



General Assembly

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DEMANDING REFORMS, SPEAKERS SAY OUTDATED UNITED NATIONS STRUCTURE LEAVES

ORGANIZATION ILL-EQUIPPED TO ADDRESS TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY REALITIES

Addressing Assembly via Cell Phone, Honduran President Zelaya Calls on United Nations to 'Restore Rule of Law and Freedom that Honduras Deserves'

Concerned that the United Nations outdated structure left it ill-equipped to deal with twenty-first century realities, Government Ministers addressing the General Assembly today pressed the world body to revamp its institutions, extend its alliances and break old mindsets that had hampered its credibility as the world's pre-eminent negotiating forum.

For Osman Mohammed Saleh, Eritrea's Minister for Foreign Affairs, who echoed the sentiments of many speakers during the Assembly's morning session, the United Nations should have embarked on a process of transformation 20 years ago, at the end of the cold war. The global financial and economic crisis was a mere symptom of that inaction, and it was clear the ageing world order had been hijacked to serve the interests of the few. Despite fervent calls for reform, the few who controlled global arrangements were not attuned to the notion of change; they regarded crises and suffering as ordinary historical imperatives.

Moreover, when it came to resolutions, Africans found themselves dependent on the good will of others, he explained. Fundamental change in the Organization should not be left to the goodwill of the few. Nor should it be limited merely to increasing the number of seats in the Security Council. Rather, it should steer the world away from its dangerous descent and redirect it towards a path of safety. Africa as a whole had to expend more effort to achieve that goal, as truly fundamental reform required collective commitment, he added.

Later in the evening, delegates heard a moving address by Honduran President José Manuel Zelaya, who appealed to the Assembly via telephone from his refuge in the "besieged Brazilian embassy" in Tegucigalpa, the Honduran capital. Mr. Zelaya explained that in June he had been subjected to a coup d'état, which had oppressed his peoples' rights. His people had been silenced and a serious crime had taken place.

"I call on the United Nations to restore the rule of law and the freedom that Honduras deserves," he said over a cell phone held up to a microphone by Honduran Foreign Minister Patricia Isabel Rodas Baca. Calling for civilized nations around the world to "maintain a stand against barbarism," Mr. Zelaya, who has been back in Honduras for a week, saluted Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's courage in upholding democracy. He urged the United Nations to reverse the coup and ensure that democracy was made available to all nations.

Following the telephone address, Ms. Rodas Baca characterized Honduras as a country under siege: the constitution had been suspended, news and media outlets had been dismantled, women were being raped in "concentration camps" and the entire nation had been militarized. "First we fought against conquest, colonization and economic differences", she said. Today, Honduras continued to fight peacefully -- its only weapon was the truth. She urged delegations to convene a special assembly session on the crisis and to request Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to send a mission to her country.

Returning to the issue of United Nations reform, several delegates said that the need for across-the-board reform was nowhere more apparent than in the 15-member Security Council, where Africa had been unrepresented for far too long. Marco Hausiku, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Namibia, called for Africa to be equitably represented on the Council, with all the privileges associated with membership. His country stood by the common African position outlined in the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration.

Welcoming the joint communiqué on strengthening African Union capacity in peacekeeping operations as a step in the right direction, he underscored the need for a more formalized cooperation between the Council and its counterpart, the African Union Peace and Security Council, including in the areas of financing, logistics

and technology transfer.

[The Ezulwini Consensus, adopted by African Union Foreign Ministers as Africa's common position on United Nations reform, argues that Africa be fully represented in all the decision-making organs of the United Nations, particularly in the Security Council, where it should have two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats.]

Naha Mint Mouknass, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation in Mauritania, added that a restructured Security Council should also include permanent seats for the Arab world, given that the latter made up 11 per cent of the global population.

Indeed, it was absurd to argue for static institutions in a changing world, said Mexico's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Patricia Espinosa Cantellano. Negotiations on Council reform must move toward a compromise that increased representation, improved accountability and did not jeopardize efficiency. The Council's legitimacy could be improved by strengthening work in preventing crises related to massive human rights violations and making development assistance a basic strategy for conflict prevention and reconstruction.

More broadly, she said the United Nations had to understand that the world was realigning its economic governance structures and policies needed to be adjusted accordingly. On a lighter note, she said the outbreak of influenza A (H1N1) showed how the United Nations system could coordinate States' action and prevent inappropriate unilateral measures. The World Health Organization (WHO) had lent support to the timely, energetic and responsible actions of the Mexican Government.

Taking a bird's eye view, Singapore's Minister of Foreign Affairs, George Yeo, pointed out that rebalancing the global economy was both an economic and political endeavour. The rise of Asia was altering the global power structure — and nothing expressed that more than the complex relationship between the United States and China. With its reserves of more than \$2 trillion, China was heavily invested in the United States dollar, making it a major stakeholder in that country's economy.

Looking forward, he said the world would become more multipolar, as Europe and Japan remained heavyweights and India, the Russian Federation, Brazil and others became bigger players. A multipolar world meant more effective global governance across many issues, from human rights to international financial regulation to efforts to combat pandemics, climate change and terrorism. The United Nations was not structured to deal with issues such as a major financial crisis. Though not ideal, the Group of Twenty process was presently the most important driver of change.

But for Afghanistan, "the United Nations is not a forum for lip service," said Rangin Dâdfar Spantâ, the country's Minister of Foreign Affairs. Restructuring the world body's agencies was pivotal in closing the gap between the Charter's goals and world realities. The United Nations had to provide political and moral leadership and assume greater responsibility for finding collective solutions to global challenges.

Rather than just reacting to problems, he said the United Nations had to find ways to address the structural causes of problems and conflicts. To those ends, there should be more cooperation among the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, international financial organizations and global civil society.

Also speaking today was the Prime Minister of Myanmar.

The foreign affairs ministers of San Marino, Peru, Bahrain, Cuba, Tunisia, Syria, Niger, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Oman, Belize, Hungary, Bhutan, Ireland, Yemen, Uzbekistan, Mozambique, Armenia, Barbados, Chad, Guinea, Saint Lucia, Ecuador, Angola, Timor-Leste, Malaysia and Nigeria also spoke.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Portugal spoke, as did the vice foreign affairs minister of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Also addressing the Assembly was Sudan's Advisor to the President.

The representative of Germany also spoke.

The General Assembly will reconvene at 9 a.m. Tuesday, 29 September to continue and conclude its High Level Debate.

[Background](#)

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

Statements

ANTONELLA MULARONI, Minister for Foreign and Political Affairs of San Marino, said reform of the United Nations was “fundamental to future world stability.” As part of that process, the Organization’s main bodies must be revitalized. Indeed, the Assembly must become more efficient and the Council must become more democratic, transparent and accountable. Given the numerous interrelated challenges of today’s world, global and coordinated action was of the essence, she said, adding that if the Organization relinquished its role as leader of the global governance system, it would be “a defeat for all”.

With regard to the current economic and financial crisis, she said that it was “the greatest global disaster since the very existence of the United Nations, all the more because it has added to a severe food crisis affecting many regions of the world.” It was the Organization’s task to consider the impact on Millennium Development Goals attainment and to find ways in which the fallout of the crisis could be mitigated.

On the subject of climate change, she said that it had become a central issue, “an absolute priority on the political agenda of all States”, and that it was her country’s aim to educate the citizens on the need to face climate changes. As to terrorism, she lauded the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted by the Assembly in 2006, as it laid the foundations for a coordinated response and recognized the need to respect human rights. “However, an effective response to terrorism must also be based on education, understanding and respect for each other,” she said.

Concluding on the subject of human rights, she touched on the plight of children, and women in particular. Today, 9.2 million children under the age of 5 died every year from largely preventable causes, and more than 100 million school-age children did not have access to education, she said. Many children were also victims of sexual violence, used as soldiers or sold as sex slaves, she said, and applauded the work of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to improve the lives of these children. Finally, she noted the adoption of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the importance of giving new momentum to the disarmament process. “The protection of human rights is strictly connected with the need to guarantee every human being and every population the possibility to live in peace and justice.”

MARCO HAUSIKU, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Namibia, said the impact of the financial and economic crisis was a major concern that required efforts in the search for effective solutions. Indeed, the crisis was taking a toll on every aspect of economic and social life, and progress made in the fight against poverty, hunger and disease was under threat. As the economic upheaval had arrived amid food and energy crises, net-food importing countries, like Namibia, had had to divert resources from development to energy relief, while the import of high-priced food had destabilized balance of payments and State revenue. The situation had been worsened by high fuel prices, and oil importers, like Namibia, had been negatively impacted.

The confluence of such crises, with the adverse impacts of climate change on sustainable development, was cause for great concern, he explained. Namibia, like other developing nations, was an insignificant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, yet among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. He called on major emitters to make drastic emissions cuts, and ensure that technology and financial resources were available to help developing countries adapt. He fully supported the Secretary-General’s efforts to mobilize the political will to ensure a legally binding climate agreement in Copenhagen this December.

For its part, Namibia had made progress in the provision of health, education and other services, and was on course to meet various Millennium Development Goals, he said. At the same time, it faced difficulties in responding to the combination of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, high food insecurity and poverty, and he therefore reiterated his call for increased global support for national sustainable development programmes, notably through concessional loans and foreign direct investment.

Turning to United Nations reform, he said that the process should be expedited, in order to deliver on promises in the maintenance of international peace and security, observation of human rights and environmental protection. There was an urgent need to reform the Security Council to make it more representative, democratic and accountable. The need for Africa to be equitably represented on the Council, with all privileges associated with membership, was a priority, and Namibia stood by the common African position as outlined in the “Ezulwini Consensus” and Sirte Declaration.

He also welcomed the joint communiqué on strengthening African Union capacity in peacekeeping

operations as a step in the right direction, saying there was a need for more formalized cooperation between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, including in the areas of financing, logistics and technology transfer. He called on the Assembly to pass a resolution prohibiting the participation of Governments that had taken power by military coup in all activities of United Nations bodies.

JOSE ANTONIO GARCIA BELAUNDE, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Peru, said it was regrettable that the convergence of wills around the economic and financial crisis had not been present with the same determination to reach the Millennium Development Goals and to face the threats that seriously endangered liberty, democracy and regional and global stability.

“How can we explain to our people that, in the middle of one of the most serious world economic recessions and before the existence of more than one billion in extreme poverty in the world, countries dedicate more than \$1,464 billion to military expenses in 2008?” he asked. Over the past five years, countries in Latin America had devoted a total of \$156 billion to military expenditures. He, therefore, reiterated Peru’s proposal to establish a non-aggression pact that guaranteed a Zone of Peace in South America, as well as the creation of a “peacekeeping and intervention force” to impede any conflict in the region.

He said it was also important that the fight against trafficking in narcotic drugs was at the centre of the world agenda, as it had a dangerous link with terrorism, and violence in general. The illicit production of the coca leaf was causing irreparable damage in the Peruvian Amazon forest because of logging and burning of forests. Although Peru had dedicated financial and human resources to fight the scourge, it felt it was a solitary effort, as the international community did not offer an adequate and rapid answer. He asked the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to compile a report with updated figures of the global resources dedicated to face illicit traffic in narcotics drugs, as well as identifying key programmes to intensify cooperation with the most affected countries.

Another sensitive issue was climate change and the preservation of the environment, he said. Concrete objectives must be established regarding technological transfer. He reiterated Peru’s proposal to establish a world fund to support measures of mitigation and adaptation and apply a duty of \$0.5 per oil barrel. Peru also proposed the establishment of integrated programmes of adaptation to climate change, financed by the Global Environment Facility and/or the World Bank.

He said the situation of migrants was also an issue of special interest for Peru and other developing countries. His country actively promoted the human rights of migrants and their families and the shared responsibility of countries of origin and host countries in dealing with that phenomenon. Migration was a vital development tool. Xenophobic and discriminated pressures should be avoided.

Finally, he stressed that the democratic process in Honduras had been interrupted abruptly. Measures against the Embassy of Brazil should be repudiated. He called for a dialogue that would lead to the re-establishment of the democratic system. The return of President Manuel Zelaya should be used by all Honduran political forces to establish a Government of unity and national reconciliation, based on the San Jose Agreement.

General THEIN SEIN, Prime Minister of Myanmar, began by saying the global economy was showing a tentative recovery; however, many nations still faced daunting challenges, with developing countries being hardest hit. “The nascent economic recovery has yet to effectively lift low-income countries from the trough.” He commended developed countries for taking the lead in addressing the crisis, but said the views of the developing countries must be considered. Indeed, developing countries had worked hard to combat poverty, and thus, measures taken that could have adverse effects on economic growth should be avoided. Developed countries were also urged to increase their development aid, and he welcomed China’s pledge to increase support for countries hit by the financial crisis.

Turning to climate change, he acknowledged its threat and called for a global response. He looked forward to the Copenhagen Summit in December and hoped for a new agreement to curb greenhouse gas emissions. A multilateral approach was required to address both the issue of climate change and the economic crisis, as those problems exacerbated already existing challenges such as food and energy prices and pandemic diseases. “No single country can effectively overcome these problems acting alone,” he said, adding that the global community must work together.

Speaking about United Nations reform, he called it the single world organization with near universal participation, but added that steps to make it more democratic, effective and accountable had been “painfully slow”. He urged dialogue among nations of different religious and cultural backgrounds to contribute to peace, security and development.

Mankind's greatest threat was weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. " Myanmar believes that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the single absolute guarantee against the threat or use of those weapons," he continued, expressing the hope that all nations would work towards the total elimination of such weapons. However, nations must have the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy, adding that nuclear techniques had widespread application in food, agriculture, health and scientific industries.

Moving on to the issue of sanctions, he said that some powerful countries had been resorting to economic sanctions to pressure developing countries, adding that they were a "political tool against Myanmar and we consider them unjust. I would like to state that such acts must be stopped." He said the goal of sanctions was to influence political and economic systems without taking into account a country's historical and cultural backgrounds.

A transition to democracy was proceeding in Myanmar, and a new State constitution had been approved by almost 93 per cent of the eligible voters in a nation-wide referendum in May 2008. Multiparty general elections would be held in the coming year. "The Government is taking systematic steps to hold free and fair elections," he said, adding that multiparty general elections were a significant step in the transition to a peaceful, modern and developed democratic State.

Touching on cyclone Nargis, which hit Myanmar in May 2008, the Government and the United Nations and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) had established the Tripartite Core Group to undertake relief and reconstruction, and that Group had been given due recognition by the international community. The Post-Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan (PONREPP) had been laid down for 2009-2011, and would require \$691 million over three years. He said that to date, only half that amount had been committed by the international community. However, the Government and people would always remain grateful for the generous help and assistance extended in their hour of need.

PATRICIA ESPINOSA CANTELLANO, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, repeated the energetic call of global civil society, made at the sixty-second annual United Nations Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organization Conference in Mexico City earlier this month, that Governments assume their responsibilities to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. She said protecting human rights was a universal ethical imperative and an obligation that no Government could renounce.

The health emergency Mexico had faced several months ago with the outbreak of H1N1 influenza showed how the United Nations system could help coordinate States' actions and prevent inappropriate unilateral measures. The World Health Organization (WHO) had lent its support to the timely, energetic and responsible actions of the Mexican Government. To Mexico, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals was a commitment undertaken by the State and eradicating poverty was the Government's priority.

She said the international community needed to implement policies that ensured concrete results on the 2002 Monterrey Consensus on development financing, wrapping up the Doha Round of World Trade Organization negotiations, and increasing the contributions of developed countries and multilateral development banks to countries with less growth.

Turning to the financial crisis, she said the recent Group of 20 (G-20) Summit in Pittsburgh showed that the magnitude of the crisis demanded coordinated measures by each country to mitigate the crisis' impact. The United Nations had to understand that the world was undergoing a reconfiguration of the economic global governance and its policies needed to be adjusted accordingly. The austerity imposed by each country had to be reflected in the budgets of the United Nations' organs.

On the issue of global warming, she said Mexico had promoted an innovative financing scheme, the Green Fund, during the preliminary negotiations to the upcoming Copenhagen Climate Change Conference as an economic incentive to move towards the fulfilment of the Kyoto Protocol commitments. The Fund would reward the efforts of States that adopt policies oriented to reducing the levels of greenhouse gases, without jeopardizing their development goals.

She said that the Green Fund would fully respond to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and was not just another financial mechanism that responded to conventional criteria. The scale of each country's contribution would depend on several factors, including the level of development, population size and emissions volume. Least developed countries would not have an obligation to contribute. This initiative of President Felipe Calderón had received growing support among Member States.

On Security Council reform, she said negotiations needed to move towards a compromise that increased the Council's representation, provided improved accountability and did not jeopardize its efficiency. It was absurd to argue for static institutions in a changing world. Mexico had presented its candidacy as a non-permanent Council member for the 2009-2010 term. The Council's legitimacy could be improved by strengthening its work in preventing international crises related to massive human rights violations; preventing conflict by incorporating mandates with its resolutions that link security with assistance for development and humanitarian needs; and make assistance for development a fundamental strategy on conflict prevention and reconstruction.

SHAIKH KHALID BIN AHMED BIN MOHAMED AL KHALIFA, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, said the sixty-fourth session had convened at a time of rapid universal change that placed international relations at a critical juncture. People needed to exert greater efforts towards tolerance for others who did not necessarily share their values and ideas. Common grounds of mutual understanding would help make the world more progressive and secure. Today's serious challenges required a broader global alliance of Member States and the support of the entire United Nations system in the interest of the international community.

Turning to the prolonged Arab-Israeli conflict, he said the Middle East peace process required greater political and diplomatic efforts to reach a two-State solution as part of a comprehensive and just settlement, based on equal security for all nations. The failure to end that conflict was due to the lack of a methodology based on a balanced peace, as well as the conspicuous absence of a binding mechanism of implementation.

The Arab Peace Initiative unequivocally confirmed the Arab position that peace was a strategic and irreversible option, he continued. Bahrain expected the international community, particularly the leading Powers, to exert pressure on Israel to conform to relevant international resolutions and the requirements of the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative. This would include a freeze and dismantlement of all Israeli settlements created in the territories.

He commended the speech delivered last week by United States President Barack Obama, and said Bahrain considered it a term of reference for resumption of the Middle East peace process. Nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and Gulf region was another concern, generated by the Iranian nuclear programme. That issue should be addressed without creating the threat of confrontation. Pursuant to Council resolution 1887 (2009), Bahrain reiterated its appeal to the international community to make the Middle East, including the Gulf region, a zone free of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction.

On other regional issues, Bahrain was concerned with the situation in Iraq and the need to preserve the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and condemned all terrorist activities that destabilized its security and rekindled sectarian hatred. In order to build confidence between the Gulf Cooperation Council and Iran, he said it was also imperative to settle the question of the occupied islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, either through direct negotiations between the two parties or referral to the International Court of Justice.

Bahrain also reaffirmed the need for efforts to help Yemen, under the supervision of the United Nations, deal with its refugee problem and restore stability. Preserving stability and unity in the Sudan was important, as was security in Somalia. He said Bahrain reaffirmed its position supporting the sovereignty of Morocco over all its national territory and called on the international community to support the negotiations process initiated by the Council.

BRUNO RODRÍGUEZ PARRILLA, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba, said the global community had reacted with "profound optimism" to the change of Government in Washington and it appeared that a period of unilateralism in United States foreign policy had ended. Although the conciliatory speech from the White House had raised great hopes about change, dialogue and cooperation, Washington's real capacity to "get over" ideological trends that threatened the world under the previous Administration was uncertain, as the neoconservative forces that promoted the use of force and domination still held the reins of influence. The detention centre in Guantanamo, which had usurped Cuban territory, had not been shut down. Occupation troops in Iraq had not been withdrawn and the war in Afghanistan was expanding.

The new United States Government had announced measures in April to abolish some of the most brutal actions taken by the former George W. Bush Administration, and while that had been a positive step, it was insufficient, he said. For example, American companies had received authority to carry out telecom operations in Cuba, but restrictions that prevented their implementation had not been modified. Nor had there been any sign that the Government would end the "immoral practice" of misappropriating Cuban funds that were frozen in United States banks. Despite laws such as the Helms-Burton Act, the United States President had broad powers to modify the implementation of the blockade.

Describing options, he said the United States could allow Cuba to buy products containing more than 10

per cent of American components or technology anywhere, regardless of trademark. The United States Treasury could stop freezing and confiscating third-country transfers and Washington could lift the ban preventing third-party vessels from entering United States ports until 180 days after touching any Cuban port. Further, the President could allow American citizens to travel to Cuba.

The indisputable fact was that the United States Government continued to ignore the General Assembly's overwhelming appeal to end its blockade. Just two weeks ago, that country's new President had stated that it was in the United States national interest to maintain sanctions against Cuba. Recalling that Cuba, for years, had shown its willingness to normalize relations, he said Cuban President Raúl Castro had reiterated the desire to sustain a respectful "arm's length" dialogue with the United States, without overshadowing his country's sovereignty.

Among the topics Cuba considered necessary in any future discussions with the United States were: the lifting of the blockade; Cuba's exclusion from the list of countries that sponsored terrorism; abolition of the Cuban Adjustment Act; compensation for economic and human damages; return of territory occupied by the Guantanamo Naval Base; end of radio and television "aggression" against Cuba and an end to funding for domestic subversion. Also, the United States President had the constitutional basis to release the five Cuban anti-terrorism fighters who had been imprisoned in the United States for 11 years.

Describing Cuba's efforts, he said that, on Cuba's proposal to cooperate in the fight against drug trafficking, terrorism and human smuggling, his Government had held "fruitful" talks on migration and resumption of direct postal services with the United States. Cuba maintained "fraternal" cooperation with tens of countries from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Even under a blockade, Cuba had shown its ability to cope with the global economic crisis and impacts of climate change, which cost the economy 20 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) last year. Patriotism, social justice and the decision to defend interdependence were part of Cuban national identity.

Regarding regional events, he said Latin America and the Caribbean were living through a dramatic juncture, and the coup d'état in Honduras reflected that fact. It was not clear why the plane that had kidnapped the legitimate Honduran President Jose Manuel Zelaya had stopped at the United States Air Base at Palmerola. He should be fully and unconditionally reinstated in the exercise of his constitutional duties and the siege against the Brazilian embassy in Tegucigalpa must end. Such events coincided with renewed United States interest in establishing military bases in Latin America and reactivation of its Fourth Fleet, which threatened progressive processes, particularly in Venezuela. Amid such moves, he called for greater contributions from Latin American and Caribbean peoples towards their independence.

As for the global economic crisis, he said forecasts for recovery early next year were not based on solid data and developing countries had been victims of irrational models of industrialized nations' consumption, exploitation and corruption. Measures adopted were mere palliatives that perpetuated deficiencies of an unjust economic system and he called for promoting a fully inclusive international dialogue with active developing-country participation. "We need to establish a new international economic order based on solidarity, justice, equity and sustainable development," he said, urging the United Nations to play a key role in those efforts. In closing, he reiterated Cuba's appreciation for the Assembly's solidarity in its struggle against aggression and the blockade.

ABDELWAHEB ABDALLAH, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, said the world was witnessing deep and rapid changes that had conferred new dimensions upon international relations and altered the balances which had long governed them. The scientific and technological evolution had brought about considerable progress in a number of fields, reduced distances and improved quality of life. However, such developments had not put an end to hot spots of tension, nor to the varied conflicts, extremist trends and violence. Those "disturbing paradoxes" contradicted the foundational values and principles of the United Nations, he said.

He went on to say that the present structure of the United Nations was the outcome of the conditions of its creation more than half a century ago, and no longer reflected the reality of the new world situation. Thus the process of Organizational reform must be accelerated, particularly with regard to enlarging the Security Council, and making that body more transparent and efficient. However, he said that, despite its "complex and intermingling character", the world situation would "only strengthen" the international community's attachment to the United Nations, since it was more necessary than ever to disseminate the culture of tolerance, dialogue and respect for differences.

Efforts of Tunisia to further the cause of tolerance included the 1995 adoption of the Carthage Charter on Tolerance; Tunisia's 2001 call for dialogue among civilisations; the creation of the university level of the Ben Ali Chair for dialogue among civilisations and religions; and the adoption of the Kairouan Declaration by the

“International Conference on the Dialogue of Civilisations and Cultural Diversity” held in June.

In that regard, he also stressed the importance of constantly listening to the concerns of youth, saying “they are our real wealth”. He reiterated Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali’s call to proclaim 2010 “International Year of the Youth”, including a World Youth Conference to be attended by young people from all parts of the world and to be concluded with the issuing of an International Pact, uniting world youth around common universal values. He looked forward to the General Assembly’s support for the adoption of such a resolution during its current session.

With regard to the effort to contain terrorism and extremism, he said Tunisia had been one of the first countries to warn against the dangers of this phenomenon since the 1990s, and he renewed the call to convene an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations in order to elaborate a code of conduct to fight terrorism by which all sides would be bound.

He said that conflicts in Africa had devastated the continent and put its development process in jeopardy, slowing its growth and negatively affecting its societies. He thus called upon the United Nations and the Security Council to support the efforts of the African Union and its Member States, and to stand beside the African peoples to help regain security and stability, and overcome the effects of conflict and war.

For its part, Tunisia had set up an initiative adopted by the General Assembly in 2002 for a World Solidarity Fund aimed at fighting poverty and laying foundations for a solidarity-based development among nations. He renewed the call to operationalize that fund, so that it could provide assistance to developing nations in general, particularly in Africa. He further said that Tunisia was keen to strengthen its relations with the European Union, and noted that these relations had witnessed remarkable progress due to both sides’ determination to upgrade their ties to the level of advanced partnership, thus opening wide prospects for enhancing cooperation in all fields and enabling Tunisia to further integrate its regional and international environment.

OSMAN MOHAMMED SALEH, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Eritrea, said the United Nations had been founded to address the challenges of the post-World War I and II world order and could not realistically cope with the exigencies of the twenty-first century. The Organization should have embarked on a process of transformation 20 years ago, when the cold war ended. The global financial and economic crisis was a mere symptom of the consequences of inaction, and it was clear the ageing world order had been hijacked to serve the interests of the few.

He went on to say that financial institutions had been left to operate unchecked, without restrictions or regulations. Illegitimate military and coercive blunders had been allowed to fester. A culture of “politics of fear” and “management by crisis” had been established as a norm. World peace and security had been imperilled beyond measure.

Moreover, despite the fervent calls for reform by the international community, the few who controlled the outdated world order were not attuned to the notion of change; they had regarded the crises and suffering as ordinary historical imperatives. In the global maelstrom, none had been more exposed to harm than those of the marginalized in Africa. The continent had become riddled with crises and conflict. Special interest groups had rendered the Africans paralysed. When it came to resolution, Africans found themselves dependent on the goodwill of others. The role of Africa in the United Nations, as well as in other international organizations, could be described as inconsequential.

The need for fundamental change in the Organization and other international bodies should not be left to the goodwill of the few. He said the change needed to transform anew the outdated world order should not only be implemented through reform. The desired change should not only be limited to increasing the number of seats in the Security Council. It should, rather, steer the world away from its dangerous path of descent, where it was controlled by a powerful few, and redirected towards a path that would ensure the safety of all. The African continent needed to expend more efforts to achieve that goal, he said, stressing that fundamental reform required collective commitment.

It would not do justice to dwell on numerous current events, or consequences spawned by the fundamental flaws of the world order, he continued. Doing so would only serve to confuse and distort the bigger picture. He had, therefore, chosen not to address important issues of the Horn of Africa and Eritrea’s specific issue of illegal occupation of sovereign Eritrean territory, which awaited responsible and urgent action.

WALID AL-MOUALEM, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Syria, said that the Middle East was among the most tension-ridden regions of the world, and the situation there remained “ominous”. Despite calls for

comprehensive solutions, “paying lip service” to the need for peace was categorically different from working towards that goal. He said that Israel had “no qualms” about committing internationally forbidden acts and breaching international law, as it had been encouraged and protected by the previous Administration in Washington.

He said Israel continued to lay a “stifling siege” to Gaza in contravention of the most rudimentary humanitarian principles and tenets of international law. He pointed to the recent report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on Gaza, saying that it had found Israel to have committed “grave violations” of international law, including war crimes and possible crimes against humanity.

While the new reprioritization of the problem in the Middle East was reassuring, the engagement by the new United States Administration, members of the Security Council, the European Union, the Organization for Islamic Conference (OIC), and the Non-Aligned Movement had been continuously countered by Israeli measures and positions that ignored rudimentary “givens” of the peace process. He said Israel had refused to freeze illegitimate settlement building and by so doing was in breach of its obligations under international law. Moreover, Israel continued to confiscate Palestinian lands, build its “apartheid wall”, and expel inhabitants from their homes.

Continuing that thread, he stressed that peace and occupation could not coexist. Syria sought a strategic peace based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). To that end, he said Syria had entered into indirect talks with Israel through Turkish mediators and sought to arrive at a common ground that would ultimately enable the launch of direct negotiations. However, the absence of genuine political will to make peace, and Israel’s “war of aggression” waged against Gaza earlier in the year, had brought this pursuit to a halt.

He went on to say that Iraq “continued to bleed”, and that safeguarding that country’s independence and Arab-Islamic identity was a serious concern. It was, therefore, urgent to build Iraqi unity based on national reconciliation that included “Iraqis of all stripes”. Syria continuously condemned all terrorist acts claiming the lives of innocent victims in Iraq, and called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops, and for the restoration of full independence and sovereignty. He said Syria was dedicated to strengthening bilateral Syrian-Iraqi relations.

While strongly condemning the recent “Bloody Wednesday” terrorist bombings in Iraq, he said he had been surprised to hear accusations levelled that Syria had harboured those responsible, calling these allegations both extremely unfortunate and devoid of any truth. Syria was open to all suggestions aimed at solving the current crisis, and had demanded that real evidence be made available to substantiate the claims. However, no such evidence had been put forward.

With regards to the economic and financial crisis, he said answers must be sought that consecrated sound practices and remedied systemic imbalances that were bound to affect all in a globalized world. As for climate change, he said it was the responsibility of rich States to provide all forms of support to poorer countries, as they had earned such support. He also called for a larger participation by developing countries in the work of the G-20, so as to allow them to advance proposals to overcome the crisis.

AICHATOU MINDAODOU, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Niger, declared that observing the theme of this year’s general debate -- multilateralism -- would help realize the objectives of peace and development. In addition, multilateralism, which was evidenced by cooperation between the Security Council and other regional organizations such as the African Union, would produce lasting solutions towards peace and security in Africa.

She said that progress had been achieved on conflict prevention and management -- and that there was goodwill and concerted action on peace. The Tripoli Summit had reflected a desire to take on issues that had always halted progress, she said, and thus, the theme of multilateralism had taken on real meaning.

She declared that the United Nations must be “a melting pot to achieve a more balanced community” and that all States must tackle and manage the effects of the global financial crisis. In addition, she mentioned the need for inclusive solutions to other issues: food security; climate change; and conflict resolution. Further, the global financial crisis had highlighted “our ongoing concern for a more inclusive transparent approach that would take into account the concerns of large and small countries”. Progress had been mixed and meant that “we must step up to make sure we respect our commitments.”

The Niger, for its part, had made progress in fighting poverty and in grass-roots development through specially designed projects in nearly all sectors, including the deepest corners of the country. Those projects included schools, clinics, wells, drinking water, and micro-credit programmes, especially for rural women, who were often the most vulnerable.

She mentioned a referendum in August 2009 to adopt a new constitution, which would allow for a new presidential regime. She reassured development partners and civil society who were concerned with the political situation that Niger was “not in a situation of lawlessness or insurrection”, but a place where everyone could express his or her opinion. The Niger was resolutely committed to building its future and helping its people to overcome poverty.

Turning to disarmament, she said Niger was at the forefront of the continent’s discussion of that issue, and she noted that her country had ratified several agreements on small arms and light weapons, an important contribution to peace. Highlighting several other issues, she called for a greater recognition of Africa’s role on the Security Council and also expressed hope that the upcoming Copenhagen Summit on Climate Change would heed results.

She expressed gratitude to the Assembly President’s decision to devote attention to dialogue among cultures and civilizations, and urged that “we must maintain the momentum”, something which was helped by high-level meetings on religions and civilizations, as well as an upcoming conference in the Philippines on inter-religious dialogue.

GHAZI SALAHUDDIN ATABANI, Advisor to the President of the Sudan, said millions of people were looking to the Assembly in the wake of suffocating crises, traces of which still lingered, especially amid developing countries’ dashed hopes for development and stability. Non-compliance with international law had led to a policy of double standards on the international scene, which made the world less secure. As Chair of the “Group of 77” developing countries and China, the Sudan had paid special attention to the global economic and financial crisis, which had created more poverty, hunger and unemployment, raised commodity prices and diverted foreign direct investment.

He said the Group was deeply concerned at its impacts on African States, least developed countries, small island States and countries emerging from conflict. Industrialized nations had a moral duty to find solutions, notably in the areas of funding, capacity-building and elimination of barriers to trade and investment. On reform of the global financial system, he said developing country participation in norm-setting and decision-making was of central importance, and the open-ended working group created to follow up on the outcome of the High-level Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis must urgently discharge its mandate.

Regarding climate change, he expressed hope that developed nations, on the basis of their historic responsibility to address the issue, would provide new and additional financial resources to help build capacities and develop technologies. Meanwhile, he said the absence of democracy in the Security Council had been a major factor in reducing the United Nations’ ability to respond to new challenges.

Indeed, he continued, unilateral sanctions hostile to trade and investment had violated international law, while a misused concept of terrorism had led to equating victims with aggressors, as was the case with the Palestinians. Their situation had gravely compromised the United Nations’ reputation. On the basis of the African position, he called for revitalizing the United Nations and reforming the Security Council, and more closely integrating the United Nations and regional organizations to promote development.

For its part, the Sudan had made peace a strategic goal with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, he said, noting that the pact had established rights on the basis citizenship and outlined wealth-sharing principles in line with the norms of equity. However, donors had not fulfilled their pledges, which reflected negatively on the agreement, especially in the area of development, rehabilitation and reintegration of former combatants. Recalling that the Sudan would hold executive elections in April, he invited the international community to provide financial and material support to those efforts.

Expressing profound concern at recent armed tribal conflicts in southern Sudan, he said responsibility for the maintenance of peace in that region belonged to the Government of southern Sudan. The signing the Darfur Peace Agreement in Abuja, under the aegis of the African Union, affirmed his Government’s commitment to resolving the Darfur problem. Darfur had seen positive developments, thanks, in part, to his Government’s cooperation with the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) through the tripartite mechanism. Khartoum’s signing of the humanitarian agreement with the United States Special Envoy to the Sudan further supported those efforts.

He said his Government was prepared to work at any time to ensure the success of negotiations in Doha, in the framework of the Afro-Arab Initiative and under the efforts of the joint mediator, and welcomed the United States’ readiness to help find a solution to the Darfur question. His Government also appealed to armed

groups to “muster the will for a solution”, as the Sudanese were more capable than any others of solving their problems. He called on the global community to follow through on pledges to take stringent decisions against those who impeded peace talks. In addition, his Government was keenly interested in having constructive relations with its neighbours and was ready to cooperate with a view to ending regional hotbeds of tension. The Sudan wished to normalize relations with Chad, in line with all agreements signed with that country.

Indeed, the causes of conflict in Darfur were well known and seen in the paucity of resources, environmental degradation and impacts of climate change, he said. They could be cured through development and poverty eradication, however, an unjust campaign had been undertaken against his country, which included an agenda designed to exploit the Darfur crisis and obfuscate facts.

He said the Government of National Unity had made progress in the application of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and that the country had started a new phase of political reform, peaceful devolution of authority and work to end infighting. The International Criminal Court’s selective targeting of the Sudanese leadership was a losing attempt to hamper the peace process and prolong suffering. It had been condemned by regional and international organizations. The achievement of security and stability in Darfur required those conditions to be urgently rectified. In closing, he called for renewed resolve to foster multilateral action to address world challenges.

ALEXIS THAMBWE MWAMBA, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, said that Africa, particularly the central and southern parts of the continent, had made healthy progress in settling conflicts in Burundi and the Central African Republic, promotion of good-neighbourly relations between Chad and the Sudan and, albeit slowly, promotion of democracy and consolidation of peace and stability in Southern Africa. He supported the mediation efforts by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Madagascar and rejected any unilateral decision that would violate the Maputo Agreement.

He said that the global economic crisis had undermined economies worldwide, and his country suffered from a drop in commodity prices, growing cost of imports, declining growth rate and diminishing tax revenues. The crisis had led to a shortfall of resources to finance infrastructure. At a time when the country was emerging from conflict, there was a lack of resources to establish State-wide authority. The Democratic Republic of the Congo was also affected by climate change. He welcomed the high-level event last week on the issue. If rising sea levels and advance of deserts, among other consequences, could not be stopped, the world would move towards a disaster and the African continent would be the first to bear the cost.

As for United Nations reform, he reiterated his plea for the full representation of Africa in the decision-making bodies, particularly the Security Council. Any viable reform must take into account the political and numerical weight of Africa in the Assembly. Addressing the issue of the responsibility to protect, he said that each State must protect its people against war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and ethnic cleansing. The principal role of the international community consisted in determining how it could support States in that regard, particularly countries in post-conflict situations.

Three years after the successful elections in his country, it was at long last in the process of normalizing democracy, for which the rule of law was an urgent need. Peace and security could only continue if the population realized it was established through fair means. Measures against corruption in that regard had begun to bear fruit. A successful transition from war to peace was not possible without mechanisms that could provide a sense of justice for all citizens.

Sexual violence and rape in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo were the most serious crimes humanity had seen in the twenty-first century. Justice must be restored to the raped women and girls. The Government was putting an end to impunity for the perpetrators of those crimes, whether they were military or civilian. Describing actions, in cooperation with Rwanda and Uganda, against the rebels of the Lord’s Resistance Army and the Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda (FDLR), he said the authority of the State was being restored and peace was gradually being established.

Like other post-conflict countries, the Democratic Republic of the Congo underscored the urgent need to hold an international conference on financing of reconstruction as soon as possible, he said. Coming out of a long war, his country was eminently aware of the importance of regional cooperation. It had learned that the most expensive peace was less onerous than the cheapest war.

YOUSEF BIN ALAWI BIN ABDULLAH, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Oman, declared that the United Nations had made great achievements in its more than 60 years of existence. However, the Palestinian issue remained unsolved despite the efforts of Arab countries and the wider international community. The Arab Peace Initiative was the most appropriate way to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict, which should include the return

of Arab lands occupied since 1967, the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on the west Bank and the removal of all illegal Israeli settlements. "We call upon Israel to seize the historical opportunity to establish a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East," he said.

Turning to the situation in other countries, he welcomed recent positive developments in Iraq, and expressed the hope that such developments would continue in order to achieve security and stability there, as well as contribute to the success of comprehensive national reconciliation efforts. With regard to Darfur, he looked forward to seeing positive results from the relevant peace talks, and hoped that the concerned parties could reach a political agreement that would achieve stability and security.

As for Somalia, he welcomed efforts to achieve peace, and called all parties within the country to renounce violence. He also expressed support for international efforts to combat piracy in the Horn of Africa. On Iran, he welcomed cooperation between Iran, the international community and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In terms of the global economy, he said there was no doubt that efforts exerted by rich industrial nations had restored stability to capital markets, but urged for more efforts to arrive at consensus on the Doha Round of trade talks, which would take into account the interests of all States. He also called for wealthy countries to increase spending on agriculture research, food security, and the provision of water and medicine.

He reaffirmed Oman's condemnation of terrorism in its forms and manifestations, and emphasized the continuing support to eliminate and combat it, according to international conventions and treaties. He said that the country would cooperate with the United Nations and international community in combating terrorism.

He turned to environmental issues, saying that Oman was making great efforts to preserve its territorial waters and was enacting legislation in order to put environmental considerations in line with development strategies. He hoped the United Nations Climate Conference, set to be held in Copenhagen this December, would lead to a long-term practical plan to protect the environment.

WILFRED ELRINGTON, Attorney General, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Belize, said that last week, his country had marked its twenty-eighth year of independence, but even amid that celebration, people had been concerned about the crises that were threatening to destroy the very planet that sustained all. In the aftermath of the global economic crisis, Belize was experiencing declining levels of revenue, diminishing remittances and crushing debt servicing obligations, among other things. It was also threatened by hurricanes and floods of greater intensity, damage to its great barrier reef because of warmer water, and illicit trafficking in drugs and arms. The population was also being ravaged by HIV/AIDS. All those crises had put the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals in real jeopardy, he said.

While Member States had endorsed the principle of sovereign equality, it was nourished more in breach than in observance. He said the "club model" of multilateral cooperation -- centred around the five permanent Security Council members, the weighted voting in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, and the proliferation of groupings such as the G-8 and the G-20 -- suffered from a crisis of legitimacy. There was a need for a new framework of multilateral cooperation in which all nations could have meaningful input into the decision-making process on issues that had a direct impact on their interests. That required fundamental structural reform and not mere cursory efforts at technocratic coherence.

He said that Belize, a middle-income country, had made rapid strides in building up its international financial services industry. In 2008, that industry had accounted for some 9 per cent of Belize's GDP. His country had also developed a regulatory framework and made commitments to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to improve transparency. At the same time, however, the G-20 had reactivated its harmful tax initiative and some members had called for complete annihilation of the industry. A more equitable and effective way to address the issue of offshore financial services was through a mechanism for multilateral cooperation wherein all States participated on an equal footing.

Climate change presented the most serious threat to the country's sustainable development and viability, he continued. The urgency of a global response to that issue was inescapable. Despite national and regional actions, global greenhouse gas emissions continued to increase. A response must include an agreement to implement ambitious mitigation targets and increased support for adaptation. As small island developing States were already being impacted by climate change, avoiding adverse effects on such particularly vulnerable countries should be the benchmark for determining targets and support levels.

GEORGE YEO, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore, said the global financial system had gone into seizure as the Assembly met last year. The situation looked less bleak today. Yet, even with the signs of a recovery, it would be a mistake to think the global economic crisis would end soon. The turmoil emanated from

excesses and imbalances that must be corrected. Without major restructuring of regulatory systems and institutions, those imbalances would only get worse. While the excesses in the financial sector triggered the crisis, the deeper underlying cause was the global imbalance between the producers and consumers and between savings and consumption.

Rebalancing the global economy was both an economic and political exercise. The rise of Asia was altering the global power structure and nothing revealed that change more than the complex relationship between the United States and China. China, with its reserves of more than \$2 trillion, was heavily invested in the United States dollar, making it a major stakeholder in the United States economy. Yet it would be a multipolar world as Europe and Japan remained heavyweights and India, Russia, Brazil and others became more major players, he said. Such a world meant more effective global governance across many sectors, from human rights to international financial regulation to efforts to combat pandemics, climate change and terrorism.

Turning to world trade, he said that, with effective political leadership, the World Trade Organization could still function well. Once that leadership was supplied, the Doha trade Round could be concluded within the next few years. Yet it was a dangerous period as domestic politics in many countries favoured greater protectionism. The economic crisis was a major challenge to global governance and he welcomed the pledge made recently by the G-20 leaders in Pittsburgh to adopt policies for a “strong, sustained and balanced” growth. If the largest economies did not follow through, the current respite could lead to a larger economic crisis that could possibly involve the foreign exchange markets.

Though not ideal, the G-20 process was presently the most important driver of change. The United Nations was too intricate and lacked the structure to deal with issues such as a major financial crisis. The old G-8 had lacked representation and the “G-8 Plus” was unacceptable because it put the additional participants at a disadvantage, he said. The IMF was never designed to tackle a crisis of such a scale and it, along with the World Bank, needed reform -- a major subject on the G-20 agenda.

Since most Members of the United Nations were not in the G-20, it was important for them to have a say in the role the G-20 would play as an agent of change in global governance. United Nations Member States should support the G-20 process in a way that ensured their own interests, as small States would then be taken into account. The formal establishment of the G-20 as a new international institution last week nevertheless marked a new beginning, he said.

PETER BALAZS, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Hungary, said his country had especially been hard hit by the downturn of the world economy, but the Government had responded by implementing a number of stabilization measures that were already resulting in positive trends. Global crises required all to act together in the spirit of shared responsibility. All nations shared the responsibility to develop and maintain sufficiently flexible international arrangements capable of responding to modern challenges. Besides desperately needed stimulus measures in developed and developing countries, he said urgent issues such as ensuring increased food and energy security should also be addressed.

He said climate change threatened the very foundations of life. A comprehensive strategy was needed to face all dimensions of that phenomenon, and actions should be considered as an opportunity to achieve prosperity and growth, not an additional burden. Preventing conflicts also remained high on the agenda and the United Nations, in cooperation with regional organizations, continued to play a key role to that end. International efforts in Kosovo were a good example of effective cooperation among stakeholders such as the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Full integration of the Western Balkans into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures was a means to promote stability and prosperity in the region.

A peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Georgia must be based on full respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. He deplored the decision that had led to the termination of monitoring activities of the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in parts of Georgia. The resumption of international presence there was necessary. He went on to say that Iran’s nuclear programme continued to be a matter of most serious concern, and urged Iran to engage in substantive negotiations on its nuclear programme without further delay.

He said the promotion and protection of human rights, including the rights of national minorities, was high on the Hungarian agenda. The Government attached great importance to the work of the United Nations Minority Forum, as some “alarming tendencies” had a detrimental effect on the political participation, cultural life and education opportunities of minorities. As a new member of the Human Rights Council, Hungary had prepared a feasibility study on the establishment of the Budapest Centre for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities. He strongly supported efforts to strengthen the United Nations’ ability to adapt to new realities.

DAW PENJO, Foreign Secretary of Bhutan, said it had been 18 months since his country had successfully shifted to a democratic constitutional monarchy and it had since taken concrete steps to ensure that democracy benefited every citizen. The people had embraced democracy, which now had a strong foundation. The world's multiple interlinked global crises, whether food, energy or poverty, had been exacerbated by the influenza pandemic. That pandemic had exposed the inadequacies of the health systems of many countries and the international community needed to coordinate its actions to detect and contain such pandemic outbreaks.

Turning to the Millennium Development Goals, he said Bhutan was clearly on track to achieve most of its targets, but faced major challenges in gender equality in higher school education, and the area of maternal health. It needed continued development assistance to meet these goals. At a meeting in July 2008, Bhutan launched the Tenth Five-Year Plan with the primary goal of reducing poverty and implementing the Millennium Development-based initiatives.

On the issue of climate change, he said Bhutan's fragile mountain ecology faced potential risks, such as an adverse impact on its vital agricultural sector. The erratic weather patterns and threats of glacial lake outburst floods were very concerning. Out of about 3,000 glacial lakes, 26 had been identified as being in imminent danger of bursting. Cyclone Aila, which hit the Bay of Bengal in May, had a disastrous impact in Bhutan, impacting power and water supplies and damaging roads, bridges and other infrastructure.

He said Bhutan had always maintained that climate change needed to be addressed in the framework of sustainable development. International efforts needed to move towards replacing unsustainable practices and creating a low-carbon economy with the use of renewable and energy-efficient technologies. Bhutan would chair and host the sixteenth Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation in April 2010, which would place climate change and the environment as its theme.

He said Bhutan believed reform of the United Nations, particularly the revitalization of the Assembly and reform of the Security Council, were very important. It supported expansion of the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Council and backed India, Japan, Brazil, Germany and two countries from Africa as permanent members.

With the increasing frequency of severe natural calamities and their negative impact, there was a need for an institutionalized disaster preparedness and response mechanism at the national, regional and global levels. He said the creation of the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) was an important step towards providing disaster relief urgently for lifesaving operations. Bhutan had made a modest contribution to the Fund to show its support. His delegation fully supported efforts to address the world's common challenges.

NAHA MINT MOUKNASS, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mauritania, expressed her faith in the United Nations and commended the Secretary-General's efforts towards broad attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Mauritania was emerging from political crisis and had embarked on a process of resolution, which had been enshrined through the Dakar peace accord. That, she said, provided for an elaborated electoral agenda that would be overseen by the Government and the Ministries of Home Affairs and Finance.

She went on to say that General Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz had been re-elected on 18 July winning 54 per cent of votes in a transparent poll that had been overseen by international monitoring bodies. While thanking Libya's President, Muammar Qaddafi, for being the first to call for a solution to normalize the situation in Mauritania, and Senegal's President, Abdoulaye, Wade for accompanying the signing of the peace agreement, she reaffirmed that her country was determined to uphold peace, stability and the rule of law. Also, Mauritania attached great importance to the Maghreb Union, the Arab League, and was likewise committed to the African Union and to the principles of the United Nations.

Turning to United Nations reform, she said a restructured Security Council was where Africa and the Arab world ought to have permanent seats, given that the latter made up 11 per cent of the world's population. The world continued to be wrecked by a financial crisis, which was preventing development, especially in least developed countries. Those countries would face great obstacles, she warned, urging the international community to act rapidly so those nations could avoid disaster by restoring trust, building confidence, achieving economic progress and creating jobs.

She also urged the international community to provide financial aid to poor countries, citing previous pledges by developed countries to contribute \$1 trillion to revitalize the global economy, \$50 billion of which had

been earmarked to help Africa and the least developed countries. The economic, development and environmental dimensions of climate change were interlinked, she said. Mauritania was one of the 10 most affected States by that scourge. She requested developed countries to limit their greenhouse gas emissions, and expressed the hope that the forthcoming climate talks in Copenhagen would lead to a successful outcome.

Turning to regional peace and security, she said Mauritania followed the issue of Western Sahara very closely, and aimed at finding a final solution to bolster peace and stability in the region. Mauritania rejected the International Criminal Court's arrest warrant for the Sudanese President, Omar Bashir, she said, adding that it countered international law and hindered the peace process.

PETER POWER, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Ireland, expressed support for United Nations reform to strengthen the Organization's ability to meet the challenges of climate change, global poverty and hunger, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and the economic crisis, and he urged Member States to ensure a successful outcome for the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. He said that more urgency was needed towards Security Council reform to make that body more representative and reflective of twenty-first century realities, as well as to improve its functioning and transparency.

Noting that 1 billion people on the planet went to bed hungry each evening as a result of "an enormous collective failure", he said that hunger's "eradication and nothing less [...] must be our goal". Further, the outline for common necessary action was clear: address the fundamental causes; invest in agriculture, agricultural research and support for women farmers; invest in rural infrastructure; enhance nutrition; and support national and regional plans. Ireland had made food security and related sectors a cornerstone of its aid programme, and would ensure that 20 per cent of that programme would be hunger-focused by 2012.

Ireland was proud of its long-standing contribution to United Nations peacekeeping, he continued, and welcomed the "New Horizons" initiatives, as well as the Organization's partnerships with regional organizations in peacekeeping. Ireland also contributed to conflict resolution, using lessons derived from its experiences with the Northern Ireland peace process. On disarmament, he noted that only 10 ratifications were needed for the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions adopted last year, and urged Governments that had not yet done so to sign and ratify the document. He further encouraged all Member States to work constructively for a successful outcome to next year's review conference on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The Human Rights Council and other human rights mechanisms must be able to address difficult rights situations in a timely and effective manner, he said, urging the cooperation of all Member States with the work of the International Criminal Court and the international war crimes tribunals. He added that it was imperative to give practical effect to the concept of the responsibility to protect.

He welcomed efforts to reinvigorate the Middle East peace process and called for a halt to all settlement activities and improved living conditions in the Palestinian territories. "Ordinary people must see in their daily lives the benefits which will derive from peace and must be encouraged to take risks for peace." He said all border crossings in Gaza must be immediately opened to normal commercial and humanitarian traffic and that there must be accountability for the most serious violations of international law which had occurred during the Gaza conflict at the start of the year.

On other matters, he urged Iran to comply fully with all its obligations and commitments to protect the human rights of its citizens, to cease uranium enrichment and answer all questions regarding its nuclear activities. He urged collective support for the United Nations-African Union mediation in Darfur and for full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. He also condemned the recent conviction of Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar and drew attention to the urgent need for improvement in the humanitarian situation in Sri Lanka.

ABUBAKR AL-QIRBI, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yemen, said his country was witnessing complex development challenges, including some that were a result of the world economic crisis and others deriving from a shortage of resources due to the fall of oil prices on international markets. Shortages in water resources also presented challenges, as did the limited commitments of development partners.

In addition, he went on, the Government faced challenges from subversive groups that exploited religious doctrines to gain support for their causes. The Government's need to fight those saboteurs had led to the displacement of thousands of people. The Government had dealt responsibly with the situation. In cooperation with international organizations, it had provided safe camps and had implemented measures to meet the needs of the internally displaced persons within the population.

A state of emergency had been declared a number of times so as to open corridors and reach refugees

with delivery of aid. Each time, he said, the saboteurs had seized the opportunity to make false allegations against the Government. In truth, the subversives had broken the accords to which they had agreed and the challenge they presented was growing due to the rise of Al-Qaida. Some separatist elements were also taking advantage of growing freedom to pursue their aims even though a separatist policy had been rejected in 1994.

He asked donor States and development partners to extend generous support to promote the Government's development programmes and to reduce the level of poverty in the country, recalling the fact that those were two very important elements in defeating terrorism. He also said the Government was working to increase employment and improve its partnerships with civil society. Mutual agreement had led to a postponement of April elections to allow for a reform of election law. Meanwhile, the Government had taken measures toward the elections to come, by the appointment of local governors to decentralize the electoral process.

Turning to other situations, he called for a resolution of the Palestinian situation and said the unjust blockade imposed on Gaza was a total disregard of the Palestinian people's rights. Further, the Israeli policy was a contravention of all United Nations resolutions on the matter. In Somalia, the international community must help rebuild the Somali structures needed for governing, and must lend support to the efforts of the Transitional Government. All Somali parties must agree to cooperate in re-establishing the Government, and outsiders must keep from interfering. The situation in Somalia presented serious socio-economic, political and health costs to Yemen. The security of ports in the region must be reinforced. And finally, Egyptian efforts to promote peace in Sudan were welcome. The decision of the International Criminal Court with regard to Sudan's leader must be nullified as it did not help to promote peace efforts in the region.

VLADIMIR NOROV, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, said that States and institutions were making unprecedented efforts to overcome the global financial and economic crisis, but that regional and national anti-crisis programmes came at great cost and did not guarantee stabilization of the world financial market, growth in demand or the revival of the industrial economy. Many large countries pursued protectionist policies and restricted access to their markets for goods from developing countries. Measures taken by individual States must be coordinated globally, and new rules for regulation of the financial market must be developed to ensure greater control over the use of State and corporate financial assets by transnational and national banks.

Uzbekistan was using its own model to transition from centralized planning to a free market, and was currently carrying out an anti-crisis programme for 2009-2012, he said. Thanks to those measures, the country was macroeconomically stable, had steady annual economic growth of between 8 per cent and 9 per cent, low rates of inflation, was attractive to foreign investment and had seen increase in the general population's real income. During 2009, GDP has amounted to 8.2 per cent.

He spoke of environmental security and potential accidents at giant hydro-power installations in the region, which could seriously undermine the fragile ecological balance. Referencing the accident, caused by human error and design flaws, at the Sajano-Shushenskaya power station in the Russian Federation, he expressed concern that similar installations were operating on the Amu-Darya and Syr-Darya border rivers, which provided water to the populations of all countries in the region.

Further, two large hydro-electric power stations were under consideration for the Ragun and Amu-Darya rivers without consideration for the shrinking glaciers that were the source of their waters or the fact that the proposed sites were in areas of strong seismic activity. He insisted that such projects only be implemented following impartial studies by international experts under the auspices of the United Nations.

The war in Afghanistan, he said, was a principal source of concern for international and regional security. There was no military solution to the "Afghan problem." The solution lay in the reconstruction of Afghanistan's economy, its communication and social infrastructure, and in the involvement of the Afghan people in that process. There had been no considered or well-organized negotiation process among parties to the conflict.

He stressed the importance of respecting the Afghan people's historical and ethno-demographic roots and proposed the creation of a United Nations "Contact Group 6+3", which would comprise all States bordering Afghanistan, plus the Russian Federation, the United States and NATO. President Karimov had stressed that such an initiative involving neighbouring countries could produce an accord both in and around Afghanistan.

He further encouraged greater cooperation between the United Nations and regional groups. As current chair of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Uzbekistan intended to develop a real partnership with the United Nations in such areas as security and stability, economic, social and humanitarian development and

other spheres of mutual interest. That would strengthen regional and international security and promote sustainable development in the region's countries. He called on Member States to support a draft resolution for "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization."

OLDEMIRO BALOI, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique, said his country was preparing for general elections, which would include, for the first time, voting for provincial parliaments. "These elections bear witness to our strong political will and commitment to further strengthen democracy in the country," he said, adding that, because of such political advances, Mozambique's economy had become more stable. However, while GDP growth rates had averaged 7.8 per cent over the last five years, the global financial and economic crisis had curtailed the Government's plan to reduce the poverty rate to 45 per cent, and it had been forecasted that the economic growth rate might slow to 4.3 per cent in 2009.

Turning to economic integration, democratic consolidation and political stability, he said countries in Southern Africa had made advances in such areas as free and fair elections, but challenges remained, particularly in areas like peace, security and stability. In Zimbabwe, there had been progress in implementing the Global Political Agreement, which "is enabling the country to move towards an atmosphere of political and social stability, conducive to a permanent dialogue, reconstruction and economic recovery". Mozambique reiterated SADC's call for the removal of all sanctions imposed on that country. It also reiterated its support for political dialogue in Madagascar and urged the parties to implement the Maputo Agreement.

Regarding conflicts in Africa, he praised ongoing regional and continental initiatives aimed at promoting peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Darfur, Somalia and other places. In the Middle East, Mozambique supported a two-State solution and broader Arab-Israeli normalization. The United Nations had an important role in coordinating the response to global challenges and needed to be reformed. "Mozambique strongly believes in multilateralism, and that the United Nations is at the centre of it. We also believe that the United Nations is a privileged form that congregates the universal aspirations for a peaceful, secure, stable and prosperous world, where the values of tolerance, respect of human rights and international cooperation for development are upheld."

EDWARD NALBANDIAN, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia, said that the economic and financial crisis had touched all parts and sectors of the world, making attainment of the Millennium Development Goals less likely for many countries. After noting Armenia's support for United Nations reform, and praising the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission and Human Rights Council, he went on to note the importance of preventing genocide.

To that end, he praised a recent report by the Secretary-General on "Implementing the Responsibility to Protect". "Genocides do not happen all of a sudden," he said, adding: "The instigators propagate intolerance and hatred, setting grounds for violence. As survivors of genocide, we Armenians welcome all efforts to prevent and combat racist and xenophobic attitudes."

Among its goals, the international community should seek to eliminate the "militaristic aspirations" of some States, he said. Turning to Nagorno Karabagh, he said that the peace process was moving forward and that the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan were meeting on a regular basis. Yet, the parties should commit to refrain from steps that could hamper dialogue and the peace process. He stressed that: "Azerbaijan consistently misrepresents the essence of the Nagorno Karabagh problem, like two days ago in this forum, trying to smother ethnic cleansings and its policy of violence against the people of Nagorno Karabagh."

He went on to say that the international community recalled the Azerbaijani open aggression, large-scale hostilities and war against Nagorno Karabagh, with the help of mercenaries closely linked to terrorist organizations. Such aggression had ultimately claimed the lives of tens of thousands of civilians. He said there was a serious basis for the settlement of the Nagorno Karabagh problem if the provisions contained in the Declaration signed in 2008 by the Presidents of Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation, and the Declaration of the Foreign Ministers of the Co-Chair countries of the Minsk Group, among other agreements, were implemented.

As to security in the region, he said that the South Caucasus had long been overlooked, although it was one of the "most sensitive hot spots on the world's political map", devastated by conflicts and tensions. However, he said, the process of normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations started last September, known as "football diplomacy", promised to be fruitful, and he expressed confidence that the mentality of the past could be left behind. In conclusion, he said that the bridges between the United Nations Member States had to be reinforced. "Only together can we withstand these challenges and push ahead the international development agenda."

MAXINE MCCLEAN, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados, said that the confluence of so many devastating crises of an international and multidimensional character demanded a global response, yet the approach of the developed economies had been to address their domestic interests almost exclusively. Faced with stagnating or falling economies due to factors beyond their control, developing countries were left to deal with declining economic activity, a consequential rise in unemployment and its resulting problems, at a time when they were battling increasing debt and decreasing external trade and foreign investment revenues. Rescue packages must be created beyond those for the least developed countries, including for such highly indebted middle-income countries as Barbados.

The small group of nations that fell into that group had been shown, through World Bank research, to be extremely susceptible to external shocks, she said. However they continued to be excluded from concessionary financing and debt relief. Noting that reliance on per capita income was a poor indicator of economic sustainability, she said these countries needed adequate support mechanisms with revised eligibility criteria, so that their development would not be derailed. "This crisis presents an opportunity for the developed economies and the international financial institutions to address the existing failures and shortcomings of the current financial system," she said. "The time is right for the crafting of a new, more transparent architecture, which is supportive of development objectives." Development required the involvement of communities, the private sector and civil society, she added.

The United Nations must not be marginalized and should play a greater role in global economic decisions, she continued. The challenges currently faced by the world community required comprehensive United Nations reform, which to date had been piecemeal and uncoordinated, even conflicting. There must be a commitment to finalising the reform agenda, with Security Council reform receiving the highest priority. The Council did not reflect current global realities. There should be expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent membership. A collective effort must be made to restore the United Nations to the role as envisaged by its founders: "To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations," she said.

Barbados was concerned by the tendency of limited membership groups to assume decision-making powers on issues that affected the entire international community, she said. The opportunity to create a fair and more equitable system of global governance could be squandered if the responsibility for decision-making remained with such groups. "No exclusive countries, no matter how big, powerful or rich, have a monopoly on solutions," she said, noting that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Climate Convention and the International Criminal Court were all championed by some of the smallest Member States.

She strongly condemned the targeting of small offshore jurisdictions in the wake of the global crisis, noting that that crisis had resulted from excessive risk taking, corruption and fraud, and ineffective regulatory controls and oversight in the developed world. She fully supported the proposal of CARICOM to build upon the existing programme already in place in the United Nations to address issues related to international financial services. Specifically, she called for the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation on Tax Matters to be transformed into an intergovernmental subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council.

She joined CARICOM and the Organisation of American States in calling for the immediate reinstatement of the legally elected president of Honduras and hoped that the renewed dialog between the United States and Cuba would lead to the lifting of the embargo against Cuba and normalization of relations between the two States. She further called for the extension of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) by the Security Council.

On climate change, she said that "a massive transformation of the way energy is generated and used to propel economic growth and development" was required. Barbados was committed to reducing dependence on foreign oil and increasing use of renewable energy and had plans to transition to a green economy. These activities had been undertaken with minimal support from the international community. An increased share of the budget has had to go to adaptation measures. According to World Bank estimates, the total annual impact of potential climate change on all CARICOM countries would total around 11.3 per cent of their total combined GDP. The international community had a moral and ethical responsibility "to support urgent and ambitious action to provide adaptation funding for Small Island Developing States."

In closing, she joined the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago in calling for the convening a special session of the General Assembly on chronic non-communicable diseases.

MOUSSA FAKI MAHAMAT, Minister for Foreign Affairs for Chad, said that this time last year, speakers had deplored the food, energy and financial crises that were hitting all at the same time, but which were affecting each of their countries differently, depending on their level of development. For poor countries, those crises posed obstacles to attaining the Millennium Development Goals. Those countries would continue to pay

a high price for an economic crisis, which they had not caused, he said, urging developed countries to step up their efforts in alleviating its ramifications.

He went on to say that the negative impacts of climate change were a great cause for concern globally and for poor and fragile States in particular, since industrialized countries were largely responsible for global warming. The disastrous effects were being felt in Chad on a daily basis, especially in sectors such as agriculture and livestock farming, as well as among the people, who suffered from famine and all manner of illnesses. In that regard, he warned that without the international community's full support, Lake Chad, the most significant example of such a catastrophic effect, could end up vanishing from the face of the Earth.

He said that despite some progress, the Chadian Government was seriously concerned by the situation prevailing in neighbouring Sudan's western Darfur region. He drew attention to how long that situation had been threatening regional peace and security, and specifically noted its impact on refugees and internally displaced people in eastern Chad, as well as on the environment. Another consequence of the Darfur conflict was the recruitment of child soldiers, against their will, by numerous armed groups operating in the region. Chad would be prepared to support all of the African Union and United Nations actions for a peaceful and durable resolution to conflicts. He reiterated it was wrong to assume that Chad fuelled the war in Darfur by supporting Sudanese rebels.

Turning to the work of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), he expressed his country's willingness to help that operation fulfil its mandate. He deplored delays in MINURCAT's full deployment, as such setbacks seriously impacted the security of refugees and internally displaced persons. He expressed grave concern over the Mission's future in light of Chad's lack of capacity to adequately address and remedy challenges in the east of the country. Nonetheless, whatever the outcome to the Darfur crisis, a political solution was imperative, so that vulnerable people in the region could reclaim their ancestral homelands. While praising global efforts aimed at helping Chad and Sudan regain normal relations, he noted that many signed peace agreements now remained to be implemented.

Turning to national matters, he said Chad's Government, through President Idriss Deby Itno, was pursuing political dialogue with the opposition in line with the 2007 peace accord. Despite efforts by foreign-backed armed forces to threaten the country's territorial integrity and democratically elected institutions, the Chadian Government still sought reconciliation and national cohesion.

ALEXANDRE CECE LOUA, Minister for Foreign Affairs for Guinea, said that after the former President's death in December 2008, Guinea's armed forces had decided to take the country's destiny in their own hands, to avoid social implosion that would have threatened peace, security and stability. Guinea had been weakened, among other things, by political and economic bad governance, corruption, impunity, drug trafficking and the proliferation of light weapons.

The Conseil National pour la Démocratie et le Développement (CNDD) had taken great strides to set in motion a transitional Government based on inclusive, participatory dialogue, which would lead to free, transparent and democratic elections. It had also worked to combat drug trafficking, the embezzlement of public funds and organized crime. It had put in place social programs to provide water and electricity for the population and instituted measures to reform the security and defence sectors. He hoped that, in cooperation with civil society, presidential elections would be carried out in January 2010.

He said the Government and the CNDD attached a great deal of importance to combating drug trafficking, which, over the past few years, had become more and more prevalent in the West African region. The recent discovery of toxic substances and illegal laboratories in certain cities throughout the country illustrated how serious the problem had become. He sought the international community's support for Guinea in its bid to bring about a balanced strategy to fight against drugs, in line with the recommendations of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which took place in March 2009.

He said the Government had also taken action for a more ethical management of public funds, allowing it to allocate some of what it had recovered on water and electricity programs. On behalf of his nation and people, he thanked a number of other African countries that had supported Guinea in its efforts towards a transitional peace process, unity, reconciliation and stability in the country.

Turning to broader issues, he said that new challenges called for a new world order of justice, solidarity and lasting development. Such a world would only materialize once the international community had committed to aiding poor countries that had borne the brunt of, among other ills and challenges, the global economic and financial crisis. Despite improvements in fighting pandemics, illiteracy and extreme poverty, much remained to be done to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Thus, fostering development partnerships that would scale up aid for Africa was indispensable, he stressed. Foreign debt, which seriously hindered the eradication of poverty, also needed to be addressed. It was time to restructure financial systems to help meet the needs of the twenty-first century. Guinea supported increasing development aid and improving its quality in line with the Paris Declaration. Further, creditors must be asked to support strategies that would make debt relief more flexible. He urged the international community to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) towards gains in infrastructure rehabilitation, promoting human rights and democracy and attaining the Millennium Development Goals.

RUFUS GEORGE BOUSQUET, Minister for External Affairs, International Trade and Investment of Saint Lucia, said Governments in the developing world were still struggling to meet their development targets, including the Millennium Development Goals. "Few, if any, foresaw that the winds would be contrary, the storms fierce and the course ahead so challenging," he said, adding that developing countries were still struggling to find calmer waters. Despite the crisis, Saint Lucia had made significant progress on poverty and hunger, universal education and gender equality. However, there was more work to do in the areas of child mortality and maternal health.

"We in Saint Lucia, though, observe the current global state of affairs through bifocal lenses," he said. "We see both challenge and opportunity, an opportunity to take bold new steps and think outside the box on tackling the issues that confront us," he said. Describing climate change as the most serious challenge facing humankind today, and calling for an urgent collective response, he said his country was working to formulate policies and legislation aimed at developing renewable energy sources, including wind, solar and geothermal sources. Saint Lucia had joined other Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member States in establishing early-warning systems to predict natural disasters.

CARICOM members had also adopted the Liliendaal Declaration on Climate Change and Development to protect the region's marine resources and ecosystems, he said. Small island developing States and least developed countries had joined together "to demand, appeal and even beg, if necessary, that the new Copenhagen climate agreement limit temperature increases to the attainable level of 1.5° C, as possibly anything above that will be devastating to our existence". Saint Lucia was in "crisis-management mode", but crisis-management measures must be taken with sustainable development in mind.

FANDER FALCONI, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade and Integration of Ecuador, said his country was committed to the revitalization and reform of the United Nations, as well as to the process of regional integration as a mechanism for coordination, cooperation and solidarity among people. Multilateral action was the best way to face today's challenges. Each regional group involving Caribbean and Latin America nations aimed at creating a common agenda in the social, cultural, political and economic fields, so as to build a new model of development that was more inclusive and less predatory.

Every effort towards integration required recognition of the principles of State equality and sovereignty, he said. Cuba was no longer excluded from the Organization of American States, but was still subject to the unfair embargo imposed by the United States. The coup d'état in Honduras had been squarely condemned. The international community must adopt strong measures to guarantee the restitution of democratic order in Honduras and to ensure the security of the Brazilian Embassy where the Honduran President had taken shelter since 21 September.

Moving on, he said the systemic and multidimensional crises in the areas of food, energy and finance were symptoms of a system that did not work and had to be reinvented. The scandalous financial crisis, for example, did not call for technocratic reform, but for a change of economic model. Last Saturday, at an African-South American Summit in Venezuela, the Constitutive Agreement of the Bank of the South had been signed with a starting fund of \$20 million. Other economic mechanisms initiated at the event had included the creation of a common reserve fund for Latin America, and a regional system of payments as a preamble to a Regional Central Bank. Consolidation of a common monetary system would commence with an electronic currency that would facilitate commercial exchange.

Further on the financial crisis, he said the role of the international credit institutions remained questionable. The need to restructure external debt was urgent. The Assembly's Working Group on the Financial Crisis was the ideal mechanism to implement the outcome of last June's Conference.

Turning next to the environment, he said climate change was evidence of imbalances in the relationship between society, nature and economy. The principle of shared responsibility demanded that rich nations go beyond donations or adjustment credits and make reparations that recognized their ecological debt and historic responsibility for excess emissions over several decades. His country's environmental programme focused on

ecological management of oil reserves, forest initiatives, and sustainable and renewable energy. Ecuador was also considering a possible “eco-tax”.

Calling for support of United Nations initiatives in the areas of food security, achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, eradication of human trafficking and protection of migrants, he recalled that his country had been one of the Organization’s founding members. Ecuador was committed to regional stability, including by supporting the stabilization process in Haiti. Finally, his country had initiated a process that would lead to the normalization of diplomatic relations with Colombia. The dialogue and encounter of the annual Assembly session had made the progress possible.

ASSUNÇÃO AFONSO DOS ANJOS, Minister of External Relations of Angola, said the economic and financial crisis had affected the growth of African economies by reducing the value of assets, and the retention of financial assets abroad. The crisis had also led to a drop in the price of exported raw materials. Efforts at trade liberalization were insufficient but welcome. Also welcome were calls to reform the financial and economic regulatory institutions and to improve the fluidity and transparency of capital transfers to less developed countries.

Continuing, he also welcomed the various multilateral initiatives underway, including China-Africa cooperation, the Africa-South America Conference, the Tokyo International Conference on Africa’s Development (TICAD), the Europe-Africa Summit, the India-Africa Forum, the South Korea-Africa Summit, and, more recently, the Turkey-Africa Summit. All those were of fundamental importance to development of the least developed countries, which included most countries in Africa, and Angola in particular. The invitation for Angola to participate in the July G-8 Summit in Italy had been a testament to Angola’s encouraging economic growth.

In the short period between 2004 and 2007, Angola’s economy had grown by more than 92 per cent in real terms, he said. Its gross domestic product had nearly doubled and the average annual real growth was nearly 18 per cent. Public and private investments had increased sharply and had led to the creation of more jobs, among other positive developments. Those achievements in so short a time filled the people with confidence in the future, he said.

Yet the promoting of peace and security were essential for the conditions of development and furthering of human rights. Africa must continue to receive the Security Council’s support in combating drug trafficking, the illicit arms trade, piracy and terrorism. Further, he said, conflict prevention and resolution measures could not be seen as separate from measures to combat organized and transnational crimes, the illegal exploitation of natural resources and illegal trade in small arms.

As a country that had chaired the Peacebuilding Commission, he said, Angola was particularly pleased to see progress in the peace processes of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The inclusion of Guinea-Bissau in the Commission’s agenda had been very important. Angola would continue working with the African Union and the United Nations in identifying lasting solutions for peace and national reconciliation processes. The new format and functions of the Economic and Social Council were welcome. The Security Council also must be reformed. The Non-Proliferation Treaty and disarmament in general were of utmost importance. The United Nations must be in a position to correct asymmetries and provide solutions to problems so that future generations would live according to a standard of living consistent with human dignity.

ZACARIAS ALBANO DA COSTA, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Timor-Leste, said 2009 was an important milestone for Timor-Leste, which had attained full sovereignty seven years ago and had begun the process of nation-building. “Timor-Leste has been showcased both as a success story of the United Nations and been hastily characterized by some as a failed State,” he said, and added that he didn’t want to argue with either view but describe his country today and how it has situated itself in the community of nations.

He went on to say that Timor-Leste had benefited greatly from the engagement with the United Nations, and praised the leadership of the late Sergio Vieira de Mello, who had served as the United Nations Transitional Administrator in East Timor from December 1999 to May 2002, but asked the question: “Could the United Nations have done things differently in those earlier and subsequent years, and how can we best use this partnership to move forward?”

On lessons learned, he said that it had taken time to build national capacities and sustainable institutions, and that it was a balance act between peace, justice and reconciliation. There had been as many as 3,000 evaluations and studies of Timor-Leste and the United Nations work there, and he proposed yet another one -- conducted by the country itself. There was a need for long-term engagement by the United Nations, as evidenced by the resurging violence of 2006, but he added that the Government had continued to

make strides toward peace and stability, reintegrating internally displaced persons and stopping gang violence.

With regard to its relation with Indonesia, he said: “We cannot deny, or undo, what has happened in our common past, but we are determined to reconcile that past, because we know we can progress and do much better for the future.” On the subject of justice, he said his country’s Constitution guaranteed the rule of law and that it was his Government’s aim to further strengthen the justice system.

Finally, turning to climate change, he said that his country was not under threat by rising waters but was nonetheless affected by other impacts of that phenomenon, including changing weather patterns. He closed by expressing his gratitude to the United Nations and his country’s international partners for their continued support. “We stand resolutely with you in contributing to solutions to our collective challenges and are resolved to solving our own national challenges.”

DATUK ANIFAH AMAN, Foreign Minister of Malaysia, said the developing world was not shirking its responsibilities to face the entire spectrum of challenges facing the international community, but would do so better in tandem with the developed world. Among the most pressing challenges was climate change. Malaysia had undertaken measures for sustainable forest management, increased use of public transportation and renewable resources.

However, developed countries must take the lead in combating climate change, and they were failing to do so. Developed countries’ pledges for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions were insufficient. “We have to seal the deal in Copenhagen,” he said, but there would be no deal if some were inclined to “steal the deal” through attempts to reinterpret and renegotiate key principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

There was a need to balance development, food security and poverty eradication with environmental concerns. Agriculture, the bedrock of efforts to address the ongoing food crisis, produced 14 per cent of greenhouse gases, yet more than a billion people went hungry worldwide. Climate change must not be seen as a stand-alone subject, but as part of overall sustainable development measures.

On peacekeeping, Malaysia had been contributing to peacekeeping operations since 1960 and would continue to do so, he said. The Palestinian issue symbolized everything that was unjust and unfair in international relations, having taken on symbolic value that coloured cultural and political relations well beyond its geographical scope. Resolving that issue would have a major impact on peace and security in the Middle East and beyond. Israel and Palestine must negotiate, he said, and he hoped that the United States would be an honest broker.

Non-proliferation and disarmament were also cornerstones of security, he said, and should be founded on three elements: all nations had the right to use nuclear power; nations who had nuclear weapons must move towards disarmament; and those without must disavow acquiring them. He also looked to the strengthening of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and said that, as Malaysia had been doing since 1996, it would introduce a resolution on follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons.

Given Malaysia’s multi-ethnic and multi-religious population, the Government was aware of the need to continuously promote interaction among peoples of different religions, races and beliefs and had introduced the One Malaysia concept to build on previous efforts to promote national unity. Diversity should be seen as a source of strength. Unity must arise from true acceptance rather than mere tolerance and be based on legal principles contained in the Constitution.

Decisions were still being made by the few for the many. Global governance must be improved, particularly through Security Council reform including the eventual abolition of the veto and in the sphere of the economy, and while the G-20 was more representative than the G-8, questions remained as to how truly representative and inclusive it was. Noting that reform of the Bretton Woods institutions and strengthening the international financial regulatory system had first been proposed by Malaysia, he said that solutions were not the monopoly of the powerful. He further proposed that while addressing ways of maximizing cooperation among G-20 members, that group must also address ways of improving links with the broader international community and finding greater clarity on the involvement of regional organizations.

RANGIN DÂDFAR SPANTÂ, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, said the growing gap in prosperity between and within nations was a reminder that the world was still far from meeting the ideals of the United Nations Charter to create a just and secure society for all. Restructuring United Nations agencies was pivotal in closing that gap. “The United Nations is not a forum for lip service,” he said, adding that it must

embody Charter ideals by providing political and moral leadership. In an increasingly interdependent world, the Organization had to assume greater responsibility for finding collective solutions to global challenges.

Rather than just reacting to problems, the United Nations must find ways to address structural causes of the world's problems and conflicts. To those ends, there should be more cooperation between the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, international financial organizations and global civil society. Efforts must be redoubled to resolving historical conflicts, the Middle East peace process chief among them, and Afghanistan reiterated its call for the full implementation of Security Council resolutions and regional initiatives for ending Palestinian suffering.

Turning to the Islamic world, he said that reviving the prominent role of Muslims in human progress could only be accomplished if they -- as members of the Islamic *Ummah* -- collectively confronted the current intellectual stagnation from which many suffered. The Islamic world was in urgent need of an intellectual renaissance, and rising "Islamophobia" meant that nations must seek effective ways to confront racism and discrimination.

As to the situation in Afghanistan, he said negative media coverage had overshadowed many positive trends since the collapse of the Taliban regime. In the last eight years, access to basic health services had risen from 9 per cent in 2001, to 85 per cent today. The number of students had grown from 1 million students in 2001 -- all boys -- to nearly 7 million boys and girls by 2008. Also, Afghanistan now had over 700 media outlets, often critical of the Government, versus only one State radio station and a few newspapers during the Taliban era. He added that the average per capita GDP had grown from \$185 in 2001 to \$485 in 2008.

Regarding the presidential and provincial elections held last month, he said that poll had marked the first time in the country's history that Afghan institutions had organized and conducted a nationwide election -- a test successfully passed. Braving threats of Al-Qaida, the Taliban and other terrorist groups, voters had shown their desire to have a modern, democratic political system, while candidates transcended ethnic and religious lines. No major violence had broken out between supporters, and the Independent Electoral Commission had successfully conducted voter registration, voting and counting. Despite such efforts, lives had been lost in terrorist attacks. The Independent Electoral Commission and United Nations-supported Election Complaint Commission were counting votes and addressing complaints.

There were irregularities, but "one should not assess a young terrorist-inflicted democracy with the criteria of stable, prosperous and centuries-old democracies", he said. While not condoning fraud, he urged being conscious of context. In due course, the two electoral bodies would announce and certify final election results and it would be imperative for all to respect their decision.

Afghanistan faced significant challenges, he said, and chief among them was terrorism, which enjoyed institutional support "beyond our borders". As long as terrorist sanctuaries remained protected, Afghanistan, the region and the world would be at the mercy of their totalitarian ideology. Narcotics, weak State institutions and unemployment were also problems. With that, he urged pursuing a comprehensive strategy with a focus on security, good governance, economic development, regional cooperation and international solidarity. He supported the United States new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the new assessment that emphasized the need for a long-term strategy.

He said the Afghan Government's new compact with the international community would be complemented by its new compact with the Afghan people. Abandoning the nation would undermine the collective cooperation and, for many generations to come, the moral credibility of those who failed to honour their promises. For its part, the Government was determined to take the lead in helping to realize Afghans' aspirations, placing good governance, mutual accountability and regional cooperation at the highest priority. He was fully confident that, with international commitment, Afghanistan could overcome the legacy of decades of violence and suffering.

OJO MADUEKWE, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, said that last year he had been hopeful that the world would end the devastating impact of the various global crises, including in energy, agriculture and the financial sector. However, the world had not seen relief yet. "There is no doubt that the international community needs, more than ever before, to fulfil its commitments to the developing world if more than half of humanity is to avoid an imminent calamity." He acknowledged the efforts of the United Nations, especially regarding the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Conference last June, and called for implementation of that meeting's recommendations.

In addition to addressing the financial crisis, he noted that there was a need to boost food security. That would require collaboration between investors, organizations and Governments. He called for a removal of

agricultural subsidies that developed countries continued to give their farmers, which continued to defy the logic of the free market economy. He expressed concern that the substantial gains made to lift others out of poverty would reverse, and mentioned that the actualization of targets for the Millennium Development Goals could remain an illusion for many. "Donors and recipient countries alike should make more effort to fulfil their commitments," he said.

He reaffirmed Africa's commitment to eliminate malaria, and mentioned that African countries were expected to devote 15 per cent of their public expenditure to the health sector. Although considerable efforts had been made, the goal of ending malaria had not been realized, he said, adding that Nigeria intended to host a summit on Roll Back Malaria in 2011.

Touching on other issues, he urged all Member States to rededicate themselves to reversing the worst effects of climate change, adding that Africa hosted 15 of the 20 countries most vulnerable to it. Moving on to issues of nuclear disarmament, he was heartened by the rapprochement between the United States and the Russian Federation, saying: "The idea of a nuclear free world, the architecture of which is now being put together, has great appeal for many of us. Such an outcome, probably achievable in our lifetime, would not only result in a safer world, but would free resources for use in sectors that would better benefit humanity."

He also applauded the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone, which banned testing, manufacturing, stockpiling, and possessing nuclear weapons in Africa. However dangerous nuclear weapons were, it was important not to forget the real dangers posed by small arms and light weapons, which were linked to drug trafficking, piracy and oil smuggling in the Niger Delta. He called for the international community to prevent, combat and eradicate the trade of those weapons.

Turning to internal matters, he said Nigeria continued to make great strides in its effort to build a democratic, stable, peaceful nation. The country sought to build on this foundation to grow an economy that would see it take its rightful place among the world's powerhouses, he declared, but acknowledged that there were still challenges. Still, there had been progress in the Niger Delta, and the return of peace there would provide the platform for meeting the aspirations of the people and return of economic activity.

PARTICIA RODAS BACA, Minister for Foreign affairs of Honduras, said three years ago, Manuel Zelaya, the President of her country, had come to propose honest, easy solutions to respond to the major challenges faced by society, and to diminish terrible differences between the rich and the poor. He had fought for the rights of migrants and the forgotten, she said. With simple and effective proposals, President Zelaya had constantly called for a fairer world that would lighten the burden of shame on the poor and the misery of the many.

She said the President had also called for a world of tolerance, mutual respect and cooperation in order to build a better world. Criminal hoards, she said, had forced Honduras back to an issue it thought had been relegated to the past. She said that while she was speaking, the President was being held "under siege" by military forces. He was being menaced and everyone was holding their breath as the life of the President and the people was in peril, she warned.

She held up her cell phone to the microphone so President Zelaya could address the Assembly via telephone from the Brazilian embassy in Tegucigalpa, the Honduran capital, where he has been holed up for just over a week. Mr. Zelaya said he wanted to dispel any doubts as to whether or not his country had been gripped by a dictatorship. He said he had been subjected to a coup d'état, one that had oppressed the rights of the people. When the people had been silenced, a serious crime had taken place.

Nonetheless, he called for the rule of law to be restored and for civilized nations of the world to receive support to maintain a stand against barbarism. He called for the United Nations to help restore the freedom and rule of law Honduras deserved. He saluted the courage of Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to uphold the need for democracy, and called on the United Nations to reverse the coup and to ensure that all countries had the right to democracy.

As the President was being "threatened" while taking refuge at the Brazilian embassy, Ms. Rodas Boca said she had come to report on the terrible impact of the resulting recession on the people. Describing the severity of tensions in the country, she said passage through airports had been closed, news and media networks had been dismantled and that a "state of siege" had been declared, rendering the constitution null and void.

There had also been reports of women being raped during protests, she said, likening Honduras to an enormous growing prison and a concentration camp, adding that the entire Central American country had

become militarized and taken over by dangerous mercenaries. Recalling her country's history of strife, she said that it had fought against conquest, colonization and economic differences. Now Honduras was continuing to fight peacefully, for freedom and self-determination, with only the truth as its weapon, three months to the day it had been robbed of its Constitution.

She went on to stress that “no matter how small we are, we deserve no less than any other society”. Hailing the heroic acts of everyday Hondurans, who had worked and walked tirelessly and peacefully for days, she was certain that the unwavering support of the international community would make it possible for them to reclaim their democratic path. “They put their feet firmly to the ground, on the soil that gave birth to them”, she said, praising the people's non-violent mediation efforts to find solutions to the crisis.

Turning to ways to resolve the leadership crisis, she called upon the United Nations and the international community to come up with a global proposal to ward off the threat posed by such repressive and oppressive tyrants against the President and the people of Honduras. She pressed the United Nations to use the force of its authority “to ward off the danger that hovered over Honduras”, one that had gotten closer and become more terrifying, and urged it to set specific dates to assure ultimatums and plans of action for mediation and dialogue for peace.

She called on the Assembly to convene a special session to review the situation as it unfolded, stressing that it was also crucial for the Secretary-General to appoint a special diplomatic mission comprised of numerous Member States to go to Honduras immediately and assess the situation on the ground. A state of siege with no citizens' rights was not conducive for free and transparent elections, she affirmed. She urged the international community to continue to monitor the day-to-day situation of violence and potential breaches of the Geneva Conventions, especially with regard to violations of the right to immunity.

PAK KIL YON, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Democratic People's Republic of Korea, said that one of the major tasks of the Assembly this year was to review the past in order to go forward. He listed several challenges, among them an escalating Afghan war, the ongoing conflict in Iraq, “the cold winds of a nuclear arms race”, avian flu, global warming, stagnant economies and unemployment. Meanwhile, the United Nations Security Council had become more arrogant, resulting in further inequality and prevalent double standards in international relations.

In terms of his own country, he said that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had entered a new phase of state-building. “For over half a century, our country was compelled to produce bullets first rather than sweets, while suffering from nuclear threats and danger of war posed by hostile forces, but today we have settled down to channel our main efforts into the building of a great, prosperous and powerful nation.”

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea had done everything in its power to remove nuclear threats and secure peace and stability on the Korean peninsula. “However, our effort has not received due response from the United States,” he said, stressing that the arbitrariness of the United States had been revealed as it argued that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must not launch even a peaceful satellite.

His country had come to the conclusion that, as long as the United States did not change its nuclear policy, “we have no other option but to rely on our dependable nuclear possession to ensure nuclear balance of the region”. The United States Administration should discard confrontational attitudes and show the change that had been talked about so much. “We do not pursue a nuclear arms race [...] the mission of our nuclear weapon is to deter a war.”

As for sanctions, he said they had been selectively imposed on his country and that unfair and unequal sanctions would not be accepted. “If the United States comes to dialogue with sanctions, we will also participate in the dialogue with bolstered nuclear deterrence.” With regard to north-south relations, he said progress had been made and that his Government would make all efforts towards reunification.

On the subject of United Nations reform, he described the Security Council as an “anachronistic organ”, and said that it was important to democratize the Organization by elevating the authority of the Assembly. In conclusion, he said that his Government would make active efforts to strengthen its international relations. “The foreign policy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as in the past and now, so also in the future, will be committed to the principles of independence, peace and friendship.”

JOÃO CRAVINHO, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Portugal, said climate change was a moral imperative and a matter of survival. Its consequences were evident in all States, including Portugal. Action on climate change could no longer be put off. It called for action now, recognizing that countries needed help in their adaptation and mitigation efforts. States must assume bold commitments at the

December Copenhagen Summit, within the measure of their respective responsibilities and capacities.

The Assembly resolution on the international security impact of climate change had been a good step, but there must be follow-up. The climate debate must continue and must take into account the question of energy, he said, noting that Portugal planned to produce 45 per cent of its energy from renewable sources in 2010. By 2020, the figure would be 60 per cent. Portugal had one of the lowest carbon emission rates in Europe. It was available to share experience in the area.

He went on to say the international financial system must be guided by responsibility and transparency. Regulation and supervision must be strengthened. The international market must be based on shared values, principles and patterns of conduct. The solution “was not, is not, and will not be protectionism,” he stressed. Closing the door to neighbours and partners meant leaving people in poverty. Rather, the Doha Round of World Trade Organization negotiations must be concluded in a way that corresponded to global sustainable development objectives.

Commitments to the Millennium Development Goals must be renewed so that the crisis did not affect the gains already made. He said any State that forgot the common good would have instability, poverty and insecurity knocking at its door, sooner or later. Portugal was currently a co-president of the Africa Partnership Forum. Through that body, the specific concerns of Africa had been conveyed to the G-20.

He pointed to Guinea-Bissau and Timor-Leste as two countries showing the growing activity of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries in promoting peace, democracy, human rights, political stability, and development, both social and economic. Portugal had assumed the temporary presidency of the Ibero-American Conference, whose summit would take place this year in Estoril, and would focus on innovation and knowledge. In its capacities with those two organizations, Portugal had supported the participation and involvement of emerging economies and developing countries in the debate on reform of the international financial institutions through regional institutions.

THOMAS MATUSSEK (Germany) said “in these tumultuous times” the consultations currently under way on a Charter for Sustainable Economic Activity were pointing in the right direction. The economic crisis should be turned into an opportunity for development and a “green recovery”. To prevent setbacks in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, donor States must continue their efforts for development. Germany had continually increased its official development assistance (ODA) contributions over the years, and had increased the resources of the global financial institutions to ensure that States affected by the crisis would receive quick, effective help.

Developing countries must also live up to their responsibilities through responsible governance, respect for human rights, environmental protection, the fight against epidemics and the strengthening of women’s rights, he said. Turning to climate change, he said joint action, through an inclusive process that included those countries directly affected by climate change, was required right now. “History may not offer us a better chance for a fair, effective and ambitious climate deal”, he said, referring to the upcoming Copenhagen climate summit.

He warmly welcomed the new dynamic in the area of nuclear disarmament and expressed support for a nuclear-weapons-free world, and stressed that sub-strategic nuclear weapons must be incorporated into the ongoing disarmament process. A new consensus at the 2010 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Review Conference, a start to the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty negotiations in Geneva and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty were also needed. The international community must not relent in banning all weapons of mass destruction, he said, citing the chemical weapons convention as a model.

He went on to urge Iran to grant a verification team from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) access to its newly revealed enrichment plant, and regretted that country’s lack of full cooperation with that body. If Iran’s leaders continued to stall in demonstrating willingness for honest and speedy negotiations, the international community would have no choice but to take additional measures to underline the seriousness of its common concern.

Iran, one of the “origins of civilization,” could become an anchor of stability in the region, a respected member of the international community, he said, but that would involve, in addition to a diplomatic resolution of questions regarding its nuclear programme, a responsible foreign policy towards its neighbours, including recognition of Israel’s right to exist.

He said that 2009 was a pivotal year for Afghanistan. The elections, the first in decades organized by the Afghans themselves, were an impressive sign of the resolve of the Afghan people to determine their own

fate. Under the difficult security conditions, further strengthening of security forces was needed. Germany would continue to increase the number of its police instructors in the country and would help to advance the training of the Afghan Army within the framework of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Along with the United Kingdom and France, Germany had taken the initiative for an international conference to set out concrete, realistic and measurable goals for the further political and economic development of Afghanistan.

Finally, he said the United Nations must be reformed to reflect the realities of the contemporary world. To deal effectively with current and future crises, the Organization's revitalization must be coordinated with reform of the international financial institutions. Germany advocated the inclusion of newly industrialized and developing countries as part of that exercise. If the Security Council did not reform itself, there was a risk that other bodies would try to take its place. Germany was prepared to take on a permanent seat on a reformed Security Council, or a non-permanent seat for the period 2011-2012. Now, and in the future, Germany would work towards finding common interests, overcoming divisions and strengthening a global partnership of responsibility.

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