

[At UN, Cuba urges relief to assist storm-hit Caribbean; cites 'setback' in bilateral relations with US](#)

22 September 2017 – In the wake of successive hurricanes Irma and Maria, which tore through the Caribbean and left communities in desperate conditions, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla urged the international community to “give the highest priority to this situation and mobilize resources to assist the small Caribbean Island States and territories.”

Expressing heartfelt sympathies all those affected – including in Mexico which was hit with two earthquakes this month, and the United States, where Hurricane Harvey had struck several southern states – he went on to describe the scene in Cuba, speaking of heart-touching moments from the disaster that also carried a message of hope, scenes such as rescuers saving a girl and giving her back to her mother and of strangers helping one another.

Conveying his country’s gratitude for the offers of assistance from the global community, he also offered strength to neighbouring islands which were also hit hard by the hurricanes and natural disasters.

Turning next to political matters, Mr. Rodriguez Parrilla referred to the address by the US President at the General Assembly earlier in the week, t noted statistics on extreme poverty, hunger and refugee crises, asking how could global challenges be overcome with an “America first” view.

Calling the new Cuban policy of the US “a setback” in bilateral relations, he said it undermined the basis established two years ago for advancing ties characterized by respect and equality. He condemned the “disrespectful, offensive and interventionist” statement made against Cuba by that country’s President, reminding him that the US had no moral authority to judge Cuba.

Despite longstanding tensions with the US, the Minister expressed that he believed in the possibility for coexistence and respect between the two nations.

Concluding his address, he reiterated that the Cuban people will keep up their struggle to achieve the most just society possible. “We will continue to steadily advance down the path of revolutionary transformations that has been sovereignly chosen by all Cubans to further improve our socialism.”

[Full statement available here](#)

At UN Assembly, small island States press for action to mitigate impacts of climate change

22 September 2017 – The President of Kiribati, Taneti Maamau, told the United Nations General Assembly that the theme of its current session – ‘Focusing on People’– reminded world leaders of their responsibility to ensure that human lives, dignity and values prevail over “dollar value.”

Indeed, the shared goal is to “provide a peaceful and secure world, without nuclear weapons, and to promote social progress, better living standards, human rights and dignity for all our citizens,” he told the annual general debate.

Offering condolences to those affected by the recent string of natural disasters in the Caribbean, United States and Mexico, and elsewhere, he stressed that while the plight Kiribati, Tuvalu, Marshall Islands, the Maldives and other small island developing States may not capture global attention, those countries and their people continue to suffer daily from the impact of climate-driven disasters.

“The United Nations must focus on the most vulnerable and underprivileged members of our global family, such as the least developed countries and small island developing States,” emphasized Mr. Maamau. “We must make sure they are not left behind in our global journey towards achieving the global development Agenda [...] We must make sure their voices are heard,” he added.

Asserting that oceans have a strong connection to people, peace and prosperity, the President urged for the formulation of an international legally-binding instrument to manage the use of biological marine diversity beyond national jurisdiction. “We must ensure that urgent and collective action for conservation of our ocean is made so that we do not repeat the same mistake we made with our atmosphere,” he stressed.

Mr. Maamau pointed out that in the quest for sustainable development, the focus is often on economic fundamentals at the expense of human values. He urged compassion for the most vulnerable to transform the world’s challenges, saying “Love, compassion, respect, understanding and kindness are priceless solutions to the mounting problems that we continue to battle.”

[Full statement available here](#)



King Tupou VI of Tonga addresses the general debate of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also addressing the Assembly, King Tupou VI of Tonga shared his concerns over

the conservation and sustainable use of global resources, underscoring the importance of partnerships in collectively achieving the targets, goals and objectives stipulated under international law and internationally-agreed outcomes.

Turning to the 2017 High-Level Political Forum, he highlighted the value of reviewing the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), commending the initiative to examine the complex sustainability challenges facing small island developing States. The King of Tonga fully supported Fiji's Presidency of the Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change this year, to strongly address the adverse impacts of climate change and the urgent need for innovation in adaptation for those island States, and called for the appointment of a UN Special Representative on Climate and Security.

"We have, and continue to, experience the negative impacts of ocean degradation to our livelihoods and culture due to the anthropogenic activities and inter-related devastating effects of climate change," he said.

To Tonga, the successful implementation of SDG 14 – on the ocean and its resources – is critical for the pathway towards sustainable development and its inter-connection with achieving other goals, such as those related to food security, water and sanitation, health, economic growth, and sustainable production and consumption.

He urged strong political will on mainstreaming ocean-related actions in international, regional and national development plans and strategies for the inclusive participation of all stakeholders. "We may be small islands [we are all] large ocean States," he stated.

[Full statement available here](#)



Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare of Solomon Islands addresses the general debate of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Manasseh Sogavare, Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, spoke at length about the negative impacts of climate change, which are occurring at an alarming rate on its shores, as presenting a clear and present danger.

"For us Pacific Island nations, climate change continues to be our enemy [and] we are invaded by this enemy every day," he said.

He also condemned the recent testing of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea over the Pacific Ocean as an insult to the people of the Pacific. "We are ocean people. The sea is our sanctuary. It is the foundation of our heritage," he underscored, denouncing any pollution and contamination of that ocean, which its peoples depend on for their livelihoods.

The Prime Minister highlighted that an unstable climate, and the subsequent

displacement and relocation of people, can exacerbate some of the core drivers of conflict – such as migratory pressures, clash of cultures and competition for resources. “These are threats to the very existence of humanity and could very well morph into threats to global peace and security,” he said, adding that Pacific small island developing States have been requesting the Security Council to address the issue of climate change.

[Full statement available here](#)

Global Goals a ‘blueprint’ for fair and equitable development, Kenya tells UN Assembly

22 September 2017 – Speaking at the 72nd annual general debate at the United Nations General Assembly, Kenya highlighted that the [2030 Agenda](#) and its Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) have provided the globe with a blueprint for a more peaceful world and for making development and globalization “fair and equitable for all.”

In her address, Amina Chawahir Mohamed, the Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Kenya said that her country a firm believer in multilateralism and that it acknowledges the UN’s “remarkable role” in sustaining peace and providing a platform for cooperation and solidarity among nations.

“We know the UN can do better,” she added, noting that the Organization must embrace reforms to adjust to current times, and be more accommodative, more democratic and more effective.

She also voiced concern at “exclusion of countries” at the Security Council, noting that it continues to be “dominated by a small club of countries.”

“This exclusion continues to undermine the legitimacy and even efficiency of the Council; while its operations, on the other hand, raise issues of accountability and transparency.”

Also in her address, the Cabinet Secretary informed the General Assembly of efforts within her country to accelerate implementation of the [SDGs](#) as well as the [Paris Agreement](#) on Climate Change. She also spoke of Kenya’s assistance to refugees and on efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

[Full statement available here](#)

UN officials hail establishment of Technology Bank for world's poorest nations

22 September 2017 – United Nations officials today hailed the establishment of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), which will go a long way in addressing one of the major challenges facing the world's poorest nations.

The Bank, to be headquartered in Gebze, Turkey, also marks the achievement of the first target of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, namely SDG 17.8.

"This achievement is not only highly symbolic but also of great strategic importance to the LDCs in the overall achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals," said Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu, the UN High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

There are currently 47 countries on the list of LDCs, comprising more than 880 million people (about 12 per cent of world population), but accounting for less than 2 per cent of global GDP and about 1 per cent of the global trade in goods.

"We must ensure that the LDCs are not yet again left behind," Ms. 'Utoikamanu told a press conference at UN Headquarters, stressing that access to technology, science and innovation are critical for this group of countries.

The establishment of the Technology Bank was a priority under the Istanbul Programme of Action adopted in 2011, which represented the vision and strategy for the sustainable development of LDCs. Its importance was confirmed in the 2015 [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#), adopted at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, and then again in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Bank is expected to broaden the application of science, technology and innovation in the world's poorest countries. It will improve technology-related policies, facilitate technology transfer and enhance the integration of the LDCs into the global knowledge-based economy.

It will also serve as a knowledge hub, connecting needs, resources and actors; facilitate the access of LDCs to existing technology-related projects; and foster joint initiatives with relevant organizations and the private sector.

"We strongly believe that this Bank will help fill the technology gap and it

will also speed up the structural transformation in the LDCs,” said Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavusoglu.

With the signing of the host country and contribution agreements, the Turkish Government has committed to provide the Bank with \$2 million annually for five years, and also provide personnel and premises in Gebze, which is located outside of Istanbul. It is also planning to implement joint projects with the Bank.

Welcoming the signing of the agreements, Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed [said](#): “We now have a collective responsibility to turn this tool into an effective mechanism for strengthening the science, technology and innovation capacities of LDCs.

“I appeal to Member States and other stakeholders, including the private sector and foundations, to contribute generously to the financing of this Bank so it may reach its potential.”

[Tunisia, at UN, calls for comprehensive response to global terrorism](#)

22 September 2017 – The threat of terrorism has forced Tunisia to double the budget of its military and security expenditures, Foreign Minister Khemais Jhinaoui told the United Nations General Assembly today, stressing that more international support was needed despite the Government’s efforts to stamp out the scourge.

Indeed, the world’s “hotbeds” of terrorism are fueled by poverty and war, and linked to organized crime, refugee flows and large-scale violations of human rights, and he called for a comprehensive global response to the terrorist threat.

On development, Mr. Jhinaoui said Tunisia has mainstreamed the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) in its national plan for 2016-2020, also aligning its development priorities with African Union’s ‘Agenda 2063.’

Noting that Tunisia would present its first report on the implementation of the Goals at the next session of the UN Economic and Social Council High-Level Political Forum, he said it was critical to consider countries’ specific situations as they implemented those targets.

Indeed, reductions in financing to developing countries – especially those in Africa working to achieve those Goals – would have a negative impact. Tunisia had also signed the [Paris Agreement](#), having committed to reducing its

emissions by 41 per cent by 2030.

More broadly, he called for resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict centred on the prompt establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Voicing concern about the conflict in neighbouring Libya, he said Tunisia is playing a mediation role, along with Algeria and Egypt. All solutions to that issue must be in line with Security Council resolutions and avoid creating a leadership vacuum, he added.

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