In the headlines:

- After latest round of peace talks, Colombia on ‘final path’ to end 50-year conflict, President tells UN
- Small islands remain ‘humanity’s moral compass,’ leaders say, urging UN action on climate change
- Venezuelan President urges UN to build new geopolitical system that respects needs of all people
- At UN, Uruguay leader urges action to ease global burden of noncommunicable diseases
- At UN, President of Yemen decries civilian toll of country’s conflict, appeals for more humanitarian aid
- Prime Minister applauds 2030 Agenda, pledges work towards a sustainable Thailand
- Australia applauds ‘unanimous endorsement’ of Agenda 2030 in address at UN
- Urging global assistance for Syrian refugees, European Union at UN says ‘everyone can offer help’
- President tells UN Assembly negotiations have opened ‘new window of opportunity’ for all Cypriots
- Fighting terrorism and drug trafficking are key priority’s for Tajikistan, President tells UN Assembly
- Armenian President reports to General Assembly on increasing tension with Azerbaijan
- At UN, Kuwaiti leader affirms importance of scaling up aid as crises persist in Middle East

More stories inside

After latest round of peace talks, Colombia on ‘final path’ to end 50-year conflict, President tells UN

30 September - President Juan Manuel Santos told the United Nations General Assembly today that Colombia’s 50-year conflict is coming to an end, following the latest advances in the three-year peace process between the Government and Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) rebels.

“Colombia is on the path to peace,” President Santos declared, telling officials gathered for the Assembly’s annual high-level debate that in a world in which there were more than 20 armed conflicts taking place, he was proud to announce that the conflict in Colombia was on the final path to a genuine solution.

Colombia had put an end to the longest armed conflict in the Western Hemisphere. “Using courage and responsibility,” Colombia he said, was bringing an end to more than 50 years of internal warfare. “Peace is a difficult path, but not an impossible one, and [we] are dedicated to it. Peace “requires that every person inside opens their mind, heart and soul to reconciliation,” he added.

Providing details about the latest steps in the peace process, Mr. Santos said that less than a week ago, in Havana, Cuba, which had been hosting the talks between the sides, Colombia had reached an agreement on the most significant obstacle to peace in the country. The accord laid down a system of transitional justice to ensure that there was no impunity for the perpetrators of the crimes. The system respected the principles of international and national law. “Our goal was maximum justice, which would allow us to move to peace,” he said.
The agreement set out an accountability system in the form of a national court for crimes. The system could serve as a precedent for other armed conflicts in the world. Significantly, a deadline for the signing of a final agreement by 23 March 2016 had been set. In addition, the FARC would begin to lay down its arms no later than 60 days after the signing. He could return to the Assembly next year representing a Government in peace.

“On behalf of 48 million Colombians, I thank the international community for its efforts,” he said, underscoring that a Colombia at peace would help the country deal with global challenges, such as climate change and the eradication of extreme poverty and other pressing concerns on the agenda of the UN. Colombia was the most biodiverse country, for its size, and it was extremely vulnerable to changes in climate. As such, he said that Colombia was keen to see forward movement on the environment-relegated elements of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Small islands remain ‘humanity’s moral compass,’ leaders say, urging UN action on climate change

29 September - The President of the Dominican Republic, among other leaders of small island developing States addressing the General Assembly today, noted the importance of tackling climate change as a key part of the broader work of ensuring sustainable development for all.

President Danilo Medina Sánchez welcomed the fact that “the industrialized nations have finally stepped forward to fight climate change, with firmness and determination.”

He also spoke of the new development agenda and the opportunity it offered to combat inequality, which he said was “the great enemy of sustainable development.”

Citing a 2014 study by the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Mr. Medina Sánchez said that growth with equity required a “responsible productive sector that guarantees the generation of wealth in all layers of society.”

“Along with the necessary transformation of our economic structures, the second pillar of the fight against inequality has to be the State,” he continued. “We must regain the role of the State as an efficient wealth distributor, as a creator of opportunities and as a defender of the rights of all citizens.

Seychelles’ President, James Alix Michel, stressed UN institutional reform before he discussed the impact of climate change on small island developing States (SIDS), which he called the “sentinels of nature and the guardians of the oceans.”

Mr. Michel said that “we must break the present growth model” and place nature over consumerism in order to minimize the effects of climate change.

“Climate change is not of the making of the small island developing States, but we bear the full brunt of it, which is why we will never cease to raise the issue in every forum, including this one, because we are the conscience of the world,” he declared.

Mr. Michel also spoke about the special and differentiated treatment of SIDS, cautioning that a “one size fits all approach to development cannot be the order of the day.”

“We, the inhabitants of SIDS shall constantly remind you of this because islands remain the moral compass of the world, because our own agenda is inextricably linked to humanity’s,” he added.

He also noted the importance of Goal 14 of the 2030 agenda to all SIDS and coastal States, emphasizing that it presented a “unique opportunity for global governance of the oceans and seas” and a mechanism to realize sustainable growth for SIDS based around an ocean economy.

Referring to the upcoming climate negotiations in Paris, Mr. Michel said that “it will be the crucial and decisive moment of
choice for all of us,” adding that “we cannot allow ourselves to be condemned to the wrong side of history” and called on developed countries to commit to devoting $100 billion annually by 2020 for the operationalization of the climate change fund.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines said that the Assembly was “beset by global threats and risks.”

He spoke of the “grave and gathering threat of climate change” of the “rising and raging seas” attacking the coastline of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, where, he said, climate volatility threatens lives and livelihoods.

Speaking of the recent devastation wrought by tropical storm Erica on the island of Dominica, Mr. Gonsalves noted that nations’ existential struggles in the face of climate change must be addressed with an agreement at the upcoming climate change conference in Paris.

The Prime Minister of Tonga, Samuela 'Akilisi Pohiva, said his country looked forward to the successful conclusion of negotiations on a climate agreement in Paris at the end of this year.

“This agreement must reaffirm the ultimate objective of the [UN Framework Convention on Climate Change] to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere,” he underscored.

“Tonga remains highly vulnerable to natural disasters, which continue to increase in frequency and destructiveness,” he continued. “Climate change continues to pose an irreversible threat to our people, our society, our livelihoods, and our natural environment.”

President Pohiva also noted that Tonga's vulnerability to natural disasters epitomized the island nations' special case for sustainable development. Such vulnerabilities, he said, should be factored into development finance calculations designed to assist SIDS.

**Venezuelan President urges UN to build new geopolitical system that respects needs of all people**

**29 September** - Calling today for “new geopolitical system that respected the needs of the peoples,” the President of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro Moros, told the General Assembly that the United Nations must create a world that rejected every kind of hegemony, the use of force, and military and economic domination.

Noting the presence during the annual General Debate of world leaders, including the President of the United States, Mr. Moros said that rather than edicts from certain countries, he would rather talk about a “philosophy of peace.”

“It is only peace that can ensure that we will achieve the 2030 Agenda, which is indeed a very lofty and optimistic programme,” he added.

He then paid tribute to Colombia and its President, Mr. Juan Santos, who he said had achieved a peace agreement with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC).

Mr. Moros also acknowledged the bold decision taken by the US to develop a new policy vis-à-vis Cuba, noting however that the “56 years of economic blockade of Cuba must come to an end as soon as possible.”

He went on to address the border dispute with Colombia and Guyana, emphasizing that “today, I can say that we have really positive hopes that the situation will be resolved and we will be able to resume normal working relations with the Government of Colombia and the same applies to our sister republic of Guyana.”
He continued, adding that some issues had arisen on the subject that had to be resolved. Mr. Moros said that Venezuela met with representatives of Guyana last Sunday and “the diplomacy of peace did prevail and we were able to take a positive decision and resolve the issue.”

**At UN, Uruguay leader urges action to ease global burden of noncommunicable diseases**

29 September - President of Uruguay Tabaré Vazquez addressed the United Nations General Assembly today, urging decisive action from the world community to find solutions to a raft of global challenges, including migration and the increasing prevalence of noncommunicable diseases.

Prevention, said Mr. Vazquez, is better than cure, and what is needed is to “recognize other people as ourselves and protect all their rights,” adding that democracy is the only form of government that allows people to be full citizens and to protect the planet.

Noting that he used to be a practicing medical doctor, Mr. Vazquez focused much of his address on the issue of public health, which he said was a central component of national sovereignty and “an unavoidable responsibility of States.”

He added that the global burden of morbidity had shifted from infectious to chronic noncommunicable diseases, which were preventable. Some 60 per cent of morbidity globally is due to cardio-vascular disease, cancer and other noncommunicable diseases, “which have no borders.”

Coordinated policies are needed to address poverty, promote healthy lifestyles, physical activity, sport and a healthy diet, as well as to control smoking, alcoholism, and drug abuse, said Mr. Vazquez.

Praising the resumption of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States, he said a key element to success was ending the embargo. Uruguay would vote in the General Assembly to do so as it had for many years, he said, adding, “Let’s hope that this is the last time the United Nations will have to take up this issue.”

He recalled that, in 2008, Uruguay had presented its candidacy for non-permanent membership on the Security Council for the period 2016-2017. The country, he said, was a founding Member of the United Nations, and believed that the only way for the Council to fulfil its mandate was on the basis of the UN Charter. He said that Uruguay was a peace-contributing country and would like to bring its experience to the Council.

**At UN, President of Yemen decries civilian toll of country’s conflict, appeals for more humanitarian aid**

29 September - Appealing for more relief aid for Yemen's beleaguered civilian population, President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, told the United Nations General Assembly today that he had recently returned from the war-ravaged coastal city of Aden, which nevertheless was experiencing “great joy as it has been liberated from the Houthis militia.”

“Yet, I am troubled to see the degree of destruction left in the wake of these criminal militia,” said Mr. Hadi, denouncing the tragedy in Aden and other Yemeni cities.

“Three years ago I found myself at this podium before you,” he continued. “At that time I spoke of the various stages we had undertaken to ensure a successful transition a handover of power in a spirit of peace.”

Detailing the political transition process, he noted that just as the Constitution was supposed to be submitted to a popular referendum, Houthi militias launched a political and military coup d'état.
Mr. Hadi said that Yemen had appealed to neighbouring countries for assistance in tackling the Houthi militias, and that the response was a “courageous one,” particularly from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which, he said, had “acted with utter determination.”

He also noted with concern the human tragedy sparked by deteriorating public services in various provinces.

“This requires greater effort internationally so as to alleviate human suffering and to ensure that the Yemeni crisis is not forgotten,” he said.

While the United Nations has announced an appeal for humanitarian assistance, Mr. Hadi noted that the contributions only covered a portion of what was needed.

“I would like to take this opportunity to address and appeal to donor countries to ensure that they provide the promised assistance,” he said.

All efforts for peaceful settlement to the political crisis would be welcomed and supported, Mr. Hadi underscored.

“I do hope that efforts made by the United Nations will be crowned by success,” he said, emphasizing that “the satiability of our country is a source of stability for the region and the world.”

**Prime Minister applauds 2030 Agenda, pledges work towards a sustainable Thailand**

29 September - Speaking at the United Nations General Assembly, Thailand’s Prime Minister, Prayut Chan-o-cha, commended the Organization on its recent adoption of Agenda 2030 and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and spoke on a wide-ranging topics including Thailand’s bid for a non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council.

“Successful implementation of the new Sustainable Development Agenda will require joint ownership and collective efforts across all sectors, since people are, after all, the main agents of change – and that change must begin from within, he said.

Thailand is currently undertaking comprehensive reforms on several fronts to make the country stronger and better. Hopefully in the process, the reforms will help it achieve security, prosperity, sustainability, and pave the way towards resilient democracy.

“Today, the adverse impacts of climate change and natural disasters can reverse decades of sustainable development gains. It is, therefore, incumbent upon every person and every country to join hands in solving this pressing global challenge. On Thailand’s part, we reaffirm our commitment under the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions between 20 and 25 per cent by the year 2030,” he added.

Prime Minister Prayut also announced Thailand’s decision to run for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for the term 2017-2018.

“Thailand attaches importance to building a culture of peace. We have also actively participated in the international efforts to address global challenges. It is for these reasons that Thailand has decided to run for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council for the term 2017-2018. We believe that we can constructively serve as a bridge-builder among UNSC Members and non-members,” said the Prime Minister.

He underscored the importance of the rising number of middle-income countries who can jointly achieve sustainable development through coordinated action.

“As a middle-income country, Thailand firmly believes that development cannot be truly sustainable when some countries...
forge ahead and leave others behind. That is why we have pursued the “Thailand Plus One” policy for all-inclusive, region-wide economic and industrial development, so that our neighbours can advance alongside us,” he added.

He also commented on Thailand’s human trafficking issue and said that ‘Thai Government accords priority to solving the problem of human trafficking.’

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha 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 UN, the Assembly provides a forum for multilateral discussion of international issues covered by the UN Charter.

**Australia applauds ‘unanimous endorsement’ of Agenda 2030 in address at UN**

**29 September** - Speaking to the 70th United Nations General Assembly, Julie Bishop, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, commended the unanimous endorsement and adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the UN and its Member States.

“Should we realize all 17 Goals, we will transform our world for the betterment of humankind. We must ensure that the remarkable spirit of cooperation displayed during the negotiation process is maintained as we work to turn these ambitious Goals into reality,” she told the annual General Debate.

She also called for the collective participation of all countries in the combat against climate change, saying the phenomenon is a challenge for all nations, and decisive action is required to effectively address it.

“We will only succeed in reducing global emissions if there is engagement by the entire UN membership,” said Ms. Bishop. “Australia has announced a strong, responsible and achievable post-2020 contribution to international climate action. We are committed to ensuring the UN Climate Conference in Paris is the platform needed to secure a collective approach to the 2 degree goal,” she added.

As for her country’s contribution to meeting Goal 5 of the SDGs, she said Australia has established a $50 million fund to accelerate support for gender equality in development programmes it delivers in the Indo-Pacific. “We must step up the fight against the global scourge of violence against women and girls,” she stressed.

Regarding the Europe refugee crisis, Ms. Bishop commended the neighbouring countries to war-torn Syria and Iraq and pledge Australian support in terms of humanitarian assistance.

“The humanitarian consequences of the conflicts in Syria and Iraq are devastating. I commend neighbouring countries – Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey – which continue to bear the brunt of the population of displaced persons.”

She said that Australia has provided $230 million in humanitarian assistance since the start of the conflicts. The massive flows of displaced people across the Middle East and into Europe have stretched response capacities to breaking point. In this environment, people smugglers will strive to prosper from their dangerous and criminal trade, she added.

Julie Bishop 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 UN, the Assembly provides a forum for multilateral discussion of international issues covered by the UN Charter.
Urging global assistance for Syrian refugees, European Union at UN says ‘everyone can offer help’

29 September - With Europe confronting its worst refugee crisis since World War II, the continent’s leaders mounted the podium of the United Nations General Assembly today to call for global action to end the conflict in war-torn Syria and elsewhere that has sent hundreds of thousands of people fleeing to their shores.

“The crisis we are talking about has global dimensions and demands a global solution,” European Council President Donald Tusk told world leaders on the second day of the Assembly’s 70th annual General Debate, chiding those who cite European tensions over how to tackle the influx as an example of ill treatment.

“If in Europe we are engaged in animated discussions on relocation quotas, it is because we care. It is because we seek to be as effective and as inclusive as possible. But quotas are just a fraction of what Europe is already doing to help those who flee wars and persecution,” he said.

“By contrast, many countries represented here deal with this problem in a much more simple way; namely by not allowing migrants and refugees to enter their territories at all. This is why suggesting that Europe is an example of poor treatment or indifference towards asylum-seekers is sheer hypocrisy,” he declared.

“Everyone can offer help to the refugees. And those who do not want to, at least shouldn't hide their indifference by criticizing Europe for doing too little.”

Mr. Tusk said Syria’s crisis will not be solved unless a common denominator of interests is found among the regional players. He warned, however, that a peace plan must not just define a new division into spheres of influence but above all safeguard the interests of millions of Syrians, including those internally displaced and the refugees.

The fight against terrorism is important in this context, he added, but stressed that many refugees are fleeing the state terrorism of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

“Today the circle of proponents of the idea that Bashar al-Assad should be part of Syria's transition is growing. Yet we cannot forget that millions of people have fled his horrific methods of trying to secure stability in Syria,” he declared.

Mr. Tusk’s message was echoed by national leaders. “Not helping is not an option for us,” Finnish President Sauli Niinisto told the Assembly, stressing that Finland is receiving proportionally a very high number of asylum-seekers.

“But we have to find more effective and sustainable ways to help those in need. Solving the conflict in Syria and elsewhere is essential for any lasting solution,” he said, calling the “horrendous terror” of the [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant] group in Syria and Iraq a direct product of the conflicts there.

“The international community must now show that we do care. Especially the UN Security Council and the countries in the region, must work together on finding a political solution to the crisis in Syria,” he declared, reaffirming Finland’s commitment to international coalition to counter the so-called ‘Islamic State.’

Mr. Niinisto also said Russia’s “illegal” annexation of Crimea must not be recognized, announced that Finland would increase its contribution to UN peacekeeping operations at a time of ever more violent conflicts, stressed the need for urgent action at December’s climate change conference in Paris, and suggested that the next UN Secretary-General should be a woman.
Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves stressed the need to deal with the root causes of the migration crisis. “But this truly biblical movement of peoples demands a global response,” he said, noting that the European Union (EU), the main donor, has already mobilized some €4 billion already mobilised to Syrian refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

He voiced extreme concern at the rising support for far right or far left political movements in Europe, often fuelled by anti-immigrant, racist sentiments. “Short-sighted, populist policies exploiting fears of ordinary people will lead to nowhere,” he said.

Mr. Ilves deplored Russia’s “illegal” occupation of Crimea and called for an end to the aggression against Ukraine.

He noted that this year is the 10th anniversary of the Responsibility to Protect, under which all UN Member States commit to protecting their people from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

“The Security Council bears primary responsibility in this regard,” he stressed. “Unfortunately, in most serious situations, the Security Council has failed to act due to the use of the veto. It is disappointing that in cases of Syria and Ukraine the Council debates have brought no result.

“Council members must not vote against actions aimed at preventing and stopping mass atrocity crimes,” he said, calling for the right of veto by the five permanent members – China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States – to be excluded in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes or other atrocities.

Also calling for a global response, Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi said Europe was born to tear down walls, not to build them. “This is why Italy is in the front line in rescuing thousands of migrants who are fleeing war and despair,” he declared.

“All of us acknowledge and have touched with our own hands the failure of inertia… more than ever before a very dangerous enemy is at our doors,” he added, referring to the Islamic State. “We have to unite our forces and fight against the threat of terrorism.”

He said Italy was also ready to cooperate with the new Libyan Government and would be ready, if asked, to take a leading role in a mechanism to stabilize the violence-torn North African country.

For his part, Romanian President Klaus Werner Iohannis also called for addressing the full dimensions of the current massive waves of migration.

“This phenomenon needs not just responses to the immediate humanitarian needs of the refugees of migration but to the root causes,” he said.

Like his Estonian counterpart he, too, called for the non-use of the veto in the Security Council when dealing with mass atrocities, warning that inaction created the impression that unlawful territorial gains, such as in Ukraine, were tolerated.

The need for restricting the right to veto was also emphasized by Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė, who said this would have been beneficial in Syria to stop the Government’s use of barrel bombs and gross human rights violations.

“The Security Council failed to do so and millions of Syrians had to flee,” she declared. “The four vetoes on resolutions on Syria did nothing to solve the situation. As a result today we have the largest humanitarian crisis in the world.”

Turning to Ukraine, Ms. Grybauskaitė said the UN Charter has been breached with no consequences as Russia seeks to revise history and redraw borders, with Russian aggression in Crimea and eastern Ukraine striking at the very core of international principles.

“Our collective failure to stand up for the undeniable principles of independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine will have far-reaching repercussions for the international order.
“The occupied territories of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova are full of red lines that we have drawn ourselves but never acted upon,” she added, stressing that the UN must have the tools to operate in the 21st century.

Czech Republic President Miloš Zeman called for coordinated action under the umbrella of the Security Council to combat terrorism.

“What we need are small military units equipped by drones, by helicopters, by cooperation of secret services by commandos or, if you wish rangers, the small blue helmets of some sort which would eliminate the leaders of terrorist organizations, the nerve centres of those organizations, and not the occupation of territory.”

He called on Security Council members to introduce such a resolution.

In his remarks, Philip Hammond, Secretary of State of the United Kingdom, said the world faces deep challenges posed by those that would undermine international peace and security. Indeed, conflict and tyranny the North Africa and the Middle East has driven millions of people to abandon their homes, sparking a humanitarian emergency on an unprecedented scale.

“And many millions more still live under regimes in which they have no say about how they are governed and in which human rights and fundamental freedoms are denied,” he said, adding that the multilateral system is also being undermined by States willing to violate the territorial integrity of others or to breach the most fundamental prohibitions on weapons of mass destruction.

“And alongside these, we face the longer-term threats posed by climate change, pandemics and anti-microbial resistance; threats that we must tackle collectively now if we are not to put the lives of future generations at risk,” said Mr. Hammond, emphasizing: “But it is in Iraq and Syria…that our collective values and our will to act are being most immediately challenged.

The “twin evils of [Syrian leader] Bashar al-Assad’s murderous regime and the brutality of ISIL” have inflicted suffering on the Syrian people “on an almost unimaginable scale.” He said that the humanitarian consequences as well as the refugee and migration crisis were testaments to the dire situation. He urged all countries to ensure that the UN appeals for Syria are fully funded.

**President tells UN Assembly negotiations have opened ‘new window of opportunity’ for all Cypriots**

**29 September** - Expressing the hope that a new round of negotiations that resumed this past May will lead to the final settlement of the “Cyprus problem,” Nicos Anastasiades, the President of Cyprus, told the United Nations General Assembly today that a negotiated settlement would create a “win-win” situation, not only for the people of Cyprus, but for the region, the interested parties and the wider international community.

“Following the non-renewal of actions which violated the exercise by the Republic of Cyprus of its sovereign rights within its exclusive economic zone, and the change in the leadership of the Turkish Cypriot community, a window of opportunity opened that revived our hope that the new round of negotiations which resumed this past May will lead to the final settlement of the Cyprus problem,” President Anastasiades told the annual General Debate.

He also said that he hopes Mustafa Akinci, the Turkish Cypriot leader, would share similar political courage and provide a resolution for its people who “desire the solution of the Cyprus problem through a viable, lasting and functional settlement.”

He said that the settlement should ideally leave neither winners nor losers and should take into account the concerns of the two communities and respect the fundamental rights of all Cypriots and other factors which contribute to peaceful co-existence between all communities.
President Anastasiades cited progress on the new round of negotiations, but maintained that there are still a number of significant issues that need to see similar progress.

“It is with satisfaction that I can inform this august body that during this new negotiating round, progress has been achieved in a number of issues on almost all Chapters of the Cyprus problem. However, on other substantive issues, there are significant differences that need to be resolved. Differences that, in order to be resolved, would also require Turkey’s active and determined contribution, considering that its occupation forces still remain in the northern part of our country,” he said.

The President also said that he was hopeful that the resolution of the Cyprus problem can be a towering achievement of what diplomacy and negotiations can yield.

“I strongly believe that reaching a solution on the Cyprus problem can become a paradigm of how diplomacy and the adoption of a reconciliatory stance can contribute to the resolution of even the most difficult international issues, prevailing over mistrust,” added President Anastasiades.

President Anastasiades 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 UN, the Assembly provides a forum for multilateral discussion of international issues covered by the UN Charter.

**Fighting terrorism and drug trafficking are key priority’s for Tajikistan, President tells UN Assembly**

29 September - Taking the podium at the United Nations General Assembly today, Emomali Rahmon, the President of Tajikistan stressed that combating terrorism and extremism, and curbing drug trafficking are some of the top priorities for his country.

“Of special concern is the scope and global nature of the current threats caused by terrorism, illegal drug trafficking and organized crime. Destructive and inhumane forces of terrorism and extremism have been gaining in power involving in their orbit the ever-increasing number of young people,” said the President in his address at the annual General Debate.

He also urged the world leaders to implement UN’s anti-terrorism programmes and other resolutions to cease the spread of terrorism and radicalism.

“It is in our common interests that Member States implement the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and relevant resolutions of the UN General Assembly and Security Council, and effectively combat any forms and manifestations of terrorism, including the use of Internet for terrorist purposes,” said the President.

He also commended the accomplishments of the Drug Control Agency of Tajikistan in curbing drug trafficking.

“Since 1995, the Tajikistan National drug enforcement authorities have confiscated eleven metric tons of narcotics. This amount is equal to 206,650,000 drug doses, and could have turned 50 million people the world over into drug abusers,” he said.

The President also highlighted his country’s friendly relations with neighbouring Afghanistan, and urged world leaders to support the Afghan Government in their struggle to bring peace in the country.

“Tajikistan stands for expanding friendly and good neighbouring relations with Afghanistan, and calls on the international community to support the efforts of the Government...at achieving peace and stability by addressing the social and economic problems, continuing the process of national reconciliation and dialogue, and involving the country in the regional cooperation,” he said.
The President praised the UN on its recent adoption of the Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and said that this provides a ‘road map’ for countries aiming to achieve broader sustainability.

He also pointed out the significant impact the effects of climate change have had in Tajikistan.

“It is known that as a result of climate change, the amount of water resources stored in glaciers and snow-caps has diminished, the area of ground water affected by salinization has increased, and precipitation has become more frequent and heavier,” the President explained.

However, he stressed that despite climactic troubles, Tajikistan has been aiming towards transformation to a ‘green economy.’

“In terms of the amount of carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions Tajikistan ranks as 135th in the group of countries with the least emissions of greenhouse gases. Per capita emission of the greenhouse gasses in the country is 10 times less than the average world index. A broad use of renewable energy sources, predominantly hydropower facilitates economic and social development of the country and formation of ‘green economy’, he added.

President Rahmon 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 UN, the Assembly provides a forum for multilateral discussion of international issues covered by the UN Charter.

**Armenian President reports to General Assembly on increasing tension with Azerbaijan**

29 September - The peaceful resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh problem remains one of the most salient issues in the South Caucasus, the President of Armenia today told world leaders attending the General Assembly, while highlighting that the establishment of the UN has been one of the “greatest achievements of humankind” that consolidated nations around shared aspirations and principles.

“I shall note that aggressive policy pursued by Azerbaijan resulted in the absence of any meaningful progress in negotiations for the conflict settlement, and the situation drifts toward increasing tension,” said President Serzh Sargsyan at the annual debate in New York.

An autonomous region during Soviet times, Nagorno-Karabakh has been at the centre of a dispute between the neighbouring countries since they became independent in the early 1990s.

“Just a few days ago in the bordering area of Armenia, three women fell victim to Azerbaijani bombardment,” the President recalled. “It is obvious for us that the Azerbaijani leadership has irreversibly lost both the sense of reality and of norms of human conduct.”

He further noted that Azerbaijan “completely disdains” five joint statements issued by the leaders of the United States, Russia and France, as well as the efforts of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group.

“Shall it continue such an aggressive policy, it will not leave Armenia any other choice but to take necessary legal and political-military steps to provide the Republic of Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh Republic with the opportunity to develop in security and peace,” President Sargsyan warned.

Meanwhile, he recalled that last year, one the eve of the Armenian Genocide Centennial, he expressed gratitude to the nations that recognized the Armenian Genocide and named them all individually.

“Today, from this very podium, I thank Pope Francis, and acknowledge the historical Mass he served; the European Parliament, and recall the Resolution it adopted; the German President, and, believe me, his well-known statement will
thenceforth take part in the pages of our nation's history textbooks,” the President continued.

He also thanked the legislative bodies of Austria, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, for their recent recognition of the 1915 genocide.

“Our determination to keep the prevention of the crime of genocide on the international agenda is [exemplified] by the resolutions we periodically table at the Human Rights Council,” Armenia’s leader underlined.

Furthermore, President Sargsyan said the global community is today witnessing “unspeakable cruelty” in the Middle East, and that his country has been directly affected by the atrocities unfolding there, since they result in the destruction of the Armenian spiritual and cultural heritage artefacts, as well as the murder and expulsion of the numerous Armenians residing in Iraq and Syria.

“The Armenian community of Syria, whose history is centuries-long, shares and experiences all hardships that the Syrian people are undergoing in these difficult times,” he declared.

“We are trying to aid the refugees to the best of our abilities: until this day, Armenia received more than 16,000 refugees from Syria. By this sheer figure, Armenia is one of the first among recipient European countries.”

He also highlighted the historical agreement made on the nuclear programme of Iran, which he noted is an “immediate neighbour” of Armenia.

“All these come to prove that when there is political will to bridge disagreements and emphasize the spirit of cooperation, it is indeed possible to find solutions for the most complicated issues,” the President highlighted.

**At UN, Kuwaiti leader affirms importance of scaling up aid as crises persist in Middle East**

**29 September** - Addressing the United Nations General Assembly today, Sheikh Jaber Al Mubarak Al Hamad Al Sabah, the Prime Minister of Kuwait, affirmed his country’s commitment to promoting the existence of peaceful societies and highlighted the “serious challenges” facing Yemen, Syria, Libya and Iraq.

He noted the high level of humanitarian assistance offered by Kuwait, and said that the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development “continues its leading role in providing development assistance to developing countries, without regard to geographical locations, religious beliefs or nationality,” adding that it has also allocated “the amount of $15 billion to meet the entitlements and requirements of sustainable development.”

The Prime Minister also stressed the necessity of sustainable development to security and peace efforts.

“The importance of undertaking the necessary efforts and actions by the international community to consolidate and promote the existence of peaceful societies, based on the foundations of justice and freedom from all manifestations of violence and radicalism, is undoubtedly, a confirmation of the principle, that there can be no sustainable development without security, and no security without sustainable development,” he said.

Turning his attention to the Middle East, he spoke on the crisis facing Yemen.

“The Republic of Yemen and its brotherly people face serious challenges due to the intransigence of the Houthi militias, their insistence on breaching their commitments, and threatening the security and stability of our region and our countries,” he said.
Sheikh Jaber added that Kuwait had contributed $100 million to help meet the humanitarian needs of the Yemeni people.

Regarding Syria, the Kuwaiti Prime Minister said that he believed that “the solution of this disaster can only be achieved through political peaceful means” and that his country had hosted three international donor conferences, which had collected a total of $7.15 billion, including $1.3 billion from Kuwait.

He also noted that Kuwait was following developments in Libya regarding the formation of a national consensus government, and said that it looked forward to a stop to the bloodshed and a restoration of security and stability.

Sheikh Jaber also addressed the actions of terrorist groups in the Middle East.

“Our region faces exceptionally delicate dangers that threaten its security and stability, as a result of the phenomenon of terrorism and violence, which has made Islam its slogan to commit its criminal acts rejected by all divine religions,” he said.

“The brutal crimes committed by the so called ‘Da’esh [also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, ISIL], spreading death and destruction, particularly in Iraq and Syria, constitute a threat to international peace and security,” he added.

He also reiterated Kuwait’s rejection of all forms of terrorism, radicalization and intolerance and the importance of a “universal strategy to combat terrorism, which aims to achieve international peace and security.”

### Presidents of Sierra Leone and Liberia outline post-Ebola recovery plan in addresses to UN Assembly

**29 September** - In their respective statements to the United Nations General Assembly, the leaders of Sierra Leone and Liberia, among the countries hardest hit by the Ebola outbreak, discussed their subsequent recovery efforts, and also spoke about the need for the reform of UN bodies.

“‘The Ebola Virus Disease outbreak has taken a heavy toll on the entire socio-economic fabric of Sierra Leone. But with support from our international friends, we fought back,” said President Ernest Bai Koroma.

“Whilst we are making progress to end the epidemic, I commend the United Nations Agencies and the international community for their support and commitment to end the epidemic as well as support for the Post-Ebola Recovery Plan,” he added.

He also commended the Secretary-General for mobilizing a UN system intervention to support countries affected by Ebola in the West Africa region.

“In addition to the containment of the epidemic, the intervention by the UN and our partners has resulted in enhancing our preparedness to respond to similar outbreaks in the future. This is a useful model that can be applied to contain and tackle pandemics wherever they may surface,” he said.

President Koroma also spoke of a “sub-regional post-Ebola socioeconomic recovery plan” created by his Government in collaboration with those of Guinea and Liberia, to ensure that those countries most affected by the virus could “return to the path of stability and prosperity.”

The plan, he said, addressed both immediate recovery activities and building national systems of resilience and sustainability.

Mr. Koroma also spoke of the need for UN reform, and for greater inclusion of African countries in the membership of the Security Council.
“As the Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State on UN Security Council Reform, I take this opportunity to once more emphasize the need for urgent reform of the Council and once again re-echo Africa's concern over the continuous failure of this body to adopt measures that will lead to a comprehensive reform of the Security Council,” he said.

“I wish to call attention to the regrettable status quo that undermines the principles of equity, legitimacy, accountability and transparency,” he continued. “It also undermines the effectiveness of the Security Council in its pursuit of international peace and security. The need to address the non-representation of Africa in the permanent membership category and the under-representation in the non-permanent category is long overdue and therefore now imperative.”

Meanwhile, the President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, also spoke about the impact of the Ebola virus on her country.

“Weak public health systems in individual countries threaten global health and well-being,” said Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf. “It is not beyond this body to find answers and respond, and we know that we must.”

She also welcomed what she called the “introspection” of the UN regarding the questions of structural reform.

“At 70, we feel compelled to ask: is our world Organization hindered today by inflexible structures and overburdened bureaucracies? Is the current structure of the United Nations fit for purpose – to play its role in the global transformation process over the next 15 years?” she said.

Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf noted that she also welcomed the review of UN peace operations, peacebuilding architecture and study on the implementation of a resolution on women participation in peace processes.

Speaking about Ebola, the Liberian President thanked the international community for aiding her country’s recovery.

“As we ponder, in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, three countries worst-hit by the deadly Ebola Virus Disease, we bear witness to the foundational creed of the United Nations – that we can always find it within our humanity to respond even to unknown enemies to our collective progress,” she declared.

“Accordingly, we remain grateful to all of you for the outpouring of support and assistance as we faced down the deadly Ebola Virus Disease, the greatest modern threat to global public health.”

She also spoke about the post-Ebola programme formulated by the three countries hardest hit by the virus.

“We are now proceeding with implementation of our Post-Ebola Economic Stabilization and Recovery Plan with expectation of support from our bilateral and multilateral partners,” said Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf.

“We are also committed to a regionally approved Post-Ebola Recovery Strategy which the three affected countries of the Mano River Union, have formulated,” she added, noting that the relevant nations were determined to address the development losses incurred as a result of Ebola.
At UN, Japan announces major boost in assistance for Syrian and Iraqi refugees

29 September - In his address to the annual high-level meeting of the General Assembly, Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, vowed to enhance his country's assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons from Syria and Iraq.

Underscoring its history of nation-building and fostering human resources, Mr. Abe offered Japan’s support to those who have fled their homes amid conflicts in Syria and Iraq by pledging to triple the amount of last year’s assistance, to approximately $810 million.

“In Lebanon, we will implement $2 million in new assistance measures… to impart momentum for the collaboration between humanitarian actors and development actors,” he said. “We will newly implement approximately $2.5 million in humanitarian assistance for countries neighbouring the European Union that are grappling with the acceptance of refugees and migrants.”

Mr. Abe made clear that each of these were emergency countermeasures, as Japan’s unchanging principle “is at all times to endeavour to return to the root of the problem and improve the situation.”

Recalling Japan’s 70 year history as a peace-loving nation, the Prime Minister highlighted the preparation of Japan’s legal domestic framework to contribute to peacekeeping operations moving forward.

“It is all people acquiring the ownership by which they themselves determine the path of their own lives that is our ultimate objective,” he said.

He also pointed to the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, lamenting that this year’s review conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty failed to indicate guidelines for future nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Determined to bring about the total elimination of nuclear weapons, Mr. Abe said “Japan is preparing a new draft resolution to promote united action by the international community.”

On related issues, he said, just as the UN does not “avert its eyes” from major concerns, Japan would work with relevant countries towards the comprehensive resolution of outstanding issues regarding the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, including abduction, nuclear and missile matters.

As for UN reform, he said Japan would pursue Security Council reform through cooperation with the Assembly President, and his country would seek a permanent seat. Citing peacekeeping work in South Sudan, Kenya, Uganda and elsewhere, he said Japan also had laid the legal domestic framework to contribute to such efforts.
At General Assembly, Ukrainian President says country suffering ‘brutal violation’ of UN Charter

29 September - Ukraine is suffering from a brutal violation of the fundamental norms and principles of the United Nations Charter, President Petro Poroshenko told world leaders today at the annual General Assembly debate.

“The aggressor is Russia – a neighbouring country, former strategic partner that legally pledged to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the borders of Ukraine,” President Poroshenko declared.

“In February 2014, Russia conducted an open and unprovoked aggression against my country, having occupied and annexed Crimea,” he continued. “Bluntly and brutally violating international law and shocking the whole world community […] Despite the fact the until now Russia refuses to officially admit its direct military invasion, today there is no doubt that this is an aggressive war against my country.”

Since the conflict began in eastern Ukraine in mid-April 2014, the UN reports that close to 8000 people– including Ukrainian armed forces, civilians and members of the armed groups– have been killed, and more than 17,800 injured.

The Ukrainian leader warned that to mislead the world community, Russian leadership orders that insignias be taken of its military servicemen and identification marks of its military equipment, to abandon its soldiers captured on the battlefield, and to “cynically use mobile crematoriums to eliminate traces of its crimes in Ukrainian soil.”

He noted that over the past few days, the global community heard “conciliatory statements from the Russian side” in which it called for the establishment of anti-terrorist coalition.

“Cool story, but really hard to believe! How can you urge an anti-terrorist coalition if you inspire terrorism right in front of your door?” President Poroshenko asked.

Meanwhile, he said he was taking the opportunity during his address to express his gratitude to the international community for the considerable efforts in providing necessary assistance to the people in need in his country.

“However, we must recognize that in the 21st century our Organization lacks an effective instrument to bring the aggressor-country to justice, which has stolen the territory of another sovereign State,” he added.

Since the beginning of the conflict, Russia has used its veto right twice while the Security Council was considering questions related to Ukraine.

“At the outset, Russia blocked a draft resolution condemning ‘fake referendum’ on Crimea's annexation in March 2014,” he stated. “The second time, Russia put its shameful veto on the draft resolution on establishment of the International Tribunal to investigate and bring to justice all responsible for Malaysian MH17 plane crash.”

President Poroshenko insisted that Ukraine stands for the gradual limitation of the veto right with its further cancellation.

“I welcome the initiative of my French colleague President Hollande, supported by President Peña Nieto of Mexico, on the Political Declaration to restrain from the veto right among the ‘P5 members’ [of the UN Security Council, United States, France, United Kingdom, China, and Russia] in case of mass atrocities.”

Furthermore, the Ukrainian leader said combatting terrorism should be one of the top priorities for the General Assembly 70th session, adding that he strongly believes that one of the most important aspects of fighting against terrorism is keeping
and sharing the memory of the victims.

“In this context, I propose that [the] 70th Session of the General Assembly consider the establishment of the International Day of Commemoration of Memory of the Victims of Terrorist Acts,” he stated.

He also called upon the UN to launch a worldwide campaign to pressure Russian authorities to immediately release all Ukrainian citizens who have been held hostage or sentenced. He said this includes Nadiya Savchenko, Oleg Sentsov, Olexandr Kolchenko, as well as Oleg Sentsov, a respected filmmaker sentenced to 20 years in prison “only for being Ukrainian patriot.”

African leaders highlight UN’s ability to support countries and rid world of fear and violence

**29 September** - The UN has played a significant role in reducing conflicts on the African continent and in other parts of the world was a message underlined by a number of African leaders who addressed the United Nations General Assembly today during the annual general debate.

“Namibia is a child of international solidarity, midwifed by the United Nations,” Hage G. Geingob, the Namibian President, told world leaders from the podium. “After the termination of South Africa’s mandate over the then South West Africa, the United Nations assumed direct responsibility over Namibia.”

Namibia attained independence in 1990, and, according to President Geingob, was able to develop the necessary building to construct its democracy thanks to the UN.

“We are in the process of establishing a new Africa, with its own narrative as told by its sons and daughters,” the President continued. “Africa has turned a new leaf, bidding farewell to the days of coup d’états and embracing electoral democracy. We as Africans, through the African Union, have ostracized those who come to office through unlawful ways.”

The Namibian leader explained that the recent coup in Burkina Faso is an example of the continent’s zero tolerance policy towards those who come to power through illegal ways, and called for the establishment of processes, systems and institutions to ensure electoral democracy.

“This will ensure that those who lose at the polls accept the results,” he stressed. “By doing so, we can bring to an end a situation where those who lose at the polls feel left out, defeated and therefore choose to wage war.”

The President further noted that Namibia is rated number sixth overall as the best governed country on the African continent by the Mo Ibrahim index of African governance, and number seven in Africa as a “clean country” in terms of corruption by transparency international.

“We are still faced with enormous social disparities between the rich and poor, amongst others,” he warned. “Noticeable is the critical shortage of housing and other basic necessities.”

President Geingob also recalled that on the day he was sworn in as President last March, he announced that the Namibian Government was declaring “all-out war on poverty.”

“I would like to add that one of the most impactful interventions we can make in the war against poverty is through empowering women, who although representing half of the world’s population, account for nearly 70 per cent of the world’s poor,” he stated.

Namibia is currently second to Rwanda in terms of female representation in Parliament, at 47 per cent.
Meanwhile, also addressing the General Assembly today was King Mswati III of Swaziland.

He appealed to the UN to continue helping Africa emerge from the cycle of poverty and disease as the continent seeks to attain the aspirations of its vision 2063, aimed at eradicating poverty and creating prosperity for all.

“Africa has a great potential for investment,” King Mswati III declared. “What remains is creating the requisite environment for economic growth. We strongly believe that the structures of the UN can provide a peaceful global village that is free of fear and violence.”

He noted that the “impressive progress” witnessed during the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) gives his country confidence in that the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will enjoy greater success.

“We have good reason to anticipate a sustainable transformation of nations over the next 15 years,” he said, adding that Swaziland looks forward to a legally binding global climate agreement at the UN climate change conference (COP21) in France later this year.

He also highlighted that the secret of his Kingdom has been consultation and dialogue to build consensus, describing it as a “model of peace that has a place in the execution of UN operations.”

Also speaking at the podium today was the President of Malawi, Peter Mutharika, who said a complete sense of peace in the world cannot be realized without justice, dignity and freedom.

“As we live in this imperfect world, the pursuit for peace should be our main goal if we are to shape a promising world for our future generations,” President Mutharika declared.

Regarding his country’s socioeconomic development, he said it is evident that Malawi is embarking on the implementation of the new post-2015 development agenda with “unfinished business,” despite success in meeting half of the MDGs.

“My Government is grateful to development partners who worked with us to achieve four of the eight Millennium Development Goals namely; reducing child mortality; combating HIV and AIDS, Malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and developing a global partnership for development.”

On the global goal of ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030, President Mutharika underlined that reaching that goal will require enhancing the capacity of developing countries such as Malawi to manufacture drugs and make them more available.

He also highlighted his Government’s commitment to the He-for-She campaign, launched by UN Women to address gender inequalities and end gender-based violence.

Finally, he noted that to “strike a massive blow at poverty” and achieve the SDGs, the world needs improved and increased access to higher education; yet, he expressed that he doesn’t find SDG 4 – ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning – to “fully capture the centrality of higher education.”

Meanwhile, the President of Tanzania, Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, underlined that most of the conflicts the world is witnessing today are being handled, first and foremost, by regional and sub-regional organizations.

“The UN, therefore, must seek to forge strategic partnership with these organizations,” urged President Kikwete.

“Where and when appropriate, the United Nations should invest in strengthening the capacity of these organizations and their member states, in anticipating, detecting, preventing, managing and resolving conflicts. I am of the view that this capacity is urgently needed in Africa.”

On the issue of peacekeeping, he noted that Tanzania is proud to have contributed 1,322 troops out of the 125,000 women and men deployed across 16 UN peacekeeping missions worldwide, adding that his country is ready to contribute more if
The Tanzanian leader also announced it would be his last time speaking to the General Assembly as he is about to leave office at the completion of his two term mandate.

Taking the podium in the afternoon for the first time was recently elected Zambian President Edgar Chagwa Lungu.

“I thank the people of Zambia for being true champions of democracy,” President Chagwa stated, noting however that his country is concerned that the gears to advance the three pillars of the UN Charter [human rights, development, peace and security] are moving “at a very slow pace; a pace with the potential of negating the gains we have achieved so far.”

“Seventy years of the United Nations has seen more conflicts in Africa than any other continent,” he stressed. “Yet, the same 70 years characterizes Africa’s absolute exclusion from decision-making in the UN Security Council where a significant part of the agenda concerns the continent.”

President Chagwa also insisted that special attention be paid to gender and women’s empowerment, and that Zambia acknowledges that gender-based violence extends to most nations, including its own.

He announced that his Government will soon be launching the USAID-supported “Boys-to-Men” project targeting the 15-21 age group, to encourage the development of a non-violent generation.

In her remarks Aja Isatou Njie-Saidy, Vice-President of Gambia, said there had never been a greater moment for the Organization to respond to the increasing complexity of threats to peace and stability. The UN must craft and implement critical resolutions for the sustenance of better lives for all. In order to establish world peace and security, all UN Member States must be promptly and severely reprimanded for any violations of the Sustainable Development Agenda.

She went on to say that the United Nations must act with greater resolve in promoting sustainable production and consumption patterns and in reducing man-made disasters. She was also among the many African leaders to weigh in on the intergovernmental negotiations on reforming the Security Council, which she said must be driven by Member States themselves, acknowledging the need to increase representation of African nations through two permanent and two non-permanent seats.

Habib Essid, Head of Government of Tunisia, told the Assembly that his country had witnessed important work in its democratic transition, where growing political awareness allowed stakeholders to employ dialogue to resolve its problems. Legislative and presidential elections had produced robust institutions that were focusing attention on policies and programmes aimed at promoting social and economic development. National guidelines on ensuring sustainable development had been crafted in the interest of the people and the country in alignment with the global agenda.

Although Tunisia had made great strides in countering terrorism, it was the victim recently of two “heinous attacks” aimed at undermining the country’s culture of tolerance as well as the economy. Tunisia’s counter-terrorism strategy went beyond a military dimension and sought to address root causes through bilateral and multilateral cooperation and coordination. “The escalation of conflicts across the globe – regardless of the reasons – is a source of concern and requires greater international partnership,” he declared.

Also addressing the Assembly, Hamadi Ould Meimou, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mauritania said that his country had participated in UN peacekeeping operations and was preparing to dispatch a battalion aimed at helping establish peace in the Central African Republic (CAR).

He said that his Government was following with “grave concern” the dire crises in both Yemen and Syria, and he said the Government was also calling on the parties in Libya would take greater strides to establish the rule of law for the benefit of all the Libyan people.

Turning to the African continent, he said that myriad development programmes and strategies that had been implemented had not achieved the desired goals. Indeed, the continent faced pockets of deep poverty and conflict. Some regions had
recently been hit with the Ebola virus, which had exposed the fragility of their healthcare systems.

At UN, Mongolian President urges coordinated action to tackle pressing global issues

29 September - In his speech at the 70th United Nations General Assembly’s annual General Debate, Mongolian President Tsakhia Elbegdorj urged his international counterparts to unite and exercise decisive leadership to fulfil UN’s core missions.

He stressed that the only way to rid the world of conflicts and other global issues is for world leaders to diligently work together to ensure that all the primary objectives of the UN are met.

“The only way to bring peace and stability is through a system of [norms], laws and institutions that every country agrees to abide by. If the UN fails to adopt [such a system], we all fail,” said President Elbegdorj. “When we face global challenges, we must admit one thing: no one country – big or small – can address them on its own. Therefore, the coordinated actions of all players and countries are needed,” he added.

He also highlighted the important role the UN has played over the past seven decades in maintaining world peace, and he admitted that in order to uphold the Organization’s primary purposes, immediate and significant institutional changes must be made.

“We all know there are sound critiques of the UN. If our United Nations is to survive in the new reality, we must embrace substantive change. We need reforms to build a just common home. If we delay action, change will become more painful and challenging,” he warned.

The President stressed that much of the global economy and manpower are spent on war machines and the propagation of violence, rather than on eradicating resolvable global issues.

“We are the first ones in history who have the potential, technology, and resources to resolve the world’s problems. When I observe a giant military exhibit, I wonder: ‘What a huge amount of money, human ingenuity and time are being spent on war machines and weapons of mass destruction.’ With a fraction of the money and technology we spend for ‘the masculine war show,’ we could solve many of today’s troubling issues,” he said.

He also appealed to the governments to adopt national laws and policies to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, adopted recently by the Assembly.

“Our historic 2030 Agenda is comprehensive and sustainable. We agreed on urgent targets, on a broad range of economic and social challenges, and on environmental emergencies,” he emphasized. “To achieve them, the family of nations needs a robust, inclusive and open mechanism. We must have reliable implementing, monitoring and accountability regulations and institutions in place,” he added.

President Elbegdorj 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 UN, the Assembly provides a forum for multilateral discussion of international issues covered by the UN Charter.
‘The only sustainable future is one that includes us all,’ Rwandan President tells UN Assembly

29 September - Change is coming and it is vitally necessary, the President of Rwanda told the General Assembly today, urging United Nations Member States to not merely pledge commitment to the Global Goals but to acknowledge that the bold new targets will only be reached if all countries work together and acknowledge their mutual interdependence.

“Our task is to settle the future not the past. Change is coming and it is necessary. No one can manage it alone. And the Global Goals rightly recognize our mutual interdependence,” said Paul Kagame in his address to the Assembly’s annual General Debate, stressing that the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development had set out good commitments that must now be wholly kept.

“Building a community of shared purpose capable of doing so starts with a recognition of our equality,” he added.

The adoption by the General Assembly of the Global Goals marked a new era in international cooperation. Ending extreme poverty was never going to be enough to fulfil the international community’s ambitions, he said, referring to the landmark Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which the new targets will succeed.

“This new compact is about prosperity and it recognizes that the only sustainable future is one that includes all of us. It could hardly be otherwise,” said Mr. Kagame, noting that the creativity and dynamism of billions of people is already transforming our world for the better. This is thanks to improved health and education, access to new technologies and empowering women to take their rightful place.

But such change brings global challenges, related to international migration, environmental protection and demands for good governance. Responding to these challenges, he said, will put the UN at the centre of global affairs as never before in the generation ahead.

As such, cooperation is the only way forward. However, the new consensus on sustainable development is incomplete because it lacks a shared definition of the political legitimacy required to sustain this international order.

“The divergence of visions is rooted in history. When world powers created the UN 70 years ago, independence for the colonized peoples of Africa and Asia was not on the agenda. We were seen as people who still needed to be ‘looked after,’” he said, noting that such “moral hierarchies and prejudices” lingered even today, contributing to the mismanagement of political change and corroding the trust upon which effective multilateral cooperation depends.

But the internal character of a national systems counts for everything and cannot bypassed. “Political legitimacy is not a legal abstraction; it is an objective reality which can be measured, for example, in terms of progress towards the Global Goals as well as indicators of public opinion,” said the President.

“We face serious challenges that must be confronted together. As an international community, we cannot afford to undermine the most capable members by applying standards to some countries that are not applied to others,” Mr. Kagame continued.

For example, international refugee law has barely been a factor in the current crisis, “as if the purpose all along was to keep refugees encamped far from developed countries rather than to protect people fleeing persecution.” In some cases international institutions have been used to gain credibility for biased attacks against countries seven as scrutiny of the actions of the powerful is deemed unnecessary.

But the international community has nothing to fear from high standards, he continued, and the only stability worth having is one based on good politics that deliver real results for citizens and facilitates peaceful change. There is human dignity and
even survival involved, continued President Kagame, stressing that no country or system had a monopoly on wisdom, much less a claim on moral superiority.

President of Guyana urges UN to protect small States from foreign aggression

29 September - Reaffirming his country’s commitment to international law and the primacy of the decisions of the United Nations, the President of Guyana today called on the world body to stand by its commitment to protect small States from foreign aggression, in this case, attempts by Venezuela to “unravel borders which have been undisturbed for decades.”

In a statement to the UN General Assembly’s annual high-level debate, David Arthur Granger focused solely on his country’s long-simmering territorial dispute with neighbouring Venezuela – an issue he said was actually settled 116 years ago. “The whole world – except the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela – accepts our borders,” he declared.

“For fifty years, our small country has been prevented from fully exploiting our rich natural resources. Venezuela has threatened and deterred investors and frustrated our economic development,” he said emphasizing that Guyana’s territorial integrity is being violated by Venezuela, “which has occupied a part of our territory, the most recent incident being on 10 October 2013, when it sent a naval corvette into our maritime zone and expelled a peaceful, petroleum exploration vessel which was conducting seismic surveys.”

Quoting a UN General Assembly resolution adopted some 20 years ago, President Granger said that despite such international decisions and attempts at arbitration, Venezuela had promulgated “spurious decrees” claiming Guyana’s territory, the most recent being on May 26th, 2015, our independence anniversary, when Venezuela issued a decree with specified coordinates purporting to annex almost our entire maritime zone.

“That decree constituted a reassertion of its claim to five of Guyana's ten regions,” he declared, rejecting claims by Venezuela which he said are in defiance of international law. “Guyana resists Venezuela's acts of aggression in defiance of the Charter of the United Nations which prescribes the peaceful settlement of disputes and proscribes the use of armed force.”

He said Venezuela is unsettling a settled border. “It is destabilizing a stable region of the globe by the use of armed force against a peaceful, small State. Venezuela has retarded Guyana's development by threats that are intended to force a small state to yield its birthright,” he continued, adding that Venezuela's expansionist ambitions cannot be allowed to unsettle the principle of inviolability of borders, undermine the tenets of international law and unravel borders which have been undisturbed for decades.

Renewing Guyana’s pledge to continue pursuing the path of peace, he said Guyana does not wish for Venezuela’s “obnoxious territorial claim” to obscure the prospects of peace and obstruct the possibility of growth for the next 50 years. “We need a permanent solution in order to avoid the fate of perpetual peril and penury. Guyana seeks a juridical settlement to this controversy.”

Mr. Granger said Guyana reposes its faith and places its fate in the international system of peace that was promised by the Charter of the United Nations 70 years ago. “We want to bring an end to Venezuelan aggression. We want to develop our country, all of our country, in accordance with international law,” he declared, calling upon the UN to give “real meaning” its Assembly resolution of 9 May 1994 by establishing a collective security system not merely to "monitor' but, more so, 'maintain' the security of small States.
UN stresses need for access to thousands affected by Central African Republic violence

29 September - United Nations officials continued to voice their concern today over the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) – where more than 30 people have been killed, over 100 have been wounded and thousands are seeking shelter amid the recent upsurge in violence – and stressed the need for free movement for aid workers to reach those in need.

According to the UN peacekeeping mission in the country (MINUSCA), although the security situation has calmed in the last 24 hours, tensions persist in the capital, Bangui, which had been the scene of attacks against civilians, violence between communities and attacks against humanitarian personnel since a young Muslim man was murdered on 26 September.

“MINUSCA is conducting patrols around critical areas, with the view of protecting civilians, including one Muslim and two Christian hotspots at 3rd and 5th districts in Bangui,” UN spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric told reporters in New York.

“As of today, the main road towards the airport has been re-opened, as have some other key roads and barricades have been removed.”

Mr. Dujarric said that yesterday, over 500 prisoners escaped from the Ngaragba prison in Bangui and others escaped in Bouar. “Some of these include well-known perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses, and pose a serious threat to civilians and the protection of victims and witnesses and beyond, to the overall security situation.”

The UN Mission is engaging in a political dialogue with local authorities and all other actors, including government officials and community leaders in order to put an end to further violence, the spokesperson said. The Secretary-General’s Special Representative and head of MINUSCA Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, who was in New York for the annual high-level meetings of the General Assembly, has returned to Bangui.

The UN human rights office (OHCHR) said the prison escape is “a huge setback” for the preservation of law and order, and for the fight against impunity, which has been and remains a chronic problem in CAR.

“This is a crucial moment for the Central African Republic. The Transitional Government authorities must work closely with MINUSCA and other international forces to urgently stop what appears to be a deliberate attempt to derail the current peace process and important progress made in CAR over the last 18 months,” OHCHR spokesperson Rupert Colville said at a press briefing in Geneva.

Meanwhile, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in CAR, Aurélien A. Agbénonci, and the rest of the humanitarian community there has deeply condemned the attacks against humanitarian organizations and residences during the latest outbreak of violence, and called for the free movement of aid workers to reach civilians in need.

Over the past three days, conditions for aid agencies in Bangui have deteriorated, according to a news release issued by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Several offices and residences of relief organizations have been looted and their freedom of movement impeded, especially health workers in hospitals.

“The work of non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies providing emergency relief to the population is based on the principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality. The safety and security of aid workers and their property is a condition for programmes to be carried out,” said Mr. Agbénonci.

According to OCHA, more than 27,000 people have fled the areas with heightened tension, to seek refuge mostly with host families and in displacement sites.

“Urgent access to the displaced population is needed, so I call on all parties to respect international humanitarian law…”
Displaced people are reported to be in a state of shock and extreme fear. Many have been displaced repeatedly. Central to the work of any aid agency is that their national and international staff members are free to move, unimpeded, to reach civilians in need,” Mr. Agbénonci stated.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said fighting and the numerous roadblocks have made an already difficult humanitarian situation worse, impeding the ability of the agency and its partners to gain access to thousands of internally displaced people and assess needs.

“All sides should urgently allow humanitarian organizations access to areas hosting the newly displaced,” said UNHCR spokesperson Leo Dobbs.

Yesterday, both Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Security Council called for an immediate end to the sudden eruption of violence in CAR and urged the country’s leaders and partners in the sub-region to work closely with the UN to prevent the violence from derailing the political process.

A high-level meeting on CAR is expected to take place on Thursday in New York on the side lines of the Assembly’s annual general debate.

**With South Sudan at crossroads, Ban urges parties to reaffirm commitment to peace**

29 September - Citing a new window of opportunity for peace in South Sudan, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today called on all parties to demonstrate a genuine commitment to the peace agreement signed last month, including by immediately halting military operations and forming the Transitional Government of National Unity.

“The road ahead will be difficult,” said Mr. Ban. “I urge the signatories to honour their solemn commitment and implement the agreement without delay. Reverting to war yet again cannot be an option.”

Speaking at a high-level meeting on South Sudan, held on the margins of the general debate of the United Nations General Assembly, the Secretary-General noted that it is “a pivotal moment” in the history of the world’s youngest nation.

The security situation in South Sudan has deteriorated steadily over the past year and a half since political in-fighting between President Salva Kiir and former Vice-President Riek Machar, and their respective factions, erupted in December 2013. The hostilities subsequently turned into a full-fledged conflict, resulting in reported atrocities and possible war crimes.

“The conflict that broke out in December 2013 dashed the aspirations of the South Sudanese people for a brighter future. It shattered the optimism of the international community. Thousands of lives have been lost in a senseless conflict,” said Mr. Ban.

“When the parties signed the peace agreement last month, they created a new window of opportunity.”

Mr. Ban called on the parties to immediately cease all military operations and form the Transitional Government of National Unity to which they have agreed. The parties must also provide unfettered access to those in need of urgent humanitarian assistance, he added.

“South Sudan’s leaders have a chance to correct their grave mistakes and focus on the well-being of those who entrusted them with this role – the people of South Sudan,” the UN chief stated.

He noted that long-term reforms are essential for South Sudan to transcend ethnicity and rebuild a truly national identity, adding that every effort must be made to promote a more equitable distribution of power and wealth.
“Horrific crimes have been committed against civilians in this war. The social fabric of South Sudan has been shattered. To mend it, the provisions in the peace agreement related to justice, accountability and reconciliation must be implemented in full,” he continued.

The UN will continue to stand by the people of South Sudan, Mr. Ban pledged. “We are ready to support implementation of the agreement and will continue to protect civilians and provide humanitarian assistance.”

He called on the international community to provide economic assistance to South Sudan, while adding that the parties must, in turn, demonstrate a genuine commitment to the peace agreement.

“South Sudan stands at a crossroads. I call on the international community to remain engaged in every step of the implementation of the agreement. I appeal to all partners to reaffirm their unwavering commitment to accompany South Sudan along the path to peace, recovery and reconciliation.”

Addressing the meeting via video teleconference, President Kiir stated that he signed the agreement fully committed to return South Sudan to peace and development.

“When I decided to join the liberation struggle three decades ago, I did not expect to liberate my people in order to take them back to war amongst themselves,” he stated. “Therefore, I am determined to stop this senseless war and make sure that, together with my brothers in the armed opposition, we will build a democratic, united and harmonious country by implementing the agreement.”

Mr. Kiir called on all those gathered at the meeting to prevail on the armed groups so that they respect the permanent ceasefire and assist in the successful implementation of the agreement.

“Our people do not need war but certainly need peace and development. That is what we must achieve for them and that is my promise to you and to my people.”

UN agencies call for end to violence and discrimination against LGBTI community

29 September - Twelve UN agencies today called for an end to violence and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) adults, adolescents and children, and set out specific steps to protect these individuals.

“This is the first time that so many members of the UN family have joined forces in defence of the basic rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people,” said Charles Radcliffe, the Chief of Global Issues for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

“It’s both an expression of commitment on the part of UN agencies, and a powerful call to action for Governments around the world to do more to tackle homophobic and transphobic violence and discrimination and abuses against intersex people,” he added in a news release.

At a high-level event on LGBT rights, held in New York on the margins of the annual debate of the General Assembly, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon applauded the agencies for “speaking in one voice” on this critical issue.

“When the human rights of LGBT people are abused, all of us are diminished. Every human life is precious – none is worth more than another,” he stated.

“This United Nations I lead will never shirk in the fight against discrimination. We will never shy away from protecting the most marginalized and vulnerable people. This is not just a personal commitment – it is an institutional one.”
The event highlighted the linkages between protecting the rights of LGBT people and progress towards achieving the new set of global development goals that world leaders adopted last week.

“There are 17 sustainable development goals all based on a single, guiding principle: to leave no one behind. We will only realize this vision if we reach all people regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity,” Mr. Ban stated.

Ending marginalization and exclusion of LGBT people is a human rights priority – and a development imperative, he continued.

“We are here together to break down the barriers that prevent LGBT people from exercising their full human rights. When we do that, we will liberate them to fully and productively contribute to our common economic progress…. We can show future generations that the best way to advance our shared goals is to embrace all members of our human family – regardless of who they are or whom they love.”

In at least 76 countries, discriminatory laws criminalize private, consensual same-sex relationships, exposing millions of individuals to the risk of arrest, prosecution and imprisonment – and even, in at least five countries, the death penalty.

The joint statement outlines how laws are used to harass, detain, and discriminate against LGBTI people, while laws that criminalize cross-dressing are used to arrest and punish transgender people. These discriminatory laws perpetuate stigma and discrimination, police abuse and torture, and negatively affect public health by hampering vital access to health and HIV treatment and services.

In addition, the statement sets out steps for Governments to stop violence and discrimination against the LGBTI community, including measures to improve the monitoring, reporting and investigation of hate crimes.

In addition to OHCHR, the joint statement has been endorsed by the following UN entities: the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Growing threat of violent extremism demands unified response, UN chief tells summit

29 September - Addressing the growing threat posed by violent extremist groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), also known as Da’esh, goes to the heart of the mission of the United Nations and requires a unified response, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed today at a high-level event held in New York.

“Violent extremist groups – including Da’esh and Boko Haram – pose a direct threat to international security, mercilessly target women and girls, and undermine universal values of peace, justice and human dignity,” Mr. Ban stated.

“That threat is growing,” he added, noting that recent data shows a 70 per cent increase in foreign terrorist fighters from over 100 countries to regions in conflict.

The Leaders’ Summit on Countering Violent Extremism, hosted by United States President Barack Obama on the margins of the General Assembly’s annual high-level debate, brought together representatives from more than 100 nations, more than 20 multilateral institutions, some 120 civil society groups from around the world, and partners from the private sector.

“Addressing this challenge goes to the heart of the mission of the United Nations, and it requires a unified response,” stated the Secretary-General, who intends to present a comprehensive Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism early next year to the General Assembly.
“Our objective must be to go beyond countering violent extremism to preventing it in the first place,” he added.

In this regard, he outlined five key priorities: the need to engage all of society; the need to make a special effort to reach young people; to build truly accountable institutions; respect for international law and human rights; and the importance of not being ruled by fear – or provoked by those who strive to exploit it.

“We have a major challenge before us – one that will not disappear overnight – but one that we can address concretely by forging societies of inclusion, ensuring lives of dignity, and pursuing this essential endeavour inspired at all times by the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

Opening the meeting, President Obama said that it is not going to be enough to defeat ISIL in the battlefield.

“We have to prevent it from radicalizing, recruiting and inspiring others to violence in the first place. And this means defeating their ideology. Ideologies are not defeated with guns, they’re defeated by better ideas – a more attractive and compelling vision.”

Highlighting some of the measures taken by the US, Mr. Obama noted that it is stepping up its efforts to discredit ISIL’s propaganda, especially online, and working to lift up the voices of Muslim scholars, clerics and others – including ISIL defectors – “who courageously stand up to ISIL and its warped interpretations of Islam.”

The US has also recognized the need to confront the economic and political grievances that exist in some of the areas that ISIL seeks to exploit. “The real path to lasting stability and progress is not less democracy; I believe it is more democracy in terms of free speech, and freedom of religion, rule of law, strong civil societies. All that has to play a part in countering violent extremism.”

And in all countries, it is vital to continue to build true partnerships with Muslim communities, based on trust and cooperation, so that they can help protect their loved ones from becoming radicalized, Mr. Obama continued.

“This cannot just be the work of government. It is up to all of us. We have to commit ourselves to build diverse, tolerant, inclusive societies that reject anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant bigotry that creates the divisions, the fear and the resentments upon which extremists can prey.”

Today’s meeting follows the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism, held in February in Washington, DC, as well as a high-level meeting of the Security Council held in September 2014 that focused on foreign terrorist fighters.

In wake of Taliban attack, UN rights chief urges protection of civilians in Afghan city of Kunduz

29 September - Following yesterday’s attack by the Taliban in the Afghan city of Kunduz, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights today urged both parties to the conflict to take all measures to protect civilians from harm.

“The civilian population in Kunduz has already suffered months of fighting and is now in grave danger – with very worrying signs that the violence may intensify,” Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein said in a news release.

“I urge all parties to the conflict to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law to protect civilians and to take all feasible steps to prevent the loss of life and injuries to civilians.”

The attack sparked ground engagements throughout the city between the Taliban and Afghan National Security Forces. Pro-Government forces also carried out airstrike in certain parts of the city. The UN presence in Afghanistan received additional reports of fighting in Takhar province, which borders Kunduz province.
“The situation in Kunduz threatens to severely undermine the progress Afghanistan has made in restoring peace, stability and the rule of law, which is what all Afghans deserve,” said the High Commissioner.

The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) are seeking to verify reports that at least 110 civilians were killed and injured as a result of the fighting.

“We fear that many more civilians may be harmed if fighting continues over the next few days,” High Commissioner Zeid stated.

Intense fighting around Kunduz between April and June resulted in 36 deaths and 140 people injured – 64 per cent of which resulted from the operations of pro-Government forces countering the Taliban.

The Taliban have reportedly taken control of the city’s main hospital, some government facilities and UN premises. It has also reportedly freed some 700 inmates from the provincial prison, including up to 350 conflict-related detainees. Fifty-six juveniles, including 10 girls and 10 conflict-related child detainees, reportedly fled the juvenile detention facility following the Taliban occupation of the city.

“We are aware the Taliban leadership has directed its forces to protect civilian lives and property, but there are disturbing signs that these commitments are being breached,” the High Commissioner said.

“International law upholds the protected status of healthcare facilities and personnel, preserves humanitarian space and requires that those who have laid down their arms, are injured, detained or otherwise hors de combat, must be treated humanely.”

Lethal use of force could worsen existing tensions, UN warns Israelis and Palestinians

29 September - The United Nations human rights office today stressed the need for Israeli and Palestinian security forces to refrain from the use of excessive force amid the clashes and escalating tensions in East Jerusalem and in the West Bank, warning that such action could further inflame an already tense situation.

Briefing reporters in Geneva, Rupert Colville, spokesperson for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), voiced concern about clashes and escalating tensions resulting from a wave of protests against access restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities on Palestinian worshippers wishing to enter the Al Aqsa Compound.

“We note with concern allegations that Israeli security forces may, in some cases, have used excessive force against Palestinian protesters in East Jerusalem in recent days,” he stated. “We also call for restraint following the authorisation granted by Israeli authorities on Sunday on the use of live fire in life-threatening situations in East Jerusalem.”

Mr. Colville warned that any lethal use of force could exacerbate the cycle of violence and further inflame an already tense situation.

“We urge the Israeli authorities to ensure that security forces only employ force as a last resort and in full accordance with the standards laid out under international law for maintaining public order, including detailed guidelines governing the use of live ammunition.”

He also noted with concerns allegations of excessive use of force against protesters by Palestinian security forces in Bethlehem on Friday, and welcomed the decision by the Palestinian Authority to set up an investigative committee into the conduct of police during this demonstration.

“One of 7 structures demolished on 3 September 2015 by Israeli authorities in the East Tayba Bedouin community of the central West Bank, displacing 9 Palestinians, including 5 children, due to lack of Israeli-issued building permits. Photo: UNOCHA occupied Palestinian territory (UNOCHA/oPt)
of the historic status quo at Haram Al-Sharif, which includes the Al Aqsa Compound,” said Mr. Colville.

“We remind Palestinian and Israeli authorities of their duty to investigate any alleged excessive of force by their security forces and to ensure accountability.”

**Breakthrough needed to ensure nuclear-test-ban treaty enters into force – UN chief**

**29 September** - Lamenting the fact that nearly two decades after its negotiation the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has still not entered into force, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today urged world leaders gathered at the United Nations to demonstrate the necessary political will to usher in a nuclear-weapon-free world.

“A breakthrough is long overdue,” Mr. Ban said at a conference on facilitating the entry into force of the CTBT, held on the margins of the General Assembly’s high-level debate.

“I welcome all the Treaty’s steadfast supporters here. I am also pleased to see representatives from States that have not yet either signed or ratified the Treaty. I count on you to do so quickly.”

Adopted by the General Assembly in September 1996, the CTBT now has 164 State parties. For the Treaty to enter into force, ratification is required from the so-called Annex 2 States. Of these, China, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan, and the United States have yet to ratify it.

To the eight remaining Annex 2 States, Mr. Ban said: “You have a special responsibility. You must not wait for others to act before ratifying.”

Noting that more than 20 States not listed in Annex 2 have either not signed or ratified the Treaty, he called on them to take this step as soon as possible.

“We need every person in this room to show leadership on the urgent international imperative of ending nuclear tests,” said the Secretary-General.
UNICEF advocate Orlando Bloom urges protection of refugee and migrant children


During a visit to a refugee and migrant reception centre near Gevgelija in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, at the border with Greece, Mr. Bloom listened to stories of perilous journeys, concerns and hopes for the future from the children he met.

“These children have travelled through one of the deadliest refugee and migrant routes in the world. I talked to children who endured terrifying journeys, often in extreme weather conditions and for many, walking in the only shoes and clothes they have,” he stated in a news release.

“They are being shuttled from one authority to another, crossing numerous borders, uncertain of the risks ahead. If they arrive safely at their final destination, they still fear an uncertain future. We need to protect and support them,” he added.

Many of the children have escaped violence in Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. Through UNICEF-supported services at the reception centre near Gevgelija, children now have access to a safe place to rest, play and obtain food and water, warm clothes, sanitation and the hygiene and protection services that they need.

Among those Mr. Bloom met was 17-year-old Tarek from Syria who spoke about the terror of the boat trip from Turkey to Greece and the pain of leaving his entire family in Damascus. Like many unaccompanied minors on the move in Europe, he is traveling with a Syrian family he met during the journey after saving their 10-year-old daughter from drowning.

While Tarek praised the humanity of the support staff at the child-friendly space, he also expressed to Mr. Bloom his deep despair of not knowing what the future holds for him.

Rajae Msefer Berrada, UNICEF Deputy Representative in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, explained the importance of protecting the children as people flee the conflict and Europe faces one of its greatest crises in recent times.

“We must provide services in countries where children are on the move, and in countries of origin and destination, for play, healthcare and protection. We must put children’s best interests at the heart of our action and ensure families are kept together throughout their journey. We cannot fail these children,” she said.

UNICEF noted that while earlier scenes of chaos at the border have now greatly improved, a large number of people, including children and women, are not being registered – raising concerns that those in need may not have access to the necessary services.

Nearly 100,000 people – one-third of whom are women and children – have been registered at the border at Gevgelija since June this year. As the crisis continues to grow, UNICEF estimates that as many as 320,000 women and children fleeing to Europe could be in need to assistance over the next six months.

On Wednesday, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will convene a high-level meeting in New York on migration and refugee movements, on the side lines of the high-level segment of the UN General Assembly.
Upcoming elections represent milestone in Myanmar’s democratic transition – Ban

29 September - The upcoming elections represent a milestone in Myanmar’s transition to democracy, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said today, adding that their credibility will depend on acceptance of its outcome among the political leaders and the broader population.

“It is crucial that these proceed in a fair, inclusive and transparent atmosphere. This responsibility rests with the Government, the Union Election Commission and the Army, but also all sections of Myanmar society,” he said at a meeting of the Partnership Group on Myanmar, held on the margins of the high-level segment of the United Nations General Assembly.

The public commitment by the Army leadership to ensure a free election and to respect its results must be honoured, Mr. Ban stated. Likewise, it is essential that the Government ensure a free and unfettered process for candidates and voters.

In addition, he noted that civil society needs space to carry out its work – and actions against media and activists as well as arbitrary arrests and detention must stop.

“The authorities must ensure that all those who were able to vote in previous elections retain those rights,” Mr. Ban continued.

“I am deeply disappointed by this effective disenfranchisement of the Rohingya and other minority communities. Barring incumbent Rohingya parliamentarians from standing for re-election is particularly egregious,” he stated.

According to a read-out of the meeting, participating Member States noted the need for more decisive action on resolving the humanitarian situation in the camps for internally displaced persons and on the broader issues of citizenship for the Rohingya, adding that failure to do so could result in more suffering and loss of lives.

Concerns were expressed at the disenfranchisement of voters and rejection of candidatures, especially of Muslim representatives who had qualified for previous elections.

Ultimately, the credibility of the elections and smooth transfer of power will depend on acceptance of its results among the political leaders and the broader population within Myanmar, the read-out stated, echoing Mr. Ban, who noted that only this can ensure a smooth transfer of power.
At event on abolishing death penalty, Ban stresses need to respect rights of victims’ families

29 September - As momentum continues to build towards abolishing the death penalty, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today stressed the need to ensure that the rights of victims and their families are respected as part of efforts to ensure a life of dignity for all.

“The rights of victims and their families must absolutely be respected,” Mr. Ban said in his message to an event on Moving Away from the Death Penalty: The Voices of Victims’ Families, delivered by United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein.

Critical in this regard, he noted, are the right to see effective investigations and proper retribution for crimes and the right to demand redress for the harm suffered, through judicial and administrative mechanisms that are expeditious, responsive, fair, and accessible.

“This implies that all victims should be fully informed about such processes, which should be inexpensive and allow for the presentation of victims' views and concerns,” Mr. Ban stated.

Seven decades ago, only 14 countries had abolished the death penalty. Today, 82 per cent have either introduced moratoria by law or in practice or have abolished it. Over the past 12 months alone, Fiji, Madagascar, Suriname, and the state of Nebraska in the United States have abolished the practice of putting people to death.

But despite this overarching worldwide trend towards abolition, Mr. Ban said, a small number of countries have increased or resumed executions in recent months.

“Frequently, these policies are justified by authorities invoking the rights of crime victims’ families. In reality, many murder victims’ families believe that responding to one killing with another does not honour the victim.”

The event, held on the margins of the high-level segment of the General Assembly, was organized by the UN human rights office (OHCHR), which noted that a growing body of evidence suggests that, from the perspective of murder victims’ families, the death penalty is harmful and interferes with a difficult healing process.

“A life of dignity for all includes the dignity of victims and their families, who must be acknowledged by all law enforcement and judicial personnel with full compassion and respect. It is also paramount to secure the safety of victims, their families and witnesses from intimidation and reprisal,” said Mr. Ban.

The UN Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power clearly states these and other rights of victims of crime, and it outlines measures to secure them.

“I call on States to do far more to realize these principles in practice,” said Mr. Ban. “And I urge all States and individuals to join the United Nations as we continue advocating for an end to the imposition of death penalty as part of our larger push for a more just and sustainable future.”