

International community must remain united to address global challenges, stresses Italian leader

20 September 2017 – Stressing that terrorism and violent extremism continue to cause much suffering around the globe, Paolo Gentiloni, the President of the Council of Ministers of Italy, called for broad collaboration among countries as well as regional and global organizations to successfully tackle the threat.

In particular, he underscored the need to act against all the dimensions employed by terrorist groups, including the Internet and social media, as well as financing of terrorist activities.

In his address to the 72nd general debate at the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. Gentiloni also highlighted Italy's close involvement in assisting crisis-struck countries around the world, and said that addressing such distressing situations, such as many conflicts across Africa, required dialogue and reconciliation.

Turning to the heightened tensions on the Korean Peninsula due to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) nuclear weapons development programme, he underlined that unity in the international community and determination in its response is vital.

"Full implementation of the pertinent Security Council resolutions [...] is crucial [...] North Korea must immediately end its missile and nuclear proliferation and all provocative actions," he said.

He also noted the progress made by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – under which Iran reaffirmed that it would not seek, develop or acquire nuclear weapons – and said that it remains a "success story in the framework of global efforts to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction."

Further in his remarks, the Italian leader stressed the importance of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and expressed his country's pledge to do its part to ensure its strong implementation.

Mr. Gentiloni also expressed his nation's support for the reform plans proposed by [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres as well as his focus on empowerment of women and girls, and gender equality.

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[Addressing Assembly, Portugal highlights need for UN reform, conflict prevention measures](#)

20 September 2017 – Portugal’s Prime Minister António Luis Santos da Costa took the podium of the General Assembly to reiterate his country’s support of the Secretary-General’s agenda, which includes boosting conflict prevention activities and creating a stronger more adaptable world Organization.

“Your priorities, Mr. Secretary General, are the same as ours: an Organization that is stronger, offers greater solidarity and is capable of preventing conflicts, alleviating human suffering and promoting peace and prosperity.” the Minister said, also mentioning the importance of having a “more transparent, more effective and more adaptable” UN.

As for organizational reform, he said consolidating a culture of conflict prevention requires action across the board and an integrated vision of the three pillars of the UN system –peace, human rights and sustainable development – as well as closer institutional cooperation between the organs of the Charter, namely the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Mr. Santos Costa said the Security Council must be reformed to ensure a better representation of today’s world. “The African continent cannot be denied a permanent presence, and Brazil and India are also two inescapable examples,” he added in his address to the Assembly’s annual general debate.

During his speech, he positioned Portugal as a multilateral country contributing to the battle against terrorism, supporting the protection of migrants and refugees, and makes participation in peacekeeping operations one of the clearest priorities of its foreign policy.

“Multilateralism is the only framework for the defense of the common good of humanity and the collective promotion of peace, security and development. In no way does it diminish the sovereignty of each nation, nor the capacity for decision of their people and institutions,” he told world leaders.

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[Japan’s Abe, at UN General Assembly, calls for ‘action now’ on DPRK nuclear](#)

programme

20 September 2017 – Saying that “all options are on the table,” Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe today took the podium of the United Nations General Assembly to call on world leaders to provide the necessary action now to curb the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s (DPRK) nuclear and missile programmes.

“We consistently support the stance of the United States: that ‘all options are on the table’,” he told the Assembly’s 72nd annual general debate, voicing appreciation for the unanimous adoption on 11 September of the latest and most stringent of many UN Security Council resolutions, further intensifying sanctions against the DPRK.

“But I must make an appeal to you. North Korea has already demonstrated its disregard of the resolutions by launching yet another missile. We must prevent the goods, funds, people, and technology necessary for nuclear and missile development from heading to North Korea,” he stressed.

“What is necessary is action. Whether or not we can put an end to the provocations by North Korea is dependent upon the solidarity of the international community. There is not much time left. The resolution is nothing more than the beginning,” he stated.

Mr. Abe went through a litany of two decades of failed dialogue with the DPRK, which during all that time used the talks as the best means for deception and buying time. “We must make North Korea abandon all nuclear and ballistic missile programs in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner,” he said. “What is needed to do that is not dialogue, but pressure.”

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Conflict prevention, migration and terrorism key concerns for EU and member countries at UN

20 September 2017 – On the second day of the United Nations General Assembly’s high-level debate, Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, underscored that the UN must rise to address many global challenges, including forced displacement and terrorism.

Mr. Tusk said the European Union (EU) continues to receive people in need of protection. He echoed his appeal to the international community to take

responsibility for refugee protection and irregular migration, underscoring the EU's support of the UN process to develop Global Compacts on Refugees and on Regular, Safe and Orderly Migration.

"Your engagement is needed right now, both in terms of money for humanitarian assistance, and more resettlement for those displaced by conflicts in Syria, Yemen, Myanmar, and especially across Africa," he told the Assembly.

In connection with the refugee crisis, Mr. Tusk urged a "crackdown on human smugglers that exploit vulnerable people and violate sovereign borders," and welcomed the International Criminal Court investigation on smugglers in Libya for crimes against humanity.

Against the backdrop of repeated terrorist attacks, he stressed the need for the constant strengthening of the global fight against that scourge and violent extremism, including doing more on counter-radicalization. He reiterated his plea to the world's Muslim leaders to stand strong against Islamist extremism as a real support in fighting terrorism. "In short," the President said "we must be more determined than they are."

[Full statement available here](#)



Sauli Niinistö, President of Finland, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

In his address, the President of Finland called the Secretary-General's determination to reform the UN "laudable," spotlighting that transparency, accountability, efficiency and gender balance "should be the guiding principles of the UN system."

Sauli Niinistö also welcomed the Secretary-General's focus on conflict prevention, advocating for the marginalized to be given a voice in peace processes. "Women, children and adolescents often pay the highest price in conflicts but they can also help to pave a way out of the crisis," he told the Assembly, while pointing to Finland's contribution in establishing a Nordic network of women mediators who provide inclusive and meaningful participation in all phases of peace processes.

Pledging his support for UN peacekeeping reform, he drew attention to Finland's increased participation in UN police missions – now through seven UN operations, including a specialized team on sexual and gender based violence in South Sudan. "It is my strong view that no UN peacekeeper nor any other UN personnel should be associated with misconduct of any shape or form. In particular, there must be 'zero tolerance' with regard to sexual exploitation and abuse," he stressed.

Turning to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mr. Niinistö called that country's nuclear weapons programme "a threat to global peace and stability," that must be stopped. While stressing the importance of the continued unity of the Security Council, he underscored: "Such behaviour

cannot be tolerated by the international community.”

Before leaving the podium, Mr. Niinisto expressed his strong belief that global challenges and threats be addressed together by the world community. “Peace and security, human rights and development belong to all of us. Only together can we make this world a better place,” he concluded.

[Full statement available here](#)



Rumen Radev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also taking the podium, President Rumen Radev of Bulgaria spoke in depth about international peace and its links to the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), telling the Assembly that the UN peace and security architecture, together with the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, “have provided a solid foundation for achieving peace and prosperity.”

Mr. Radev stressed that Bulgaria supports a surge in diplomacy for peace that places prevention as an overarching priority. “Prevention and mediation are essential means of reducing human suffering, including in addressing the root causes of forced displacements, bringing humanitarian, development and peace-building efforts together,” he elaborated.

The President pointed out that armed conflicts in many parts of the world continued to undermine peace and human values, asserting that “protracted conflicts require a holistic UN response encompassing preventive diplomacy, mediation, peace-building and effective special political missions.”

Calling climate change “one of the biggest challenges of our time,” he noted that the phenomenon not only impedes the well-being of countries, but also poses security threats to many of them.

Mr. Radev wrapped up his address by drawing attention to the need for promoting equality, countering discrimination and ensuring respect for human rights as keys to achieving lasting peace and sustainable development, saying “we believe that the protection of human rights should be placed at the centre of all action undertaken by the UN.”

[Full statement available here](#)



Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session

For his part, Netherlands Prime Minister Mark Rutte pointed out that the problems confronting today’s world, such as climate change, migration, terrorism and cybercrime, are by definition international.

“No single country can tackle them in isolation. We need each other. [...] In this turbulent world, the importance of the UN is growing every day, he told the Assembly.

The Prime Minister said “cooperation is key” when it comes to preventing terrorism, and that the UN is the prime forum for international cooperation. As a good example of cooperation, he pointed to the Global Counterterrorism Forum, saying its work “is not high-profile – most of it goes on behind the scenes – but it saves many lives.”

Turning to conflict, Mr. Rutte flagged that not enough attention is being devoted to the early its early stages of development, saying “That has to change.” He pointed to the MINUSMA peacekeeping mission in Mali where the Netherlands is using intelligence to carry out long-range reconnaissance work in anticipation of conflict – instead of waiting for it to happen.

Conflict prevention ties in with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which he calls “the ultimate prevention agenda” as “they address the drivers and root causes of instability and conflict.”

“Investing in human dignity, eradicating poverty, fostering climate resilience and promoting economic and social progress will reduce the incidence of conflict, instability and despair. Development and lasting peace – all in one package,” Mr. Rutte maintained.

[Full statement available here](#)

[UN offers up new strategy to advance peace, stability in Libya](#)

20 September 2017 – [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today launched a United Nations strategy to help bring about peace and stability in Libya and end a protracted crisis that has caused immense suffering and contributed to instability beyond the country’s borders.

“It is my deep belief that there is an opportunity for a political solution in Libya,” Mr. Guterres [said](#) at the high-level event held on the margins of the annual debate of the General Assembly, adding that everyone needs to come together to ensure that this opportunity translates itself into a reality.

Despite a nearly two-year-old Political Agreement, Libya remains fraught with numerous challenges, including insecurity, frustration, political dysfunction and economic despair.

“The Libyan people have suffered too much,” stated the Secretary-General, voicing deep concern about the political, security, socio-economic and

humanitarian situation in the North African nation.

“Looking ahead, it is crucial to fashion a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political solution.”

Mr. Guterres outlined the UN strategy, which has seven main priorities, beginning with reinvigorating an inclusive political process by building on recent positive developments.

The other priorities are: building credibility with the Libyan people; strengthening security arrangements and national security architecture; coordinating international engagement, including the efforts of Libya’s neighbours, so that all are part of a single common agenda; improving socio-economic conditions and the provision of goods and services, for a true peace dividend to be felt by the people; supporting migrants and upholding long-standing international norms on migration; and securing predictable support for humanitarian assistance.

The Secretary-General added that his Special Representative for Libya, Ghassan Salamé, will strive to unify and consolidate the various initiatives, and to promote dialogue towards the formation of a unified national government and the immediate end of parallel institutions.



Secretary-General António Guterres addresses the High-level Event on Libya. Listening are Fayez Mustafa Serraj (left), President of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord of Libya and Ghassan Salame (right), Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNSMIL. UN Photo/Mark Garten

Elaborating on next steps, Mr. Salamé [said](#) that the first stage must be to amend the Libyan Political Agreement, which in its current state is not adequate. Once the amendments have been adopted, the second stage is a National Conference that will open the door to “those ostracized, those self-marginalized, those players who have been reluctant to join the political process.”

Following the conference, the House of Representatives would be expected to prioritize the legislation for a constitutional referendum, as well as presidential and parliamentary elections. In parallel, the Constitutional Drafting Assembly will review and refine its work, taking into consideration the observations and suggestions expressed during the National Conference.

Mr. Salamé, who heads the UN Support Mission in Libya ([UNSMIL](#)), noted that this political sequence must be underpinned by concrete progress in a number areas, including preparation by the High National Election Commission for electoral events; dialogue with armed groups with the aim of integrating their members within the political process and civil life; an initiative to unify the national army; and continued and intensified local reconciliation efforts.

"This process, in all its stages, is indeed meant to prepare the proper conditions for free and fair elections, which will usher Libya into institutional and political normalcy," said the Special Representative.

"There is much to be done, and this plan is certainly ambitious. However, if the Libyan people can come together in the spirit of compromise and together write a new common national narrative, this plan is achievable."