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CLOSING 'HISTORIC AND UNFORGETTABLE' ANNUAL DEBATE, GENERAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT

SAYS TIME TO SHIFT GEARS TO CRUCIAL NEXT STEP, 'TURN TALK INTO REAL IMPACT'

World Leaders Came to Express 'Hopes and Needs of Their Nations', Salute Courage of Those Who Fought for Freedom, Dignity, Democracy around Globe

"It has been an historic and unforgettable debate," said the President of the General Assembly this evening as he closed the annual event, but it was now time to shift attention to the crucial next step, "turning talk into real impact".

Speaking in the legendary General Assembly Hall, where, since last Wednesday, representatives of 194 Member States and Observers — 100 at the level of Heads of State and Government — had come "to express the hopes and needs of their nations", the President of the sixty-sixth session, Nassir Abdulaziz al-Nasser of Qatar, said "coming together is the start; working together will get us to the end".

World leaders, he said, had called on the international community to assist in the fulfilment of their populations' aspirations for the rule of law, transparency, prosperity, justice and human rights, including responsible freedom of expression. As they came together to consider such timely and complex issues, the role of mediation was "clearly more relevant than ever before", he said of the theme selected for the current session — "mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes".

But, he noted, claiming centre stage were the tributes paid by speaker after speaker to the hope awakened by the shifts taking place around the globe — especially the Middle East and North Africa — and the courage of those who had fought for freedom, dignity and democracy, and who had made clear that Governments could not suppress their people without accountability.

That renewal of hope and determination dominated discussion on the Palestinian issue as well, when Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas announced that he had submitted an application to the Secretary-General for the admission of Palestine to the United Nations. Calling that an "historic moment", the Assembly President said he had been impressed to hear the overwhelming majority of international leaders call for a Middle East peace resulting in two viable, sovereign and independent States — Israel and Palestine.

Also significant had been the welcome of new leaders to the Assembly's ranks, he said, pointing to the first President of the newest African country, South Sudan, and the Foreign Minister of the Transitional Federal Council of Libya, both of whom had addressed the gathering.

The spotlight was also focused on the humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa, where the worst drought in more than 60 years had left much of Somalia in a declared state of famine, he said. That concern brought up the need to urgently improve disaster prevention and response — a reform that the Assembly would tackle this session through an important draft resolution.

Throughout the debate, several leaders had called on the United Nations to take the lead in reforming the world economic and financial order, he said, with many seeing that call in the context of the ongoing comprehensive reform of the United Nations. There was broad agreement on the need for “early consensual reform” of the Security Council, the President said, adding that such reform was inevitable if the Council was to reflect contemporary realities and be more representative, inclusive, democratic and transparent. He urged Member States to reenergize that process and generate the political will necessary to proceed in a timely manner.

Earlier today, attention was indeed drawn during the debate to the need for a reconfigured United Nations to play its central role in recasting the world economic and financial architecture. However, some leaders, including the Minister of Foreign and Political Affairs of San Marino, worried that existing institutions had been unable to respond “rapidly or adequately” to the challenges. That paralysis had led to the formation of informal groups, such as the Group of Eight (G-8) and the Group of 20 (G-20), which had increasing influence, she said.

Echoing the Assembly President’s call to action to hasten reform of the Security Council, several speakers denounced its slow pace, saying that despite the formation of a working group on the issue more than 15 years ago, the composition of the Council — five permanent members (China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States) and 10 rotating non-permanent members — remained unchanged.

Developing nations, in particular, voiced indignation at their continued exclusion from that powerful decision-making body. Malawi’s Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation called for two permanent seats and a total of five elected seats to be allocated to African States, in line with the African Union’s “Ezulwini Consensus” agreement. “We in Africa are desperate to see that the historic injustice done to our continent at the inception of the United Nations is addressed as soon as possible,” he stressed.

Meanwhile, others called for the eradication of the veto power and a permanent seat dedicated to a representative from a small island developing State. The Minister of the People’s Power for Foreign Affairs of Venezuela, speaking on the President’s behalf, warned the time for reform had come and gone. In fact, the United Nations itself required a “re-founding”, he said. That must begin with the elimination of both the permanent membership and power of the veto in the Security Council. The General Assembly’s decision-making power should be democratically maximized and the Charter should be reviewed with the aim of drafting a new one.

Speaking at the ministerial level were representatives of Mauritania, Singapore, Belarus, Yemen, Russian Federation, Belize, Burkina Faso, Myanmar, Viet Nam, Azerbaijan, Malaysia, Thailand, Benin, Pakistan, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Romania, Panama, Norway and Zambia.

Also participating were representatives of the Republic of Moldova, Ecuador, New Zealand, Dominica, Philippines, Saint Lucia and Denmark, as well as the Holy See.

Background

The General Assembly met today to continue and conclude its general debate.

Statements

HAMADY OULD HAMADY, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mauritania, said the sixty-sixth session of the Assembly took place during a very special political environment of revolutions for democracy. Mauritania had been at the forefront of the movement — over the past years it had seen peaceful change to democratic, credible institutions that guaranteed individual freedoms within the rule of law. Those measures included free and fair transparent elections with the presence of international observers. His country had also experienced an opening of dialogue between all political persuasions, as well as the opening of airwaves, which would begin radio and television broadcasts in short order.

Since the election of Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz as President, Mauritania had joined regional groups and broadened the scope of its diplomacy. The country also wished to contribute to reform of the Organization and its different bodies, including the Security Council, asking for permanent representation for Africa, as well as the Arab Group. The Security Council must fairly reflect the will of the entire international community, he said. Mauritania was also candidate for a non-permanent Security Council seat for 2012-2013, as a demonstration of its sincere will to promote peace and security. Mauritania was not party to any conflict and had excellent relations with all countries in the world, and thanked all friendly States that supported its candidature.

The increase of absolute poverty, especially in the most destitute parts of society, made it difficult for developing countries to reach the Millennium Development Goals as their deadline approached. Conditions, such as decreases in overseas development assistance, volatility of commodity prices and increases in death rates of newborns and mothers, had devastating consequences on the populations of developing countries. There needed to be acceptable levels of public service to assure international peace and security, he said. Non-communicable diseases were another obstacle to the Goals, and he noted that this country had risen to the challenge, creating health infrastructure and strengthening human resources in record time, over the period of two years since the succession to power of President Aziz.

The Israeli-Arab conflict was also a source of insecurity, and his country supported recovery of all the rights of the Palestinian people, calling on recognition of Palestine as an independent State along the borders of June 1967 with full membership to the Organization. Mauritania also condemned Israel's blockade on the Gaza Strip and acts by Israel's military. The international community needed to support the Libyan people in all their needs so their transitional phase would be successful, and was also required to deliver a speedy response to the tragic humanitarian situation caused by the acute drought in the Horn of Africa. Mauritania had provided \$1 million assistance to Somalia, even though its means were modest.

Organized crime, such as kidnapping, terrorism and drug, weapon and human trafficking, had been expanding for many years in the Sahara region. That was a threat to peace and stability in the region, and Mauritania's security operations had responded firmly to threats of terrorist groups, succeeding in guaranteeing peace within and along its borders. In cooperation with neighbouring countries, it had put a stop to the activities of those terrorist groups and made it impossible for them to move freely.

ANTONELLA MULARONI, Minister for Foreign and Political Affairs with Functions of Prime Minister of San Marino, said that on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the attack on the World Trade Centre in New York, she wished to stress the importance of an effective fight against terrorism and effective actions aimed at preventing the development of terrorist groups. A crucial task for policymakers was, therefore, to create the conditions so that terrorism could find no breeding ground. San Marino supported the Assembly's theme of peaceful settlement of disputes. It had always believed in the power of dialogue, democracy and tolerance, values upon which peaceful coexistence among peoples was based.

The unusual scale of the Arab revolution, which had taken the world by surprise, demonstrated that major political and institutional changes were needed due to changes brought about by a globalized world. If the United Nations intended to play a pivotal role in managing global governance, it should be able to interpret the need for such changes and support them. The current global and economic crisis had demonstrated that existing institutions were unable to respond rapidly and adequately. Further, that had led to the formation of informal groups, such as the Group of 8 and the Group of 20, which had increasing influence. Those bodies, in their decision-making process, should be more transparent and inclusive and should take into consideration the interests of non-Member States, in particular developing countries.

San Marino was concerned about some of the consequences of the economic crisis, including unemployment, and felt that the United Nations should pay special attention to that issue. Also worrying was the sovereign debt crisis that faced States, she said. The United Nations should focus on those issues. Additionally, the destinies of the world's peoples depended on the global threats in an increasingly direct way, including climate change and biodiversity; food security; public health; disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons; and others. Those threats were interdependent, and the new form of international cooperation and multilateralism should be based on that fact. For example, climate change had led to a reduction in global food production, with the most damaging effects seen in Africa and Asia. And the end result was the humanitarian emergency in the Horn of Africa, where a severe drought was affecting over 12 million people. Further, sea level rise was affecting not only small islands, but large

islands and countries with coasts at sea level.

San Marino had been following with interest the reform process of the Security Council. The process was prompted by the conviction that intergovernmental negotiations were the right framework within which it would be possible to find a solution, taking into account the interests and positions of all. San Marino believed that the five key issues of the reform — categories of membership, the question of the veto, regional representation, size of an enlarged Council and working methods — were closely interrelated and should be considered as a whole. The revitalization of the General Assembly was also necessary.

Turning finally to the situation of persons with disabilities, she said since the 2006 adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, much remained to be done to ensure its implementation through the establishment of legislative frameworks and policies at a national and international level. Noting the strong link between disability and poverty, she said that targeted strategies and policies should be taken with regard to children with disabilities. In general, women and children still suffered most from violence, abuse and exploitation, she stressed, saying that San Marino, therefore, joined the international community in supporting Resolution 65/1 “Keeping the Promise: Uniting to achieve the Millennium Development Goals”. The protection of those who lived in extremely difficult conditions, representing a large share of the world’s population, should be the primary task of every individual and State, she stressed. “Their progress is our progress, and their smile will be the light allowing us to look to the future with optimism,” she concluded.

K. SHANMUGAM, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Law of Singapore, said the difficult times since the global economic crisis had been compounded by natural and man-made disasters of growing scale and severity. The repercussions of those events had given rise to unpredictable outcomes. Today, Governments must grapple with the challenge of reviving growth and creating jobs amid fears of a double-dip recession. Longer-term issues like sustainable development, climate change and water security must be tackled along with immediate concerns of food security and job creation.

With almost 7 billion people to feed, “this is a stark reminder of the magnitude of our task”, he said, underscoring that the United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organization could help ensure that the global economic framework was conducive for growth. Citing a World Trade Organization report showing that the Group of 20 (G-20) countries had introduced 122 new trade restrictive measures between 2010 and April 2011, he said the United Nations should take a strong stand against such measures, as fighting protectionist pressures collectively was important for the sustainability of economies.

Due to its sheer size, the United Nations would need time to achieve consensus and make decisions, he said, which left the door open for ad hoc coordination by smaller, informal groups, like the G-20 or the Group of Eight (G-8), which might be more efficient in decision-making. A certain amount of fluidity “is a given” in global governance, in order to tackle increasingly complex problems. But, ultimately a balance must be struck between efficiency and genuine legitimacy. The United Nations must act together with such groupings as complementary parts of the international system, not as mutually exclusive competitors.

On food and water security, he said the United Nations was doing a great deal in both areas to foster collaboration among States, but on the issue of water, it could do more to build synergies of technology, policy and capacity. Since 2008, Singapore had regarded water as a strategic resource and had invested considerable resources into testing new technologies. “We would be happy to share our experiences,” he said, adding that Singapore was a member of the Green Group, whose members discuss ways to augment collective experiences in water management. On other matters, he said there was a disconnect between the “proliferation” of resolutions generated each year and present realities, underscoring the need for more coordination between New York and the field. Timelines and objectives should be set on some resolutions and other texts should be retired.

Turning to the Global Governance Group, he said that grouping sought to act as a bridge between the United Nations and the G-20, focusing on areas of potential cooperation and calling for renewed commitment to a universal, rules-based, non-discriminatory multilateral trading system, which was key to achieving food security. As the only universal international organization, it was uniquely placed to influence

the future. However, “we should not take this position for granted,” he cautioned, as globalization and economic integration had redefined global governance and decision-making since 1945. The United Nations must adjust to that new environment and it was up to Member States to rally the political will to set aside narrow self-interests and act for the collective good of future generations.

SERGEI N. MARTYNOV, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus, said there was a pervasive feeling that chaos was engulfing the planet; one global crisis followed the next, international law was being shamelessly trampled and a growing number of people were suffering. “We need a global strategy against chaos,” he stressed, adding that it must be built on strengthening international law, establishing global partnerships and revitalizing the United Nations. In the area of international law, he said it was hardly an exaggeration to say that a civilization was determined by the extent of its transition from the rule of power to the rule of law.

In the Middle East, countries had the inalienable right to determine their own development and their choices must be respected, without interference into their internal affairs. Unfortunately, not every country complied with such obligations, as the United States had pursued an economic blockade against “freedom-loving” Cuba, which clearly violated United Nations principles and decisions. Belarus had also been under economic sanctions for the choice it made during its presidential election. But, Belarusians would never renounce their right of choice. “Neither sanctions nor blackmail nor threats will alter our stance,” he said, noting that the country stood ready to develop mutually beneficial cooperation with all countries.

On global partnerships, he said transnational threats could not be addressed with traditional foreign policy tools like balance of power, spheres of influence and sanctions. New forms of cooperation were required that considered two major global shifts: from the “West to the Rest” and from States to non-State actors. Such partnerships could ensure a pooling of efforts by interested stakeholders in opposing an array of challenges that recognized no borders. In identifying specific approaches, it was important to address the issue of transfer of effective energy technologies to developing and middle-income countries, which was integral to tackling climate change. Such technologies had already found their practical application in many parts of the world, and it would be impossible to have a “green paradise” when poor countries lived in a “contaminated hell”.

With that, he suggested that Member States, through a General Assembly resolution, work to create a global mechanism that secured access to modern energy technologies for all countries. He noted the important strides that had been made in the past year in forging a global partnership against slavery and human trafficking, and said it also made sense to establish global partnerships to support youth. As for revitalizing the United Nations, the question hinged on the extent the Organization was “tenable” for devising and implementing a development strategy. “Let us be frank. Everyone bears grudges against the United Nations,” he said. In recent years, the United Nations appeared to have merely survived various crises, rather than solved or prevented them. But, the Member States were at fault. “Together, we failed both in grasping what kind of world we wanted to build and in adjusting the United Nations to the new realities,” he said.

Offering ideas, he said the Security Council must be enlarged in both its categories, above all, in the interests of developing nations, while its working methods must be brought into conformity with the “spirit of the age”. The Economic and Social Council should align itself with solutions to urgent problems faced by Member States. Also, a balance must be struck among the interests of various groups of countries, and Belarus would seek to guide United Nations agencies towards a more efficient response to the specific needs of middle-income countries. Finally, he underscored the need to enhance the United Nations’ mediation role in peaceful dispute settlement, including cooperation with regional structures like the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

ABUBAKR A. AL-QIRBI, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yemen, said his country had been experiencing an acute political crisis since January. The political opposition had decided to reject the principle of consensus after failing in elections, as democratic means would not allow it to seize power. That violence threatened to become a civil war, undermining the achievements of the modern Yemeni people. At the beginning of the 1990s, Yemen had established a unified state based on pluralistic, democratic foundations. But, those who focused on narrow, partisan interests did not approve of that historic achievement and tried to start a commotion, using as their basis errors made in Yemen at the beginning of the establishment of its unified State.

Unbridled population growth, prevalence of poverty, desertification and paucity of oil had combined to create an environment in which it was impossible for thousands of university graduates to find employment. But, opposition powers used the tidal wave of change in Arab countries to prevent Yemen from achieving democratic change through elections; the Government had started dialogue with youth to respond to their requests and created tens of thousands of jobs to alleviate unemployment. “However the opposition parties abused and misused the vigils by youth in order to seize power, and some of their elements conducted subversive actions to sabotage the movement of the youth,” he said.

Yemen’s President had offered compromise to the opposition who had refused to endorse the 2006 election, leading to the postponement of parliamentary elections for two years. He had assured that he had no intention running for President again and had accepted modifications to the Constitution, election laws and a whole package of reform. The country had experienced losses of more than \$2 billion from the chaos caused by the opposition, which had tried to cut through roads, explode oil pipelines and cut electricity lines.

Yet, he said, the Government continued to call the opposition to the table to start dialogue. Divisions in Yemen would only be overcome by a return to the legality of the constitution and fixing its shortcomings. A smooth transition of power would allow reconciliation, reform and reconstruction without violating democratic principles. Yemen would provide a model for change in which all parties would be winners — an example of a country that opted for dialogue as a means to overcome crisis.

Despite limited resources, the Government continued to make every effort to fight Al-Qaida; it needed a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy that strived to achieve international justice. Yemen attached primary importance to human rights and welcomed the result of the universal periodic review conducted by the Human Rights Council. In Yemen’s political crisis, there had been many violations of human rights by all parties. Nevertheless, the Government was ready to conduct independent national investigations and bring the perpetrators to justice, as well as open its doors to the Human Rights Council’s fact finding mission this year.

SERGEY V. LAVROV, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, said that, just as a ship caught in adverse weather conditions needed a united team and a compass to take the right course, the international community today needed a combination of efforts to respond to common challenges and clear guidelines to strengthen the mechanisms of global governance. The United Nations remained a pillar of international relations and equitable multilateral cooperation in the interests of all States. It should, therefore, continue to provide political, legal and moral leadership in dealing with global challenges, including through the establishment of principles and standards of interaction, their monitoring and implementation, and the provision of assistance and support to States in need. In that vein, however, wider international cooperation was needed to keep the global economic situation under control. A significant contribution to the reform of the economy was being made by the BRICS States (Brazil, Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa). For its part, the Russian Federation had made a proposal to elaborate a Convention on International Energy Security, he added.

The “logic of joint consolidated action” should also prevail in matters of security and the elimination of surplus nuclear weapons worldwide, he continued. The Russian Federation and the United States had taken an important step when they signed the START Treaty and began its implementation; he thus called on all States with nuclear weapons capability to join that effort. “We believe that further progress in nuclear arms reduction is possible only on a multilateral basis.” Moreover, progress in that area was inseparable from coordinated efforts to move forward on all aspects of strengthening international security and strategic stability. That included the development of universally acceptable approaches to the missile defence issues, accounting for the impact of strategic conventional arms, preventing weaponization in space, and eliminating qualitative and quantitative imbalances of conventional arms.

The deployment of strategic missile defence elements altered the overall configuration of international security, he said, adding that it was not enough to make statements that the increase in global missile defence capabilities would not undermine the basics of strategic security. “The issue is way too serious,” he said. Solid legal guarantees were needed that missile defence potential would actually be adequate to the declared objectives and would not disrupt global and regional balances. It was of primary

importance to prevent the undermining of the non-proliferation regime, he said, calling for the universalization of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the strengthening of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. The early resolution to the nuclear problems of Iran and the Korean peninsula would contribute to the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime, he said.

The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) was a key tool to ensure stability within the area of its responsibility. The signing of the Joint Declaration on Cooperation between the United Nations Secretariat and the CSTO in March 2011 was a major step in the collaboration between those two organizations, primarily in the field of peacekeeping. The Russian Federation constantly called for interaction between regional organizations, under the auspices of the United Nations, to strengthen global stability based on the solid legal framework of the United Nations Charter, he added. President Dmitry A. Medvedev of the Russian Federation had launched an initiative to sign a treaty on European security, whose practical implementation would allow the region to “finally draw the line under the post-cold war period”, establishing a universal and clear framework for issues including National Missile Defence and arms control, among others.

While giving special attention to the developments in the Arab world and condemning violence against civilians, the Russian Federation stressed that actions by outside forces in that context must be based on full respect for international law and be instrumental to the search for a political settlement between the authorities and the opposition. The attempts to go beyond the Security Council’s mandate were unacceptable, since they undermined its authority and multiplied the suffering of innocent civilians. The leading role in elaborating modalities for the post-conflict resolution in Libya must belong to the United Nations and the Security Council, he said, adding that it was time to lift the no-fly zone in that country. In Syria, it was “inadmissible” to boycott proposals on a national dialogue, stir up confrontation and provoke violence, while neglecting the achievable — albeit late — reform proposals by President Bashar al-Assad.

He also touched on several other outstanding conflicts, including the Arab-Israeli standoff, the Cypriot conflict, and over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. His country was also committed to preventing a repetition of the use of force in the Caucasus, as occurred in August 2008 as the result of a “reckless venture by the ruling regime in Tbilisi”. The Russian Federation was ready to act as a guarantor of the non-use of force between Abkhazia, Georgia and South Ossetia, and would welcome the decision by the United States and the European Union to do the same. Finally, turning to the question of reform of the Security Council, he recognized the need to adapt the United Nations to contemporary realities while preserving its interstate nature and the immutability of its Charter principles. The Russian Federation supported a solution that would be based upon the broadest possible agreement.

WILFRED P. ELRINGTON, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Belize, agreed that mediation was a more sensible means of ending disputes than use of force, or threats of force, especially in the case of neighbouring States. Today’s world was characterized by widespread anxiety and insecurity, seen in financial markets and cities alike. Debt crises, drugs and human trafficking dominated the global stage, while Mother Nature was undergoing extreme change. Thus far, international responses had been “uninspiring” and “inadequate”. Far too many people were dying from hunger or curable diseases, and the global economy was again bracing for setback, as recovery in major industrialized nations risked being reversed. Against that backdrop, Belize had no doubt that the United Nations held the key to solving such problems.

For small island and coastal States like Belize, global warming posed an existential threat, he said, and it required a global response based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. Twenty four such States were partnering in a sustainable energy initiative called “SIDS DOCK” aimed at transforming energy sectors, which would require delivery of the promised environmentally friendly technologies and additional funding. On other issues, he said crime in Central America had escalated drastically over the last decade, with the arms used in most murders being received through illicit trafficking between South and North America. The problem required international cooperation, and especially, a universally applicable normative framework to regulate the arms trade, such as an arms trade treaty that was legally binding.

Turning to a silent killer, he said non-communicable diseases could only be combated through collaborative international efforts, stressing that the political declaration adopted at the recent High-level

Meeting on Non-communicable Diseases should be a template for action at all levels. Belize awaited the development of indicators and global targets aimed at achieving a 25 per cent reduction in non-communicable disease-related deaths by 2025 and would support that initiative unconditionally. Given the scale of such problems and the need for an ever increasing amount of resources, the international community must avail itself to every source of assistance that was available. In that regard, he urged that the Republic of China (Taiwan) be allowed to participate in the United Nations work and that the embargo against Cuba, denounced by the Assembly for years, be brought to an end. In closing, he said Belize recognized the United Nations' primacy in international affairs and global governance.

DJIBRILL YPÈNÈ BASSOLÉ, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Burkina Faso, noting the theme of this year's debate and underlining the important mediation role that President Blaise Compaoré had played in the resolution of crises in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, said his country was committed to sharing its experience in facilitating peace negotiations with the international community. Domestically, he noted, his country had been confronted, at the beginning of this year, with social unrest due to the conjunction of national and international economic problems. Those troubles were fortunately resolved thanks to inclusive dialogue initiated by the President. In addition, the Government put in place a consultative committee on political reform to strengthen the initiatives that have been in process for several years.

In social and economic areas, as part of the implementation of an accelerated strategy for growth and sustainable development, he said the Government had focused on the following sectors: education, health, water, training, youth employment and the transportation system, with the assistance of multinational and bilateral partners. At the regional and subregional levels, the country continued to work for the strengthening of the regional economic integration process through the West African Monetary and Economic Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union. He reiterated his country's full availability to support the Union's peace and security work.

On climate change, he stressed the urgency of the problem and the need for an international solution. He saluted the initiative of Hilary Clinton, Secretary of State of the United States, on a global alliance for clean cooking stoves, from which his country could greatly benefit. He also welcomed the High-level Meeting of the Assembly on the fight against desertification, as well as the accession of many countries, including his own, to the Nagoya Protocol on biological diversity. In other areas, he looked forward to greater support from United Nations Women to the advancement of women in developing countries, and said that in this Assembly session the Group of African States would introduce a draft resolution intended to prohibit, at the international level, female genital mutilation.

Expressing strong support for the settlement of dispute by peaceful means, he pledged his country's willingness to facilitate future mediation processes. Noting that his country contributed a contingent of 800 troops to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), he welcomed the emergence of the Doha Document and called on all parties to sign it. He pledged his country's continued work for peace in Darfur and elsewhere. He finally expressed solidarity with Tunisia, Egypt and Libya in their quest for freedom and democracy, and he supported the application of Palestine for membership in the United Nations.

WUNNA MAUNG LWIN, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, updated the Assembly on recent changes taking place in his country, saying it had emerged as a "new democratic nation", in accordance with the Constitution, which had been approved by an overwhelming majority of people. Giving context, he said multiparty democratic general elections had been held in November 2010, in which 37 political parties contested. Today, elected representatives were exercising their democratic rights in legislative bodies. In his inaugural speech in March, the President had said that all elected Hluttaw members were duty-bound to safeguard the Constitution. The new Government had pledged that all citizens would enjoy equal rights, and that it would both revoke existing laws and adopt new ones deemed necessary to realizing peoples' fundamental rights.

Noting that Myanmar had received State leaders from neighbouring countries in the last five months, he said the new Government had also launched reforms to improve socio-economic conditions for its people, including those to reduce poverty. Forward-looking economic policies would lead to inclusive and equitable growth which, in turn, would increase job opportunities and promote agriculture. In that context, he urged that unilateral sanctions on Myanmar be lifted. In the area of human rights, he said the United Nations

Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar had visited in August, and that Myanmar's report had been submitted to the Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review. Myanmar agreed to accept 52.4 per cent of the recommendations and believed the review process was the most dependable monitoring mechanism to rectify countries' human rights situations.

Turning to other matters, he said the Government offered an olive branch to all "national race" armed groups on 18 August, which had been accepted by some. In May, the President had granted amnesty to 20,000 inmates, who were released in July. Further, he had received Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on 19 August and held "cordial and candid" discussions to find common grounds for cooperation. Turning to other issues, he said as an agro-based country, Myanmar followed climate change issues with interest. Lately, floods and droughts had devastated agricultural production in the region and Myanmar looked forward to tangible outcomes from the Seventeenth Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The three pillars of sustainable development — economic development, social development and environmental protection — also must be promoted in an integrated manner.

Strongly condemning terrorism, he welcomed the Secretary-General's commitment to conduct a global threat review in the wake of deadly attacks in Abuja, Nigeria. Myanmar stood ready to cooperate regionally and internationally to combat that scourge. Efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals had been hindered by slow economic growth, diminishing resources and increasing food prices, and while each country had the primary duty for achieving its own development, international support was needed. Turning to security issues, he said that as a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Myanmar was a strong advocate of nuclear disarmament and had tabled a resolution on that matter every year since 1995, which enjoyed wide support. His Government strongly supported any effort to realize a world free from such weapons and its by-products. He closed by stressing that Myanmar had transformed "towards" a democratic nation in a smooth and peaceful manner. The steps taken were concrete and irreversible, and the Government would ensure that reforms were carried out in an incremental and dynamic manner.

PHAM BINH MINH, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, said that while peace, cooperation and development were the overriding features of our time, tensions and conflicts persisted in most continents and regions. The world economy's unstable recovery, coupled with economic downturns in many developed nations, had exposed developing ones to risks of even further unequal terms of trade, rising protectionism, dwindling financial resources and erosion of gains made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Additionally, multilateral negotiations on issues such as disarmament and climate change had not yielded results "up to our expectation", he said.

The key to peace, security and stability lay in each nation's own efforts, but also in enhanced international cooperation and multilateralism, he said. Over the past years, the United Nations had played an increasingly crucial role in ending conflicts and promoting the peace process in various regions. Viet Nam deeply valued the initiatives putting the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable at the centre of the international agenda and mobilizing resources and capacities. The Organization should continue its concerted and coherent efforts to promote peaceful settlement of civil wars and local conflicts in several regions, especially North Africa and the Middle East, while preventing others from erupting. Viet Nam also supported efforts to end violence and strengthen national reconstruction and reconciliation in Afghanistan and Iraq. He also noted that Viet Nam had recognized the State of Palestine in 1988 and had always supported the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent and sovereign State.

In parallel with security concerns, the United Nations should work for more equal international relations and fairer international economic and financial architecture and institutions, he said. Developing countries must have a greater role and say in international governance. Among other key actions, developed countries should successfully complete the Doha Round, eliminate unfair trade measures and increase development assistance, he said. Viet Nam recommended that the United Nations convene a follow-up meeting to the outcome of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis, which was held in June 2009, and strongly called for an end to the economic embargo against Cuba. Moreover, he said, to promote inclusive and sustainable development, political commitment and efforts — with the central coordinating role played by the United Nations — must be doubled.

Viet Nam was working with other Member States to revitalize the General Assembly as the principal deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, and to enlarge the Security Council and improve its working methods. The operation of the Human Rights Council and other

human rights mechanisms should continue to be improved to become more effective, efficient and consistent. To make more of a contribution to that end, Viet Nam had presented its candidature for membership in the Council for the term starting 2013.

During the last 25 years of comprehensive renewal, Viet Nam had made significant achievements. Now Viet Nam was determined to step up the renewal process in a comprehensive manner with higher quality and effectiveness. It would also continue to implement its independent foreign policy for peace, cooperation and development, meanwhile aiming to be a “reliable friend and partner, as well as responsible member of the international community”. It was working with regional groups in various capacities, including through its strong commitment to dialogue, conflict resolution and peacebuilding mechanisms — including the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea. Pending a solution agreed on by all relevant parties, Viet Nam would continue to strictly observe the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the Eastern Sea, and looked forward to the conclusion of a Code of Conduct in the foreseeable future.

ELMAR MAMMADYAROV, Minister for Foreign Affairs of [Azerbaijan](#), said his country was ready to contribute to more effective mediation, but not all States approached international obligations responsibly. “For almost two decades we have been facing the flagrant violation of the [United Nations] Charter and other documents of international law by the Republic of Armenia, which perpetrated aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan. As a result of this aggression, almost 20 per cent of the territory of Azerbaijan continues to remain under occupation and about 1 million Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced persons are unable to return to their homes,” he said.

The Security Council in 1993 adopted four resolutions demanding immediate withdrawal of Armenian forces from all territories of Azerbaijan, but Armenia continued to ignore the calls of the international community. Even more worrisome was that, instead of preparing its people for a prosperous and stable future with neighbouring countries, Armenia’s leaders incited future generations to new wars and aggression, propagating hatred of Azerbaijan and other peoples of the region. Illegal implantation of ethnic Armenian settlers and destruction of cultural heritage were another source of serious concern, he said.

“Earlier in this hall we have witnessed a very aggressive and unconstructive statement of the President of Armenia. He openly confirmed this destructive policy of Armenia,” he said. The Field Assessment Mission to the occupied territories conducted by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group co-Chairs last October stated the occupation was unacceptable and urged Armenia to end its illegal practices in those territories. “It is absolutely illogical when the leadership of Armenia, who has implemented the total ethnic cleansing of not only the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, but also its own territory from their Azerbaijani population, is trying to apply the principle of self-determination. It is obvious that one cannot expel peoples from their homes on ethnic grounds and, at the same time, speak about self-determination on the same ground for those who remained,” he said.

Resolving the conflict must start with withdrawal of Armenian armed forces, followed by restoration of communications, return of refugees and internally displaced peoples and creation of conditions for peaceful coexistence of Azerbaijanis and Armenians in the Nagorno-Karabakh region with the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, he said. Azerbaijan believed the international community would convince the Armenian side to cease abusing the right of Azerbaijanis to live within their own territory, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region; in return, Azerbaijan was ready to guarantee the highest level of self-rule for this region. To contribute further to peace and help redress under-representation of small developing countries, Azerbaijan had put forth its candidature for a seat in the Security Council for the 2012-2013 term and would highly appreciate Member States valuable support.

DATO SRI ANIFAH AMAN, Minister for Foreign Affairs of [Malaysia](#), said that in a turbulent neighbourhood, mediation was the only answer for people to live in peace and security. “Through mediation, we can determine what the security concerns of people are and take appropriate measures,” he said, recalling that year after year, there had been hope for a peaceful and just resolution to the Palestinian issue. Patience and prudence had their merits, but they must not result in paralysis. “We must act,” he said, stressing that Malaysia supported Palestine’s bid for statehood and full United Nations membership.

Urging strengthened resolve to eradicate terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, he said its root causes must be tackled. The hearts and minds of people must be won, but that was only half of the

“battle of perceptions”. The other half involved combating the expression of extremist sentiments, including “Islamophobia” and attempts to demonize Islam or link it with terrorism. The real issue was not between Muslims and non-Muslims, but between moderates and extremists in all religions. “We must ensure that the voices of moderation, which currently constitute the silent majority, prevail over that of extremism,” he said. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) had endorsed the “movement of the moderates”, whose work Malaysia would ensure complemented the Alliance of Civilizations.

In other areas, he noted that Malaysia had pledged \$1 million to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Trust Fund on Somalia and dispatched a humanitarian mission to help Somalis. In the field of the environment, there was a lack of political will to implement good plans and Malaysia was concerned at the paralysing differences in the institutional framework for sustainable development. The failure of the Commission on Sustainable Development to deliver a successful outcome last May spoke to that point, as did the unwillingness to honour United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change commitments. The principle of common but differentiated responsibility must be coupled with that of historic duty in all climate negotiations. If institutional frameworks could not meet the daunting environmental challenges ahead, new mechanisms that were inclusive might need to be explored. On nuclear issues, he said Malaysia would continue to advocate for the total elimination of nuclear weapons by supporting a nuclear weapons convention, an issue which required starting multilateral negotiations, and he called on nuclear Powers to show good faith in that regard.

On economic issues, he called for a new financial architecture that was transparent, equitable and representational, saying lessons could be learned from developing economies that had strengthened their financial institutions following the Asian financial crisis. For its part, Malaysia, under its “One Malaysia” concept, had launched various reforms, especially vis-à-vis its internal security and emergency laws. The Internal Security Act would be repealed and replaced by legislation to prevent subversive action, terrorism and organized violence. As for the United Nations, he said the Security Council should be reformed into a more legitimate, representative and transparent body that was accountable to the larger membership. Urging that mediation be used in the search for peace, he said States should also adopt the principles of transformation and moderation. Together they would comprise a “winning formula” for reaching world peace.

ARTHUR PETER MUTHARIKA, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Malawi, said that, in today’s increasingly complex world, it was no longer possible to solve issues with an inward focus alone. The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes, therefore, could not be overemphasized. He applauded the efforts of the United Nations, the African Union, regional economic organizations and other international organizations for the role that they played in the settlement of disputes.

The recent economic and financial crisis had not spared the developing world, he said. The effects of problems originating in the developed world had manifested themselves in the escalation of food, oil and commodity prices. Malawi had been on track to meeting five out of the eight Millennium Development Goals prior to the economic crisis, he said. While it had been severely affected, the country was confident that it would still attain most of the targets by 2015, largely thanks to the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy — a national policy that addressed all the Millennium Development Goals. Progress towards meeting those goals could also be attributed to the Government’s good agricultural and economic policies. As Malawi’s President Bingu Wa Mutharika had said: “Without food, the medicines and drugs in hospitals and clinics become ineffective ... without food, children cannot learn well in schools ... and without food, we cannot maintain peacekeeping forces anywhere in the world.”

Malawi had also worked towards curbing youth unemployment and rapid urban migration by introducing a series of national initiatives, including the Malawi Rural Development Fund, the Youth Enterprise Development Fund and the One Village One Product scheme. It had made strides in areas such as combating HIV/AIDS and malaria, and had reduced its under-five mortality rate from 189 deaths per 1,000 in 2000 to 112 deaths per 1,000 in 2010. However, challenges remained. The current crises, coupled with natural calamities, most affected the world’s least developed countries, of which Malawi was a part. In that regard, he expressed his hope that the commitments made at the Istanbul Programme of Action in May 2011 would be fully implemented. Additionally, as Malawi, like other African nations, was adversely affected by climate change and global warming, he hoped that the upcoming Conference of States Parties to the Climate Change Convention would conclude in a positive agreement based on the Bali

Plan of Action, with agreed cuts on greenhouse gas emissions and measures adopted to help ameliorate the impacts of climate change on the most vulnerable nations.

With regards to peace and security, he called on the General Assembly's Member States to redouble their efforts to eliminate current conflicts, prevent the occurrence of new ones, and continue to condemn, frustrate and isolate those who sought to come to power through corrupt and unconstitutional means. Malawi would continue to play an active role through the contribution of troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Recalling that colonialism ran counter to social, economic and cultural development — and that there remained 16 Non-Self-Governing territories around the world — he further urged the United Nations to renew its commitment to ensuring that those territories were able to exercise their right to self-determination.

Finally, he expressed concern at the “slow pace” at which the reform of the Security Council was progressing. More than 15 years had passed since the process began, he recalled, and there appeared to be no tangible progress. “We in Africa are desperate to see that the historic injustice done to our continent at the inception of the United Nations is addressed as soon as possible,” he stressed, by granting Africa two permanent seats with all the privileges and prerogatives as the current permanent members enjoyed, including the right to veto if that function were maintained, and a total of five elected seats. That position was stipulated in the Ezulwini Consensus, he added, which clearly provided a solution to the long-awaited reform of the Council.

SURAPONG TOVICHAKCHAIKUL, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand, said that after its political unrest, his country had taken another step forward in its democratic process. General elections in July this year went smoothly and the new Government had been successfully formed, with a solid mandate from the people. “We seek to bring about a strong, equitable and sustainable economic infrastructure in the country. More importantly, this Government is determined to promote reconciliation and uphold the rule of law to serve as a basis for harmony and unity within the country,” he said.

Thailand would further enhance cordial relations with neighbours, as well as friends beyond its region, with a special emphasis on promoting trust, confidence and mutual respect. The international order must be more inclusive and responsive to all States and civil society, and, in changing times, a reform of global governance was needed. On peace and security, he believed the peaceful resolution was the most desirable and cost-effective approach — both in terms of human lives and financial costs. To that end, political will remained the key ingredient to peaceful resolution of disputes, but in many instances, deployment of peacekeepers was still necessary. Wishing to do its part, Thailand had supported over 20 peacekeeping missions and was about to deploy military officers to a United Nations mission in Kashmir. Since autumn 2010, Thailand had dispatched two counter-piracy task groups to join efforts to protect ships from pirate attacks in the Gulf of Aden.

But, a key foundation for durable peace was sustainable development; ever since the financial crisis of 1997, Thailand's “people-centred approach” had helped ensure its people were able to cope much better with subsequent crises. Thailand's Government was working to ensure free primary and secondary education and universal health-care coverage, resolutely pursuing development beyond the Millennium Development Goals. It was also seriously preparing for participation in next year's “Rio+20” conference, aiming to move forward economic and social development and environmental conservation in a balanced and integrated manner.

Thailand also strove to play a constructive role in human rights, especially through membership of the Human Rights Council. Thailand was proud to have led the crucial task of reviewing the Council's work to make it more relevant during its presidency; the Arab Spring phenomenon revealed human rights could only thrive in democracy. Without democracy, fundamental human rights were at risk. Further, respect for human rights could not be imposed from outside. Such values must be developed and nurtured within, in accordance with the readiness and aspirations of the people. Meanwhile, Thailand was also undergoing its first universal periodic review this October and was determined to continue playing a constructive role in the Human Rights Council. In that regard, it would proudly stand for election again for the 2015-2017 term.

Thailand also attached special importance vulnerable groups such as children, women, persons with disabilities or the elderly. In the area of women's rights, the General Assembly last year adopted the

United Nations Rules for Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders - the “Bangkok Rules” – which arose from the initiative of Thai Princess Bajrakitiyabha. Moreover, the recent election of the country’s first female Prime Minister confirmed Thai society was open to women and promoted gender equality.

NASSIROU BAKO ARIFARI, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration, Francophonie and Beninese Abroad of Benin, said his country understood the importance of mediation and had established a public mediators’ office. More broadly, there was a need for multilateralism in order to avoid a “collective shipwreck” in tackling global problems. “Nationally, we need greater cohesion,” he said, and more determination to eliminate obstacles to development. In Benin, democracy had been preserved through the United Nations tireless commitment, especially its support for computerized electoral lists, which had guaranteed polling results. Benin had worked to consolidate governance at national and local levels, notably through a package of reforms to rid structural and behavioural obstacles to governance. Strengthening democratic bodies and rebalancing their powers was at the heart of revamping the Constitution. The number of presidential terms was limited to two and anyone over the age of 70 could not be a candidate.

Turning to the fight against corruption, he cited the adoption of a law in August that allowed the Government to address new forms of illicit enrichment, instilling transparency in the management of State resources and combating practices that prevented citizens from enjoying the fruits of their labour. “This is a revolution in Benin’s legal mechanisms,” he said. More broadly, the United Nations should be the leader in global governance. In the Human Rights Council, Benin would work to promote and protect all universally recognized human rights, and supported their interdependence. Despite a bleak global economic picture, countries must make progress in the areas of good governance, health, water, sanitation, primary education and women’s empowerment. Least developed countries required modern technology transfers and a greater share of international trade, which required fulfilling pledges in the Istanbul Programme of Action.

On climate change, he voiced hope that the 2012 “Rio+20” summit would lead to decisions that were in line with “the perils that await us”. On transnational organized crime, he said Benin had been targeted by piracy, armed theft at sea and illicit flows of fake medicine — a situation that complicated the search for resources to address external economic shocks and attain the Millennium Development Goals. He called on States with expertise in maritime operations for assistance, as Benin’s resources were “laughable”, given the scale of the threat. Pressing the United Nations to enhance its capacities to help States respond to such threats, he said negotiations to reform the Security Council must be stepped up, with 2015 seen as a possible deadline for completing talks and establishing an inclusive body that rectified the historical injustice to Africa.

Conflict prevention also involved supporting young people, and he urged that outcomes from the recent High-level Meeting on Youth be translated into action. Indeed, only those States which gave young people opportunity would be able to meet future challenges. With respect to the Palestinian question, he said the United Nations had the means to find a lasting solution, and it should not shirk its historic responsibilities for a Palestinian State living in peaceful coexistence with Israel. He supported that goal and called on the Security Council to facilitate a rapid solution so Palestinians’ daily suffering would be relieved.

DOMINIQUE MAMBERTI, Secretary for Relations with States of the Holy See, said certain areas, such as the Horn of Africa, faced serious humanitarian emergencies that plunged millions into drought and malnutrition. Those emergencies underscored the need to find innovative ways to implement principles, such as the responsibility to protect. There should also be a deep search for a way to handle and manage conflicts through constructive dialogue. Military action should be a last resort under the responsibility to protect, and that principle should prompt a search for solutions to those crises. It was important for the responsibility to protect to motivate the work of the United Nations and all countries.

Unfortunately, there were numerous situations in which religious freedom was limited or denied, he said. Christians suffered the most persecution worldwide because of their faith, and a joint commitment to promote the religious freedom of each individual of each religion was important, with measures for secure lives for minorities and those of all faiths and beliefs. There were countries that promoted great pluralism and tolerance but perceived religion as destabilizing and marginalized. Yet, the sincere search for God had brought larger respect for the dignity of man.

The global financial crisis was caused by lack of ethics in certain structures, he continued. Economies did not work merely for market self-preservation – there had to be an ethical reason for being, if economies were going to work for mankind. Each economic decision had a moral consequence, and the world community must be able to reduce poverty and lighten the suffering of those who had the least. Therefore, a clear-sighted review of distortions of the economic system was needed, and a new model was necessary. It must serve the family of nations and a family was, by its nature, community based, with mutual trust and attention to the weakest and most disenfranchised.

The international community should also concern itself with an effective and applicable Arms Trade Treaty, he said. The goal should not be merely regulating trade and creating obstacles to illegal markets, but also creating respect for human life. Courageous decisions also needed to be made for the right of Palestinians to have their own sovereign State and the right of Israel to have security. The Holy See urged both parties to return to negotiations with determination and resolve, issuing a call to the international community to help foster lasting peace between Israel and Palestine.

NICOLÁS MADUROS MOROS, Minister of the People's Power for Foreign Affairs of Venezuela, reading a message from President Hugo Chávez, reaffirmed his country's commitment to justice, equality and peace, stressing that peace should be sought through international laws. The Charter's preamble, which talked of saving future generations from war, was a "dead letter", since wars, since 1945, had inexorably multiplied. Indeed, Libya now lay bloodstained and in ruins, and since 11 September 2001, an unprecedented, imperialist and permanent war had begun.

Why was the United States the only country that had military bases all over the world? he asked. What was it so afraid of that it had to allocate such a staggering budget for its military power? Why had it unleashed so many wars? The United States Empire had appointed itself to be a judge of the world, although no one had asked it to do so, and today, Clausewitz's famous maxim had been reversed: politics was the continuation of war by other means.

The new cycle of wars, which had started in Libya with the sinister goal of refreshing the global capitalist system, posed a serious threat to global peace, he said. At the same time, the world was marching inexorably towards ecocide; global warming and its frightening consequences were "announcing" it, and while energy and food prices rose, capitalism continued to trespass all limits with impunity. But there was a greater power than that of military force and nuclear bombs: the power of good, of morality, of humanitarianism and the human spirit. It was imperative to unleash a great political counter-offensive to prevent further war, he said.

Recalling that Venezuela, like the African Union, had been actively advocating for a peaceful resolution to the Libyan crisis, he said the logic of war had won out based on premeditated lies regarding the bombing of innocent civilians by the Libyan Air Force. Asking how the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) could conduct more than 20,000 missions against the Libyan people if there was a no-fly zone called for in Security Council resolution 1973 (2011), he suggested that the intention of the military intervention had been Libya's re-colonization, and he called for the immediate cessation of the bombing operation. Asking why Libya's National Transitional Council was granted a seat in the General Assembly while Palestine's admission to the United Nations was blocked, he voiced unrestricted support to the Palestinian national cause. Moreover, only the Syrian people could decide their fate in light of the right to self-determination.

In the Horn of Africa, \$1.4 billion in assistance is needed to prevent more than 12 million people from dying. It was also time for the United States to end its criminal blockade of Cuba and to release the five Cuban anti-terrorist fighters it was holding hostage.

Underlining the continuing "[United Nations] crisis", he said it was clear the Organization could not improve from the inside. If the Secretary-General, along with the President of the International Criminal Court, took part in an act of war, as was the case in Libya, nothing could be expected from the current structure. There was no longer time for reforms. If the commitment was not made for "re-founding" the United Nations, the Organization would lose its remaining credibility. That re-founding must start with the elimination of both the permanent membership and power of the veto in the Security Council. The General

Assembly's decision-making power should be democratically maximized and the Charter should be reviewed with the aim of drafting a new one. Furthermore, an alliance of the South must lead the way to peace.

HINA RABBANI KHAR, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, speaking on behalf of Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, said Pakistan was here today because it believed in multilateralism. "We can do more together than we can apart," she said. Pakistan also believed in the promise of the United Nations: a world free from war, governed by the rules and norms of civility and inter-State conduct based on respect for the Organization's immutable principles. Thanking the international community for its support in the wake of devastating floods last year, she said that Pakistanis would overcome that misfortune with fortitude and resilience.

Noting that Pakistan was seeking election to the Security Council, she said the Government had reached out to its neighbours. "We realize the enormous opportunities that ensue from pursuing with diligence the vision of common development and cooperation," she said, noting that Pakistan and India were now engaged in a dialogue process, which her Government planned to make a "mutually rewarding enterprise". Pakistan looked forward to resolving all outstanding issues, including the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, and working with India to create mutual confidence in avoiding an arms race and enhancing strategic stability.

In Afghanistan, Pakistan strongly condemned recent terror attacks in Kabul, and fully supported an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned, inclusive reconciliation process, she said. Urging an end to violence, she said the road ahead for peace – in Afghanistan and the region – was full of challenges, and in that context, her Government attached importance to the Trilateral Core Group and the Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Commission for Peace and Reconciliation. Given the volatility of the situation, States must work closely as responsible partners and not question each other's intentions. Reaffirming support for Palestinians' inalienable right to an independent homeland with Al Quds Al Sharif as its capital, and to United Nations membership, more broadly, she said that the aspirations of people in North Africa and the Middle East must be accommodated without external interference, in a manner consistent with the principle of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Recounting how Pakistan had been "ravaged by the monster of terrorism", she said the country was united in its determination to eliminate that scourge from its soil, region and the world. "It is Pakistan's firm determination not to allow any space on its territory for militants and terrorists," she stressed, adding that the issue of organizing, financing, arming and abetting terrorist violence must be seriously addressed. Pakistan had done all it could to realize a bright future for Pakistanis and Afghans, especially by advocating for closer regional economic integration. Prioritizing development in terms of mutually beneficial joint ventures in infrastructure, energy and trade would help change the picture.

As for the United Nations, Security Council reforms must be taken in a manner that would reinforce confidence in that body, she said. The Organization provided the best global forum to enhance understanding, but she voiced concern at campaigns that stigmatized Islam and Muslims. In sum, she said that as a democratic country, Pakistan would do its best for the cause of global peace and prosperity. "We will defeat those that seek to terrorize us. We will empower women. There will be challenges, but *inshaAllah*, we will overcome them," she said.

PAK KIL YON, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, said that international law and order were being violated and undermined by the "arbitrary and high-handed acts of some [of the] big Powers". He emphasized that such a reality required Member States to reaffirm the principles of defending peace and sovereign equality as enshrined in the Charter. Member States must also step up the process of Organizational reform, including strengthening the General Assembly. As an example of disregard for Assembly decisions, he said the 193-member body had long ago adopted resolutions on dismantling the "United Nations Command" in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and on ending the United States blockade against Cuba, but they had been ignored.

Enhancing the Assembly's authority would require, among other things, urgently putting in place a mechanism which give that body approval over all Security Council resolutions related to peace and security, especially those enacting sanctions. Other forums where "the logic of power" was starkly apparent were the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) and the Geneva-based Human Rights Council.

Indeed, while Organizational reform had been touted as a way to eradicate politicization in the world body and its main organs, selectivity and double standards still prevailed when human rights issues were being discussed. Indeed, while some States were singled out, the actions of “major human rights violators are simply passed over in silence”, as per the political objectives and interests of the West, in line with Western ideals. With those issues in mind, he called for speedy reform of the Organization's human rights bodies so that fundamental freedoms could be ensured for all people of all countries.

As for the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, he said Kim Jong Il was leading the efforts to build a powerful State, concentrating all the Government's resources on bolstering the economy and improving the livelihoods of all citizens. Yet, the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea could only press ahead with their efforts at building their country in a peaceful environment, and, regrettably, the Korean peninsula did not have a “lasting and stable peace mechanism”. Indeed, national division imposed by outside forces and a fragile armistice characterized by neither war nor peace had lingered for decades. Despite the broad desire to ensure stability, the build-up of arms was proceeding and “nuclear war exercises continue to be staged one after another against [his country] and in and around the Korean peninsula”. That situation often drove the peninsula to the brink of war, and the prevailing situation posed a grave threat to his country's security and economic development efforts.

Had it not been for the efforts of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's great leader “and our powerful war deterrent”, the peninsula would have been turned into a theatre of war countless times, he said. The Government was consistent in its desire for stability and the denuclearization of the peninsula. The continued tensions there were the result of the hostile relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. As long as that hostility existed, the mistrust would not dissipate. To remedy that situation, his country had last year proposed to hold talks to replace the Armistice Agreement with a peace accord. Yet, the United States continued its “nuclear war policy” against his country. Indeed, the entire situation would never have become an issue if the United States had refrained from deploying nuclear weapons in the Korean peninsula. The United States, therefore, should abandon its hostile policy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and move towards full-fledged dialogue.

He said that while inter-Korean relations had been developing favourably since the 15 June Joint Declaration, they had now deteriorated to their worst state, creating an atmosphere of “war and confrontation”. That situation was being driven by fundamental differences between North and South. While previous authorities in the Republic of Korea had supported the Declaration, the current authorities “totally denied” it and had come up with their own “unification through absorption” policy, which presupposed one party's collapse. He declared that that policy was the “road to war”, whereas a federal formula - based on coexistence and the best possible method for reunification - led to peace. If the current Republic of Korea authorities wanted to ease the current situation, they would abandon the confrontational attitude and make efforts to implement the Joint Declaration.

DORU COSTEA, State Secretary for Global Affairs of Romania, said that protracted conflicts in Eastern Europe continued to demand the undivided attention of the international community, and he reiterated the importance of remaining involved in handling those conflicts with a view to reaching peaceful solutions, within the existing regulatory frameworks. He welcomed the opening of dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, facilitated by the European Union following the resolution of the General Assembly in 2010, and reiterated the central role of the United Nations and the framework of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). Romania supported the Geneva talks, co-chaired by the United Nations, European Union and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on the situation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Progress on the humanitarian track should not be held hostage to political setbacks and called for urgent solutions.

Regarding Afghanistan, he said progress was being made in the gradual takeover of responsibility by the Afghan authorities in the fields of security, reconstruction and socio-economic development. He welcomed the steps being taken by the Afghan Administration for national reconciliation, and trusted that a rigid framework would not be set up, but rather be tailored to particular realities and conditions required for the normal functioning of the Afghan society. Progress in Afghanistan also depended on the efforts of the authorities in Kabul and the continued commitment of the international community.

Last year in Bucharest, an international workshop had been convened on electoral and political matters pertaining to democratic transition, organized in part by Romania. It had been attended by more

than 40 participants, from Egypt and Tunisia, representatives of public institutions involved in organizing the elections, representatives of the media, civil society and academic circles, and by Romanian and international experts. The seminar focused on sharing experiences on first electoral cycles in post-authoritarian regimes, as founding moments for a new democratic society through credible, transparent and free elections.

In times of crisis, options were limited, he said. The international community could dwell in endless debates on “what should have been done” and “what might have been”, but now was not the time for such debates. Reforms were needed that observed comprehensively good governance principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as the wise use of available resources. That was the only option — a country without equal and dignified citizens could never be rich.

FRANCISCO ALVAREZ DE SOTO, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama, said his country was a multi-ethnic place where people of diverse races, cultures, creeds and languages coexisted in harmony and freedom. Panama believed that adherence to representative democracy and independence, as well as the respect of sovereignty, ideology and territorial integrity of all countries, were “inalienable particularities” that defined it as a nation. Panama would always advocate for international peace and security, the promotion of dialogue between Member States, the strengthening of multilateral dynamics and facilitating the mission of the United Nations. Such advocacy stemmed from the experiences accumulated during the course of Panama’s diplomatic trajectory.

He said his country, upon regaining democracy at the beginning of the 1990s, and with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), had strengthened administrative institutions, secured an impeccable revision of the Panama Canal to Panamanian hands, and identified strategies to accomplish the nation’s development priorities. Panama’s robust outlook for economic growth and favourable management of debt, combined with continuous, adequate and careful financial discipline, had been determining factors in the recently achieved investment grade from the World Economic Forum, which placed it as the second most competitive country in Latin America.

In light of the need to contribute to the coherent restructuring of the world economy, he said Panama’s international agenda pointed towards active participation in important multilateral mechanisms and economic integration forums, to allow the openings of new markets in trade, investment, tourism and technology. To guarantee a favourable economic climate, internal conflicts must be avoided, including through effective democratic regimes, public security, the guarantee of human rights, responsibly-managed resources, access to health and sanitation services, and the affordability of basic goods, among others. The experience of living under dictatorship had led Panama to speak out in order to strengthen or re-establish the validity of democratic institutions where required, and express its position in defence of democracy, including in Honduras and during the failed coup attempt in Ecuador, and in connection with the “Arab Spring”.

He said that Panama’s lengthy and notable trajectory of peace and conciliation had fostered the opinion that the best option when facing the threat of armed conflict was a broad, transparent and unconditional diplomatic dialogue between the parties. In that light, he welcomed the unanimous adoption of the resolution entitled “Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution”. That consensus marked a victory for reason over the absurd unreasonableness of confrontation. Human history had shown that hunger, misery, ignorance, injustice and social inequality engendered the greatest threats to peace and security. In order to save future generations from the scourge of war, the international community must opt to proactively ensure a peace that was based – not on reacting to political or military acts of aggression – but on trusting and guaranteeing universal and equal human rights in all corners of the globe.

The world faced many great challenges, one of the greatest of which was the threat posed by climate change and its effects, he said. Addressing such threats was a priority of his foreign policy in the environmental realm, and, in that light, Panama would be hosting the meeting of the special working groups of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Those groups were set to gather in Panama from 1 to 7 October to advance modalities for a second period of commitments of reductions in carbon emissions by developed countries and the stabilization of global temperatures.

ESPEN BARTH EIDE, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs for Norway, describing major changes around the world, said autocrats who had failed to offer a better life in freedom and dignity had been overthrown. Calls for reform in Syria had been met with violence, South Sudan had become the United Nations newest Member State, and in Côte d'Ivoire and Libya, the United Nations had proved its worth by addressing some of the most challenging situations in the world. Norway's participation in the military campaign in Libya was an expression of its belief in a United Nations-led world order and the principle of the responsibility to protect. Promoting human rights and gender equality was a common responsibility, and failing to adhere to universally agreed principles in that area was simply unacceptable. Investment in women and girls was essential for economic prosperity.

He said that strong political leadership and new partnerships had brought about real progress, and Norway would continue to focus on women's rights and promoting women's role in development. There were vast untapped resources within many countries that were struggling to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and broadening the tax base, halting illegal capital flows and fighting corruption were measures that must be used fully in the fight against poverty. On climate change, he said the implementation of the Cancún agreements was crucial and that the Green Climate Fund must be made operational.

Turning to the Middle East, he said Norway's policy was based on the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. It was legitimate for Palestinians to turn to the United Nations under current circumstances and he welcomed the call by the Quartet for negotiations on outstanding final status issues to be completed within a year. Norway looked forward to welcoming Palestine as a full United Nations member. Stressing the importance of strengthening the United Nations, he said the Organization had not been equipped with the resources to carry out its mandates. "We define noble objectives, only to undercut them in the budgeting process," he said.

Noting that Member States had a crucial role to play in achieving greater system-wide coherence, he said that at times, the vision of a United Nations that "delivered as one" had been undermined by State insistence on "pet" projects, earmarking of funds and "awkward" financial reporting requirements. In closing, he deeply regretted that the Assembly podium once again had been abused to promote extreme views and unfounded allegations. The purpose of the general debate was to draw attention to current challenges and lay the basis for constructive dialogue.

LUCY MUNGOMA, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Zambia, underscored the need for the international community to resolve conflicts on the African continent, including the situation in Libya, within the framework of the African Union. Zambia shared the relief of the Libyan people in the need to rid themselves of a leader who committed egregious atrocities against his own people. However, she expressed concern over new atrocities being committed against black people in that country, both citizens and migrants from other African nations. A strong message must be sent that, not only would the perpetrators of such atrocities be pursued as vigorously as Muammar al-Qadhafi had been, but that all allegations would be thoroughly investigated. It would be tragic if, in celebrating the ousting of Qadhafi, the United Nations turned a blind eye to those atrocities still being committed.

She said that the drought situation in the Horn of Africa presented a humanitarian emergency that threatened the lives of 21 million people. While erratic rainfall in past years was the main cause of the drought, the prevalent political instability and violence in Somalia had hampered that country's ability to effectively respond to the crisis. She called on the United Nations to implement the recommendations of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Somalia, in which he called for the establishment of a United Nations peacekeeping mission there.

Last week, on 20 September, Zambia had held general elections and, on 23 September, had welcomed its fifth and newest President, he noted. Zambia's continued political stability had a positive impact on the economic development of the country, with real GDP growth averaging 5.4 per cent in the past decade. However, her country still faced the challenge of translating economic growth into significant poverty reduction. The target date for the Millennium Development Goals was four years away, and while Zambia had made notable progress towards some goals, such achievements risked being reversed, owing to the multifaceted negative impacts of the world economic recession, unfulfilled commitments, and ever diminishing levels of financial assistance.

Turning to other issues of concern to Zambia, he said the country was battling both non-communicable diseases and infectious diseases alike, fighting desertification and land degradation, and climate change. Zambia was looking forward to the forthcoming talks on climate change to be held in Durban. With the year 2012, Zambia was also anticipating the successful conclusion of the arms trade treaty, as a strong and robust instrument would help foster regional and international peace and security. Africa was now the largest of the United Nations regions, with 54 Member States, the same as Asia. It was also a fact that three quarters of the agenda on the Security Council were African issues. Unfortunately, it was also the only continent with no representation in the permanent category of the Security Council, and it was underrepresented in the non-permanent members' category. Africa's request for two permanent seats – with all the rights and obligations of current members – and two additional non-permanent seats was a matter of justice and respect for its right to have an equal say in decision-making on issues of concern to the continent. Indeed, it was about democracy, as well as the dignity of a people and a continent.

ALEXANDRU CUJBA (Republic of Moldova) noting the twentieth anniversary of his country's independence and membership in the United Nations, recommitted the Republic of Moldova to the founding principles of the Organization and thanked the international community for its assistance over the years. Surveying developments of the past year, he stressed that global challenges required global strategies under the aegis of a strengthened United Nations that pragmatically adapted to new realities through an inclusive process of reform in strict accordance with the Charter.

Given the challenges presented by the global economic crises, he said, it was critical that access to markets be opened up more for developing countries. His Government was working hard towards the extension and diversification of market channels in cooperation with partners, primarily in Europe. Openness, a constructive approach and fair-play were the best allies for “win-win solutions in global trade”. Also committed to human rights, the Republic of Moldova last year ratified the international treaties on disabilities and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and was active in the Human Rights Council, committed to pursuing a balanced and objective agenda there. Advocating the earliest completion of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism, he noted that his country was hosting a regional counter-terrorism conference.

Turning to the Transnistrian conflict that beset his country, he announced that five days ago the decision had finally been taken to unconditionally resume negotiations in the so-called 5+2 format involving the Russian Federation, OSCE, Ukraine, European Union and the United States, all of which he thanked for that development. He stressed, however, that a viable political solution could only be based on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. The central question for the negotiations should be the special status of the Transnistrian region – with full respect for the needs, rights and freedoms of the local population – integrated within the country. In the past year, the Government had been working to restore railways and communications within the Transnistrian area.

Noting unresolved issues in the Transnistrian area, such as the situation of Latin-script schools and the unjust imprisonment of Ilie Cazac, he said that the existing, military peacekeeping arrangement in the Republic of Moldova was not needed since the country had been at peace for 19 years. A multinational civilian mission, focused on confidence-building activities, would be more useful. A withdrawal of foreign forces and wide international support by mediators and observers was needed. Meanwhile, the absolute priority of the Government was deep reform, in the context of advancement on the path to European integration. He counted on the support of the United Nations and its Member States in advancing the political and economic development of his country.

FRANCISCO CARRIÓN-MENA (Ecuador) said the world economic and financial crisis should have been a turning point for reform in the international financial architecture, yet it had only resulted in superficial changes. Moreover, the United Nations had been unable to respond to the challenges of global economic instability. For its part, Ecuador promoted the creation of a new regional economic architecture to reduce the crisis' impact. It further stressed the need for regional considerations during trade and financial negotiations and hoped a regional fund could be set up to work through the proposed Unique System of Regional Compensation. Those regional efforts, in turn, should be integrated into a larger framework that went beyond economic and financial spheres, as in the case of the Union of South American Nations. Moreover, regional efforts should complement urgent global reforms, which should

include an economic council to guide restructuring and debt concerns.

He pointed to a “crisis of multilateralism”, which stemmed from the political turmoil in the Middle East, and underlined the need for Security Council reform in terms of its decision-making mechanisms, working methods and membership. Noting that Ecuador had taken over the chairmanship of the Special Committee on Decolonization, he called for a greater focus on ending colonialism. His Government believed that any action to impose peace would fail and could lead to war. Ecuador had recognized Palestine as a State within 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on 24 December 2010. Thus, it supported Palestine’s admission to the United Nations as a Member State. It meanwhile condemned the trade embargo against Cuba, which had caused serious economic damage, as well as humanitarian problems for the population.

Among other issues, he said Ecuador hoped the Rio+20 Conference would result in renewed efforts to bolster sustainable development across its three pillars. However, the world community must comply with commitments to reduce greenhouse gases; insist on the transfer of new, additional and committed financial resources for developing countries in the face of global threats; and address sustainability, not just as an environmental issue, but as one that addressed the interlinkages between capital, labour, nature and politics. That conference should also specify technology transfer and articulate sustainable development instruments aimed at achieving equality and improving the quality of life. He also highlighted Ecuador’s Yasuni-ITT Proposal, which requested the international community to provide at least half of the income the country had given up by choosing not to access the oil reserves in the biodiverse Yasuni region.

On other matters, Ecuador hoped the Conference on Disarmament would address all pending questions. It also called for a resolution of the outstanding issues on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. It supported the work to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and also had increased its participation in United Nations peacekeeping efforts. However, it was clear that the United Nations system could not meet the present global challenges if it did not reform.

JIM MCLAY (New Zealand) said his country did not relish the prospect of being dragged into another recession that was not of its own making. Cautioning other larger States against repeating the mistakes of the 1930s when autarkic protectionism only deepened the global depression and led to war, he called for a successful conclusion of the Doha Round of trade negotiations, which would be a key to prosperity, particularly in the South. The earthquake that hit Christchurch on 22 February, followed closely by other disasters, such as the tsunami in Japan, reinforced the importance of effective disaster preparedness, response and recovery. No desktop exercise, disaster preparedness was a matter of survival.

Likewise, he said, for New Zealand’s Pacific neighbours, climate change was a fundamental question of existence and posed a grave threat to livelihoods, security and well-being. Thus, all relevant international forums, including the Security Council, must play their part in addressing the climate change challenge. Urgent and effective action on emissions reduction was needed. Adaptation in developing countries must also be strengthened and security implications must be planned for before becoming larger threats. This year’s meeting in Durban must set the global community on the road to fully implementing the Cancun agreements. New Zealand was committed to integrating adaptation and mitigation measures into its development activities. It had also initiated the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases to ensure that reducing agricultural emissions did not compromise global food security.

New Zealand was also proud to be part of the Pacific Islands Forum, which was central for the region’s efforts to address its own problems, he said. The theme of discussions at recent celebrations for the fortieth anniversary of the Forum’s founding focused on strong, sustainable growth, protecting vulnerable populations and ensuring that the peoples of the Pacific region were healthy and educated and able to live long lives. The Forum also focused on sustainable development and called for next year’s Rio+20 conference to recognize the Pacific’s economic and environmental significance, as well as its contribution to sustainable development. Rio+20 must also support the “blue economy” concept.

Turning to security matters, he underlined the need for greater progress on the disarmament agenda through the full implementation of the action plan agreed at the 2010 Review Conference of the

Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and further progress on the arms trade treaty. Calling for the Security Council's reform, he recalled New Zealand's intention to seek a non-permanent Council seat for the 2015-2016 term based on its belief that "States, large and small, have a place at the Council table."

LIBRAN N. CABACTULAN (Philippines) said the collective experience of the United Nations had highlighted that only when nations worked together in firm and determined resolve, could the international community begin to address the many difficulties that confronted it. As the world strove forward together, the international community must renew its faith in the United Nations, reaffirm commitments to the values and principles each had sworn to uphold, and redouble efforts in working for a safer and better world.

He said it was necessary to develop a framework for the work of the United Nations, since a peace anchored firmly on a rules-based international system was the only way forward and would ensure equal and meaningful participation for both the established and the emerging, the developed and the developing. Also crucial was to build peace and strengthen international security through disarmament. The irony of global advancement since the two world wars was that the international community not only had failed to leave behind armaments that it had destroyed, but had actually refined them and made them deadlier. Peace must be built through equitable and sustained development, and by protecting human resources and upholding human dignity.

The international community was duty-bound to stay true to the core United Nations principle, namely to preserve and protect human rights, particularly for those most vulnerable and living in marginalized sectors, he said. As the world looked to strengthen the ramparts of peace, the important role and contributions of United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding must be recognized. Further, as the international community sought to reinforce peacekeeping operations, so too should it continue to examine efforts to maintain stability and security at sea. At present, around 70 seamen from the Philippines were being held hostage by pirates in the Gulf of Aden and the wider Indian Ocean.

Terrorism continued to cast its dark shadow on the world, and the decapitation of terrorist organizations had not put an end to that, he said. It was necessary to re-examine the effectiveness of the sanctions against terrorists and efforts to cut the lifelines of terrorist funding. A comprehensive approach, therefore, must be undertaken. Out of the horrors of war, the United Nations had resolved as one global community to strengthen peace. Yet, that peace could easily disintegrate when even just one nation behaved irresponsibly, contrary to the rule and norms by which the United Nations had elected to abide.

VINCE HENDERSON (Dominica) said the impacts of climate change were projected to increase. Several outcomes agreed in Cancún could be built upon, acting as catalysts to new approaches and solutions in Durban. Climate change was an energy-related issue, and the provision of affordable energy was critical to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Small Island Developing States Sustainable Energy Initiative was an outstanding outcome of the Cancún meeting, and support from partners would ensure transformation of the energy sector of those countries. Dominica had been working to develop its geothermal potential, and preparation for drilling had begun at three test wells. That energy would allow Dominica to meet its domestic needs and supply electricity to its neighbours. As part of the Rio+20 process, Dominica called for the creation of a special small island developing States technology fund to address financing for sustainable energy technology transfer.

Welcoming negotiations on an arms trade treaty, he placed particular importance on the 2012 Review of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In a similar vein, he said the Security Council's ability to respond to new world dynamics rested in its acceptance of the need to adapt to the times. In other areas, he called for the lifting of the blockade against Cuba, while on Haiti, he urged the extension of the tenure of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). He looked forward to the implementation of the political declaration adopted at the High-level Meeting on Non-communicable Diseases.

DONATUS KEITH ST. AIMEE (Saint Lucia) said the world economic situation was not the making of small island States, but it made a tremendous impact on them. "It continues to confound how the Member States of the Caribbean Community with the exception of Haiti — small island States with limited resources, population, land mass, and economies — can be classified as middle-income and therefore not eligible for special arrangements in finance and trade," he said. Such categorizations put those countries

at a great disadvantage for aid and trade packages, adversely affecting their development.

He urged an understanding of challenges faced by countries such as Saint Lucia, which were vulnerable to natural disasters. “Almost every year, gains made during the first half of the year are eroded in the last quarter by weather-related phenomenon,” he said. Saint Lucia recognized oceans were vital for development, and it remained committed to sustainable development of coastal and marine resources. It had passed legislation for effective fisheries management, established a number of marine reserves, and was fortifying resilience to impacts of climate change through a building code and environmental impact regulations.

Negotiations for the upcoming Rio+20 conference needed a strong focus on oceans, which were important for energy and food security to small island developing States and also regulated the global climate, he said. Those countries also yearned to enjoy benefits of renewable energy sources, but had not been able to develop their potential, so it was imperative that the international community assist achievement of energy security through renewable energy and energy efficiency programmes. “So far, the [small island developing States] have been largely overlooked, as investments go into larger economies where greater economies of scale and profits beckon,” he said.

While efforts should be applauded to conserve the world’s forests to reverse desertification, consideration should also be given to small “tree stands” in small island developing States, as those were crucial to soil fertility, he said. And as a member of the Caribbean Community, which had spearheaded the recently concluded High-level Meeting on Non-communicable Diseases, Saint Lucia appreciated the commitment to address the issue. But it was necessary to set targets, implement programmes and measure success if progress was to be made “beyond just a meeting”.

Like all others in the Caribbean Community, he said, Saint Lucia grappled with threats engendered by the illicit trade in firearms and narcotics. The country would spare no effort working towards a legally binding arms trade treaty that was robust and comprehensive. Saint Lucia also called to end the embargo against its neighbour, Cuba, as the blockade no longer fit into twenty-first century politics, economics or humanitarianism. He also urged the Organization to find suitable means to permit Taiwan to participate in its specialized agencies and mechanisms.

CARSTEN STAUR ([Denmark](#)) said that from Tunisia to Egypt, from Libya to Syria, from Bahrain to Yemen and beyond, the winds of change currently sweeping across the Middle East and North Africa had confirmed yet again that the desire for freedom, democratic reforms, and human rights was universal. People in those regions were standing up for core human aspirations and values: they wanted to shape their own lives, economically and politically.

Specifically on Libya, he said Denmark was proud to have supported the legitimate aspirations of the Libyan people and to have contributed to the protection of Libyan civilians. It was encouraging that the Security Council had now authorized a new United Nations mission to support that country’s national efforts. Developments across the Middle East and North Africa made it clear that in the twenty-first century, Governments had to be politically accountable, respect the people’s rights and dignity, and deliver on economic opportunities. Even as the General Assembly met, events continued to unfold across the region, including in Syria, where more than 2,600 people had died during the popular uprising. He strongly condemned the violence against, and killing of, peaceful demonstrators and called for increased international pressure on the Syrian regime, including sanctions, declaring: “It is high time to respect the right of peaceful protests and their legitimate demands”.

On Afghanistan, Mr. Staur observed that the country had come a long way since the fall of the Taliban regime, and hoped Afghanistan would take yet another step in its transition during the upcoming conference in Bonn in December. Moving towards 2014, the United Nations system, in close cooperation with the Afghan authorities, would have to undertake a thorough review of its activities in Afghanistan in order to continuously maximize its contribution towards good governance, anti-corruption and sustainable socio-economic development. What was occurring around the world was not only a call for political reforms, but also a call for inclusive economic development, for jobs, and for improved standards of living, and not least of all from youth. In that regard, Governments needed to strengthen economic and social reforms, ensuring that they generated growth and shared prosperity for all and not just for the few and

already privileged.

The Millennium Development Goals had succeeded in galvanizing action, not least in health and education, he said, urging all countries to fulfil their joint obligation to ensure that the Goals were met by 2015. The development challenge was pressing in sub-Saharan Africa, a region long marked by poverty and conflict, but in recent years, many countries also saw strong growth and optimism. Stressing the importance of national ownership and clear political commitments to success, he said countries marred by conflict or fragility required a special focus. Women's empowerment was also important to that process. Rio+12 in June 2012 was a unique opportunity to revitalize understanding of sustainable development and to put sustainable development at the top of the global development agenda. Denmark also supported the two-State solution to the question of Palestine.

Right of Reply

Speaking in exercise of the right of reply, the representative of Sri Lanka said his delegation was deeply anguished by the remarks made by the Canadian Minister for Foreign Affairs, despite extensive efforts made to keep the Canadian delegation in Geneva informed of the reasons for the background to Sri Lanka's objections to the Canadian initiative on "an interactive dialogue on the LLRC process in Sri Lanka at the March 2012 session of the Human Rights Council", including domestic mechanisms put in place. The Sri Lankan objections had been endorsed by a wide cross-section of members of that Council.

He said that, in the United Nations, an organization comprised of 193 countries, subscribing to a range of social, economic and political philosophies, procedure and process were critically important to ensure good governance and prevent intergovernmental organizations from being abused for narrow domestic political advantage and selective application of principle. The rule-based framework of the United Nations system, valued by all nations, must be safeguarded for the protection of all against such abuse.

Exercising his right of reply, Armenia's representative said Azerbaijan's references to Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh could only be attributed to the imagination of the speaker, who presumed that cold war propaganda could be effective in strengthening his country's position in the Minsk Group. While preaching adherence to international law, he had single-handedly misinterpreted the United Nations Charter, statements by the Armenian President and the Minsk Group Co-Chairs on the field assessment mission to the territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh. He regretted that Azerbaijan was misusing the field assessment report to justify its military rhetoric, saying that Azerbaijan's own interpretation of that report contradicted the Co-Chairs' recommendations. His accusations were not only baseless, they endangered the negotiation process.

He went on to say that none of the four Security Council resolutions on Nagorno-Karabakh contained a word on the so-called Armenian aggression. Azerbaijan had launched a large-scale offensive against the civilian population of Nagorno-Karabakh as a response to their constitutional expression of the right to self-determination. Nor did those texts contain wording about the withdrawal of Armenian military forces from Nagorno-Karabakh, simply because they had never been there. Also, the Defence Army of Nagorno-Karabakh controlled only 8.5 per cent of the Azerbaijani territory that served as a security buffer zone, not the 20 per cent quoted in Azerbaijan's statement. Azerbaijan controlled 15 per cent of the Nagorno-Karabakh territory.

Azerbaijan had claimed that there were 1 million refugees in that country, he said, which did not correspond to any official data from an international organization. Such distortions undermined the United Nations work and artificially delayed steps to meet the needs of the people in Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia had always supported conflict settlement in Nagorno-Karabakh exclusively by peaceful means and had proven that in practice.

Azerbaijan's representative said that those remarks testified to Armenia's disregard of its Charter obligations, and revealed how far it was from engaging in a constructive search for peace. It was curious that Armenia — which had unleashed a "war of aggression" against Azerbaijan, carried out "ethnic cleansing" during the conflict and advocated racist ideologies — lectured Azerbaijan on peace, human rights and conflict resolution. Armenia must be aware that what it considered the self-determination of Armenians living in Azerbaijan had been qualified in the Security Council and the General Assembly as an

illegal use of force against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

The illegality of the separatist entity established on Azerbaijani territory had been stated at the international level in an unambiguous manner, he said, adding that Armenia had purged occupied areas of Azerbaijan of non-Armenians and had created a mono-ethnic culture. Armenia's attacks over the last month against Azerbaijanis and increase in hostile statements by its leadership as to the root causes of war only confirmed the validity of concern about the destabilizing effects of Armenian policy. He was confident that that agenda was fated never to be realized. Armenia would be obliged to cease its provocative policy, denounce its territorial claims and establish civilized relations with all countries in the region. There was no alternative to peace, stability and mutually beneficial cooperation.

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