

[At UN, Central European Leaders spotlight development, countering terrorism and securing peace](#)

19 September 2017 – Sustainable development, ensuring peace and security and protecting human rights are the basic goals of the international community and the foundations of the United Nations system, Andrzej Duda, the President of Poland, told the General Assembly today.

Mr. Duda pointed out that Poland has adopted and is fully committed to the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, saying: “We believe that only by means of an effective implementation, will we be able to ensure relevant socio-economic conditions for everyone.

For a number of years, the country has fulfilled its obligations to protect the environment and fight climate change. He noted that Poland surpassed its Kyoto Protocol reduction target, made ambitious contributions to the [Paris Agreement](#) and will, for the third time, host the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. “We will continue the leadership in climate negotiations in the spirit of the Paris Agreement, ensuring the participation of all States and the transparency of discussions,” he stressed.

He went on to note that human rights are withheld in too many parts of the world, with persecution of persons belonging to religious minorities, including Christians, “a particularly visible problem,” which Poland strongly condemns, along with all instances of persecution and discrimination based on religion.

“‘Solidarity-Responsibility-Engagement’ are the values that we unceasingly seek to promote in the international arena [...] to produce sustainable development, security and peace not only for now, but also for future generations to come,” concluded Mr. Duda.

[Full statement available here](#)



President Miloš Zeman of the Czech Republic addresses the General Assembly’s annual general debate. UN Photo/Cia Pak

For his part, Miloš Zeman, President of the Czech Republic, told the Assembly that a terror-based anti-civilization had emerged over the last few decades, stressing that “we all express solidarity with the victims and organize protests, but, unfortunately, we still hesitate to fight terrorist organizations with full power.”

He welcomed the Secretary-General’s new Office for Counter-Terrorism as a

reasonable and practical solution along with the appointment of its Under-Secretary-General to solve problems in the fight against Islamic terrorism.

The President recalled that, one year ago, he had criticized the UN for not being able to define the word terrorism, noting that there were currently 38 anti-terrorist organizations and institutions under the UN umbrella and pointing out that as that number increased, more terrorist organizations flourished. He also called for the use of military force against terrorism – in accord with Article 47 of the UN Charter.

On the other side of the same coin he pointed to the issue of migration, which, citing Syria and Iraq, he said was often provoked by terrorist actions. Mr. Zeman also underscored the concern that terrorists often hid within migrant populations. Citing Africa, he flagged the issue of “brain drain” – or the weakening of potential in those countries – with large migration flows. The Czech President explained that by welcoming migrants in Europe, countries are fuelling the brain drain phenomenon, and in turn, reversing progress in countries of origin.

Mr. Zeman concluded by saying the war on terrorism should be based on “historical optimism.” He gave the example of Barcelona, in which the Spanish people said they were not afraid, and recalled United States President Franklin Roosevelt’s proclamation of ‘freedom from fear.’ Mr. Zeman echoed what he called the most beautiful expression of historical optimism by quoting theologian Martin Luther: “If I knew that it would be doomsday tomorrow, I shall go today and plant an apple tree.”



Andrej Kiska, President of the Slovak Republic, addresses the Assembly’s annual general debate. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also address the Assembly, the President of Slovakia, Andrej Kiska, opened his speech highlighting the need to build safe, healthy, prosperous and just societies for all people to live a dignified life, telling the Assembly that it is not a mere ambition, “It’s our duty. It’s the reason why our people trust us with the power to act on their behalf.”

While Mr. Kiska called “the respect for the principles of peace and security” essential, he observed that “far too many are dying in senseless conflicts or suffering in displacement” – pointing out that armed conflicts and the resulting refugee crisis “depletes the much-needed resources for social and economic development.”

The President censured short-sighted interests that are built on spreading instability and undermining collective efforts towards peace and security for crippling “the very core of the UN Charter for securing peaceful coexistence among nations.”

While naming Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova as sovereign nations being undermined by an aggressive neighbour, Mr. Kiska cited the Democratic Republic of Korea as “one of the worst threats to international peace and

security in recent history.”

“I strongly call on the North Korean regime to terminate its development of weapons of mass destruction and to return on the path of dialogue and building peace in the Korean Peninsula,” he underscored.

[Full statement available here](#)