Latin American leaders urge reform of UN bodies, highlight 2030 ‘agenda of change’

28 September - Chilean President Michelle Bachelet, one of several leaders from the Latin American and Caribbean region to address the General Assembly today, warned of the urgent need for United Nations Member States to react to the plight of refugees, which she said had become a global crisis affecting peace and security.

“As an international community, we are duty-bound to react with solidarity in order to restore peace and provide a response that will enable us to minimize the suffering of the victims of war and those who are running away from it,” said Ms. Bachelet.

“This is why my Government has decided to take in refugees from the civil war in Syria and it is also why Chile will expand cooperation with Africa. Starting in 2016, we will be participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations in that region,” she added.

She also highlighted the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for tackling inequality and being an “agenda of change.”

“This is a promising and a binding agenda,” said the Chilean President “It focuses on addressing various aspects of inequality, which is the main challenge in Latin America and of course in Chile, in this new phase of our economic and political development.”
At the same time, she said the primary responsibility for sustainable and more equal development rests with each individual country, adding that: “Only if we can carry out an agenda of change at the global, as well as the national level will it be possible to promote more inclusive and sustainable societies.”

She also touched on her hope for an increased number of permanent members for the Security Council.

“In 2014 and 2015, we have been a non-permanent member of the Security Council. In light of this experience, we wish to reaffirm our belief in the need to reform the Council by increasing the number of its permanent members and reducing the veto, at least in cases of crimes against humanity,” said Ms Bachelet.

The Chilean President also referred to the resumption of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States.

“This is a historic step,” she said. “Chile applauds the use of dialogue and respect for international law as the civilized way for countries to resolve their differences,” she added.

In her remarks, Cristina Fernandez, President of Argentina noted that the General Assembly had recently adopted a resolution on the guidelines for the restructuring of countries’ external debt, saying that States enjoy the sovereign right to decide their own macroeconomic policy. That was a logical principle, she said, noting that creditors established timetables for repayment when a company or municipality defaulted.

Argentina had gone bankrupt in the early 2000s, leading to a default in 2001, but it had rebuilt itself. Politicians had retaken control of the Government and decided it was necessary to allow Argentina to grow in order to be able to pay. “That is economic logic,” she said. Argentina then began its inexorable progress, which led to paying off its debt to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2005. The State was moving towards sustainable development. “We do not forget that the greatest growth occurred among the emerging countries,” she said.

The recent global financial crisis had begun here, in the United States, “the very heart of international finance,” continued President Fernandez. It had then extended to the Eurozone. It was a euphemism when people spoke of “saving countries;” that really meant saving the banks. It was essential to have regulation to ensure that the flood of resources into the financial sector came back into the real economy, but no such rule was implemented.

In the Eurozone, that had led to historic levels of unemployment and unprecedented financial woes. The collapse of financial institutions had now threatened developing countries, which had previously been growing at a rapid rate. The current refugee crisis was caused by “financial predators.”

According to the IMF, one per cent of the global population held a shockingly large percentage of the world’s wealth. She asked how the world could talk about gender empowerment when resources were so inequitably distributed. It was time to inject resources into the “real economy” – to create jobs in production as engines driving society, she said.

Horacio Manuel Cartes Jara, President of Paraguay, spoke of the importance his country placed on ending extreme poverty and inequality, saying that “the main objective of our Government is to reduce poverty, through public policies to eradicate it in the short term.”

“Therefore, we maintain and increase the scope of the assistance programs, especially those focusing on extreme poverty and through tied aid,” he added. “Generation of opportunities, employment, decent housing, respect, equity and access to education, health and quality basic public services constitute the arsenal of our tireless struggle to eradicate extreme poverty in our country.”

He also spoke about the youth of Paraguay, noting that 70 per cent of its population is under 40 years old, which, he said “represents a valuable human capital.”

“We trust the immense potential of our youth and we firmly believe in the importance of access to high quality education to achieve the full progress of our nation,” he said.
Mr. Cartes Jara said he noted with great concern the exodus of families fleeing conflicts in Syria and other countries.

“We cannot turn our backs on this human tragedy that is currently occurring,” he said. We call upon our Organization to appeal to Member States, in particular those in the region, to adopt the necessary measures in favour of the most vulnerable sectors of civil society.”

He also spoke of what he saw as the need to reform the General Assembly and the Security Council. “If we want democracy to rule within our own republics, it is fair that we would also want it for the United Nations,” he said, calling for democracy, equity and geographical representation within the UN system.

President of Ecuador Rafael Correa Delgado began his address to the General Assembly by making a request that the next Secretary-General of the United Nations should be a woman, before going on to talk about the problems of poverty and extreme poverty.

“It can be said that poverty is the worst form of violence,” said Mr. Correa Delgado. “Poverty and extreme poverty are still waiting for justice, freedom and real democracy.”

He also highlighted the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), saying that common goals should not just be those “seeking the bare minimum, but seeking social maximums,” including the right to live with dignity and in harmony with other human beings of different cultures.

Mr. Correa Delgado said that the absence of any mention of “free human mobility” was “a very regrettable omission” from the SDGs. Free movement of merchandise, he said, for maximum profit was promoted, while the free movement of people seeking decent work was penalized.

**Afghan Chief Executive calls for UN reforms to tackle unprecedented range of crises**

28 September - Warning that the world faces a host of mainly human-made threats, Afghan Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah today called for United Nations reforms to deal speedily and effectively with the challenges ahead.

“Never has the world and the UN faced such fast-paced change – both constructive and harmful – such abrupt fluctuations, heightened expectations and immediate demands for solutions and answers,” he told the General Assembly on the opening day of its 70th annual General Debate.

“These monumental tasks, mixed with population growth, unprecedented mobility, connectivity and access to information and technological knowhow, necessitate constant negotiations, legal frameworks, new management and leadership skills, but also encompass inherent risks and security concerns,” he said.

“At some point, it is the UN and other specialized and multilateral organizations that will need to be ready to drive the agenda and provide the required platform for decision-making. We urge future reforms to take these needs of our times into account and offer flexibility and fast-track problem management for the work at hand.”

Turning to the security problems of his own country, Mr. Abdullah cited the attacks over the past 48 hours by hundreds of militants, some of them foreign fighters, in Kunduz province, and efforts by terrorist organizations, including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) to find a foothold.

“The presence of terrorist sanctuaries and support networks in Pakistan continue to cause trouble inside Afghanistan. The Haqqani network has been identified as a main culprit and needs to be dismantled as has been our demand in the past,” he declared.

“We call on Pakistan to do what its leadership promised to us a few months ago when they agreed to crack down on known
terror outfits.

“We also call on regional stakeholders and our international partners to realize the gravity of the situation, and use their good offices or any effective means to support our aspirations for a genuine and durable confidence-building process leading to talks with willing Taliban and other armed opposition groups.”

‘Living well,’ not capitalism, key to sustainability and social justice, Bolivia tells UN Assembly

28 September - Decrying capitalism and the predatory polices of multinational corporations, the President of Bolivia, in his address to the United Nations General Assembly today, called for all countries to reject the imperialist models that led to poverty and degradation and to take up the philosophy of ‘living well,’ which is the key to sustainable development and social justice.

Evo Morales said it was important to carry out a deep examination of political, economic, social and cultural transformations over the 70 years of the life of the United Nations. It was clear that wars and invasions had continued during that time, as oligarchs fought to keep power and wealth in the hands of a few to the detriment of the many. Indeed, while speakers today in the Assembly had said they sought peace, what was true is that there could be no peace without social justice.

Some of those same speakers pursued capitalism, which was a failed model that had ultimately sparked a raft of crises – humanitarian, economic and environmental. Some governments claimed to be spending billions of dollars to save Mother Earth, but they were really spending those billions on military aims which would ultimately lead to the destruction of the planet.

“We are convinced that capitalism is not the solution for humanity,” said President Morales, stressing that the principle of “living well” – living in solidarity and complimentarity, at one with Mother Earth – is the key for humanity. This is the exact opposite of capitalism, he said, adding that “living well” also ensured that basic services and natural resources belonged to all people, not private companies. “This is how we freed ourselves economically,” he declared.

He went on to say that his Government was shouldering its responsibilities to save Mother Earth, and to that end, all countries, especially in the lead-up to the Paris climate conference, must shoulder their responsibilities. Bolivia was hosting a conference of social movements from 10-12 October to show the world that some were not following policies of the North American empire. This empire, which claimed to be democratic, was actually being governed by big business, not the people.

“The only way to end poverty and all the other serious problems facing humankind is to do away with capitalism,” said President Morales, stressing that globalization should be for all people. The exploitation of human beings and pillaging of natural resources must end, as should wars aimed at securing access to those resources, he said.
At General Assembly, Mali leader lauds UN for helping to restore peace to war-torn north

28 September - President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita of Mali took to the podium of the General Assembly today to voice his “profound gratitude” to the United Nations for its help in restoring peace after a vicious civil war erupted in the north of the African sub-Sahara country in 2012.

Speaking on the opening day of the 70th annual General Debate, he detailed the peace agreement signed earlier this year and the need for international help to see it fully implemented.

“That is why I want to launch an urgent appeal to the international community, especially to the friends of Mali, with a view to mobilizing efficaciously of the technical, material and financial resources necessary for the realization of the agreement,” he said.

Since 2012, the UN has maintained a Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), currently with an authorized troop ceiling of 11,240 military personnel, including some 40 military observers to monitor and supervise the new agreement.

But despite positive developments on the ground, the situation in Mali has long remained a challenge. The Government has been seeking to restore stability and rebuild following a series of setbacks since early 2012, including a military coup d’état, renewed fighting between Government forces and Tuareg rebels, and the seizure of its northern territory by radical Islamists.

Mr. Keita also called for UN reform including expansion of the Security Council to include African permanent and non-permanent members.

Eastern European leaders at UN urge stronger cooperation to tackle threats to global peace and stability

28 September - Poland is ready to participate in the attainment of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted last week, the country’s President told the UN General Assembly today, underlining that objectives such as the defence of democracy, sustainable economic growth, and fighting climate change all contribute to the preservation of peace world-wide.

“Poland actively participates among others in the international effort to arrive at a new climate agreement,” President Andrzej Duda said during his address at the annual debate.

“We see the need for the permanent understanding to be reached in this field, one which will be joined by all states.”

President Duda further highlighted Poland’s “impressive” track record in climate protection, noting that its economic transformation contributed to the lowering of CO2 emissions by 30 per cent in relation to 1990.

He further stated that “mindful of the tragedy of World War II, and of communist times,” Poland also pledges to actively cooperate in building international order founded on law.

Indeed, he said contempt of international law may turn out to be the “germs of war,” explaining that this is currently visible in the Middle East where State institutions have been either excessively strained or replaced by private armies, terrorist militias, and self-proclaimed courts.
“[The] international community has never had to struggle with a humanitarian crisis of such a scale as in the present day,” he declared. “At this point, I would like to mention with great satisfaction the outputs of Polish humanitarian organizations which lend active support to those in need.”

The Polish leader stressed that women suffer twice as much during times of warfare and mass migrations.

“First, when they lose their sense of security, knowing that warfare is raging around,” he explained. “And then, when they lose their husbands, fathers, brothers, and sometimes cannot even bury them. The tears of women distressed with war is the greatest charge against humanity in the 21st century.”

President Duda also insisted that it is crucially important to continue the work on streamlining the effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council, the body responsible for protection of international peace.

“In recent years, the right to veto led on many occasions to a total stalemate of the Council’s work on the most important security issues,” he warned. “This is why Poland supports the French proposal to adopt a code of procedure for refraining from a veto in the event when we are confronted with gravest crimes in the sense of international law, including the crime of genocide.”

He recalled that the year 1945 is more than the end of World War II, noting that it is also the origin of the United Nations, which he described as the most fundamental mechanism for cooperation in international community for the sake of global peace and security.

In his remarks, President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus warned that the entire system of international security is going through a severe crisis. “Loss of mutual trust between global players, unwillingness to compromise and partial return to the ‘bloc-type’ confrontation have essentially put the world on the verge of a new war,” he told the General Assembly.

“Efforts to impose upon other countries a certain development model continue unabated,” he said, stressing that foreign intervention regime changes have plunged previously stable countries into chaos and anarchy.

“Do we feel better now that a number of national leaders were brutally murdered? Instead of promised democracy and prosperity people in these countries experience extreme suffering and are forced to flee,” he said.

“This is why I am strongly convinced in the need to have a broad discussion in the United Nations about the principles of future coexistence of States and peoples.”

Mr. Lukashenko decried “an artificial cult of individual rights and freedoms to the detriment of collective social interests” and called for “strong” States.

“Of late, resounding calls for maximum freedom have put to test the basic foundations of human society, including the family, good morals and virtue,” he declared, voicing deep concern at the ongoing destruction of the traditional family in a number of countries where certain moral deviations and various social ‘innovations’ are called natural.

“Under the guise of protection of human rights, overthrow of governments, destruction of States and wars over resources are being justified. Chaos and anarchy are proliferated. Predatory attitude to nature and pursuit of easy profit are cultivated.”
From General Assembly podium, Egypt calls for proactive UN strategy against extremism

28 September - Denouncing Islamic extremists for negating a religion that stands for tolerance, justice and mercy, Egyptian President Abdel Fatah el-Sisi took to the podium of the General Assembly today to call on the United Nations and its Member States to join him in a proactive strategy to defeat terrorism.

“Counterterrorism efforts so far have relied solely on defensive reaction, focusing on defending the present,” he told world leaders on the opening day of the week-long 70th annual General Debate in a speech which dwelt on the extremists’ threats to the Arab world, from Libya, Syria, Iraq and Yemen to Egypt itself.

“It is our belief in Egypt that the Middle East and the world at large are confronted with a perilous danger and are in dire need of a model that presents new prospects for our youth, providing them with opportunities for a brighter future. They must be shown that, with diligent work, they can participate in crafting this future.”

Those who claim to have a monopoly in interpreting Islam are merely propagating their own prejudiced interpretation of the religion, he said.

“There is no doubt that more than 1.5 billion Muslims refuse to subscribe to the views of this small minority that claims to speak on their behalf and seeks, through violence and extremism, to marginalize and silence all who oppose it,” he declared.

At the same time he decried prejudice against Muslims, which played into the hands of extremists since they seek to create a fissure between Muslims and the rest of the world.

“We have all witnessed Libya's descent along a downward spiral when the forces of extremism announced their presence through actions that contradict the principles of Islam and humanity,” he said, citing the slaughter of Egyptians in Libya earlier this year.

“We have also observed how extremists exploited the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people to drag this brotherly nation into conflict, in order to achieve their intentions to exclude anyone but themselves.”

Mr. Sisi also called for empowering the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination and to an independent state within the borders existing before the 1967 six-day war with East Jerusalem as its capital.

“[This] will effectively eliminate one of the most important factors contributing to the region's instability and one of the most dangerous pretexts used to justify extremism and terrorism,” he said.
Terrorism most immediate problem for new Nigerian Government, President tells UN

28 September - The new Nigerian Government has many issues to contend with but none as important as defeating the terrorist threat posed by Boko Haram and bringing back the Chibok girls unharmed, the country’s President declared at the United Nations General Assembly today.

“Boko Haram’s war against the people of Nigeria, Chad, Niger and Cameroon may not attract as much worldwide attention as the wars in the Middle East but the suffering is just as great and the human cost is equally high,” Muhammadu Buhari said in his address to the Assembly’s high-level debate.

Stating that Nigerians are on the front lines of the war on terror, he said the battle is between progress and chaos; between democracy and the rule of law.

“Boko Haram celebrates violence against the weak and the innocent and deplorably, they hide behind their perverted interpretation of Islam. Boko Haram is as far away from Islam as anyone can think of.”

Mr. Buhari, who was elected President in March, informed fellow world leaders that the new Government is attacking the problems it inherited head-on.

“We intend to tackle inequalities arising from massive unemployment and previous government policies favouring a few people to the detriment of the many. We intend to emphasize quality technological education for development and lay foundation for comprehensive care of the aged, the disadvantaged and the infirm.

“But for now, terrorism is the immediate problem,” he stressed.

The President outlined a number of steps being taken, adding that Nigeria and her neighbours Cameroon, Chad and Niger plus Benin are working together to face this common threat within the regional framework of the Lake Chad Basin Commission.

“We have established a multinational joint task force to confront, degrade and defeat Boko Haram. We have driven them away from many of their strongholds, killed or captured many of their operatives or commanders and freed several hundreds of hostages.

“One of our major aims is to rescue the Chibok girls alive and unharmed. We are working round the clock to ensure their safety and eventual reunion with their families. Chibok girls are constantly on our minds and in our plans,” he stated.

Some 276 girls were abducted by Boko Haram from their school in Chibok, located in Nigeria’s restive north-eastern Borno state, in April 2014, as the militant group ramped up brutal attacks targeting the country’s children. Some 200 of the girls were released from captivity in April of this year.
At UN, French President pledges to work with all parties towards political solution in Syria – except Syrian leader

President François Hollande of France addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventieth session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

28 September - France is ready to work with all countries that want to find a political solution to the four-year crisis in Syria except for President Bashar Al-Assad, who cannot be part of the solution, French President François Hollande told the UN General Assembly today at the annual general debate.

Syria is “calling once more for our mobilization and intervention,” said President Hollande, underlining that the civil war has to date killed more than 250,000 people. He recalled that the “Syrian tragedy” follows an uprising which sought to undermine the “dictatorship of Bashar Al-Assad.”

Moreover, he stated that eight million people haven’t just fled a war – “they’ve fled Bashar Al-Assad’s regime – the same regime which dropped bombs on innocent civilians.”

“It is not because terrorists massacre, loot, and rape that there should be pardon or amnesty for the regime that created the situation,” the French President continued.

With 80 per cent of Syrian refugees fleeing to other countries of the global South, “it is the poor and most vulnerable who are hosting the poor and most vulnerable”, he said, underlining that European countries should do more.

He insisted that the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme (WFP) must be provided the means to ensure the necessary support, and refugees must be allowed to work in their host countries. He further announced that France is contributing €100 million to WFP for refugees in countries neighbouring Syria.

Meanwhile, President Hollande saluted the immense progress accomplished by the United Nations since its creation 70 years ago, while noting that unfortunately the world is still challenged by many conflicts.

Enumerating many natural disasters caused by climate change, he said the upcoming climate change conference in Paris must answer the question: “Is humankind capable of deciding to preserve life on the planet?” while noting some progress, singling out recent commitments made by the United States and China.

Furthermore, he said he favoured a global climate agreement, differentiating the responsibilities of each country, and laid out three conditions for success in Paris: every country must make commitments on emission reductions; a review mechanism must be established to allow for revisions every five years; and developed countries should fulfil their commitments to developing countries by ensuring $100 billion in support.

In addition, he announced France will increase its annual funding for climate from €3 billion to €5 billion to be disbursed, not as loans, but as grants.
At UN, President of Zimbabwe denounces sanctions against his country

28 September - Addressing the General Assembly today, President of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe condemned sanctions against his country imposed by the European Union and the United States and called for broad scale reform of the United Nations and its institutions.

“We invite other countries with which we may have differences of whatever nature to eschew threats, pressures and punitive actions, in favour of reconciliation, friendship and dialogue,” said Mr. Mugabe.

“I therefore denounce, in the strongest terms, the illegal sanctions that are imposed on my country by the European Union and the USA and call for their immediate and unconditional removal,” he continued.

He also touched on the question of Security Council reform, saying that he reiterated Africa’s common position on its reform.

“We are disappointed that we have lost the opportunity of this anniversary [of the United Nations] to address this burning issue of the reform of the UN Security Council in a manner that satisfies the just demands and expectations of the majority of us,” he said.

He also called for “the revitalization of the General Assembly” and “inclusivity and transparency in selecting our organization’s Secretary-General, by ensuring that the General Assembly plays a more significant role in that process.”

Turning to the subject of human rights, Mr. Mugabe said that, while respecting and upholding those rights was the obligation of all states, he rejected attempts “to prescribe ‘new rights’ that are contrary to our values, norms, traditions and beliefs.”

The President of Zimbabwe also spoke of the refugee crisis in the Middle East and beyond.

“For some months now, we have watched heartbreaking and harrowing scenes of desperate refugees seeking to enter Europe,” he said. “This tragic situation could have been avoided through the respect of the independence of other countries and non-interference in their internal affairs,” he added.
In UN speech, South African President calls for reform of Security Council

28 September - In his address to the United Nations General Assembly today, South African President Jacob Zuma stressed on reforming and restructuring of the UN Security Council in order to resolve conflicts surrounding Middle East and African nations.

He specified that although significant progress has been made by the UN since the adoption of the World Summit Outcome in 2005, no reform has been made to the restructuring of the Security Council since the founding days of the organization.

“It is unacceptable and unjustifiable that more than one billion people in the African continent are still excluded as permanent members of the key decision making structure of the United Nations, the Security Council. A continent with a smaller population than Africa is represented by three countries on the UN Security Council,” said President Zuma addressing the 70th General Debate.

He also called on the UN to allow more representation of countries through permanent and non-permanent membership at the Council, thereby keeping with the changed times. “The UN cannot pretend that the world has not changed since 1945. We are no longer colonies. We are free, independent sovereign states,” he said.

President Zuma criticized decisions taken by certain Security Council members that led to an escalation of conflicts in the Middle-East and Sahel region.

“The current situation in Libya and the Sahel region is a direct consequence of some members of the UN Security Council not heeding informed counsel from the African Union. The principle of the ‘responsibility to protect’ had been abused for narrow political interests that had nothing to do with the fundamental aspects of the prevention of mass atrocities,” he added.

He also warned that unless an immediate solution to Israel-Palestine conflict is implemented, Middle-east cannot hope for peace.

“There can be no peace, security and development in the Middle East without the resolution of the Palestinian question. A solution is urgent, otherwise if we delay, in the next decade, we may no longer have a piece of land to justify the two-State solution,” he said his address.

President Zuma commended the recent signing of the Peace Agreement between the parties in South Sudan and urged the UN and other stakeholders to support the Sudanese people during these challenging times.

“We reiterate our support of the people of Western Sahara and urge the international community to support their struggle for self-determination, freedom, human rights and dignity.”

He also stressed the need to work towards the elimination of nuclear weapons and applauded the recent agreement reached on the Iranian nuclear program.

“There can be no safe hands for nuclear weapons. The humanitarian consequences of a possible detonation of a nuclear weapon, whether intentionally or accidentally, will be catastrophic for humanity. We welcome the recent agreement reached on the Iranian nuclear program and the recognition of the right of Iran to peaceful use of nuclear energy.”

President Zuma of South Africa is among the many leaders who will address the general debate of 70th General Assembly which opened this year with the adoption of Agenda 2030 and 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Made up of all the 193 Member States of the United Nations, the Assembly provides a forum for multilateral discussion of international issues covered by the UN Charter.
Addressing General Debate, Cuban President calls for end to US embargo

28 September - In his first-ever address to the United Nations General Debate, Cuban President Raúl Castro noted the warming of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba before promising to reintroduce an annual resolution calling for an end to the long-standing US embargo on the island nation.

“To the 188 governments and peoples that have sponsored our just demand, here and in other international and regional forums, I reaffirm the eternal appreciation of the Cuban people and government for your continued support,” he said.

Full normalization of relations will only be achieved, President Castro declared, with an end to the embargo, the cessation of “subversion and destabilization programs,” compensation for “human and economic damages,” and the return of Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, which Cuba considers to be illegally occupied by the United States.

Pledging solidarity with Cuba’s “Caribbean brothers” as well as its other regional neighbours and peoples in conflict in the Middle East, Castro denounced colonialism, imperialist aggression, and foreign interference “in the internal affairs of the States.”

He asserted Cuba’s belief that “full respect for the inalienable right of every State to choose their political, economic, social and cultural system is an essential premise to ensure peaceful coexistence between nations.”

And he pointed out that 70 years after the founding of the United Nations, the world body has not done enough to preserve future generations from the scourge of war, protect human rights, promote social progress and improve standards of living.

Turning to other issues before the Debate, he said climate change is threatening the very existence of the human species, and States should assume common but differentiated responsibility for that, in light of the indisputable reality that not every country is equally accountable, and not all of us waste natural and human resources to an irrational and unsustainable consumerism.

The consequences of climate change have a particularly devastating effect on the small developing island nations and bring additional tension to bear on their fragile economies. And, the same is happening in Africa with the relentless advance of desertification.

Mr. Castro delivered his remarks on the opening day of the General Debate, following a speech to the General Assembly two days prior, on the occasion of the UN’s adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It was his first appearance at the United Nations.
Mexican President urges UN to reform Security Council, step up action against world drug problem

28 September - Addressing the United Nations General Assembly today, Enrique Peña Nieto spotlighted key issues facing the world body and urged the international community to promote sustainable development and combat climate change and also encouraged the reform and modernization of the UN Security Council.

Underscoring that the veto power belonging to the Council’s five permanent members must not be used for national ends, he supported France’s initiative to restrict the veto in cases of serious violations of international law and war crimes.

President Peña Nieto went on to recall the long history of collaboration between his country and the United Nations and noted, for example, its decision to participate in peacekeeping operations and Mexico’s efforts to bolster humanitarian assistance.

Turning to the situation of migrants, he said movements of people in search of a better life was the norm in today’s world, however, in all continents, the migrant experience had been one of risks, discrimination, and abuse, made worse by ignorance, racism or pure political opportunism.

“Let us not allow that injustice to continue,” he urged, adding that the world community must be united in its effort to create a global scheme to protect migrants’ rights. Millions of migrants required a global response – a response that should come from the United Nations.

President Peña Nieto said that humanity must also reassess its vision of the global drug problem, which required a more just and humane international response. During the Assembly’s special session next year, there must be a collective willingness to “reverse inertia” and develop people-centred policies. Keeping a watchful eye over the principles that gave birth to the United Nations was the responsibility of all, he said, urging Member States to work together to build a better future.

African leaders at UN cite ‘remarkable’ progress on MDGs and urge commitment to post-2015 agenda

28 September - African leaders speaking at the UN General Assembly debate today noted that their countries were guided by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) over the last 15 years, and that the post-2015 development agenda and the new goals adopted last week, embody the collective ambition to transform the world by 2030.

“Similarly to other countries, I believe, Mozambique has achieved remarkable progress in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals,” said Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, the President of the southern African nation which recently celebrated 40 years of independence.

Worth highlighting, he explained, is the expansion of access to education, gender balance in the access to primary education and compliance with the target on infant mortality reduction.

“The commitment of Mozambique to the [post-2015 development agenda] is unequivocal and it has been expressed from the onset,” the President continued. “As you might be aware, Mozambique has been one of the 50 countries selected by the United Nations to host national consultations.”

The leader further underlined that in line with the theme of the 70th session of the General Assembly – “a commitment to action” – for Mozambique, this should include the adoption and implementation of effective structures for the prevention
and management of conflicts, as well as the need to conclude a convention against terrorism.

“Emphasis should be on preventive diplomacy,” he stated. “The commitment to action we celebrate here should establish platforms for dialogue among cultures and civilizations as an essential tool to promoting tolerance, the culture of peace and a dignified and peaceful world.”

President Nyusi added that the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations is being shadowed by an unprecedented crisis at the international level.

“I am referring to the humanitarian crisis arising from the flow of refugees and migrants with no parallel in the recent history of the humanity,” he declared, urging leaders to redouble efforts. “This shocking situation is a manifestation of a succession of unresolved crisis or poorly settled situations in relation to which the international community had already forecast.”

Meanwhile, during his address to world leaders in New York, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia said his country never lost confidence in multilateralism and remained a staunch supporter of the principle of collective security embodied in the UN Charter.

“It is based on this conviction that Ethiopia has been actively contributing to the advancement of the principles and purposes of the United Nations, including by deploying its forces as part of the blue helmets since the early days of the UN,” said Hailemariam Dessalegn. “It gives us great satisfaction to note that Ethiopia is now the second largest contributor to UN Peacekeeping.”

He also underlined that despite the “many failures” of the Organization, the global community cannot afford to live without it.

“In spite of its shortcomings, the United Nations remains the only universal organization that we have – whether big or small, rich or poor – providing us with a unique platform to advance our common objectives and address those myriad problems we collectively face.”

Echoing the President of Mozambique, he noted that the reason for the remarkable progress Ethiopia has made over the past fifteen years, including in achieving most, if not all of the MDGs, is because the country took charge of its own destiny, devising its own development strategy and mobilizing domestic resources.

“But we also made the best use of development cooperation we have had with the United Nations and other partners,” the Minister added.

In his remarks, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of Uganda said that 70 years after the founding of the United Nations, inequalities among States persisted in defiance of the underlying messages of brotherhood and solidarity every religion preached. Underdeveloped countries are in their current state today because of various internal and external factors, which the world could no longer afford to debate.

“The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals constitutes a landmark in humanity’s quest for peace and prosperity and was a prescription closely aligned with the national strategy Uganda has been following,” he said. For the first time, the Goals proclaim in bold letters the concept of universal prosperity, which would assist the prioritization of the use of scarce resources by international agencies.

In particular, the use of the word “transformation” in the Goals is most revealing, he said, stressing that the purpose of sustainable development was to ensure growth both qualitatively and quantitatively.

The President of Gabon, Ali Bongo Ondimba, expressed concern about the rising threat of terrorism in Africa and called on the international community to strengthen its action against groups such as Boko Haram and Al Shabaab.

He called on the international community to redouble efforts against terrorism, including by urging donors to devote more
"supervision of financial circuits that power this phenomenon."

For greater efficiency in the fight against terrorism and to better address the other global challenges, Mr. Bongo also called for reform of the UN Security Council towards greater democratization of its operation. He thus called for better representation of the various regions of the world and a reform of the veto power.

The Gabonese head of State noted his concern about the delays in the negotiations prior to the holding of the climate summit in Paris in December, saying the process is still far from the required consensus to conclusion of an overall agreement in the French capital.

In his Assembly address, President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya said the just adopted 2030 Agenda was the culmination of more than three years intensive intergovernmental negotiation, which began with the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio, Brazil in 2012.

“We are glad to note that the Agenda recognizes ending poverty in all its forms everywhere as its overarching goal. The goals and targets set by the agenda are universal and will apply to all countries while recognizing different realities and capabilities,” he said.

Moreover, the new Agenda recognizes that sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security; and peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development. This therefore calls for building peaceful, inclusive and well-governed societies with responsive institutions as the basis for shared prosperity.

“Fundamentally, the Agenda reckons that we cannot reach our development goals without addressing human rights and complex humanitarian issues at the same time” said President Kenyatta, adding that the new development framework “commits all of us to be responsible global citizens, caring for the less fortunate as well as for our planet's ecosystem and climate action on which all life depends.”

Also addressing the Assembly, Macky Sall, President of Senegal said that 70 years after the founding of the United Nations, peace, which is not simply the absence of war, continues to be threatened by poverty, disease hunger and environmental degradation. With that in mind, he hoped the upcoming climate change conference in Paris could set the world on a path towards a more sustainable and low-carbon future.

There could only be true peace when all nations realized that all peoples are connected and that only by working together, could real change be affected. “We can no longer have business as usual common sense requires that we change our vision of the present, as well as the future,” to ensure that the UN and its institutions better reflected modern realities. To that end, he called for reform of the UN Security Council in line with the African position; reform the global financial institutions, combat illicit financial flows; and democratize business practices.

**At UN, Kazakh President proposes ‘strategic’ 30-year plan to promote fairness and human development**

28 September - Stressing that there is no alternative to the United Nations as a universal organization, President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan today looked ahead 30 years to its 100th birthday in 2045 to propose far-reaching reforms, from creating a supranational currency to moving its Headquarters from New York to Asia.

“I believe that in the next 30 years, our civilization will find the wisdom and will to cut through the Gordian knot of wars and conflicts,” he told world leaders on the opening days of the General Assembly’s 70th annual General Debate.

“I propose that, for the centenary of the United Nations, a 2045 ‘Global Strategic Initiative Plan’ is agreed. Its core idea is to launch a new trend in global development based on fair conditions where all nations would have equal access to world infrastructure, resources and markets as well as to maintain comprehensive accountability for human development.”
He outlined a five-point programme, including the transformation of the UN Economic and Social Council into the Global Development Council, consisting of member States elected by the General Assembly, heads of all UN specialized agencies, with the task of becoming a global economic regulator to promote world-wide growth.

“The UN Member States need to combine their efforts to create a new supranational currency, which should be relevant to the targets and tasks of global sustainable development and prosperity,” he added.

Other planks in the programme include total nuclear disarmament worldwide, the imposition of international sanctions as the exclusive prerogative of the Security Council, and the establishment under UN auspices of a unified global network to counter international terrorism and extremism.

As the final plank, Mr. Nazarbayev proposed opening in Astana, the Kazakh capital, an International Centre for the development of green technologies and investment projects under UN auspices.

As to the location of UN Headquarters, he said: “The powerful rise of Asia’s developing economies has defined a new reality in global processes. In order to use this historic change and opportunity to give a new boost to relations between states, I propose considering the transfer of the UN headquarters to Asia.”

China’s President urges UN General Assembly to put new development agenda into action

28 September - In his address to the United Nations General Assembly’s annual gathering of world leaders, the President of China warned that the security of all countries was interrelated and that no country could protect its security alone and none could find stability at the expense of another’s.

“We must abandon the Cold War mentality,” said President Xi Jinping, urging a holistic approach to both conventional and unconventional security threats, and also noted that globalization and increased connectivity had created “unprecedented opportunity.”

President Xi also urged a renewed commitment to the UN Charter, noting that China was the first country to sign it, and highlighted its underpinning of the belief of the sovereign equality of States. He called for a new form of international relations, where countries forged alliances and all countries were treated equally, regardless of their size.

He also highlighted the importance of the new development agenda.

“With close to 800 million people still living in extreme poverty, nearly 6 million children dying before the age of five and 60 million unable to attend school, the new development Agenda must be turned into action,” he said, adding that “all economies should build on a sound global eco-environment, and green, low-carbon circular sustainable development should be pursued.”

President Xi said China would honour its commitments to mitigate climate change, and he urged developed countries to do the same.

He also said that China supported a greater voice for developing countries, particularly those in Africa, in global governance. China will also establish a $100 billion, 10-year China Peace Development Fund for the UN and join the new UN peacekeeping system. The nation would establish an 8,000 troop stand-by peacekeeping force, and would give $100 million to the Africa Union to establish its own stand-by force.

“Let us establish a new win-win partnership for all mankind. Let prosperity, fairness and justice spread across the world,” he said.
Addressing UN Assembly, European leaders call for increased funds to ease refugee and migrant crisis

28 September - Western European leaders, taking the podium of the United Nations General Assembly on the opening day of 70th annual General Debate, today deplored the brutal abuses by Governments and terrorists that have, as in the case of Syria, driven millions of people from their homes.

King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands praised the UN for its 70-year role in producing a better world, from its role in halving extreme poverty to its peacekeeping.

“What would today's world look like without the United Nations?” he asked the assembled heads of State and Government. “There can be no doubt we would be worse off.”

He deplored the “the tragic images” of families forced to flee their countries and leave everything behind in their search for a safe haven because the “despicable conduct” of tyrants, noting that the Netherlands has again increased its humanitarian aid, making it one of the largest donors in the world.

“We call on other nations to follow suit and give additional support to the UN so it can provide food and shelter to all those who have been forced to flee, and give them a chance to rebuild their lives,” he said.

Portuguese President Aníbal António Cavaco Silva stressed that no conflict, “no matter how complex it may be, may possibly justify barbarism, whether by States or by non-State parties, noting that human rights are the common heritage of all that must be defended regardless of geography.

“The tragic humanitarian situation in Syria, Iraq, Libya and in many other conflict settings should prompt us to act in a supportive and responsible manner,” he said, praising the UN refugee agency for its humanitarian aid and calling for “strong, concerted responses and a determined fight by the international community” against terrorism.

He also hailed the adoption by a UN summit last week of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, called for “a lasting agreement that is global, fair and binding on all” to be reached at the Paris summit on climate change in December, and urged that the UN Security Council, now restricted to 15 members, be expanded “to mirror the realities of our world.”

For his part, Lars Løkke Rasmussen, Prime Minister of Denmark said that mass migration is obviously an immense “challenge for our societies; for our international cooperation and our solidarity. First and foremost, mass migration is a global challenge. We must address the root causes.”

People migrate because they have lost hope at home, he said and inclusive economic growth in developing countries should be a common goal. “There are no easy solutions. The UN is an important part of the answer,” he said, stressing that while Member States have the primary responsibility for development and progress in their own countries, “we must all do our part and provide the necessary financial contributions to ensure that they succeed.”

Denmark, he said, was ready to do its part and remained to the UN target of 0.7 percent target of gross national index (GNI) for official development assistance (ODA). In addition, Prime Minister Rasmussen’s Government had just last week decided to allocate some 100 million euros to humanitarian assistance and to measures that support the European efforts to address the mass migration from Syria and its neighbourhood.

Swiss President Simonetta Sommaruga called for joint action in tackling the current refugee crisis in the Middle East and in Europe. “If each of us only looks after its own interests, we all lose out in the end: The migrants lose out and the solidarity between states falls by the wayside,” she warned. “We will all be judged on how we respond to this dramatic humanitarian challenge.”
While acknowledging that the UN has made much progress in reducing poverty and peacekeeping, she stressed that much more needed to be done.

“The fact that nearly 120,000 personnel are currently active in UN peacekeeping missions means that there are still far too many crises and wars in this world. We have 60 million displaced persons worldwide, more than at any time since the UN was founded,” she said, also warning that that many countries remain in abject poverty despite their natural wealth.

“As we all know, when dealing with poverty and migration challenges, conflicts, terrorism, organised crime and climate change, collective action is vital to meet the needs of states and their citizens,” she declared.

“The UN is more necessary than ever. What we need is a "strong UN for a better world”. States get the UN they deserve. It is up to us to strengthen it!”

**At UN Assembly, Gulf, Mid-east leaders call for urgent action against terrorist groups**

**28 September** - Taking the podium at the 70th United Nations General Assembly today, leaders from Gulf and Middle East countries appealed to world leaders to unite against the growing threats from Islamic religious extremists, and also drew attention to a wide range of issues including the Syrian crisis, the ongoing Israel-Palestine dispute and the European refugee crisis.

King Abdullah II of Jordan stressed that radical terrorism has been on the rise and that terrorists prey on differences between communities to spread their radical ideas through fear, violence and anger. “They target religious differences, hoping to kill cooperation and compassion among the billions of people, of all faiths and communities, who live side-by-side in our many countries. These outlaw gangs use suspicion and ignorance to expand their own power,” he said.

He also pointed out that the emergence of terrorism in conflict-prone regions has led to a ‘third world war,’ which is not being responded to appropriately by the international community.

“What if they were not defeated? What would our world look like? Can we tolerate a future where mass murder, public beheadings, kidnapping and slavery are common practices? Where the persecution of communities is law? Where humanity’s cultural treasures, preserved for thousands of years are systematically destroyed? I’ve called this crisis a third world war and I believe we must respond with equal intensity. That means global collective action on all fronts,” he added.

He introduced a seven-step process through which such issues can be tackled. These include respecting one another’s faith, curbing radical ideas that spread violence, integrating our value system into everyday life, moderating the use of advanced media by extremists, recognizing the motives of radicals, being intolerant to intolerance and bringing communities together through advanced methods of communication.

Jordan’s King Abdullah also called on world leaders to increase humanitarian assistance to regions affected by the refugee crisis.

“It is the world’s obligation to find solutions and provide relief for the millions of refugees in my region. Today we are still facing huge shortfalls, cuts, threats to vital UN programmes and agencies, including the [UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East], the [Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the [World Food Programme],” he added.

King Abdullah also commented on the lack of assistance Jordan has received since it began providing refuge to Syrians four years ago.

“Support to our country has been small fraction of the cost we have endured. It is high time that the international community
acts collectively in facing this unprecedented humanitarian crisis, and support countries like Jordan and Lebanon which have been carrying the brunt of this burden over the past four years,” he said.

Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Amir of Qatar reiterated the need to take a strong and collective stance against terrorism in his speech while addressing the annual General Debate at the UN.

“The phenomenon of terrorism with its dire consequences imposes grave political, security and economic challenges before nations and peoples. There is so doubt that tension and conflict zones have contributed to the emergence of terrorist organizations.”

In addition, the international community’s failure in addressing the hotbeds of tension and conflict has also contributed to creating an environment that advocates the execution of terrorist operations, he said.

The Qatari leader also stressed the need to arrive at a faster solution to the Israel-Palestine dispute. “The just and lasting solution of Palestinian cause, which remains an issue of people displaced from their land, and are still under the yoke of occupation, cannot be delayed to the next generation,” said Sheikh Tamir.

“Allow me to send a message to all major parties of the international community in general that the continuation of the Palestinian cause without a permanent and just solution is a stigma at the face of humanity,” he added.

Sheikh Tamir also spoke of the catastrophic consequences that have ensued due to untimely responses and lack of action to end the Syrian crisis.

“It was incumbent on the international community to stop the massacres at the right time, and provide the conditions for the Syrian people to put forward a rational, civil and fair alternative to tyranny. But is there a tyranny in the world that could acknowledge an alternative? Is it possible for a tyranny to allow an alternative to grow and develop under its shadow?” he questioned at the Assembly.

He urged the international community to cooperate and impose a solution to the Syrian crisis.

“I call for cooperation in order to impose a political solution in Syria that would end the rein of tyranny and replacing it with a pluralistic regime based on equal citizenship for all Syrians defeat radicalism and terrorism and insulate Syria from them, repatriate the displaced to their homes, and allows reconstruction of Syria.”

The 70th General Assembly opened this year with the adoption of Agenda 2030 and 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Made up of all the 193 Member States of the United Nations, the Assembly provides a forum for multilateral discussion of international issues covered by the UN Charter.

In Assembly address, Russian President stresses national sovereignty within context of UN Charter

President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventieth session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

28 September - Stressing the unique legitimacy, representation and universality of the United Nations, Russian President Vladimir Putin warned today that many of the crises facing the world have been exacerbated by countries acting against sovereign States outside the UN Charter.

“We consider the attempts to undermine the authority and legitimacy of the United Nations as extremely dangerous,” he told the General Debate on the opening day of the high-level segment of the Assembly’s 70th annual session, citing United States sanctions against Russia over Ukraine and calling for full support for the Syrian Government in its war against terrorism.

In a wide-ranging speech in which he also proposed the formation in accordance with the UN Charter of a broad international coalition against terrorism and the harmonization of regional economic projects, Mr. Putin emphasized the
diversity of models among UN Member States and the vital importance of respecting State sovereignty.

“Ensuring peace and regional and global stability remains the key objective of the international community, with the UN at its helm,” Mr. Putin declared. “We believe this means creating a space of equal and indivisible security which is not for the select few, but for everyone.”

Turning to specific issues, he said aggressive foreign interference that in the Middle East and North Africa has resulted in a flagrant destruction of national institutions rather than bringing about reforms, opening the way for tens of thousands of terrorists and extremists to fill the vacuum under the banner of the so-called Islamic State.

“We think it is an enormous mistake to refuse to cooperate with the Syrian Government and its Armed Forces, who are valiantly fighting terrorism face-to-face,” he said, noting the danger posed by foreign Islamic State recruits from Europe and Russia if they returned to their homelands.

“We should finally acknowledge that no one but President (Bashar al-) Assad’s Armed Forces and Kurd militia are truly fighting the Islamic State and other terrorist organizations in Syria.”

As current President of the Security Council, Russia will convene a ministerial meeting to propose agreement on a resolution to coordinate the actions of all the forces against the Islamic State and other terrorist organizations based on the principles of the UN Charter, he added.

Closer to home, Mr. Putin denounced United States sanctions on Russia over the annexation of Crimea and the fighting in eastern Ukraine as unilateral and circumventing the UN Charter, charging some “colleagues” with “thinking of the times of the cold war and the desire to explore new geopolitical areas.”

Hence they expanded NATO’s military infrastructure, offering post-Soviet countries a false choice – either to be with the West, or with the East.

“Sooner or later this logic of confrontation was bound to spark off a grave geopolitical crisis,” he said. “This is exactly what happened in Ukraine where the discontent of population with the current authorities was used and a military coup was orchestrated from outside that triggered a civil war as a result.”

He called for genuine consideration for the interests and rights of the people in eastern Ukraine to guarantee that the country will develop as an essential link in building a common space of security and economic cooperation both in Europe and in Eurasia.

Mr. Putin also stressed the importance of ensuring that UN Climate Change Conference in December in Paris is a success, noting that Russia plans to reduce by 2030 greenhouse gas emissions to 70-75 per cent of the 1990 level, and offering to co-sponsor a special forum under the UN auspices on depletion of natural resources, destruction of habitat and climate change.

“Russia believes in the huge potential of the United Nations which should help us avoid a new global confrontation and engage in strategic cooperation,” he concluded. “Together with other countries, we will consistently work towards strengthening the central coordinating role of the UN.”
**Divided peninsula ‘last remaining vestige of Cold War,’ Republic of Korea President tells UN**

**28 September** - In her address to the annual high-level meeting of the General Assembly, President Park Geun-hye of the Republic of Korea (ROK) cited the Iranian nuclear deal as she urged the international community to focus on resolving the North Korean nuclear issue.

President Park called for the resolution to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s (DPRK) nuclear issue to be accorded “the highest priority” towards creating a world without nuclear weapons. She emphasized that provocation would not only “harm the hard-won mood for inter-Korean dialogue,” but also “undermine the efforts of the members of the six-party talks to reopen denuclearization talks.”

“Pushing ahead with provocations, including its nuclear development programme, will undermine the values of humanity’s peace espoused by the international community and the UN,” she said.

Dubbing it “the last remaining non-proliferation challenge,” Ms. Park said “The DPRK would do well to choose reform and opening rather than additional provocations and to endeavour to free its people from hardship.”

Ms. Park recalled that Republic of Korea “is a country that experienced a devastating war and remains scarred to this day by partition,” while underscoring her country’s acute aware of the importance of peace and its strong support of UN efforts to protect it.

She called attention to Germany’s 25th anniversary of reunification, asserting that “ending the seven-decade-on history of a divided Korean Peninsula – the last remaining vestige of the Cold War – will mark nothing less than a contribution to world peace.”

Referring to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s claim that Northeast Asia lacked a regional cooperation mechanism, Ms. Park spoke of “the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative to create a virtuous cycle of trust-building and increased cooperation.” She elaborated that consultations among regional countries were already underway on a range of collaborative areas, including nuclear security, disaster management and health.

With regard to climate change, Ms. Park noted that as Republic of Korea has achieved rapid industrialization, it also supports the co-existence of man and nature, saying “Korea… is actively seeking to transition towards a low-carbon economy, while actively participating in climate negotiations.”

**Nuclear deal could be blueprint for global relations based on mutual respect, Iranian President tells UN**

**28 September** - While safeguarding its historic and cultural heritage, Iran is looking to the future – not only the distant future but also the near future with a bright outlook for cooperation, President Hassan Rouhani told the United Nations General Assembly today, stressing that his country’s recent nuclear deal could suggest a way forward for broader international relations among all nations based on mutual respect and non-intervention.

“Today, a new chapter has started in Iran’s relations with the world,” President Rouhani said, explaining that two years ago, the people of Iran in a competitive election, had given him a mandate for consolidating peace and constructive engagement with the world, whilst pursuing national rights, interests and security.
This national will, he continued, had manifested through a careful and clear diplomatic effort which resulted in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between Iran and the six world powers that was immediately turned into an international instrument with the ratification of the UN Security Council.

“From the standpoint of international law, this instrument sets a strong precedent where, for the first time, two sides, rather than negotiating peace after war, engaged in dialogue and understanding before the eruption of conflict,” Mr. Rouhani said, recognizing the role of all the negotiators, the leaders and the Heads of state and Government of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, Germany, and China, as well as Iran, in achieving this agreement.

“We had decided to bring about a new environment while maintaining our principles and we succeeded in doing so. Where necessary we moved forward and where necessary we showed the courage for flexibility; and, at each point, we made use of the full capacity of international law and showcased the potentials of constructive dialogue,” he said.

Unfortunately, Mr. Rouhani continued, it must be said that in most cases this important international institution has not been successful or effective. “This time, however, the United Nations made the right decision.” Nevertheless, he protested the adoption of unfair resolutions against Iran and the imposition of sanctions against the Iranian nation and Government as a result of misunderstandings and sometimes overt hostilities of some countries.

“We consider as unfair the conduct of the Security Council in the past, and insist that Iran, due to the important fatwa of its leader and its defence doctrine, has never had the intention of producing a nuclear weapon […] we proved in these negotiations that there is nothing on Iran's table other than logic, reason and ethics, and where necessary, legitimate and decisive self-defence against any kind of aggression,” he declared, and noted that Parallel to the implementation of the JCPOA, Iran expects the nuclear-weapon States to take necessary steps to fulfil their commitments under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

“The nuclear deal […] has managed to disburse the clouds of hostility and perhaps even the spectre of another war and extensive tensions from the Middle East,” President Rouhani said stressing that the deal “can and should” herald a new era and lead to positive outcomes regarding the establishment of sustainable peace and stability in the region.

“From our point of view, the agreed-upon deal is not the final objective but a development which can and should be the basis of further achievements to come. Considering the fact that this deal has created an objective basis and set an appropriate model, it can serve as a basis for foundational change in the region,” he observed, underscoring that this opportunity can be seized in order to look to the future and avoid focusing on the past and rebuild Iran’s relationships with the countries in the region, particularly with its neighbours, based on mutual respect and our common and collective interests.

Unfortunately, the Middle East and North Africa has turned into one of the world's most turbulent regions, he said, explaining that with the continuation and intensification of the current condition, the turmoil can spread to other parts of the world.

“The gravest and most important threat to the world today is for terrorist organizations to become terrorist states. We consider it unfortunate for national uprisings in our region to be deviated by terrorists and for the destiny of nations to be determined by arms and terror rather than ballot boxes,” he said, proposing that the fight against terrorism be incorporated into a binding international document and no country be allowed to use terrorism for the purpose of intervention in the affairs of other countries.

“We are prepared to assist in the eradication of terrorism and in paving the way for democracy, and ensuring that arms do not dictate the course of event in the region. As we aided the establishment of democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan, we are prepared to help bring about democracy in Syria and also Yemen,” said President Rouhani.

While urging a comprehensive action to tackle the root causes of terrorism, and recalling that at the heart of much of today’s war, destruction and terror, “can be found in the occupation, invasion and military intervention of yesterday,” he called for the countries of his region to launch an action plan that would see a united front against terrorism towards the overall creation of a collective and global movement to tackle regional problems in a serious manner through dialogue.
UN ideals point the way to solving the world’s crises, US President tells annual Assembly debate

28 September - Warning against those who advocate authoritarianism and a return to the era of “might makes right” in the face of global disorder, United States President Barak Obama today gave a ringing endorsement of the lasting universality of the United Nations principles of freedom, prosperity and equality for all.

“There are those who argue that the ideals enshrined in the UN charter are unachievable or out of date – a legacy of a post-war era not suited to our own,” he told the General Debate on the opening day of the high-level segment of the Assembly’s 70th annual session, citing what he referred to as Russia’s annexation of Crimea and the call by some to support “tyrants like Bashar al-Assad, who drops barrel bombs to massacre innocent children,” since the alternative is worse.

“Effectively, they argue for a return to the rules that applied for most of human history and that pre-dated this institution: the belief that power is a zero sum game; that might makes right; that strong States must impose their will on weaker ones; that the rights of individuals don’t matter; and that in a time of rapid change, order must be imposed by force,” he said.

“But I stand before you today believing to my core that we, the nations of the world, cannot return to the old way of conflict and coercion. We live in an integrated world – one in which we all have a stake in each other's success, and we cannot turn those forces back,” he stressed.

“It is this international order that has underwritten unparalleled advances in human liberty and prosperity. It is this endeavour that has brought about diplomatic cooperation between the world's major powers, and buttressed a global economy that has lifted more than a billion people from poverty.

“It is these international principles that have helped constrain bigger countries from imposing our will on smaller ones, and advanced the emergence of democracy, development, and individual liberty on every continent.”

Turning to specifics, Mr. Obama said the US imposed sanctions on Russia when Ukrainian sovereignty is “flagrantly violated” since doing nothing would encourage the violation of the territorial integrity of any UN Member State.

“Now, imagine if Russia had engaged in true diplomacy, and worked with Ukraine and the international community to ensure its interests were protected,” he declared.

“That would be better for Ukraine, for Russia, and for the world – which is why we continue to press for this crisis to be resolved in a way that allows a sovereign and democratic Ukraine to determine its future and control its own territory; not because we want to isolate Russia, but because we want a strong Russia that is invested in working with us to strengthen the international system.”

On the contradictory territorial claims by China and neighbouring countries in the South China Sea, he appealed for a recourse to international law, not the law of force, for a peaceful resolution.

He recognized that diplomacy is hard, but highlighted the recent international nuclear agreement with Iran and the rapprochement between the US and Cuba as examples of the primacy of dialogue.

Mr. Obama touted the role the UN can play in countering climate change, eradicating extreme poverty, and slashing preventable diseases, called for compassion in dealing with the current flood of refugees, and stressed the need for genuine democracy and respect “for the universal values this institution is supposed to defend.”
“Some universal truths are self-evident,” he declared. “No person wants to be imprisoned for peaceful worship. No woman should ever be abused with impunity or barred from going to school. The freedom to peacefully petition those in power – without fear of arbitrary laws – these are not ideas of one country or one culture. They are fundamental to human progress, and to the ideals of the United Nations.”

At UN Assembly, Brazilian President urges solidarity towards Global Goals, tackling refugee crisis

President Dilma Rousseff of Brazil addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventieth session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

28 September - Following the tradition of being the first Head of State to address the annual General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly, Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff today, in a wide-ranging address, stressed, among other issues, her country’s improved economy after the 2008 economic crisis and its efforts to provide refuge for migrants stranded across Europe.

Ms. Rousseff said that numerous fiscal measures undertaken by the Government since the global meltdown has led to the revival of Brazil’s economic stagnation.

“During these six years, we adopted a comprehensive set of measures by lowering taxes, expanding credit, strengthening investment and stimulating household consumption,” said President Rousseff.

Brazil’s effort to reduce greenhouse emission gases was also emphasized by President Rousseff in her speech. Earlier, she had announced the Brazil’s INDC (Intended Nationally Determined Contributions) according to which the country would strive to reduce 43 per cent of its greenhouse gas emission by 2030.

She also added that Brazil is at the onset of an economic expansion where measures are being taken to alleviate investments in energy and infrastructures.

The President also commented on the poor management of the rising refugee crisis that is gripping the European countries. She also criticized the stance of disallowing people who are desperately seeking humanitarian assistance along European borders.

“The profound sense of indignation caused by the picture of a dead Syrian boy on the beaches of Turkey and by the news of the 71 people asphyxiated inside a truck in Austria must be translated into unequivocal acts of solidarity. In a world where goods, capital, data and ideas flow freely, it is absurd to impede the free flow of people,” she said.

She welcomed the arrival of refugees and insisted ‘Brazil is a hosting country’.

“We have received Syrians, Haitians, men and women from around the world, just as we sheltered, over a century ago, millions of Europeans, Arabs and Asians. We are a multi-ethnic country, where differences coexist,” she added.

President Rousseff also called for the expansion of the UN Security Council’s permanent and non-permanent members.

She also commended UN’s recent adoption of 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and applauded the Organization’s effort in prioritizing urban challenges such as gender and race.

Yet, she said the UN has not had the same success in addressing collective security, an issue which was present at the Organization’s origins and which remains at the centre of its concerns.

“The proliferation of regional conflicts – some with high destructive potential – as well as the expansion of terrorism, that kills men, women, and children, destroys our common heritage and displaces millions of people from their secular communities, show that the United Nations [faces] a great challenge.”
Turning to her country, she highlighted Brazil’s success in eradicating abject poverty by incorporating renewed social policies and cash transfer programs.

Leading with her country’s example she emphasized that comprehensive efforts must be taken to fulfil Zero Hunger policy which is Goal Two of the SDGs.

“The efforts to eradicate poverty and promote development must be collective and global,” she said in her speech, stressing that implementing Agenda 2030 requires global solidarity, a determination from each one of us and a commitment to confront climate change, overcome poverty and generate opportunities.

Ms. Rousseff is among the many leaders who will address the general debate of 70th General Assembly which is opened this year with the adoption of Agenda 2030 and 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Made up of all the 193 Member States of the United Nations, the Assembly provides a forum for multilateral discussion of international issues covered by the UN Charter.

‘When we stand together, there is no limit to what we can achieve,’ Ban tells UN Assembly

28 September - Facing a world where inequality is growing, trust is fading, and impatience with leadership can be seen and felt far and wide, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon set the stage for 70th General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly today with a call to “translate promises on paper to action on the ground” by backing a bold new sustainability agenda that aims to wipe out poverty and build a sustainable future for all.

“Our aim is clear. Our mission is possible. And our destination is in our sights: an end to extreme poverty by 2030; a life of peace and dignity for all,” the Secretary-General declared, noting that this session of the General Assembly had opened with a “towering achievement”: the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for, including 17 inspiring Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

What counts now is translating those promises on paper into real change, said the UN chief, adding: “We owe this and much more to the vulnerable, the oppressed, the displaced and the forgotten people in our world. We owe this to ‘succeeding generations,’ in the memorable words the Charter.

“In this year in which we mark the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, we must heed the call of the Charter, and hear the voices of ‘we the peoples.’ That is how we can overcome the grim realities of the present – and seize the remarkable opportunities of our era,” declared the Secretary-General.

Mr. Ban’s annual opening message, which draws from his yearly report on the work of the Organization turned next to the pressing challenges of the day. Suffering is at heights not seen in a generation, he said, explaining that one hundred million people require humanitarian assistance. At least 60 million people have been forced to flee their homes or their countries.

“The United Nations has asked for nearly $20 billion to meet this year’s needs – six times the level of a decade ago. UN humanitarian agencies and our partners are braving difficult conditions to reach people. Member States have been generous, but demands continue to dwarf funding,” said the Secretary-General, urging all countries to do more to alleviate suffering in countries across the world, from war-torn Iraq, South Sudan, Yemen and Syria, to Gambia, where one in four children suffers from stunting, and the UN appeal “has been met with silence.

“Our aim is not just to keep people alive, but to give them a life – a decent life,” Mr. Ban stressed, noting that Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey are generously hosting several million Syrian and Iraqi refugees, and that people are also on the move as never before in the Americas and the Sahel, in the Mediterranean and Andaman Seas.

Commending those in Europe that are upholding the European Union’s values and providing asylum, he urged countries to do more to shoulder their responsibilities, and recalled that he is convening in New York a high-level meeting on 30
September aimed at promoting a comprehensive approach to the refugee and migration crisis.

“We must combat discrimination,” he added. “In the 21st century, we should not be building fences or walls.”

Turning to the crisis in Syria, the Secretary-General said four years of diplomatic paralysis by the Security Council and others have allowed it to spin out of control, despite the responsibility for ending the conflict lying first and foremost with the Syrian warring parties.

“My Special Envoy is doing everything he can to forge the basis for a peaceful settlement. It is time now for others, primarily the Security Council and key regional actors, to step forward,” he declared, stating that five countries in particular hold the key: Russia, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey.

Meanwhile in Yemen, 21 million people – 80 per cent of the population – need humanitarian assistance. While calling for an end to the bombings, Mr. Ban said all sides are showing disregard for human life, but most of the casualties are being caused by air-strikes.

Regarding the Middle East Peace Process, the Secretary-General said “the world can no longer wait for leaders to finally choose a path to peace.”

“With settlements expanding and incitement and provocations on the rise, it is essential for Israelis and Palestinians to re-engage – and for the international community to pressure the parties to do so,” he stressed.

He also announced that early next year he will present to the General Assembly a comprehensive plan of action on addressing the menace of violent extremism, as Da’esh [also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL], Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab remain major threats, especially to the women and girls who have been systematically targeted.

Furthermore, the Secretary-General commended progress made on several global issues, such as the nuclear agreement between Iran and the P5+1 countries [China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States] and recent agreements in South Sudan. He called on the international community to finalize the agreement in Libya and to continue the dialogue to address tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

He voiced that he is deeply troubled by growing restrictions on media freedoms and civil society across the world and urged leaders to abide by the constitutional limits on their terms.

“Earlier this month, I put forward my vision for strengthening UN peace operations, building on the recommendations of an independent panel,” Mr. Ban explained, highlighting that the potential of women to advance peace must be unlocked.

To this effect, the Secretary-General is co-hosting a meeting today on the margins of the General Assembly, focused on UN peacekeeping and how to strengthen it in concrete and meaningful ways.

“Over the past 70 years, we have helped to liberate millions from colonialism and supported the successful struggle against apartheid,” he declared. “We have defeated deadly diseases, defended human rights and deepened the rule of law. This and more we have done – but that is far from enough.”

Mr. Ban said he is inspired by the world’s young people whose voices must be integrated more fully in decision-making everywhere.

“There is nothing we can say to the world’s children that can convince them the world needs to be the way it is,” he stated. “That means we must do everything we can to close the gap between the world as it is, and the world as it should be.”

“That is the mission of the United Nations,” he concluded.
Global Goals will only be realized in a world of peace, security and respect for human rights – UN Assembly President

28 September - Never before has such a large share of humanity enjoyed so good a life, “yet never before have we been at greater risk of fundamentally disrupting the basic living conditions on our small globe,” the President of the General Assembly warned today, challenging the United Nations to generate the political will to end conflict and poverty and invest the trillions of dollars that will be needed to build a sustainable global infrastructure over the next 15 years.

“This 70th anniversary of the United Nations must be a defining year to confirm and invigorate the universal values that we – the peoples – agreed upon in the Charter. No one shall be left behind,” Mogens Lykketoft urged Heads of State and Government and other high representatives gathered for opening session of the Assembly’s annual General Debate in New York.

With this in mind, he recalled that just four days ago, the United Nations adopted the new framework, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, composed of 17 goals and 169 targets to wipe out poverty, fight inequality and tackle climate over the next 15 years.

“Now, we face the even more daunting task of transforming our vision into action,” said Mr. Lykketoft said, underscoring that the ambition of UN Member States will only be realized in a world of peace and security and respect for human rights – “not in a world, where investment in armament and wars more and more absorbs and destroys a huge share of the resources we have committed to invest in sustainable development.”

Moreover, those ambitions could be dashed in a world, where war, poverty, hunger, deep inequalities and poor governance are drivers of ever growing waves of refugees and uncontrolled human migration – and count heavily among causes of conflicts, which in turn affect and uproot many more people.

“Governments will also only succeed in implementing this great agenda with the continued and expanding participation of all stakeholders – parliamentarians, leaders of regions, cities and local communities, civil society, youth, religious communities and trade unions, business and academia worldwide,” the Assembly President declared, adding that progress on the Global Goals demands that Member States acknowledge that the world today is more interconnected than ever before.

While noting that the landmark Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) had seen the number of people worldwide living in poverty reduced by half, he said that with the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), however, “we acknowledge that eradicating poverty in all its forms is only possible with a much more complex transformation of the entire global economy, the environment and social structures.”

“We realize that we cannot rely only on the traditional growth model of the past fifteen – or the past seventy – years. Incredible and unsustainable inequality in income, wealth access to resources and to quality education and health services must be overcome, Mr. Lykketoft said, also vigorously underlining that equal rights and opportunities for girls and women are crucial preconditions for a sustainable future everywhere.

Calling for an end to unsustainable production and consumption, for rich countries to live up to their development commitments and for national governments to do more to fight corruption, he said: “It is due time for far reaching decisions to bring an end to devastating conflicts and to start investing big in sustainable development. Action is needed now.”

“If we fail, we run the overwhelming risk of unmanageable and inescapable damage to the political, social, ecological and climate balance on our planet. If we fail, the SDGs will never be reached because the resources needed will be swallowed up in addressing crises and conflicts,” said Mr. Lykketoft, also warning that failure to stop climate change could lead to
“catastrophe.”

“I am sure that Member States – building on our great 2030 Agenda – will increase efforts to make human rights a reality for all people without discrimination – from fundamental rights such as safe access to food, clean water, quality health and education services and decent work,” he said, urging action on civil and political rights such as freedom of expression and association; from the rights of migrants and indigenous peoples to those of women, children and persons with disabilities.

Renewed attacks in Central African Republic prompt UN call for end to violence

28 September - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the United Nations Security Council today called for an immediate end to the sudden eruption of violence in the Central African Republic (CAR) which has led to more than 30 deaths and left over 100 wounded.

In a statement issued by his spokesperson, Mr. Ban deplored the upsurge in violence, which was sparked by the murder of a young Muslim man on 26 September in the capital, Bangui.

According to the UN humanitarian wing, thousands of people have fled the areas with heightened tension to seek refuge, mostly with host families and in displacement sites. Many houses have been burned or looted.

“The Secretary-General strongly condemns all acts of violence and calls for an immediate end to the unacceptable violence and retaliatory attacks. He urges the Central African Republic’s Transitional Authority to do everything within its means to prevent further violence,” said the statement.

It added that Mr. Ban is also deeply concerned over the escape of more than 500 Prisoners this morning from the Ngaragba prison in Bangui and the ensuing elevated threat to civilians and the security situation, and called on the authorities to do their utmost to immediately apprehend these individuals.

The Secretary-General emphasized the importance of the commitment of the international community to support the political process in CAR at this critical time. He also underlined the importance of enhanced efforts to build trust and ensure peaceful co-existence between religious communities in the country.

“He urges the Central African Republic’s leaders and partners in the sub-region to work closely with MINUSCA [UN peacekeeping mission] to prevent the violence from derailing the political process and to ensure that the transition is concluded in a timely manner, in order to chart a sustainable path to peace.”

Members of the Security Council, in a statement issued to the press, expressed their deep concern about the latest developments and called for an immediate end to the violence.

“They strongly condemned such violence, including all attacks against civilians, violence between communities, as well as attacks against humanitarian personnel, and recalled that those responsible should be held accountable before justice.

“They reiterated their demand that all militias and non-state armed groups lay down their arms and cease all forms of violence and destabilizing activities immediately.”
World leaders recommit to modernize 120,000-strong UN peacekeeping force

28 September - Leaders of more than 50 countries gathered for a summit on United Nations peacekeeping operations today to pledge new commitments and strengthen existing capabilities, with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon saying “the demand for peacekeeping has never been greater.”

“We are here together to strengthen United Nations peacekeeping in concrete and meaningful ways,” Mr. Ban told the Leaders’ Summit on Peacekeeping, held at UN Headquarters on the margins of the annual high-level debate of the General Assembly.

The Summit, convened by President Barack Obama of the United States, comes at a time when peacekeeping missions are unprecedented in scale of operation and scope of mandates with 125,000 troops, police and civilian personnel in 16 operations spanning four continents.

Mr. Ban said the more than 120 countries currently contributing personnel disarm, demobilize and reintegrate ex-combatants; strengthen rule of law and security institutions; and promote human rights.

“These numbers show peacekeeping’s value,” he said, “but are also a sign of troubled times.”

Saying that “the demand for peacekeeping has never been greater,” he also said “the situations into which peacekeepers are deployed have never been more challenging, as tasks multiply and we face extremists, criminal groups and others who show no regard for international humanitarian or human rights law.”

To ensure that UN peacekeeping is up to these and future challenges, Mr. Ban spoke of the need “to act urgently, boldly and collectively” to have predictable and effective military capabilities, a qualified police personnel, including more female officers, and a standby reserve for tomorrow.

He also reminded the participants of the need to prevent and punish sexual exploitation and abuse, and said he counted on all troop- and police-contributing countries to act swiftly and decisively to hold perpetrators to account.

“Those who serve in peace operations must never prey on the people they are meant to protect,” he said.

More than 50 heads of State and government signed up to announce new pledges and recommit themselves to modernizing UN peacekeeping operations through helping to meet persistent capacity gaps, improve the performance and capabilities of uniformed personnel, support rapid deployment and reinforce and enhance the foundation for future peacekeeping efforts.

“We are here today, together, to strengthen and reform UN peacekeeping because our common security demands it,” Mr. Obama said in his opening remarks. “This is not something that we do for others; this is something that we do collectively because our collective security depends on it.”

He went on to say that by providing the necessary support and embracing reforms, UN peace operations can be strengthened for decades to come.

“Because we know – we can be certain – that in the years ahead, as conflicts arise, the call will go out to those men and women in blue helmets to restore calm, and to keep the peace, and to save lives. And when they go, their success and their lives will depend on whether they have the training and the forces and the capabilities and the global support they need to succeed in their mission.
“The decisions and the commitments we make today can help ensure that they do.”

**Senior UN official alarmed at upsurge in human rights abuses in Burundi**

**28 September** - The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights today reported an alarming upsurge in arrests, detention and killings in Burundi since the beginning of September, and urged the country’s authorities to fight against impunity.

“Almost every day, dead bodies are found lying on the streets of some of Bujumbura’s neighbourhoods,” Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein said in a news release. “In many cases, the victims appear to have been killed by a bullet fired at close range. The bodies sometimes show signs of torture and are typically found with their hands tied behind their backs.”

Reports received by the High Commissioner’s Office (OHCHR) suggest that many of these people had been arrested by the police or by the National Intelligence Agency (SNR) prior to their deaths.

“This succession of unexplained killings, and the widespread perception that they may be linked to State institutions, is instilling a deep sense of fear within the population, especially in neighbourhoods known to be supportive of the opposition,” said the High Commissioner.

Since April 2015, OHCHR has registered 134 killings and hundreds of cases of arbitrary arrest and detention. Some of these cases stay in pre-trial detention over the maximum duration allowed under international law.

The High Commissioner added that there has been an intensification of search operations allegedly aimed at seizing illegal weapons in specific neighbourhoods of the capital, Bujumbura. “Young adults seem to be particularly targeted, with many of them alleging they were accused by the authorities of intending to join rebel groups based in neighbouring countries,” he said.

OHCHR has documented more than 90 cases of torture since April 2015. It has also been receiving many allegations of torture carried out by police or the SNR, with the reported aim of forcing victims to confess to participation in an armed rebellion.

“But because crimes as serious as extrajudicial executions and torture are going unpunished, more people are looking to take the law into their own hands. There is an increasing risk that spiralling tit-for-tat violence will plunge the country back into its bloody past,” the High Commissioner warned.

**Better future for Somalia must remain collective priority, Ban says at high-level meeting**

**28 September** - Outlining the progress made so far by the Government and people of Somalia, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today stressed that a better future for the Horn of Africa nation must remain a collective priority for the international community.

Addressing a high-level meeting on Somalia, held on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly’s annual debate, Mr. Ban said the country has made “steady progress” in building a federal, democratic State.

In particular, he highlighted the formation of a new interim regional administration, the launch of the constitutional review process, and the creation of a National Independent Electoral Commission. In addition, a National Consultative Forum was launched on 19 September to agree on the 2016 electoral process.
“These are important steps, but the momentum must be sustained. Somalia cannot afford to get side-tracked by partisan politics or self-interest,” the Secretary-General cautioned.

“I urge all parties to work together on the goals they have set, including to complete state formation, advance the constitutional review and ensure an inclusive electoral process in 2016. There can be no extensions of the constitutionally mandated terms of the executive and legislature.”

Noting that the threat of Al-Shabaab continues to destabilize the country, Mr. Ban paid tribute to the African Union and bilateral partners, whose operations with Somali forces have expelled the militant group from key strongholds.

At the same time, he stressed that the threat of Al-Shabaab cannot be defeated by military means alone. “I call on all Somalis, as well as Somalia’s friends, neighbours and partners, to reflect on the need for a more comprehensive approach to counter violent extremism in the country,” he said.

“We need to understand the factors that drive people to join Al-Shabaab. We must help Somali authorities forge a viable alternative: notably by building a State that offers political inclusion, security, justice and economic opportunity to all – and that respects the human rights of all and empowers the country’s women.

“We must help counter propaganda, and offer a path out of violence for those ready to leave Al-Shabaab. A strong regional approach and collaboration will be important in furthering this objective.”

Mr. Ban also stated that the time has come to invest more support in the Somali police, to help provide security in areas recovered from Al-Shabaab. He asked all partners to deepen their efforts as part of the broader development of the criminal justice system. Greater attention also needs to be devoted to the country’s economic recovery, as well as to the dire humanitarian situation in which some 855,000 Somalis face acute food insecurity and over a million are internally displaced.

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud told the meeting that Somalis are about to begin consultations for an electoral process that will enable them to elect their own leaders for the first time in 47 years, since the last election in 1969.

He highlighted key areas of focus, including ensuring security and economic recovery, which is critical to a better life for the Somali people, and the need to support the recently established regional governments, which will be the foundation of a full-fledged federal republic of Somalia.

Also vital will be ensuring that the “fragile” humanitarian situation in Somalia does not also contribute to the country’s insecurity, he stated.

“Three million Somalis are dependent on humanitarian assistance to meet their most basic daily needs. This is not acceptable anymore compared to the development and the progress in security and politics in Somalia,” said the President.

He added that the Government is committed to a broad and inclusive process that makes certain that decisions are taken in a representative manner and that promotes the participation of women and minority groups.

“There will be room for discussion but not disengagement. There will be room for perspectives but not for politicking. There will be room for negotiations but not for negativity. The Somali people deserve success not spoilers.

“The seed for peace has taken root in Somalia and I have no doubt it will bloom into a tree whose branches shelter us all.”
UN Daily News  - 32 -  28 September 2015

UN mission deplores deadly suicide attack at volleyball game in Afghanistan

28 September - The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) condemned Sunday’s suicide attack at a volleyball game in the south-eastern province of Paktika that killed at least 17 civilians and injured at least 60 more, most of them children.

“An attack deliberately targeting a group of civilians playing volleyball is an act bereft of humanity and clearly violates national and international law,” said Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Secretary-General’s Deputy Special Representative and acting head of UNAMA.

“This attack reflects the intent to destroy lives and spread terror among the civilian population.”

According to a news release issued by the Mission, a suicide attacker detonated an improvised explosive device at the event, which took place in Zarghun Shahr district.

The Secretary-General, in a statement issued by his spokesperson, conveyed his deepest sympathy to the families of the victims of Sunday’s attack as well as to those affected by today’s attack, claimed by the Taliban, on the northern city of Kunduz.

“Such attacks on civilians and civilian facilities are a clear violation of international human rights and humanitarian law,” said the statement.

A UN report released last month noted that civilians continued to bear the brunt of the Afghan conflict, and projected that casualties will equal or exceed the record high numbers documented last year.

Improvised explosive devices, along with ground engagements, complex and suicide attacks and targeted killings, accounted for the vast majority – 90 per cent – of civilian casualties recorded in the first half of 2015, according to the report.

Ban calls on all actors in Burkina Faso to act responsibly, exercise restraint

28 September - United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today urgently called on all national stakeholders in Burkina Faso to act responsibly, exercise restraint and work in the best interests of the country.

“In particular, he calls on the members of the Régiment de Sécurité Présidentielle (RSP) and the national armed forces to abide by the terms of the agreement that they signed on 22 September,” said a statement issued by his spokesperson.

According to media reports, the RSP – the presidential guards responsible for the recent coup d’état – are refusing to disarm.

“The Secretary-General encourages the transitional authorities to intensify efforts towards the early holding of presidential and legislative elections to allow for the return of constitutional order to Burkina Faso,” the statement continued.

It added that the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for West Africa, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, will continue to work closely with regional and international partners to support national authorities in the lead-up to peaceful and transparent elections.
Yemen: Ban condemns airstrikes that reportedly struck wedding party and killed over 100

28 September - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today condemned the airstrikes that reportedly struck a wedding party in Wahijah village, outside of the Red Sea port city of Mokha in Yemen, killing as many as 135 people.

“The Secretary-General expresses his deepest condolences and sympathies to the families of the victims and a swift recovery to those injured,” his spokesperson said in a statement.

“The Secretary-General has consistently stated that there is no military solution to the conflict in Yemen. Its continuation will only bring more human suffering and destruction.”

Since the uprisings in early 2011, the Secretary-General has used his good offices to engage with Yemeni political leaders and civil society to promote a peaceful, orderly and inclusive political transition process. These efforts have been stepped up following the military operation launched on 25 March by a coalition led by Saudi Arabia.

The Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Yemen, Ould Cheikh Ahmed, is working intensively to bring the parties back to the negotiating table.

Mr. Ban called once again on all parties involved in the Yemeni conflict, from inside and outside the country, “to immediately cease all military activities and resolve all differences through peaceful negotiations facilitated by his Special Envoy.”

The statement added that any intentional attack against civilians is considered a serious violation of international humanitarian law and should be investigated through prompt, effective, independent and impartial mechanisms to ensure accountability.

Report by UN and Gates Foundation presents vision for eradicating malaria by 2040

28 September - A new report released by the United Nations and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation presents a vision to eradicate malaria by 2040 that involves new strategies, tools and financing and urges world leaders to expand their commitments to fight a disease that still kills about one child every minute.

The report – From Aspiration to Action: What Will It Take to End Malaria? – urges major donors and malaria-affected countries to expand their commitment to the fight against the disease, noting that eradication could save 11 million lives and unlock $2 trillion in economic benefits.

“Over the past 15 years, we have seen tremendous progress in reducing the burden of malaria globally – a direct result of our collective action – and we now stand in the unique position of putting an end to this disease forever,” said Ray Chambers, the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Financing the Health Millennium Development Goals and for Malaria.

“The next five years are vital for setting in motion an ambitious-yet-achievable plan to eradicate malaria by 2040. We must double down on our commitment and move with deliberate haste to bring in new investments, develop new tools, and implement new regional strategies to see our unified goal of a malaria-free world become a reality.”
According to a news release on the report, global investment in malaria has jumped in recent years by 2,000 per cent annually – from just $130 million in 2000 to $2.7 billion in 2013 – fundamentally transforming the fight against the disease.

Malaria deaths have fallen dramatically – saving an estimated 6.2 million lives and averting 663 million cases of the disease since 2000 – and more than half of the world’s nations are now malaria free. These gains have accounted for 20 per cent of the total progress that the world has made in reducing maternal and child mortality under the Millennium Development Goals, and they have helped convince Asian and African leaders to commit to malaria elimination by 2040.

The challenge, according to Mr. Chambers and Bill Gates, is that one billion people remain infected with the malaria parasite, and half of the world’s children remain vulnerable to death and disability caused by the disease. Malaria still kills about one child every minute.

They argue that eradication is ultimately the only feasible solution to this challenge, and assert that the alternative to eradication – controlling the disease forever without eliminating it – is biologically and politically untenable.

The report envisions a new approach to eradication that will draw important lessons from past eradication efforts and apply innovative strategies, tools and financing.

“Eradication is the only sustainable solution to malaria,” said Mr. Gates. “The alternative would be endless investment in the development of new drugs and insecticides just to stay one step ahead of resistance. The world can’t afford that approach.”

Rabies 100 per cent preventable, UN health agency says on World Day

28 September - Do you have a dog? Vaccinating dogs is the most cost-effective strategy for preventing rabies in people, which leads to tens of thousands of deaths, mostly in Asia and Africa, according to the United Nations World Health Organization (WHO).

“Rabies is preventable at its source by vaccinating dogs” Dr. Bernadette Abela-Ridder, Team Leader of Neglected Zoonotic Diseases at WHO headquarters in Geneva, said in a news release issued on the occasion of World Rabies Day.

“Decline in human rabies deaths closely mirrors that of rabies in dogs, and investments are needed now to roll out elimination programmes in affected communities and countries.”

“Rabies, which mainly affects the rural poor and marginalised populations, continues to kill tens of thousands of people every year. Almost 40 per cent of victims exposed to dog-bites are children under the age of 15.

“The disease is mainly transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected dog, something that is widespread in low-income countries that have little or no domestic and stray-dog management or vaccination programmes, according to WHO.

“The agency went on to say that pilot programmes have successfully demonstrated that elimination of rabies is achievable mainly through mass dog-vaccination campaigns, supported by improved access to post-bite treatment immediately after a dog bite.

“Recent WHO-led pilot projects in the Philippines, South Africa and Tanzania have demonstrated that mass vaccination of dogs can drastically reduce and eventually eliminate human rabies deaths.

“Another successful rabies elimination programme was implemented in Bangladesh where a mass dog vaccination campaign between 2011 and 2013 resulted in reducing human rabies deaths by 50 per cent, WHO said.

“Building on the success of its national elimination programme, Bangladesh plans to reduce human rabies deaths by 90 per cent by the end of this year and achieve elimination by 2020,” it said.
“WHO, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) are initiating an international conference on the global elimination of dog-mediated human rabies from 10 to 11 December 2015 in Geneva.

“Over 99 per cent of human cases are due to dog bites and, unlike many other diseases, the tools required to tackle this neglected disease are available,” it said.

**Warning of dangers to health, environment, UN experts urge phase-out of hazardous pesticides**

28 September - Two independent United Nations human rights experts today called for an immediate worldwide phase-out on use of highly hazardous pesticides that are inflicting significant damage on human health and the environment.

“Workers, children and others at risk continue to suffer severe impacts from hazardous pesticides,” the Special Rapporteur on human rights and hazardous substance and waste, Baskut Tuncak, said in a news release. “Those living in danger cannot wait several years for the next opportunity. It is imperative that States take collective action now.”

The call for the phase-out by Mr. Tuncak and the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Hilal Elver, comes as States, businesses and other parties from around the world gather in Geneva, Switzerland, for the fourth meeting of the International Conference on Chemicals Management. The week-long gathering is the last of its kind before 2020, the year by which States pledged to achieve sound management of chemicals following the 2002 Earth Summit.

Mr. Tuncak noted that, since the 2002 Earth Summit, coordinated global action to reduce highly hazardous pesticide use has not materialized. “Risks are particularly grave in developing countries, many of who import these highly hazardous pesticides despite having inadequate systems to reduce risks,” he said.

“There are still a significant proportion of pesticides being used around the world which can be considered as highly hazardous,” he warned, “despite international pesticide experts’ claim that there are almost always safer alternatives to highly hazardous pesticides.”

Criteria developed by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) include pesticides with high acute toxicity, with established chronic toxic effects including the ability to cause cancer even at very low exposure levels, or which are very persistent in the environment or in organisms.

“Often, the residues of these hazardous pesticides are found in the food that we consume and this impedes individual’s right to access safe healthy food. The exposure is particularly serious for farmworkers and their families. Children are exposed to highly hazardous pesticides through their mother’s milk,” said Ms. Elver.

“Urgent action is needed. States must reorient their methods of food production towards systems that inflict less harm, are more sustainable, and truly contribute to the realization of all human rights,” she added.

Independent experts or special rapporteurs are appointed by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a country situation or a specific human rights theme. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.
World drug problem violates human rights in five key areas, says UN official

28 September - The global drug problem violates human rights in five key areas – the right to health, the rights relating to criminal justice and discrimination, the rights of the child and the rights of indigenous peoples, a senior United Nations official said today.

“It is clear that the world’s drug problem impacts the enjoyment of a wide range of human rights, often resulting in serious violations,” said Flavia Pansieri, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights.

“It is, nevertheless, a positive development that human rights are increasingly being taken into account in the preparations for the General Assembly’s Special Session on the world drug problem to be held in April 2016,” she said.

Ms. Pansieri made the remarks during her presentation of the report by the High Commissioner for Human Rights during a panel discussion on issues related to human rights and drug policy taking place on the side lines of the 30th session of the Human Rights Council underway in Geneva, Switzerland.

She said “the report addresses the impact of the world drug problem in five main areas: the right to health, rights relating to criminal justice, the prohibition of discrimination including, in particular against ethnic minorities and women, the rights of the child and the rights of indigenous peoples.”

On the right to health, she said the report therefore encourages States to embrace harm reduction approaches when dealing with drug dependent persons.

“Today, such measures, including syringe exchange programmes and opioid substitution therapy, are available in slightly less than half of countries worldwide,” she said.

Ms. Pansieri said the report also endorses the UN’s call on States to consider decriminalizing possession and use of drugs “because criminalization of possession and use has been shown to cause significant obstacles to the right to health.”

On issues relating to criminal justice, she said an estimated 33 countries or territories continue to impose the death penalty for drug-related offences, resulting in approximately 1,000 executions.

While in some States, convictions for drug-related offences result in disproportionately harsh sentences for relatively minor offences, and adversely affect a range of rights or entitlement to benefits, she noted that “ethnic minorities and women may be particularly subject to discrimination in law enforcement efforts.”

“Children should be protected by focusing on prevention,” she said, “and should receive accurate and objective information on drugs in a child-friendly and age appropriate manner.”

And finally, concerning the rights of indigenous peoples, “they have the right to follow their traditional, cultural and religious practices, and where drug use is part of these practices, it should in principle be permitted.”
“It is my sincere hope that in the outcome documents of the General Assembly’s Special Session on the world drug problem, human rights will be addressed in a constructive and specific manner so that human rights violations relating to the world drug problem are addressed, and that protection of human rights can be better integrated into State law and practice in the years to come,” she stated.