

Hurricane Irma erased 'footprints of an entire civilization' on Barbuda, Prime Minister tells UN

21 September 2017 – The Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Gaston Alphonso Browne, told the United Nations General Assembly today that after the largest storm ever in the Atlantic Ocean, “the island of Barbuda is decimated; its entire population left homeless; and its buildings reduced to empty shells.”

As all its inhabitants were evacuated to Antigua in the wake of Hurricane Irma, in addition to providing shelter and basic necessities to the residents, the social services on Antigua are under great strain – providing places for 600 additional children; medical services for the elderly; and a means of income for the able-bodied.

“For the first time in over 300 years, there is now no permanent resident on Barbuda. The footprints of an entire civilization have been emasculated by the brutality and magnitude of Irma,” he said.

Mr. Browne stressed that Barbuda is not only a natural disaster, it is a humanitarian crisis that now consumes Antigua. “Whatever position on climate change any nation takes, the evidence of global warming is now irrefutably stronger,” he underscored. “We are the least of the polluters, but the largest of the casualties. The unfairness, injustice and inequality are painfully obvious,” he added.

He pointed out that according to preliminary estimates, rebuilding would cost Barbuda about \$250 million – representing 15 per cent or more of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) of approximately \$1.5 billion. “Antigua and Barbuda urgently requires the assistance of the international community, including the international development and finance institutions, to accomplish this vital task of rebuilding Barbuda,” he said.

Caribbean islands need to construct more resilient buildings and infrastructure, requiring international developmental and financial institutions to provide financing at concessionary rates without artificial impediments – or cost in lives and property would be “too frightening to contemplate.”

[Full statement available here](#)

European ministers tell Assembly UN is proper place to tackle phenomenon of mass migrations

21 September 2017 – From the podium of the United Nations General Assembly today, European foreign ministers called for humane treatment of the hundreds of thousands of refugees flooding into the continent and the orderly management of migrant flows that benefit the countries of origin, transit and destination.

“Large displacements of people have reached unprecedented levels in recent years,” Spanish Foreign Minister Alfonso María Dastis Quecedo told the Assembly’s 72nd general debate.

“The two Global Compacts on Refugees and Migrants that we have undertaken to adopt in 2018 should confirm the concerted, equitable and humane response to the phenomenon of refugees,” he added.

In a wide-ranging speech that touched on all major world crises, as well as development and climate change, Mr. Dastis expressed “the sincere gratitude of the people of Spain for the multitude of heartfelt displays of support and affection we have received from around the world” following last month’s terrorist attack in Barcelona.

“Terrorism will be vanquished through unity, perseverance and the full weight of the law,” he said.

[Full statement available here](#)



Minister for Foreign and European Affairs Jean Asselborn of Luxembourg addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Luxembourg’s Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn, said the UN was the appropriate place to tackle the phenomenon of mass migration.

“The causes are manifold: demographic pressures, climate change, conflict, humanitarian catastrophes. Perfectly respectable economic motivation, both in the country of origin and that of destination are also often the cause of such movement,” he added.

He also called on the five permanent Members of the UN Security Council to forgo the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities, such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

[Full statement available here](#)



Minister for Development Cooperation Ulla Tørnæs of Denmark addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also addressing the UN General Assembly today was Ulla Tørnæs, Minister for Development Cooperation from Denmark, who highlighted the "ever more interconnected" threats and challenges facing the international community, including displacement and irregular migration, as well as violations of human rights and armed conflict.

Given the evolving global landscape, there is a need for leadership and common purpose to steer the UN in a new direction by breaking the status quo and reforming the UN development system, bridging immediate relief and long-term development objectives.

"Staying on the current path is not an option if we want to maintain the legitimacy of the United Nations. Fundamental and ambitious reform is the only way forward," Ms. Tørnæs said.

[Full statement available here](#)

At UN assembly, Croatia calls for treating migrants humanely while also tackling 'root causes'

21 September 2017 – Croatia, a major way-station on the path of tens of thousands of refugees from the Middle East and Asia in 2015, called from the podium of the United Nations General Assembly today for a holistic approach that respects migrants' rights while tackling the root causes of their flight.

"Croatia in the past has been faced with acute refugee and migrant crises," Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic told the Assembly's 72nd general debate. "The approach we took has always been – and will always be – one that puts people first.

"In the context of the upcoming negotiations on the Global Compact on Migration, we would advocate an approach to human mobility that prioritizes safety, dignity and human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, no matter where they come from and where they are headed.

"As with all global challenges, here too a holistic approach is required. We therefore need to work together to fight the root causes of mass migrations –

be it poverty, failing States and wars or climate change and natural disasters – while standing against exploitation and abuse in the context of human trafficking and people smuggling.”

On conflicts, Mr. Plenkovic said that while a consistent approach by UN, and in particular the Security Council, is essential for its credibility, copy-pasted “one-size-fits-all” approaches are not the most effective way to proceed.

[At UN Assembly, Pacific small islands urge collective action against climate change impacts](#)

21 September 2017 – Addressing the 72nd annual general debate at the United Nations General Assembly, leaders from Pacific small Island developing states highlighted the growing impact of climate change on the lives of their people and called for concerted action to address the threat.

“As small island Pacific countries, we are no longer protected by our isolation,” said Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, the Prime Minister of Samoa, adding: “Climate change, like other global challenges, cross borders seamlessly. It has no respect for sovereignty and does not discriminate countries between rich or poor.”

“Its dire consequences are real including [for] those who remain in denial,” he underscored, urging global leaders to collectively prioritize the implementation of the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change.

Also in his address, Prime Minister Malielegaoi, spoke of the importance of the [2030 Agenda](#) and the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) and highlighted that, for small island development States, the 2014 ‘Samoa Pathway’ is their sustainable development roadmap which highlights their key tasks and priorities and links closely with the 2030 Agenda.

The Samoa leader also noted the escalating crisis in the Korean Peninsula and called for visionary leadership to ensure that peace is given a chance. Concluding his remarks, he also informed the General Assembly of the Summit of Leaders of discussions and outcomes at the Pacific Island Forum, which Samoa hosted earlier this year.

[Full statement available here](#)



President Tommy Esang Remengesau, Jr. of the Republic of Palau addresses the

general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also addressing the general debate today, Tommy Esang Remengesau Jr., the President of Palau, said the natural disasters wreaking havoc across many parts of the world are a "harbinger of wars to come on a hotter planet," underscoring the need to the full implementation of the Paris Agreement.

"Palau in the Pacific have experienced, first hand, the impact of climate extremes," he said, adding: "[Climate change impact] is a ticking time-bomb – no one knows when or where the next disaster will strike – but we are a keenly aware that it can wipe out years of progress in a span of hours."

Noting the importance of expanding cooperation with all stakeholders, including with the private, public and non-profit sector, to address the complex challenges facing the planet, he added that UN is the crucial link that can bring global efforts together, and that concerted and united efforts are also crucial to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Concluding his address, President Remengesau also spoke of the need of strong multilateral efforts, within the UN framework, to resolve challenges ranging from international peace and security, global terrorism, large-scale migration and many other difficult issues.

For the success of such efforts, the UN system must be strengthened so that all its Member States can believe in the fairness and effectiveness of the overall international negotiation and dispute resolution process.



Prime Minister Enele Sosene Sopoaga of Tuvalu addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Joining the Pacific leaders expressing concern over the threat posed by climate change, Enele Sosene Sopoaga, the Prime Minister of Tuvalu, also underscored the importance of the Paris Agreement, especially for the tens of millions living in low-lying islands and coastal areas around the world.

"The Paris Agreement is our common hope of a decent life on a sustainable planet. For Tuvalu, it is our hope of security and survival," said the Prime Minister, noting however, that the hope, is however, "dimmed with the announcement by the United States that it will abandon the Agreement."

In his remarks, the Prime Minister also highlighted the importance of the 2030 Agenda and referring to challenges within his country in its implementation, thanked the international community for their help in overcoming them.

He also expressed his country's support for a 'global pact on the environment,' explaining that it would be an international legally binding agreement on the protection of rights to a safe and clean environment.

“We are but on one canoe for humanity, no one country must jump ship! We either must paddle together to keep us afloat and safe. Or allow the canoe to sink, and we all drown. It is our hope, that with this ‘Global Pact’ and the Paris Agreement, the canoe, we can save Tuvalu, and if we can save Tuvalu we can save the world.”

[Full statement available here](#)



Prime Minister Charlot Salwai Tabimasmamas of the Republic of Vanuatu addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also delivering his address before the General Assembly, Charlot Salwai Tabimasmamas, the Prime Minister of Vanuatu stated that the United Nations offered the “best hope and catalyst” for addressing global challenges including those related to peace and security, as well as the environment problems.

In particular, he said that as the impact of climate change continues to grow unabated, world leaders must consider a legal framework to address the issue of climate change refugees, who would be left stranded once their homes and lands disappear.

In his remarks, the Prime Minister also called on Security Council to move beyond political interests of its members and to find compromise solutions. He also said that his country supports Security Council reforms to accord fairer regional representation.

Further in his address, Prime Minsiter Tabimasmamas underscored the importance of implementation of the Paris Agreement and he urged the United States to reconsider its decision on the Agreement and to support its full implementation.

Turning to crisis emanating from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea nuclear weapons development programme, the Prime Minister reaffirmed his country’s commitment to denuclearization of the Pacific region and welcomed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

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

Boost regional cooperation, for the ‘sake of peace and prosperity,’

[Belarus tells global leaders at UN](#)

Boost regional cooperation, for the 'sake of peace and prosperity,' Belarus tells global leaders at UN

21 September 2017 –

The past few decades have been fraught with two contradictory tendencies – enhanced political fragmentation and increased economic globalization, Belarus' Minister for Foreign Affairs told the United Nations General Assembly today.

Vladimir Makei noted that the former has been associated with global political instability resulting from wars, conflicts, terrorism, xenophobia and other factors – giving rise to mounting chaos and despondency. This predicament came about because there was no peace treaty to end the Cold War, as is usual in other major wars. “We were left without a universally accepted framework, which could have guided our subsequent behaviour,” he explained.

“But it is never late to do what is right,” continued Mr. Makei, pointing to the possibility of a negotiating process in which key global powers collectively strategize on building new constructive relations. “Agreements emanating from the dialogue would, essentially, put an end to the last epochal war,” he explained, adding that the UN would have a role in its implementation.

While the second world tendency – increased economic globalization – has contributed to progress and economic development, it appears that the majority of the world's population did not benefit, especially over the last few decades. “As a result,” said Mr. Makei, “we have not been able to eliminate poverty, while inequality has been steadily on the rise.”

Belarus believes that regional integration is a key feature of the contemporary world, as it leaves less room for political fragmentation. While acknowledging that everyone might not agree on the importance of tightening cooperation among regional integration processes, Mr. Makei said “what, however, we are firmly convinced of is that it is high time for all of us to demonstrate urgency in action and cooperation for the sake of peace and prosperity.”

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