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LEADERS FROM DEVELOPING WORLD VOW TO WIN STRUGGLE TO ENSURE DEMOCRACY, PEACE,

DEVELOPMENT WITH HELP OF UNITED NATIONS, AS ASSEMBLY DEBATE CONTINUES

In Recorded Vote, Member States Block Address by President of Madagascar

Championing their struggle to rebuild strife-torn nations and secure peace and long-term development, several leaders of the global South today appealed to the General Assembly for broad support to help them staunch terrorism, further entrench democracy and ensure that hard-won electoral gains would not be lost.

The meeting, a wide-ranging and often impassioned examination of the merits of lasting peace, security and democracy, was interrupted by a late-day procedural debate that led to a ruling by the 192-member Assembly to block the participation of the self-proclaimed President of Madagascar's High Transitional Authority.

Ahead of that action, a point of order was raised by the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Comoros. Those delegations objected to the participation of Andry Nirina Rajoelina, whose Transitional Government had come to power in Madagascar following a military-backed coup in March.

Although General Assembly President Ali Abdussalam Treki had ruled earlier to allow Madagascar to take the floor, he put the matter to a vote after African delegations challenged that decision, decrying Mr. Rajoelina's presidency as illegitimate. His participation in the debate today was denied by a recorded vote of 23 against to 4 in favour (Denmark, Ecuador, Jamaica, Madagascar), with 6 abstentions (Cameroon, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Mali, Trinidad and Tobago, Vanuatu). (See Annex)

Earlier in the day, Laurent Gbagbo, President of Côte d'Ivoire, offered a view from a country emerging from conflict. That West African nation had resorted to internal methods to help usher the Government — as well as former rebels -- towards a peace process, which had led to the end of conflict and the beginning of preparations for general elections. Acknowledging the support of the United Nations and others in helping the country return to peace, he said presidential elections would take place on 29 November 2009.

Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, President of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, said his Government, which had come to power following the Djibouti Peace Process, outlined priorities of improving the security situation, promoting reconciliation and delivering humanitarian assistance to displaced persons. At the same time, however, rebels, many of whom were foreign extremists, were working to bring down his Government through a "violent insurrection", which only compounded the effects of 18 years of violence and hopelessness.

Nonetheless, the Government was determined to continue political dialogue with all stakeholders, including the armed rebels, with a view to ending the conflict and laying the basis for a transparent system with institutions that reflected the will and cultural values of Somalis. He said such a system would seek to promote the genuine Islamic principles of individual freedom, respect for equity and equal rights, irrespective of gender or ethnicity. With international support, he was confident that Somalia could make genuine, concrete progress.

Similarly, Asif Ali Zardari, President of Pakistan, said his country had suffered greatly from terrorism and extremism that exploited Islam in the name of jihad. But the country also had seen a profound democratic change and had entered a new era of democracy, rule of law and human rights. Democracy had begun to successfully fight militancy -- the challenge now was to make the positive changes sustainable and irreversible.

To that end, he said political ownership of the fight against terrorism was essential, and Pakistani authorities had, within a short period of time, cleared militants from large areas of Malakand. Further, most of the 2.5 million people displaced from that region had returned home and the Government was helping them rebuild their lives. Calling the early return to peace in Afghanistan similarly “critical”, he appealed for global support in reintegrating Afghan refugees, 3 million of whom had been sheltered on Pakistani land for three decades.

On that point, Michel Sleiman, President of Lebanon, said Palestinian refugees similarly could not be denied their natural right of return to their homes and lands, a position that was in line with the Constitution and the national pact of Lebanon, and which would “neither be compromised nor reversed”. He urged the global community to compel Israel to fulfil its obligations. If not, he wondered how the wider region could convince its peoples it was able to achieve comprehensive peace.

Indeed, the Middle East had become a place of tensions, conflicts and wars, and he exhorted that regional peace be realized on a “predetermined and integrated scheme”, and include basic elements that had been mapped out in internationally legitimate resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. He expressed hope that the United Nations, which had originally been established to prevent wars and resolve conflicts through peaceful means, would continue to work through active and unbiased international efforts.

Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority, said that, while all had agreed on the need to achieve Middle East peace, counter extremism and establish a regional nuclear-weapon-free zone, the deeper tragedy remained the suffering of Palestinians for more than 60 years, a scene to which the United Nations had borne witness, with its archives of unimplemented resolutions. Israeli settlement policies were undermining the goal of creating a geographically contiguous Palestinian State, and contravening various resolutions, including the Road Map.

Palestinians were also keen to end internal divisions and restore their national unity, which Egypt, Arab countries and others were making “commendable” efforts to achieve, he said. Palestinians had made progress in building institutions and promoting socio-economic development despite the harsh conditions of occupation. Notably, they also would be “resorting to the ballot boxes”, with presidential and legislative elections to be held under the supervision of Arab countries and the United Nations. He was confident that Arab countries would adhere to the Arab Peace Initiative as a foundation for safeguarding Palestinian rights and a way forward for peaceful relations once an independent State of Palestine was established.

Also speaking today were the Presidents of Zimbabwe, Nauru, Palau, Estonia, Burkina Faso, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Dominica, Kiribati, Mauritius, Serbia, Federated States of Micronesia, Congo, Mongolia, Cameroon and Viet Nam, as well as the King of Swaziland.

The Vice-Presidents of Suriname and Liberia also participated in the debate, as did the Prime Ministers of Antigua and Barbuda, Kuwait, Kenya, New Zealand, Montenegro, Central African Republic and Vanuatu.

The Deputy Prime Ministers of Luxembourg, Bahamas, and Solomon Islands also spoke, as did the Foreign Affairs Ministers of Kazakhstan, Benin, Philippines, Azerbaijan and Gabon.

The Assembly will reconvene at 9 a.m. Saturday, 26 September, to continue its general debate.

Background

The General Assembly reconvened today to continue its general debate.

Statements

ROBERT MUGABE, President of Zimbabwe, recalled that his Government, through the years, had underlined the need for the United Nations to truly serve the interest of all States. It was his unchanged belief that all global bodies should abide by the universal principles that underlie multilateral decision-making processes, particularly that of equality among States and the right to development. He hoped to have a candid and holistic debate on the global responses to today’s crises.

Noting that Zimbabwe supported revitalization of the General Assembly to make it more effective, he said that, as the United Nations’s pre-eminent, deliberative and policymaking body, it should play a more active role in mobilizing action against such challenges as peace and security, the financial and economic crisis, economic and social development and climate change. He was greatly concerned at the encroachment of other United Nations bodies on the Assembly’s work, and thus, reiterated the need to

strengthen accountability of all the Organization's principal and subsidiary organs.

He expressed hope that negotiations on Security Council reform would break the deadlock that had prevented progress in an area of strategic interest for Africa. Reform was "imperative" if the Council was to ensure successful implementation of its mandate to maintain international peace and security. That Africa remained underrepresented and without a permanent seat was a serious and antiquated anomaly, whose time for address was overdue. It was clearly a violation of the principle and practice of democracy in international relations. Council reform should urgently take full notice of Africa's position, which demanded two permanent seats, with complete veto power, plus two additional non-permanent seats.

Continuing, he said the devastating effects of the financial and economic crisis had exposed the "folly" of leaving management of the global economy in the hands of a few self-appointed countries. He fully supported the creation of a follow-up working group under the Assembly's aegis, saying it should reach an early agreement on immediate international policy actions to support developing countries, including a global stimulus plan.

Such measures, however, would not achieve desired goals without comprehensive reform of the Bretton Woods institutions, which should include representation of sub-Saharan Africa on their Executive Boards. While pleased that the International Monetary Fund had finalized the reallocation of Special Drawing Rights on the basis of the \$250 billion pledged by the Group of Twenty (G-20), he regretted that only \$18 billion of those funds had been allocated to low-income countries. Developed countries, which had caused the crisis, received the lion's share.

On food security, he reiterated his call for a substantial increase in investment in agriculture in developing countries, and it was critical that provisions of agricultural inputs — seeds, fertilizers and chemicals — be available to small-scale farmers, particularly women. As such, he called for channelling support towards agriculture, which had "dwindled" in recent decades, and for developed countries to lift or reduce agricultural subsidies and open their markets to developing nations.

Turning to the area of health, he said efforts to reduce maternal and child mortality, and combat HIV/AIDS, among other diseases, had fallen short of targets. While Zimbabwe had made great strides in its fight against HIV/AIDS — with a drop in the adult prevalence rate to 11 per cent this year, from 20 per cent in 2000 — the global community, in cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, had to assist in increasing access of affordable essential drugs. For sub-Saharan Africa, malaria also presented a formidable challenge and he urged strengthening national and international commitments to eradicate that scourge.

Welcoming renewed "enthusiasm" of the Russian Federation and the United States to pursue a nuclear-free world, he urged other nuclear-weapons States to do the same. Zimbabwe had chaired the Third Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference and was hopeful that, having secured agreement on the Conference agenda, members would produce renewed commitment to the three pillars of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty: nuclear disarmament; non-proliferation; and peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Describing developments in his country, he said that since its formation in February, the inclusive Government had expressed an unwavering commitment to chart a "new vision" for the country and improve people's lives. Priorities included the maintenance of peace and stability, pursuit of economic recovery and development, promotion of human rights and improvement of conditions for women and children. However, while Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries had given Zimbabwe financial and other support when it too had been reeling from the effects of global crisis, the United States and European Union imposed illegal sanctions against his country and refused to remove them. "What are their motives?" he asked.

Similarly, he called for an immediate end to the coercive and illegal 50-year embargo against Cuba, which had lost an estimated \$96 billion. He joined the Non-Aligned Movement in its condemnation of the use of coercive measures as a violation of international law and international relations. In closing, he reiterated the need for effective multilateralism to promote global partnership for peace and development. The United Nations and other international bodies should play a lead role in directing the course of events, taking into account the interests of the majority of its members. He expressed hope that through unity, solidarity and cooperation, the challenges could be addressed. "Let us rise to the occasion," he said.

MARCUS STEPHEN, President of Nauru, said the new millennium had been no stranger to crisis. The world had seen how ideological extremism could foment turmoil, learned that financial instability could quickly spread across global markets, and been reminded that, "We disrespect the environment at our peril." While global challenges might shock, they should not surprise: most stemmed

from problems that had been allowed to fester for years, if not decades and all were inextricably linked to the global community's choices about commerce and development. As they were global in nature, they required a global response, and he called for revitalizing international systems of governance.

Large countries tended to dominate international fora and drown out others. "In the case of climate change, I mean this quite literally," he said, urging that States consider the impacts of activities on the most vulnerable.

In addition, he said the global community should renew its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, explaining that after success in the 1990s, progress had slowed. In the Pacific, where nearly 40 per cent of the population lived on less than \$1 a day, the Asian crisis devastated many regional economies, while the recent spike in food and energy prices strained limited resources.

The Pacific confronted unique challenges in reaching the Goals, as the region's remoteness made it difficult to access world markets and increased the costs of doing business. By way of example, he said that for most countries, the food crisis had eased, as commodity prices had fallen, but in Nauru, the price of a bag of rice increased by 80 per cent in the past year, hovering now at above \$60. The rest of the world paid less than \$25. The time had come for the global community to deliver on its promise and dedicate 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income to helping developing countries meet their goals.

In addition, it was vital that the United Nations boosts its engagement in the Pacific, he said, noting that Nauru had requested the Organization to open an Office there for the past four years. It was critical that United Nations agencies work more closely with national Governments to ensure that accurate data was available for planning and policymaking. The temptation to add "layers upon layers" of new programmes also must be avoided.

Continuing, he said the international community also had to reform the world financial system so that developing countries could equitably share in economic prosperity, explaining that reforms should aim to facilitate growth in developing nations and increase their resilience to abrupt economic fluctuations.

Calling for swift steps to mitigate climate change, starting with a bold agreement in Copenhagen, he said climate change presented the greatest threat to small island developing States such as his.

Flooding was already eroding Nauru's shores and contaminating its water supply, while ocean acidification was damaging the marine ecosystems it depended on for food and livelihood.

While science called for reducing greenhouse gas concentrations to 350 parts per million, most developed nations had proposed targets that would result in far higher concentrations, he said. That was not acceptable. If an engineer said eight columns were necessary to support a building, would any responsible person recommend using only four? "Then why are the most vulnerable countries asked to accept proposals that would surely lead to our extinction?" Developed countries must also provide the financial, technical and human resources necessary for developing nations to address a problem not of their making.

Continuing, he said Taiwan could contribute to cooperation on climate change and should be invited to play a larger role in the United Nations system, particularly in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process. It was also vital that the Security Council monitor developments and pay special attention to the most vulnerable groups in the world's poorest countries, including women and children and indigenous persons.

As for Security Council reform, he said the Council should become more representative in permanent and non-permanent categories, to reflect current geopolitical realities. Japan, India, Germany and Brazil should be made permanent members and he called on the Assembly to accept Taiwan's participation in its specialized agencies.

Discussing national developments, he said that, in cooperation with the Pacific Islands Forum, Nauru outlined key governance and development priorities in the Pacific Regional Assistance to Nauru, which included re-evaluating fiscal policies, reviewing the Constitution and reforming the education sector. Such efforts were an example of how country-focused development aid could quickly lift a nation out of crisis and back onto the sustainable development path. In that context, he expressed appreciation to Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, Japan and the Forum Countries.

In closing, he said the United Nations system was born at a time of great crisis and ushered in over a half century of peace and prosperity. However, the benefits were not equally shared and two thirds of humanity was largely left behind. The time had come to take up the project begun 64 years ago, so that future prosperity could be shared by all.

JOHNSON TORIBIONG, President of Palau, said his country, a new and young Member of the

United Nations, remembered and honoured the legacy of the Organization. He went on to list a number of challenges facing the international community, including climate change, environmental degradation and the global financial crisis. “We are now confronted with several looming threats to our continued peaceful way of life, and indeed, to our very existence,” he said.

With regard to climate change, he applauded the commitments made by members of the Assembly and outlined a joint regional policy — “Green Energy Micronesia” -- adopted by Palau and its neighbours in the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands, that sought to make renewable energy a pillar in the area’s collective energy security. Palau had also signed the statute of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and expressed hope that the upcoming United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen would yield results.

He lauded the vision and commitment in this area shown by Yukio Hatoyama, Prime Minister of Japan, and said that was just one reason Palau supported Japan obtaining a permanent seat on the Security Council. He also noted that Palau and the Pacific small island developing States had initiated resolution 63/281 “Climate Change and Its Possible Security Implications” and he looked forward to the Security Council’s action on the issue.

On the subject of the environment, he said that the people of Palau had always lived in symbiosis with the sea. “We are seeing now, though, that the sea, which has long been the source of our sustenance, is both rising in rage to destroy us, and becoming barren,” he said. “This fury was caused by the abuses of humankind and we, therefore, need to take every action necessary to allow the oceans to heal themselves,” he added, and called for an international moratorium on deep-sea bottom trawling, which contributed to the rapid loss of coral reefs, a critical ecosystem.

He also advocated an end to the destructive practice of “shark-finning” to save sharks from extinction; Palau, for its part, would become the first national shark sanctuary in the world. With that move, Palau would end all commercial shark fishing in its waters and provide a sanctuary of some 237,000 square miles of ocean to live and reproduce unmolested. Finally, he decried overexploitation of tuna stocks and called for the establishment of the Organization of Tuna Exporting Countries to give island States fair value for the threatened resource and to make tuna fishing sustainable.

As for the economic crisis, he expressed gratitude for the development grants his country had received from allies and partners. But he implored those States to help create international partnerships to advance the economy of Palau so his country could move away from taking handouts. In conclusion, he said: “We have heard the voices of world leaders from countries large and small, powerful and vulnerable. We have heard the voice of science. Let us heed these voices, fulfil our obligations to our people, and work for a strong economy and a healthy planet.”

TOOMAS HENDRIK ILVES, President of Estonia, said that even if the financial crisis was connected to issues of peace, security, human rights and development, it should not be allowed to overshadow all other global challenges. At the same time, however, while the world economy seemed to have stabilized, the crisis was not over, and there was still a need to restore confidence and repair the financial system, he said.

On the subject of climate change, he thanked the Secretary-General for hosting the Climate Change Summit earlier in the week, which had finally brought home to all Member States the magnitude of the task ahead. “Time is running out,” he said, adding: “Melting glaciers, frequent and abnormally large hurricanes, floods and heat waves — this is not the planet Earth we want to leave to our children.” He called for binding goals to be set at the Copenhagen Climate Summit, and underscored that the “polluter pays” principle would have the greatest effect.

Regarding international security, he reiterated his country’s support for Georgia and its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Next, he expressed concern about the situation in Afghanistan and noted that Estonia was one of the countries that had steadily increased military and civilian contributions to that country. Finally, on that issue he warned about new challenges, such as the increasing number of cyber attacks, which endangered vital information technology systems, as well as whole communities, and called for the creation of a universal cyber culture — “a universally accessible, secure and safe environment for all”.

Turning to humanitarian affairs, he said the international community must provide a more predictable, equitable and consistently effective response to complex emergencies, an effort that required more assistance and better coordination. While many countries had suffered due to the global financial crisis, it was important to keep up commitments to humanitarian relief. “Today’s short-sighted financial decisions or fading political will may, in the end, become much more expensive and entail severe long-term consequences.” He went on to laud the efforts by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs towards more efficiency and coordination, and said that the launch of the Central

Emergency Response Fund (CERF) had helped in this regard.

In conclusion, he spoke of the need for reform within the United Nations, particularly regarding the Security Council, and warned that there would be “severe consequences” if the reform process wasn’t completed. Estonia was a dedicated supporter of United Nations initiatives that fostered gender equality. The various challenges ahead called for a united response, he said. “This is why we — the leaders of all nations — once again have gathered here this week: to remind ourselves to keep our eyes on the horizon of peace and prosperity, and to make sure that we are in the same boat.”

LAURENT GBAGBO, President of Côte d’Ivoire, said his country had resorted to internal methods to help usher the State, as well as former rebels, towards a peace process, which had led to the end of conflict and the start of preparations for general elections. Acknowledging the support of the United Nations and friendly nations in helping the country return to peace, he said presidential elections would take place on 29 November 2009.

He said the 2008 energy crisis had been unprecedented, citing that the price of a barrel of crude oil had shot up to more than \$140. Furthermore, the food and financial crises had rapidly escalated into a deep economic crisis. The world had recognized the effect of those three simultaneous crises on the social and political situation, creating a wave of panic and uncertainty. Consequently, international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) mobilized on behalf of the international community, to rise to those unbridled political and social challenges, even in Europe.

Nonetheless, he said, the financial crisis had, contrary to the world’s timid or even diffident reaction, impacted Africa more than anywhere else. Indeed, the continent’s economic and social fragility had been exposed. No country, in Africa or elsewhere, had escaped the economic upheavals, proving it was high time for reforms in the global financial and monetary systems.

The United Nations had to undergo reform to continue playing a key role in multilateral diplomacy, he said, noting that the Organization must take important steps to curb the growth of extremism, through intercultural dialogue. Recalling the High-level Interreligious Dialogue for a Culture of Peace that had taken place in November 2008, he said that event reinforced the need to sensitize the world to the importance of preventive diplomacy, among other things. Member States might consider creating a mechanism for a permanent dialogue among civilizations.

On global peace and security, he said the only way to ensure sustainable peace efficiently was to ensure a democratic Security Council that would treat conflicts and situations equitably. At the same time, while more countries should be represented among the Council’s membership, that body should do more to bolster its tools for conflict prevention, management and resolution. The Council could also consider passing such tasks along to regional and sub regional bodies.

He also stressed that world peace and security relied on the eradication of poverty, which his country was concerned about and, to that end, welcomed the results of recent meetings on the Millennium Goals and development in Africa. Indebted countries were bound to sink and the world would sink with them unless swift action was taken to shore up the global economic system, reduce debt burdens, and ensure the achievement of the Millennium Goals.

Deserts in West Africa were advancing towards coastlines, wiping out towns in Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana, he warned. Floods and expanding deserts were now common in West Africa. While Africa wanted to do its part to combat the evolving scourge of climate change, it felt abandoned by the wider international community. Also troubling was that in the near future, clean water would be difficult to find and that not all countries had the resources to transform sea water into potable water. He called for a United Nations meeting that would lead to decisive action on such matters.

BLAISE COMPAORÉ, President of Burkina Faso, said that due to their weak and fragile economies, African countries had borne the brunt of the economic and political consequences of the financial crisis. It was not fair for them to pay the price for a crisis in which they had played no real role in generating. He urged the creation of development partnerships that would rectify the wrongs of a failing global economic system.

In the aftermath of post-crisis talks, he welcomed the prospects of a more virtuous system of global governance that would lead to sustainable development for all States. It was crucial to boost aid to developing countries in order to ensure that the Millennium Development Goals were reached. On climate change, he said floods were becoming more frequent, citing a deadly and destructive event that had inundated Burkina Faso in September 2009.

It was crucial for States to take action as a matter of necessity to find appropriate solutions to climate fluctuations and global warming. In this regard, he thanked the international community for

mobilizing to tackle those menacing issues and stressed that the upcoming Climate Summit in Copenhagen would be a prime opportunity to take bold decisions to protect people and the planet. He announced that next month, his country would host the Seventh World Forum of Sustainable Development, focused on "Climate Change, Mobility and Sustainable Prospects of Development". That event would allow Africa, which had weaker means to adjust to the ramifications of climate change, to bolster its contribution to the global debate on the matter.

Turning to other matters, he said recurrent global conflicts posed a veritable threat to peace and international security, and hindered social and economic progress. Burkina Faso was gravely concerned at the situation in the Sudan's western Darfur region, and reaffirmed its willingness to help the Sudan reach a peaceful settlement. The international community's effort to pave the way for dialogue leading to a peace agreement between the two sides was indispensable. On Somalia, he said States must support that country's Transitional Federal Government in its bid to restore security throughout the war-ravaged peninsula.

On Guinea and Madagascar, he called on political players to engage in constructive dialogue in order to return to constitutional order swiftly. He commended the African Union in its efforts to find solutions to troubled hot spots around the world. Elections in Guinea-Bissau were an example of how far the international community had succeeded in its bid to foster peace. In Côte d'Ivoire and Togo, the commitment of political actors meant that peace deals would be applied effectively.

He went on to say the proliferation of nuclear arms had posed a huge divisive threat to the international community for some years. Thanking United States President Barack Obama for successfully organizing and leading a Security Council meeting on disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, he said that event could jumpstart the movement towards a world without nuclear weapons, whereby nuclear power would be more for civil purposes. He urged for a cautious but determined approach to reforming the United Nations in general and the Security Council in particular, with a fairer representation of Member States, which would bolster the work of the Council and revitalize the General Assembly.

MICHEL SLEIMAN, President of Lebanon, began his statement by expressing hope that his country would be elected to a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for 2010-2011. Lebanon approached that election with "great confidence", as the country had been a founding Member of the Organization and had significantly contributed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He reaffirmed Lebanon's willingness to participate in the Security Council and to the resolutions of international legitimacy, especially those which aim to ensure peace in the Middle East.

However, the Middle East had become a place of tensions, conflicts and wars. He urged that Middle East peace should be achieved on a "pre-determined and integrated scheme", with basic elements that had been mapped out in resolutions of international legitimacy, such as the Madrid Peace Conference and the Arab Peace Initiative. The key to peace was political will, but the Israeli side lacked it. He added that "Israeli threats of attacks and wars persist as a means to impose control and hegemony, as well as to impose a fait accompli."

Thus, he urged the international community to resort to appropriate means of pressure to compel Israel to fulfil its international obligations towards the peace process. If not, he wondered how the wider region could convince its peoples that the international community was capable of achieving a just and comprehensive peace, including Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories. He noted that people have a right to retrieve their occupied territories "through all legitimate and available means, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and its relevant resolutions."

Then, he turned to the issue of Palestinian refugees and noted that addressing that situation required a political solution and that the Palestinians could not be denied their natural right of return to their homes and lands. That position was in accordance with the Constitution and national pact of Lebanon. "Let it be known that such a position will neither be compromised nor reversed," he said, expressing his gratitude to the countries that supported that position.

Turning inward, he noted Lebanon's accomplishments: maintenance of internal stability, dismantling "Israeli spying networks" and terrorist cells, while striving to implement Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). Lebanon had also reinforced bilateral relations with friendly countries, and had recently carried out transparent parliamentary elections. Lebanon was looking forward to forming a national unity government "very soon", in the hopes of launching the political, administrative and judicial reform processes in line with the wishes of its people.

He was resolute in the fact that Lebanon had been able to boost its credibility, avoid the aftermath of the global financial crisis and raise its growth rate to almost 6 per cent and attract tourism and investment. He ended by recalling the situation in the Middle East, and expressing hope that the United

Nations, which was originally established to prevent wars and resolve conflicts through peaceful means, would continue to work “through the active and unbiased international efforts”.

SHEIKH SHARIF SHEIKH AHMED, President of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, thanked all those who had promoted peace and stability in his country, as well as those that had delivered aid to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity. He expressed condolences to those who had lost their lives in defence of those principles.

Describing priorities of his Government, which came to power following the Djibouti Peace Process, he said it would be imperative to improve the security situation, promote reconciliation and deliver humanitarian assistance to displaced persons. Unfortunately, rebels were working to bring down his Government and were conducting a “violent insurrection” against Transitional Authorities, which only compounded the negative effects of 18 years of violence and unemployment.

Foreign elements had joined the rebellion, he explained, some of whom had become leaders. Reminding the Assembly that his Government had overcome an attempted coup d'état, that success had been due, in part, to efforts of the Government and people, and assistance from the global community, especially the African Union. For its part, Somalia was working to create new naval forces, including a new Coast Guard, and to tackle piracy, which threatened shipping in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. However, there was still a long road to travel to that end.

In that context, he said there was a new type of rebellion under way in Somalia, one conducted by foreign extremists and which was against Islam, peace and security. The extremists were “spoilers” who had taken advantage of the anarchy that had prevailed over the past 18 years. The situation should not be taken lightly and the global community must take “prompt and decisive steps” to ensure that Somalis were not held hostage by those working against their destiny. The consequences of inaction risked creating trouble in neighbouring countries. However, he stressed that terrorism was not confined to Somalia and should be tackled at the international level.

Similarly, he said that if Somalia's security situation remained unchanged, piracy would continue. While that scourge had slowed, thanks to international efforts, among others, more attention was needed. In addition, activities like illegal fishing and pillaging of national wealth not only violated Somali sovereignty but damaged the environment.

Nonetheless, he was determined to continue political dialogue among all stakeholders, including the armed rebels, and “sit at the table to negotiate” an end to conflict. Indeed, he would spare no effort in finding a lasting solution to ensure the security of all Somali people and territory. Though the rebels did not believe in dialogue, he was ready to lay the basis for a transparent system, notably by establishing institutions that reflected the will and cultural values of Somalis.

Such a system would be based on the protection of human rights and rule of law, and would seek to promote the genuine Islamic principles of individual freedom, respect for equity and equal rights, irrespective of gender or ethnicity.

In addition, he said the Government would work to establish an economic system, based on market economics, which would encourage foreign direct investment and individual ownership. Institutions to combat corruption would also be created.

“At this difficult moment in history, we need assistance and support,” he said, particularly in terms of security and humanitarian aid. It would be difficult to protect human rights without achieving security. Outlining Somalia's needs, he said measures should be taken to promote police services, and judicial and administrative services. African Union troops should be increased. The refugee situation continued to deteriorate, and more than 3.8 million people needed humanitarian assistance.

Regarding the resolution adopted by the Security Council on the arms embargo, he urged that body to reconsider that matter and help Somalia build its security forces, without which, efforts to reconstruct the country would be impossible. He also asked donors attending the Brussels Donor Conference to make further funding available.

In closing, he expressed his firm belief that security advances would likely help counter the economic and social impacts of the “offensive” that had occurred for the last 18 years. In that context, he called for relaunching the enterprising spirit of Somalis. With remittances from those living abroad, tangible progress had been seen and he believed the economy could progress “reasonably” in coming years. As the economic crisis had placed an additional burden on Somalis, there was a need for joint and urgent action for Somalia. With international support, he was confident that Somalia could make genuine, concrete progress.

GJORGE IVANOV, President of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, emphasized the necessity for the United Nations to help resolve the financial crisis and prevent future crises. He stressed that current economic problems should not shift the focus from what he called “the absolute priority”, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Equally pressing was dealing with one of the biggest challenges for humanity, climate change. “Our children, the generations to come, oblige us to preserve our planet.” The last minutes were being counted down and coordinated and serious measures could no longer be postponed. His country had been a party to the Convention on Climate Change for a decade and had had great expectations for the Copenhagen conference. He pledged his country’s commitment to related global efforts.

In meeting those challenges, as well as achieving what he called the “primary goals” of peace, democracy and human rights, he said effective multilateralism was crucial. In that effort, he strongly supported efforts towards improvement of United Nations system coherence. He said that dialogue was also important, pointing out that his country represented an example of successful multi-ethnic and multi-confessional cohabitation, and hosted the Summit on Dialogue among Civilizations in 2003, which in turn had become an annual meeting organized in the South-East Europe region, under United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) auspices.

His country, he said, was also committed to the promotion of democracy, to the improvement of the standard of living of its citizens and to essential reforms in all spheres, and had achieved impressive progress in those areas. It, therefore, expected the start of accession negotiations with the European Union. It had also fulfilled all foreseen conditions for membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). It was an active supporter of regional cooperation, so integration with those groups was a strategic priority.

However, the actions of its southern neighbour, he said, prevented his country from NATO membership and were contrary to the obligations undertaken in the 1995 Interim Agreement. Those actions had been taken to influence the outcome of negotiations held under the auspices of the United Nations. He stressed that his country was “sincerely dedicated” to resolving differences with its southern neighbour within the mechanisms set forth in United Nations resolutions. Despite the absurdity of the dispute, his country sincerely hoped that the only obstacle preventing it from joining the Euro-Atlantic family would soon be removed.

He wanted to state clearly that his country was prepared to discuss the issues foreseen in the United Nations resolutions only, and was prepared for a solution that was a reasonable and fair compromise, which should not touch upon, nor deny national, cultural and linguistic identity in any way. At the same time, there was no more sovereign right than the right of self-determination and self-identification, “A right cherished by many generations before us.” He hoped that Greece would abandon its policy of taking actions from positions of power in order to unfavourably influence the outcome of the disputed issue and that, “We can reach a solution that will have no winners and no losers.”

NICHOLAS LIVERPOOL, President of Dominica, said the world was experiencing a period of “unprecedented crises”, which had the potential to bring social and political instability. “The citizens of the small vulnerable States among us will be the worst hit and, therefore, continue to warrant the special attention of this body”.

He went on to outline regional responses to the crisis, and collaborations under the auspices of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), but also said that small island developing States and least developed countries still needed practical assistance and financial support from the wider international community.

With regard to the ongoing food crisis, he reminded the Assembly that more than a billion people went to bed hungry every night. While praising the United Nations System High-level Task Force on Global Food Security as a timely and welcome initiative, and lauding the Group of Eight (G-8) pledge of \$15 billion towards food security, he warned, however, that harmful agricultural subsidies in developed countries could curtail the desired objective.

Climate change, he continued, was one of the leading generational challenges. Dominica supported biodiversity conservation and he announced the country’s intention to become a model for sustainable development. Further, Dominica was already promoting energy efficiency domestically, and was already generating 40 per cent of its electricity by hydropower. With further development of geothermal resources, Dominica should be able to reach the target of generating 100 per cent of its electricity through renewable energy by 2015.

Regarding international relations, he voiced concern about the current economic situation in Haiti and called for development assistance to that country to ensure the success of peacebuilding efforts.

Wrapping up, he reiterated his plea for a sound climate agreement to be reached at the upcoming United Nations Climate Change summit in Copenhagen to “protect the inhabitants of this planet, particularly the most vulnerable, from one of the most serious challenges ever to confront humanity”.

ANOTE TONG, President of Kiribati, declared that climate change was the greatest moral challenge of our time, and the world could not afford the consequences of inaction. The people of his country were already feeling the impacts of climate change, which he said would only worsen with time. “We, together with those of other low-lying States, are the human face of climate change.”

He advocated pragmatic adaptation strategies, and stressed that it was the Government’s desire to “maintain our homeland and our sovereignty”. However, with the island’s ever-shrinking ability to support life, its growing population and rising sea levels, the Government also wanted to provide opportunities for those who wished to migrate to do so, on merit and with dignity. While calling for assistance with adaptation measures, he also asked those nations that might need his country’s labour to open their doors.

Urging international support for relocation strategies, he referred to strategies, in cooperation with New Zealand and Australia, such as the Kiribati Australia Nursing Initiative and the Australia Pacific Technical College, which he believed could be implemented more broadly and could become win-win options for all concerned.

Turning to the international community’s work on climate change, he said it would be important to reach consensus in Copenhagen, and asked: “If we can mobilize trillions of dollars to address the challenges to the global economy, then we are capable of taking the actions necessary to deal with the challenges of the global environment.” The key was to capitalize on collective political will, he said urging delegations not to waste time on “diplomatic-speak, posturing and empty platitudes”.

He said that everyone knew what needed to be done and stressed that the Copenhagen summit provided an opportunity to enter into a global compact for action on climate change — between developed and developing; North and South; East and West. “This is perhaps our last chance. If we do not act now, who will?”

Moving on to graduating from least developed country status, he said Kiribati’s vulnerability as a small island developing State should be taken into account when considering it for such graduation. Indeed, losing the international assistance provided the least developed countries would be detrimental to Kiribati’s development efforts.

ASIF ALI ZARDARI, President of Pakistan, said his country would work to fashion a better and safer world in which everybody lived in peace and harmony. Pakistan had witnessed profound democratic change and had entered a new era of democracy, rule of law and human rights. Democracy, for which Pakistan had struggled hard, was not only crucial for his country but also for the region and the world. He recalled his late wife Benazir Bhutto’s tireless efforts in her fight for democracy, which led to her tragic death, and hailed international efforts to investigate her assassination.

Democracy in Pakistan had begun to successfully fight militancy. The challenge now was to make democracy sustainable and irreversible, and to give people peace and stability, progress and prosperity. Following decades of conflicts, he said Pakistan had suffered greatly from terrorism and extremism, which was based on exploiting Islam in the name of jihad, allowing warlords and criminals to destroy civilizations to come.

“The virus [spread] and affected the world. We must strike at its roots. Surgery alone will not be enough.” he declared, adding that Pakistan stood fully united in that struggle. Democracy and political ownership of the combat against terrorism were key weapons in the fight against militancy and extremism. Indeed, Pakistan’s law enforcement authorities had, within a short period of time, cleared militants from large areas in Malakand. Further, most of the 2.5 million people displaced from that region had returned to their homes, and the Government was currently helping them rebuild their lives.

He went on thank those that had supported Pakistan’s efforts to defeat the militants, and urged the international community to reinforce its help and support in that regard. And while Pakistan was determined to wipe out terrorism and extremism, the early return to peace and stability in Afghanistan was critical. He called for international support during the reintegration of Afghan refugees, 3 million of whom had been sheltering in Pakistani territory over the past three decades.

Continuing, he said the flow of weapons across the region must stop, and the funding of drug barons and other criminal elements must also cease. Pakistan believed regional efforts could ensure peace and stability and combat terrorism and extremism. He urged world democracies to do more for peace and development in areas where militancy and terror had struck, stressing that it was necessary to

create more economic opportunities for people.

He expressed his country's wish to be on amicable terms with neighbouring India, citing that he looked forward to resuming the composite dialogue process, and finding a peaceful solution to pending disputes such as the Kashmir issue, to ensure lasting peace and stability in South Asia.

On other global issues, he called for the immediate release of Aung San Suu Kyi, as well as for the full implementation of United Nations resolutions guaranteeing the rights of the Palestinian people. Noting that all States sought peace and security, he called for equal security among all nations, saying that was fundamental to ensuring arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Pakistan would carry on playing a role in promoting conflict-resolution in South Asia and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation initiatives, he added.

MAHMOUD ABBAS, President of the Palestinian Authority, said there was a full agenda before the Assembly and the world's peoples were looking for what could be done to save the planet from climate change, address the international financial crisis and reform the United Nations, including the Security Council, to reflect the current global situation. Such common concerns must not hide or ignore that there were serious problems in the Middle East, the foremost of which was the lack of commitment to the United Nations Charter.

While all agreed on the need to achieve Middle East peace, counter extremism and violence, and establish a regional nuclear-weapon-free zone, the deeper tragedy remained the suffering of Palestinians since Al-Nakba more than 60 years ago, to which the United Nations had borne witness, as its archives held hundreds of unimplemented resolutions.

Palestinian suffering resulting from Israel's colonial occupation was clear, he explained. Since the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including East Jerusalem, in 1967, Israel had continued its settlement policy on Palestinian land, especially in Jerusalem, where it had been accelerated through seizure of Palestinian homes. New settlement neighbourhoods were being built and Jerusalem was growing completely isolated due to settlements and the "apartheid wall".

"We are facing a unique situation," he said. If international law did not allow the acquisition of territory by force, how would the current situation be addressed? Israeli settlement policies were undermining the goal of establishing a geographically contiguous Palestinian State, contravening various resolutions, including the Road Map, which was based on land for peace.

While many conferences had been held since the signing of the 1993 Oslo Accords, conflict persisted, he said. United States President Barack Obama had given hope to Palestinians with his vision of a peace agreement on the basis of a two-State solution and the end of settlement activities. He welcomed such active United States diplomacy to revive the peace process and efforts of the international Quartet.

Such efforts had been confronted with Israeli intransigence, and refusal to adhere to requirements for re-launching the peace process. How could one conceive of holding negotiations without agreement on the terms of reference, and the objective that the whole world had unanimously agreed upon, namely ending Israeli occupation of the territories occupied in 1967, establishing a State of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital, and reaching a just solution to the question of Palestine refugees on the basis of resolution 194 (III) (1948)? In that context, he expressed deep appreciation for President Obama's recent speech, in which he had reaffirmed the need to end the 1967 occupation and the illegitimacy of the settlements. He also stressed the need for addressing final-status issues, including Jerusalem, refugees, borders and water.

Reaffirming his interest in achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace, he cautioned that the settlement policy and building of the separation wall would abort opportunities to re-launch the peace process. "Time is running out and the risks are becoming greater as a result of the continued suffering of the Palestine people under the last occupation in the world," he said. With that, he called on the global community to exert pressure on Israel to cease its settlement activities, comply with agreements, end occupation policies, release some 11,000 prisoners and lift the unjust siege imposed on the Gaza Strip, which had caused thousands of casualties.

Palestinians were also keen to end internal division and restore their national unity, which Egypt, Arab countries and others were making "commendable" efforts to achieve. Palestinians had made progress in building institutions and promoting economic and social development despite the harsh conditions of occupation. Notably, they also would be "resorting to the ballot boxes", with presidential and legislative elections to be held under the supervision of Arab countries and the United Nations.

"Hope will remain alive in our souls," he said, and Palestinians would not despair to regain their

rights on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions. Reaffirming his commitment to the Road Map, the Arab Peace Initiative and all terms of reference of the political process, he called on all parties to abide by those strategies with a view to re-launching a successful peace process. He was confident that Arab countries would adhere to the Arab Peace Initiative as a foundation for safeguarding Palestinian rights and a way forward for peaceful relations once an independent State of Palestine was established.

WINSTON BALDWIN SPENCER, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda, began by quoting a 1920 speech by former United States President Calvin Coolidge, who had said “[...] the benefit of one is the benefit of all, and the neglect of one is the neglect of all.” Those words were just as timely today, he said, as humanity was being tested by the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Additional challenges included the increased incidence of pandemics, worsening poverty, the adverse consequences of climate change and tensions over peace and security.

For small island States like his, the impacts of such issues had been exacerbated by ill-conceived interventions, and while many had spoken of a globalization that that would lift all boats on a sea of economic opportunity, it was now clear that such tides could turn into an economic tsunami that washed away development gains that had taken decades to be realized. Stronger economies had to be aware that their welfare was inseparably bound to that of the weakest nations.

In the pursuit of new strategies, he encouraged exploring alternative models, like that of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas, which promoted complementarity as an alternative to competition; solidarity as opposed to domination; cooperation as a replacement for exploitation; and respect for sovereignty rather than corporate rule. He commended the IMF decision to limit conditionalities to those critical to achieving goals of country programmes.

Turning to international financial governance, he called on developed countries to ensure their response strategies involved better international cooperation on tax issues, notably through inclusive frameworks that ensured the equal treatment of small jurisdictions, as stated in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis. He urged the Assembly to follow up on the Conference’s outcome and to take an inclusive approach that allowed for participation of those nations that were not members of the G-8 or G-20.

Continuing, he said traditional Western-based models of development cooperation had failed, stressing the need to promote partnerships that supported sustainable development, based on principles of mutual respect, equality and a genuine desire to effect social and economic development. Trade arrangements with the European Union, among others, would work in the interest of the parties, and a focus on development would ensure those arrangements produced positive results. Further, he called on the United States to unequivocally end its embargo on Cuba.

On climate change, he said the parallels between the global economic crisis and the climate change crisis “are both stark and dire” for small island States. Antigua and Barbuda had joined others at a recent meeting of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) in sending a strong message on the need for bold and ambitious action. Those States were profoundly disappointed at the lack of action within the Climate Change Convention negotiations to protect their nations. As such, he fully supported China’s call for developed countries to provide new, additional and adequate support to developing nations.

Describing how Antigua and Barbuda had made gender equality and women’s empowerment central to the national development strategy, he also said that gun violence had escalated significantly in recent years, and he requested greater cooperation and United Nations support to eliminate that threat. He fully supported a legally binding arms trade treaty to prevent the illegal international transfer of arms. Also, the threat posed by non-State actors acquiring weapons of mass destruction was shared by countries large and small, and he supported extending the mandate of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). He forcefully rejected the continued use of the Caribbean Sea for the trans-shipment of nuclear waste.

Finally, he said Antigua and Barbuda looked forward to the erection of a permanent memorial to the victims of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery, and to the start of serious dialogue on the issue of reparations. In closing, he urged all to demonstrate — in word and deed — the belief that the welfare of the weakest and the mightiest were inseparably bound.

NASSER AL-MOHAMMAD AL-AHMAD AL-SABAH, Prime Minister of Kuwait said that with the myriad of complex and diverse problems facing the global community, a strong, effective United Nations was needed now more than ever. He encouraged Member States to uphold their responsibilities in supporting the Organization and urged the United Nations, for its part, to improve its own administrative structure and “rise to a level which would match the dangers of the times in which the world lives”, while engaging regional and specialized organizations as well. In its own capacity, Kuwait would be participating in the upcoming Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen, and in December would be hosting the thirtieth Summit Conference of the Cooperation Council of the Arab Gulf States, where the

agenda would focus on building a framework to integrate those States, commencing with the linking of the electrical power grids between States of the Cooperation Council. He hoped that strategic step would be the start of many others, including monetary unification.

Kuwait was proud to top the list of Arab States and hold the thirty-third position globally in the *Human Development Report* issued by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), he said. It was also proud to be in the third place globally in the field of combating illegal drugs. At the same time, Kuwait would continue to contribute to development projects through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, which, since its establishment in 1961, had provided some \$14.5 billion in assistance in more than 100 countries. Although a developing country, Kuwait's contribution of 1.31 per cent of its gross national product to humanitarian development exceeded the .45% of GNP of OCED member States. He also noted that Kuwait had hosted the first Economic Development Summit Conference for the Arab States, which focused on economic cooperation, trade exchange and the raising of living standards for Arab citizens. In Kuwait's parliamentary elections this year, a "quality transformation" had taken place, with four women obtaining the trust of voters, continuing the expansion of women into public service and private enterprise.

Addressing the question of Palestine, he expressed concern for the deteriorating political, economic, social and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, despite international and regional efforts and initiatives to the contrary, and condemned the Israeli military aggression on Gaza last year where homes, property and civilian infrastructure facilities had been demolished and 1,400 Palestinians, mostly children and women, were killed. In light of the United Nations fact-finding mission documenting war crimes, he called for the Security Council to take the necessary measures needed to stop Israel's violation of international humanitarian law. Its own contributions and pledges for both relief aid and support for the Palestinian Authority exceeded \$200 million. Kuwait had also donated \$34 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to cover the costs of urgently needed relief aid.

Speaking on Iraq, he commended all efforts to achieve peace and security, while preserving Iraq's sovereignty, its national unity, its territorial integrity and the non-interference in its internal affairs. He pledged Kuwait's continuing assistance for the building of a unified and peaceful Iraq through dialogue and national reconciliation actions. He then encouraged Iran to resolve outstanding issues regarding the occupied Emirates Islands through direct negotiations or through the International Court of Justice.

He noted with great satisfaction the recent Security Council summit focusing on nuclear disarmament and creating a world free of nuclear weapons. To that end, he applauded the unanimous adoption of resolution 1887 (2009). However, endeavours to make the Middle East a region free of nuclear weapons were of utmost importance and he urged Israel to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty and subject all of its facilities to the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). While supporting the rights of all States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, he encouraged negotiations between Iran and IAEA so that a peaceful solution for all involved would be realized. He concluded with hopes that the international community would further its joint political will so that "the noble purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter" could be fulfilled.

NAVINCHANDRA RAMGOOLAM, President of Mauritius, said multilateralism was the way forward in today's uncertain world. He looked back over the past year — the economic crisis, the loss of jobs and the food crisis — and remarked that no country had been spared, including his own. He added that whatever modest progress Mauritius had achieved over the past few years had been severely set back, as its small, open economy had been exceptionally exposed to the adverse effects of the crises.

While there were reforms which had helped, he was concerned that a prolonged economic downturn could throw Mauritius' export-oriented economy into reverse gear, with further declines in trade and capital flows, exchange-rate volatility, and further falls in tourist arrivals. Calling for strengthened regulations and supervisions that could prevent the accumulation of high-risk toxic assets that had led to the crisis, he emphasized that Mauritius had been a collateral victim of economic imbalances, overleveraged financial institutions, inadequate regulations and deficient supervision.

Ultimately, it had become clear to all that the Bretton Woods institutions needed fundamental reform to ensure long-term stability and sustainability of the global economy, he said. For too long, the international community had condoned a clear democratic deficit in global governance. "We need to reshape the global economy into a more equitable system, responsive to the needs of all countries and one that reflects the realities of the day," he said, expressing appreciation for the convening this past June of the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development.

He strongly believed that what was also needed now was a change in approach in the developing economies. Indeed, while it was necessary to successfully wrap up the Doha Round of World Trade

Organization negotiations, it was also necessary to consider launching a Marshall Plan for developing countries. That could happen by creating pro-business policy reforms and curtailing reliance on aid. "This is the way to create wealth and prosperity," he said, and added: "We need to unleash the entrepreneurial drive of our people."

Turning to national matters, he noted the fight against HIV/AIDS, saying it was a priority. The Government had also taken steps to deal with the H1N1 influenza pandemic. Food security continued to be a priority, and the recent decline in food prices "should not make us lose sight of the structural long-term deficit the world faces". He added that the international community must bolster food security globally and that the upcoming World Food Summit in Rome would be an important step in that regard. He also urged action on climate change and said that divergences must be resolved at all cost and quickly, and he called for a breaking away from finger pointing, recrimination and brinkmanship.

BORIS TADIĆ, President of Serbia, said safeguarding the United Nations Charter was much more important than the policies of any single nation, especially in transformative periods such as the current time. International systems were undergoing a paradigm shift of a scope comparable to that of 1945 and 1989. Many interrelated factors had expedited the new set of international circumstances, and the global balance of power was shifting as new financial models competed for primacy. In that regard, achieving consensus on fundamental issues had never been more important, he said.

He said that enhancing dialogue between civilizations, providing for sustainable development and eradicating poverty were the only effective ways to fight terrorism and cross-border organized crime, and to promote nuclear disarmament. It was also vital to cooperate on combating the effects of climate change, which he said would continue to be strongly emphasized over Serbia's two-year presidency of the Governing Council of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Integral to those efforts was the proposed establishment of a regional climate change centre in Belgrade.

He underlined the necessity of agreeing on a fair and balanced emissions-reduction scheme, in particular on a new climate agreement that would secure eco-friendly investments, stimulate innovation and facilitate the global spread of technologies, knowledge and experience. Working towards a "green economy" would decisively contribute to putting the whole world firmly on a cleaner, more sustainable path.

Turning to the unilateral declaration of independence by the ethnic Albanian authorities of Kosovo and Metohija, he said Serbia had become caught at the heart of one of the most dangerous challenges to the universality of the international system since the founding of the United Nations. That attempt of secession stood in direct violation of Serbia's democratic Constitution, and the basic principles of the United Nations Charter, the Helsinki Act and Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). Kosovo's independence declaration was an attempt to "impose a nineteenth century outcome to a twenty-first century challenge". He stressed that Serbia would never, under any circumstances, implicitly or explicitly recognize that declaration.

In that regard, he said Serbia had ruled out the use of force and had chosen to respond to Kosovo's unilateral declaration with the utmost responsibility and restraint, and was opting for a diplomatic approach. Thus, he said that a "vast majority" of United Nations Member States had refrained from recognizing Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. Serbia had decided to contest the issue before the International Court of Justice.

He said the Court had concluded the preliminary written phase of the proceedings, and verbal hearings were scheduled to begin on 1 December 2009, with a decision expected some time next year. The outcome would either strongly deter other separatist movements from attempting to secede, or encourage them to act in similar fashion. If Kosovo's declaration was allowed to stand, he said, the door would be opened for challenging the territorial integrity of any United Nations Member State. He appealed to Member States to not prejudge the Court's deliberations or obstruct its work, and let it be uninhibited by political pressures

He went on to say that Serbia maintained support for a reconfigured United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and its continuing indispensability, and welcomed the status-neutral European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) working in the southern province, on the basis of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). He called on all responsible stakeholders invested in the future of Kosovo to work more closely with the Government of Serbia on fully implementing the Secretary-General's six-point plan, welcomed by the Security Council in November 2008.

Speaking of Serbia's desired entry into the European Union, he said that despite setbacks, the country's core strategic priority remained becoming part of the European Union, not just for economic prosperity, but due to the essential shared values. Modernizing efforts had also led to an upgrade of the administrations and, among other things, the protection of minorities and the redoubling of efforts to

ensure regional stability.

He said Serbia was ready to have full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, which was an essential moral obligation for future generations. As the twentieth anniversary of fall of the Berlin Wall, the international community must not forget to bring all nations of Europe under the same roof. Still, he said, much remained to be done.

With regards to Bosnia and Herzegovina, he said Serbia was a guarantor of the Dayton Agreement. As the “strategic anchor of stability” in the Western Balkans, Serbia would invest ever greater efforts to complete the democratic transformation of “our part of Europe”. Serbia’s “robust European vision” was complemented, he said, by its strong determination to pursue a carefully balanced, artfully executed and active foreign policy aimed at engagement with nations throughout the world.

EMANUEL MORI, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, said the importance of Assembly resolution 63/281 on climate change could not be overstated; that phenomenon was a threat to international peace and security. It was the defining issue of the day and should command attention and support from everyone. In a spirit similar to when the world had stood together last year to avert global disaster in face of the economic crisis, the international community must now be bold enough to take equally swift and difficult decisions to blunt the impact of climate change crisis. For Pacific islanders, as well as for islanders around the world, that issue was a matter of survival, he added.

Micronesia was already experiencing the brunt of the impact of climate change, including from the effects of rising sea levels an increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters such as typhoons, all of which were undermining development efforts. Compounding the problem was the saltwater intrusion into freshwater aquifers or other sources that was damaging basic crops, including coconut trees — “our tree of life”. If melting of polar ice and glaciers reached an irreversible tipping point, Micronesia and all low-lying islands would disappear. The impact would also endanger coastal cities and communities all over the world, including Manhattan.

Micronesia had submitted a proposal to the Secretariat of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change for evaluating rapid mitigation strategies by establishing an expert-led four-year programme of work to report on ways to achieve rapid mitigation through actions dealing with the short-lived non-CO₂ agents, including “black carbon”, he said. Together with Mauritius, it had also proposed an amendment to the Montreal Protocol aimed at phasing down production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons. The proposal would also expand efforts to destroy so called “banks” of discarded refrigerants.

Mr. Mori said that other priority areas for his country included working with other Governments in the subregion to meet the commitments of the Micronesia Challenge regarding conserving biodiversity and limited natural resources. Micronesia was also seeking to acquire comprehensive broadband connectivity capacity through submarine fiber-optic cables. His country was undertaking a wide variety of tasks in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, but progress was inherently threatened by the nature of its vulnerability.

As an island State with a large Economic Exclusive Zone of confidence, abundant with marine and fisheries resources, Micronesia was concerned with unsustainable fishing practices and with the unabated incidence of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Collateral catches and discards in commercial fisheries deprived its people of their subsistence living. The international community must help the islands in finding ways to minimize and eliminate that wasteful harvesting of resources.

Turning to Security Council reform, he said reform must include an expansion in both of its membership categories in order to reflect the present realities of the world in the new century. In that regard, he reiterated his country’s support for Japan, India and Germany for permanent membership of the Council. As a member of the AOSIS, the Federated States of Micronesia had repeatedly called for a strong agreement in Copenhagen that “must leave no island behind”. Mistrust between countries could not become a reason for failure, nor could economics become an excuse for inaction, he added.

DENIS SASSOU-NGUESSO, President of Congo, said the United Nations symbolized hope in the face of the major challenges that countries could not tackle alone. The Summit on Climate Change had called upon the collective consciousness of all nations to work together to build a better world for present and future generations — one that resembling that which the Organization’s founding fathers had hoped for.

He went on to say that everyone knew that nearly 1 billion people around the world lived on a dollar a day. Everyone also knew that climate change exacerbated that injustice in countries that bore the least responsibility for it. Indeed, Africa, responsible for only 3.8 per cent of the planet’s greenhouse gas emissions, had suffered the most from the effect of climate change.

Sustainable development was not a concept, but an issue that required responsibility. Urgent measures were required in Africa -- and all nations -- to guarantee food security, combat drought and restore the natural eco-systems. That would require mobilization of major resources. One of Congo's main resources was the forest, the planet's most important "lung" -- a vast carbon sink needed to help regulate greenhouse gases -- after the Amazon jungle. Congo was aware of its role as guardian of that immense and unique ecological system, and had worked with the international community since the 1990s to protect it.

The upcoming Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen must address numerous mechanisms, including adaptation, capacity-reinforcement and technology transfer and financing, he said. The international community should take into account the forests, which were carbon sinks that could help stabilize the planet.

Turning to the situation in the Middle East, he supported efforts to promote a permanent dialogue between the parties and bring about an equitable end to the crisis. He called for strict compliance with the nuclear non-proliferation agreements. The renewed confidence of the Congolese people in his presidency was based on a project called the "Path of the Future". It proposed to open the country to modernization and industrialization, pursue peacebuilding and the rule of law, and promote good governance and protect human rights. Africa would do everything within its power to open up a gateway to the future for everybody.

King MSWATI III of Swaziland said Africa was afflicted with multiple problems that were seriously hindering progress in the areas of health, economy, poverty and social welfare, all part of the Millennium Development Goals. Africa's intention, however, was to grow from being a continent of "third world countries" to gaining "first world" status, which called for Africa to work "harder and smarter" in generating a strong economy to better the lives of all.

Because resources were limited, he continued, Africa relied on the United Nations for assistance with forging partnerships to help its economies grow. Developed nations should recognize Africa's hard work by increasing African countries' access to soft loans and grants in support of development programmes and poverty reduction strategies. Also, the United Nations should support national initiatives, including by taking into account the setback to development agendas caused by the global financial crisis.

In his country, Government interventions had been needed to rescue sectors such as the pulp and textile industries. Those measures had been coupled with initiatives to mobilize resources and promote financial inclusion so as to stimulate growth at the grass-roots level.

Moving on, he called for unity in condemning the disturbances and violence that still flared in the world, including in the form of wars and coups. He said nations must ensure those acts were not supported or encouraged. Instead, sympathizers and sponsors should be isolated and discouraged. Nuclear arms would also have to be eradicated, he said, adding that the United Nations must set targets and timelines to ensure compliance towards that end.

Turning to other concerns, he cited the delay in reforming the United Nations Security Council. Africa had stated its views with firm and clear resolutions, including those affirmed by the recent Non-Aligned Movement Summit. The issue should now be addressed with the urgency it deserved, especially in light of statements made by fellow leaders calling for the United Nations to "turn anew" by approaching global matters collectively. Serious Council reform would clearly demonstrate the new approach.

Finally, he said it was encouraging that the one-day Climate Change Summit had been held prior to the Assembly session, since environmental protection was critical to all development strategies. That Summit had mobilized political support for efforts leading up to the Copenhagen Conference, which would lead to the transfer of skills and technology that would enable developing countries to pursue growth while avoiding mistakes of the past.

The importance of protecting the environment could not be overemphasized, he said, stressing that precious ecosystems and natural resources must be preserved for future generations. A major climate change fund should be established at the Copenhagen summit as one mechanism among the funding solutions that would be predictable, accessible and incremental in providing assistance for climate change projects.

ELBEGDORJ TSAKHIA, President of Mongolia, said the human family was facing unprecedented challenges and a multitude of global crises, including leading economic, fuel, food, flu pandemic and climate change, which all required global solutions. Climate change posed a "truly existential" threat to humanity. Because global efforts should be complemented with those at the regional and subregional levels, his

country had proposed a North-East Asia summit on climate change. The subregion had already been affected by drought, desertification, land degradation, an increased occurrence of natural disasters, melting of the permafrost and reduced water resources.

He said that the multiple natures of the crises had to be taken into account in order to find responses at the global level, and all policies and actions needed to focus on human costs of overcoming the crises' dire consequences. Vulnerable countries, including landlocked developing countries, ought to be assisted to withstand the harsh impact of the crises. Every sixth member of the United Nations was a landlocked developing country and was hindered by lack of access to the sea, remoteness from world markets, high transportation costs and undue delays. The recent establishment of the international think tank for the landlocked developing countries in Ulaanbaatar would enhance coordinated efforts for the effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals.

Marginalization and inadequate representation of the developing world in global decision-making was another drawback to the strength of a new multilateralism, he said. There was, therefore, a need for reformed global governance structures. The United Nations was uniquely placed to serve as the centre of the new multilateralism, because of its impartiality and universal legitimacy. He hoped the Assembly negotiations on Security Council reform would make meaningful progress during the session on Council expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories. A revitalized Assembly, an increased role of the Economic and Social Council in global economic governance and enhanced United Nations capacity in democracy and peacebuilding were also needed.

He said that, as a North-East Asian nation with a recognized nuclear-weapon-free status, Mongolia supported a nuclear-weapon-free Korean peninsula. Achieving a comprehensive solution to the nuclear issue through dialogue was of the utmost importance. The Security Council's summit, chaired by United States President Obama, had yesterday confirmed the path towards a world free of nuclear weapons in its historic resolution.

This year, Mongolia would observe the twentieth anniversary of its democratic transformation. Democracy and human rights had been inherently woven into the Millennium Development Goals. Mongolia had, therefore, been the first country to adopt, in 2005, its Goal 9 on "Strengthening human rights, fostering democratic governance and zero tolerance for corruption". He applauded the increased role of the United Nations in fostering democracy and good governance, with the United Nations Democracy Fund as a notable example.

PAUL BIYA, President of Cameroon, said the strong response, led by the industrialized countries, to the global financial and economic crisis fully demonstrated the breadth of the international community's responsiveness when it was driven by true political will. Cameroon would have loved to see such international solidarity realized through the broad achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, with a common desire to narrow the gap between North and South to fight poverty, hunger and pandemics.

Africa had no role in the financial crisis yet had suffered greatly, he continued. Among the most disturbing consequences were a decline in capital transfers to African countries, a drastic drop in the price of its products, a marked decline in investment, expanding budget deficits and an economic slowdown. If the crisis persisted, the continent could suffer increased indebtedness, just as it emerged from years of economic recovery under rigorous structural adjustment programmes.

He said the international community needed to find a coordinated response that would include substantial financial resources without, as much as possible, imposing conditions. Development, improved living conditions, and peace and stability in Africa hinged on such support. He backed the decision made at the G-20 Summit in London this past April to urge the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to grant more and softer loans, with lighter conditions, to the weakest economies. Cameroon was aware that assistance could only be worthwhile if based on stringent management and good government.

Cameroon was also concerned with other issues -- the food crisis, reducing poverty, global peace and security, and climate change. Like other continents, Africa had been hit severely by climate change even with its low levels of greenhouse gas emissions. The drying up of Lake Chad, whose size had declined from 26,000 square kilometres in the 1960s to 1,500 square kilometres today, required the collective action of the Central African States. They needed strong support from the international community, he said. While acknowledging that the planet's fate was everyone's business, it was legitimate that the people of Africa be duly compensated by the international community for their efforts and sacrifices. He hoped that the Climate Conference in Copenhagen would provide answers to Africa's special needs.

He deplored the persistence of numerous conflicts, such as the situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Darfur and Somalia. He lauded the activities of the United Nations aimed at helping to stabilize those situations, but he said that doing so would require more appropriate human,

financial and material resources for greater efficiency. The United Nations also needed to strengthen its role as the crucible of multilateralism, as a forum of ideas, equity and equality, where all voices were expressed and taken into account.

The United Nations needed to adapt to current trends and changes in international relations. He urged reforming the Security Council, revitalizing the Assembly and increasing the means of action of the Secretary-General. The overhaul of the Organization needed to be fast-tracked so it was more democratic, credible and efficient, and gained the trust of people.

NGUYEN MINH TRIET, President of Viet Nam, said the year since the last Assembly was not a long span of time. Yet, it had been characterized by many challenges, as all parts of the world suffered from the financial crisis and economic downturn. That had further aggravated challenges in food security, energy security and climate change facing developing countries, in particular. At the same time, during that same period, the international community had exerted enormous efforts -- in both thought and action -- to not only address the immediate problems, but also create a more sustainable foundation for the common peace and prosperity.

In due course, he continued, nations had been able to draw valuable lessons on governance over domestic development and gain a fuller understanding of the meaning of multilateral cooperation. It was evident that no single country alone could respond to the financial and economic crisis, in addition to other global challenges. Policies and measures of imposition and unilateral use of force to address international security and political issues would only result in more tension, confrontation and impasse. Given the many difficulties, he was encouraged by the positive signs in the world economy. Further, the first summit of the United Nations Security Council on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament had highlighted the question of disarmament on the international agenda.

He invited the General Assembly to focus its deliberations on three critical areas. First, fostering respect for the fundamental principle of international law and the United Nations Charter as the determinant for peace and security. He said the United Nations should continue to make active contributions to easing tension and peacefully resolving outstanding disputes and conflicts, including those related to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran. With respect to the situation in the Middle East, he supported ensuring the rights of the Palestinian people and the legitimate interests of all parties concerned. He fully supported the national reconciliation and reconstruction processes in Afghanistan and Iraq, and strongly condemned terrorist acts against civilians. Viet Nam opposed the unilateral use of economic sanctions against developing countries and supported the United Nations General Assembly resolutions on the necessity of immediately ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba.

The second issue was an effective and comprehensive response to the economic crisis, he said. In the short term, urgent measures must be taken to curb the pace of the downturn and minimize the impact of the crisis, particularly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals in developing countries. In the long term, the system of international economic relations, which had for quite a while shown many irrationalities, must be reformed. It was imperative to promote the role of the United Nations in designing international strategies and mechanisms to address the energy and food crisis, pandemics and climate change, including issues to be discussed in Copenhagen this December.

He said Viet Nam was of the view that United Nations reform should be conducted in all United Nations agencies, with Security Council reform conducted in such a way that broadened its representation and increased the democracy and transparency in its operational methodology. Renewal of that mechanism should go hand in hand with renewal of content and due attention paid to a balance among fields of activity of the United Nations. Additionally, he called for United Nations operations to be sufficiently resourced.

As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, he said Viet Nam was an active participant in, and an effective and responsible contributor to, the maintenance of the world's peace and security. He said Viet Nam strongly supported and contributed to the peaceful settlement of international disputes and conflicts, the fight against transnational crime, international terrorism and the promotion of disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As a country that had experienced decades of war with devastating consequences, including the long-term effects of the toxic chemical Agent Orange, and as a country that had attained important achievements in development, Viet Nam had always endeavoured for the effective operation of the Security Council in supporting reconstruction efforts of countries emerging from conflict.

He said this year's General Assembly was taking place at a crucial juncture. The significant world changes of 2009 required corresponding policy decisions. Only by standing shoulder to shoulder to enhance multilateral cooperation would the international community meet the expectations of the world's peoples, and set out the directions for long-term development of the United Nations.

Action on Point of Order

Raising a procedural objection, after Andry Nirina Rajoelina, President of the High Transitional Authority of Madagascar, was announced as the next speaker, ALEXIS THAMBWE MWAMBA, Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo, speaking on behalf of the 15-member Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Comoros, objected to the participation of Madagascar in the general debate based on articles 71 and 113 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly.

Based on article 34 of the Rules of Procedure, Assembly President ALI ABDUSSALAM TREKI ruled that Mr. Rajoelina could take the floor and announced that the Assembly's Credentials Committee would meet on the matter tomorrow and its decision could be taken up by the plenary after the closure of the general debate next Tuesday.

The representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo then tabled a motion of order based on article 71 of the Rules of Procedure, calling on Member States to vote against the President's ruling.

In a recorded vote of 23 against to 4 in favour (Denmark, Ecuador, Jamaica, Madagascar), with 6 abstentions (Cameroon, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Mali, Trinidad and Tobago, Vanuatu) the Assembly decided that Mr. Rajoelina would not take the floor (see Annex). The Assembly President noted that it was clear that the majority of the Assembly had "remained silent" during the vote.

The representatives of Guinea-Bissau, Jamaica and Algeria also took part in the procedural debate.

Statements

RAMDIEN SARDJOE, Vice-President of Suriname, enumerated the traditional and new challenges facing the global community, including pervasive poverty, deadly disease, increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters and environmental degradation. Added to them were the energy, food, financial and economic crises, he said. Current challenges transcended national borders and required concerted action and responses from the international community. The United Nations was, therefore, the central forum for addressing global issues and he called for effective multilateralism -- not as an option, but as a necessity. United Nations reform, including meaningful reform of the Security Council, was indispensable towards that end. Equally important was strengthened cooperation within and between regional groups, as well as between those groups and the United Nations.

The same multilateral engagement was needed to address climate change, he said, as had been demonstrated in such areas as the fight against the uncontrolled spread of illicit small arms and light weapons; the fight against international terrorism; HIV/AIDS; peacekeeping and peacebuilding; the advancement of women; and human rights. The upcoming Conference in Copenhagen must produce an agreement with ambitious mitigation and adaptation targets. Countries that were historically responsible for the emissions of the current amount of greenhouse gases should take the lead in that regard. Appropriate mitigation efforts must also be undertaken by developing countries.

Suriname continued efforts to manage its forests in a sustainable manner with the aim of maintaining and improving the climate stabilizing value of its standing forest, he continued. A future forest carbon-mitigation regime should provide incentives to high-forest low-deforestation countries. Referring to the report of the informal working group on interim finance for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD), he noted that it estimated that financing of €15 billion to €25 billion for the 2010-2015 period for REDD+ efforts could produce a 25 per cent reduction in annual global deforestation rates by 2015. He called upon Member States to support REDD+.

He emphasized the importance of full implementation of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations Programme of Action and of the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Culture of Peace. His own democracy, he said, where diverse ethnic groups from different multi-cultural backgrounds and religious traditions had come a long way towards cooperating harmoniously and peacefully, could serve as an example in the quest for peace, security and development. In the atmosphere of democratic values and high levels of religious and ethnic tolerance, Suriname was building a society that could prosper and engage with the region and the world. "Only with mutual trust and understanding will we be able to overcome international tensions," he said.

Education was the foundation for economic opportunity and prosperity, he said. Knowledge and advanced skills were critical tools to enhance every country's economic potential, growth and standard of living. For that reason joint efforts were necessary to disseminate and maximize technological advances that would allow developing countries to progress faster towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, particularly those relating to all levels of education, health and gender equality. On human rights,

he said that Suriname remained committed to the protection and promotion of all human rights. He further said that the upcoming review of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, to be held in Uganda next year, should seriously address the issue of the elements of the crime of aggression.

JOSEPH BOAKAI, Vice-President of Liberia, said his country continued to make progress on many fronts, including national dialogue -- with the release of the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission -- the related nomination of members of the Independent Human Rights Commission and the establishment of a commission to address the explosive issue of land reform. In addition, the national disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme had been successfully concluded in conjunction with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

Among other signs of progress, he noted the training of 2,000 troops for the national army, and said that the reorganized police force had also made improvements, but continued to lack infrastructure, equipment and other essentials. Partnership consultations had recently been held to fulfil those gaps and to enhance continuity in training, though there were additional needs in border control.

He went on to describe significant strides in other areas of the rule of law, including the fight against gender-based violence. Women's participation in the reconstruction of the country was the subject of several programmes, and he recommended that the Secretary-General appoint a special envoy on women, peace and security, and appealed to the international community to support the Monrovia Declaration on that issue. A policy of mandatory free primary education, with a special emphasis on girls, had also been instituted.

He said Liberia's economic revitalization, in partnership with the international community, was shaping up as a post-conflict success story, with the poverty reduction strategy emphasizing good national leadership, technical competency, anti-corruption efforts and other reforms. Qualifying for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) process would aid further progress.

Gains in stability remained fragile, however, because of continued institutional weaknesses coupled with the absence of employment opportunities, especially for youth, he said. Development progress was needed, in particular as a catalyst for smooth general elections in 2011. In addition, the potential return of tens of thousands of refugees posed humanitarian challenges. For those reasons, the fast-track relaxation of conditions placed on development assistance was needed, along with the continued empathy and support of the international community. He expressed thanks for the extension of UNMIL in that regard and requested that it provide a security environment conducive to elections.

Maintaining that regional factors were also crucial to security, he urged attention to Guinea as well as action against illicit trafficking in drugs and humans and other transnational crime. He also supported the lifting of sanctions on Zimbabwe and called for renewed commitments for initiatives to restore stability to Somalia, condemning the recent killings of peacekeepers there. In addition, he expressed hope for a political solution in Darfur. He called for urgent action to reduce greenhouse gasses and assist developing countries to respond to climate change. He also called for a more democratic Security Council, the development of an early warning mechanism for conflicts and measures to shield post-conflict countries from economic crises.

RAILA AMOLLO ODINGA, Prime Minister of Kenya, said it was encouraging that the world was turning to the United Nations to find a common global path to resolving the most intractable challenges. A clear recognition was emerging that "together we can all rise; separately, we can only sink". The disdain of the powerful for the Organization's ability to be a unifying player was changing, thanks to the President of the United States, who held a special place in the hearts of Africans, particularly Kenyans. The need to reform the United Nations so it could better meet its challenges must be pressed forward, he said, adding that enlargement of the Security Council must include permanent, veto-bearing seats for Africa. The world could no longer continue to marginalize a continent that was home to nearly a billion people, if sustainable solutions to challenges were to be devised.

The world was now acutely aware that the quest for peace began with ensuring survival of the planet, he said. Since little progress had been made in producing a more coherent institutional framework for international environmental governance since the 2005 World Summit, the Nairobi-based United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) should be upgraded to the same level as the Organization's Geneva and Vienna Offices. It should serve as the central institution in charge of the numerous environment-related conventions, since the emergence of multiple centres only dissipated the impact of "green" efforts.

Reviewing his country's environmental challenges and measures undertaken to address them, he highlighted the restoration of water towers, a huge reforestation drive to plant 7 billion trees and a crash programme to rapidly shift energy production to green technologies. Kenya needed assistance with a drought that just last week had been declared a national disaster, with 10 million Kenyans possibly facing

starvation soon. Addressing that situation would require \$500 million, half to be mobilized domestically and the other half from donor partners. A massive mobilization was already under way, including through the use of the military, to provide relief, drill boreholes and transport water to areas in acute need.

Turning to other matters, he said his country's terrible post-election violence had made reconciliation and reconstruction harder, but the people had shown resilience in rising to unprecedented challenges. The election-era bitterness had been resolved through an accord signed with the help of the African Union, mediation by former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and a personal visit by the Organization's current Secretary-General at the height of the crisis. However, one area where peace did not prevail was in Kenya's neighbour, Somalia, which was of concern to the entire international community.

Efforts to defeat the forces of extremism in that country were hampered by the help they received from external elements. A major source of insecurity in Kenya was the resulting inflow of refugees, small arms and light weapons. The latest additional source was the disruption of international trade through piracy in one of the world's busiest sea routes. Kenya had offered facilities for dealing with suspected pirates and was ready to host a United Nations conference on coordinating efforts to deal with the phenomenon. The international community should recognize that the use of force could not curb extremism, and encouraged Somalia's Transitional Federal Government to more aggressively pursue its commitment to a much more inclusive political process.

JOHN KEY, Prime Minister of New Zealand, welcomed the actions of the G-20 over the past year, but in commending those efforts, he also called on the G-20 to heed the voice of the world's smaller economies and to ensure they had a role in global decision-making. Free and fair trade would be the principle engine for driving developing countries out of poverty and bringing prosperity to all.

An essential component in the international community's response to the global economic crisis must be a balanced and ambitious conclusion to the Doha Round of World Trade Organization talks, he said. A genuinely global agreement that reduced tariffs, eliminated export subsidies, reduced domestic subsidies and increased market access would see benefits flow to all States. At a time when all countries suffered from the brunt of the current economic crisis, further delay was, he said, "inexcusable".

As one of the world's "truly open economies", New Zealand had an unwavering commitment to trade liberalization and the pursuit of bilateral, regional and global free-trade agreements. He supported the Secretary-General's call for the immediate suspension of price controls and other agricultural trade restrictions to reduce soaring food prices, as that would help millions cope with the highest food prices in thirty years. He therefore called on those States and groups which had broken their promises and reintroduced protectionist measures to reconsider. Such actions were as harmful as they were unacceptable, he said.

As poverty escalated as a result of the economic crisis, aid effectiveness was just as important as "the quantum of aid". This was why, last month, New Zealand had committed to the Cairns Compact, which would strengthen development coordination in the Pacific islands. The world could not afford to contemplate failure at the Copenhagen Climate Conference, and all countries must take action that reflected their individual circumstances, responsibilities and capabilities.

For its part, New Zealand had set a target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by between 10 and 20 per cent below 1990 levels by 2030 -- if there was a comprehensive global agreement. He said there had been a per capita drop of 35 to 42 per cent since 1990. New Zealand was acutely aware that most of its greenhouse gas came from livestock methane emissions, which so far no technology could reduce.

Its challenge was to find a way to balance growth in agriculture production with the need to reduce emissions and reach climate change targets. Agricultural emissions made up 14 per cent of all emissions worldwide, he noted, adding that, as food demand rose, so would these emissions. So far the only known way to reduce those emissions was through reduction in output, and that was not an acceptable response -- "not for New Zealand, and not for a growing world that seeks freedom from hunger". Instead, New Zealand had developed a proposal for a global alliance on the reduction of agricultural emissions to promote agricultural research.

Calling attention to the need for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, he said that last week New Zealand had presided over the General Conference of IAEA in Vienna. That agency's work was a fundamental pillar in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons through safeguards under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. New Zealand would also work for a "robust, action-oriented" outcome at the second Review Conference of the anti-personnel landmine convention later this year. He also expressed strong support for the International Criminal Court, and said his country's commitment to create and maintain peace and security was evident in its candidature for the Security Council for 2015-2016.

MILO ĐUKANOVIĆ, Prime Minister of Montenegro, said only concerted global efforts could yield positive results to current challenges. Montenegro aimed to preserve peace and security by creating an environment for the implementation of the rule of law and the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms. Those were the main principles of its foreign policy, along with cooperation with its neighbours and regional stability. It remained committed to the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter. He was encouraged by the dynamic progress Montenegro had made towards membership in the European Union and NATO.

As the recovery from the global economic crisis would be long and gradual, all countries, led by the United Nations, should be committed to policies and measures initiated through different international forums, including the United Nations Conference on the World Economic and Finance Crisis, the G-20, the World Bank and IMF. The Government of Montenegro had adopted a package of economic policy measures meant to maintain macro-economic stability, improve productivity and preserve a favourable economic environment.

Regarding the environment, he said the harmful consequences of climate change, increasing energy consumption and the growing dependence on fossil fuels were concerning issues for everyone. Montenegro strongly supported the negotiation process in Copenhagen on a post-2012 climate framework and calls to "seal the deal" in December. Recognizing the importance of regional cooperation, Montenegro would organize a regional conference on climate change and sustainable development for the Mediterranean and South-West European countries in Budva on 16 and 17 October. It also firmly advocated the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals and implementation of all United Nations documents related to development issues and the special needs of Africa.

The United Nations debate on the concept of the "responsibility to protect" was crucial, as the surge in internal conflicts and violations of human rights during the 1990s had led to deliberations on the primary obligation of each State to protect its citizens from genocide, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. It also had spurred a discussion on the need to protect civilians during armed conflicts. He stressed the need to reach agreement on an appropriate instrument within the framework of the United Nations and international law, based on a consensus of all actors.

Given the turbulent characteristics of the Balkans, Montenegro paid close attention to the needs of refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons. It was investigating ways to find enduring solutions for refugees and displaced persons from the territory of the former Yugoslavia. On the issue of terrorism, Montenegro supported the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and fulfilment of the obligations stipulated by the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and the Convention against Drug Trafficking. It welcomed the reform process, which would hopefully lead to a more democratic and representative United Nations.

FAUSTIN ARCHANGE TOUADERA, Prime Minister of the Central African Republic, reminded the Assembly that it had a number of challenges to overcome, including peace and security, the threat of climate change, terrorism and United Nations reform. The new challenges of a changing world, including economic development and social progress, could only be tackled through international cooperation. That was why multilateralism seemed like the only way to solve the world's problems.

He said the global economic and financial crisis was unprecedented in terms of its ramifications. Some exit strategies might include developing State-friendly commercial capacities and deploying strategic partnerships between different regions. The food crisis triggered by soaring prices had plunged a large part of the planet into famine and extreme poverty, leading to deteriorating terms of trade between the countries most affected, including the Central African Republic.

Agricultural growth must encourage sustainable development as well as sound environmental resource management, he said. Plans for long-term growth should be in line with the Millennium Development Goals, and the Assembly session was the occasion for international organizations to commit to mobilizing funds to help attain them. Actions in favour of least developed countries must be reviewed to address their socio-economic challenges.

Turning to climate change, he said that for countries with weak economies, the cost of adjusting would amount to billions of dollars, further straining limited resources. Rich countries should take responsibility in order to attain the goals they had set themselves in the Kyoto Protocol. Hopefully the forthcoming climate talks in Copenhagen would take into consideration the mutual concern of Central African countries of the Congo Basin forest, the world's second largest of its kind. The Copenhagen Conference must help those countries attain a "win-win" situation, which would enable them to strike a balance between protecting natural resources and embracing economic development.

He urged the United Nations Disarmament Commission to promote resolutions on multilateralism

with regard to disarmament, non-proliferation and cutting military budgets, while respecting environmental norms. As well as condemning all terrorist acts, he reiterated his country's support for the fight against terrorism, noting that illegal armed groups threatened the stability of countries like the Central African Republic. Tackling the movement of arms was the best way to get to the bottom of growing numbers of illegal armed groups and cross-border crime, he added.

The United Nations had the well-entrenched legitimacy to provide solutions to the world's many problems, he said. That was why States thought its role was crucial and that reforming the Organization was vital to helping it reach its full potential. Restructuring the Security Council in a transparent manner and revitalizing the General Assembly were key priorities. Expanding the Security Council would give it scope to represent more regions and provide new approaches to peacekeeping and international security.

EDWARD NIPAKE NATAPEI, Prime Minister of Vanuatu, said that one of the major goals of his country's comprehensive reform programme, introduced in the 1990s, was to promote social equity, especially in terms of integrating the needs of its culturally diverse people and geographically remote communities into the national development priorities. Despite high levels of development assistance, economic performance of the island nation remained weak. Concerned that recent high economic growth would fall sharply as a result of the global economic recession, Vanuatu would host a Pacific United Nations Conference on the Human Face of the Global Economic Crisis in the Pacific in February 2010.

The complex and challenging circumstances in Fiji had led to international condemnation and pressure, he said, noting that, while his country was part of the regional desire to see an early return to democracy there, continuing international engagement with the Government of Fiji would be critical. The Melanesian Spearhead Group had continued to maintain a high-level dialogue with the Fijian Government. The processes of returning the country to democracy should be driven by peaceful dialogue and concern for the socio-economic well-being of Fiji's people. Any punitive measures would not be in their economic and social interests or for the region as a whole.

Challenges such as climate change posed unacceptable implications for the social, economic and political structures of small island States, and often had grave security implications. General Assembly resolution 63/281 had been a historical milestone for Pacific small island developing States because the security implications of climate change had been brought to the attention of the international community. "No country, small or large, developed or developing, will be able to avoid the security implications of climate change, which are already affecting the livelihoods of our people as the international community struggles to come to terms with the idea that climate change poses a real threat to the future survival of mankind," he said, adding that the word "doomed" best described that particular global crisis.

He said Vanuatu was being hurt by the global economic and financial crisis, through, among other things, falling trade, erratic commodity prices, increased borrowing costs and strains on official development assistance (ODA). It was a matter of concern that the crisis had been caused by outside forces, yet its rippling effects were quickly reaching Vanuatu's most vulnerable population; children, the disabled and the working poor.

Turning to reform of the United Nations, he said that in order to ensure a stronger and more effective Organization, there was a need to review the Security Council membership, sooner rather than later. A better geographical representation would give the underrepresented groups of Member States a stronger sense of responsibility and responsiveness. Negotiations on the matter should be conducted in an atmosphere of mutually constructive dialogue and positive engagement. Elsewhere in the Organization, he noted that the often highly bureaucratic procedures and mechanisms established by the United Nations system for accessing much-needed funds had placed unnecessary strains on local capacities. There was a need to identify ways of simplifying the procedures, including by exploring possibilities for direct access.

JEAN ASSELBORN, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg, said the past year had been marked by the worst worldwide financial and economic crisis since the Great Depression, with 50 million workers losing or facing the loss of their jobs, and more than 100 million people sinking into hunger and poverty. Add the H1N1 Influenza pandemic, the last 12 months could be described as an *annus horribilis*. However, there was no better place to take stock, draw lessons and readdress those many global crises than the General Assembly.

Because those events had hit the poorest and most vulnerable hardest, there was a need for a concrete international action plan to engage the responsibilities of both donors and recipients, he said. In that regard, Luxembourg not only reaffirmed its continuing commitment to devote 0.95 per cent of its gross national income to ODA, but would focus on a target of 1 per cent while insisting on qualitative improvement in its involvement with economic, social and environment issues. As a lesson of the

multidimensional crises, a new architecture must be employed. As the President of the Economic and Social Council, Luxembourg planned to work towards full implementation of the various mandates put forth by Member States from the framework of the recent Conference on the World Financial Crisis and Economic and Its Impact on Development.

Noting that unilateral tendencies often emerged from times of crisis, he urged Member States to reaffirm the multilateral structures needed to address the issues at hand, and to continue to foster trust among nations. Current geopolitical realities called for a reformed Security Council, a revitalized General Assembly, a more effective Economic and Social Council and a stronger United Nations. "It lies in our hands to demonstrate the continued relevance of our Organization, of its capacity to act and to formulate joint responses, global responses and legitimate responses."

Turning to Middle East issues, he said the Israeli policy of colonization was clearly an obstacle to peace and must cease in order for progress to be made. He hailed President Obama's intention to engage in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, noting that, when alone around a table, such as at Annapolis, Israelis and Palestinians were unable to work towards resolving the complex issues at hand. Substantial progress had been made on Palestinian support for Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, as well as on confidence-building measures by Israel and the Arab countries, among other things. Still, full implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) was essential. "The credibility of the United Nations is at stake," he said.

Hailing President Obama's broader discussion on non-proliferation and disarmament in the Security Council, and his commitment to work towards ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, he remarked that the United States decision to discontinue its the missile defence shield marked efforts to engage in dialogue with involved parties rather than in unilateral measures. As for climate change, Luxembourg was committed, with its European Union partners, to its goal of "20-20-20", which aimed to increase energy efficiency in the regional bloc 20 per cent, increase the share of renewals of final energy consumption by 20 per cent and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent. Disarmament efforts would free up financial resources that could be redirected to financing climate change adaptation efforts.

T. BRENT SYMONETTE, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Bahamas, said the global economic and financial crisis threatened to negate all that had been achieved on the development agenda, both at the national and international levels. The fallout for the Bahamas, with tourism as its primary industry, had been considerable as the country was in the midst of one of the most difficult tourism seasons. The Government had acted quickly to soften the impact of the crisis. Among other things, it had ensured the continued integrity of the domestic financial system. It was of critical importance to global financial health that actions taken at the national level were complemented by appropriate international responses.

As the Assembly would consider the scale of assessments this year, he reiterated his country's position that per capita gross national income should not be given undue weight in determining "capacity to pay", as it often lead to distortions. The current scale for assessing peacekeeping operations placed the Bahamas, a small island developing State, in the same category as the most developed economies. The gross national income criterion did not properly reflect either the vulnerability of the Bahamian economy or the extraordinary costs associated with the duplication of infrastructure required because of its archipelagic configuration.

He said climate change presented acute challenges for small island developing States, including the Bahamas, which had suffered from an increase in the number and ferocity of hurricanes. Restoration and recovery efforts had diverted scarce resources from development programmes. The Bahamas recognized that responsibility for climate change did not rest with developed countries alone and had taken a number of actions to increase its resilience vis-à-vis the adverse impacts of climate change. However, environmental protection initiatives should not cause greater harm than good. An air passenger levy would damage the already weakened tourism industry, and proposed marine bunkering levies were likely to impact negatively on the cost competitiveness of the Bahamas Maritime Registry.

The Bahamas faced particular challenges in the area of maritime safety and security, he said, adding that it had committed tremendous financial and technical resources to combat illicit trafficking in drugs and weapons, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, as well as human trafficking. The country therefore needed effective cooperation and coordination with other States to resolve those issues and complement national efforts. Illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs as well as small arms and light weapons were major contributors to increased criminality in the region. A disproportionate amount of scarce budgetary resources was dedicated to fighting those crimes and dealing with the terrible fallout in Bahamian communities.

Turning to Haiti, a near neighbour, he said the Bahamas was committed to that country's

stabilization and political and economic development. Short- and long-term development could not be achieved without sustained support from the international community. Sharing the Secretary-General's hope that Haiti was moving away from its history of conflict towards a future of peaceful and sustainable development, he called on the Security Council to extend the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) beyond 15 October, and expressed hope that Special Envoy Bill Clinton would keep the issue at the forefront of international attention.

FEDRICK FONON, Deputy Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, said economic growth in his country had fallen drastically because of the world economic crisis and he therefore welcomed the outcome of the June Financial Crisis Conference, including its call for the reform of the Bretton Woods institutions. He also expressed hope that there would be more stimulus funds available for the poorest of the poor.

As small island and least developed countries were also under great threat because of climate change, he called for urgent measures to assure that the global average temperature does not increase more than 1.5°C. In that context, he also expressed hope that financing and technical assistance for the prevention of deforestation would be incorporated into any agreement in Copenhagen.

In the area of peace and security, he called for a firm commitment to a "holistic multilateral disarmament negotiation". He also spoke of the progress that had been achieved, following the conflict in his country, along with the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI). This year, the relationship with RAMSI had progressed from one of assistance to one of partnership, and he expressed hope that that partnership could interact more with the United Nations. He said that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission had allowed the Solomon Islands to face its troubled period with courage.

He supported a review summit on the Millennium Development Goals as well as on the Mauritius Strategy for least developed countries next year. His country was poised to make some gains in achieving the Goals through various partnerships, including those on education with New Zealand and China, and those on eliminating malaria with Australia. China, the European Union and other partners had assisted the rural development policy. His country had also taken steps to develop human resources in tourism, agriculture, fisheries and the mining sector to offset projected revenue losses from reduced harvesting of forests. South-South cooperation was also a major factor in his country's development efforts.

In other areas, he called for hastened reform of the Security Council and for a fully-fledged United Nations presence in his country. Having submitted extended coastal territorial claims, his country looked forward to working with the Continental Shelf Subcommittee. Regional countries have met to work collaboratively on the conservation of marine species that populate the seas in the area.

He asked for United Nations support to his country's national statistics office, and invited investment in infrastructure, noting that the country had opened up telecommunications to competition. He called for the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review to be the reference point for assessing countries' human rights situations. He expressed hope that positive interaction between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan would continue, and that the latter's admission to United Nations forums could expand.

KANAT SAUDABAYEV, Secretary of State and Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan, recalled that on 11 September eight years ago, Kazakh citizen Zhanetta Tsoy had kissed her husband and daughter goodbye before perishing on her first day of work, in the attack on the World Trade Center. That terrorist act, and the world's unity in condemning it, showed that only together could the international community make a safer and better present and future. Kazakhstan had supported the global fight against terrorism from the start by assisting the efforts of the international coalition in Afghanistan. However, there had never been and there would never be a purely military solution to the conflict there.

Noting with satisfaction the increased attention paid by coalition members to non-military aspects of security, he said his country was assisting, to the best of its ability, in the international efforts to rehabilitate Afghanistan. Kazakhstan was also in the process of developing a long-term educational programme for training qualified Afghan specialists. However, the country's long-term stability was impossible without effective measures to tackle illicit drug trafficking. The Central Asian Regional Information Coordination Centre had been established in Almaty, Kazakhstan, with United Nations support, to fight illicit drug trafficking. As Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2010, Kazakhstan intended to define stabilization efforts in Afghanistan as one of that organization's most important priorities.

As a country that had experienced the horrors of nuclear tests, Kazakhstan had a "moral right" to call for more decisive action in the area of disarmament, he said, calling in particular for the soonest possible entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. However, the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was "asymmetrical" in providing sanctions only against

non-nuclear-weapon States. Nuclear-weapon Powers should themselves set the example by reducing and renouncing their nuclear arsenals. An effective measure to strengthen the non-proliferation regime would be the establishment of an international nuclear fuel bank under IAEA auspices, which Kazakhstan would be willing to host on its territory.

Calling attention to Kazakhstan's proposal to declare 29 August the International Day for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons, he said that was the date of the first Soviet nuclear test conducted at Semipalatinsk in 1949 and the date when the site had been shut down in 1991. As Chairman of the 2011 Ministerial Conference of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), Kazakhstan was eager to use that "unique opportunity" to strengthen constructive cooperation between various cultures and civilizations, and to adopt concrete decisions on the issue. Quoting Martin Luther King Jr., he said: "Men often hate each other because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don't know each other; they don't know each other because they cannot communicate; they cannot communicate because they are separated." While those words were often true today, they should not be true tomorrow.

JEAN-MARIE EHOZOU, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Benin, said the multifaceted economic crisis had been caused by an accelerated globalization without global economic governance. The time for assumptions had passed and now was the time to restore the capacity of the United Nations to fulfil its vocation in its search for solutions to global problems. The Dialogue among Civilizations was an essential precondition for strengthening multilateralism, and in order to reverse climate change, a new alliance between man and nature must be forged. The Copenhagen Conference would offer an exceptional opportunity in that regard.

Describing several measures that his country had taken to combat marginalization and poverty, he said the Government was committed to combating female genital mutilation and establishing equal rights between men and women through a new family code. Benin welcomed the establishment of a single United Nations system entity for the advancement of women. Measures to combat poverty included the promotion of microfinance, youth training, mechanization in agriculture and promoting education. However, economic recession and climate change jeopardized the success of those measures.

Benin suffered from coastal erosion due to rising sea level and drought, he said. To combat coastal erosion, infrastructure projects were required at the subregional level, for which enormous resources had to be mobilized. In that regard, he proposed the establishment of a multilateral investment fund under the aegis of the United Nations and the African Union. There was a need for a United Nations with the moral authority to commit developed countries to reform the global financial architecture, while leading emerging countries to shoulder fully their international commitments while using their assets to promote South-South cooperation in order to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

He called for an Organization with strengthened capacity to contribute to ensure the peaceful settlement of disputes, including through mediation, that could settle the question of Palestine; promote disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; promote the rule of law nationally and internationally; promote equitable trade; combat terrorism; and exercise the responsibility to protect. In reforming the United Nations, expansion of the Security Council membership in both categories was an inescapable requirement. There was also a need for an Organization that was more just and responsive to the urgent needs of the current times, as well as to the aspirations of the most vulnerable people on earth.

ALBERTO ROMULO, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, said the signs of global recovery from crisis did not signal either the right to complacency or to return to business as usual. The drive for global development had slowed while challenges to peace remained stark. No peace dividend had resulted from the end of the cold war and both nuclear proliferation and violent conflict continued. Shortfalls in aid resources and faltering trade and investment were generating a global development emergency. Many nations would not reach the Millennium targets. Still, the march of progress must continue by focusing on five great challenges of the times.

The first of those challenges was a need for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, he continued. The second was to manage the global crisis in a way that encouraged equitable recovery, fairer globalization and faster poverty alleviation. The next challenge was to protect and promote the rights of migrants who continued to contribute to global development and the well-being of world society. And the last two were addressing the adverse effects of climate change, and reducing conflict while deepening understanding and respect through interfaith and inter-civilization dialogue.

Detailing actions to be taken in each area, he emphasized the need to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as key pillars in the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The few countries that had not yet done so should accede to both. On recovery from crisis and a new globalization, he said the lines of action adopted at the June

United Nations conference should be implemented, along with the International Labour Organization's Global Jobs Pact, adopted in July by the Economic and Social Council. And since migrants were among those most adversely affected by the economic crisis, their rights must be protected by implementing the outcome of the Philippines-sponsored Second Global Forum on Migration and by accession to the Convention on Migrant Rights. On climate change, the Philippines had hosted the International Conference on Green Industry in Asia earlier this month, and the resulting Manila Declaration would provide inputs for Copenhagen.

After touching on his country's role as the biggest police contributor to peacekeeping missions, he said there was an urgent need to reduce tensions based on cultural differences. The Philippines had taken the lead in that effort by tabling an annual General Assembly resolution and thought the 2006 launch of a New York-based Global Tripartite Forum comprising 54 Governments, 15 United Nations agencies and 110 religious non-governmental organizations. The First Special Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace and Development would be held in Manila in December.

ELMAR MAMMADYAROV, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, said that, unfortunately, the unlawful use of force had still not been removed from the context of international relations. Today, civilian populations were still suffering from the manifest failure of individual States to fulfil their most basic responsibilities. Governments failing to obey the rules of international conduct inevitably infringed upon individual liberties and freedoms at home, thus undermining democratic development. The most vivid example of misconduct against the norms and principles of international law was the still unresolved Nagorny Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

As a result of Armenia's aggression, almost one fifth of Azerbaijan's territory had been occupied and some 1 million Azerbaijanis had become refugees and internally displaced persons, he said. Four Security Council resolutions recognized Nagorny Karabakh as part of Azerbaijan, and called for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces. General Assembly resolution 62/243 expressed support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, and the advocated a step-by-step approach to settling the conflict.

He said a number of important steps must be taken, starting with the withdrawal of Armenian forces from all occupied territories and the return of internally displaced persons to their homes. That would pave the way for durable peace and stability in the region, which would be conducive to the elaboration of the legal status of Nagorny Karabakh within Azerbaijan, taking due account of the wishes of both Azeri and Armenian communities of the region. Armenia's acceptance of the step-by-step approach based on the decisions reflected in the Joint Declaration signed in Moscow in 2008 by the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Armenia and the Russian Federation was a positive sign.

Azerbaijan had minimized the impact of the global economic downturn and managed to sustain its growth, he said, adding that, since 2003, the poverty rate had dropped from 44 to 13 per cent. The country's modern energy infrastructure, coupled with vast energy resources, had transformed Azerbaijan into an energy hub of international importance and contributed to the development of neighbouring States. Today was a time of heightened religious and ethnic awareness, which in certain instances was maliciously exploited to fuel conflicts on ethnic, religious or cultural grounds. Azerbaijan supported fully the Secretary-General's recommendations to remove hate messages, distortions, prejudice and negative bias from educational media and to ensure basic knowledge and understanding of the world's main cultures and religions. Azerbaijan had been among the first countries to join the Alliance of Civilizations initiative of Turkey and Spain.

PAUL TOUNGUI, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, la Francophonie and Regional Integration of Gabon, noted that his country had just undergone a critical phase with the loss of President Omar Bongo Ondimba on 8 June and the opening of a delicate transition period. Under the interim presidency of Rose Francine Rogombe, Gabon had held a vote on 30 August. Ali Bongo Ondimba had been proclaimed elected by the constitutional court, which had one month to review any appeals against his election. In that context, he noted the importance of the democratic transition and expressed pride that it had been conducted in a manner that was mindful of what was at stake.

Thanking all those who had come to observe the elections, he said that as Gabon opened a new page in its march towards progress and development, the country understood it could rely on the international community and its friends throughout the world to help it take up various challenges. The Government would spare no effort to ensure good political and economic governance and consolidate gains in peace and democracy. Gabon was motivated to maintain regional and global peace, particularly by strengthening its relations with its neighbours.

Noting that the Assembly's sixty-fourth session had opened deliberations in the context of crises in finance, food, energy and the environment, he called on delegates to provide solutions by acting

collectively. The United Nations Conference on the Global Financial and Economic Crisis marked an important step in solidifying commitments in the struggle to combat the repercussions of the crises. "We must ensure that actions taken to address problems are proportional to their gravity," he declared.

Regarding the food crisis, he said important statements had been made at the 2008 World Food Security Conference and it was time to implement them. In addition, the challenge of feeding a growing planet was linked to climate change and he was pleased that world leaders would discuss that connection in Copenhagen this December. Gabon, whose forests were in the Congo Basin, had fought against climate change and would allocate 11 per cent of its territory to humanity by creating 13 national parks.

On international peace and security, he said Gabon had submitted its candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council in 2010-2011, a proposal endorsed by the African Union Summit held in Sirte, Libya, in July. Indeed, the Council must evolve to allow the Organization as a whole to adapt to the new international context. The 2005 World Summit Outcome reaffirmed the need to reform the Organization and, in that context, Gabon welcomed the progress made in implementing its important recommendations. The creation of a more just world that was responsive to people's profound aspirations depended on it.

ANNEX

Vote on Participation of Madagascar in General Debate

The motion on Madagascar's participation in the general debate was rejected by a recorded vote of 23 against to 4 in favour, with 6 abstentions, as follows:

Against: Angola, Argentina, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, Seychelles, South Africa, Suriname, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

In favour: Denmark, Ecuador, Madagascar, Malaysia.

Abstain: Cameroon, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Mali, Trinidad and Tobago, Vanuatu.

Absent: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen.

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