

## Panama vows to combat drug trafficking, asks for help to eliminate 'blood money' driving scourge

20 September 2017 – The most effective way to solve problems that affect the world's people is always placing human beings at the centre of all decisions, the President of Panama told the United Nations General Assembly today, stressing that his country, which joins North and South and which is bordered by the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, would continue to be a beacon of cooperation and understanding.

"I have always been aware of Panama's calling as facilitator of dialogue and understanding; a country [that will] work in the service of the international community [and] contribute our resources to address the common problems affecting the region" contributing to wider peace and security, Juan Carlos Varela Rodriguez said in his address to the Assembly's annual general debate.

While the countries of the wider region, including Colombia, are indeed making solid progress, he said "our continent faces a problem which transcends borders: increasing production of drugs and drug trafficking," he said calling on leaders to tackle this pressing challenge head on.

Panama, for its part, reiterated its commitment to maintain a fight against drug trafficking, putting all its capacities and resources at the service of the region to eliminate the scourge. "At the same time, I appeal to the leaders and Heads of State of producing countries and consumers of drugs to support us in this struggle; every dollar generated by the drug trafficking represents a death in our region," he underscored.

Turning to Venezuela, he said it would be a serious miscalculation for that country's Government to try to impose a single-party political model. Among other things, such an action would increase outward migration. Amid such challenges, he vowed to remain "on the front line" of efforts to strengthen unity among countries of the Americas and called on Panama's neighbours to do to the same.

"We do not have time and space to waste in squabbling amongst ourselves," he said as he turned to global challenges. Condemning all acts of terrorism, he called on the Security Council to strengthen measures to foster lasting peace in such places as Syria and Iraq, and condemned the irresponsible leadership of such Governments as that in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which sought to destabilize regions.

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

---

## Focus on people's prosperity key to sustainable development, says Kyrgyz leader at UN Assembly

20 September 2017 – Noting that the only source of power in his country is its people, the President of Kyrgyzstan highlighted that the country's path to sustainable development has a focus on ensuring the Kyrgyz peoples welfare and prosperity.

Over the last five years, extreme poverty has fallen by 45 per cent, said Almazbek Atambaev, adding that system-wide efforts have been introduced to address corruption and that the country has embarked on major projects to improve infrastructure, achieve energy independence and create a stable energy sector.

"Kyrgyzstan is among the most free and stable in the Euro-Asian region and boasts a strong civil society," he highlighted.

In his address to the 72nd annual general debate at the United Nations General Assembly, President Atambaev said Kyrgyzstan is elaborating a strategy for sustainable development through 2040, which is aimed at creating jobs, ensuring social well-being, raising living standards and promoting a parliamentary democracy with a strong civil society.

Turning to the challenges posed by climate change, he said that being a mountainous country, Kyrgyzstan is particularly prone to its effects, with all sectors feeling the impact. Calling the transition to sustainable development "a matter of survival," the President said the protection of endangered wildlife, such as the snow leopard, is also critical.

Further in his remarks, the Kyrgyz President underscored that future prosperity is, in part, contingent on the effective use of scarce water resources, he urged for cooperation among countries to resolve any disputes.

In conclusion, he also drew attention to the increasing threat of terrorism and extremism and urged international collaboration and cooperation to combat the scourge, including through tackling the issue of money-laundering and drug trafficking.

---

## [At General Assembly, Iran's chief denounces those seeking to rip apart nuclear pact](#)

20 September 2017 – Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, speaking at the same United Nations podium from which the United States yesterday denounced the accord curbing Iran's nuclear programme as one of the 'worst deals ever,' today pledged his country's continued adherence to the pact.

"I declare before you that the Islamic Republic of Iran will not be the first country to violate the agreement, but it will respond decisively and resolutely to its violation by any party," he told world leaders on the second day of the General Assembly's 72nd annual general debate.

"It will be a great pity if this agreement were to be destroyed by 'rogue newcomers' to the world of politics, the world will have lost a great opportunity," he said. "By violating its international commitments, the new US Administration only destroys its own credibility and undermines international confidence in negotiating with it, or accepting its word or promise."

Endorsed unanimously by the UN Security Council in 2015, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), between its five permanent members (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States), plus Germany, the European Union (EU) and Iran, set out rigorous mechanisms for monitoring limits on Iran's nuclear programme, while paving the way for lifting UN sanctions against the country.

Turning to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Mr. Rouhani said Iran never threatens anyone but also does not tolerate threats, adding that peace, security, stability and the progress of all nations are intertwined.

"It is not possible that a rogue and racist regime trample upon the most basic rights of the Palestinians, and the usurpers of this land enjoy security," he declared. "It is reprehensible that the rogue Zionist regime that threatens regional and global security with its nuclear arsenal and is not committed to any international instrument or safeguard, has the audacity to preach peaceful nations."

[Full statement available here](#)

---

## [Supporting spirit of UN reforms, Rwanda urges world leaders to address global challenges](#)

20 September 2017 – The United Nations must treat all people with impartiality and respect, and be a good steward of the funds entrusted to it, the President of Rwanda today said in his annual address to the General Assembly debate in New York, adding his country's support to the spirit of reform taking root at the Organization.

"Abuse and waste are therefore not a mere public relations problem, but an existential threat, which must be tackled head-on," Paul Kagame said.

He urged support for Secretary General António Guterres, who is leading the reform effort, which President Kagame said would make the UN "not only effective, but transformational."

Mr. Kagame urged other world leaders to address global challenges, saying "we have the tools and the mandates but where we fall short is in getting things done."

"The essence of reform, is a mindset of constantly striving to improve performance and delivery, and holding ourselves responsible for shortcomings and results," he stated.

He also noted areas for closer cooperation between the African Union and the UN on issues related to peace and security, as well as development.

[Full statement available here](#)

---

## [At General Assembly, Bosnia and Herzegovina stresses central role of UN in preventing war](#)

20 September 2017 – The leader of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a country born two decades ago in the deadliest fighting in Europe since the Second World War, today stressed the centrality of the United Nations in resolving crises before they degenerate into war and the flight of refugees.

"In Bosnia and Herzegovina, unfortunately, we know too much about the high price of wars," Dragan Covic, the Chairman of the country's Presidency, told

world leaders from the podium of the UN General Assembly on the 2nd day of its annual general debate.

“On a global level, the United Nations system must be at the heart of all activities using preventive measures to resolve the crises and prevent people from leaving their homes. Again, much of the responsibility for prevention lies with other levels. Within our communities, we must counter all the symptoms of trouble and conflicts,” he added.

He highlighted the importance of correcting social injustice, reconciling the seemingly irreconcilable, persevering in compromise and striving for pluralistic and inclusive solutions.

In a wide-ranging speech Mr. Covic denounced violence against civilians in Syria, backed the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, called terrorism “undoubtedly the greatest evil of today,” and highlighted the importance of gender equality in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) that seek to eliminate a host social ills like hunger and poverty.

[Full statement available here](#)