

Multilateralism key to address complex global challenges, urge South East Asian leaders at UN Assembly

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Speaking at the 72nd annual general debate of the United Nations General Assembly, leaders from South East Asia today highlighted the importance of the spirit of multilateralism to address the myriad challenges confronting the global community.

“This year, we witnessed multiple natural disasters, inflicting heavy losses in human life and property in Cuba, Mexico, the United States and other Caribbean countries,” said Ph?m Bình Minh, the Deputy Prime Minister of Viet Nam in his address, noting also the challenges related to global economy, inequality between and within countries and impact of climate change.

Adding that while the world remains fraught with uncertainties, the adoption of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development offered the most appropriate path to a better future and that it is incumbent upon the international community to bring this “ambitious plan” into reality.

In his address, the Deputy Prime Minister also highlighted the need to ensure sustainable peace, noting that with a commitment to multilateralism, the goals can be achieved. He also noted the need to bolster efforts towards disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and rein in migration and humanitarian crises around the world.

He also spoke of Viet Nam’s close cooperation with member nations of Association of Southeast Asian Nations ([ASEAN](#)) and said that the country looked forward to hosting the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC) this year.

[Full statement available here](#)



Don Pramudwinai, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also speaking today, Don Pramudwinai, the Foreign Minister of Thailand recalled the philosophy of “sufficiency economy” which places emphasis on every person’s potential to mould their lives in harmony with nature.

“When each person can contribute meaningfully to [their] community, the life of the nation will surely be good,” the Foreign Minister, told global leaders, adding that based on the philosophy, which was advocated by the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, the country has formulated its key development frameworks to “focus first on people.”

Noting that on top of challenges such as terrorism, conflicts, irregular migration along with environmental degradation, climate change and disasters, the world faces the grave threat of nuclear weapons, making the current time one in which “humanity is being truly tested.”

In his address, the Thai leader urged the international community to rally behind the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and also expressed concern over the crisis in the Korean Peninsula.

Concluding his remarks, Minister Pramudwinai hailed the importance of multilateralism and called on the UN to take transformative steps in view of current realities and expectations.

[Full statement available here](#)



Prak Sokhonn, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Further today, addressing the UN General Assembly, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cambodia, Prak Sokhonn, underscored the importance of all dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

“The 2030 Agenda is inextricably linked to many issues that perturb the world today, the most pressing one being climate change, which is not only a direct threat in itself but also a multiplier of many other threats – from poverty, diseases and food insecurity to mass migrations and regional conflicts,” he said, highlighting his country’s efforts in address these at the national level.

Also in his address, the Cambodian Minister voiced concern over targeting of his country by some UN agencies and non-governmental organizations over human rights issues, and questioned the impartiality and neutrality of the criticism.

“The issue of human rights and democracy is raised only when the specific interests of certain major powers are at stake, at the vagaries of the moment. Otherwise, it is sheer silence, and often a conspiracy of silence,” the Minister said, adding that non-governmental organizations are “far from being politically neutral.”

Noting that his country had been the victim of political manipulation during the 12 years of the Khmer Rouge regime, during which egregious mass crimes had occurred, but which he said, were denied by the international community.

Also in his address, he voiced concern over the situation in the Korean Peninsula and urged all parties to exercise utmost restraint.

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Pehin Lira Jock Seng, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Brunei Darussalam, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also, speaking today, Pehin Dato Seri Setia Lim Jock Seng, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Brunei Darussalam highlighted his country's efforts to creating a better life for its people, in particular the youth, and noted that such efforts were built on the foundations of ensuring a sustainable future.

"[We] will continue to do what it can to contribute [...] to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, our efforts rest on promoting efficiency in energy consumption and gradually deploying renewable energies," he highlighted.

In his address, the Minister also said that his country would continue to pursue stronger engagement with partners, including ASEAN members, to continue to contribute to global peace and development.

He also noted that Brunei Darussalam looks to the UN to address pressing issues around the globe and in that context, highlighted that it is vital for the Organization to enhance its working relations with all partners and pursue efforts to make itself more strong, effective and efficient.

"As such, we support the Secretary-General's ideas to reform the UN and reposition it to focus more on conflict prevention measures, including mediation," expressing hope that such efforts will help the UN optimize its work and resources and "above all, save lives, safeguard people's dignity, and promote peace and security around the world."

[Full statement available here](#)



Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Anifah Aman of Malaysia addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

In the same vein, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, Dato Sri Anifah Aman, also highlighted his country's efforts to translate into action, the vision of growth which is based on the prosperity and wellbeing of its people while protecting the environment and strengthening peace.

Recalling Malaysia's presentation of its voluntary national review at this year's session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the Minister reiterated that the Government "strives to ensure that each and

every Malaysian has an equitable share in the prosperity and wealth of the country, and that no one will be left behind.”

In his address, the Minister also underscored the threat to the global community from weapons of mass destruction and called for steadfast commitment to international obligations on disarmament and international security through various national, regional and international approaches.

In that context, he also expressed concern over the crisis in the Korean Peninsula and called on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to desist from conducting further nuclear tests and missile launches, to halt its nuclear and ballistic missiles programme, and to comply fully with its international obligations in the interest of the maintenance of international peace and security.

He also drew attention to the plight of Rohingyas who have been displaced from Myanmar and forced to seek refuge in Bangladesh.

“If the current situation is not addressed judiciously, the desperate people in Rakhine will become easy prey to recruitment by extremists. Prolonged frustration, anger and deprivation provide fertile breeding ground for it,” he warned.

Concluding his address he underlined the need for reforms at the UN and expressed support to the Secretary-Generals for his efforts for the same.

[Full statement available here](#)