



General Assembly

GA/11153

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

Sixty-sixth General Assembly
Plenary
22nd, 23rd & 24th Meetings (AM, PM & Night)

EXAMINATION OF MEDIATION VERSUS MILITARY INTERVENTION TO ASSIST REGIONS WRACKED

BY CONFLICT FOCUS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE AS IT ENTERS FOURTH DAY

Leaders Can No Longer Use Sovereignty as ‘Wall to Violate Rights of Citizens’, Some Say; Others Say Mediation Less Costly, Saves Lives, Aligns with UN Charter

Consideration of the appropriate use of mediation and military intervention took the fore today as the General Assembly held the fourth day of the general debate of its sixty-sixth session, with the representatives of the transitional Libyan, Egyptian and Somali authorities taking the floor and international options for dealing with other turmoil in the region continuing to garner much debate.

While addressing this year’s theme, “the role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means”, delegates also considered a wide range of concerns, from organized crime to debt relief to the need to make progress in the negotiations on an effective climate change protocol. Many representatives also weighed in on the Palestinian application for admission to the Organization as a fully fledged Member State.

Taking the floor early this afternoon, the Chairman of the National Transitional Council Executive Office of Libya, lamenting the shedding of the “sacred blood” of more than 30,000 martyrs, credited the intervention of the United Nations and regional organizations with preventing the loss of more civilian lives, after Security Council resolutions 1970 (2011) and 1973 (2011) put sanctions on the Qadhafi regime, imposed a no-fly zone and authorized “all means necessary” to protect civilians.

Under that authorization, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) attacked heavy weaponry of the Qadhafi regime in an extensive air campaign. Calling the international community a “faithful friend” that was now needed as a “trustworthy partner” in helping to rebuild the country under the ownership of the Libyan people, he affirmed that the intervention had served to stop Mr. Qadhafi’s massacre.

The Prime Minister of Lesotho, however, said that Libya could be a case study for the Council’s occasional preference for military intervention over mediation, while mediation was, as many representatives pointed out today, preferable in terms of cost, lives saved and adherence to the United Nations Charter. In Libya, he said, the African Union’s road map for a peaceful settlement of the crisis had been marginalized, and the results of the hastily adopted military route were a matter of record for all to see.

He maintained that peace imposed without consulting all the parties could not be sustained and he called for comprehensive reform so that the Council could better perform in a multilateral manner and could better cooperate with regional organizations, noting their role in mediated resolutions in Kenya, Burundi and Sudan, which had saved lives at minimal cost. Among the questions that would benefit from greater focus on mediation, he said, were those of Western Sahara, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and tensions between Cuba and the United States.

“Instead of non-interference, Belgium believes in non-indifference,” said that country’s Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Institutional Reforms. “Sovereignty is no longer a wall leaders can use to violate the rights of their citizens,” he said, pointing to Libya, where the Security Council had been able to prevent a massacre in Benghazi. He said that “leaders who believe that they can cling to power through terror and suppression make a cruel mistake”. Belgium would not stand idly by when people claimed a future free of coercion and terror.

Italy’s Foreign Minister said his country had called for dialogue and the end of use of force against civilians in Libya, but the only way to prevent a massacre had been to invoke the principle of “responsibility to protect”. By helping to implement that decision in military, diplomatic and humanitarian terms, the international community had shifted from a culture of “sovereign impunity” to one of “responsible sovereignty” rooted in national and international accountability for the most serious violations of human rights.

Concurring with that view, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg noted that in Tunisia and Egypt people also had prevailed in their quests for liberty, but in Syria, the regime continued to lead a brutal campaign against its people. All appeals to stop the violence had gone unanswered, and the Security Council must now take its responsibility, as the Organization’s credibility as a moral force was at stake.

Support for both mediation and intervention were voiced, with Somalia’s Prime Minister suggesting that both were needed in his country, which had not had a functioning Government since 1991, but which had recently made strides towards stability and could turn out to be Africa’s “sleeping giant”. He stressed that the recent National Consultative Conference in Mogadishu, which reached broad-based agreement on a road map to end the transition, was the best hope for the country to establish a firm political foundation from which to rebuild, he said.

At the same time, he maintained that international support for security remained critical because the Al-Qaida-affiliated group Al-Shabaab still controlled vast parts of the country, had exacerbated the nation-wide famine by their obstruction and was now threatening a renewed terror campaign. He called for the reinforcement of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) while the nascent Somali army was built up, in order to prevent a security vacuum in the areas of Mogadishu recently vacated by the insurgents, and to make the city safe for residents and aid workers.

Also today, delegations continued to proffer a wide range of opinions on yesterday’s submission of a United Nations membership application by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, from advocating quick admission to the Organization to maintaining that all progress must be made in negotiations between the parties, and many views in between. Portugal’s Prime Minister argued that Palestine’s admission as a United Nations Member State must be the logical outcome of negotiations, but he also voiced support for granting Palestine strengthened status within the Organization.

With many small island developing States speaking today, strong and immediate action on climate change was urged, as well as assistance for the unique problems of those countries. The Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands thanked Ban Ki-moon for becoming the first Secretary-General to have set foot on a least developed island to see the situation for himself, calling for him to more strongly advocate for new commitments and noting that, already, the national hospital was in danger of being flooded and must be moved to higher ground.

Also speaking today were the Prime Ministers of Montenegro, Slovakia, India, Guinea-Bissau, Tuvalu, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Nepal, Mauritius, Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Barbados, Malta, Cape Verde, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Vanuatu, Tonga and Togo.

Government officials of Egypt (also on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement), Austria, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Spain and Cameroon also spoke.

The representatives of Serbia and Albania also spoke in exercise of the right of reply.

Background

The General Assembly met today to continue its annual general debate.

Statements

PAKALITHA B. MOSISILI, Prime Minister of Lesotho, said that while the target date for attaining the Millennium Development Goals was fast approaching, the world continued to be overwhelmed by unending hurdles in its path toward those objectives. Despite globalization, the least developed countries were yet to be fully integrated into global markets. Rapid environmental degradation, compounded by the effects of climate change, continued to adversely affect their ecosystems, agriculture, water resources and water supplies. At the same time, HIV/AIDS had not relented from decimating whole nations, and good governance and the abuse of power in international relations, among other things, also presented challenges. Terrorism also continued to pose transnational challenges, and Lesotho was convinced that the only way to ensure that terrorists did not acquire weapons of mass destruction was the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Thus, he urged the nuclear weapon States to be faithful to their commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Continuing, he said the international community had been inconsistent in its approach to managing internal and external conflicts of significant proportions. Acting through the Security Council, it had been swift and decisive in intervening militarily in some countries, while opting for mediation in others. In still others it had turned a blind eye at best, leaving it to some Members to unilaterally threaten sanctions. The Organization had not sufficiently used mediation as a tool for conflict resolution and believed the Security Council must adopt a multilateral approach, since it was the only way to guarantee transparency, impartiality and ownership of the process by the Organization's general membership. Moreover, peace that was imposed without consulting all parties could not be sustained.

While the primary role for maintaining international peace and security lay with the Security Council, cooperation and coordination between the Council and regional organizations in terms of Chapter VIII of the Charter was key to speedily resolving conflicts and the United Nations must empower and support the efforts of regional structures and organizations. Further, the Council would be able to better discharge its function if it was more representative of the larger membership, and Lesotho called for the Council's early and comprehensive reform.

He noted that the 2007 crisis in Kenya had been resolved peacefully through mediation by the Southern African Development Community (SADC). A mediated solution was also achieved in Burundi and Sudan. Lives had been saved at minimal cost. Strangely, however, the Council sometimes preferred military intervention and individual Member States had also unilaterally engaged in military intervention, although neither case ever enjoyed universal support from the United Nations membership. Libya could be a case study for such a situation, he said, observing that although the African Union had developed a comprehensive road map that would have led to a peaceful settlement of the crisis, it had been marginalized. Instead, the results of the hastily adopted military intervention were a matter of record for all to see. Nevertheless, the African Union's Road Map for Peace remained relevant and the United Nations and the Union must work together to consolidate peace and national reconciliation and to establish an all-inclusive Government in Libya.

Turning to other matters, he stressed that the good office of the Secretary-General should be strengthened through sufficient human and other resources in order to better undertake early mediation for conflict prevention. He also encouraged that office's mediation efforts towards realizing a free and independent Western Sahara. In addition, he urged all parties involved in the Palestine question to resuscitate negotiations between the State of Palestine and Israel. Mediated solutions should also be explored between Cuba and the United States.

IGOR LUKŠIĆ, Prime Minister of Montenegro, congratulated South Sudan on its independence, noting two months ago it replaced his country as the youngest Member of the Organization. He also supported democratization processes in North Africa, as well as actions by the Organization and the African Union for progress on other parts of the continent. Within its own region, Montenegro contributed

to South-East Europe's stability by chairing its most important regional initiatives. Montenegro's commitment to internal reform was a solid foundation for the European Commission to recommend opening European Union accession negotiations with his country.

Montenegro was also preparing a plan for NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) membership, since progress in Western Balkan integration with Europe and the Euro Atlantic region was key to regional stability and long-term economic prosperity. His country participated in the peacekeeping missions in Liberia and Cyprus, the NATO mission in Afghanistan, global efforts against terrorism and Operation ATALANTA against piracy, but it was necessary to strengthen the Organization's preventive diplomacy and mediation activities. Accordingly, Montenegro strongly supported peaceful resolution of all conflicts, especially those in the Middle East and North Africa.

An Israel-Palestine peace agreement in their mutual interest was a priority, he said. "If both sides refrain from violent actions, room will be created for confidence-building and a comprehensive solution to the Middle East issue, making Israel a safe country, to the benefit of both internationally recognized sides, and creating prerequisites for Palestine to establish a stable state," he said. Montenegro also supported all actions by the international community aimed at stopping human rights violations and fulfilling legitimate aspirations of populations in Libya and Syria.

As a supporter of the principles of universality of all human rights, Montenegro was standing as a candidate for the 2013-2015 Human Rights Council, and believed the Universal Periodic Review represented an important instrument that should be strengthened. But, modern pragmatic reforms, such as strengthening the role of the General Assembly and enhanced representation of the Security Council with another non-permanent seat to the Eastern European Group, were needed. The One United Nations Initiative was an opportunity to achieve more efficient results implementing national priorities, he said.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio next year represented an important opportunity to cooperate for sustainable development and evaluate its progress over the past two decades. As a member of the United Nations Sustainable Development Commission from 2011 to 2014, Montenegro was committed to the success of the Conference. "There are numerous potential negative effects of climate change on Montenegro: increase in sea level, temperature and impact on biological diversity," he said. The fight against climate change required a global, coordinated and decisive international agreement, based on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol.

IVETA RADIČOVÁ, Prime Minister of Slovakia, said when the President of Brazil addressed the Assembly, she said her female voice was the voice of "democracy and equality". And that, expressed with courage and sincerity, is the main change for coming years. In light of the economic and debt crisis, there were still no adequate solutions at a time when the world was facing common risks in the areas of the economy, government and politics. The majority of the world's population expected economic growth, prosperity and a better quality of life, and those living in poverty deserved speedy action and results from political leaders. Slovakia had done its homework to stabilize its economy, including its pension system, sustainability, fiscal responsibility, labour market reform and measures to tackle corruption and increase transparency.

Courage was needed in the Eurozone to return to the old principles necessary for successful international cooperation and integration, as well as stricter European and national fiscal rules, controlled default and new rules for managing the financial sector, she said. As a member of the Economic and Social Council, Slovakia believed that that body had the capacity to contribute more significantly to joint efforts. To be able to do that, its mandate must be urgently adjusted so that it could react more swiftly to the economic and social needs of the world. "In times of dire financial restriction of our own national budgets, we, as the United Nations, also need to learn to do more with lesser resources," she said.

Among Slovakia's priorities was international terrorism, and respect for international law, human rights and the rule of law should be an integral part of the fight against that scourge. Turning to peacekeeping, she said with the proliferation of United Nations missions in recent decades and the growing complexity of managing their mandates, her country supported every effort to increase their effectiveness and efficiency. Peace was not merely the absence of war, she said. Peace meant safety in all areas of

people's lives. There was no chance for lasting peace without sustainable development, an area that required more work and a concerted effort. To that end, Slovakia's aid was aimed at some of the most troubled regions, in areas including food delivery, refugee assistance and technical assistance.

Mediation and the peaceful settlement of disputes was the right path to follow, she said, especially during times of sky-rocketing peacekeeping costs. Mediation was the savviest form of investment and the most efficient way to prevent conflicts before they escalated. She welcomed the adoption of the first General Assembly resolution dedicated especially to supporting mediation as an essential tool for maintaining peace and security, which Slovakia co-sponsored. Focusing on eliminating the primary causes of conflicts was needed, not just dealing hastily with their grave consequences. She stressed that the important role of women was often underestimated. The United Nations had a central role in effective multilateralism and concentrated efforts helped to create just and lasting solutions.

MANMOHAN SINGH, Prime Minister of India, said it was a time of "great uncertainty and profound change", pointing to the global economic slowdown and unprecedented social and political upheaval in West Asia, the Gulf and North Africa. The unresolved Palestinian question was also a source of great instability and violence. India supported Palestine's request for full United Nations membership. He pointed to growing terrorism and new threats to international security, such as piracy. "We have no choice but to meet those challenges. We will succeed if we adopt a cooperative rather than a confrontationist approach," he said. Success would also come from efforts grounded in multilateralism, legitimacy and the rule of law. Societies could not be reordered from the outside through military force. People everywhere had the right to choose their own destiny and decide their own future. The international community had a role in transition and institution-building, but prescriptions must not be imposed from the outside.

It was necessary to address the deficit in global governance, he said. A stronger, more effective United Nations was needed; that required early and urgent reform of the Assembly and the Security Council. He called for effective ways and means to better coordinate the macroeconomic policies of major economies, and for reforming global financial institutions speedily and efficiently. The development agenda must once again be the United Nations main priority. He called for a more determined effort to ensure balanced, inclusive and sustainable development.

In the last few decades, India had lifted tens of millions of its own people out of abject poverty, he said. It was in a position to better feed its people, better educate them and widen their economic choices. But there was still a long way to go. He called on the international community to work in partnership with India to quicken India's transformation, a move which would expand the global economy. Developing countries needed investment, technology and market access for their products, as well as aid in education, health, women's empowerment and agriculture. During the recent Least Developed Countries Conference, India had strengthened its partnership with those nations by significantly enhancing lines of credit to them for capacity-building.

He called for particular focus on Africa and for empowering its greatest resources — its people — with technology, education and skills development. At the second India-Africa Forum Summit held in Addis Ababa earlier this year, India offered \$5 billion in lines of credit and \$700 million in grants for human resource development, technology transfer and institution-building. The United Nations should lead food security efforts. He called for more cooperation in agricultural technologies, water conservation, land usage and productivity, and commodity price stability.

Developing countries needed a peaceful external environment to grow, he said. The fight against terrorism must be unrelenting, fought on all fronts and be non-selective. India and Bangladesh were cooperating in security, an encouraging sign. Pointing to the recent assassination of Burhanuddin Rabbani in Kabul, he said Afghanistan's nation-building and reconciliation process must succeed and India was helping Afghanistan towards that end. He desired creation of an open, transparent and inclusive architecture for regional cooperation and the peaceful settlement of disputes in Asia and the Pacific. He called on the United Nations to comprehensively resolve piracy in the Red Sea and off the coast of Somalia and said India was ready to work with nations towards that end. Further, the action plan put forward by India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi for a nuclear-free and non-violent world provided a concrete road map for achieving nuclear disarmament in a time-bound, universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable way. On a related issue, he said his country had undertaken a thorough review of the safety of its nuclear plants.

CARLOS GOMES JÚNIOR, Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau, said defence and security sector reform was an urgent priority for his country. For its part, his country's commitment to mobilizing resources for the sustainability of that reform had led to the creation of a special pension fund and had deposited \$200,000 of the \$500,000 the country pledged to the fund, as proof of its commitment to contribute 10 per cent of the total resources required. He counted on holding a high-level meeting with development partners to obtain the financial and technical assistance needed to complete the reform process. As resources were also needed to tackle drug trafficking and organized crime to bolster existing Government plans, he formally requested support from the United States, the European Union and its Member States.

Meeting the approaching Millennium Development Goals' deadline was another challenge, he said, and a high rate of poverty still prevailed in Guinea-Bissau. The National Poverty Reduction Strategy Document defined those challenges and recommended priorities for the next five years. Following that strategy had already reversed that negative trend. The current economic situation was improving over the last two and a half years, as a result of public policies and good macroeconomic performance, including the forgiveness of about 90 per cent of external debt and a gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of 5.3 per cent. To continue forward, his country would hold a donor round table in 2012. He welcomed the creation of UN Women, noting that his country had already taken measures to uphold the dignity of women, including promoting empowerment, criminalizing female genital mutilation and increasing penalties for the trafficking of minors, he said.

He then welcomed the Palestinian Authority's decision to request recognition of the State of Palestine as a full member of the United Nations. Regarding the major changes in the Arab world, he regretted the cases where transition incurred high costs in terms of human lives. On the subject of Libya, Guinea-Bissau supported the African Union's position and expressed full readiness to cooperate and strengthen the increasingly friendly relations and cooperation with the legitimate representatives of the Libyan people. He also urged the United States to resume its relationship with Cuba.

The responsibilities of the United Nations were increasing and the historical reasons that led to the establishment of the Security Council were no longer current. Demographic representation was needed as part of the Council's reform. Under the auspices of Guinea-Bissau's President Malam Bacai Sanhá, the National Assembly had launched a process of national reconciliation involving all the forces of the nation. That important initiative had contributed to the establishment of peace and understanding that now prevailed in the country. "We will spare no efforts in consolidating peace and building a more just society to create better living conditions for the Guinean people," he concluded.

Willy Telavi, Prime Minister of Tuvalu, said the unprecedented impacts of globalization and the global economic and financial crisis had a profound, critical negative impact on Tuvalu's economy. The Tuvalu Trust Fund, the nation's main source of revenue, had been severely affected, forcing the Tuvalu Government to cut basic services for the population. He called on the international community and development partners to urgently fulfil their commitments to the least developed countries by implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action. Tuvalu would do its part by integrating the action programme into the Tuvalu National Sustainable Development Strategy. As a least developed country, Tuvalu was highly vulnerable to global economic shocks, the impact of climate change and disease outbreaks. He called on the international community to take those factors into account when considering the graduation criteria of least developed countries.

Last month, Tuvalu published its second Millennium Development Goals progress report for the 2010-2011 period, he said. Tuvalu would most likely achieve five of the goals by 2015. Still, such progress could be reversed overnight due to the country's economic and environmental vulnerabilities. On United Nations reform, he said the process of reforming the Assembly and the Council had taken too long. It should be expedited and given a more realistic timetable. The United Nations continued to turn a blind eye to Taiwan's contribution to maintaining global peace. He strongly urged the Organization to recognize Taiwan's commitment as a development partner. He called on United Nations subsidiary bodies, notably the World Health Organization (WHO), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to allow Taiwan to fully participate in their meetings and activities.

For a small island developing State like Tuvalu, climate change was a security issue that threatened its survival, he said. The upcoming meeting in Durban of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change must deliver key outcomes. It must adopt amendments to the Kyoto Protocol to allow for a second commitment period to immediately follow the first. That would be necessary to ensure the continued functioning of the Clean Development Mechanisms and finance for the Adaptation Fund. It must pave the way for rapidly developing an international mechanism to address loss and damage. The meeting must also focus on reducing emissions caused by deforestation and forest degradation.

Moreover, all major greenhouse gas emitting nations must take more decisive action to reduce emissions, he said. Calling the current pledging system inadequate, he said he would seek a mandate in Durban to begin negotiating a new legally binding agreement for major emitters that had not implemented Kyoto commitments. There must be a focused chapter on the needs of small island developing States. When considering the green economy, it was essential to carefully explore how to redirect the current global trading system to properly reflect those States' needs. He called for: accessible, affordable, renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies; strategies to protect oceans; and new preferential trade agreements to help small island developing States overcome their size disadvantage.

RALPH E. GONSALVES, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, said winds of change had encircled the globe in recent months, reaching and reshaping its unlikely corners, for good and ill. As a result, the United Nations found itself in the eye of increasingly turbulent geopolitical and socio-economic storms, and its response to those howling gales would determine both the contours of the post-crisis world and its relevance as an institution. Noting the current debate's focus on mediation, he said the difficult work of negotiation and peaceful dispute resolution was too often abandoned for the "quick fix" of militarism, brinkmanship or ill-advised unilateral action. Yet, the role of mediation in the settlement of disputes was more than a theme; it should become a firm resolution during this year's session. Among other things, that resolution should embody an international commitment to exhaust peaceful methods of dispute resolution, to narrowly define military interventions and to strictly adhere to Security Council mandates for such action. As such, it would mark the beginning of a break with the vicious, yet oft-repeated cycle of unilateral interventionism and its unfortunate long-term consequences to the local victims and the international community.

He said that, with the world well into the third year of the international economic crisis, it was now possible to declare that the tepid and timid responses of wealthy developed nations had failed to heal the global economy. Small, vulnerable and highly indebted middle-income countries could not afford to wait for the promise of incremental or cyclical upticks in the world economy. Small States needed the fiscal and policy space to creatively spur development in ways that complied not with the checklists of discredited economic theories, but with real-world particularities and people-centred politics. Further, the General Assembly must reassert its role in responding to the economic crisis, including by following up on the unfulfilled mechanisms and recommendations spelled out by the United Nations Conference on the World Economic and Financial Crisis and its Impact on Development.

Recalling the impact of Hurricane Tomas on his country earlier this year, he underscored the continuing vulnerability of small island developing States during the current Atlantic hurricane season. He remained baffled by the intransigence of major emitters and developed nations that refused to shoulder the burden for stopping climate changes that were linked to the excesses of their own wasteful policies. The world's "dance with global disaster" must end this year at the next climate change conference in Durban, South Africa, he said. Similarly, as the world returned to Latin America next year for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, or "Rio+20", it must accept two inescapable truths: First, that promises made must be kept, and, second, that while talk is cheap, development is not. It was no longer possible to pretend that meaningful global development was possible without the commitment of new resources, in addition to the realization of previously unfulfilled pledges.

Continuing, he said it should be a source of alarm and international embarrassment that the composition of the Security Council was an ossified relic of World War II, seemingly immune to modern realities. His Government called for the Council's reform, including an expansion of permanent and non-permanent members with full regard to Africa's aspirations and the necessary accommodation for small island developing States. Also, his country was honoured to serve as co-facilitator for the Working Group for the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly.

Turning to other issues, he noted the declaration of the International Year for People of African Descent, stressing that that group remained systematically and individually disadvantaged. The famine in East Africa, as well as its attendant refugee and security problems, required urgent attention and massive response. In addition, the international community must redouble, rather than reduce, its support to Haiti. His Government had no doubt that Palestine's membership application would resuscitate the moribund negotiating process between it and Israel. It also believed there was no place in the modern world for the anachronistic embargo of Cuba and that Taiwan's request to participate in the specialized agencies of the United Nations was reasonable.

BABURAM BHATTARAI, Prime Minister of Nepal, said that his country was undergoing a momentous transformation. Indeed, following a period of persistent struggle, a "feudalistic and autocratic monarchy has been abolished". Nepal had entered a new era with the creation of a federal democratic republic, and today, the new State apparatus was striving to take into account the country's multi-ethnic, multilingual and multicultural diversity. The ultimate aim was to abolish all discrimination and oppression based on class, gender, nationality, religion and caste, and to create a just and democratic system.

He paid tribute to the ultimate sacrifice of thousands of martyrs in the historic 10-year People's War that had begun in 1996, People's Movement of 2006, the Madhesh Movement and many other oppressed peoples movements that had helped lay the foundation for Nepal's rebirth, and pledged to consolidate those historic gains towards establishing peace and stability for all. The Government was committed to achieving that end by concluding the peace process and writing a new constitution. The new constitution would not only guarantee fundamental democratic norms and values, but would also ensure that Nepal's multiparty democracy was inclusive and participatory. It would pay particular attention to the "oppressed, labouring masses and marginalized [people]."

He went on to say that Nepal's home-grown peace process and historic transformation could provide excellent examples for others. "We believe that transformation must be holistic to have long-lasting impact at the grassroots [level]," he said, explaining that such transition must include improvements in the political, social and economic spheres, and be based on dialogue and consensus building. While Nepal, like other countries, had suffered "transitional pains and delays," it had remained united behind a vision to complete the process by striving for consensus among all political parties and stakeholders. On another matter, at a time when humanity was so much in need of peace, he appealed for the development of Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha, as "the fountain" of world peace. In that regard, the International Committee for the Development of Lumbini needed to be reactivated as soon as possible.

While the United Nations upheld the noble vision of peace, security, development and justice for all, "we have a long way to go to achieve this," he continued. Conflicts still raged; deprivation deepened and sustainable development was denied to people all over the world. Calling for a focus on the root causes of such ills, he urged the United Nations to come up with a new and far-reaching development package. The world needed a new "Marshall Plan" for rebuilding post-war societies and promoting "bold, visionary steps" to ensure lasting development and peace. The least developed and landlocked countries faced severe structural constraints that hindered their development efforts, requiring specific attention, particularly in areas such as trade and infrastructure development. Moreover, such countries, including Nepal, faced challenges posed by labour migration, dependence on remittances and climate change, and he urged that the economic transformation of the least developed countries be placed at the top of the United Nations agenda.

NAVINCHANDRA RAMGOOLAM, Prime Minister of Mauritius, said the international community should address four areas of security: economic, environmental, human and legal. Regarding economic security, the current turmoil had especially affected small island developing States. The stalled international trade talks were regrettable and, when they were active, were held in sectoral and often restricted forums. It was imperative that the international community ensured that sectoral frameworks had universal membership and that the United Nations took a holistic view of global economic, financial, trade and development issues. While the United Nations had shaped the international economic order in the 1970s, it had the responsibility now to have an overview of global economic development, with the Economic and Social Council having prominence in implementing reforms. Food security must also be addressed, along with racism, as well as youth participation in development and security policies and programmes.

Turning to the environment, disruptions from climate change posed a grave threat to global security, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was the primary forum for negotiating a global response, he said. Small island developing States were particularly vulnerable, and relied on the international community for their security. For its part, Mauritius had pursued a sustainable development strategy, including engaging in a national consultation process to formulate strategies and policies to protect the environment, deliver social justice and create a sustainable economy.

The area of human security included disarmament, he said, warning that the failure to resolve issues continued to undermine global development and security. A significant reduction in the production of conventional weapons and a world free of nuclear weapons were the ultimate goals, he said. The international community also needed to follow up on the Global Strategy to Combat Terrorism and to enhance international cooperation in that regard. He also urged General Assembly delegates to recommit efforts to fight drug trafficking, as part of a global strategy to ensure human security. The high-level meeting last June had renewed the political commitment of Governments to halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and, among other things, to ensure that by 2015 no child was born with HIV.

Legal security required an appropriate legal framework for the redress of grievances or the settlement of disputes, he said, citing a dispute involving his country and the United Kingdom over the Chagos Archipelago. Prior to independence, that archipelago was excised from Mauritius in disregard of United Nations resolutions and declared the so-called British Indian Ocean Territory. When Mauritius had announced in 2004 that it would refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice, the United Kingdom amended its earlier declaration, in order to oust the jurisdiction of the Court with respect to certain disputes with a member or former member of the Commonwealth. It illustrated the kinds of problems a State could have in settling a claim under international law. He called on the United Nations to keep under review the whole issue of dispute settlements and to set standards of conduct for all States. He was pleased that the General Assembly had taken mediation as its current session's theme. He said the United Nations should lead by example and must, among other things, give the sincere and strong support required to implement reform at the United Nations, the Security Council and the General Assembly.

He looked forward to a more all-inclusive United Nations system that could effectively address issues of international security with the admission of Palestine as a Member State. The United Nations and the international community had a duty to restore to the Palestinian people their dignity and right to statehood and security, he said. He welcomed the statement by President Mahmoud Abbas that Palestine extended its hands to the Israeli government and Israeli people for peacemaking and for building cooperative relations between the States of Palestine and Israel. He also welcomed the emergence of South Sudan as an independent and sovereign State and its admission to the United Nations.

SALI BERISHA, Prime Minister of [Albania](#), said amid the complex crises that currently threatened the peace and security of several regions, this year's springtime was a historic season for Africa and the world, with 125 million oppressed people standing up to overthrow tyrannical regimes in five countries and open the gates of freedom. As his country had only 20 years ago brought down the Hoxhaist dictatorship, he cordially welcomed the representatives of Côte d'Ivoire d'Ivoire, Egypt, Libya, South Sudan and Tunisia.

Today, Albania, once plagued by extreme poverty and starvation, belonged to a group of countries with middle- to upper-income levels, boasted the smallest public sector in Europe, had a functional democracy and was a NATO member, while remaining firmly focused on its path towards European Union integration. Albania's economy had remained strong through the recession, with exports rising by 300 per cent in recent years, and was based on economic freedom. Four factors contributed to its economy's resiliency: a small public sector, a 10 per cent flat tax rate, heavy infrastructure investment and facilitating business development. To achieve Albania's dream of being a "developed country", his country was committed to sustainable development and was determined to become a "small superpower of renewable energy".

His country fully supported the Partnership for Open Government, and had expanded Internet access to all schools and free services to every citizen in all post offices nationwide. E-government and transparency would strengthen democracy and the law guaranteed free access for all citizens to all acts,

decisions and expenditures of the Government.

Turning to regional affairs, Albania had excellent relations with neighbours and those in the region, and would like to further relations with Serbia. Kosovo also had an equally strong will for good neighbourly relations, he said. The International Court of Justice had decided in 2010 that the declaration of independence of Kosovo was in full compliance with international law. The Republic of Kosovo had been recognized by 80 States and he called upon the rest of the States, United Nations Member States, to recognize the free and independent State, which had become an important factor of regional peace, stability and cooperation. He also called on Serbia to adapt its positions in line with the International Court of Justice's decision, thus demonstrating that it accepted and respected the international law in its entirety and not only those parts that served its case.

In accordance with the European Union Rule of Law Mission, the Kosovo multinational security force (KFOR) and other international institutions present in the country, Kosovo had implemented the highest standards in the region and beyond regarding the freedoms and rights of minorities. The most worrying problem for Serbs in Kosovo was tensions created and orchestrated for nationalistic purposes. Interethnic relations in all areas where Serbs and Albanians lived together were good. He said respect for borders in the Balkans was a fundamental condition of lasting peace and stability. Belgrade's efforts to maintain parallel structures of authority in the three Serbian homogenous communes north of Mitrovica demonstrated it still believed in reshaping borders based on the failed idea of ethnically clean countries.

He also invited Serbia to cooperate with the search and return of the remains of 1,500 Albanians abducted and massacred in Serbian territory only for their nationality. Addressing allegations against Albanians regarding organ trafficking and mass graves, Albania had officially invited the European Union Rule of Law Mission to investigate all aspects that involved any part of the Albanian territories. He thanked the European Union Rule of Law Mission, reassuring the Mission that Albania would fully cooperate with the investigation team and would offer them all facilities needed to perform their tasks, so the truth could be brought to light.

NIKOLA GRUEVSKI, President of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, said two decades after his country's independence, it especially valued mediation for peaceful conflict settlement. The majority of conflicts were predictable, so there were realistic opportunities for effective diplomatic engagement towards their prevention. Regional and subregional organizations could significantly help mediators understand the essence of issues, and the European Union — to which the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia aspired and hoped for a quick start to accession negotiations, was created from historic reconciliation. The European experience would certainly contribute to the Organization's basic objectives and tasks.

The world's greatest crises have resulted from lack of vision and dedication, so commitment to the Millennium Development Goals must not weaken, he said. Climate change required an immediate and long-term solution, and though the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia experienced its effects less dramatically, it expressed solidarity with countries most exposed to the phenomenon, above all small island countries in the Pacific. Since the end of the cold war, the world had seen historic freedoms, but also new threats to peace. The so-called Arab Spring showed once more that democracy could be derived only from the people; human rights and freedoms should be an integral part of global governance.

Sometimes faintheartedness, scepticism and perhaps cynicism were strong among Member States, but those challenges could be defeated by an active, united approach in the service of noble objectives. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia supported unreservedly readiness under the Secretary-General to minimize the risks of nuclear wars, but noted maintenance of peace and stability could not happen without sustainable development. "Allow me to make a suggestion: let us dedicate a leaders' meeting during 2012 to one of the key themes aimed at fulfilling the millennium goals: education, innovations and technological progress as the factors for a sustainable development," he said.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had been acting responsibly for these past 20 years and it was acting responsibly to be a regional leader in all segments of modern living — economic reform, education, and human rights to name a few. But, it also treasured its heritage, and had many issues to resolve on the verge of its great transformation. Its southern neighbour objected to both its name and

identity, in an artificial, absurd and utterly incomprehensible dispute. “Please give us support to be proud and dignified, and to avoid the situation to discuss a solution that would break our backbone: we seek a solution that will not harm our spirit, a name that will recognize our commitment, desire and determination for coexistence, community, individuality, and identity, but also our affiliation to the world, to their world which we are building, whose virtues we establish, whose future we fight for,” he said.

Fortunately, he said, 131 countries had made the choice to recognize his country by what it called itself — the Republic of Macedonia — and he thanked them. “Unfortunately, the rules of the world are arranged in such a manner that we cannot be called by what we call ourselves in this very body — the United Nations — nor can we join organizations we have worked hard to become members of and, in the case of NATO and the [European Union], have earned a right to be a part of. And this, frankly, is wrong,” he said.

WINSTON BALDWIN SPENCER, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, said mediation was a bedrock on which the United Nations was founded and there was a growing interest in its use as a cost-effective tool in peaceful dispute settlement. The international community had repeatedly recognized its role in creating conditions conducive to lasting peace. Turning to the Middle East, he recalled that last year, he had urged the implementation of the two-State solution, which would see Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security. Yet, that solution had not been realized. Fully supporting the two-State solution, he joined others that had recognized the State of Palestine, believing that such recognition would help create lasting stability in the region.

On the issue of illegal trade in small arms and light weapons, he said it had been linked to the associated rise in violence and adversely affected economic and human development in his region. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and World Bank had reported that his region had the highest murder rate in the world and that those weapons had been used in the commission of more than 70 per cent of those murders. “This dubious designation we never sought and it is neither welcome nor desired”, he said, adding that in July, Antigua and Barbuda joined other CARICOM members in adopting the Declaration on Small Arms and Light Weapons to accord the highest national and regional priority to such matters.

Turning to the economic crisis, he urged the creation of a sovereign debt restructuring and debt resolution mechanism that took into account the various dimensions of debt sustainability. The seemingly unending crisis had affected countries in his region in both economic terms and through barriers to trade and finance embedded in some of the anti-crisis measures adopted by developed countries. While Antigua and Barbuda had made progress with the United States on their online gaming dispute, he urged the United States to remain committed to reaching a mutually agreed outcome that would bring value to his country. In a similar vein, he urged the United States to lift its blockade against Cuba.

In the area of non-communicable diseases, he said the political declaration adopted at the General Assembly’s recent high-level meeting on that topic had not fully developed a clear goal for launching the global campaign and corresponding road map. If rigorously implemented, however, it would contribute to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Also, the legacy of slavery, segregation and racial violence against peoples of African descent had impaired countries’ advancement, and he called on former slave States to issue formal apologies for the crimes they had committed over the 400 years of the African slave trade. He also urged those States to back up their apologies with new commitments to the economic development of nations that had suffered under that human tragedy.

Further, the African Diaspora Summit, to be held in South Africa in 2012, would provide a platform to put in place economic policies aimed at ensuring sustained economic cooperation among public and private stakeholders, he said. On other matters, he recalled the need to prioritize population dynamics when developing policies to promote health and dignity. Investing in human capital and measures to promote both gender equality and youth participation in all spheres would help developing nations transform their economies. Policies that responded to peoples’ needs were also required for tackling challenges related to food, energy and water. In his region, Antigua and Barbuda fully endorsed the objectives of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

To respond to the economic crisis, members of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union had

upgraded their economic integration arrangements and established an Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Economic Union in January 2011. The Eight Point Stabilization and Growth Programme, adopted in 2009, aimed at transforming their economies, while fiscal targets aimed to help them achieve a debt to GDP ratio of 60 per cent by 2020. Antigua and Barbuda was also committed to intensifying national efforts to create legal, social and policy frameworks to eliminate stigma and violence related to HIV.

“Now more than ever we need a more efficient, effective and focused United Nations”, he said, to help States address the extraordinary array of geopolitical and humanitarian challenges, from famine in Somalia, to aftershocks of the Arab Spring to ongoing conflicts around the world. “We cannot afford to disappoint.”

SHEIKH HASINA, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, underscoring peace as the basis for development, stressed that where peace prevailed, justice prevailed. Thus, justice for peace had found its place into her Government’s domestic and foreign policy and contributed to strengthening Bangladesh’s secular, democratic and progressive ideals. The country’s strong foundation in the rule of law had also helped the peaceful settlement of disputes with its neighbours and formed the basis of its participation in United Nations peacekeeping efforts, which had included 102,294 peacekeepers in 52 Missions in 36 countries.

She said the success of the United Nations had reinforced the belief that it was still the most legitimate, universally accepted international body in the twenty-first century with the ability to harness global collective will for the peaceful settlement of disputes through mediation. Bangladesh, therefore, lauded the Secretary-General’s report on enhancing mediation and had co-sponsored the General Assembly resolution on “strengthening the roles of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes”. Throughout all areas of its involvement in the Organization, Bangladesh advocated peacebuilding, development and preventive diplomacy in post-conflict societies; consciously promoted democracy, secularism, justice and rule of law; as well as equal rights for women children and minorities and other vulnerable groups. It was also committed to setting global norms and standards in development practices.

She recalled that during her last tenure as Prime Minister in 1997 she had mediated the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord for the marginalized communities from the Hill Tracts regions, as well as the 30-year Ganges Water Sharing with India. During her current term, she had also mediated and signed memorandums of understanding with India on border demarcation. Faced with the mutiny of Bangladesh’s border forces soon after forming her Government, she had also chosen a mediated settlement. Consequently, Bangladesh had developed its national mediation capacity with a pool of retired judges and legal experts capable of acting as arbitrators and mediators. It had also set up an independent Tribunal to try those responsible for crimes committed during the country’s 1971 liberation war. Its “zero tolerance” policy towards terrorism aimed to break the nexus between terrorism, extremism and radicalization.

She went on to note that Bangladesh had received a United Nations Award for Millennium Development Goal 4 on reducing child mortality. It was also on track on Goal 1 on poverty alleviation, Goal 2 on universal primary education, Goal 3 on gender equality and Goal 5 on reducing maternal mortality. Bangladesh’s Poverty Reduction Strategy, which aimed to raise 12 million people out of poverty by 2015, also aligned with the Goals. Meanwhile the recently revised National Women’s Development Policy provided for women’s empowerment, protection and equality, as well as their participation in decision-making processes. Education was currently free for girls up to class XII, and women’s political participation had increased following the 2008 general elections, with women now holding five cabinet positions, among other high-level Government positions. Among other key developments, Bangladesh was expanding the reach of information and communications technology throughout the country. Primary health services were also being delivered through 11,000 community health centres. The Government was also working to expand awareness of autism and other child development disorders.

Yet, like other least developed countries, its efforts for socio-economic security needed international support, which must come from being granted market access and equal voice in the Bretton Woods institutions, the removal of trade barriers, and the fulfilment of official development assistance, among other things. Development partners must implement the commitments made in Monterrey, Paris and Brussels before the conclusion of the Doha Round of trade negotiations. Finally, based on her lifetime of experience, she proposed a new multidimensional peace model that championed democracy and

people's empowerment through six mutually reinforcing peace multipliers: eradicating poverty; reducing inequality; mitigating deprivation; including the excluded; accelerating human development; and eliminating terrorism. That "people's empowerment and peace-centric model" reaffirmed that all people should be treated equally and emphasized the scope of human capability.

FREUNDEL STUART, Prime Minister of Barbados, said the present global economic downturn was a painful reminder of the interconnectedness of the world. His Government had partnered with the local business community and trade unions to ensure that layoffs and wage demands in Barbados were kept to a minimum, so that the gain and pain of the downturn was shared equitably. The Government was committed to protecting the most vulnerable, based on its conviction that a nation was more than just an economy; it was also a society. The downturn highlighted the urgent need for a global financial architecture based on fair and transparent rules that would prevent the massive social dislocations now taking place. The success of humanity's development goals depended on the planet's ability to sustain consumption and production patterns. Therefore, he urged caution in the use of fossil fuels, carbon emission levels and unregulated waste treatment.

The already dramatic changes in climate and the prospect of sea-level rise threatened the very existence of small island developing States in the Caribbean and the Pacific, he said. Barbados continued to work with other small island developing States to update and improve the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy and to ensure a successful Rio+20 Conference. Turning to the protracted Israel-Palestinian conflict, he said Israel had the right to exist and live in security. The Palestinians also had the right to their own sovereign State. It was time for the Holy Land to become a symbol not of humanity's divisions, but of its unity. That state of affairs would only ensue when the "disgracefully long" wait of the Palestinians for a homeland was brought to an end.

He fully embraced Cuba as an important partner in the Caribbean region and supported its sovereign rights and hemispheric integration. The United States economic embargo against Cuba would not facilitate that integration. It had long outlived its usefulness and should be lifted. Barbados was also committed to supporting Haiti's development and helping it rebuild. He fully supported the call in July of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Heads of State and Government for the international community to fulfil its pledge to finance Haiti's reconstruction.

The United Nations must be the foremost form of collective security against terrorism, he said. Terrorism should never be accepted or justified. Barbados was an active, committed partner in global efforts to combat terrorism and other transnational criminal activities. At their July Summit, CARICOM Heads of Government committed to accord the highest national and regional priority to combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms, light weapons and their ammunition. CARICOM had a vested interest in the 2012 United Nations Conference on an Arms Trade Treaty. It would continue to work with other Member States to forge a legally binding, robust and comprehensive treaty.

MAHMOUD JIBRIL, Chairman of the National Transitional Council Executive Office of Libya, lamented the loss of more than 30,000 Libyan martyrs whose "sacred blood" was shed to write a new history for the new Libya. "I bow to those mothers who today know that their sons' sacrifice was just and right," he said. Two years ago, Muammar al-Qadhafi stood before the Assembly and tore up the Charter in a "pathetic theatrical move" that flouted international values. "Today, I stand before you to show the world that a new Libya is coming to life," he said. He spoke of a forward-looking country keen on healing, rebuilding and beginning a new, prosperous chapter based on non-discrimination. Mr. Qadhafi had built a State that had the worst educational and health systems in the region. Today, poverty stood at 20 per cent and youth unemployment at more than 30 per cent. But on 17 February, Libyan youth began to open a new page in the country's history, which was to be written by all of Libya's people. Friendly sister States responded to the vision set forth by Libyans working to end injustice. The United Nations and regional organizations were instrumental in protecting civilians and preventing the Qadhafi regime from doing even greater harm.

Libya, however, was a "land not yet fully liberated", he said. It grappled with widespread infrastructure destruction, including more than 63 ruined schools, more than 50,000 injured people and more than 1,700 amputees awaiting help. Its social fabric had been torn by Mr. Qadhafi, who pitted tribes and regions against each other. Oil must be pumped and oil export production resumed. "We need more help," he said, stressing the urgency of mass-scale institution building in a nation deprived of any real

institutions or laws for over 50 years. Libya's people and the world had great social and political expectations. Everyone must consider the colossal task ahead of ensuring respect for human rights and foreign workers, building institutions at the required speed, achieving national reconciliation, ending militarization of streets and towns, and maintaining unity.

Achieving national unity and reconciliation was an important early demand, he said. It was very important to put a draft Constitution to a referendum. "The asset freeze on our funds must be lifted as soon as possible," he said, imploring the Council to lift that freeze. "We want the help of the United Nations, the help of friends, without conditions," he said. He envisioned Libya as a law-abiding State and an "oasis for human development in the Middle East". Due to its geography, history and geo-strategic importance, Libya could become a link between North and South, and East and West. Africa had great human resource potential. As hundreds of thousands of African migrants headed north in search of economic opportunities, Libya could be "the gate to development instead of being the obstacle of migration from South to North".

African labour could positively contribute to European Union growth, he said, noting that in 30 years, Europe's population would shrink by an estimated 27 per cent, while Africa's would expand to more than 2 billion. Agreements between the Libyan Government and European regulations could facilitate that contribution. The new Libya must be a democratic State, in which women had a genuine role in rebuilding and development. Libya's new foreign policy must be based on mutual respect, mutual interests, non-intervention in the internal affairs of others, and adherence to international conventions, treaties and values.

Rebuilding Libya was an important matter for the entire Middle East and North African region, he said. The country could become a "model of democracy and successful development" — a vision which merited the full support of the Arab Spring movement. The United Nations, and its agencies, must have a leading role in that process in order to avoid corruption and a lack of transparency. The international community had intervened to stop Mr. Qadhafi's massacre. He called on that "faithful friend" to become a "trustworthy partner" in helping to rebuild Libya.

LAWRENCE GONZI, Prime Minister of Malta, said over the past 12 months, the world had witnessed continued upheavals and crises compounded by food insecurity in Africa, and exacerbated by drought and famine, which threatened the survival of millions of people, particularly in Somalia and the rest of the Horn of Africa. Malta continued to channel most of its foreign humanitarian aid into the Horn of Africa. It also contributed to the Central Emergency Response Fund to assist those in need in that region. Within its limited resources, Malta had financially helped non-governmental organizations and individuals carry out school, clinics, housing and other development projects in developing and least developed countries. He called on the United Nations to address the influx of illegal immigrants flowing into Malta due to the crises in Libya and North Africa.

"We continue to call for international solidarity and burden sharing in dealing with this phenomenon," he said. He expressed hope that the European Union's Asylum Support Office, which opened in Malta in June, would help streamline European Union asylum policies and improve cooperation among authorities. During Libya's current turmoil, Malta, earning its title as the "Nurse of the Mediterranean", had served as a safe haven for thousands of Libyan refugees. In past months, Malta had provided a humanitarian hub to evacuate 20,000 people, as well as medical and other relief aid, to the World Food Programme (WFP) and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations aiding Libya.

He welcomed the National Transitional Council's approach in recent weeks to enhance its standing and legitimacy, and its determination to ensure that justice, not vengeance, was pursued in Libya, he said. National reconciliation, underpinned by full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, in Libya must take hold as soon as possible. He welcomed the Libyan delegation as the "new and rightful" representatives at the United Nations. "At this defining moment, the Libyan people deserve the fullest international solidarity on the political, economic and financial fronts," he said. He supported United Nations leadership and endorsed the Organization's action programme in Libya based on Libyan national ownership, rapid response and delivery, and effective coordination. Closely coordinating support efforts, especially with the European Union, would be crucial during Libya's post-conflict period.

Egypt's and Tunisia's democratic reform processes deserved support so that they could be sustained politically and economically, he said. As the people of the Middle East and North Africa embarked on a path of freedom and prosperity, it was necessary to help fulfil the long-sought aspirations of the Palestinian people. The dramatic events unfolding in the Arab world made progress on the Israeli-Palestinian track even more urgent. "No effort should be spared" to bring both sides back to the negotiating table. Agreement on the parameters for negotiations would clearly be a step in the right direction. He fully supported the European Union's efforts to make that happen. The conclusions of the European Union's Foreign Affairs Council provided balanced parameters to resume talks.

He strongly condemned terrorism and pledged to work with other Member States to ensure terrorist acts were not only condemned in absolute terms, but also suppressed. Unfolding events in North Africa highlighted the need to protect and promote human rights worldwide. He said Malta intended to present during the Assembly's 2012 session the draft Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities, a document which he had first proposed in 2009 to complement the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Malta had made environmental sustainability a priority. It was working towards a successful outcome at next year's Rio+20 conference. Malta also contributed to the Climate Change Fund.

MOHAMED KAMEL ALI AMR, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, said he stood before the Assembly representing his country in a new era and with a novel face. Seeking to implant the seeds of a brighter future deep in the arid lands of reality, the Egyptian people came out in masses on 25 January to call for democratic reforms and a strengthened respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and social justice. They were backed by the Egyptian armed forces, who exemplified patriotism and unity with the people, consistent with their core doctrine as guardians of the nation. Moving forward, Egypt was determined to complete the transition phase. Since the revolution, it was witnessing new internal dynamics and a wide national debate that involved all segments of society and covered all issues on the national agenda, starting with the drafting of a new constitution and the organization of legislative and presidential elections. That process would culminate with power being handed to an elected civilian authority.

Speaking also on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, he recalled that in July 2009 Egypt had assumed the chairmanship of the Movement, which had held its first summit 50 years ago, and had undertaken numerous activities to strengthen its capacity to respond effectively to new and continuous global changes. It also sought to reinforce the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Group of 77 developing countries and China. Among other things, it aimed to reinstall development as the top priority of the United Nations, while also advancing initiatives on food security, women's empowerment and defeating human trafficking. The Movement believed there was a pressing need for the Organization's comprehensive and substantial reform, including altering the membership of the Security Council, revitalizing the General Assembly and strengthening the Economic and Social Council. Financing for development commitments must also be honoured, while global economic relations should become more balanced, including through the establishment of a more just trade system.

Turning to the question of Palestine, which remained unanswered after two full decades of fruitless negotiations, he said the world had witnessed another failure yesterday by the Quartet to come up with a balanced vision to achieve the goal that everyone knew and of which they all approved. It had become "totally absurd" to continue talking about a peace process while Israel continued to construct settlements on Palestinian territory in the West Bank, to alter the features of occupied East Jerusalem, to use violence against civilians and its blockade of Gaza. For its part, Egypt was, and would remain, committed to the goal of achieving a just and comprehensive peace. It would also continue its efforts to end Israeli occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to reach a solution on all final status issues in a specific, agreed upon and internationally guaranteed time frame.

Reiterating Egypt's continuing support to Sudan and South Sudan, he also paid tribute to Tunisia's revolution and congratulated the National Transitional Council for now occupying Libya's United Nations seat. Egypt was ready to provide any support it could to Libya's reconstruction efforts. In addition, it backed all efforts to achieve stability and to meet the expectations of the people of Yemen and believed that a lack of change in that country's status quo would have grave implications on the region's security and stability. Noting the serious developments unfolding in Syria, he reiterated Egypt's position that the only solution to that crisis would be found in ending the violence and engaging in serious dialogue among all parties in a climate of political openness. He added that Egypt would always strive to achieve stability in

the Arab Gulf region.

Addressing other matters, he expressed concern that a facilitator had not been nominated, or a host country selected, for the Middle East conference endorsed by the 2010 Review Conference on the NPT. He reiterated Egypt's position that the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy must be linked to full compliance with international commitments under the NPT, adding that that entailed the full cooperation of all States, including Iran, with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Egypt expected the United Nations to maintain the support of the various components of the African peace and security structure and to continue to back the continent's development efforts. It once again invited external parties to refrain from negatively interfering in Somalia's internal affairs and to instead contribute to ongoing efforts to improve the humanitarian situation and achieve stability in that country.

PEDRO PASSOS COELHO, Prime Minister of Portugal, said that in re-launching growth and employment, the world faced a massive challenge that required an urgent collective answer. To that end, it must correct macroeconomic inequalities, strengthen monetary security and rebalance world trade. Governments, international organizations, the private sector and social partners should cooperate in broad-ranging efforts aimed at restoring the confidence of citizens and firms. He further noted that, during preparations for the Secretary-General's report on global economic governance, which would be submitted to the Assembly, Portugal had advocated for greater coordination and complementarity between the United Nations, the G-20 and other relevant regional groupings. It was also engaged in the European Union's preparation for its economic government, which was advancing well. Furthermore, Portugal was moving quickly and resolutely to consolidate its public accounts and to implement structural reforms to modernize its economy.

Arguing that institutional complementarity between the Assembly and the Security Council was of utmost importance, he said Portugal had pleaded with the Council to work in an open and transparent manner. It supported reforming the Council to make it more efficient and representative, in particular, by giving Brazil and India permanent seats and ensuring that Africa was part of any enlargement. During its presidency in November, Portugal would organize an event on the Council's working methods, as well as an event dedicated to new challenges for international peace and security. In that context, he stressed that the Organization must invest in a broad concept of security encompassing sustainable development and identifying solutions for global phenomena such as climate change. He also stressed that Portugal's participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions was one main way it contributed to the effective functioning of multilateralism. As part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), its troops were also working to consolidate Afghanistan's peace and security to ensure next year's orderly and successful transition.

He underlined his Government's determination to contribute to the successful transition in Libya as it opened a new era of change and reconstruction. At the same time, Portugal hoped to see "success" characterize the Middle East peace process. After 60 years, there was no time left for advances and retreats, nor for the status quo or unilateral actions that were prejudicial to negotiations. His Government believed Europe had the opportunity to speak with one voice, to build bridges and to facilitate compromises in the context of the Quartet. "It should be clear that, as the creation of a Palestinian State is a promise to be honoured, so too the security of Israel must be firmly guaranteed by the international community," he said, arguing that Palestine's admission as a United Nations Member State must be the logical outcome of negotiations. He voiced Portugal's support for granting Palestine strengthened status within the Organization.

He further highlighted Portugal's ambition for a new economic and commercial relationship, involving a new European "neighbourhood policy" and a renewed Union for the Mediterranean. The Portuguese Government would continue to support the transition process and reform under way in the Middle East and the Maghreb, responding in a coordinated manner to the needs identified by its partners. His Government considered that disintegration of the situation in Syria was unacceptable and unsustainable. Praising the action of the Human Rights Council on that issue, he said the Security Council should also take a position.

He stressed that a strong and efficient United Nations must cooperate loosely with other regional and international organizations, including the African Union the Arab League and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries. He said the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

(UNFCCC) provided the appropriate structure to fashion a strong agreement and coordinate action between all States. More attention must also be paid to combating desertification and to managing the world's resource-rich oceans. Finally, he said Portugal was presenting its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the 2015-2017 biennium.

JOSÉ MARIA PEREIRA NEVES, Prime Minister of Cape Verde, said he believed he this was the first time the language of his country, Cape Verdean Creole, had been used in the General Assembly. Speaking that language, born on the threshold of the fifteenth century, in the most important hall in a meeting of Heads of State and Government highlighted Creole's anthropological value to all humanity, as well as the ethos of Cape Verde, historically, a meeting place for various peoples of the world. "By so doing I also pay vibrant tribute to Aristides Pereira, the first president of Cape Verde, and a great African fighter for freedom, and human dignity. He has recently passed," he said.

He said the Assembly session's theme of mediation was crucial to the way of being and lifestyle of Cape Verdeans, who also considered it vital to focus on prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, specifically in the face of the challenges of developing countries. As a small island developing State at the crossroads of two large regions, his country also counted on all others in this hall to coalesce around the goal of a green economy and sustainable development. Cape Verde itself was implementing an ambitious programme for 50 per cent national coverage in renewable energy by 2020.

From its place in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, Cape Verde was a strong partner for global security and interests in world trade, as well as a useful partner in the fight against trafficking and related crime, he said. "Those who know us, know that we are a country concerned with development. We do not settle for being a middle-income country; we need the partnership of the international community to fulfil our destiny," he said. Promoting effective governance, strengthening human development, confronting structural and social challenges of competitiveness and investment in infrastructure were the five pillars to transforming Cape Verde.

He said his country was developing a foreign policy for democracy, justice, peace, cooperation and sustainable development. He worried that thousands of children dying of hunger every day in Africa did not motivate a stronger international intervention, and urged the Organization to make a more effective and assertive effort to reverse the human tragedy in the Horn of Africa. Small States also had to have a greater voice in international decision-making, through increased reform of global governance within the Organization, including expansion of permanent members of the Security Council.

PETER O'NEILL, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, said his country had welcomed and formalized the concept of "One United Nations – Delivering as One", as a model self-starter nation. That plan would enable a more effective and efficient way for the United Nations to deliver on its mandate. Beginning in January 2012, his country would also benefit from a new country programme targeting governance, social justice, health, education, gender, environment, climate change and disaster management.

He said his country had produced two Millennium Development Goal progress reports, indicating its achievement of some of the national targets, especially on poverty reduction and child mortality. Papua New Guinea was also progressing in the area of education, with enrolments in grades 1 to 6 increasing by 53 per cent. It had recently announced a free education policy from elementary to year 10, and a subsidized education policy from grades 11 to university, beginning in 2012. Additionally, the country was revamping its national health system. The new Development Strategic Plan 2010-2030 and Medium-Term Development Plan aimed to build and foster key enabling environments, bringing Papua New Guinea to the status of middle-income country. In that respect, he called on development partners to complement the nation's efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

In the area of women's empowerment, he reported that Papua New Guinea had recently passed the first vote on a parliamentary bill to provide 22 reserved seats for women to act as candidates in the upcoming elections in 2012. While the country appreciated the push by multilateral partners, such as the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, on gender equality, it further urged them to support Papua New Guinea's financial institutions by allocating funds without risk, to be lent to women entrepreneurs to develop business opportunities.

The Pacific remained a nuclear-weapon-free zone, he boasted, calling on the necessary Member States that had not done so to sign and ratify the Rarotonga Treaty. As the illegal use, abuse and dangerous proliferation of small arms and light weapons hampered the development aspirations of many nations, he called upon the international community to deal seriously with outstanding issues, such as the illegal supply and trade of small arms. Papua New Guinea remained committed to working closely with Governments and relevant international law enforcement agencies to curb drug and human trafficking and money-laundering.

As one of the top five remaining rainforest nations, Papua New Guinea was also committed to addressing the many challenges of climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development related to its forest and marine resources, he said. It further supported and encouraged the reform of the United Nations, its agencies and its Secretariat to become more responsive and active to global, regional and national challenges; he, therefore, reiterated the call for an expansion of membership in the Security Council's permanent and non-permanent categories – which must take into account the geopolitical realities of today's world. In terms of Papua New Guinea's own contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security, he was pleased to announce the deployment of its uniformed personnel as United Nations military observers.

Additionally, he noted, as tuna was an important source of food and economic resources in the Pacific island States, Papua New Guinea and countries that were parties to the Nauru Agreement were determined to process tuna onshore and to add value and create employment for their people. He encouraged investment in onshore activities. He was conscious of the obligation to conserve fisheries through sustainable fishing. As Papua New Guinea continued to experience unprecedented economic growth levels of 6 to 8 per cent annually, he stressed that it was positioned to become a significant development partner in its region.

TUILAEPA SAILELE MALIELEGAOI, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Samoa, recalling that his country had joined the United Nations 35 years ago from a belief in the sovereign equality of all nations, said the Secretary-General's visit to the Pacific region was significant, as it had allowed him to see the scale of challenges faced by Pacific small island countries. The first ever visit to the region by an incumbent Secretary-General, it marked a milestone in the relationship between the Pacific and the Organization. Indeed, the United Nations was the world's premier organization, whose role in various areas of development and improving the human condition must be exemplary. Its work to encourage Governments to uphold fundamental human rights was sorely needed.

He urged the United Nations to play a more proactive role in helping the people of the Pacific to exercise their right to self-determination. A decade into the new millennium, full recovery of the global economy to pre-2008 levels was an elusive goal. The immediate to medium-term outlook was not promising, and while some Governments were being assisted with their budgetary difficulties, others were struggling to provide basic necessities. Noting that Samoa was both a least developed country and a small island developing State, he said that, despite the United Nations commitment to international development frameworks like the Brussels Programme of Action, the needs of those groups always outstripped available resources.

Turning to non-communicable diseases, he said that, left unchecked, they would wreak havoc on the world's economies, and he urged including their reduction in work to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. "These are real concerns," he stressed, adding that sustainable economic development was a priority for Samoa and the Pacific island countries. He hoped that the Conference on Sustainable Development would allow for a reorientation of the United Nations community on the importance providing resources to implement the agreed programmes of action.

The Pacific States had long been committed to efforts to conserve and manage fisheries, he said, and it had long been a point of frustration that vessels of major fishing nations fished illegally in Pacific waters. Thus, he urged cooperation from all nations with fishing fleets in the Pacific to work together to stop illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing practices. As for climate change, it was imperative that adequate resources were available and accessed through direct modalities to help countries meet their mitigation and adaptation programmes.

Turning to peacekeeping, he said Samoa's support for that work was underpinned by its contribution of police officers to peacekeeping operations in Sudan, Liberia and Timor-Leste. Welcoming South Sudan as the United Nations' newest Member, he said that a year ago he had spoken of the hope that progress would come in the process to bring peace to the people of Israel and Palestine. The goal of a Palestinian nation living side by side with a secure Israel remained elusive. Direct negotiations must start. Solutions must be decided by the two parties and not imposed from the outside. Visionary leadership on both sides was needed. On terrorism, he said only by pooling resources and working collaboratively could countries defeat that menace. In closing, he said an expanded Security Council that mirrored present-day realities was essential, and he urged increases in the permanent and non-permanent categories of its membership.

MELTEK SATO KILMAN LIVTUNVANU, Prime Minister of Vanuatu, said carrying out the general debate's theme — the role of mediation in the settlement of disputes — would require all countries to be more creative and forward-looking. Settlement of disputes by peaceful means was central to the work of the United Nations, and he encouraged Israelis and Palestinians to continue peaceful negotiations towards a settlement that "will ensure regional and global stability". He also urged the Secretariat to revisit the framework with which it implemented and fulfilled its mediation mandate. The Organization must also develop closer partnerships with regional actors and groups involved in mediation, while at the same time cultivating an overall environment that rejected sowing seeds of bitterness, hatred and vengeance.

He reaffirmed his Government's conviction that there was a need to strengthen the multilateral system and ensure that relevant mechanisms operated in a swift and efficient manner. Indeed, nations acting unilaterally would be hard-pressed to defeat a robust multilateral system that could respond effectively with comprehensive solutions. To that end, he was pleased to note that one of the main priorities of the Assembly's sixty-sixth session was to press ahead with Organizational reform. In addition, the establishment earlier this year of the Change Management Team had been a step in the right direction, especially since it came at a time when Member States were calling on the Organization to play a more prominent role in building a global culture of transparency, accountability, good governance and enhanced democratic participation.

Turning to other matters, he said that small developing countries continued to struggle with the fallout from the economic and financial meltdown that began in 2008. That situation, coupled with ongoing effects of climate change and natural disasters, continued to threaten the economies in those countries and undermine their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. While Vanuatu had made some progress in that exercise, much remained to be done, through, among other avenues, pooling its national resources and engaging the international community to coordinate broader development initiatives. Vanuatu's economic growth had slowed since the outbreak of financial turmoil, sparked by the 2008 mortgage meltdown. The results of such outside shocks had eroded Government revenues and put further strain on Vanuatu's economy.

Thus, significantly increased financial support was needed from development partners, he said. While previous assessments of Vanuatu's status as a small island developing State by the United Nations Committee on Development Policy had shown a "progressive development pace", and its graduation from that status might be imminent, the Assembly must recognize that the challenges such countries faced were permanent. Indeed, small size, remote location, extreme vulnerability to natural disasters, and susceptibility to sea-level rise were but a few of Vanuatu's permanent challenges. He, therefore, urged the United Nations to ensure that its mechanism for graduation for the least developed countries category did not ignore such realities. He similarly called on the world body and the wider international community to assist vulnerable communities with adaptation and mitigation measures to avert the "impending global disaster of climate change".

DANNY PHILIP, Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, thanked Mr. Ban for becoming the first Secretary-General to have set foot on a Pacific small island developing State with least developed-country status with his visit to the Solomon Islands earlier this month. The current General Assembly theme, which focused on mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, was "fitting and timely". Multilateral diplomatic and political capitals needed to take centre stage over military solutions that might lead to long and protracted conflicts. In that vein, the Solomon Islands — whose population spoke some 87 different languages — was committed to building a multicultural and cohesive society with equal opportunities for

all. A dedicated Government ministry was in its third year of working to build bridges between former conflicting parties within the Solomon Islands, he said.

The United Nations needed to make a “special outreach” to countries with special needs, he stressed, especially those lagging the furthest, to assist them in operationalizing outcomes of global agreements. The international community must honour its commitments to do so by giving sufficiently to ensure economic transformation in least developed countries and small island developing States. Multilateralism was the basis of the foreign policy of the Solomon Islands, and the country had opened its second Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva in June. It hoped to see that action reciprocated with an enhanced United Nations presence in the Solomon Islands. The current system was “over-regionalized”, and had seen problems grow in the Pacific. Additionally, 5 out of the 12 Pacific countries were listed as least developed.

The Solomon Islands, as one such nation, applauded the adoption in May of the 10-year Istanbul Programme of Action for least developed countries. Partnership was critical to supporting investment in income-generating activities, employment creation, infrastructure development, rural agricultural development and investment in small-holder farmers. Solomon Islands was reaching out to 85 per cent of its population in rural areas, and was currently implementing parallel reform processes in both sectoral and constitutional land-reform programmes. The country supported the call for the Secretary-General to conduct a structured discussion on a post-2015 Millennium Development Goals-process. “We must all realize and admit we will fall short of achieving the MDGs come 2015,” he emphasized. That meant looking at the Goals from a sustainable development perspective.

On climate change, he called on the Secretary-General to garner the necessary political will from developed partners to adopt a second commitment period in Durban, under the Kyoto protocol. Problems associated with climate change were growing challenges for the Solomon Islands. Among practical measures taken, the Government was planning the relocation of the national referral hospital to a higher ground; efforts were also under way to build a resilience policy on food and water security.

The country was grateful for the growth of South-South cooperation and its support from countries including Cuba, India and Papua New Guinea, he said. As a post-conflict State, it remained engaged with the Australia-led Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands. It also hoped to join other Pacific countries in having its police force participate in United Nations missions in the future. Solomon Islands believed in dialogue and engagement with all countries of the world, including Fiji. It had established relations with more than 27 countries since the current Government came to office. On a related issue, he called on the United States to unconditionally lift the economic blockade against Solomon Islands’ development partner, Cuba.

Turning to the conflict in the Middle East, he said his country supported the work of the Quartet. Noting that two thirds of the United Nations Member States recognized the State of Palestine, he added that the international community must have the “strength and stamina” to act decisively and build on the two-State solution. Finally, the Solomon Islands continued to support the intergovernmental negotiations for expansion of both permanent and non-permanent seats in the Security Council. It also joined other small island developing States in calling for a non-permanent seat explicitly for those countries.

LORD TU’IVAKANO, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tonga, addressing a host of issues, said that non-communicable diseases in small States threatened livelihoods and gains made in pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals. He was pleased that the Secretary-General had visited a number of countries in the region on his way to the Pacific Islands Forum, assessing the impacts of climate change and validating the activities of Pacific small island developing States, like Tonga, in international forums. Urging countries to embrace the promise of the Seventeenth Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, he said he was pleased that the Security Council in July had seized the moral imperative by holding an open debate on the impact of climate change. The Council must continue to lead on that issue.

Stressing the importance of conserving marine resources as an income generator, he said it was vital to ensure that countries like Tonga enjoyed a greater share of benefits derived from those resources. He also noted this year’s consensus decision by States parties to the United Nations Convention on the

Law of the Sea relating to the workload of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, whose work Tonga valued. He repeated the call for creating a formal small island developing States' category within the United Nations system, which addressed the diversity of size, population and remoteness of each country.

Welcoming South Sudan as the newest United Nations Member, he said Tonga had long supported efforts to find a comprehensive, just and enduring peace in the Middle East. This was a moment of truth for those with genuine hope for a secure Israel and viable Palestine. Recalling that he was addressing the Assembly as Tonga's first democratically elected Prime Minister, he said he had taken office following a process of principal reforms that included the peaceful transfer of Executive power from His Majesty in Privy Council to the Government. In sum, he said that to address an uncertain future, his Government had approved the Tonga Strategic Development Framework, which would guide efforts over the next four years and included nine priority areas. He reaffirmed Tonga's commitment to the United Nations and pledged support to its ongoing reform.

ABDIWELI MOHAMED ALI, Prime Minister of Somalia, said the seemingly unending humanitarian crisis in his country had many and varied causes. Several factors — including decades of conflict, the demise of the central State, poor and kleptocratic leadership, struggles between clans for limited resources, and cycles of devastating droughts — had created chronic food shortages and an underdeveloped economy, and had driven the population to despair. Furthermore, the global terrorist organization, Al-Qaida, had in recent years sought to exploit such divisions to plot and execute attacks on the rest of the world. A small minority, mainly the Al-Qaida affiliated group Al-Shabaab, was responsible for the current nation-wide famine through their policies of systematically looting grain stores, forcible recruitment of farmers and their families, and preventing access by aid agencies to the most affected regions in the south. Al-Shabaab's threats were not limited to within Somalia's borders, but were exported by foreign fighters to the rest of the Horn, creating insecurity, an influx of Kenyan and Ethiopian refugees and regional instability.

He said his country was doing what it could to fight terrorism with its limited resources. The retreat of extremists from Mogadishu earlier this year was a welcome development, which would allow improved access for humanitarian assistance. However, the retreat might also herald a new and more dangerous phase of conflict as extremists increasingly turned to suicide bombings and the use of improvised explosive devices targeting the civilian population. Terrorism preyed on decaying States, exploiting poverty and ungoverned space to radicalize, recruit and plan. In that regard, Somalia's leaders were redoubling efforts to achieve national reconciliation and to adopt a road map for the re-establishment of permanent, legitimate and representative government of the country.

The National Consultative Conference in Mogadishu had been the culmination of a Somali-led reconciliation initiative dating back to the Arta Declaration of May 2000, and represented the best hope for the country to establish a firm political foundation from which to rebuild, he said. The road map was a significant achievement for the Somali peace process, and shed light on the remaining transitional tasks, such as drafting and promulgating a new constitution. He thanked the African Union, especially Uganda and Burundi, for their support in that regard. Though dangers may lie in the shadows, Somalia would not divert from the path illuminated by the road map, and he asked partners for their continued help on the journey towards full sovereignty.

Despite the many challenges, fragile gains had been made. It was critical for the Somali army and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to be reinforced, in order to prevent a security vacuum in the areas of Mogadishu recently vacated by fleeing extremists, and to make the city safe for residents and aid workers. Somalia needed outside help to rebuild its economy and provide jobs for the millions of young people deprived of opportunities owing to the anarchy of the past two decades. Somalia might have eroded the trust of the international community in the past, but the country could and would do better — Somalis demanded and deserved a Government that put national interest before personal ambition. The new Transitional Federal Government was making efforts to instil a sense of patriotism and responsibility, increase professionalism, and strengthen governmental mechanisms.

He said Somalia was truly Africa's "sleeping giant", where a relatively small investment would go a long way. With the longest coastline on the continent and bountiful and unexploited natural wealth, a peaceful Somalia would be a force for moderation and prosperity. For the time being, however, the

humanitarian situation in Somalia remained dire, and he expressed gratitude to the international community for its pledges of assistance. However, without urgent intervention, three quarters of a million people might perish in the next few months. It was critical, therefore, to accelerate efforts to reach those living in the Al-Shabaab-controlled areas, and the international community must urgently reinforce efforts to extend the zone of safety for aid workers beyond Mogadishu and into those affected areas. The future of Somalia hung in the balance and with it, the prospect of peace, stability and prosperity in the Horn of Africa and security for nations across the world. Resolute global action was now required if Somalia was to consolidate and build on the gains already made and extend them to the rest of the country for the sake of future generations.

GILBERT FOSSOUN HOUNGBO, Prime Minister of Togo, said that the ever increasing number of challenges each country faced required all nations to work together more closely and with more dedication to ensure broader peace, stability and development. Togo, for its part, had taken strong measures to jumpstart its economy, promote social growth and ensure democratic progress. Following recent elections, it had made a firm decision “to claim victory for the people, rather than for a particular political party”, as a way to consolidate gains and ensure an open and inclusive society. In addition, the two year-old Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission was presently holding public hearings on some of the most painful moments of the country’s history. For that exercise to be meaningful, the Togolese people needed to “talk to each other and tell the truth about the past”, so the young democracy could turn the page on that past and move forward.

He said his Government had also pledged to tirelessly pursue the gains of democracy and peace, including through the broad promotion and protection of human rights and pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals. In terms of economic governance, Togo was instituting legislation aimed at reaching the end of its Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative obligations and ensuring debt cancellation of nearly \$1 billion. It was also pressing ahead with efforts to rebuild roads and other infrastructure, he said, thanking all development partners that had helped.

On conflict resolution and prevention, he was encouraged to note that significant progress had been made in that regard in Africa, particularly in countries such as Côte d’Ivoire and Sudan. Those nations had proved that obstacles could be overcome when concerned parties acted with commitment and dedication. Yet, in countries where people were expressing the desire to break free from oppression, he hoped that such processes would end peacefully while also achieving the aims and aspirations of the concerned citizens. Turning briefly to the situation in the Middle East, he urged similar peaceful negotiations to comprehensively settle the situation between Palestinians and Israelis.

Continuing, he said that crisis and conflict, as well as new threats to international peace and security, such as cybercrime and piracy, required the international community to rethink the United Nations role in the areas of security and economic development. At a time when West African countries were locked in a struggle against drug traffickers, they needed regional and international cooperation to simultaneously tackle incidents of piracy off its shores. The United Nations must be reformed and efforts to revitalize the Security Council should proceed apace, with the aim of correcting “flagrant injustices”. Such change would also ensure that the 15-nation body was better placed to address current challenges.

He went on to note that Togo was among three African countries vying for two seats in the upcoming round of elections for non-permanent members to the Council. As such, he urged Member States to cast their ballots with the recognition that the Council must maintain regional balance within Africa, including West African representation. If elected, Togo would focus on preventive diplomacy, peaceful dispute settlement, the link between security and development, and on emerging international threats. That noble ambition could only be fulfilled if its candidacy was supported by Member States, and he urged delegations to show such support.

MICHAEL SPINDELEGGGER, Vice-Chancellor and Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of Austria, said that in the last nine months, the world had witnessed momentous change in the Arab world, which could not have been foreseen a year prior. An overwhelming number of young people had been at the forefront of that gigantic tide, beginning in Tunisia and Egypt. In Libya, thousands had lost their lives in the struggle for freedom and democracy. In Syria — and to some extent in Yemen — the suppression was ongoing. He condemned the systematic human rights violations and violence against

peaceful demonstrators and urged those responsible to immediately stop the bloodshed and engage in meaningful dialogue and reforms.

He said the international community and the United Nations must support the transition process in the Arab world, as the United Nations was now doing in Libya. He encouraged the newly empowered authorities to create a constitutional framework based on democracy and human rights in order to fulfil the mandate for democratic change responsibly and peacefully. Further, focus should be kept on the Middle East peace process. That region had taken centre stage this week at the Assembly, and the international community should build on trust and foster the belief among Israelis and Palestinians that a negotiated settlement could be achieved. That would entail a sustainable solution based on two States living side by side in a secure and peaceful neighbourhood within mutually recognized borders. "We have no choice but to return to direct negotiations between the two parties," he said, voicing support for the Quartet's statement of 23 September as a way forward with concrete timelines. "There is no time to lose," he warned.

Last year's tenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security had reminded the Assembly of the promise of women's full and equal participation in all efforts of maintaining peace and security, including mediation processes. However, those efforts had not yet come true, and in that regard the international community should intensify its efforts. For its part in mediation endeavours, Austria had invited decision-makers from both Khartoum and Juba to Vienna for a meeting platform. The United Nations Headquarters in Vienna served as a dynamic hub for the promotion of peace, security and sustainable development.

On other matters, he said the thematic debate in April on the rule of law and global challenges was an important step in the preparation of the high-level meeting on the rule of law, scheduled for September 2012. The international system could only function properly if it was based on clear and predictable rules, which applied equally to all Member States. The promotion and protection of human rights was also a core priority of Austria's foreign policy, and his country remained fully committed to the respect for freedom of religion and belief. Further, various forms of child trafficking and exploitation constituted a gross violation of children's rights, and as a member of the Human Rights Council, Austria would work to address that issue and develop counterstrategies. Austria was also committed to fighting forms of extremism such as racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination or intolerance, including anti-Semitism, and would work to strengthen protection of journalists against all threats and intimidation.

JEAN ASSELBORN, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg, said that when the Assembly recognized the full powers of the National Transitional Council in Libya, it consecrated the end to a dictatorial regime that had oppressed Libyans for 42 years. "The international community had to react, to recognize its responsibility to protect Libyan men, women and children," he said. Indeed, the United Nations had acted in a decisive, timely and just manner, and Luxembourg stood ready to accompany Libya on its path to democracy. In Tunisia and Egypt, people also had prevailed in their quests for liberty, while in Syria, the regime continued to lead a brutal campaign against its people. All appeals to stop the violence had gone unanswered, and the Security Council must now assume its responsibility, as the Organization's credibility as a moral force was at stake.

Turning to the Middle East, he said a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which had poisoned the entire region, must be achieved through recognition of the right of both parties to live in a sovereign, viable State. Despite the hope raised last year by the United States President, there had been neither a stop to the illegal construction of settlements nor a lifting of the embargo on the Gaza Strip. He could only hope that the appeal by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas for recognition of his people's right to a State would be heard.

But such an appeal on its own would not suffice, he said, stressing that direct negotiations between the parties must restart as soon as possible. He also fully supported the proposal made yesterday by the Quartet for a strict timetable of not more than a year to reach a comprehensive agreement. On a similar note, he said conflict prevention was a principal obligation of the United Nations. At the 2005 World Summit, world leaders committed to promoting a culture of prevention, for which the Peacebuilding Commission was an essential tool. Luxembourg contributed actively to its work as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration.

With respect to sustainable development, he said Luxembourg would do all in its power to contribute to the success of the 2012 “Rio+20” summit, adding that economic, social and environmental development — the three pillars of sustainable development — had long been at the centre of its development cooperation policy. Luxembourg had allocated 1.09 per cent of its gross national income in 2010 to official development assistance (ODA). Calling climate change a “threat multiplier”, he said his country offered technical assistance to small island developing States and had taken binding commitments to reduce carbon emissions. On non-communicable diseases, he said the response to that challenge must be global and universal, and he lauded the initiative of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in bringing that matter to the Assembly’s agenda.

Rounding out his remarks, he said the United Nations had become the target of terrorist acts, but he cautioned against an inward-looking retreat. Such behaviour must exhort States to step up their efforts to further the ideals of the United Nations and its Charter — to fight together for a safer future, respect for human rights and the rule of law. “This is our joint responsibility,” he said, and Luxembourg stood ready to work towards an effective multilateral system.

STEVEN VANACKERE, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Institutional Reforms of Belgium, recalled that when he stood at the podium last year, he had insisted upon the importance of the principle of accountability. This year, there was even more reason to do so. In several countries in the Arab world, people were transforming the outlook of their societies, moving towards a more accountable leadership. In Côte d’Ivoire, a leader who had repeatedly plunged his country into violence had not stood the “test of democratic legitimacy”, and the nation was now ready to make a fresh start. In Europe, the arrest of Ratko Mladić showed that war crimes would not remain unpunished forever.

“The past year has shown that more than ever, history is on the side of those who, worldwide, strive for more accountability,” he said. First, that meant legal accountability, and he appealed to those Member States that had not yet done so to join and shoulder the Rome Statute. Second, it meant political accountability — which was a challenge in Europe, as well as elsewhere. European leaders should not run away from the obligation of being accountable to the people they represented, he stressed, adding in the “Durban spirit of non-discrimination” that that meant all people, regardless of their ethnic background, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation or social position.

“Leaders who believe that they can cling to power through terror and suppression make a cruel mistake,” he stressed. Warlords who thought they could perpetrate the sexual abuse of women or the recruitment of child soldiers must be stopped and held accountable. Belgium, for its part, would not stand idly by when people claimed a future free of coercion and terror. “Instead of non-interference, Belgium believes in non-indifference,” he stressed. “Sovereignty is no longer a wall leaders can use to violate the rights of their citizens.”

In that respect, he pointed to Libya, where the Security Council had been able to prevent a massacre in Benghazi. Belgium had been among States that had taken action in that country. “We are not just responsible for what we do, but also for what we don’t do,” he stressed. Now the international community had the responsibility to help in that country’s reconstruction. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, after years of violence, undeniable progress had been made. The role of the United Nations and of its Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) could not be ignored. However, challenges remained, including reform the security sector, establishment the rule of law and the fight against sexual violence. Those were the essential ingredients of the consolidation of democracy, which should be confirmed once and for all in the elections slated for November.

In the Middle East, he said, it was not acceptable that no solution had yet been reached to the long-standing conflict. The parameters of a sustainable solution were well known. Both the Palestinian and Israeli people had legitimate aspirations, and it must be possible to satisfy both legitimate needs. Over the past few months, the European Union had spared no efforts to start the negotiation process. “There is no alternative to negotiations, however risky this path might be,” he stressed. It was his sincere hope, therefore, that the steps proposed by the Quartet the previous day would be fully implemented. It could not be ignored that the Palestinian Authority had successfully progressed on the road to statehood.

The challenges the world faced today were many, he continued. They ranged from terrorism to climate change and sustainable development, from financial turmoil to terrible humanitarian tragedies like the one in the Horn of Africa, from cluster munitions to nuclear proliferation, notably in North Korea and Iran. Belgium believed that the only way to address those was through a multilateral approach. “No country, as big or important as it might be, is capable of tackling global challenges alone,” he said. Multilateralism should not be about blocking solutions, but should instead lead to change; it should also have the United Nations at its centre. In that vein, he was proud to announce a development in the particularly important field of international conflict mediation. Belgium had decided to financially support the United Nations Mediation Unit and to actively engage with the General Assembly President and with other Governments and non-governmental stakeholders to strengthen the role of the United Nations mediation efforts.

Finally, he said, Belgium’s current engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission and its bid for a non-permanent seat in the Security Council for the period 2019-2020 showed a willingness to play its role at the United Nations. Today, he was also proud to announce Belgium’s candidacy to the Human Rights Council for the period 2015-2018.

SAM CONDOR, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis, said youth played a critical and defining role in his country’s future and would define the world of tomorrow. However, youth violence had attained epidemic proportions in the Caribbean, which was invariably symptomatic of deeper individual, community and societal issues. A multisectoral, integrated approach was required in redressing that problem, and CARICOM States were actively grappling with the challenge. There was a need to reinforce the role of relevant United Nations agencies in supporting those efforts to reverse the trend.

He said his country was also working to contribute to combating HIV/AIDS, as well as non-communicable diseases. He recognized the urgent need to make good on pledges resulting from the United Nations High-level Meeting on Non-Communicable Diseases, as that could only augur well for a future in which due recognition must be given to the role of health in overall development. He also highlighted the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to which his country would lend full support to the main objective of securing political commitment.

As a small island developing State, his country felt the bane of climate change on a daily basis, he said. The question was no longer “if” and “how”, but rather “when” and “by how much” the world would be affected by climate change. The international community desperately needed to struggle to upgrade pre-emptive measures to counter the imminent threats and define a strategy to aggressively promote climate financing.

Turning to the situations in other countries, he said the international community must always remember Haiti’s trials and struggles against natural and manmade catastrophic events, unsettling social and political vicissitudes and economic hardships, the effects of which had set Haiti many years behind. Antigua and Barbuda remained locked in an “underdog struggle” to benefit from its success before the World Trade Organization (WTO) Dispute Settlement Body. Cuba also continued to endure much hardship due to 50 years of embargo, and he called for a speedy redress of that matter. In today’s highly integrated and interconnected world, almost all issues demanded full participation by, and cooperation from, international partners. In that light, the participation of Taiwan as an observer in the annual World Health Assembly set a useful precedent for Taiwan’s greater participation in the United Nations system.

FRANCO FRATTINIA, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy, said that in celebrating the 150th anniversary of Italian unification this year, he stressed his country’s long tradition of mediation, which served to bridge the gap between aspirations for independence and the reality of foreign occupation. For decades, Italy had emphasized the need to bridge the economic and social gap between the conditions of the northern shores of the Mediterranean and the expectations of the neighbours to the south. Despite that vision, the aspirations of the peoples of the Middle East were often overlooked. The Arab Spring had been a wake-up call for the world that no political leader could maintain power at the expense of his or her people.

He said that while Italy had called for dialogue and deplored the use of force against civilians, that

had not been enough in Libya, whose regime had vowed to slaughter its own civilians. The only way to prevent a massacre had been to invoke the principle of “responsibility to protect”. By helping to implement that decision in military, diplomatic and humanitarian terms, the international community had shifted from a culture of “sovereign impunity” to one of “responsible sovereignty” rooted in national and international accountability for the most serious violations of human rights.

The uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East sent a message that the United Nations could do more and do better, he said. His delegation was not calling for less United Nations involvement — it was asking for more. Libya could be the first test case for a more prominent United Nations role, and the Organization should therefore chair the international coordination mechanism with the support of the Arab League, African Union and European Union, among others.

We went on to say that the world’s humanistic heritage defined the human being as the measure of all things. The principle of placing people first underpinned Italy’s active support for United Nations campaigns on fundamental issues, such as the abolition of the death penalty, the protection of freedom of religion or belief, and others. Italy also placed the rights of human beings and the environment at the centre of society, and would endeavour to create and consolidate a “modern humanism”, as there could be no better defence against the hatred and criminal intolerance that had struck New York, the United States and the world 10 years ago.

TRINIDAD JIMÉNEZ GARCÍA-HERRERA, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of [Spain](#), said the international community’s capacity to address any type of crisis in a timely manner was limited, which stymied defeat of poverty and implementation of sustainable development policies. Advancing women’s equal access to the labour market, as well as to the political and social spheres, was essential to overcoming the current economic crisis. Welcoming the success of popular movements in Tunisia and Egypt, she said Spain joined the international efforts to strengthen the transition processes in both countries. The Libyan people also could now live in a democracy after decades of dictatorship. The global community was obliged to help them in their reconciliation and reconstruction processes.

She condemned the repression of civilian demonstrators by Syrian authorities and reiterated the need for international measures to stop such actions. The recent revolutions and uprisings had deep consequences, including for Palestinians, whose legitimate aspiration to enjoy freedom could not be left aside in the wave of change. The Assembly’s sixty-sixth session could be remembered as the one in which non-member Observer State status was granted to Palestine, a decision that Spain could support, as a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict required the existence of two States — Israeli and Palestinian — living side by side in peace in security. Indeed, after more than 60 years of conflict, the global community should send a clear signal to Palestinians underlining its desire to see the creation of a Palestinian State. Palestinians could find in that new status a stimulus for the prompt resumption of negotiations.

While Spain had always given political, economic and moral support to the Palestinians, its relations with the Jewish people dated back centuries. “Spain’s identity cannot be understood without its Arab and Jewish heritage,” she said, underlining its commitment to Israel, a country that had suffered from terrorism against its civilians. Israel’s security was essential and the best way to preserve it was through a peace treaty that included the establishment of a Palestinian State along 1967 lines, with agreed swaps and Jerusalem as a shared capital. While some had raised concern that new democracies could provide grounds for political groups with extremist ideologies, she said democracy was an open and fair system of political participation which must be able to defend itself from such threats. The Alliance of Civilizations, which promoted intercultural dialogue and cooperation, could help prevent such situations.

Stressing that Al-Qaida’s terrorism must be prevented from being reinforced in the Sahel, she urged the international community to be united in that same fight in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The tenth anniversary of the attack on the “Twin Towers” was a reminder that, despite determined efforts against such actions, it had been a bloody decade. Spain had joined the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, launched a few days ago, and firmly supported United Nations initiatives under the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The situation in the Horn of Africa was “simply unbearable”, and Spain was helping to alleviate the famine in Somalia. The fight against poverty was a priority, and to realize the Millennium Development Goals, she urged States to make the most of the 2012 “Rio+20” summit. As for international peace and security, she said close to 1,200 Spaniards participated in United Nations peacekeeping operations. She hoped that States would support Spain’s candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the

Security Council for the 2015-2016 period.

HENRI EYEBE AYISSI, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cameroon, said that this year the United Nations had welcomed its newest Member State, South Sudan, which, among other things, had allowed a part of the African continent to “close a dark chapter of tears, bloodshed and woe”. He thanked the United Nations, the Government of Sudan, the African Union and all those that had helped bring about that positive outcome of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. On crisis management and conflict prevention, he said that the United Nations must follow the principles of its Charter, which called for the peaceful settlement of disputes and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. Such settlement and preventive diplomacy, along with suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, must be at the heart of the world body’s work. The Charter also called on individual Member States to refrain from threatening any other State or infringing on their territory.

He said that the African Union and all its members would continue to support the idea that settling any dispute peacefully must be based on local political situations, meeting the aspirations of citizens and promotion of inclusive societies. He also noted the Assembly’s recent decision to recognize the representatives of the National Transitional Council of Libya, as well as the similar decision of the African Union on the matter of Libya’s representation. Cameroon would abide by that decision.

On the home front, Cameroon was aiming to establish a favourable environment for revenue-generating activities and improving the living conditions of its people. Such programmes were absolutely necessary as the ripple effects of the financial crisis were still being felt. He said that Cameroon’s multi-year “growth and strategy document” sought to enhance socio-economic progress, boost job creation and promote broader development. A major plank of that action plan was already being implemented and could be seen in the large number of infrastructure projects that were under way throughout the country.

Turning to political matters, he said that Cameroon was continuing to shore up its electoral mechanisms to, among others, ensure the free distribution of identity cards and efforts to promote participation of Cameroonians living abroad in the 2012 presidential elections. With the assistance of United Nations specialized agencies, the Government believed that the elections could now be held peacefully. In addition, the Government would invite international observers to monitor the poll. He noted with pride the dedication of the Cameroonian people and their ability to “make the right choices” when it came to ensuring that all such exercises were carried out with transparency and in a peaceful manner. The Government and the people were committed to building a more prosperous and secure nation.

Right of Reply

Speaking in exercise of his right of reply, the representative of Serbia said that today’s speech by the Prime Minister of Albania had contained “misrepresentations and falsehoods”. Kosovo had taken unilateral actions of a “coercive nature” in the negotiation process in Brussels, attempting to create a fait accompli on issues that were still pending. The Prime Minister had also misrepresented the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice from July 2010, he added, noting that the Court had never decided that the declaration of independence of Kosovo was in full compliance with international law. In fact, it had only found that Kosovo did not violate international law because the law contained no applicable prohibitions on declarations of independence.

Neither Serbia nor the Security Council had ever accepted “Ahtisaari’s package”, which the Prime Minister had mentioned today. Further, it was not true that Serbian cultural heritage was more secure in Kosovo today than ever. One only needed to recall the 2004 Albanian pogrom of Serbs to see that. Nor were inter-ethnic relations where Albanians and Serbs lived together “very good”, as the Prime Minister had said. Criminal groups mentioned by the Prime Minister were better characterized as Albanian groups that had a long tradition of devastating the rule of law in Kosovo. Finally, on the issue of the return of the remains for victims of the conflict in Kosovo, Serbia had shown its full readiness to complete that task, he said.

Also exercising his right of reply, the representative of Albania said he profoundly disagreed with the Serbia’s statement. Albania was convinced that an independent Kosovo was the only solution to the issue of an area long torn by conflict; Albania continued to hope that Serbia would come to terms with that

“undeniable and unreversible” reality. Regarding the International Court of Justice’s opinion, he reiterated that the Court had found that the declaration of independence by Kosovo had violated no international law. He was still waiting for Serbia to accept that decision.

Whoever spoke of dividing Kosovo was “looking back to the dark ages”, he said. As German Chancellor Angela Merkel had said recently in Belgrade, Serbia must implement agreements with Kosovo, allow the European Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) to operate in the whole of Kosovo and abolish its parallel governance structures in the north. The Albanian Government regarded the [Dick] Marty report, mentioned by the representative of Serbia, as a series of unfounded conclusions that had no match with reality. Albania had offered that EULEX could investigate in full any part of the report’s allegations, he added, noting that such an investigation was the only way to “cut short the propaganda” that the Assembly had heard tonight. The question was only whether Serbia would accept the opinion of that investigation, or if it would simply ignore it, as it had with the International Court of Justice’s decision. For its part, Albania was fully ready to develop its relationship with Serbia.

Taking the floor a second time, Serbia’s representative said that he had stated all he deemed to be necessary and it was now up to the Assembly to draw its own conclusions.

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