffering and debilitation to this day, and from which only reparatory action can alleviate their suffering.

I hold that sustainable development cannot be achieved in an environment where people are denied their basic rights to live free from fear, with daily deprivation of the necessities of life due to the ravages of war and other types of instability. It is for these reasons that Trinidad and Tobago is concerned by the developments in Ukraine and other parts of the globe, which have caused pain and suffering to hundreds of

innocent victims. They too must be allowed to live freely.

At the same time, we note with grave concern the continued failure to find a lasting solution to the decades-old Arab-Israeli conflict, which has caused tremendous loss of life and destruction of property in the Gaza Strip, and has left emotional and psychological scars on those almost 2,000 families who lost loved ones. Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to the negotiation of the two-State solution as the preferred means to bring lasting peace to the region so that the people of Palestine, so long denied their rightful place in the international community, can live in larger freedom with their Israeli brothers and sisters. To that end, we call for the implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions geared towards the resolution of the conflict and the lifting of the illegal embargo imposed on the Palestinian people since 2005.

Likewise, as co-sponsors of Security Council resolution 2178 (2014), on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorists acts, adopted at Wednesday's summit, we remain optimistic that the resolution may serve as a catalyst for greater international cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

We in Trinidad and Tobago have been the victim of terrorists in 1990, when there was an attempted coup against the newly elected Government by terrorists and extremists. Members will agree that this new terrorist phenomenon could be dubbed a terrorism "virus" as it is spreading throughout the global family. The Assembly will agree that terrorism has been undermining, and continues to undermine, the sovereignty, territorial integrity and peace and security of the peoples of the Middle East and further afield.

Members of the Assembly will also recall that, in my inaugural address to this body in September 2010 (see A/65/PV.20), I indicated that the time was right for the adoption of a treaty to regulate the international trade in conventional arms. That has now come to be history with the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT); after yesterday's High-level Treaty Event, it now has the requisite number of States parties for its entry into force, which is likely to be on 25 December of this year. We are very happy about that.

The entry into force of the ATT will require States parties to make important decisions to implement the provisions of the Treaty at the First Conference of States Parties, which is likely to be convened by

mid-2015. One of these decisions is on the location of the ATT secretariat. Over a year ago, my country announced its candidature to have the ATT secretariat located in Port of Spain. That bid has been endorsed by all 14 CARICOM States and has so far received the support from a number of States from diverse regions. The hosting of this important body in a region which is disproportionately affected by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and its association with other trans-boundary crimes, such as drug trafficking, would be a significant development. It will assist in the full and effective implementation of the Treaty, and contribute to the reduction, if not the elimination, of illegal weapons in the hands of criminals whose actions continue to threaten the sustainable development of our region.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to providing the necessary resources to host the secretariat, and this has been transmitted to all Members of the United Nations. I call once more on all those States which have not yet announced their support for our candidature to do so and to ensure that the principle of equitable geographic distribution in the location of major global bodies is observed. No country or region, in my respectful view, must continue to have a monopoly in hosting important institutions which are established for the benefit of all.

Trinidad and Tobago is satisfied that, among the 17 sustainable development goals adopted by the General Assembly on 10 September, goal 3 ensures healthy lives and promotes well-being for all ages. The health and well-being of our people are critical to ensuring productive lifestyles which are critical to sustainable economic development, growth and achieving a transformative post-2015 development agenda. Health and well-being are one of the 10 thematic areas of development identified by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

It will be recalled that CARICOM, of which we are a member, was largely responsible for calling the attention of the General Assembly to the need to adopt a resolution to focus attention of the effects of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) as a major contributor to human mortality. Nevertheless, while we continue to make strides in tackling the incidence of NCDs, we are cognizant of the need to combat the spread of infectious diseases within our region and in different regions, which threaten the survival of people in many nations.

Security Council resolution 2177 (2014), which was co-sponsored by Trinidad and Tobago, garnered unanimous support, including that of the Secretary-General, for dealing with the Ebola virus. We congratulate the Secretary-General. Members pledged to take action at the global and regional levels to combat the spread of Ebola to supplement the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response. Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to playing our part in eradicating infectious diseases undermining the health and well-being of our people.

It is for this reason that, prior to the adoption of resolution 2177 (2014), on Ebola, as Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago I wrote to the Secretary-General of CARICOM requesting that a meeting of States members of the Community be convened to discuss and agree on sustainable policy responses at the national and regional levels alike concerning public health issues, including Chikungunya and the Ebola virus.

Finally, the Assembly can rest assured of the support of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in assisting the United Nations family in shaping a transformative post-2015 development agenda. Our support will come not only through our representation in the various organs of this global institution but also by continuing to adopt policies at the national level geared towards putting people at the centre of all developmental objectives. I say once again: any development agenda which alienates people or places them at the periphery and not the centre will not bring sustainable development and will be doomed to failure. Such failure stands against the commitment we have all made and the purposes we are serving at the Assembly. Our work is cut out — for all of us, together in global partnership, to achieve the goals that we have set ourselves.

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

Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Elmar Maharram oglu Mammadyarov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Mammadyarov (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to congratulate my good friend Mr. Sam

Kutesa on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. I wish him every success in fulfilling that highly responsible duty. We are also grateful to Mr. John Ashe for all his hard work in presiding over the sixty-eighth session.

Azerbaijan reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of the global sustainable development agenda and to reaching an agreement on the post-2015 development agenda. My country's record in attaining the Millennium Development Goals is truly unique. Over the past 10 years, the gross domestic product of Azerbaijan has increased by 3.4 times. Now the economy of Azerbaijan accounts for more than 80 per cent of that of the South Caucasus.

The unrivalled high rate of economic growth has been achieved thanks to the prudent use of available resources and the rapid transition to a socially oriented market economy. The poverty rate was reduced from 49 per cent in 2004 to 5.3 per cent in 2014. Over the same period, the unemployment rate has decreased from 10.6 per cent to 5 per cent. The Government has been implementing large-scale programmes on improving good governance, strengthening the rule of law, ensuring respect for human rights and providing facilitated access to public services. Such programmes also cover inclusive and equitable education, gender equality, the empowerment of women, better access to affordable energy and the protection of the environment.

The rapid development at the national level has enabled Azerbaijan to embark on a new road of official development assistance as an emerging donor. Over the past years, Azerbaijan has continued to respond to the humanitarian and socioeconomic challenges faced by developing countries through the Azerbaijan International Development Agency and other channels. The commitment to contributing to international development is widely shared with our people. The leading non-governmental organization in Azerbaijan, the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, has implemented numerous social, humanitarian and development projects in a number of countries.

Azerbaijan has established itself as a reliable supplier of energy in the global market. Just recently, a groundbreaking ceremony to launch the southern gas corridor was held in Azerbaijan. That \$50 billion project, which envisages the construction of pipeline systems such as the trans-Anatolian and the trans-Adriatic pipelines, will enable Europe to obtain gas supplies

from a completely new resource base in Azerbaijan. The Trans-Eurasian Information Superhighway project, which was initiated by Azerbaijan, will provide the countries of the region with information technology services, thereby facilitating access to the Internet, telecommunications systems and electronic information resources for 20 countries throughout the region. Acknowledging the value of transport as an important mechanism for sustainable development, Azerbaijan has successfully launched several regional infrastructure projects. The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway is an important link that connects Europe and Asia.

Against the background of the various threats and challenges facing the world nowadays, it is critical to persistently stress the importance of promoting key values of different cultures, enhancing better understanding among diverse communities and encouraging mutual respect. Located between the two great continents of Asia and Europe, Azerbaijan is a unique place, where the East and the West meet, where the world's main religions peacefully coexist and where the values and traditions of different cultures harmoniously complement each other. It is not a coincidence that in recent years, Azerbaijan has hosted numerous international events aimed at promoting the dialogue among civilizations and enhancing understanding among different religions, faiths and cultures.

Violence and fragility remain the greatest obstacles to development. The world community still faces serious breaches of the fundamental norms and principles of international law. Peoples throughout the world continue to suffer from devastating wars, aggression, military occupation and ethnic cleansing. For more than 20 years, Armenia has used force against the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan. It has occupied approximately 20 per cent of the territories of Azerbaijan and conducted ethnic cleansing against almost 1 million Azerbaijanis, as a result of which no single Azerbaijani is left in Armenia or in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. No single Azerbaijani historical or cultural monument has escaped destruction in the occupied territories or in Armenia.

In 1993, the Security Council adopted four resolutions that reaffirm the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory. Resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993)

demand the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian occupying forces from all occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Furthermore, the General Assembly, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and numerous other regional organizations adopted various decisions in support of the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and demanded the settlement of the conflict on the basis of those principles.

Unfortunately, Armenia disregards all of those resolutions and the generally accepted norms and principles of international law and continues its military occupation of Azerbaijani lands. Armenia regularly violates the ceasefire and deliberately attacks Azerbaijani civilians, which results in the killing and wounding of inhabitants residing near the front line. Just recently, several Azerbaijani civilians who were visiting the tombs of their relatives in the occupied territories were taken hostage and tortured. Some of them were even killed by Armenian forces. It is therefore critical that the international community play a more proactive role in ending impunity for the crimes committed against the civilian population of Azerbaijan. Combating impunity is important in order to ensure sustainable peace and reconciliation.

Two days ago, the President of Armenia delivered a statement here during the general debate and tried to mislead the General Assembly by distorting the facts and the situation with regard to the peace process, misinterpreting the norms and principles of international law and the relevant documents adopted within that framework (see A/69/PV.6). The President of Armenia misuses the noble principle of self-determination to cover up his country's attempts to annex territories of the neighbouring State, Azerbaijan, through the use of force. The situation, which he tries to present as the self-determination of the Armenians living in Azerbaijan, has nothing in common with the principle of self-determination contained in the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act. In fact, the principle of self-determination requires the return of the displaced Azerbaijanis to the Nagorny Karabakh region, where they will live together with the Armenian community in peace, dignity and prosperity within Azerbaijan. We believe in achieving that goal by political means.

Azerbaijan stands for a negotiated settlement of the conflict without prejudice to its rights under the Charter

of the United Nations, in particular those set forth in Article 51. The Government of Armenia must realize that the military occupation of the territory of another State does not represent a solution and that its reliance on the status quo is a grave miscalculation. Azerbaijan will never allow its territorial integrity, or the rights and freedoms of its citizens that have been violated as a result of aggression, to be compromised.

The international community's unequivocal and consistent support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan has been a crucial factor. It makes clear to Armenia that the current status quo, which was achieved as a result of aggression, will never be accepted. I would like to thank Member States for upholding the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations by supporting the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. The international community does not, and will not, accept attempts to change internationally recognized borders through the use of force. Nor should the world accept double standards. To do so would take us back to the dark chapters of the past century. In that regard, the time is ripe to bring to justice those in Armenia who perpetrated acts of aggression against Azerbaijan and crimes against humanity and to impose sanctions on them.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Erlan Idrissov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Idrissov (Kazakhstan): On behalf of the Republic of Kazakhstan, I would first like to congratulate Mr. Sam Kutesa on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. We offer him our best wishes and full support. We also extend our special gratitude to Mr. John Ashe for his able leadership of the Assembly and his commitment to finding solutions to pressing international problems.

The world today is undergoing a major upheaval. The global instability we face is a crisis of the global economy, of international law and, in a broader sense, of a lack of vision for our world's future. To our deep regret, it seems that not all States yet recognize their full responsibility for the fate of their neighbourhoods and the world as a whole. Instead of well-thought-out, viable solutions, we are witnessing a disturbing escalation of problems, drawing in more countries and making our shared hopes of peace and stability ever more distant.

Rivalry among the major Powers over perceived spheres of influence, markets and control over the production and transit of energy resources has increased. Tensions are on the rise, and the dangerous and unacceptable belief in the right of power in world politics has strengthened. As a result, we are witnessing a renewed arms race and the use of military force to impose and extend influence. Unilateral actions and double standards are destabilizing the international situation, exacerbating tensions, inciting ethnic and religious strife and threatening the security of other States. In today's confusing media space, it is impossible to distinguish lies from truth. This dire state of global affairs, rising tensions and mistrust between States is undermining the efforts of the United Nations and entire international community to bring about a peaceful solution to any crisis by lawful means. It is also deeply worrying to see the established architecture of international law being dangerously eroded.

What is even more perilous is that radical movements and extremist forces are skilfully exploiting the resulting uncertainty and instability in the international system. We are particularly concerned about the continuing violence in the Middle East and Africa and the growing threats posed to some Asian countries. We extend our deepest condolences to the citizens and Governments whose civilians have been senselessly killed during the violence.

The situation in Ukraine is of special concern to Kazakhstan. The impact of the crisis now extends not just beyond the borders of Ukraine, but beyond the entire region. Kazakhstan supports peaceful initiatives aimed at the speedy de-escalation of the conflict, including the Minsk peace agreements. The ceasefire must be used to implement the peace plans of President Poroshenko and President Putin. These give hope for the eventual stabilization of the situation in Ukraine. We should also be concerned that the crisis in Ukraine has led to mutual sanctions being imposed by countries that together make up 60 per cent of the world's gross domestic product. That will certainly have a damaging effect on global development and economic growth.

Now more than ever, the world needs to come together to find an alternative model to solving problems, based on equal partnership, broad dialogue, mutual respect and tolerance among all stakeholders. We are confident that the Charter of the United Nations and the fundamental principles of international law provide the basis for this model. The role of the United Nations

must remain pivotal and primary, while bringing States together and providing global leadership based on the equal participation of all Member States in the process.

The dynamics of our world today and the forecasts of what the future might hold must prompt world leaders to look beyond narrow national interests and to exercise the highest degree of judgement and political will. What is at stake is nothing less than saving our civilization from destruction. This is not an exaggeration or overstatement. It is the harsh and threatening reality.

We are seeing a fundamental change in the structure of geopolitical, geo-economic and transnational relations. What is emerging is a polycentric system of international transactions. Within that framework, nobody has the right to determine global and regional processes unilaterally. No country has exceptional rights or advantages. To help adjust to this emerging new multipolar world order and promote the widest possible involvement in identifying the way forward, in 2012 the President of Kazakhstan proposed the G-Global initiative. It seeks solutions based on five principles, namely, a strong preference for evolutionary rather than revolutionary policy change; the crucial importance of justice, equality and consensus; the promotion of global tolerance and trust; the need for global transparency; and, finally, the encouragement of constructive multilateralism. Unfortunately, the decisions taken in the wake of the global financial crisis by the Group of Twenty and the Group of Eight have proved to be insufficient because they were not all-inclusive in their elaboration.

Kazakhstan therefore encourages Member States to use the G-Global platform for dialogue to help draw up plans — developed by all and acceptable to all — to prevent future global crises. We have already embarked on that process through the Astana Economic Forum, which resulted in a draft anti-crisis plan offered to the United Nations. We believe that the plan should be taken up by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and given serious consideration.

At the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly in 1992, President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan initiated the convening of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA). Like the G-Global initiative, CICA emerged from the firm belief that international progress could come about only through strong and effective partnerships, built in the spirit of solidarity among all countries, regardless of their political and economic development. CICA has

become an effective multinational forum for enhancing cooperation and promoting peace, security and stability in Asia. Kazakhstan supports the initiative of China, the country that chairs CICA currently, for a new security concept for Asia based on the principle of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable regional security. That will enable us to consolidate CICA in the near future and transform it into the Organization for Security and Development in Asia.

Two weeks ago, the General Assembly held an informal meeting to mark the International Day against Nuclear Tests. We are pleased that all those present expressed their determination to bring about a world without nuclear-weapon testing and, ultimately, without nuclear weapons. That is an issue close to the hearts of the people of Kazakhstan, who have witnessed and continue to live with the terrible legacy of nuclear testing. That is why we proposed 29 August as the day to raise awareness of this important issue, and why President Nazarbayev has launched the Abolish Testing: Our Mission Project, a global education campaign on the perils of nuclear testing.

The closure of the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site and the renunciation of the world's fourth-largest nuclear arsenal — both inherited from the Soviet Union upon our independence — were defining moments for our nation, and the starting point for the peaceful foreign policy we pursue today. Strengthening the global non-proliferation regime has remained one of the most important priorities of Kazakhstan's foreign policy. The signing in May of the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia — the Semipalatinsk Treaty — by the five permanent countries on the Security Council marked a major moment for nuclear security in our region. We now urge the “nuclear five” countries to ratify the Protocol as soon as possible. We strongly encourage all stakeholders to uphold the provisions of Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime, and to work towards the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

We share the objectives of the proposed convention on the general and complete prohibition of nuclear weapons. Again, we call on all Member States to adopt the universal declaration on a nuclear-weapon-free world. That would serve as the first step towards the adoption of the convention.

Reaffirming our commitment to the principle of the equal right of all countries to access nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, Kazakhstan stands ready to host the international bank of low-enriched uranium under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We also support an early political and diplomatic solution with respect to Iran's nuclear programme, on the basis of strict compliance with the provisions of the NPT and IAEA regulations. Kazakhstan helped break the deadlock in the negotiations by hosting the first two rounds of resumed talks in Almaty last year. We welcome the latest 5+1 talks and strongly hope an agreement can be reached in November.

We, together with the entire international community, are alarmed that terrorist groups are creating quasi-State entities to fight legitimate Governments and sow enmity and hatred. Religious extremism and separatism are fuelling a rise in terrorism, transnational crime and the illegal trafficking of narcotics. Kazakhstan was a sponsor of resolution 2178 (2014), on foreign terrorist fighters, because we believe that the fight against international terrorism demands a long-term comprehensive approach.

We also strongly believe that interreligious and interethnic harmony are essential prerequisites for peace and security. Kazakhstan, a diverse nation of 130 ethnic groups and many different faiths, has worked hard to build a culture of tolerance and respect. We have sought to promote those values internationally through the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, an event that has taken place every three years since 2003. The Congress and its participants have unanimously renounced violence and pledged their support for continued interreligious dialogue among leaders of Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism and many other faiths. Just last week, a preparatory meeting of religious representatives for the fifth Congress, to be held in Astana in 2015, issued a statement condemning extremism, violence and terrorism conducted in the name of any religion.

Kazakhstan initiated the suggestion that the period 2013-2022 be proclaimed as the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures. Greater dialogue and the exchange of ideas between different cultures greatly enhance international security.

The situation in Afghanistan in the wake of the recent elections and the ongoing withdrawal of the coalition forces is a matter of importance for the wider

security of Central Asia. We congratulate President-elect Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai and the people of Afghanistan on the completion of the electoral process. We look forward to close cooperation with Mr. Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah as they form, and work together in, the National Unity Government.

Economic development is key to Afghanistan's re-emergence as a peaceful and prosperous nation and good neighbour in Central Asia. Kazakhstan fully supports Afghanistan's integration into the region's expanding network of trade, energy and transportation links. We have taken practical steps to assist in the rehabilitation of our neighbour. The Government of Kazakhstan has allocated almost \$3 million for the construction of social infrastructure and has provided more than \$17 million in humanitarian food assistance. We are spending \$50 million to train approximately 1,000 Afghan students in Kazakhstan universities. The first civilian students will soon successfully complete their education in Kazakhstan and join the peaceful reconstruction process in their home country.

It is clear that we in Central Asia face a number of challenges that endanger stability not only in specific countries but in the entire region. There is regrettably little sign that those problems will disappear in the near future. That is why the United Nations and the international community need to work more purposefully in Central Asia. Accordingly, Kazakhstan's call for the establishment of the United Nations regional hub in the city of Almaty is highly relevant. The United Nations plays an invaluable role in addressing natural and man-made disasters and assisting countries in their sustainable development through the coordination of the activities of national, regional and international actors. We believe that, with the focus on humanitarian assistance and development, the regional United Nations hub in Almaty would complement the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. The presence of those two regional United Nations entities would cover a very broad range of challenges faced by countries in our vast region, including Afghanistan. Of course, the Government of Kazakhstan stands ready to offer its full support in establishing and developing the hub.

Sustainable development is central to Kazakhstan's ambitions for the future. We commend the United Nations and the Secretary-General for convening the action-focused Climate Summit a few days ago.

Within our borders, we are working hard to achieve our national plan to make the transition to a green economy and have recently adopted voluntary commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emissions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. A national system for greenhouse gas emissions trading has already been put into operation. We are also determined to support sustainable development globally.

In 2017, Astana will host the international specialized exhibition Expo 2017 on the theme “Future Energy”, which will promote best practices in the field of sustainable energy. We will provide support to representatives of around 60 developing countries to take part in Expo 2017.

Kazakhstan, in conjunction with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, is launching a project on the installation of biogas systems in nine small island developing States of the Pacific, which will help local communities produce electricity. At the same time, Kazakhstan and the United Nations Development Programme are developing a training programme in the sectors of oil and gas, agriculture and medicine for countries in Africa, Oceania and Latin America and the Caribbean.

As the largest landlocked country in the world, Kazakhstan attaches great importance to the upcoming second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, to be held in Vienna in November. The meeting aims to review and build on the Almaty Programme of Action in order to produce a new road map for landlocked developing countries that takes into account the challenges and threats that have emerged since the Almaty plan was first developed, over a decade ago.

In 2015, we will finish construction of the Kazakhstan section of the Western Europe-Western China International Transit Corridor, which offers the shortest route from China to Europe and reduces transit times by up to 10 days, making it four to five times shorter than the sea route through the Suez Canal. By 2020, we expect the volume of freight traffic on the corridor between China, Central Asia, Russia and Europe to reach 33 million tons annually.

The construction of new rail routes is also bringing our region together as never before. This December, we plan to open the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Persian Gulf railroad, which will carry up to 10 million

tons of cargo a year and allow us to increase our wheat exports five-fold. Another rail route, Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Oman-Qatar, which was first agreed in 2011, will also greatly increase international transit capacity for our region.

As the Assembly knows, Kazakhstan is a candidate for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the period 2017-2018. Its election would be a major step for our country, which has never before served on that body. Our extensive engagement in international affairs, including chairing key regional organizations, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, has given us the experience necessary to discharge that important responsibility. We believe that the priorities and challenges of our region should be represented in the Security Council, and Kazakhstan is ready to play that role.

We are a peaceful, stable and fast-developing country, with a reputation for impartiality and for taking an effective, balanced approach, with a strong focus on international cooperation, conflict prevention and mediation. Overall, we are confident that we can fully contribute to the maintenance of international peace, security and development, as well as the improvement of the Council’s working methods.

Only by working together, in a partnership in which all States Members of the United Nations are truly equal, regardless of their level of political and economic development or geographic location, can we achieve peace and security for all — a peace that is free from fear and violence and meets the needs of future generations.

Mr. Kogda (Burkina Faso), Vice-President, took the Chair.

I would like to end by quoting Nelson Mandela, who said:

“People respond in accordance to how you relate to them. If we approach them on the basis of violence, that’s how they’ll react. But if you say we want peace, we want stability, we can then do a lot of things that will contribute towards the progress of our society”.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Abdulaziz Kamilov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Mr. Kamilov (Uzbekistan): Today I would like to address some of the most important issues on the General Assembly's agenda.

First are the growing regional and international security challenges and threats, escalating conflicts and wars, and the aggravation of geopolitical confrontations between large centres of power, which could produce new areas of tension in the world and make it more difficult to address the continuing global financial and economic crisis. All those elements are cause for serious alarm and deep concern. Uzbekistan firmly believes that such acute contradictions and confrontations can be tackled only through a political path and peaceful means, in strict observance of the fundamental principles of international law enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

The persisting instability in Afghanistan, which is exhibiting a tendency to escalate further, poses a serious threat to stability and security in Central Asia and the greater region. In the situation currently unfolding, the accelerated drawdown of the International Security Assistance Force may turn out to be counterproductive, and that could further complicate the state of affairs in Afghanistan.

Today we can say with confidence that all the parties interested in resolving the Afghan problem are unanimous about one thing, which is that there is no military way to achieve peace in Afghanistan. The President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, said so as long ago as 2008 at a NATO Summit in Bucharest, and at the General Assembly's 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (see A/65/PV.3). The presidential elections in Afghanistan this year demonstrated vividly that the Afghan people are tired of bloodshed and violence, long-standing misery and devastation. Today they want peace and stability and the right to define their fate on their own.

The only reasonable way to tackle the Afghan problem is to search for a political settlement of the conflict through peaceful negotiations and achieve consensus to establish a coalition Government in which all of Afghanistan's parties in conflict and its national and religious groups would be represented.

Uzbekistan adheres to a policy of non-interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs. We are building and will continue to develop stable, friendly relations with Afghanistan that proceed from the national interests of both countries, and, on an exclusively bilateral basis,

we will support the Government elected by the Afghan people.

Secondly, in view of the ongoing global financial and economic crisis, transport and communications development and strengthened regional economic cooperation are key factors for ensuring Central Asia's stability and sustainable development. Implementing large transport and communications infrastructure projects that can connect our region with global markets will promote interregional trade and economic cooperation, attract investment and help develop social and industrial infrastructure, as well as promote steady progress in neighbouring regions. I refer in particular to such projects as the international Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Oman Transport Corridor, which will link Central Asian countries to the Middle East by the shortest and most reliable and secure route. Uzbekistan's completion of the Hairatan to Mazar-i-Sharif railway, the first and so far the only functioning railroad linking Afghanistan to the outside world, was a historic landmark event.

Thirdly, as the States of Central Asia, like many other countries, are experiencing growing water shortages, the fair and reasonable use of the resources of the transboundary Amu Darya and Syr Darya Rivers becomes extremely important to the life support and well-being of the population of Central Asia. Uzbekistan adheres firmly to the principled position that the issue of the reasonable use of Central Asia's transboundary river resources must be resolved according to the universally recognized norms of international law and within the framework of the relevant United Nations conventions on the use of international watercourses, which clearly define the principles of preventing damage to the environment and interests of neighbouring countries.

We believe it is unacceptable that certain countries in the region are promoting the construction of large hydropower stations with gigantic dams without conducting an international, truly independent, unprejudiced and professional expert study. Implementing such projects without thorough analysis could exacerbate tensions and the potential for conflict in the region. Building such grandiose hydropower facilities in a mountainous, highly seismic area with a potential for earthquakes of magnitude of 9 points or higher could carry a high risk of devastating man-made catastrophes. I wish to underscore that owing to the potential for making ecological problems worse, a growing number of countries around the world are

rejecting the construction of gigantic dams and opting for small and medium-size hydropower stations that do not damage the environment, safety or socioeconomic well-being of their populations.

Fourthly, the dynamic development of our economy and modernization of all spheres of the country's life have enabled Uzbekistan to ensure the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) ahead of schedule. Since achieving independence, Uzbekistan has seen its economy grow almost five-fold and per capita income increase 8.7 times, testifying to the growth in our standards and quality of life. In the past 10 years, Uzbekistan's annual rate of growth of its gross domestic product (GDP) has exceeded 8 per cent. By 2030 we intend to increase the per capita GDP to \$9,300.

About 60 per cent of State expenditures are channelled to fund social development, with more than 34.3 per cent of that spent on education. Almost 100 per cent of school-age children attend secondary schools. Women now represent 45.4 per cent of employed persons. We have achieved tangible successes in improving maternal and child health, with the mortality rate among children under the age of 5 reduced by a factor of 1.8 and maternal mortality rates by 1.6.

Furthermore, Uzbekistan will do its utmost to achieve all its intended plans for the implementation of the MDGs as soon as possible. We will also continue to undertake large-scale programmes in terms of the post-2015 development agenda.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Ali Ahmed Karti, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Sudan.

Mr. Karti (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, on behalf of the Republic of the Sudan, I would like to convey to Mr. Sam Kutesa our sincerest congratulations on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. I also extend thanks and appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. John Ashe, for his wise and patient conduct of the deliberations of the previous session. We hope that this session will culminate in concrete results on important, universal issues, in particular the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, which is a major topic of discussion at this session.

Today, I address the Assembly at a time when the Sudan is on the threshold of an important new phase of comprehensive political participation that excludes no

party, faction or group. On 27 January, His Excellency the President of the Republic of the Sudan, President Omer Al-Bashir, launched an initiative for an inclusive national dialogue, calling on the representatives of the Sudanese people to sit at the same table to discuss six major priorities: unity and peace, the economy, fundamental freedoms and rights, their identity, foreign relations and the issues of governance and the implementation of the outcomes of the national dialogue.

The President's appeal enjoyed an unprecedented response on the part of all political forces in the Sudan and the international community in view of the fact that both the Government and the opposition were convinced that dialogue was the only option at that time, as agreed by the people of the Sudan. There followed a succession of organizational and procedural consultations in order to translate the statement of His Excellency the President into concrete steps. The initiative even found a positive response among the armed groups that still existed. I would like to affirm the State's intention to move the dialogue forward in the hope of achieving a national consensus on the political future of the country.

In that regard, we greatly appreciate the ongoing efforts of the African Union and the African Union High-level Implementation Panel on the three major political, security and economic tracks. We call on the international community to promote a positive and constructive role in support of the Sudanese economy, in particular by lifting the unilateral sanctions, and by cancelling the Sudan's accumulated debt, in line with the aspirations for broader political participation.

The Sudan has continued to play an effective and positive role at the regional level on the African continent, with a view to establishing peace and stability in neighbouring States. When a conflict broke out in the Republic of South Sudan, the Sudan adhered to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of that country. The Sudan was the first State to provide humanitarian aid to those affected in South Sudan, and continues to do so. The Sudan is participating effectively with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development so as to put an end to the war and to conclude a reconciliation agreement between the two parties to the conflict in South Sudan. My country has received more than 100,000 internally displaced persons from South Sudan.

In that context, we recall the Sudan's constructive efforts for the restoration of peace and stability in the

Central African Republic, thereby complementing other international and regional efforts. The Sudan is also actively working with Libya's neighbours in assisting the Libyan parties to reach an agreement on a solution to the Libyan crisis. Internationally, I underscore the trilateral cooperation among the Sudan, Ethiopia and the Arab Republic of Egypt in order to ensure the common enjoyment of the waters of the Blue Nile and to avert any negative repercussions in that country.

In that regard, we also stress the efforts of the Sudan in the area of border control and demarcation with neighbouring States in order to strengthen the border posts and border monitoring and security and to prevent transnational crime, including illegal immigration and the illegal transfer of small arms and light weapons. In that context, we appreciate the experience of the joint border forces of the Sudan and Chad, the Sudan and the Central African Republic, and the Sudan and Libya as models of successful regional security cooperation between neighbouring States in the interests of peace and stability. In that connection, I would like to recall that in mid-October 2014, the Sudan will host a conference, in partnership with Italy, the European Union and the African Union, on preventing illegal immigration, smuggling and human trafficking.

Concerning the situation in the Middle East, the question of Palestine has continued to present a real challenge for the international community for decades. It has now reached a stage that requires the exceptional and prompt action of the international community in order to contain the situation and to move it forward towards sustainable peace in the Middle East, through the achievement of the legitimate and urgent demands of the Palestinian people, in particular the protection and reconstruction of what the Israeli war machine has destroyed. The entire world's ongoing disregard for the genocidal war in Palestine and its failure to intervene to protect the Palestinians and their rights fuel extremism in the region and throughout the world. As long as the Palestinian people opt for a peaceful solution, it is imperative to support that direction in order to prevent despair from spreading and the pursuit of destructive solutions.

We fully accept and support the theme of the post-2015 development agenda as a major topic for discussion at this session. However, there remain only a few months until the end of 2014 and we still have not achieved all the MDGs. We nevertheless remain very hopeful that we can overcome the obstacles that have

impeded us from achieving those Goals and that the deliberations will culminate in a thorough preparation for the development of viable post-2015 sustainable development goals.

In the United Nations Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), adopted in 2000, the Heads of State and Government unanimously agreed a set of principles and goals that laid the foundation for an international partnership to put an end to people's suffering and poverty. The year 2015 was designated as the deadline for eradicating poverty and for ensuring well-being. However, the achievements reached on the eve of the end of 2014 are still short of our aspirations, since poverty, suffering, need, environmental deterioration and unemployment persist.

The agreement of the world's leaders with regard to mitigating poverty requires that the obstacles to achieving such development be overcome. However, the development partners that drafted the Declaration have adopted actions that run counter to its provisions and to human rights. Such coercive measures as unilateral sanctions outside the framework of international legitimacy have flagrantly damaged the content of the Millennium Declaration. That has had an adverse impact on the noble principles and purposes of the Declaration.

Indications of the current situation in human development are that the Sudan has achieved concrete progress in several fields, especially in peace, health care, education and the standard of living. While acknowledging uneven degrees of progress between rural and urban areas, the Sudan has implemented a federal system to promote the role of local communities. However, such progress has been greatly damaged as a result of coercive and unilateral measures illegally and unjustifiably imposed against the Sudan, which have aggravated and delayed initiatives, thereby negating the Sudan's role, and which continue to shackle the country's economy. In that regard, I recall that the international consensus, achieved after the referendum in South Sudan that led to the separation of South Sudan, had been to cancel the Sudan's debts. A number of States were assigned to do so in order to promote peace and development after the end of the war. However, that agreement has not been implemented so far.

In the Sudan, in the context of our established commitment to the MDGs, we have formulated the required policies, which have gone a long way towards promoting several poverty-eradication projects and

initiatives, such as the establishment of a funding portfolio for small families and those with limited income; programmes to recruit graduates and young people in capital projects; the promotion of the role of women in governance and management; and the strengthening of the role of the zakat fund in promoting quick and short-term funds and other projects, which have resulted in helping thousands of families to play a productive role in paying the zakat. That is now under consideration by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, so that it can be applied throughout the Islamic States.

However, we must affirm from this rostrum the importance of the commitment to a common responsibility in achieving development objectives, because the international community must support and assist developing countries, especially the least developed, which represent the segment more in need of support and capacity-building. That is why, in the light of declining development assistance, we hope that deliberations at this session culminate in our taking practical steps in financing development for developing countries, especially those emerging from conflict. On the basis of those measures and in order to guarantee serving the objectives of development, my delegation feels it important to include the following requirements in the post-2015 development agenda.

First, we should consider debt cancellation, providing the necessary funding and renouncing discrimination and exclusionary political considerations. Secondly, we should facilitate the transfer of development-related technology and information through advanced communications technology. Thirdly, we should suspend coercive measures, sanctions and all kinds of illegal measures imposed unilaterally by States outside the framework of international legitimacy. Fourthly, we should launch feasible initiatives in North-South relations, such as funding food-security projects, where my country can play a pioneering and effective role in their success. Fifthly, we should help the United Nations and its various organs to play an effective role in achieving their desired development objectives by providing the mechanisms enabling them to do so.

This year's general debate coincides with the United Nations Climate Summit, the outcomes of which we hope will provide a strong impetus for the current efforts to address climate change and to turn the grave challenge facing humankind into an opportunity for joint action in order to achieve a binding international

commitment to supplement the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, take practical steps towards a green economy, and reduce the carbon emissions that threaten the safety of our planet. In that regard, the Sudan, a State affected by the climate change phenomenon, accords special importance to the environment issue. We recall that the drought and desertification that have hobbled Africa north of the equator are the living examples of the effects of climate change, which have led to tribal conflicts over sources of water and pasture. The Sudan's involvement in the United Nations Environment Programme over the past 40 years has been consistent with our concern in that regard.

The Sudan remains in an effective global partnership in the fight against terrorism at the national level. We have come a long way in harmonizing our laws with international legislation and in working with international law and instruments relevant to fighting terrorism. We commit ourselves to those international laws and reaffirm our commitment against all forms and manifestations of terrorism. At the same time, we condemn any attempt to identify terrorism with any religion, race or culture and call for the redoubling of efforts to enhance international and regional cooperation to stand up to terrorism. The phenomenon of terrorism can be addressed and overcome only through a balanced international system based on equality and respect for the established principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. In that context, we feel that any unilateral action based on politicizing terrorism will not eliminate but exacerbate it. There are numerous instances supporting that conclusion.

In conclusion, the Sudan affirms that international and regional security is an integrated, interconnected system and that the Organization has invested enormous efforts and resources in peacekeeping operations. It is now time to do so, and we have significant experience in that regard. It is time for the Organization to invest in peacemaking and peacebuilding by supporting developing countries and building the capacities of least developed countries so that they can achieve the MDGs and peace and development can supplement each other.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Carlos Raúl Morales, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guatemala.

Mr. Morales (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin my remarks by conveying our

greetings to Mr. Sam Kutesa, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. At the same time, I wish to express our appreciation to Mr. John Ashe for his recognized leadership and exceptional performance as President at the sixty-eighth session. I should also like to take the opportunity to congratulate the Secretary-General for his stewardship and especially for the success of the recent United Nations Climate Summit 2014.

Since September 2013, when the President of Guatemala, Otto Pérez Molina, addressed the General Assembly (see A/68/PV.12), 12 months have passed with significant progress for Guatemala in three priority areas of our domestic policy, in spite of our having to face some new challenges, including a recent prolonged drought.

First, I can report that we have advanced in the battle against chronic malnutrition among children. According to an independent investigation, in one year, the program Zero Hunger has succeeded in reducing chronic malnutrition on the same scale as that achieved during the past decade, that is, by almost 2 per cent. That means that, should that trend be maintained, by the end of this Administration we will have been able to reduce the rate of chronic malnutrition beyond that achieved since 1985, proving that democracy and appropriate policies would have enabled us to make progress for Guatemalan children.

Secondly, I would like to say that the Administration of President Pérez Molina has also advanced in complying with the Pact for Peace, Security and Justice. For the third consecutive year, the number of homicides in Guatemala has decreased, with a cumulative contraction of 25 per cent between 2011 and 2014. With that, we are coming closer to achieving the same levels of security recorded after the Peace Accords were signed in 1996. That progress shows that the measures taken are producing the expected results and that Guatemalan democracy is slowly winning its battle against crime and impunity, in the framework of respect for the law and compliance with human rights.

With regard to that second achievement, once more we express our appreciation for the support received from the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), an entity that has strengthened criminal prosecution against mafia networks, some of which even infiltrated the security and justice establishment. As the final year of the mandate of CICIG approaches, after nearly eight years of cooperation

with three democratically elected Governments, our assessment is that international cooperation programme, supported by the United Nations, was fully justified, since Guatemalan institutions today are better prepared to take on their constitutional role.

Moreover, this last year will be critical to ensuring the institutional sustainability of the judicial investigations and procedures already under way. We thank the United Nations and the international community for joining us and leaving that great legacy for Guatemala. Our country will now have the responsibility of strengthening a system of security and justice capable of reducing impunity and ensuring the total separation between criminal networks and our public institutions.

A third advancement that I would like to share with the Assembly has to do with competitiveness and the business climate. In the past two years we have advanced eight steps in the Global Competitiveness Index, established by the World Economic Forum. In fact, the World Bank has highlighted us for the second consecutive year as one of the most reformed countries in the world in terms of improving the business climate, jumping 19 positions in the respective report. That is due to the actions of the present Administration in the framework of the Pact for Oversight and Competitiveness.

That improvement in the business climate is above all the result of administrative improvements that have reduced bureaucratic procedures, supported additionally by a progressive improvement in the country's infrastructure. In addition, as we informed the Climate Change Summit, our commitment regarding economic progress is made within the context of increasing sustainability. The change in the energy matrix towards more sustainable and environmentally friendly energy sources and away from fossil fuels, which produce greenhouse gases, is being achieved by bringing into the system more plants that depend on the sustainable use of water, geothermal sources, solar energy and even natural gas.

In that context, we have gone ahead with various strategic agreements with our neighbouring countries. For example, with Mexico, we can report on the projects to reconstruct and modernize border crossings on land and the signing of a historic agreement for a project that will transport gas from the Gulf of Mexico to Guatemala and all of Central America. With Belize, we are moving forward and have negotiated 15 important

bilateral agreements in all areas, which we will sign in December. They will strengthen the relations not only between our Governments but also between our peoples. In the Central American Integration System, we are making progress in consolidating our integration process, and the next goal is to establish a customs union. In addition, relations between Central America and the Caribbean are becoming increasingly intensive, guaranteeing greater markets and improved economic and political relations among our countries.

In the context of advances in the social, economic, security and justice areas, we cannot forget some challenges that have gained a higher profile during the current year. In that regard, I must refer to the crisis of the Central American child migrants on the border between the United States and Mexico. The crisis, provoked by diverse factors in both Central America and the United States, has alerted us to the need to move more quickly on the path towards greater prosperity, in particular for children and adolescents.

We trust that the people and Government of the United States understand that the migrant crisis requires a strategic response that attacks the structural roots of the phenomenon and provides sustained actions. That implies working together to promote development and prosperity in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador and intelligent management of seasonal work for migrants that both satisfies the demands of the labour market in the United States and provides for workers from Central America. It is also important to make the necessary efforts to regulate the situation of undocumented persons in the United States. Above all, migrants must not be criminalized, because migration is neither a sin nor a crime. It is the networks of human traffickers that are criminal, promoting corruption, extortion, kidnapping and sexual abuse.

In the same vein, I cannot fail to mention the challenge posed by the shortage of rain this year in all the Central American region. The drought has led to the loss of crops of basic foods for hundreds of thousands of families, and addressing the food crisis will incur a cost of close to \$50 million for Guatemala alone during the next eight months. It is clear that the drought is a result of climate change and that, without decisive action by our Government and the solidarity of the international community, many families will find themselves in a very vulnerable situation due to hunger. The speeches during the Climate Change Summit must translate into direct humanitarian assistance that reaches the

most needy communities in Central America and the Caribbean. It is time to transform rhetoric into action.

I would like to mention three important processes driving the United Nations that Guatemala strongly supports.

First is putting together a post-2015 development agenda that must clearly embrace inclusive and sustainable development goals, including those related to promoting justice for all. In that context, we must also incorporate specific goals to avoid man-made climate change.

Secondly, Guatemala is committed to supporting the 2016 special session of the General Assembly to discuss the world drug problem. President Pérez Molina, together with other Presidents of the Western Hemisphere, is determined to promote, through leadership, a frank and sincere debate on this issue, utilizing as a main reference the two declarations emanating from the General Assembly of the Organization of American States during the past 18 months. During the most recent extraordinary session, held a few days ago in my country, I was charged with transmitting to the presidency of this General Assembly and to the United Nations Commission on Drugs and Crime the text of the resolution, which I will do in due time. Our focus must be comprehensive, objective and evidence-based. And our goals must be realistic and measurable — no more dead products of the war against drugs, no more false promises. A comprehensive focus is necessary.

Thirdly, Guatemala will follow up on the resolution and recommendations of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (resolution 69/2) and work to see that the world recognizes the rights of the indigenous peoples as one of the basic platforms of the international legal architecture of human rights.

Like many of the heads of delegation who preceded me in speaking, I view with growing concern the deteriorating security landscape facing various parts of the globe. The exceptional cruelty of militant jihadist groups leaves us astonished, and we energetically condemn those crimes. We support all measures to combat them, including in particular the elimination of the root causes that lead many people to those levels of fanaticism.

We are also profoundly troubled by the instability in the Middle East, especially by the prolonged conflict in Syria, which has already taken an immense toll in

lives and human suffering. We are concerned that in Central Europe principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, such as respect for territorial integrity, are being put to the test. We also remain concerned about tensions in various countries on the African continent and on the Korean peninsula.

We believe that the United Nations offers the ideal venue in which to address those conflicts and tensions, and we reiterate our hope that dialogue, agreement and preventive diplomacy will take precedence over the use of force. In that respect, we pin our hopes on a negotiated outcome of the long-standing conflict between Israel and Palestine with the emergence of two States, living in peace within secure borders.

I end my remarks by repeating what President Otto Pérez Molina said last year to the Assembly, when he congratulated the United Nations system for its ongoing commitment to seek peace and justice worldwide. Guatemala aligns itself with that statement and those same goals and can affirm with pride that we are and will always be a country that is guided by the principles set out in the Charter of the Organization. That sentiment is reflected in our commitment to peacekeeping operations.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Harry Kalaba, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Zambia.

Mr. Kalaba (Zambia): I extend our sincere congratulations to Mr. Sam Kutesa on his election to preside over the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. We see him undertaking that onerous task at a particularly important moment in not only the forging of the future global development agenda, but the development of international peace and security. I therefore assure him of my Government's support as he sets out to discharge that important assignment. In the same spirit, I also convey our appreciation for the contribution made by his predecessor, Mr. John Ashe, President of the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

I wish to highlight our deep concern at the global health emergency that has resulted from the Ebola outbreak in parts of Africa. That burden is not only for the people of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea; Zambia views the epidemic as a common challenge to humankind, and therefore stands ready to support all efforts required to defeat the disease and ensure a return to normalcy in the daily economic and social

lives of our sister Republics that are directly facing the disease.

There is growing acceptance and concern that Ebola could easily spread beyond the first four countries that have so far borne the brunt of the disease. The recent resurgence of the disease in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo is a reminder of the extent of the danger. Beyond that, we remain deeply concerned that over 5,000 people in all have been victims of the disease and 2,400 needless deaths have already been recorded across the continent. Zambia therefore supports the call for greater and wider involvement by all Member States. The World Health Organization has already warned that if the epidemic is left unchecked, we will soon be dealing with over 20,000 Ebola patients.

It is equally for that reason that we continue to look at global health issues as important parameters for global development. The Ebola public health emergency and other ongoing challenges, such as malaria, tuberculosis, AIDS and other, non-communicable diseases, need a concerted global approach.

In the past few months, the international community has witnessed the growing desperation of extremist terrorist organizations, notably through the abduction of innocent schoolgirls in Borno state, Nigeria, and the wider reign of terror, which includes bombing civilian trading points across that important African nation.

Zambia is also concerned about the insecurity currently being experienced as a result of the instability in Ukraine. We have followed the counter-accusations, which point to the deep-seated divisions and suspicions of a bygone era. Sadly, the human losses have been heavy, as ordinary Ukrainians are caught in the middle of a crisis that is strongly influenced by foreign factors. Innocent civilians from other nations have also been drawn in through the loss of lives on Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17. We share in the sorrow of the families and the nations that lost loved ones in that human-caused catastrophe. Zambia believes that ordinary Ukrainian citizens are of the same view and desire nothing but peace, harmony and prosperity for their country. They should be allowed to enjoy those basic human conditions.

Those and other global security concerns linger, facing a United Nations that is becoming ever more challenged in coordinating any robust or convincing global response.

This session of the General Assembly is also taking place at a moment of renewed focus on the global development agenda through the negotiations on the post-2015 agenda and the work to produce the sustainable development goals (SDGs). My understanding has been that the negotiations have thus far been engaging and have included the participation of all stakeholders, including Governments, civil society, the business community and academia. It can therefore be said that we have laid a solid foundation upon which the world will articulate its development policies for the next decade and a half, in line with the three pillars of the SDGs.

We look forward to the completion of those deliberations, knowing that unless the means of implementation are adequately covered with new investment inflows, we risk rendering that noble effort a futile exercise. Given the immense challenges facing our nations, it is such multilateral approaches that will address the underlying cross-border factors that affect climate change, global poverty, public health, children's welfare, labour and migration, youth unemployment, the advancement of women and many other issues whose solutions lie in actions that may have transboundary effects.

The new global development regime must therefore demonstrate a new and more robust approach to those problems. For that reason, Zambia supports the related meetings being held alongside this session of the Assembly, notably those relating to population and development, labour and decent work, and the 2014 Climate Summit. It is hoped that those discussions will, in the not-too-distant future, lead to lasting solutions to the development challenges faced by many of our countries.

On another important matter, I wish to report that Zambia has increased its campaign to forestall the growing problem of child marriages and early and forced marriages. That problem is strongly rooted in the prevailing poverty levels in some poor families and in the quest by organized criminals to profit from selling off under-age girls either into marriage or to engage in exploitative vices. With that national awakening to the problem, Zambia hosted a three-day national symposium on the problem in July. We look forward to working with other nations to ensure that a global approach is developed to curb the incidences of child, early and forced marriages, which is a problem

with greater consequences for the future advancement of women.

Zambia is also undertaking several other initiatives aimed at reducing the gender divide. My Government is of the conviction that girls and women should be enabled and allowed to reach their full potential and be able to contribute to national growth on an equal footing with men. In that regard, the education of the girl child and the socioeconomic empowerment of women through their representation in key decision-making positions is at the top of the national agenda.

Furthermore, Zambia reaffirms its commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women made at the fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. My Government has continued to stress the importance of women's emancipation and their contribution to national development in line with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The question of the reform of the Security Council remains an important priority for Zambia and the rest of the African continent. We remain deeply concerned that little progress has been recorded in the negotiations on the expansion of the Council. Africa remains fully committed to all five clusters of the intergovernmental negotiations process outlined in decision 62/557, of 2008. As a member of the African Union Committee of Ten on Security Council reform, let me echo other voices in reiterating the importance that our member States attach to the realization of those long-overdue reforms.

My delegation also accords due priority to the questions relating to countries in special situations, in particular landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), for which group Zambia was nominated as Chair in March. The implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, as adopted in 2003, has run its course, albeit with mixed results. It is coming up for review at the United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, to be held in Vienna in just over a month's time, from 3 to 5 November. The 32 Member States in that grouping are counting on the support of the entire United Nations membership to ensure a successful Conference, which we expect will firmly place the LLDCs on a sound path of development. I therefore look forward to the full participation of Member States at the Conference.

I would like to end by informing the Assembly that our historic capital city, Lusaka, has for the past

year been celebrating its centenary. That occasion was followed this year by two other important celebrations, namely, the ninetieth birthday of our founding father, the first Republican President, Mr. Kenneth Kaunda, and the fiftieth anniversary of our national independence, which falls on 24 October.

The commemorations have offered a unique chance not only to celebrate, but also to reflect on our development path. I submit that within our known difficult struggle to achieve social and economic development lies a strong national spirit, eager to contribute not only to our own growth, but also to that which the growing global interdependence demands. Let me, on behalf of all Zambians, express appreciation to all those that have helped our beloved country in achieving those milestones. Zambia looks forward to a strengthened and more versatile United Nations system that will help create the conditions for the further growth and development of our youthful nation.

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

Several representatives have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Singh (India): I take the floor in exercise India's right of reply to the unwarranted references made by Pakistan's Prime Minister in his statement. I would like draw the attention of the General Assembly to the fact that the people of Jammu and Kashmir have peacefully chosen their destiny in accordance with the universally accepted democratic principles and practices, and they continue to do so. We therefore reject in their entirety the untenable comments made by the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Kazhoyan (Armenia): I apologize for taking the floor. It was not my intention. However, I am compelled to take the floor to reply to the comments made a short time ago by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan.

Every time I hear statements based on falsified information, I never cease to be amused at what an interesting phenomenon wishful thinking can be. Having repeated the same lies year after year, one

might even think that the leadership of Azerbaijan has started to believe in what they have been lying about. But as an oriental saying I once quoted goes, regardless of how many times one stirs the cup, the tea will never become sweeter. The reality is that no one buys the story of Armenia being the bad guy and having taken control of Azerbaijani lands.

It is probably easy to make statements when nobody verifies what one says and what is true and what is a lie. Anybody who cares to find out who is right and who is wrong need only search for newspaper articles from 1988 on how the Nagorno Karabakh conflict started and how Azerbaijan responded with massacres and, afterwards, with a full-scale war unleashed on the peaceful Armenian population. Other relevant articles are those from 2004, when the ceasefire agreement was signed between the authorities of Azerbaijan, Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia. Representatives can Google them as well, but they should be careful as they might stumble upon Azerbaijani sites with an altered world history from the time of the Great Flood and Noah to our days. That is because all true information is persecuted in Azerbaijan, and all the bloggers writing the truth are behind bars. Armenia has never had any claims whatsoever on Azerbaijan, but the populations of the Nagorno Karabakh autonomous region expressed the right to self-determination through their elected representatives back in 1988, realizing their absolutely legal constitutional right. In fact, the only aggressor in that case was Azerbaijan itself, who responded with hostilities, massacres and war. And that is how it all started, with the aggression of Azerbaijan against the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh.

Let me give the Assembly a few facts, or rather dates, and whoever wants to do so can do the math. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics officially ceased to exist on 26 December 1991. Azerbaijan held its independence referendum three days later, on 29 December 1991. The independence referendum was held in Nagorno Karabakh on 10 December 1991, when the Soviet Union still existed. It resulted in the approval of independence by 99.89 per cent of voters. Therefore, by the time of the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Azerbaijan's gaining of independence, Nagorno Karabakh was already independent. Any intrusions by Azerbaijan against an independent Nagorno Karabakh constitute nothing else but a blatant violation of international law and an

explicit act of aggression against the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.

I really cannot understand the logic of Azerbaijan's statement, which calls upon Armenia to comply with resolutions and/or decisions of international or regional organizations to which Armenia is not even party. That is also something new, since there is a lot of ground for legal novelties in that regard as well, and that is also wishful thinking. Let us repeat the names of many organizations. Who cares if Armenia is not bound by those decisions and they have been adopted at Azerbaijan's initiative, only sometimes through explicit blackmailing.

It is very obvious also why Azerbaijan constantly mentions some sort of attacks on Azerbaijani civilians. The Azerbaijani militants, on a regular basis, kill, maim and torture civilians and shoot at delegations of the International Committee of the Red Cross on the border. The hypocrisy is that Azerbaijan then starts blaming the victim for having been killed by the killers.

The Azerbaijani media widely publicize the speeches of the President of Azerbaijan calling for a military solution to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. That is well documented, even on the President's website, whereas no politician, no analyst and no media source can provide a single example of similar statements from the Armenian side.

Another fact is that the OSCE Minsk Group co-Chairs have suggested removing the snipers from the line of contact. Azerbaijan is today the only party that has openly rejected those proposals, continuing to murder civilians with their snipers.

Another shameful lie is the charge of the destruction of Azerbaijani historical and cultural monuments. Once again, the places have shifted. All of the civilized world silently witnessed the destruction of the Armenian medieval monuments in Julfa, Nakhchivan, which is well documented through videos, photos and eye-witness reports. They were not just Armenian monuments, they were part of the cultural heritage of humankind. And they are gone now. Meanwhile, some of the few monuments of Islamic art, which have nothing to do with Azerbaijani culture, are under the strict protection of the State, and those that needed repair or renovation as a result of Azerbaijani shelling have been restored with professional help by invited specialists. I would therefore like to call upon the Azerbaijani leadership to engage constructively in the Nagorno Karabakh

peace process, in the name of finding a lasting solution based on the principles of self-determination, territorial integrity and the non-use or threat of use of force.

Ms. Mammadova (Azerbaijan): I am compelled to take the floor in exercise of my right of reply to the remarks just made and the allegations just raised against my country by the previous speaker, whose statement seems to be a reflection of Armenia's habitual moral and legal irresponsibility, as well as its distorted and misguided sense of international law and history.

Its obsession with consolidating the current status quo and finally imposing a *fait accompli* situation, thus trying to equalize the responsibility of the aggressor, Armenia, and the victim, in this case Azerbaijan, now takes new form as Armenia attempts to distort the objectives of the four Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993) and blame Azerbaijan for non-compliance. The Security Council resolutions, our most authoritative rulings on the problem, contain important qualifications of the actions of the Armenian side and declaring its claims to the territory of Azerbaijan null. It should also be recalled that the Security Council resolutions, which Armenia definitely has difficulty accepting and referring to, were adopted in response to the aggression and invasion of an Azerbaijani district by Armenian forces. Besides condemning the use of force, the Security Council demanded the full, unconditional withdrawal of armed forces from the occupied lands of Azerbaijan. By speaking and blaming Azerbaijan for non-compliance with the resolutions, one should ask Armenia: what about the occupation and the presence of the military forces of Armenia at this time on the territory and lands of Azerbaijan?

The memory of Armenian officials conveniently lapses when it comes to the provision of those well-known resolutions, which, *inter alia*, recognize the fact of the invasion and confirm the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Armenia easily bargains away those sacred principles. Not surprisingly, the Armenian representative also brazenly neglected the fact that, along with the Nagorno Karabakh region, Armenia continues to occupy seven adjacent districts of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Armenian side also tends to conveniently forget to mention that the Security Council demand for an immediate, unconditional withdrawal of foreign armed forces from the territory of Azerbaijan has yet to be implemented.

Another question to be addressed is, how can Azerbaijan be responsible for the failure of Armenia to liberate the territories that Armenia occupies? Blaming Azerbaijan for non-compliance with the resolutions is a mere projection of the guilty conscience of the Armenian leadership, as Armenia itself has constantly and continually committed aggressions against Azerbaijan by occupying its territory since 1992. That is the favourite — and, I would say, frequently used — argument of the Armenian side with regard to the principle of self-determination.

It is a well-known fact that, under international law, the principle of self-determination applies in reality to three categories of people — and I believe that there is certainly a need for education in that regard for one delegation — first, to people of sovereign States; secondly, to people of territorial units formed during colonialism; and, thirdly, peoples under foreign domination, subjugation and exploitation, including peoples under foreign military occupation. There is no doubt that the members of the Armenian ethnic minority group living in the Nagorno Karabakh region of Azerbaijan do not fit into any of those categories of peoples and will never be considered an independent subject with the right to self-determination. Yet another question to be addressed is: how many times can one nation exercise its right to self-determination? Armenia exists, and Armenians do live on that territory.

There were many things said about how Azerbaijan replied with aggression. Once again, Azerbaijan cannot reply with aggression because Azerbaijan is the victim. How can Azerbaijan be an aggressor if its own territory is under occupation and one eighth of its citizens have become refugees and internally displaced persons?

With regard to the comments concerning compliance with the decisions and resolutions of regional organizations, that comes as no surprise given the fact that Armenia does not respect the norms and principles of international law. If it contravenes, contradicts and challenges the very provisions of the Security Council resolutions, then I believe it is no surprise that they easily overlook the references and decisions of regional and intergovernmental organizations.

The attacks on civilians and the massacres have been a trademark of the Armenian State's foreign policy. Very recently, the Ministry of Defence of Armenia claimed that captured Azerbaijani civilians were saboteurs and criminals and could be considered prisoners of war. He stated that they had committed

crimes under Armenian law and that they would answer for that pursuant to the requirements of “our laws and international norms”. That statement by a high-ranking Armenian official is yet further proof of Armenia's direct military involvement in the conflict and of the fact that the illegal separatist regime established in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan is under direct military command and control by Armenia's armed forces. Those civilians cannot possibly be prosecuted under Armenian laws, because they were on the internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan, which is not under the jurisdiction of Armenian laws.

It was also interesting and surprising to hear about the pace of development and the human rights situation in Azerbaijan. Armenia, a country with no particularly stellar record in the area of human rights, economic development or tolerance, has the insolence to characterize the development of Azerbaijan, behind which it lags in many areas and which has been recognized in terms of human development and global competitiveness, to mention just a few.

Indeed, Armenia seems to be lost in the face of the need to choose how to justify its deliberate policy to operate consistently outside international law, while at the same time portraying itself as an eternal victim. While continuing to deny its involvement and role in the conflict, the Government of Armenia openly claims its ownership over the Nagorno Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan and claims “to act as a guarantor of the security of the Nagorno Karabakh”. With regard to the question of Armenia providing guarantees and the country's national security strategy of 7 February 2007, no explanation is provided as to how those guarantees, which affect a portion of Azerbaijan's territory, fit into international law.

It is equally surprising to hear that Armenia is astonished by the attention or attitude of Azerbaijani society to Armenia. By attacking the Azerbaijani community in Armenia, they were perpetrating acts of aggression against Azerbaijan.

The expectation that Armenia can be friends with Azerbaijan while it continues to occupy Azerbaijani land also goes against conventional logic. Armenia's proclaimed love of peace and its aspiration to have friendly relations with all countries of the region, including Azerbaijan, have no weight or value against the background of its policy of territorial expansionism and annexation even at the expense of the security and welfare of its own population. In an attempt to defend

the indefensible in the Nagorno Karabakh war, Armenia has become a homeland that cannot sustain its own population, which is manifested in an unprecedented emigration from Armenia, low natural growth rates, rising poverty, heavy dependence on foreign aid and other development challenges, all of which is well documented in reports of international organizations.

Let us therefore not make reference to some pro-Armenian articles and then ask people not to scroll up the screen in their browsers to see what is being said in the Azerbaijani media. If we are inviting the international community to look up the facts, let us look at them and face them. There has been aggression. There is occupation in Nagorno Karabakh and in seven other adjacent districts of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Clearly, there are many things the Armenian leadership should learn, including how to promote peace, security and better standards of living for its own population.

Mr. Kazhoyan (Armenia): I will not touch upon the Security Council resolutions issues, which were clearly articulated and well explained by my President two days ago in his statement delivered during the general debate in this Hall (see A/69/PV.6).

Believe me, there is no logic when somebody grants that the people of Nagorno Karabakh voted for independence and that the Azerbaijani authorities unleashed war on them, leading to the massacre of Armenian populations in Baku, Sungai and Kirovabad, but then insists that the Nagorno Karabakh people themselves or the Armenians are the aggressors. The Nagorno Karabakh people have clearly expressed their legal, constitutional right to do whatever they want and to have the status they want. Any military response to that must be called aggression.

I would also like to remind the Assembly that, while the Armenians might be the minority in Azerbaijan, they comprise the majority in Nagorno Karabakh. As I said earlier, by the time that Azerbaijan become independent from the Soviet Union, Nagorno Karabakh was already not part of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan also should have thought twice before unleashing war on Nagorno Karabakh, because doing so inevitably resulted in the loss of the seven adjacent regions, which came under the control of Nagorno Karabakh. They are probably forgetting the fact that the continued shelling and bombardment from the Azerbaijani territories was targeted at the civilian population of the cities, towns and villages of Nagorno

Karabakh, where people lived and had to hide in basements in order to escape that bombardment. It is a big question why Azerbaijan would bombard people who were peacefully living in what Azerbaijan claimed was Azerbaijan. It did not make sense to bombard them at all. But because they did it, it resulted in the loss of the territories. Unfortunately, those are the rules of war.

Armenia has also had refugees. They were mentioned previously by my Azerbaijani colleague, but not until today. Armenia, with its limited resources, has done everything to naturalize and find jobs and homes for the entire refugee population of Armenia. We have accepted about 600,000 refugees in our country. I am surprised to see that, as of today, one out of eight Azerbaijanis is a refugee in what is an oil-rich country.

Azerbaijan has used the tactic of “the best defence is a good offence”, hoping that it could blame everybody else for what the world condemns them for. To cut a long reply short, I will summarize that no Azerbaijani, especially no Azerbaijani official, has any historical, moral or legal right to tell the Nagorno Karabakh Republic and the people of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic how to live and how independent to be.

Ms. Mammadova (Azerbaijan): I would like to make just a few remarks.

The assertion that Nagorno Karabakh is independent is yet another outright lie. Armenia was, and still is, directly responsible for the creation of the subordinate puppet regime there. Its State policy of consolidating the consequences of the occupation include, but are certainly not limited to, providing political, military, economic and financial means to the separatist regime, without which it could hardly survive.

The popularity of the idea of the so-called quest for self-determination among the Armenian leadership and society at large is also genuinely puzzling. By holding such a view, Armenia seeks to legitimize unilateral secession, the use of force with annexation of part of the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the expulsion and ethnic cleansing on a massive scale committed against the Azerbaijani population and all non-Armenian minorities.

As a matter of fact, the Armenian political and military leadership aided large-scale expulsions and ethnic cleansing to create a unique mono-ethnic culture, both in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan and in Armenia. That fact alone has been a matter of concern for many international organizations,

including the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The idea of the ethnic incompatibility of Azerbaijanis and Armenians has been promoted by Armenia's leadership, including its former President Robert Kocharyan in his notorious statement in 2002 at the Parliamentary Assembly. By contrast, Azerbaijan is united in its diversity and proud to be distinguished for the culture of religious and ethnic tolerance that prevails in its society.

It is also surprising to hear comments on moral and legal obligations and then hear about Armenia's

commitment to those principles, when the incumbent President of Armenia has openly acknowledged its involvement in seizing Azerbaijani lands. He has clearly stated that he has no regrets about the deaths of hundreds of civilians in the town of Khojaly in Azerbaijan. I believe that when the Head of State takes pride in his involvement in atrocities, no further comment is needed.

The meeting rose at 9.50 p.m.