

'Lack of trust' among nations threatens progress, rules-based order, Suriname Minister tells UN

Suriname agrees with the United Nations Secretary-General that a lack of trust among countries is the fundamental issue confronting the international community, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Suriname told UN General Assembly on Saturday.

Yldiz Pollack-Beighle affirmed her nation's commitment to upholding internationally accepted principles which "provide for predictable actions in our international relations, thereby creating a climate of trust, understanding and respect," and a "rules-based world order which is necessary to address global concerns."

A major concern for Suriname is climate change and, in particular, as a low lying coastal state, the rising sea level: Ms. Pollack-Beighle noted that the international community is being "urged to move beyond the rhetoric and take immediate action."

Suriname, she continued, has been badly hit by the sharp downturn in gold and oil prices three years ago and the closure of bauxite operations in 2016 led to a recession and severe loss of government revenues.

Following a change in monetary policy, the exchange rate has stabilized, monthly inflation rates have fallen to less than one per cent and there is no longer a current account deficit in the balance of payments.

The Government, said Ms. Pollack-Beighle, is committed to continuing efforts to restore the primary fiscal surplus, noting that the International Monetary Fund ([IMF](#)) and international ratings agencies have commended its actions.

However, Ms. Pollack-Beighle noted that the classification of Suriname as a middle-income country is an unjustifiable obstacle to development which does not reflect the country's vulnerabilities or the full set of challenges with which it is faced. She called for the matter to be addressed with urgency, so that the country can gain access to concessional funding.

Returning to climate change, Ms. Pollack-Beighle said that global commitments are not yet being translated into tangible results. Although Suriname contains some 20 per cent of the world's tropical forests, storing 18 per cent of tropical forest carbon, the country is not fully benefitting from global arrangements associated with sound forest management.

Next February, she continued, Suriname will host a High-Level Conference on Climate Finance Mobilization which will "seek to initiate and implement new economic models of eco-sustainability to improve the quality of life for all."

Turning to drug trafficking, Ms. Pollack-Beighle said that illicit drug trafficking, transnational organized crime, terrorism, as well as trafficking in arms and persons, are placing an unprecedented burden on small developing countries: Suriname needs to work with surrounding countries to effectively combat transnational organized crime, and this cooperation must yield results.

She went on to pledge Suriname's support for the creation of a United Nations agency dealing with youth, and voiced her expectation that the [UN Youth Strategy](#) will be "inclusive and deliver on the aspirations of the world's young people."

Ms. Pollack-Beighle concluded by saying that, "if there were no United Nations, today, we would be calling for its creation," and the we should "focus on what binds us, rather than what divides us."

[Full statement available here](#)

Standing together to oust terrorists, Iraqis prevented a 'historic catastrophe' from occurring, Minister tells UN Assembly

Speaking from the podium of the United Nations General Assembly, the Foreign Minister of Iraq said ISIL is "breathing its last breath", and urged world leaders to continue to stand with his country as it works to usher in a future of promise and prosperity for all its people.

In his address at the UN Assembly's annual debate, Ibrahim Abdulkarim Al-Jafari, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, said that much has changed since he last addressed the august gathering.

Four years ago, a third of his country was occupied by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), and millions of Iraqis were forced from their homes or had died in the violence.

"This could have been a historic catastrophe from which we might never have recovered."

Instead, we stood together and rose to liberate our land, he added, noting that ISIL "is now breathing its last breath," across the border, in Syria before being snuffed out.

Iraq is now turning the page in its story, he went on to say, highlighting the country's plan for national economic, social and cultural progress – with a focus on young people and women –to reduce unemployment, provide job opportunities, protect diversity and combat extremist narratives.

Iraq is now working to help those returning home and to strengthen its State institutions, he added, noting that it has joined the club of democratic nations, built on an inclusive, constitutional consensus.

In his address, the Minister also welcomed the work of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and called on all countries to fulfil the financial commitments made for Iraq during the UN-backed donor conference in Kuwait, in February.

Concerning the wider region, he said that peace will come to the Middle East until Israel completely withdraws from the Occupied Palestinian Territory and an independent Palestinian State is established. On Syria, the Minister urged a balanced political solution rather than attempts to impose a military solution, and called for an end to all “external meddling” in Yemen.

[Full statement \(in Arabic\) available here.](#)

[Philippines successfully ‘salvaging’ itself from becoming ‘a Narco State’, Foreign Minister tells Assembly](#)

The Philippines, under the leadership of President Rodrigo Duterte, is on track to reverse its decline towards becoming a “Narco State”, or one that is being “held hostage” by the rich and powerful, said its Foreign Affairs minister at the United Nations General Assembly’s annual debate on Saturday.

Alan Cayetano, said his country was “at one with the UN, in being uncompromising on the issues of rule-of-law” and the protection of “each and every human being’s rights”.

“We are on track in salvaging our deteriorating country from becoming a Narco-State, or a State held hostage by the rich and powerful who ignore the plight of the poor, powerless, and marginalized – or both,” he declared.

[According to](#) the UN human rights office ([OHCHR](#)), since President Duterte was elected in July 2016, thousands of Filipinos have reportedly been killed for their alleged involvement in illegal drug use or trafficking. It is suspected that many incidents have involved extra-judicial killings in the course of police anti-drug operations.

Mr. Cayetano said that the “hunger for change, for peace, for law and order, is genuine” across the Philippines, and added that “in cases where we have to choose between protecting the rights of law-abiding citizens and law enforcers, versus the rights of drug lords and criminals, it is clear we will protect the former.”

He said the Government was also prioritizing economic development, “so that 10 million Filipinos abroad may choose to work at home and abroad, and not be forced by poverty, to find high paying jobs at the expense of leaving the country and separating from their families.”

The Foreign Affairs Minister praised the principle of “love thy neighbour” which he said underpinned the UN-convened [Global Compact for Migration](#): “Issues on migration cannot be swept under the rug, but should be discussed openly, frankly and thoroughly”, he said, thanking “migrants around the world, for inspiring us to have the first, inter-governmentally negotiated compact to cover holistically, and comprehensively, all dimensions of international migration.”

Mr. Cayetano praised the UN’s enduring value as the place “to resurrect our hopes and dreams of a better world”.

“Making the United Nations relevant to all, is a dream, yet it is a dream worth fighting for,” he said.

[Full statement available here.](#)

[Help Pacific ‘Ocean of Peace’ live up to its name, Papua New Guinea’s Foreign Minister tells UN](#)

Welcoming the growing attention the world is paying to the Pacific Ocean, Rimbink Pato, Papua New Guinea’s Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, urged the international community to ensure that the Ocean becomes a “zone of cooperation, of stability and security, of pristine beauty and prosperity,” and expressed his hope that the it lives up to its name: “the Ocean of Peace.”

Mr. Pato’s comments were part of his UN address, delivered during High-Level week of the [General Assembly](#) at UN Headquarters in New York.

As host of this year’s Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum ([APEC](#)), Papua New Guinea, said Mr. Pato, will see many major issues discussed, including several related to the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, particularly

climate action and gender equality.

Mr. Pato described the Agenda as “a solid pathway that holds much promise for the international community.” He acknowledged that it is essential that Papua New Guinea fully harness the potential of its young people, who comprise some 60 per cent of the population, and ensure that women and girls have full equality in Papuan society.

Almost a year after the closure of the Australian-run Manus Island migrant detention centre in Papua New Guinea, Mr. Pato said that his country is working closely with Australia in resettling qualified asylum seekers.

Migrants still remain in Papua New Guinea and that each will be addressed on a case by case basis, he said, adding: “that is our contribution to the extent possible, in partnership with Australia, to address human trafficking, people smuggling and transnational crime.

Turning to the implementation of the [Bougainville Peace Agreement](#), the Minister noted the international community’s increasing interest in the referendum, one of the pillars of the Agreement, which is scheduled for 15 June 2019.

He announced that his country’s Government is fully committed to the Agreement, and has appointed former Irish Prime Minister, Bertie Ahern, to preside over the work of the Bougainville Referendum Commission.

On Friday, UN chief António Guterres recognized the efforts of the Pacific Islands Forum ([PIF](#)), of which Papua New Guinea is a member, for taking forward peacebuilding priorities, and congratulating the Government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government on implementing the Agreement: Mr. Pato expressed his gratitude to the UN, and other partners, for working with Papua New Guinea on this “important national issue.”

[Full statement available here](#)

[At UN, Syria slams US for ‘supporting terrorism’, thanks Russia for cooperation](#)

Denouncing the United States for supporting terrorism and war crimes in his conflict-torn country, Syrian Deputy Prime Minister Walid Al-Moualem reported to the United Nations General Assembly on Saturday that the seven-year war is almost over, calling all those opposing President Bashar al-Assad terrorists.

"To the disappointment of some, here we are today, more than seven years into this dirty war against my country, announcing to the world that the situation on the ground has become more secure and stable and that our war on terror is almost over, thanks to the heroism, resolve, and unity of the people and the army, and to the support of our allies and friends," he told the Assembly on the fifth day of its annual general debate.

He delivered a withering attack on the US-led "illegitimate international coalition" supposedly formed to combat terrorism in Syria. "The so-called international coalition has done everything but fight terrorism," he said. "It has even become clear that the coalition's goals were in perfect alignment with those of terrorist groups; sowing chaos, death and destruction in their path."

"The coalition destroyed the Syrian city of Raqqa completely; it destroyed infrastructure and public services in the areas it targeted; it committed massacres against civilians, including children and women, which amount to war crimes under international law. The coalition has also provided direct military support to terrorists, on multiple occasions, as they fought against the Syrian army.

"It should have been more aptly named 'The Coalition to Support Terrorists and War Crimes'," he declared holding up Russia, as an example of legitimate international cooperation.

Mr. Moualem also denounced Turkey for supporting terrorism and committing direct aggression against towns in northern Syria in violation of the country's sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity as well as of international law.

"Since day one of the war on Syria, the Turkish regime has trained and armed terrorists, turning Turkey into a hub and a corridor for terrorists on their way to Syria," he said.

While he stressed that Syria had eliminated all its chemical weapons, he accused the rebels of using them to falsely incriminate the Government and provoke "wanton aggression" launched by the US, France, and the United Kingdom in April in response.

With the situation becoming ever more stable, Mr. Moualem invited the millions of refugees who have fled their homeland over the past seven years to return. "All conditions are now present for the voluntary return of Syrian refugees to the country they had to leave because of terrorism and the unilateral economic measures that targeted their daily lives and their livelihoods," he declared.

"The return of every Syrian refugee is a priority for the Syrian State. Doors are open for all Syrians abroad to return voluntarily and safely," he said, adding that thanks to Russian help his Government will spare no effort to meet the basic needs of the returnees.

[Full statement available here.](#)