

Healthy oceans, safe climate imperative for small islands to survive, Pacific island leaders tell UN

20 September 2017 – As the high-level segment of the United Nations General Assembly continued today, Baron Divavesi Waqa, President of Nauru, expressed deep sorrow and condolences to those who have suffered from the recent successive hurricanes in the Caribbean and United States and earthquakes in Mexico, stressing that “your suffering and grief is shared by us all.”

Mr. Waqa agreed that the full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) be at the centre of the coming year’s work, underscoring that the five words – ‘people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership’ – which guide the goals, are broad enough to encompass collective ideals, while accommodating tremendous diversity.

“In the case of Nauru, our status as a small island developing State underlies every aspect of the lives of my people,” he said.

Noting that Nauru was among the first countries to ratify the [Paris Agreement](#), the President pointed out that “more than most, our prospects depend on a stable planet, including a safe climate and healthy oceans.”

“Climate change will be the defining security challenge of the century and we are simply not prepared for life on a hotter planet,” Mr. Waqa asserted. For that reason, Nauru supports the appointment of a UN Special Representative on Climate and Security.

He also urged that the mounting threats to the health of the world’s oceans be tackled ambitiously. Pointing to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing as a great threat and economic loss to his country’s small economy, he emphasized that “security of our Oceans is a problem which must also be tackled by us all.”

[Full statement available here](#)



Prime Minister Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama of the Republic of Fiji addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also taking the podium, the Prime Minister of Fiji, Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, said his people share a special sense of solidarity with those affected by the recent hurricanes and earthquakes, recalling that Fiji lost 44 individuals and a third of its economy last year when struck by the

biggest cyclone ever to make landfall in the southern hemisphere.

As the incoming president of the 23rd session of the States parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Mr. Bainimarama is deeply conscious of the need to lead a global response to the underlying causes of these events. "The appalling suffering in the Caribbean and the United States reminds us all that there is no time to waste," he said.

"Unless we tackle the underlying causes of climate change, we already know that some places will become unlivable and others will disappear altogether," he stressed, noting that Fiji has offered refuge to the people of Kiribati and Tuvalu, its neighbours at risk.

Climate change affects Fijian lives, whether it is entire villages being moved away from rising seas; the loss of ancestral burial grounds; salinity affecting crops; or the constant threat of destruction to homes and infrastructure.

Noting that 2018 will mark 40 years that Fiji has helped to make the world more secure through its contribution to UN Peacekeeping, Mr. Bainimarama expressed his determination that his country would make a successful contribution to the wider security of the planet through its leadership of the next climate change conference.

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[Kuwait to host donors conference on rebuilding Iraq, Prime Minister tells UN Assembly](#)

20 September 2017 – Kuwait intends to host an international donors conference in the coming year to help Iraq rebuild the areas devastated by the war against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or Da'esh) terrorist group, the Kuwaiti Prime Minister told the United Nations General Assembly today.

"The position of the State of Kuwait in condemning terrorism in all its forms and manifestations is principled and constant," said Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al Sabah, congratulating the Government and people of Iraq on victories that its forces are achieving on the ground against ISIL.

He expressed hope those victories and national reconciliation efforts will eventually create the appropriate environment for starting rebuilding and reconstruction efforts, and for the return of the refugees to their homes.

He went on to note that Kuwait hosted international donor conferences in 2013, 2014 and 2015, in support of the humanitarian situation in Syria, and co-chaired the 4th international donor conference, held in London in February 2016, as well as the 5th international donor conference held in Brussels, in April 2017.

On the Israel-Palestine conflict, the Prime Minister appealed to the international community and the UN Security Council to continue to pressure Israel to implement the UN resolutions towards the attainment of all the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people, and the recognition of their own independent state, over their own territory, with East Jerusalem as its capital, along the borders of 4 June 1967.

On the Security Council reform, he renewed his country's call for the necessity of that 15-member body to reflect new international realities and ensure permanent Arab representation commensurate with the number of Arab States and their contribution in supporting the different activities of the United Nations.

[*Full statement available here*](#)

Africa must be allowed to play rightful role in international affairs, Moroccan Minister tells UN

20 September 2017 – With the world at a crossroads – battered by climate change, threatened by terrorism and extremism, and struggling with deepening inequality – it is not only time to bolster multilateral cooperation, but to make use of the vital capacities that can be provided by the dynamism of the African continent, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Morocco told the General Assembly today.

Addressing the Assembly's annual general debate, Nasser Bourita cited a raft of global ills, and noted that while globalization has driven the international economy it has also increased employment instability and widened the economic gaps between and within nations. Similarly, the Internet had created unprecedented opportunities for growth and development but it has also provided a space for extremists and terrorist groups to promote their nefarious aims.

"All this means our collective working mechanisms need to be reformed," said Mr. Bourita, stressing that Morocco is convinced that a global organization that is effective and truly multilateral can help solve the problems the world is facing. Morocco is equally convinced that Africa can no longer be seen as a burden on the global community – the continent must play its role

in tackling global challenges, including broader development.

“Africa has not held its rightful place in the [international arena]. It should not be dealt with based only on how much assistance it receives, or how “many agenda items it takes up” at UN meetings. Indeed, Africa has imbued with immense human and natural resources. In that regard, Morocco viewed South-South cooperation as a major opportunity for forming development partnerships that could assist African countries, bolster foreign direct investment and increase African participation, with increased equal footing, in global mechanisms.

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

‘We all share a responsibility’ to combat terrorism, President of Senegal tells world leaders

20 September 2017 – Addressing the United Nations General Assembly, the President of Senegal expressed his desire for a peaceful and secure African continent – one that does not serve as a sanctuary for terrorists defeated elsewhere in the world.

“Senegal, I reiterate, strongly condemns terrorism, wherever it strikes. Nothing, let alone religion, can justify such violent fanaticism,” President Macky Sall of Senegal told world leaders gathered at the 72nd annual general debate.

“At the same time,” he underscored, “we cannot accept that Islam is associated with violence. We cannot accept that Muslims be held responsible for violence that they themselves are victims to.”

“We are all concerned by the terrorist threat and therefore have a responsibility to work together to find concerted solutions to this scourge,” he noted.

Noting that this was the purpose of the Dakar International Forum on Peace and Security in Africa, the fourth session of which will be held in November, President Sall informed the Assembly that the Forum will focus on responding to violent extremism.

“We want an Africa in peace and security; an Africa that does not serve as a sanctuary for terrorist groups fought and defeated elsewhere,” the President noted, explaining that because of this reason Senegal – remaining committed to seven peace missions, including the UN Integrated Multidimensional Mission for Stabilization in Mali ([MINUSMA](#)) – welcomes the efforts of the G5 Sahel

(Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad) and the partner countries in the fight against terrorism.

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

World oblivious to suffering of other minorities in Rakhine, says Myanmar Vice-President

20 September 2017 – Informing world leaders that the violence, suffering and mass displacement in Myanmar’s Rakhine province affects not just Muslim and Rakhine communities, but also other minority groups – to which most of the world has been oblivious – the country’s Vice-President stressed his Government’s deep concern over the situation.

“There is no denying that this is a problem of significant magnitude,” said U Henry Van Thio, the Vice-President of Myanmar. “I am [however] happy to inform you that the situation has improved. No armed clashes have been reported since 5 September.”

Noting that his Government is also concerned over reports that the number of Muslims crossing into Bangladesh remains unabated, the Vice-President said that the reason needed to be found for the exodus.

What is little known is that the great majority of the Muslim population decided to remain in their villages, he stated.

Acknowledging that it is his Government’s “first and foremost” responsibility to respond to the challenges in Rakhine province, he announced the adoption of an integrated national strategy to address the situation there.

Humanitarian assistance also remains a top priority, said the Myanmar leader, adding that the Government is committed to ensuring that aid is received by all those in need, without discrimination.

Further, noting that there has been a call for the repatriation of the displaced people who fled northern Rakhine to Bangladesh, the Vice-President recalled the Myanmar State Councillor’s announcement yesterday in which, according to him, she stated that “Myanmar was prepared to start the verification process at anytime.”

“Our two neighbours have had the experience of such a process in 1993 through the establishment of a joint working group for implementation of repatriation process. We can develop a process based on the experience of 1993,” said the Vice-President.

“The recent events in Rakhine state are a painful reminder that we face difficult challenges ahead on the long journey towards peace, prosperity and democracy,” he added, and further recalled State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s first address to the General Assembly, in which she said:

“As part of this commitment, we have made the national reconciliation and peace process our top priority. Our vision here is clear: to achieve a democratic, federal Union, based on the principles of freedom, justice, equal rights and self-determination.”

Noting that his country has made real progress, he expressed that his Government knows that the road ahead is “long and convoluted.”

“Our democratic transition is fragile. At this important juncture in our nation’s history, we only ask that the international community continues to support our efforts to achieve peace, prosperity and democracy,” urged the Vice-President of Myanmar.

[Full statement available here](#)