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### **MINISTERS URGE SERIOUS STEPS TO END LONG-STANDING CONFLICTS, SUPPORT FOR PEACE PROCESSES, AS GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S ANNUAL DEBATE CONTINUES**

Conflict resolution and peacebuilding in places as diverse as the Middle East, Kashmir, Cyprus and the Balkans emerged as major themes as the General Assembly continued its annual general debate today, alongside calls for reforms to make the Security Council more representative of the United Nations membership, 65 years after the founding of the Organization.

Speaking in the context of renewed direct peace talks between the Israeli and Palestinian leadership, and the end of a moratorium on new construction of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Avigdor Lieberman, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Israel, rejected the view that the conflict between the two sides lay at the heart of regional instability, or that it prevented international action vis-à-vis Iran.

Resolution of what he called “the Iranian issue” had to take place before a durable agreement with the Palestinians could be found, he said, adding: “We are not ready to compromise our national security or the vital interests of the State of Israel.” He went on to say that the guiding principle for agreement in the Middle East should be the exchange of populated territory, rather than land for peace. The idea was not to move people, but to move borders — or “right-sizing the State” — so as to better reflect demographic realities, he said.

Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malta, was among several speakers who welcomed the resumption of direct Israel-Palestinian talks. Closer Euro-Mediterranean cooperation could help the process, he said. However, Walid al-Moualem, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Syria, said that so long as Israeli settlement-building continued, the proposed two-State solution would be a “dead letter” with no chance of survival. “Peace can be genuine only if there is a genuine will to make peace,” he said, calling for stepped up action regarding the occupied Syrian Golan. Syria was ready to resume peace talks from the point where they had stopped, through the Turkish mediator, if it found in Israel a committed partner to such terms of reference.

In his address, Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Foreign Minister of Pakistan, thanked the United Nations and others for helping his country cope with the worst flooding in living memory. He also recalled how long the issue of Jammu and Kashmir had been on the Organization’s agenda. He said Pakistan was willing to engage with India to resolve the dispute — an outcome that would help create peace and stability in South Asia — so long as the right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people was upheld. He also called for reconciliation in Afghanistan to be led by Afghans, saying: “The time has come to turn Afghanistan from the centre stage of proxy wars, interference and confrontation into a hub for international cooperation and development.”

Alhaji Muhammad Mumuni, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ghana, recalled his country’s strong support for the “responsibility to protect” as the means to prevent genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing, although he warned of the dangers of the principle being abused. Indeed, rather than being used to undermine State sovereignty, the principle was meant to ensure that sovereign responsibility was exercised in a manner that would prevent a repeat of the “mass atrocities” seen in Rwanda, Srebrenica and Sierra Leone. Sadly, some of those conflicts lingered today and the global community must assist national authorities requesting such help, with a view to enhancing the capacity of nations that were unable or unwilling to uphold that duty.

For his part, Dimitris Droutsas, Foreign Minister of Greece, recalled his country’s efforts — in the context of a United Nations negotiating process — to resolve a longstanding dispute over the name of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; he also believed that Greek and Turkish Cypriots could find solutions and live together harmoniously in a reunited Cyprus within the European Union. Bulgarian Foreign Minister Nikolay Mladenov said Europe had to reaffirm its commitment to bring the Western Balkans into the European Union, just as the States in that region had to commit to tough reforms.

The question of reforming the United Nations, and in particular the make-up of the Security Council,

was raised by a number of speakers. Hor Namhong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cambodia, said that a bigger representation on the Council for developing countries should be a priority. Meanwhile, Musa Kousa, Secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation of Libya, proposed permanent memberships of the Security Council for regional unions and also suggested that the General Assembly consider moving the United Nations Headquarters elsewhere.

Also speaking today was the Deputy Prime Minister of Bahamas, as were the Foreign Ministers of Yemen, Myanmar, Singapore, Mauritius, Eritrea, Equatorial Guinea, Oman, Liechtenstein, Tunisia, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, Chad, Barbados and Mali.

The Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus and the Secretary of State for External Relations of Angola also spoke.

Also addressing the Assembly were the representatives of Mexico, Denmark, Burkina Faso, Tuvalu, Sweden, Guatemala and Cape Verde.

Speaking in exercise of the right of reply were the representatives of Ethiopia, Iran, Eritrea, United Arab Emirates, Cuba, Egypt and China.

The General Assembly will reconvene at 9 a.m. Wednesday, 29 September, to continue its annual general debate.

### Background

The General Assembly met today to continue its general debate.

### Statements

TONIO BORG, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta, said during the past 12 months the international community had been overwhelmed by global and financial crises exacerbated by the many humanitarian tragedies around the world. In the face of destruction, loss of life and increased forcible displacement of people worldwide, the United Nations continued to be the refuge for the most vulnerable and deprived of our societies for addressing increasing inequality, responding cohesively and rapidly to calamities and in efforts to improve the very nature of humankind. It was an accepted norm, he said, that "there is no development without security, no security without development and neither without respect for human rights".

There have been important achievements in the past months in disarmament and non-proliferation, he said, including the proposal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference to hold a 2012 conference to address establishing the Middle East as a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. Positive developments in the Middle East could be enhanced by closer Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and Malta, a European country but nonetheless Mediterranean, acted as a political and cultural bridge to its neighbours. Among its initiatives, Malta hosted the European Commission-League of Arab States Liaison Office which formalized relations between the European Commission and Arab World. Malta had played an active part in the Union for the Mediterranean and next month would be hosting the Mediterranean Conference of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and in November would be the venue of the first regional conference for the Mediterranean of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. And, on an issue closely related to the Mediterranean, Malta joined others welcoming Israel and Palestine's decision last month to resume direct negotiations, supporting creation of the right conditions where all peoples of the Mediterranean and the Middle East "will live in peace and prosperity".

This year brought stark reminders of the devastation and loss of life that could be expected from climate change if it continued unabated: floods and landslides in Asia, droughts in Europe and Africa and wildfires in the Russian Federation, he said. Despite such warning, the international community had not adopted a sufficiently ambitious response to mitigate climate change and the great expectations of a decisive push forward in Copenhagen last year had not been realized. "Nevertheless, we must persevere on the road ahead, perhaps more pragmatically than dramatically," he said. Copenhagen had produced several seeds that could perhaps be harvested in Cancun. Vulnerable States like Malta had no option but to prepare for expected climatic impacts and intended to promote cooperative regional action, including in the context of the Mediterranean Climate Change Initiative announced by the Prime Minister of Greece.

Protection of human beings also continued to be a top priority, and he welcomed the initiative to set up a United Nations joint office to deal with prevention of genocide and other crimes and the small, but welcome progress on discussion of the Responsibility to Protect. The adoption of the United Nations Global Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons was another important development. Malta attracted a disproportionate influx of illegal immigrants and asylum-seekers; it affirmed its commitment to international obligations, but reiterated calls for the international community to continue to assist resettlement of these unfortunate people. Malta, as one of the world's leading flag States, was also very concerned about the increase in pirate attacks off the coast of Somalia, and intended to promote debate in the international community on new issues in the law of

the sea. It also intended to launch constructive debate on the question of human responsibilities, as it believed rights and duties were needed together to form a democratic society.

Concluding, he paid tribute to the memory of Guido de Marco, former President of Malta and President of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, who died last month. He said Malta would be guided by Mr. de Marco's "vision for and love of the United Nations" as it continued its support for the Organization and worked to make the world a better place for present and future generations.

ABUBAKR AL-QIRBI, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yemen, said the global financial crisis had affected his country's progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Low oil prices, which accounted for 75 per cent of Yemen's national income, overpopulation, scarce water resources and limited help from development partners to fund poverty eradication, were all serious challenges for his country. In addition, Yemen's share of official development assistance (ODA) was low. But, Yemen had recently agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to straighten out its budget deficit and was working to reduce its fuel subsidies to alleviate budget pressure. Among other steps, judiciary reforms had been adopted and the Government was working on its fourth five-year development plan. Discussions were under way with opposition parties to introduce constitutional reforms and form a national unity Government, with a view to conducting parliamentary elections in April.

He was confident that, with help from its partners, Yemen would build its abilities to combat terrorism and protect maritime courses in the Bay of Eden from piracy. Political developments had exacerbated that situation, including the rebellion in Sa'ada. Tens of thousands of people had been displaced and camps had been set up with help from relief organizations. The war had ended when rebels accepted six measures related to the Doha accords. "We are implementing accords observed by sisterly Qatar," he said. The Government was following the rebels' response to peace efforts. Yemen also suffered from the terrorist activities of Al-Qaida, which was trying to assassinate security leaders and entrench its position in the Arab peninsula, cooperating with those wishing to disrupt Yemeni unity. The Yemeni security apparatus had made headway, arresting terrorist elements and aborting their operations, but there also was a pressing need to foster national abilities. External interference to combat terrorism only created a local tendency to sympathize with terrorist elements. Yemen's successes against Al-Qaida required strong international backing.

In other areas, as chair of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China, Yemen led difficult negotiations to reach the outcome document of the recent summit on the Millennium Development Goals, he said, and was leading other complex talks on climate change. In Pakistan, he urged standing by that Government to help some 20 million Pakistani flood victims. Turning to the Arab-Israeli conflict, he said Israel's settlement policies, and refusal to abide by legitimate resolutions or Arab peace initiatives remained barriers. The United States should grant Israel one last opportunity to abide by all such accords. Should Israel not comply, the Security Council should terminate that conflict. Israel also must accede to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and enter into talks with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to free the region from weapons of mass destruction.

As for Somalia, the situation was still dangerous, he said, citing piracy and the lack of effective help for the transitional Somali Government. Yemen suffered from the outflow of Horn of Africa refugees, most of whom were Somali. The Security Council should restore stability to that country. In Sudan, he called on the International Criminal Court to cancel its warrant against the Sudanese President. In Iraq, he was confident the dialogue process would help it avoid sectarian conflict. Yemen had hosted the Tenth Ministerial Meeting of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), where delegates underscored the importance of trade and piracy, among other subjects. That reflected Yemen's desire to achieve cooperation among the world's regions. Regarding the Goals, rising food prices, among other factors, prevented developing and least developed countries from making much progress. Yemen had adopted a national poverty eradication strategy and was working to implement it.

AVIGDOR LIBERMAN, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel, said that his country was facing many pressures, which made his work as Foreign Minister difficult. On the other hand, it was also easier than before, because the country had a stable coalition, a stable Government and the support of the majority of its citizens. Israel was ready for a fair solution and to cooperate with the international community. "However, we are not ready to compromise our national security or the vital interests of the State of Israel." Despite the impression given in the international media, Israel was not divided; everyone wanted peace and stability. Rather, the controversy in Israel centred on the specific question of how to achieve peace, and how to reach security and stability in the region.

Despite the efforts of good people with the best of intentions, such as Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, Benjamin Netanyahu, Ehud Barak, Ariel Sharon and Ehud Olmert, despite the Camp David and Annapolis summits, there was still deadlock, he said. In fact, contrary to the prevalent view, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was not at the heart of instability in the Middle East. Further, neither the so-called "occupation" nor the settlements in Judea and Samaria, and settlers themselves were at the root of the problem. Peace agreements had been concluded with Egypt and Jordan despite the settlements; on the other hand, flourishing settlements had been evacuated in Gush Katif and more than 10,000 Jews transferred, yet Hamas was in power and thousands of missiles deployed. It was also misguided and irresponsible to claim that the Palestinian issue

prevented a determined international front against Iran. That flawed argument was akin to saying that the Palestinian issue prevented action on North Korea or piracy in Somalia. Just as the Khomeini Revolution had nothing to do with the Palestinians, so, too, was the Iranian decision to develop nuclear weapons unrelated to them. The connection between Iran and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was precisely the reverse: Iran could exist without Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hizbullah, but terrorist organizations could not exist without Iran. "Relying on these proxies, Iran can, at any given time, foil any agreement between Israel and the Palestinians or with Lebanon." Therefore, in searching for a durable agreement with the Palestinians, one that would address the true roots of the conflict and endure for many years, the Iranian issue had to be resolved.

There was an utter lack of confidence over issues such as Jerusalem, recognition of Israel as the nation-State of the Jewish People, and refugees, he said. Under such conditions, a focus needed to be placed on coming up with a long-term intermediate agreement, something that could take a few decades, so as to raise an entire new generation that would have mutual trust and not be influenced by incitement and extremist messages. As was true everywhere, where there have been two nations, two religions and two languages with competing land claims, there has been friction and conflict; on the other hand, where effective separation had been achieved, conflict had been avoided, reduced or resolved. Thus, the guiding principle for a final status agreement must not be land-for-peace, but exchange of populated territory. That was not about moving people, but about moving borders to better reflect demographic realities. That a mismatch between borders and nationalities was a recipe for conflict was a virtual truism in the academic community. "Right-sizing the State" was the term coined to capture the idea that States must be in balance to ensure peace. That was not a controversial political policy. It was an empirical truth.

Beyond empirical truth, there was historical truth, he said. The Jewish people had an unbreakable bond to its homeland. "Israel is not only where we are. It is who we are," he said. He referred to a quotation by the Jewish prophet Isaiah to be found outside the Headquarters of the United Nations that begins "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares...", and hoped that the deep wisdom of those words would guide two peoples in two nation-States to live in peace and security.

HOR NAMHONG, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia, said the global economic and financial storm seemed to be over. Economic recovery was far from complete, however, especially in developing countries. As economic recovery took place, a joint effort was needed to boost confidence and sustain the momentum of worldwide growth. Cambodia had set its own Millennium Development Goals and it had been listed among 20 countries making the most progress on the Goals. Climate change was also a serious challenge; the fifteenth Conference of Parties summit in Copenhagen had laid down a good foundation for advancing international cooperation on deforestation, renewable energy and financial support for poor countries. Binding agreement in Cancun was uncertain; a spirit of compromise was, therefore, necessary to ensure a fruitful outcome and save humankind from further serious catastrophes. For its part, Cambodia had launched its own initiative, the Cambodia Climate Change Alliance and had steadily implemented its projects within the Framework of Reduction Emission from Deforestation (REDD).

Food security was an issue that deserved great attention, he said, it was Cambodia's hope that the international community would redirect and increase official development assistance to emphasize food production. In that context, the \$20 billion pledged at the 2009 Group of Eight (G-8) Summit to support agricultural production in poor countries was opportune, but the time disbursement of the funding was imperative. For Cambodia, food production was at the top of its priorities, with agriculture a springboard for broader economic development.

Turning to other world issues, he said the situation in the Korean peninsula was a threat to regional peace and security; he urged parties to avoid escalating tension and to undertake negotiations as soon as possible. Cambodia warmly welcomed the recent direct talks on the Palestinian-Israeli issue and urged both sides to look for a compromise. Cambodia also called upon all Member States to implement resolutions relating to the United States embargo on Cuba. The functioning of every organ of the United Nations should be readjusted and reinvigorated, with priority being given to increasing the representation of developing countries on the Security Council. Reform had been discussed for many years, yet particular interests had impeded reform.

T. BRENT SYMONETTE, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration of the Bahamas, said that, despite global progress in the areas of poverty and education, the World Health Organization's forecast that deaths from non-communicable diseases would increase worldwide by 17 per cent between 2005 and 2015, were exacting heavy tolls on finances and health systems of his and other developing countries. The Bahamas continued to place a high priority on attaining its Millennium Goals, but stressed it was "not out of the woods". The fallout from the global and economic crisis continued to impact tourism - its chief economic engine and employer - and slowed recovery and expansion in other segments of the economy. In that regard, his Government accelerated the implementation of an infrastructure programme to accommodate new growth once the economy rebounds.

The Bahamas had made considerable progress in various areas, most notably, in enhancing its social net, expanding unemployment benefits and introducing new national prescription drug programmes to ensure

that infants, school-aged children and the elderly received prescription medicines regardless of their ability to pay, he said. Overshadowing its success, however, was the imposing threat of climate change. The Bahamas was the fifth most vulnerable country to sea level rise and, despite its negligible greenhouse gas emissions, would suffer catastrophic results if emissions were not stabilized worldwide. A temperature rise of 2° C would result in sea level rise of two metres, which would leave 80 per cent of the territory under water.

Therefore, he said, in collaboration with other small island developing States, the Bahamas called on the international community to undertake “urgent, ambitious and decisive” action to significantly reduce emissions of all greenhouse gases, in addition to financial and technical support as the countries try to adapt to climate change. The Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States remained the blueprint for action, which was reaffirmed in the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation. Regarding biodiversity, the Bahamas had established marine, coastal and terrestrial protected areas, and a national energy policy that focused heavily on the potential of renewable energy was well under way.

Turning to Haiti, he said there had been some progress over the past nine and a half months — “but not nearly enough”. Millions continued to languish in makeshift tent cities. He called on the United Nations to continue to mobilize assistance and assist in recovery and reconstruction. In its commitment to fighting terrorism and other transnational criminal activities, the Bahamas currently served as Chair of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism, and recently hosted a workshop on counter-terrorism. Also, crime and security remained a threat to the people of the Bahamas and Caribbean subregion; for years, international trafficking of illegal drugs and small arms and light weapons had disrupted peace. Fighting those problems required large portions of annual budgets and the seemingly unlimited resources of drug cartels rendered its efforts insufficient. To that end, he endorsed the Arms Trade Treaty, which would be the focus of the upcoming 2012 Conference. In closing, he applauded the proclamation of the International Year of Youth and said the Bahamas was seeking to expand educational programmes and career-oriented programmes for youth at the Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute. He also reaffirmed its commitment to tackling the country’s growing human trafficking problem to the fullest extent.

U NYAN WIN, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, said there was no doubt the United Nations was the best forum for addressing the world’s challenges. While the United Nations had devoted most attention to peace and security, new global challenges such as climate change, poverty, hunger, water and energy insecurity demanded urgent and careful actions. Yet the world was also full of injustice, conflicts, interference in internal affairs and attempts to impose domination on developing nations. Myanmar stressed the pressing need for strengthening the United Nations to make it more democratic and effective to meet growing challenges, firmly believing that reform must reflect increasing membership. The Security Council had to become more transparent and efficient, and Myanmar supported expanding both categories of its membership.

The international community also had to step up its efforts to realize the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and Myanmar welcomed the successful recent High-Level Plenary Meeting on the Goals. Important global improvements have been made, but progress remained uneven and varied from region to region. International assistance played an important catalytic role in developing countries’ development efforts and Myanmar emphasized indiscriminate fulfilment of development assistance, increased investment, market access and resolving debt problems were essential to meeting the Goals. It was time to remove unjust economic coercive measures and trade embargoes that hampered the attainment of the Goals and hurt people, he said. Despite challenges, Myanmar had made certain progress achieving the eight Goals, especially in the fields of poverty alleviation, food security and promotion of education and health.

As a party to the NPT and the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, Myanmar recognized the legitimate right of every State to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It firmly opposed proliferation or production of nuclear weapons and strongly supported any efforts towards a nuclear-weapon-free world, and heartily welcomed the signing of the new treaty by leaders of the United States and Russia to reduce their respective nuclear arsenals. Myanmar was also working closely with other countries on the fights against transnational crimes, terrorism and prevention and response to pandemic diseases, which required a global solution and concerted action.

Unprecedented frequency and severity of recent natural disasters testified climate change was a pressing global threat. Myanmar was also a victim of climate change when it was hit by devastating Cyclone Nargis in May 2008, but was pleased to say international community aid helped it successfully rebuild affected areas. To address climate change, harmful emissions must be direct, but financial resources and transfer technologies must also be provided to developing countries. Industrialized countries were mainly responsible for climate change, but developing countries were most severely affected by its consequences. Turning to political developments in his own country, Myanmar was also at the critical phase of its political transformation, with multi-party elections set for 7 November. A total of 37 political parties, including those representing various ethnic groups, would take part in the vote, with more than 3,000 candidates contesting a total of 1,171 seats at the People’s Parliament, National Parliament and State/Regional Parliaments. Such large participation made it clear that the elections were virtually inclusive. Myanmar was committed to holding free and fair elections for the best interest of the country and its people, and its new Government would emerge to maintain and strengthen friendly relations with all nations and work more closely with the United Nations.

GEORGE YEO, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore, said that the Group of 20 (G-20) had been formed two years ago when the global economy was facing the abyss and, without it acting in concert, the economic crisis could have led to a global depression. Going forward, the G-20 needed to go beyond the reform of the international financial institutions and better coordination of fiscal, monetary and exchange rate policies. Without a fundamental restructuring of the real economy, a double dip might be experienced, and increased liquidity in the global system could end up creating new asset bubbles, as was already being seen forming in Asia. For that restructuring to take place, the international trading system needed to be kept open. Only then could markets make adjustments and prices find their right levels. In fighting protectionism in all its forms, leadership by the G-20 was critical. If, for lack of political will, the Group was unable to avert the crisis of a second dip, that crisis would, in the end, force it to act, but by then at much greater human cost.

“Precisely for this reason, we must not allow interest in the Doha Development Agenda to flag,” he said. When that round was launched in November 2001, a key consideration had been development. For Singapore and many others that had been in Doha during the negotiations, the Millennium Development Goals were uppermost in their minds. It had now been 10 years since the Goals were launched. While some countries had done well, many others had not. The G-20 countries, in their deliberations, should take into account the interest of all countries, not just theirs. They should play a leadership role in breaking the current impasse in the Doha Round negotiations. It was important to ensure that the needs of developing countries, especially those of the least developed countries, were met. Freeing up agricultural trade, for example, would also make a huge difference to their welfare.

With those concerns in mind, a loose grouping of countries calling itself the Global Governance Group, or 3G, had been established a year ago, he went on. Its basic stance was to support the work of the G-20 and to hold it accountable to the general membership of the United Nations. A major concern of the 3G countries was development. In that regard, they had prepared inputs to be submitted to the G-20 Working Group on Development. He added that “development is not principally about aid”. Whether a people was able to lift itself from the depths of poverty depended more on internal than external factors. Good governance, of course, was paramount. Investing in the inherent potential of citizens and creating a favourable environment for that potential to be realized were central to good governance. A critical element in good governance was education. With education, individuals were able to acquire the information and knowledge they needed to add value to the world and insist on democratic safeguards to prevent the abuse of power.

Taking advantage of globalization and information technology, education could now be spread to remote corners of the world, he said. Mobile phones, for example, had altered traditional power relationships, and social networking infrastructures like Facebook were “radically changing the world we live in”. Thus, when development was discussed, “the key is education”. It was, therefore, necessary to make sure that basic conditions were met and that children were fed and healthy, and that no group was discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity, religion and gender. The knowledge for development was already available in the world and the delivery systems could be put in place. Unfortunately, there were many obstacles impeding that flow of knowledge. Protectionism was a major obstacle. It slowed the spread of education and knowledge, and the inability to move the Doha Development Agenda forward had been particularly injurious to the least developed countries. As a group, those countries made up 12 per cent of the world population, but accounted for less than 1 per cent of global gross domestic product (GDP). “That we allow this situation to continue is a sad reflection of our solidarity as a community of nations,” he said.

WALID AL-MOUALEM, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Syria, noting that the Middle East had been rife with tension for decades, said policies, interests and trends that had unfolded on its soil had, at times, converged and at other times, clashed. Because of its location, the region influenced its neighbours in Asia, Europe and Africa. Syria, at its heart, had experienced those tensions, which defined its perspective on external issues. Safeguarding Syrian and Arab interests was the priority and the door was open for an in-depth dialogue that aimed to reconcile differences and provide a base for progress. That had been Syria’s response when it endured attempts to isolate it. Indeed, civilized international relations must be built on openness and dialogue, rather than isolation and aggression.

Israel’s land appropriation and settlement building continuing unabated, he said, and while peace talks were under way, such activities threatened to make the two-State solution a “dead letter” that stood no chance of survival. Feverishly pursuing Judiazation plans in Jerusalem, Israel’s actions also threatened the safety of that city’s holy sites. Through a fait accompli policy, Israel had imposed its will, regardless of whether talks continued. “Peace can be genuine only if there is a genuine will to make peace,” he said, adding that Syria wished to see a just, comprehensive peace achieved by implementing Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and the Arab Peace Initiative. The occupied Syrian Golan was not negotiable and recognition that it must be returned fully was the basis on which peacemaking plans should be made. Syria was ready to resume peace talks from the point where they had stopped through the Turkish mediator, if it found in Israel a committed partner to such terms of reference.

Noting with satisfaction the Human Rights Council fact finding mission report on the Israeli attack on the “Freedom Flotilla”, he looked forward to conclusions being drawn. On Iraq, Syria embraced any improvement in conditions “with a major sense of relief”, as Iraq’s sovereignty, preservation of Arab and Islamic identity and

unity of its people were of the utmost priority. The withdrawal of United States forces was a positive first step, and he expressed hope Iraq would ultimately develop strong military and security capabilities as a sovereign State. Iraqi security was contingent on its national unity, based primarily on its Arab-Islamic identity and on the participation of all “stripes” of Iraqis in building a future.

Syria had advocated the creation of a nuclear weapon-free zone in the Middle East since 2003, he said, noting that Israel must be made to comply with decisions calling on it to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which was extremely significant for the region’s security. Efforts to shelter Israeli nuclear installations from International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) oversight only encouraged it to continue with its nuclear military programme and fostered a policy of double standards that ran counter to non-proliferation prerogatives. All States had the right to acquire nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and he called for the peaceful resolution of all disputes relevant to that issue. In Sudan, Syria was dedicated to that country’s unity and sovereignty, while on Cuba, he reiterated the call to lift the embargo. On climate change, he looked forward to an expression of international solidarity in Cancun, based on scientific evidence and the principle of common but differentiated responsibility.

ALHAJI MUHAMMAD MUMUNI, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ghana, said his country would engage with others in the search for peace and security in Africa, and contribute to global efforts to prevent conflict through preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Indeed, it was time to ensure that countries emerging from conflict did not lapse back into it. Ghana strongly supported the responsibility to protect as the normative framework to prevent genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. Caution, however, must be exercised to avoid its abuse. That principle was not intended to undermine sovereignty; it was meant to ensure that sovereign responsibility was exercised in a manner that would prevent mass atrocities seen in Rwanda, Srebrenica and Sierra Leone. Sadly, some of those conflicts lingered today and the global community must assist national authorities requesting such help, with a view to enhancing the capacity of nations that were unable or unwilling to uphold that duty.

While extreme poverty and hunger counted among Africa’s challenges, most countries also grappled with climate change, poor infrastructure and lack of productive capacity, he said. High food prices had reversed impressive economic performance and jeopardized chances of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Citing increased interest in climate change, notably with the 2007 Bali Action Plan, he said: “We need to sustain that interest” and build on common ground that began with the 1992 creation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Political will was needed for industrialized countries to cut their emissions, as pledges still fell far short of the recommended 25 to 40 per cent cut, which offered a chance of staying below a 2° C average global temperature rise.

Just as there was an aid fatigue, developing countries might soon experience promise fatigue and he urged that \$30 billion be implemented for adaptation and mitigation efforts by 2012. Early delivery would boost developing nations’ confidence in the dialogue and show that the developed world was truly committed to negotiations. On the Goals, keeping the promise made in 2000 would require more resources and effective cooperation. Ghana would not compromise in its pursuit of good governance and the rule of law. African countries had acknowledged that impoverishment was due in part to poor governance, which was why many countries had consolidated governance institutions and strengthened their election processes.

In Ghana, food security was a concern, he said, and the Government was implementing a progressive agricultural policy to ensure increased production. As Ghana would soon become an important oil and gas producer, the focus also was on deriving the maximum benefit from oil production. The Government was working to ensure transparency and accountability in managing oil revenues, with a bill to that effect sent to Parliament for approval. Ghana also had made attracting foreign investment an important pillar in its development strategies. Africa was tired of resource-induced violence and he called on the United Nations to help nip the “resource curse” in the bud. Risks posed by external shocks called for more international policy coordination and a renewed commitment to a comprehensive global response to today’s challenges. With that, he reaffirmed Ghana’s commitment to United Nations ideals and urged mustering the political will to strengthen its functions, so that people could be redeemed from war, disease and poverty.

MAKHDOOM SHAH MEHMOOD QURESHI, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, said that the recent flash floods in his country — the worst in living memory — had seen precious lives lost, millions of acres of crops washed away, and livelihoods lost. Pakistan was grateful to the United Nations, its development partners and others for supporting rescue and relief efforts. The Government was determined to rebuild a better and vibrant Pakistan in a transparent and accountable manner; “the resilience of our people should enable us to achieve this objective”.

Pakistan supported a comprehensive reform of the Security Council to make it more representative, equitable, transparent and accountable, guided by the principles of equality and democracy, he said. A consensus solution should correspond with the interests of all Member States, particularly small and medium States, developing countries and Africa. On terrorism, Pakistan had achieved important successes, but at a heavy cost, with more than 20,000 innocent civilians falling victim to terrorism, more than 2,500 members of the security forces killed and material losses of nearly \$50 billion. Pakistan would persist in its efforts to eliminate terrorism, but it was essential to address the root causes of terrorism, often found in poverty, deprivation,

injustices and oppression. Terrorism recognized no borders, nor did it have a religion or creed. "We cannot accept the stereotyping of Muslims as terrorists"; terrorism was a complete antithesis to Islam's outlook and values.

Jammu and Kashmir was among the oldest disputes on the agenda of the United Nations, he said. It was a dispute about the right of self-determination by the Kashmiri people through a free, fair and impartial plebiscite under United Nations auspices. He strongly condemned the brutality of the past two months, in which more than 100 Kashmiris had been killed by Indian security forces. Pakistan was willing to engage India in a comprehensive dialogue to normalize bilateral relations and amicably resolve all outstanding issues, including Jammu and Kashmir. A peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute would help create durable peace and stability in South Asia. On Afghanistan, he said Pakistan had been hosting the largest concentration of refugees anywhere for more than 30 years; it continued to host its Afghan brothers as a moral and humanitarian duty. No country had suffered more than Pakistan from the consequences of the conflict in Afghanistan. "The time has come to turn Afghanistan from the centre stage of proxy wars, interference and confrontation into a hub for international cooperation and development." Restoring societal equilibrium was an Afghan responsibility that could not be imposed externally. Pakistan supported all efforts at national reconciliation that was Afghan-owned and Afghan-led.

Disarmament and non-proliferation should be pursued in an equitable manner, the Foreign Minister said. Pakistan has consistently pursued a policy of conventional and nuclear restraint, along with conflict resolution in South Asia; a strategic restraint regime would be an important way to promote regional peace, stability and security. Pakistan was low on the list of greenhouse gas emitters, yet climate change was causing irrevocable damage, becoming a reality for 170 million Pakistanis. Extreme vulnerability to climate change complicated the scenario for Pakistan's post-flood reconstruction. It was hoped that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference in Cancun would define a pathway to agreement at an early date.

DIMITRIS DROUTSAS, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, said that efforts on the reform and revitalization of the United Nations; and consequently global governance, needed to focus on two fundamental pillars: increasing the membership of the Security Council with both permanent and non-permanent members, and enhancing and improving the cooperation and coordination of the Organization with other major international and regional organizations, with the goal of making multilateralism work effectively to the benefit of all. Noting that the past few months had witnessed the devastating effects of natural disasters in many areas of the world ranging from Haiti to Russia and from Pakistan to Guatemala, he said what clearly set them apart from natural disasters of the past was the number of people they affected. He called climate change the world's greatest challenge, which increasingly affected everyone's lives, including peace and security. In that regard, it was the duty of the international community to lead the world into a new "Green Era" that guaranteed future generations a better and more prosperous future. The Copenhagen Accord represented a basis on which to build further in that context. The focus now needed to be on Cancun and action "must not stop". For its part, his Government would launch a Mediterranean Climate Change Initiative on 22 October, ahead of the Mexico meeting.

He turned to a number of issues, including the global financial crisis, migration and human rights, saying that remarkable strides had been made in protecting human rights in the past 60 years, yet much more remained to be done, particularly in ensuring a truly comprehensive approach to such rights was promoted. He expressed strong support for the Human Rights Council and said Greece would be a candidate for the year 2012 to 2015. On common security, he said Greece considered the upcoming 2010 OSCE summit as a major milestone in the European Security Dialogue; and thanks to the commitment and engagement of OSCE partners to the Corfu Process, the vision of the 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe had finally the prospect to become reality in the European security landscape. In that regard, Greece's security lay in being a member of the European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and it worked so that countries of the region might benefit from the stabilizing influence of their membership in those institutions. In terms of stability, the Balkans was still sensitive. His vision for the Balkans was one of a region in which democracy finally became the norm. He said the world, therefore, had a responsibility in supporting that vision for the region. There were several open issues in the Balkans, one of them revolving around the name of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It was not a pedantic dispute, but a regional question with deep historical roots. Greece had already done its part to compromise, and had intensified efforts to reach a settlement through the United Nations negotiating process. He was declaring today Greece's readiness to reach a solution and extending a hand of friendship and cooperation. The time had come for Greece's neighbours to take that hand.

On the question of Cyprus, he said he believed the last "Berlin Wall" had to come down, not be strengthened. Cyprus was the victim of invasion and remained occupied by foreign troops — that was the truth and it must end. He truly believed the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities could find solutions, thus enabling both communities to live together peacefully and harmoniously in the reunited European Union member Cyprus. "Cyprus, Turkey and Greece: for anyone willing to envision the future, our futures are as interwoven as our histories," he said. Greece and Turkey had a responsibility to cooperate on the Cyprus problem and to facilitate the process. Turkey could prove its commitment by withdrawing immediately its occupation forces, thus boosting both the negotiation process and its own European perspective.

Referring then to Greek-Turkish relations, he said they were an important parameter for stability in the region, and it was not an easy task to turn a long-standing rivalry into good-neighbourliness. Yet, Greece had embarked on a process with Turkey that would radically affect their relations in the coming years. An honest dialogue had been opened and, although they may differ on many issues, such as Cyprus, the open approach could only lead to a progressive resolution of problems. He believed mutual interests could outweigh political differences. "We can and we must resolve these differences through peaceful means," he said. Some statements and acts still undermined a very genuine and difficult effort — the long-standing threat of war had no place in the European and global family of values. But it was an historical duty to overcome those difficulties.

ARVIN BOOLELL, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade of Mauritius, recalled that world leaders a week ago had reaffirmed their commitment to achieving the Millennium Goals and said that success in achieving them was inextricably linked to the broader agenda of climate change. Hopefully, the Cancun Climate Change Conference later this year would build on the 2009 Copenhagen Accord to bring about a legally binding agreement on limits to greenhouse gas emissions, based on the principle of common but differentiated capabilities and responsibilities, as well as establishment of mitigation and adaptation funds. Joining efforts would prevent missing an opportunity to establish a "climate-smart" world.

Moving on, he said the high-level review of the Mauritius Strategy last week had reaffirmed that small island developing States should be recognized as a distinct category of countries because of an inherent specificity they shared. As such, they deserved special treatment, particularly in accessing ODA and concessionary funding. The present GDP criterion for graduating least developed countries to middle-income country status was most unfair to small island States because their unique vulnerabilities were not taken into account.

The time had come to rethink development, he said. A new development paradigm must be strongly articulated - one where developing countries were part and parcel of solutions to create a more vibrant world economy in a truly multi-polar world. The Doha Development Round should be concluded as early as possible. The gap must be closed in the provision of "aid for trade" to support the building of supply capacity. As the new chair of the Indian Ocean Commission, his country would emphasize strengthening the region's economic and commercial space, including by implementing a regional strategy on fisheries and aquaculture, promotion of tourism and development of an anti-piracy programme.

Touching on the subject of human rights and his country's membership in the Human Rights Council, he also called for Security Council reform and reviewed the situations in Myanmar, Madagascar, the Middle East and Somalia. He said his country would host the Second Ministerial Conference on Piracy next month in collaboration with the European Union, the Indian Ocean Commission and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). Finally, he urged the United Kingdom to unconditionally and without delay return the Chagos Archipelago to his country, including the atoll of Diego Garcia, and said his country and France had earlier this year come to an agreement on co-management of Tromelin Island and its maritime zones with prejudice to the sovereignty of Mauritius over the island.

NICKOLAY E. MLADENOV, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, said the world faced a complicated web of challenges, but also opportunities. Examples included the challenge to address climate change by creating opportunities for sustainable development, the challenge of developing an ethical market economy with opportunities that will emerge from reducing poverty and the challenge of reducing ethnic conflicts with the opportunities that came from good governance and democracy. The most paramount challenge would be to prove wrong all who believed the world was heading for an irresolvable clash of civilizations because none of today's global challenges could be faced without respect for different opinions, dialogue and adherence to global values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals remained off track, he continued, but their attainment was still within reach. Close coordination of partners, avoiding duplications and aiming to address the root causes of problems was needed to be effective, and the United Nations would remain vital in that effort. The current global economic crisis was dangerous, but gave a chance to put economies on a sustainable and low-carbon path. There was increased demand and pressure on international humanitarian efforts. He called on all to strengthen efforts assisting people in flood-hit Pakistan, and for Governments to help remove barriers to assist the Pakistani economy to recover. But successful development and humanitarian efforts also require a stable environment and, closer to Bulgaria, Europe would not be whole until neighbours were part of the Union. Bulgaria believed its role was to contribute to reconciliation, and Europe must commit to bringing the Western Balkans, who also had to commit to difficult reforms to strengthen regional cooperation.

All Members should stand firmly behind efforts of Israeli and Palestinian leaders to achieve peace, recognizing legitimate concerns on both sides – Israel's security and the viability of a Palestinian state. Gaza had to be opened without compromising the security of Israel. Bulgaria also believed that every nation had to put a strengthened NPT at the centre of their national diplomacy to halt the spread of nuclear weapons. He said the Democratic People's Republic of Korea could not leave its obligations to the Treaty without consequences. Justified concerns about Iran's nuclear programme also remained, and Bulgaria called on Iran to deploy confidence-building measures, while it was important to find a diplomatic solution.

He also appealed for the prompt finalization of negotiations to reach a comprehensive convention to counter terrorism and action against piracy, calling for a firm international legal framework to try suspected pirates, coordinated efforts to protect shipping and addressing poverty, isolation and lack of opportunity at the root of piracy. Finally, he said that comprehensive security rested on robust partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations, and there needed to be a resolution at the General Assembly regarding the European Union's representation. To effectively tackle challenges of tomorrow, we must continuously adapt and improve the United Nations system. Bulgaria declared itself in favour of enlargement of the Security Council's permanent and non-permanent members.

OSMAN SALEH, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Eritrea, said that, while prospects for a rapid reform of the United Nations system appeared to be dim, Member States must not give up, and instead should continue to speak out and work tirelessly for an Organization that was fit for the twenty-first century, as well as for a more just and equitable world. At the same time, Members needed to focus on their own nations and regions to ensure peaceful, stable environments and dignified lives for their peoples.

He said that Eritrea sought, through robust and constructive engagement, to make its modest contribution to global peace, security, justice and equity, and to the protection and enhancement of the environment in the face of changes that threatened the very survival of humanity. Regionally, the Eritrean Government's efforts were directed at securing peace, stability, development and cooperation in the wider Horn of Africa and the Red Sea region. Reviewing the specific situations in Sudan, Somalia as well as Eritrea's own relations with Ethiopia respectively, he said his country was working closely with the Sudanese parties, as well as with regional and international actors, as that country entered a critical period in its history. He believed that the international community as a whole needed to wholeheartedly support the parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement as the country approached the historic referendum set for January 2011, and beyond.

On Somalia, he said it was Eritrea's view that there could be no military solution to the problems in that country, given the bitter experience and spiralling violence of the past two decades. While that was a conviction that by now was widely shared in the international community, serious doubts continued to be raised as to whether the alternative — a Somali-owned and Somali-driven inclusive political process — was possible and practicable. In that regard, he urged the United Nations and all those concerned with peace and security in Somalia to earnestly engage all Somalis and to give the political process the serious and sustained attention it deserved.

Closer to home, he charged that while the United Nations grappled with Sudan and Somalia, the Organization continued to ignore the grave consequences of Ethiopia's continued occupation of Eritrean territory, eight years after the ruling of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission, and three years after the Commission had ended its work by depositing in the United Nations the demarcated boundary between the two countries. Ethiopia's illegal occupation and the United Nations silence, which meant the continuation of the conflict, was exacting a heavy price on the peoples of both countries and complicating the regional situation. He went on to say that Eritrea's constructive engagement on regional and international matters stemmed from its firm conviction that a conducive, external environment was essential for nation-building.

PASTOR MICHA ONDO BILE, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and Francophonie of Equatorial Guinea, said his country was taking part in the Assembly's session with "high optimism" for a progressive solution to problems facing humanity and, in particular, Africa. The 1990s had seen various initiatives to encourage sustainable development, promoted through conferences and world summits whose results were being evaluated, as seen in the recent review of the Millennium Development Goals. There was no point in taking the same actions and expecting different results. The Secretary-General's report showed that the number of hungry people had increased and that the environment had been degraded. Terrorism, organized and cross-border crime and piracy had contributed to the acute economic crisis which continued to affect the international community. All of those challenges pointed to the need for greater awareness, as well as coordinated international action.

He said the international community needed to concentrate its efforts, energy and resources towards the promotion and maintenance of peace and security in the world, which would result in a healthier environment. Also, there was need for active cooperation and greater efforts in working to eliminate nuclear weapons and in the fight against terrorism and international organized crime. To that end, he pledged his country's commitment to working side by side with the rest of the international community in promoting a sense of participation among nations and a world where the reform of the Security Council allowed for better decision-making, which reflected the will and interests of each country and region of the world regardless of their size.

Continuing, he called for the immediate implementation without further delay of the awarding of the International UNESCO-Obiang Nguema Mbasogo Prize for the investigation of life sciences in accordance with decision 180 EX/57, which had been adopted unanimously by all members of the UNESCO Executive Council in October 2008. The Prize had been created following a proposal by Equatorial Guinea to the UNESCO General Conference, but was "still being blocked simply for being the initiative of an African leader", he said.

Opening the afternoon session of today's debate, MUSA KOUSA, Secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation of Libya, said peace would not be achieved without the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction and implementation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. That Treaty had to apply to all, without distinction. He reminded the Assembly that Libya had suggested amending the Treaty to ensure the disarmament of countries holding those weapons as well as to let IAEA perform its duties and verify the reduction of nuclear arsenals, which were the biggest threat to humankind. That issue should be given high priority and the possession and use of nuclear energy for peaceful issues should be encouraged. He reaffirmed the use of Libya's voluntary initiative — to renounce all activities related to the production of banned materials — as a role model to the nuclear-weapon States or States seeking possession of such weapons.

On the issue of United Nations reform, he said the Organization was at a crossroads. The Assembly should become the real legislator, with binding resolutions, as it truly represented the parliament of the world. The Security Council should be an operational instrument for the Assembly's resolutions. The best solution for Council reform would be to grant its permanent memberships to regional unions. Africa's demand for a permanent seat was a legitimate request and would put the continent on an equal basis with other geographic and regional groups. Libya again urged the United Nations to move its Headquarters to another site and asked the Assembly to create an open-ended group to consider the issue and the offers made by Member States, including Libya.

Turning to security issues, he said that anti-personnel mines were used by vulnerable States to defend their territories against invading forces; the powerful States did not need them, as they had arsenals of advanced weapons. In that context, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Ottawa Convention) should be amended, taking into account the interest of the small States. He condemned the deliberate confusion between the terrible phenomenon of terrorism and the biased distortion of the struggle of colonized people. Libya believed in the right of people to resist foreign occupation. The act of listing honourable liberation movements under the category of terrorist organizations could only entrench chaos, ambiguity and lack of clarity. The manner in which the struggle of the Palestinian people was being labelled prejudiced their legitimate struggle. It was fed by a racist creed that denied the right of existence and self-determination of the oppressed people.

SAYYID BADR BIN HAMAD BIN HAMOUD AL-BUSAIDI, Minister and Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Oman, said that the international community met in challenging times, faced with a full range of complex issues, from political instability to security challenges, financial crises, economic and environmental problems, to the nuclear question and non-proliferation. For those issues, the only solution lay in dialogue and positive participation, aimed at arresting the dangers that threatened international peace and security. The floods in Pakistan, which had displaced more than 20 million Pakistanis, were still causing tremendous suffering. Despite international rescue efforts, more outside assistance, expertise and capabilities were required.

He said that those floods, the volcanic eruption in Iceland and the H1N1 epidemic were just recent phenomenon highlighting the interconnectedness of all peoples, and demonstrated the vital need for international support. While the international community had not been able thus far to resolve some complex political problems, the United Nations offered multilateral mechanisms and objectives, which played an enormous role in the reduction or neutralization of many crises, and helped developing countries in numerous and specialized fields, as well as protecting the environment.

Oman looked forward to a day when dialogue prevailed on the basis of acceptance, regardless of social and cultural differences between human communities, he said. In the context of development, Oman was dedicating resources in the fields of education at all levels and medical care for every individual in the Sultanate. The role of the Omani citizen in development was central, and stemmed from the conviction of Sultan Qaboos bin Said that life was created for mankind, male and female, and that freedom was the core of life, with free positive expression as the seed of creativity and the fuel of development.

His country believed strongly that a solution to the conflict in the Middle East was imperative, he said. While supporting the direct negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis, facilitated and sponsored by the United States, he said that Israel's policy was vague in accepting responsibility towards the requirements of peace. Peace would entail the establishment of an independent, sovereign and viable Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the withdrawal of Israel from all Arab land to the borders of 4 June 1967. He looked forward to the active, positive and continuing role by United States President Barack Obama, in order to reach a just and comprehensive settlement.

AURELIA FRICK, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liechtenstein, said that global governance could only be effective if it was truly global in reach and participation. A system where a few made decisions that everyone was expected to implement would be both unjust and ineffective. Past experience had repeatedly shown that multilateral action could only succeed when based on a broad political consensus, which was not the same as giving everyone a right to veto. Strong fundamental agreement among States was the only way to ensure that decisions were effectively put into practice. The United Nations was the place to make that happen. It was necessary to invest in the Organization to make the required improvements, instead of looking for solutions

outside.

She lauded the fact that, in the context of the G-20, the largest developed nations and most powerful emerging countries were jointly discussing matters affecting the global economic and financial architecture. The recent global economic and financial crisis illustrated the importance and indispensability of common action by the G-20 in that regard. Liechtenstein would support the G-20's further efforts to address the systemic issues that had led to the crisis. At the same time, inclusion and participation should be high on the agenda and its work better integrated into the United Nations system. The quality of the G-20's discussions and their outcome would greatly benefit from the views of all those directly affected by the matters under consideration. In that regard, Liechtenstein was an active member of the Global Governance Group.

The United Nations central role could only be safeguarded if it was put to use to effectively solve such problems as climate change, disarmament and others where results had been insufficient, she said. While the Security Council had the power to make legally binding decisions, the strongest tool in international law, its success was increasingly undermined by the perception that Council decisions lacked the requisite political legitimacy. That was due largely to its composition, which no longer reflected today's geopolitical realities. But an agreement to change that had been elusive for more than a decade. A middle ground could be the right answer. She suggested creating a new category of seats allowing States elected by the wider membership on a recurrent basis to serve permanently on the Council.

If the Council indeed was to carry out its functions on behalf of the full United Nations membership, it must also be ready to listen to those it represented, she added. In the last few years, the "S-5" countries tasked with working methods had begun a process of reflection on gradual improvements in the Council's own interests. She pointed to the damage to the United Nations due to management failures and system breakdowns in procurement and accountability. Despite progress in strengthening internal oversight and accountability, more management reform was needed. She added that, given the massive crimes committed against civilians worldwide, a common stance against impunity was more important than ever.

KAMEL MORJANE, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, said that his country attached great importance to issues relating to gender equality and women's empowerment. Women had a strategic role to play in the country's development and were considered partners in setting all national goals. The country strongly believed that democracy could not grow without women's active involvement in public life. That conviction stemmed from the country's vision of human rights. The high status enjoyed by women in Tunisia was reflected in the data and indicators on human development and women's involvement in all fields. Women currently represented 30 per cent of the country's working population and held 30 per cent of its decision-making and management positions. They also represented 33 per cent of the judicial corps and 42 per cent of the medical corps. In higher education, they accounted for 60 per cent of the students.

He said it had been a source of pride for Tunisia to have been ranked first internationally in terms of fighting violence against women and guaranteeing women's right to free movement and property ownership. The country was also ranked first in the Arab world in terms of offering women opportunities for economic participation and first in Africa in terms of women's per capita income. Since November 1987, Tunisia had adopted a comprehensive and balanced development policy that took into account the strong linkages between the economic and social dimensions, he continued. That policy reconciled the requirements of an economy based on the principles of profitability and efficiency, with the need for an equitable social policy in which there was no room for exclusion and marginalization. In that way, it guaranteed a decent life for all citizens.

Tunisia attached great importance to its youth as the pillar of the present and the builder of the future, by regularly organizing national youth consultations aimed at exploring the concerns, expectations and views of young people, he said. The results of those consultations were taken into consideration when preparing development plans. Tunisia had proclaimed 2008 the Year of Comprehensive Dialogue with Youth. That event, in which enormous numbers of youths had participated, had been crowned by the adoption of a Youth Pact, signed by all concerned national organizations and the elite of Tunisian youth. Keen to bring that policy to the international level, Tunisia had launched an initiative at the General Assembly for 2010 to be proclaimed the International Youth Year. The aim was to consolidate the position of youth in all societies as they were at the forefront of the forces of progress embracing noble universal values. Tunisia was proud of the unanimous support of Member States for the initiative's adoption by the General Assembly at its last session.

He was deeply concerned about the situation in the Middle East, resulting from Israel's disrespect for international law and for the basic reference points of the peace process. Israel persisted in its policy of settlement and its attempts to obliterate the Arab-Muslim identity of the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif. He hoped that the resumption of direct peace talks, launched on 2 September, in Washington, D.C., would meet the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. Influential parties, particularly the diplomatic Quartet, should act to get Israel to adhere to the requirements for peace, on the basis of international law, the terms of reference of the peace process and the Arab Peace initiative, and in accordance with a specific time schedule covering all the main points. Israel should also end its occupation of the Syrian Golan and the remaining occupied Lebanese territories, in accordance with international law.

He urged adoption of an efficient global policy for the protection of the environment, in order to spare

humanity the adverse consequences of climate change. He underlined the need to accelerate the pace of international talks on climate, change while also giving priority to human interest over economic benefits.

MARTY M. NATALEGAWA, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, said the session's theme, reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance, was a timely topic, as humankind faced a multitude of complex challenges that demanded international cooperation. The United Nations could play a central role in global governance as it ensured that the full problem-solving potential of every nation was unleashed. The reform of the United Nations was essential to reflect the contemporary world. A more representative Security Council would be more effective while the Assembly must be revitalized to make it more efficient. The Economic and Social Council had to become more relevant to meet its Charter-mandated responsibilities, while the Secretariat had to be made more effective, efficient and cohesive.

Indonesia would continue to contribute to United Nations peacekeeping efforts and maintain the recent momentum on disarmament issues, he said, noting that Indonesia was on track to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Indonesia supported the resumption of direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine, which he called a precious opportunity for the two parties to find solutions on all final-status issues. His country would maintain its efforts to support the capacity-building of Palestine and support the Palestinian people's preparation for their final exercise of their right of sovereignty.

Today's global threats to security demanded more effective concerted action and the United Nations had to play its part to boost global cooperation to fight non-traditional security threats, such as terrorism, people smuggling, drug trafficking, piracy and money-laundering. The United Nations framework could also be used to attain more equitable and sustainable development, address climate change and deal with the complex array of natural disasters, including the delivery of international humanitarian assistance. He gave great importance to next year's review process of the Human Rights Council, which needed to help all countries promote the cooperation of human rights.

Greater cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and initiatives would help make global problems more manageable. For that reason, Indonesia promoted stronger links between the United Nations and ASEAN and, in that regard, an ASEAN-United Nations summit would be held in Viet Nam this year. Indonesia was also playing a role in shaping a regional architecture between ASEAN and other countries in the larger Asia-Pacific region. In an effort to support the development of democracy, Indonesia in 2008 had launched the Bali Democracy Forum, Asia's only intergovernmental forum on political development, to create a platform for countries to share experiences and best practices. This December, Indonesia would hold the third Bali Democracy Forum, with a theme of "Democracy and the Promotion of Peace". "As the world's third-largest democracy, Indonesia is proof that Islam, democracy and modernization can go hand in hand," he said.

ABDULLAH BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, said the ongoing significant challenges facing the international community required strengthened collective action and increased international efforts in the United Nations and its balanced and responsible reform. He reiterated deep regret at the continued occupation by Iran of the three United Arab Emirates islands Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, and demanded the return of those islands to his country's full sovereignty. He affirmed that all procedures and measures taken by the Iranian authorities since their occupation of the islands were null and void, and without legal effect, regardless of how long the occupation lasted.

He said he looked forward to seeing Iraqi parties forming a national Government that continued to build its security, political and economic institutions; extend its authority over the entire territory of Iraq; and achieve national reconciliation, which was the real guarantee for stabilizing the political process in the country and embracing all factions of Iraqi society, without exception or discrimination. Satisfied with the withdrawal of foreign troops from Iraq, he expressed firm condemnation of all acts of violence and bombings that targeted Iraqi people. He reiterated the need to respect Iraq's sovereignty and independence, and to refrain from interference in its internal affairs.

Turning to the Arab-Israeli conflict, he said peace could not be achieved without ending the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories, and its withdrawal to the line of 4 June 1967, including East Jerusalem, the Syrian Golan Heights and the remaining occupied territories in southern Lebanon. The United Arab Emirates stood by the Palestinian National Authority and supported the Palestinian people in their quest for achieving their national goals and restoring their inalienable legitimate rights. Commending President Mahmoud Abbas for continued efforts to restore his people's rights, he affirmed support for the Authority's position in direct talks with Israel.

His country hoped that the independent Palestinian State, with its capital Al-Quds Al-Sharif, saw the light next year. He also welcomed the United States President's emphasis on the importance of leading direct negotiations into final results within one year, and seeing Palestine take its seat in the Assembly's sixty-sixth session. His country's commitment to the achievement of peace as a strategic choice made it imperative to condemn the Israeli practices committed against the Palestinian people. Continued Israeli settlement activities, and confiscation and judaization of Occupied Palestine and other Arab Territories clashed with the pursuit of peace.

He said his country would continue its international policy guided by United Nations objectives and Charter principles, especially with regard to the promotion of international peace and security, the peaceful resolution of disputes, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, and compliance with the principles of international law. It would continue to extend its distinct contributions to regional and international partnerships aimed at building a more peaceful, stable and just world. He looked forward to a world that promoted dialogue, interaction, mutual understanding, cooperation and coexistence among all religions and cultures, without discrimination. On the basis of that understanding, he condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, wherever it existed, and stressed the need to intensify regional and international efforts aimed at combating it. His country, a member of the global initiative for combating nuclear terrorism, would continue to strengthen cooperation in all areas of intelligence exchange, among other areas, and expected other States to shoulder their duties.

He touched on several points, including climate change, noting that his country had initiated a partnership programme with Pacific small island developing States. He hoped that States parties to the Climate Change Convention would achieve concrete results before the meeting in Cancun. He was pleased at the entry into force of the Statute of the International Renewable Energy Agency, which his country hosted. His Government was moving forward with its peaceful nuclear energy programme, and emphasized its commitment to all requirements of nuclear non-proliferation and its compliance with the highest standards of transparency and nuclear safety; it had ratified the Additional Protocol to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. He welcomed the creation of UN Women, saying his country was implementing various national programmes for empowering women. On another matter, he called on the international community to develop an integrated global strategy to eliminate human trafficking. He also supported the activities of the Alliance of Civilizations forum.

MOUSSA FAKI MAHAMAT, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chad, said that while he welcomed the United Nations focus on development challenges and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the relevant resolutions would once again not be implemented. He expressed particular concern for the Darfur crisis and its impact on the relations between Chad and Sudan.

He said that those relations had been completely normalized as a result of the courageous decision of President Idriss Deby Itno to go to Khartoum in order to reconcile with Sudanese President Omer Hassan Al-Bashir. The two leaders had decided, among other things, to establish a hybrid force to establish security between the two borders. High-level meetings were regularly held to assess the situation, and both had also committed to providing no support of any kind to the rebel forces in their respective countries.

Chad favoured dialogue, as it always had, he said. The situation in Darfur still merited special attention, and like the rest of the international community, Chad dreamed of peace in Sudan. Chad particularly sought peace in Sudan as that country prepared for its upcoming major political event — the referendum for the self-determination of Southern Sudan. That was a high-risk undertaking, and if the process leading up to it was not controlled, independent and transparent, mistakes on that path could compromise peace and security in Sudan and in the subregion. The results of the referendum would impact the rest of Africa, and Chad would like to see the unity and integrity of Sudan maintained, but it was the Sudanese themselves who would determine their future.

Speaking of domestic issues, he said that Chad had allocated 60 per cent of its resources from oil to invest in the social sector and infrastructure, as a basis for social and economic development.

MAXINE MCCLEAN, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados, said the theme of this year's General Assembly was timely and permitted examination of complex issues facing the global community. The Millennium Development Goals represented a common vision of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world, in which all people could enjoy better and safer lives. However, progress towards the Goals remained mixed. Success was still within reach, but was by no means certain, so last week's unprecedented consensus to revitalize the Goals must be converted immediately into collective action. The display of global solidarity in the face of unparalleled economic uncertainty reminded all that the United Nations was an indispensable instrument for the world's people.

Saying that the world was more interconnected yet more deeply divided than ever, he stressed that an enhanced system of world governance must be at the top of the global agenda. Security Council reform must be finalized at this session. To retain its unique legitimacy, the Council must adhere to the highest standards of transparency, accountability and efficiency, while improving outreach to non-members. Due to geopolitical realities, permanent and non-permanent Council seats should be increased, with Brazil, Germany, India and Japan joining the ranks of permanent members, as well as assured membership from the African Group.

Institutions responsible for global, economic and financial governance should be reformed immediately, equipped to address challenges of a globalized and highly interdependent world, he said. Barbados recognized the important role played by the G-20 in stabilizing the global economy, but the Group must significantly enhance outreach to non-members, particularly small members of the international community, whose economic viability was under discussion. The G-20 must also break the impasse in the World Trade Organization for successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round and accelerate reforms in Bretton

Woods institutions. Small States like Barbados had traditionally played a crucial role in shaping global governance, and their voice should not be diminished in efforts to reform the current system.

He said his country, as a natural resources-poor small island developing State, had played its part in the United Nations vision of the world, mainly by investing in education and health. Barbados also aimed to craft its own green economy to achieve sustainable development. It believed its experience would serve as a useful model for other small States.

MOCTAR OUANE, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali, said that, under the leadership of President Amadou Toumani Toure, his country continued to progress and develop for the well-being of its people. Every day it further built on the gains of its peaceful democracy, which was recognized worldwide as being exemplary, and further enhanced its presence in Africa and on the world stage. He called for reform of the global economic and financial architecture to prevent an even worse crisis from occurring. The United Nations must ensure a just and equitable representation of all regions, particularly in the Security Council. He reaffirmed Mali's commitment to the Ezulwini Consensus and the Syrte Declaration adopted by African Union Heads of State, and he fully supported Africa's demand for two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats on the Council. A reformed Council would better reflect today's geopolitical realities and correct the historical injustices suffered by Africa, which was the only region in the world without a permanent Council seat.

Mali was resolutely committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals in a sustainable manner through adoption of the 2006-2015 plan and implementation of the strategic poverty reduction framework and socio-economic development project, focused particularly on agriculture, food security, education and health, he said. Mali was encouraged by the results achieved in previous strategies, which had resulted in school enrolment increasing from 64 per cent in 2002 to 80 per cent in 2008. The infant mortality rate had fallen from 229 per 1,000 live births in 2001 to 191 per 1,000 live births in 2006, while the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate had fallen from 1.7 per cent to 1.3 per cent over the same period.

It was essential to speed up implementation of commitments made at key international conferences, particularly the Monterrey conference on financing for development, the Brussels conference on the least developed countries, the Barbados conference on small island developing States, and the Almaty conference on landlocked developing countries, he said. Climate change was a serious challenge. Today, more than ever, the planet's survival was threatened by natural disasters that seriously affected living conditions in developing countries like Mali. Mali suffered from the encroachment of its deserts, silting of the Niger River, shortening of its winter season and poor rainfall distribution. That was why Mali would spare no effort to find a binding global agreement on climate change. In November, Mali would host a regional forum on sustainable development.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic continued to hamper development and seriously threaten humanity's survival and security, he said. In keeping with the Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and other infection diseases, and the Brazzaville Declaration on universal access to treatment in Africa, Mali had launched a vast programme of multisectoral institutional and operational reform that obliged the public, private and civil society sectors to better coordinate efforts to combat the pandemic and be accountable to the nation. The international community must resolutely tackle trafficking of drugs, arms and human beings.

He went on to say that Mali had adopted a new strategy to combat the lack of security and terrorism. It sought to strengthen national capacities through robust action in security and community development, and to promote effective regional cooperation within the Sahel-Saharan region. Mali's President had organized a conference on peace, security and development in that region. He welcomed national reconstruction, reconciliation and peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He reaffirmed solidarity with the Palestinians for their own independent State and supported relevant United Nations resolutions.

SERGEI ALEINIKI, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus, said it had been clearly demonstrated that all challenges and threats, however difficult and dangerous, could only be overcome if countries worked together. Particular attention should be given to the economic sphere, and goals could be achieved even in the current situation if the necessary financial resources were used to support development. What had been done so far was insufficient. Analysed in an objective way, the largest developed countries spent trillions of dollars supporting their own economies, while finances for developing countries remained low. Real development aid was needed in order to help developing countries and countries in transition.

He said the work and potential of the Bretton Woods institutions must continue to be updated, helping those developing countries with decisions arising in their governing bodies, and the General Assembly must raise its voice on that important issue. Additionally, Belarus had submitted its candidature for the Economic and Social Council for 2011, and was ready to actively work in that regard. He went on to say that measures to address greenhouse gases were inadequate and could lead to irreversible consequences. It was time to end the competing ambitions with regard to climate change, or attempts to protect the climate would prove unsuccessful.

Closely related to the protection of climate was the issue of reliable systems of global security and the

development of green and low-carbon economies, he said. However, many States did not have clean-energy technologies, which “put a break” on their development. Such States could not on their own immediately establish green economies, and should be assisted including for the use of renewable energy sources.

As next year would mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster, he said, it was unfortunate that addressing the remaining negative consequences of that event was a low priority. Given that situation, Belarus and Ukraine intended to prepare a draft resolution on researching, investigating and minimizing the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster and its lingering impacts, and he called for the General Assembly’s support in that regard.

GEORGES REBELO CHIKOTI, Secretary of State for External Relations of [Angola](#), said the issues that the Assembly President had pinpointed as priorities for the session — climate change, the Millennium Development Goals, food security, sustainable development, strengthening fragile States in post-conflict situations, humanitarian aid and disarmament — must remain priorities on the national and international agenda. Backing multilateralism as the best way to resolve today’s complex challenges, Angola emphasized political coordination and stronger relations with the organs of the United Nations system, as well as the regional and subregional organizations to which it belonged, such as the African Union, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Commission of the Gulf of Guinea. The member States of the Commission, based in Angola, managed potential conflicts linked to sea borders, oversaw the management of shared maritime resources and coordinated polices to prevent sea trafficking and piracy. By doing so, it provided security to a region that produced more than 15 per cent of the world’s oil.

He said that the Angolan Armed Forces were a stabilizing factor in the country and the southern and central regions of Africa, and were a part of the early warning mechanisms of SADC and ECCAS. For that reason, Angola was surprised to learn that an upcoming report, intended for circulation as a document of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, mentioned the Angolan Armed Forces involvement in alleged acts of human right violations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That document had been produced at the initiative of an agency of the Secretariat, with no specific mandate from the Secretary-General or Member States. Angola and the Angolan Armed Forces continued to act responsibly, based on international standards and scrupulous respect for human rights.

Concerned with the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba, he reiterated Angola’s appeal to lift a measure that the Assembly had repeatedly demanded be removed, in successive resolutions. After three decades of war and political instability, Angola was entering a new cycle, marked by the adoption of a new Constitution, which had created a democratic State and the rule of law. “We are aware that we still have a long way to go, especially taking into account all the time lost and delays accumulated in several areas.” The progress had been achieved through the efforts of the Angolan executive organs and a commitment to improve the human development indexes. After eight years of peace, Angola had implemented economic and social reform policies, which revitalized its economy and rehabilitated key parts of its infrastructure. The country’s annual growth rate had increased by double digits and improved the basic indicators of the Goals. For example, since 2002, more than 2 million children had been enrolled in primary education and the percentage of children attending school had increased sharply to 76 per cent.

CLAUDE HELLER ([Mexico](#)) said the challenges currently confronting the international community included the continuation of impunity in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the reconstruction of Haiti following the earthquake that had ravaged that country, and conflict in the Middles East. Specifically on that point, he said that, despite 60 years of conflict, there was new hope for peace in the Middle East with the resumption of direct talks between the Israeli and Palestinian sides.

Mexico believed that the creation of a politically and economically viable Palestinian State living side by side with a secure Israel was an essential condition for lasting peace in that region. In that regard, his country welcomed the efforts of United States President Barack Obama to achieve that goal. Noting that hope for a definitive agreement had been marred in the past by extremist forces that sought to derail the peace process, he said that the parties had a historic duty to reach an agreement and expressed the hope that they were up to the challenge. Mexico pledged the support of States that were genuinely committed to peace.

On nuclear disarmament, he noted the significant progress achieved in 2010 with the signing of the strategic arms limitation agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation, the Nuclear Security Summit convened in Washington, D.C., and the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Those achievements deserved to be commended. The creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would be an important contribution towards advancing to a nuclear-weapon-free world.

He went on to say that the consequences of the economic and financial crisis resulting from the failure in regulatory systems had been suffered worldwide. The failure that had led to that situation must be addressed. The crisis had demonstrated the need to promote international cooperation schemes to tackle such challenges. While Mexico commended the positive work done by the G-20 in that regard, it believed that the United Nations should play more prominent role in such matters. That was why Mexico supported the relevant

objectives set out by the President of the General Assembly. In addition to traditional challenges, the international community faced new challenges, he went on. Terrorism and globalization of the drug trade posed new threats to global peace and security that endangered States and regions. Those threats were not the responsibility of particular countries or regions, but needed to be addressed jointly by the international community. Mexico had fully confronted the challenges posed by drug trafficking. That fight required increased investment of resources, he said, stressing that the cost was high, but it would be even higher if State authorities did not confront the attendant impunity.

CARSTEN STAUR (Denmark) said an effective multilateral system founded on universal rules, values and global legitimacy was needed in order to respond to current challenges. One of the most significant global challenges was achieving the Millennium Goals by 2015. To make the Goals a reality for all, progress must be accelerated and efforts must be scaled up. Developing countries must focus their political will, administrative capacity and budgetary resources on reaching the Goals, while donor countries must live up to their ODA commitments. Green growth, he noted, was an important challenge which offered new opportunities for employment, innovation and wealth creation worldwide. The international community must strive to optimize resource efficiency and apply green technologies, including renewable energy.

Moreover, climate change continued to be one of the greatest challenges of the time, and the world was experiencing its consequences. The Copenhagen Accord paved the way for eventually reaching a global, legally binding agreement within the United Nations framework, he said, underlining the importance of fulfilling commitments on fast-start financing. Turning to the principles, values and universal rights enshrined in the Charter, he stressed that it was a priority to uphold them. He pointed to recent threats to burn the Koran in Florida, which his country strongly condemned. States must ensure the human rights and fundamental freedoms of their citizens, including women's rights and gender issues which were an essential part of human rights. International peace and security rested on States' ability and willingness to ensure the protection of its population from human rights violations and atrocious crimes.

Highlighting challenges on regional, national and global levels, he noted that while Denmark strongly supported the International Criminal Court, it did not believe the Court should prosecute all international crimes. National jurisdictions were almost always better placed to combat impunity. He considered the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to be the "most serious danger of globalization", urging all States to commit to implementing the measures of the Non-Proliferation Treaty action plan. Touching on threats to peace and security, and efforts to address them in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan and Somalia, he pointed to the United Nations. "The best way to deal with these global challenges is through an effective and strong multilateral system — through the United Nations system," he said, calling for improvements in the Organization as well as reform.

MICHEL KAFANDO (Burkina Faso) noted that with many global crises occurring all at once, the international community was wondering if it would be able to achieve the Millennium Goals by 2015. In that light, last week's high-level Millennium Development Goals review gave hope for commitments to the poorest countries. However, the world could only take on a "more human face" to deal with social issues if there was a healthy and calm climatic environment.

To that end, he welcomed the Climate Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009, despite the fact that no concrete agreement had been reached on greenhouse gas emissions. The Conference had nevertheless pushed forward the debate on providing assistance to poor countries, as well as measures to reduce deforestation. He hoped assistance commitments made would be fulfilled, and he was hopeful for success at the next meeting of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Cancun. Flooding and other climate disasters had reminded the world just how fragile the environmental balance was.

Conflict resolution, particularly in Africa, remained a major challenge. While some crises had more or less been overcome, others continued to be matters of serious concern. Highlighting political progress made in Togo and Côte d'Ivoire, he then turned to Guinea and called on all political players in that country to enable it to open up quickly to democracy. Burkina Faso was concerned with the current instability in Somalia, as insurgents continued to launch attacks against interim forces and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). He urged the international community to make good on commitments to support Somalia in its rehabilitation process. Efforts to end piracy in the high seas, including in Somalia, would not last unless the root causes were addressed. Extreme poverty served as the "most fertile soil" for such crime, he noted.

Turning to Western Sahara, he welcomed the impetus of the Secretary-General to draw attention to the situation, and called for continued dialogue to realistically settle the ongoing dispute. Scourges such as drugs and narcotic trade often opened the door to more problems. Combined efforts were needed to combat money-laundering, terrorism, the proliferation of nuclear weapons and transnational organized crime. "Collective efforts must be taken to secure peace and security," he stressed, urging all States to join in. On the issue of United Nations reform, he said it had been on the agenda for many years and some progress had been made. He hoped, however, that other aspects of the reform would be achieved in due time, particularly within the Security Council.

AFELEE FALEMA PITA (Tuvalu) said last week's implementation review of the Millennium Goals had demonstrated that successes in achieving the Goals were easily reversed by the economic and environmental

vulnerability of small island States. The recent global financial crisis had exerted an enormous adverse effect on his country's economy, particularly in the increased cost of imported fossil fuels that was crippling the national budget. Tuvalu had a desperate need for renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies appropriate for its unique conditions. As pointed out at the Mauritius Strategy review, Tuvalu had three key outcome areas in which it needed support: regulating and policing illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; developing a climate risk insurance mechanism that drew on public international financing to underwrite the costs of premiums and payouts so as to recover after severe weather events; and securing proper acknowledgement of small island State concerns in the United Nations process, as well as recognition of them as a discrete group in the United Nations system.

In view of the slow progress made under the United Nations climate change process and the lack of concrete commitments on the part of key greenhouse gas emitting countries, he said, three political commitments should come out of the Cancun meeting later in 2010. First, all amendments and rules for the Kyoto Protocol should be agreed so that amendments were ready for ratification without a gap between the commitment periods. Second, a mandate should be decided for start of negotiations on a legally binding agreement based on all elements of the Bali Action Plan. And finally, a set of decisions should be agreed upon that would provide interim steps in the implementation of measures to be incorporated into the legally binding agreement.

Concluding, he said Tuvalu's economic and environmental vulnerability could not be overemphasized. The United Nations and development partners must recognize that vulnerability when reviewing the criteria and considering the graduation rules for least developed countries to move into middle-economy status. Finally, climate change must be treated as a cross-cutting issue. Pledges and commitments offered by the international community to address the effects of climate change were appreciated. However, they fell short because access to such funds was difficult and time consuming for small island States to undertake in the timely manner required.

MÁRTEN GRUNDITZ (Sweden), aligning with the European Union's written statement which would be delivered to all Member States, said every country needed to assume its share of global responsibilities. All countries — developed and developing alike — had a shared responsibility to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The development and prosperity of poor countries depended largely on their ability to integrate into the global economy. Robust international rules for open trade and investments were key, he said, adding that free trade benefited both rich and poor countries. Joint efforts were needed to ward off the threat of climate change as well, as the natural disasters which devastated Haiti and Pakistan had shown. States must cooperate not only to work towards concrete climate goals, but also to prioritize disaster preparedness and risk reduction on the national level to assist those in need on the ground.

States also had a shared responsibility to promote respect for human rights. "Without respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, all other progress will be incomplete," he stressed, highlighting several human rights violations occurring around the world which needed to be stopped. In that regard, Sweden was "deeply worried" by the situation in countries like China, Viet Nam, Egypt, Myanmar, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Iran and Sudan. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, reports of sexual violence against women were part of a pattern of conflict-related crimes that had been carried out with impunity over many years, he said. The hope of a lasting peace called for the empowerment and equal participation of women in negotiations and decision-making.

"Lasting peace can never be achieved while there is impunity. It is high time to fully implement resolutions 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, and 1820 (2008) on sexual violence in conflict situations," he declared. Few aspects of State cooperation through the United Nations illustrated shared responsibility better than joint efforts in preventing and managing conflicts, as well as keeping and building sustainable peace. However, the international community must increase the United Nations capacity to help countries in transition from war to lasting peace. Furthermore, the United Nations must have the right tools to help prevent countries from lapsing into conflict in the first place. Lastly, he touched on situations in Afghanistan and the Middle East, and then stressed the importance of stopping the spread of nuclear weapons. The early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was urgent, and the "unacceptable deadlock" in the Conference of Disarmament must come to an end.

GERT ROSENTHAL (Guatemala) said the financial and economic crisis had had a strong impact on his country's economic performance. Its national income grew less than one per cent in 2009 due to reduced exports, a contraction in remittances and the collapse of direct foreign investment. That had impacted tax receipts despite multiple initiatives by the Government to increase the tax ratio to deal with increasing demand for social services and public security. Although there had been a modest recovery this year, the intensity of that recovery would depend to a high degree on the uncertain evolution of the international economy.

Also, during the last decade, a raft of illicit activities related to organized crime had taken root in Guatemala, he continued. Trafficking in persons, arms and drugs, as well as money laundering, had expanded in a manner that was quite worrisome, under the double banner born from organized crime's capacity to co-opt and intimidate. Drug trafficking, in particular, had weakened democratic institutions. In response to that challenge, the Government had associated itself with the United Nations and friendly countries through bilateral and

multilateral cooperation. A visible expression of that cooperation was the establishment of the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala. In addition, the country had joined its neighbours in Central America and Mexico in combating regional criminal networks, as reflected in the decisions adopted during and intersectoral meeting of the region's senior Foreign Relations Ministers, Attorneys-General and police officials, held in Antigua, Guatemala, only a few days ago.

Continuing, he said Guatemala had been the victim of natural disasters with an unusual frequency, he stated. That reflected the country's extreme vulnerability to the effects of climate change, given its location in a tropical isthmus. While not fully recovered from the effects of tropical storm Stan which hit at the end of 2005, it was affected by grave drought in 2009 and, in the last few months, the eruption of the Pacaya Volcano, which had caused extensive damage to agricultural production, and tropical storm Agatha in June, affecting 330,000 people and killing 100 people while causing damages estimated at close to a billion dollars.

Guatemala had employed all the resources within its means to address those challenges but had also appealed for international cooperation. The United Nations had been among the first to respond to its call for assistance. Up till now, the focus had been on the emergency phase of those challenges, but it was imperative to also address the reconstruction and transformation phases as soon as possible. The Government had prepared a detailed plan to take on that task. It had convened an international conference of donors, to be held in Antigua, Guatemala, on 11 and 12 October, to introduce that plan. Finally, he said Guatemala harboured the hope that there would be tangible progress this year in the long-delayed reform of the Security Council. Such progress was crucial in order to provide greater legitimacy to the General Assembly. It would also benefit all the main organs of the United Nations and the Organization in its entirety. He then announced Guatemala's candidature for Security Council membership for the biennium 2012-2013 in the hope of contributing to the work of the Council.

ANTONIO PEDRO MONTEIRO LIMA (Cape Verde) said in negotiations regarding the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, he had seen a tendency towards pessimism rather than optimism. He urged the international community to act effectively, as time was running out to combat climate change. States must take action together to curb global warming and avoid the impending sea-level rise which would drastically affect many countries, especially the most vulnerable small island developing States. Cape Verde had long faced the impact of climate change, having suffered through drought and desertification, among others. His country had undertaken efforts to reduce the effect of climate change, he said, noting that similar steps had been taken in Africa and the small island developing States. Financing was a key factor in the implementation of those efforts, therefore, the fast-track funding announced in Copenhagen needed to be set up quickly.

The international community must continue to support the most vulnerable States by helping them minimize risks. Many countries were already facing issues such as population shifts and forced migration, so global solidarity was a question of their survival. "Let us not offer up the weakest as sacrificial lambs, for tomorrow we might be in their situation", he stressed. For Cape Verde, the ocean was its environment and represented its potential for the future. He called for efforts to protect and preserve the ocean, noting that an agreement had been made between coastal States along the Atlantic Ocean to protect it. Through that agreement, countries committed to make the Atlantic an area for trade and active solidarity. Furthermore, he underscored the need to protect and empower women. His country had made progress in that vein, but challenges remained. He noted, however, that Cape Verde had achieved gender parity in primary and secondary education.

Most importantly, the world must continue to work for peace. The United Nations played a vital role in that regard because it had a clearly defined mission, and its Member States all shared in the responsibilities and decision making process. World peace remained a distant goal, as hot beds of tensions still existed. His country had always been an advocate of general and complete disarmament, hoping that arms could be replaced with a desire to cooperate and view other States as necessary and complementary partners. "Drug trafficking is the scourge to our future, particularly in West Africa," he said. There must be strong efforts by drug consuming countries, as well as producing nations, to fight it, so that children could live and develop without drugs. Lastly, he highlighted his country's achievements since gaining its independence 35 years ago, particularly with respect to the achievement of the Millennium Goals, and then called on the international community to work together so that peace would no longer be "a dream deferred".

### Right of Reply

Speaking in exercise of the right of reply, the representative of Ethiopia, responding to statements made earlier by Eritrea, said that since the 1990s, Eritrea had invaded several of its neighbours. That regime had unleashed unprovoked aggression against Ethiopia, but its army had been routed. It was now campaigning against Ethiopia, claiming that Ethiopia was the aggressor even though it was Eritrea that had violated the Charter by invading Ethiopia. Ethiopia had been willing to engage with Eritrea in demarcating the boundary between the two countries.

He said that Ethiopia was ready to sit and discuss all issues with Eritrea, but Eritrea had not agreed to dialogue. The claim that Ethiopia was occupying Eritrea's territory was a figment of that country's imagination. In cases of dispute, the United Nations had no power to arbitrate without the specific mandate of the concerned

parties. Eritrea was only trying to divert attention from its destructive activities. The Boundary Commission that had looked into the dispute had made significant points to the effect that, until such time as the boundary between the two countries was finally demarcated, the boundary which Ethiopia had accepted remained as the only valid one. The most important task that remained was to demarcate the boundary on the ground in order to ensure durable peace.

Also speaking in exercise of the right of reply, the representative of Iran said the United Arab Emirates had raised unacceptable claims about the three islands in the Gulf. Rejected those remarks, he emphasized that the islands in the Gulf were part of Iran's territory. Iran stressed its determination to continue as good neighbours. All the actions and measures taken by Iranian authorities were based on the sovereign rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The representative of Eritrea categorically rejected all statements made by Ethiopia. The Boundary Commission had put the border dispute issue to rest. Ethiopia had to face up to its obligations. "There was no need to go around the bush," the representative said. Eritrea had fully cooperated with the Commission and that body's decision was binding. While Eritrea supported the peaceful settlement of disputes, Ethiopia had shown its disdain for international law.

Next, the representative of the United Arab Emirates, replying to Iran's representative, said he regretted that Iran had rejected his country's many peaceful initiatives which called for resolving the conflict over the three United Arab Emirates islands Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa through political negotiations, or resorting to seeking legal advice from the International Court of Justice. The United Arab Emirates rejected the Iranian occupation and civilian and military action taken in the three islands, which aimed to change their historic and demographic nature.

He was greatly disappointed that Iran had stated a position on that matter without dealing with the main question of the occupation itself. The United Arab Emirates hoped that the international community would support its position, which called for Iran to reconsider its illegal occupation of those three islands. The position also called for Iran to respond to its peace initiatives which aim for a comprehensive, lasting settlement of conflict.

A representative of Cuba said Sweden felt it could reserve the right to judge other countries, particularly the poor and underdeveloped countries of the global South, with regard to human rights. Sweden's representative had spoken "like a judge delivering his verdict, and then left", despite the fact that he had been asked to stay in order to hear Cuba's right of reply. With what right or mortality could Sweden judge others, he asked? Who said he could give Cubans lessons when it came to human rights, a topic which Cubans were deeply proud of?

As the international community already knew, Sweden had in the past authorized secret, illegal Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) flights over its territory. That action, a "dark episode" for Sweden, had yet to be clarified. When asked about the situation, Sweden had replied that it had been investigating it for several years. Cuba, however, believed Sweden was trying to hide the issue. Briefly drawing attention the issues of prostitution and sexual violence against women and girls in Sweden, he asked for an answer as to when the investigation on the secret, illegal CIA flights would be concluded. Furthermore, when would Sweden condemn the double standard and political manipulation within such a noble topic as human rights? How long would it continue to deceive the Assembly, he asked?

The representative of Egypt, responding to a statement made by Sweden's representative, said that speaker should have known that Egypt had been in the lead of political reform in the Middle East. Egypt had more than 300 newspapers and journals representing all shades and views of Egyptian political life. It was, therefore shocking to hear the representative of Sweden in that regard. The representative needed to get better educated about Egypt and its reforms. Egypt respected fundamental rights and rejected the allegations that had been made. The Swedish representative should know the difference between freedom of expression and making insults against the Prophet.

The representative of China, also speaking in response to statement by the representative of Sweden, said that his country had always protected the economic, social and political rights of its citizens, in keeping with the law. It attached equal importance to all categories of rights. The situation in China had improved greatly, as recognized by one and all. In the past, Sweden had seen some "dark pages" of human rights violations. Today, it continued to violate the rights of minorities within the country and the picture was a rather sombre one. That country did not have the right to point fingers at other countries over human rights situations. Sweden's comments ended up distorting the truth and amounted to a double-standard approach. China categorically rejected the unfounded accusations that had been made.

Addressing remarks made by the representatives of Sweden and Ireland regarding the human rights situation in his country, the representative of Iran used his second intervention to say that those countries were ignoring their own record of human rights. He urged them to stop spreading distortions against others and using United Nations tribunals to spread false accusations and distortions.

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For information media • not an official record