

[DR Congo, at General Assembly, calls on UN mission there to focus more on development](#)

23 September 2017 – The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which hosts more than ten thousand United Nations peacekeepers and where enormous resources over the past two decades have been devoted to bringing stability to the vast country, today called for the UN mission to be re-directed more to development.

“It is clear that nearly 20 years after its deployment the UN force cannot nurture the ambition of remaining indefinitely in my country or exercising its mandate under the same format without learning from the weaknesses that have been noted,” President Joseph Kabila Kabange told the General Assembly’s 72nd annual general debate.

“What is important and should be important in the eyes of all those who value the credibility of our Organization is the actual effectiveness of UN troops on the ground. That is why for several years now we demanded a re-dimensioning of the MONUSCO force with regard to its dynamic mission and the redirecting of the means thus freed up towards our developmental needs.”

MONUSCO, the French acronym for the UN Organization Stabilization Mission, was renewed in June for another year at a level of 16,215 military personnel, 660 military observers and staff officers, 391 police personnel, and 1,050-strong formed police units, several thousand lower than its previous authorized level.

On other issues, Mr. Kabila decried the rise of terrorism, called for full support for the UN’s [2030 Agenda](#) that seeks to eliminate poverty, hunger and a whole host of other social ills by 2030, and highlighted the threat climate change posed for humanity.

[Full statement available \(in French\) here](#)

[Tackling ‘curse of poverty’ tops Indian Government’s agenda, UN General Assembly told](#)

23 September 2017 – The complete eradication of poverty is the most important priority for the Government of India, its Minister for External Affairs told

the United Nations General Assembly today, as she outlined some of the measures taken to advance this goal.

“There are two ways of addressing the curse of poverty,” Sushma Swaraj said in her address to the Assembly’s annual high-level debate.

“The traditional method is through incremental levels of aid and hand-holding. But our Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has chosen the more radical route, through economic empowerment,” she noted.

“The poor are not helpless: we have merely denied them opportunity. We are eliminating poverty by investing in the poor. We are turning them from job-seekers into job-providers.”

Among the Government’s initiatives, Ms. Swaraj cited the Jan Dhan plan, by which some 300 million Indians – roughly equivalent to the population of the United States – who had never crossed the doors of a bank today have bank accounts.

She also highlighted programmes to provide bank credit to those who want to start small businesses; to train poor and middle-class youth for employment; to provide free gas cylinders to the poor so that women do not have to suffer the dangerous consequences of wood-fired kitchens; and remove “black money” from circulation.

She noted that nations with rising capabilities will be able to generate such change, but the developed world must become an active partner in helping those vulnerable countries still mired in poverty to reach the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) by the target date of 2030.

Agreed by world leaders in 2015, the [SDGs](#), also known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

[Full statement available here](#)

Syrian Government has spared no effort to end bloodshed, Deputy Prime Minister tells UN

23 September 2017 – The Syrian Government has spared no effort to put an end to the war that has besieged the country for the past six years, but the bloodshed continues owing to the “aggressive policies” by some States, Deputy Prime Minister Walid Al-Moualem told the United Nations General Assembly today.

"No people has suffered at the hands of terrorism more than the Syrian people, who, for six years now, has fought against terrorists pouring from all over the world, supported by parties from the region and beyond," said Mr. Al-Moualem, who is also the country's Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Since March 2011, Syria has been in the throes of a conflict that has forced more than half of all Syrians to leave their homes. An estimated 5 million Syrians have fled the country and more than 6 million are internally displaced. The crisis, described as the worst humanitarian disaster of our time with more than 13 million people in need of assistance, has caused untold suffering for Syrian men, women and children.

The UN Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, has been working to bring the parties to the negotiating table and an end to the war.

Mr. Al-Moualem stated that since day one, the Syrian Government has positively considered all initiatives to put an end to the war. "However, these initiatives eventually failed after States that supported and fueled terrorism decided to persist in their aggressive policies against Syria and its people."

He noted that the so-called 'Geneva process' has yet to bear fruit "in the absence of a genuine national opposition that can be a partner in Syria's future, and as countries with influence over the other party continue to block any meaningful progress."

"It is truly unfortunate that these countries that block a solution in Syria are members of this international Organization, including permanent members of the Security Council," he added.

Certain countries, the Prime Minister said, have boasted about fighting terrorism in Syria and having the interests of Syrians at heart. "They have established 'coalitions' and held dozens of conferences under deceiving titles, such as 'friends of the Syrian people'.

"It is quite ironic that those are the same countries that are shedding the blood of thousands of Syrians by supporting terrorists, bombing innocent civilians, and destroying their livelihoods."

Syria was, however, encouraged by the Astana process and the resulting 'de-escalation zones' and hoped that it will result in an actual cessation of hostilities and separate terrorist groups, such as ISIL, Al-Nusra and others, from those groups that have agreed to join the Astana process.

"This will be the real test of how committed and serious these groups and their 'Turkish' sponsors are," said Mr. Al-Moualem.

"So far, Turkey under Erdogan has persisted in its aggressive policies against the Syrian people and has continued to labor under the illusion that terrorism will help serve its subversive agendas in Syria and the countries of the region. Turkey's position stands in stark contrast to the positive and constructive role played by Russia and Iran," he added.

In UN address, South Sudan urges balanced approach to peace, development

23 September 2017 – Addressing the United Nations General Assembly’s high-level debate, the First Vice-President of South Sudan called for incentivising peace and stability by shifting the focus to development and long-term projects.

“We cannot continue to clean the floor while the tap is open. The old paradigm that humanitarian intervention is first and development later is not a viable policy in the case of South Sudan,” Taban Deng Gai [told](#) the world body in New York.

He said South Sudan would redouble its efforts to improve access for humanitarian intervention, but hopes that the international community would recalibrate its development and humanitarian support.

Mr. Deng also noted the need for policies to be “South Sudanese-led’ and “home grown” if they are to achieve sustainable results.

The ultimate goal, Mr. Deng said, is “to give an opportunity for peace to all South Sudanese which will enable them to choose their own leaders through free, fair and credible elections.”

He added that the country has witnessed refugees and internally displaced persons gradually voluntarily returning to their villages, and the National Dialogue Initiative announced by President Salva Kiir is making progress.

[Full statement available here](#)

Technology vital for small nations to meet development goals, Lesotho’s Prime Minister tells UN

22 September 2017 – Small countries, especially those in Africa, should be empowered with technologies to deal with and adapt to climate change challenges, as well as meet their development goals, the Prime Minister of Lesotho told the United Nations General Assembly’s high-level debate today.

“Attainment of sustainable development will elude us if there is no genuine commitment by all, including our development partners,” said Motsoahae Thomas Thabane.

“Indeed, the principles of common but differentiated responsibility and economic might and capability between the developed and the developing nations, are critical for our success in building a sustainable world.”

The Prime Minister called on the international community to continue mobilizing and providing additional financial resources to Africa for climate-friendly technologies.

“In the same vein, we urge countries that have reneged on their support to the [Paris Agreement](#) to reconsider their position and come back to the fold,” he said.

Agreed by 195 nations, the 2015 Paris Agreement seeks to combat climate change and unleash actions and investment towards a low carbon, resilient and sustainable future. Its main aim is to keep global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius and to drive efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

[Full statement available here](#)



Prime Minister José Ulisses Correia e Silva of the Republic of Cabo Verde addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

While climate change is also a concern for Primer Minister Jose Ulisses de Pina Correia E. Silva of Cabo Verde, calling on the international community to prioritize efforts that would prevent destruction to the island.

“Each island that disappears because of climate change will be a nightmare for humanity,” he said.

Among other topics raised in his speech, the Prime Minister underscored the small country's aims for “relevance” on the global scale.

“Despite our smallness, we want to make Cabo Verde a country with relevance in the Middle Atlantic in terms of economic stature, security, and diplomacy for peace and the promotion of freedom and democracy,” he said.

Resulting from mergers between Europe and Africa, Cabo Verde wants to position itself as a transit hub in the Middle Atlantic for tourism, air transport, port operations, financial and investment operations, business localization and business development in the digital and nano-technological economy, he said.

Similarly, the country wants to position itself as a “useful interlocutor in

the concert of nations for dialogue, peace and tolerance.”

[Full statement available here](#)



Pascal Ireneé Koupaki, Minister of State in Charge of Coordination and Secretary-General in the Presidency of Benin, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also addressing the Assembly, Benin’s Foreign Minister Pascal Irénée Koupaki highlighted the importance of multilateralism as an ethical and political imperative for peace.

“Our session opens at a time when the world faces a multitude of complex problems,” he said. “Violent extremism and radicalism weigh heavily on international security and stability. The attacks against multilateralism, and thus attacks against the United Nations, are part and parcel of this pernicious tendency which we must reject.”

[Full statement \(in French\) available here](#)