

Multilateralism key to address complex global challenges, urge South East Asian leaders at UN Assembly

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22 September 2017 –

Speaking at the 72nd annual general debate of the United Nations General Assembly, leaders from South East Asia today highlighted the importance of the spirit of multilateralism to address the myriad challenges confronting the global community.

“This year, we witnessed multiple natural disasters, inflicting heavy losses in human life and property in Cuba, Mexico, the United States and other Caribbean countries,” said Ph?m Bình Minh, the Deputy Prime Minister of Viet Nam in his address, noting also the challenges related to global economy, inequality between and within countries and impact of climate change.

Adding that while the world remains fraught with uncertainties, the adoption of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development offered the most appropriate path to a better future and that it is incumbent upon the international community to bring this “ambitious plan” into reality.

In his address, the Deputy Prime Minister also highlighted the need to ensure sustainable peace, noting that with a commitment to multilateralism, the goals can be achieved. He also noted the need to bolster efforts towards disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and rein in migration and humanitarian crises around the world.

He also spoke of Viet Nam’s close cooperation with member nations of Association of Southeast Asian Nations ([ASEAN](#)) and said that the country looked forward to hosting the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC) this year.

[Full statement available here](#)



Don Pramudwinai, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also speaking today, Don Pramudwinai, the Foreign Minister of Thailand recalled the philosophy of “sufficiency economy” which places emphasis on every person’s potential to mould their lives in harmony with nature.

“When each person can contribute meaningfully to [their] community, the life of the nation will surely be good,” the Foreign Minister, told global leaders, adding that based on the philosophy, which was advocated by the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, the country has formulated its key development frameworks to “focus first on people.”

Noting that on top of challenges such as terrorism, conflicts, irregular migration along with environmental degradation, climate change and disasters, the world faces the grave threat of nuclear weapons, making the current time one in which “humanity is being truly tested.”

In his address, the Thai leader urged the international community to rally behind the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and also expressed concern over the crisis in the Korean Peninsula.

Concluding his remarks, Minister Pramudwinai hailed the importance of multilateralism and called on the UN to take transformative steps in view of current realities and expectations.

[Full statement available here](#)



Prak Sokhonn, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Further today, addressing the UN General Assembly, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cambodia, Prak Sokhonn, underscored the importance of all dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

“The 2030 Agenda is inextricably linked to many issues that perturb the world today, the most pressing one being climate change, which is not only a direct threat in itself but also a multiplier of many other threats – from poverty, diseases and food insecurity to mass migrations and regional conflicts,” he said, highlighting his country’s efforts in address these at the national level.

Also in his address, the Cambodian Minister voiced concern over targeting of his country by some UN agencies and non-governmental organizations over human rights issues, and questioned the impartiality and neutrality of the criticism.

“The issue of human rights and democracy is raised only when the specific interests of certain major powers are at stake, at the vagaries of the moment. Otherwise, it is sheer silence, and often a conspiracy of silence,” the Minister said, adding that non-governmental organizations are “far from being politically neutral.”

Noting that his country had been the victim of political manipulation during the 12 years of the Khmer Rouge regime, during which egregious mass crimes had occurred, but which he said, were denied by the international community.

Also in his address, he voiced concern over the situation in the Korean Peninsula and urged all parties to exercise utmost restraint.

[Full statement available here](#)



Pehin Lira Jock Seng, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Brunei Darussalam, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also, speaking today, Pehin Dato Seri Setia Lim Jock Seng, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Brunei Darussalam highlighted his country's efforts to creating a better life for its people, in particular the youth, and noted that such efforts were built on the foundations of ensuring a sustainable future.

"[We] will continue to do what it can to contribute [...] to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, our efforts rest on promoting efficiency in energy consumption and gradually deploying renewable energies," he highlighted.

In his address, the Minister also said that his country would continue to pursue stronger engagement with partners, including ASEAN members, to continue to contribute to global peace and development.

He also noted that Brunei Darussalam looks to the UN to address pressing issues around the globe and in that context, highlighted that it is vital for the Organization to enhance its working relations with all partners and pursue efforts to make itself more strong, effective and efficient.

"As such, we support the Secretary-General's ideas to reform the UN and reposition it to focus more on conflict prevention measures, including mediation," expressing hope that such efforts will help the UN optimize its work and resources and "above all, save lives, safeguard people's dignity, and promote peace and security around the world."

[Full statement available here](#)



Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Anifah Aman of Malaysia addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

In the same vein, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, Dato Sri Anifah Aman, also highlighted his country's efforts to translate into action, the vision of growth which is based on the prosperity and wellbeing of its people while protecting the environment and strengthening peace.

Recalling Malaysia's presentation of its voluntary national review at this year's session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the Minister reiterated that the Government "strives to ensure that each and

every Malaysian has an equitable share in the prosperity and wealth of the country, and that no one will be left behind.”

In his address, the Minister also underscored the threat to the global community from weapons of mass destruction and called for steadfast commitment to international obligations on disarmament and international security through various national, regional and international approaches.

In that context, he also expressed concern over the crisis in the Korean Peninsula and called on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to desist from conducting further nuclear tests and missile launches, to halt its nuclear and ballistic missiles programme, and to comply fully with its international obligations in the interest of the maintenance of international peace and security.

He also drew attention to the plight of Rohingyas who have been displaced from Myanmar and forced to seek refuge in Bangladesh.

“If the current situation is not addressed judiciously, the desperate people in Rakhine will become easy prey to recruitment by extremists. Prolonged frustration, anger and deprivation provide fertile breeding ground for it,” he warned.

Concluding his address he underlined the need for reforms at the UN and expressed support to the Secretary-Generals for his efforts for the same.

[Full statement available here](#)

[Sierra Leone, at UN debate, stresses preventive diplomacy for regional peace](#)



Samura Mathew Wilson Kamara, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

22 September 2017 – A senior minister from Sierra Leone today stressed the importance of mediation and regional partnerships to preserve peace, urging the international body to reflect on reform measures that will uphold the United Nations’ collective responsibility to maintain peace.

Samura Kamara, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, called on the international community to “generate innovative ideas and credible mechanisms that will bring all conflicts to a peaceful end; promote social progress, peace and

security, human rights and fundamental freedoms; and secure better standards of life for humanity.”

With a nod to the country’s decades-long civil war, Mr. Kamara said that Sierra Leone “learned from experience” that for mediation efforts are fruitful only if accompanied by a timely cessation of hostilities, credible cease-fire agreements, and the timely deployment of peacekeeping or observer missions, among others.

[Full statement available here](#)

[European leaders at General Assembly stress UN’s vital importance in resolving global crises](#)

22 September 2017 – European leaders mounted the rostrum of the United Nations General Assembly today to spotlight the vital importance of the world Organization in resolving global crises from climate change and sustainable development to conflicts and [refugees and migrants](#).

“Our goal for the United Nations must be the construction, day after day, of an efficient Organization in the service of the common interests of its Member States,” Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel told the Assembly’s 72nd annual general debate.

“When regional actors and the United Nations are on the same page and work together, great things can be achieved,” he said, noting that globalization has generated fears and doubts in which even the very essence of the UN is sometimes questioned.

He cited the recent spate of catastrophic hurricanes and other environmental disasters as a clarion call for urgent action.

“It’s no longer a question of putting off to tomorrow what we must do today,” he declared. “Doubt is no longer permissible. For numerous countries, especially the island States of the Pacific, the Indian Ocean and the Caribbean, these natural phenomena have an immediate impact for their survival.”

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



Prime Minister Pavel Filip of the Republic of Moldova addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

For his part, Moldovan Prime Minister Pavel Filip stressed that the UN has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security.

“I am confident that with his competent leadership and the joint efforts of the Member States, we will succeed in redefining the role of the United Nations and adjusting it to the requirements of the modern world,” he said.

“Today, more than ever, we need a joint commitment of all UN Member States to face those challenges,” he added, citing armed conflicts in the Middle East, terrorism, poverty, the excessive accumulation of conventional weapons and the development of nuclear programmes.

“An international environment marked by the threats to use force, including nuclear arms, greatly exacerbates the sense of insecurity and lack of trust,” he said, also noting that devastating natural disasters occurring with increasing frequency in a warming world affect hundreds of millions of people.

[Full statement available here](#)



Prime Minister Joseph Muscat of Malta addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat stressed the importance of Agenda 2030, the UN Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), which seek to eliminate a host of social ills, from hunger and poverty to the lack of access to education and health care.

“Challenging times require us to be on time for the challenge. That time is now, sooner rather than later. Purposeful and systematic action by multi-stakeholders, at all levels and across all strata is crucial if the ensuing benefits are to be felt by the people in all corners of the world,” he said.

“The UN is the prime mobilizer and anchor of international peace, security and stability [and] has a quintessential role to play, if we are to secure a peaceful, sustainable and a better world for all, he continued, adding: “We are strong believers in the overarching power of multilateralism. We do not believe the UN is simply a sum of its parts, but rather a force that grows exponentially when we think and act as one, rather than alone.”

[Full statement available here](#)



Nicola Renzi, Minister for Foreign and Political Affairs and Justice of San Marino, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

San Marino’s Foreign Minister Nicola Renzi noted that the complexity of the challenges facing the UN today is unparalleled in its history.

“The interconnected nature of the challenges reminds us that countries must act together to be more effective in the fight against climate change, global terrorism, poverty and to build more inclusive, safe and just societies for all,” he said.

“The United Nations must adapt quickly to the new global challenges, but also to the new opportunities offered by an increasingly interconnected world, in order to be more effective in carrying out its mandate.

“Therefore, reforms are crucial to future world stability and maintenance of international peace and security, and must remain at the centre of our actions. We reject any downsizing of the role of the United Nations due to the impossibility of finding a common agreement on the reforms needed to improve its functioning.”

[Full statement available here](#)

Also addressing the high-level debate, Liechtenstein Foreign Minister Aurelia Frick called on all Member States to expand the authority of International Criminal Court set up 20 years ago to judge cases of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes to include illegal use of force.

“Today we often manage and contain armed conflict rather than preventing it in the first place. We must do better. This year we have the opportunity to make a historic step forward. For the first time since the creation of the United Nations, we can give an international tribunal jurisdiction over the crime of aggression,” she said.

“The most serious forms of the illegal use of force will be punishable. The tribunal in charge will be the International Criminal Court, the centrepiece of our common fight for accountability. I appeal to all of you today: Live up to the commitment we have made when signing on to the UN Charter.

“Let us enforce the prohibition of the illegal use of force by making it punishable in the highest court of criminal law that we have,” she underscored.

[Full statement available here](#)



Prime Minister Antoni Marti Petit of the Principality of Andorra addresses the general debate of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. UN Photo/Cia Pak

For his part, Antoni Marti Petit, Prime Minister of Andorra, describing his country as a “faithful defender of the multilateral order,” called for effective cooperation to address global challenges. No country, no matter how powerful, could handle today’s challenges alone. Meeting development goals required the recognition of the nexus between peace and development.

To that end, development goals would never be met if climate change went

ignored. Catastrophic climate events affected all nations, he said, noting that Andorra is prioritizing the development of renewable energy, production of electric vehicles and finding more effective ways to heat households.

On other issues, he said mutual respect would lead to a more peaceful world, he assured. The link between peace, human rights and inclusive development could not be ignored. Because of that, Andorra would support the International Criminal Court's capacity to act as a matter of course in the most serious issues without the need for Security Council intervention. He also called for limiting veto powers within the Council when dealing with cases of mass atrocities. He insisted "inclusive multilateralism" had to be the guiding principle of all Member States.

[Full statement available here](#)

At UN Assembly, United Arab Emirates stresses its resolve to fight terrorism

22 September 2017 – Rejecting extremism and terrorism, a senior minister from the United Arab Emirates today told the United Nations General Assembly debate that the region must work together to eradicate the threat and its ideological roots.

"The elimination of this threat from our Arab region is within our reach," Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, told the international community.

Despite its commitment for collective action, the UAE representative said that the country is committed to protecting its national interests and security in the Arabian Gulf by not making alliances with any organization that seeks to destabilize its peace.

"We have a clear choice with no alternative: to stand against terrorism in all its manifestations and to stand against all perpetrators without exception," the Minister said.

"We must demonstrate zero tolerance to those who spread violence, fear and destruction among innocent people, and those who provide support and safe haven to terrorist groups."

[Full statement available here](#)

[Full statement available here](#)

Enhancing connectivity, market access 'priority' for landlocked nations, Mongolia tells UN

22 September 2017 – Due to climate change, Mongolia is exposed to multiple environmental challenges, namely desertification, drought, land degradation, wildfires and other calamities, its Foreign Minister said today at the United Nations General Assembly.

“Thus, preserving ecosystem balance, protecting natural resources, ensuring their appropriate use and rehabilitation, as well as promoting green economic growth are the main goals of the Government Action Plan for 2016-2020,” said Minister for Foreign Affairs Tsend Munkh-Orgil during the high-level annual debate.

For its part, Mongolia will work to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 14 per cent by 2030, he said.

Mongolia’s national agenda for sustainable development envisages the country becoming an upper middle income country by 2030 with poverty eradicated in all its forms while preserving ecological balance and strengthening its democratic governance.

Enhancing connectivity is an urgent priority for all landlocked developing economies, he said, noting that, according to the World Trade Organization, trade costs of these countries amount to applying an ad valorem tariff of 260 per cent to international trade.

To further improve market access to main trading partners, Mongolia is studying the feasibility of free trade agreements with the Eurasian Economic Union, China, and the Republic of Korea. An economic partnership agreement is already in place with Japan, he added.

[Full statement available here](#)