

62nd SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TODAY AT THE GA

GENERAL DEBATE

1- 3 OCTOBER 2007

GENERAL DEBATE

Speakers

LEGEND

HS= Head of State

HG= Head of Government

FM= Foreign Minister

VP= Vice-President

October 1

Morning Session

1. Israel (DPM)
2. Gabon (DPM)
3. Cambodia (DPM)
4. Laos PDR (DPM)
5. Oman (FM)
6. Syrian Arab Republic (FM)
7. Mongolia (FM)
8. New Zealand (FM)
9. Niger (FM)
10. Liechtenstein (FM)
11. Belgium (FM)
12. Holy See (FM)

Afternoon Session

1. Vanuatu (DPM)
2. Moldova (DPM)
3. Canada (FM)
4. Mali (FM)
5. Hungary (FM)
6. Australia (FM)
7. Yemen (FM)
8. Nepal (FM)
9. Solomon Islands (FM)
10. Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (FM)
11. Tajikistan (FM)
12. Algeria (FM)
13. Jordan (FM)
14. Myanmar (FM)
15. Romania (FM)
16. India (FM)

October 2

Morning Session

1. Kenya (FM)
2. Trinidad and Tobago (FM)
3. Uruguay (FM)
4. Eritrea (FM)
5. Uzbekistan (FM)
6. Maldives (FM)
7. Denmark (FM)
8. Saint Kitts and Nevis (FM)
9. DPR Korea (FM)
10. Guyana (FM)
11. Uganda (FM)
12. Costa Rica (FM)

Afternoon Session

1. Bahamas (DPM)
2. Chad (FM)

Summary

The United Nations General Assembly today wrapped up its General Debate, calling for action on climate change, nuclear nonproliferation and terrorism; a resolution to conflicts in the Middle East, in Darfur, in Myanmar; and a stronger and more representative United Nations. In total, 189 Member States addressed the high-level debate, along with two observers: the Holy See and Palestine. A total of 67 heads of State, 25 heads of government, four vice-presidents, 13 deputy ministers, 66 foreign ministers participated.

During seven consecutive days of discussion that focused on political, ideological and cultural differences among UN member states, the single area of consensus that emerged was the need to act -- and act quickly -- on climate change.

There was a wide recognition that addressing climate change requires "common but differentiated responsibilities" by industrialized and developing countries to reduce emissions while simultaneously investing in economic growth, poverty reduction and new technologies. There was a broad recognition that climate change hampered significantly the achievement of the MDGs and also that the UN was uniquely placed to lead global efforts on this issue.

There was also a broad call for a stronger, more representative and more transparent United Nations, through a reform of the Security Council and by strengthening of the General Assembly as the UN's most representative body.

While most countries reiterated the need to enhance the nonproliferation of nuclear arms, developing countries also highlighted the right to acquire nuclear technology for civil purposes. Several countries, including France and India highlighted nuclear energy as a way of adapting to climate change. The proliferation of small arms were only mentioned by a few small developing countries, where as the use of cluster ammunition bombs was only condemned by several countries from the Middle East region and some European countries such as the Netherlands and Ireland.

On country-specific issues, the conflicts in the Middle East, the Darfur region and Iraq were the most prominent concerns among Member States, followed by Somalia, Congo and Afghanistan. The tensions in Myanmar became part of the daily discourse, as did condemnations of the killing of African Union peacekeepers in Darfur.

After the conclusion of the General Debate, the substantive work of the General Assembly will continue throughout the fall. Humanitarian issues will feature prominently in the Second Committee (disasters and vulnerability, ISDR), the Third Committee (IDPs and refugees), and in the Plenary, where humanitarian coordination will be the focus of the GA's work from 19-24 November. PDSB will continue to provide coverage of relevant GA events throughout the fall.

- 3 Congo (FM)
4. Burkina Faso (FM)
5. Ireland (FM)
6. Kyrgyzstan (FM)
7. Bhutan (FM)
8. Grenada (FM)
9. Saint Lucia (FM)
10. Seychelles (FM)
11. Peru (VM)

October 3

1. Tuvalu (DPM)
2. Côte d'Ivoire (FM)
3. Barbados (FM)
4. Armenia (FM)
5. Ethiopia (FM)
6. Sudan (FM)
7. Namibia (FM)
8. Suriname (FM)
9. Azerbaijan (FM)

Highlights

Climate Change

India said that measures to address climate change must be based on mitigation and adaptation strategies with a "fair burden sharing", noting that developing countries are the most vulnerable to climate change, but lack the means to tackle it. India also said that nuclear energy could be a source to address the inexorably growing demand for new and non-polluting sources of energy to fuel economic development.

Nepal as well as Bhutan underlined the disasters induced by global climate change in the Himalayan region, such as glacial lake outbursts, extreme rainfalls, recurring floods and massive landslides.

Bahamas, Jamaica and Seychelles commended the SG's efforts on climate change and said they were all concerned about the issue as small island developing states. All called for stronger multilateral commitments at the upcoming Bali conference. Seychelles added that climate change will affect food security on islands by disrupting fishing patterns.

Chad hoped the international community would act on climate change, and pointed to the problem of Lake Chad shrinking from 25,000 to 2,500 km, which affects 25 million people.

Disaster Preparedness

The Bahamas stated that the countries of the Caribbean's must prepare for the 'possibility of continued increases in the incidences of natural hazards like hurricanes, floods and earthquakes.' The Bahamas called for international cooperation in national efforts to reduce vulnerability, through assisting with hazard mapping, vulnerability assessments and the implementation of early warning systems. It welcomed the establishment of the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility and reiterated the need to execute the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), as well as for the complementary frameworks such as the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and the Hyogo Framework of Action.

Responsibility to Protect

Syria noted that earlier in the debate, there were calls 'advocating for interference in the internal affairs of states under the pretext of defending human rights and promoting democracy' and added that it questioned 'the discrepancy between words and action' in the light of Palestine, Iraq, Lebanon and other parts of the world.

Australia regards the 'responsibility to protect' the most vulnerable from genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity as 'a central tenet of our shared humanity'. In Australia's view 'the responsibility to protect' underpins the notion that States must protect their own populations and when they fail to do so, the international community has the responsibility to act. It even broadened the concept including the responsibility of the international community to act to confront the range of global challenges from terrorism and climate change to poverty.

Nuclear non-proliferation

Yemen emphasized the right of any country to pursue nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes. It said that it abided by relevant GA resolutions aiming to make the Middle East a nuclear-free zone and called, along with Syria, on Israel to also abide by the NPT regime.

India said the international community needed to intensify its efforts to address the very real threat posed by the link between proliferation of WMDs and related materials to non-state actors. It said the risk posed by the intersection between proliferation and terrorism is "real and serious".

Ireland particularly condemned the use of cluster ammunition bombs.

Cambodia highlighted the importance of the '2001 United Nations Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons' in addressing the issue of the circulation of small arms and light weapons as source for terrorism, violence and regional conflict. Concerning landmines, it highlighted that they are not only a security problem, but also a humanitarian one as the victims become permanently traumatized and physically handicapped.

Lesotho and CAR stipulated that the proliferation of small arms constituted a major problem. CAR mentioned that particularly the conflict in Darfur contributed to a proliferation of small arms in the region. Lesotho regretted that small arms and light weapons were still not registered in an effective manner.

Terrorism

Nepal and India welcomed the adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in September 2006 and called for the early adoption of the Comprehensive Convention against International Terrorism. India said that “we must ensure that there is zero tolerance for all forms of terrorism”.

Libya explained that this would require measures including the promotion of human rights and efforts to fight poverty and encourage democracy. It also said that foreign occupation was “the worst form of terrorism”.

Peace and Security

Ireland called Member States to maintain their support for the United Nations-mandated peacekeeping operations and to ‘ensure that the UN Peace-Building Commission and Peace Building Fund are organized and resourced to fulfill their important mandate.’ It also stated that it has decided to significantly increase its commitment to conflict resolution investing in national research and response capacities as well as capacity building for the African Union and relevant sub-regional organization. Ireland stated that it will be particularly active in Africa and mentioned further its particular interest in exploring the links between climate change and conflict. Ireland offered to share its lessons learned in peace-making and peace-building on issues such as constitutional change, power-sharing, cross-border cooperation, transitional justice, policing and security reform, equality and human rights, conflict over symbols, arms decommissioning and prisoner release.

Belgium stated that the most recent and expensive operations have been deployed in countries, where conflicts were fuelled by the illegal exploitation of natural resources citing DRC, Liberia and Sierra Leone. These conflicts illustrated the urgent need to develop mechanisms that break the link between conflicts and the illegal exploitations of natural resources.

Israel stated that bitter experience had shown that buying extremists is a short-term fix – for which the international community will pay dearly in the long term run and questioned the value of this organization that is unable to take effective action in the face of direct assault on the very principles it was founded to protect.

UN Reform

India and Nepal said reform at the UN would be incomplete without comprehensive reform, expansion of the Security Council and revitalization of the General Assembly. Nepal added that Brazil and Germany also deserved a permanent place in an expanded Security Council, and called for Africa to be fairly represented on the Council. It also welcomed the proposals for UN system-wide coherence on development, environment and humanitarian issues. It also welcomed the restructuring of DPKO and the creation of the new Department of Field Support.

Venezuela said that a multipolar world without hegemony is possible and that United Nations must be transformed. Seventeen years of a unipolar world has shown the need for change and called for democratization and expansion of the Security Council.

Libya said membership in the Security Council should be awarded to geographic blocks rather than to specific countries, calling also for the African Union to be granted permanent membership in the Council.

Development/MDGs/Doha

India said a comprehensive reform of the international financial architecture is a key ingredient in helping countries achieving the MDGs, calling for a greater voice for developing countries in the Bretton Woods institutions. Nepal said the upcoming conference in Doha should be used to meet the financing gap in achieving the MDGs.

Morocco reiterated the pressing need to reactivate the peace process in the Middle East, based on the agreements enshrined in the Roadmap and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Humanitarian financing/GHD

Solomon Islands raised concerns and questioned the mechanisms surrounding humanitarian financing and GHD in cases of emergency relief efforts. It said it “wondered whether the filtering of donor financial assistance through national charitable organizations is calculated to whittle down its value by the consumption of largesse in aid administration and delivery”. It called for principles of efficiency and effectiveness to guide humanitarian relief efforts. It said that human charity and human suffering are “done a disservice when disasters create a feeding frenzy for non-governmental charitable organizations”. It underlined the need for concerted international action to “regulate humanitarian aid collection and delivery”.

Gender equality

Nepal supported the establishment of an “effective gender architecture in the United Nations and an even stronger regional and country presence of the UN on gender issues”.

Hungary maintained that gender should be mainstreamed throughout the UN system.

Regional Issues

Darfur, Chad and CAR

Sudan highlighted the Darfur Peace Agreement and the formation of the Darfur Transitional Authority as important steps towards peace. It also reiterated its full support of the AU/UN initiative under Mr. Jan Eliasson and Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim as well as Sudan’s readiness for the peace talks in Libya scheduled to take place on October 27. Sudan also condemned ‘the unfair and hostile ill-intentioned campaigns from some international quarters bent on exploiting the crisis in Darfur.’

Yemen said it supported the efforts of the Government of Sudan to restore peace in Darfur and welcomed the new security initiative put forward by the Security Council, noting however that the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Sudan should never be jeopardized.

Libya underlined its ongoing contributions to peacekeeping efforts in CAR, in monitoring the border between Chad and Sudan, and its commitment to contribute to peacekeeping in Darfur.

Eritrea said it would continue working closely with all concerned parties in the ongoing conflict in Darfur and said it looked forward to the October meeting in Tripoli.

Chad welcomed resolution 1778 and noted that its implementation helped significantly to assist the Chadian Police, which are responsible to protect refugees, IDPs, civilians as well as humanitarians. It further assured Chad’s continued cooperation with the United Nations. Chad also welcomed the talks held with armed groups operating in the Sahara region in Tripoli and expressed its hopes that a peaceful solution will be found.

Ireland announced that it expects to make substantial contributions to the UN-mandated mission in Chad and CAR to assist refugees and address the regional dimension of the Darfur crises.

Middle East – Palestinian conflict

Yemen said it hoped the United States would keep to its promise regarding the establishment of a viable Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. It said a sustainable solution to the crisis would also need to be based on Israel’s full withdrawal from occupied territories and the full return of refugees. Yemen also called on Palestinians factions to return to dialogue and to reunite their positions.

Libya condemned the building of an “apartheid wall” in the Palestinian territories and brought attention to the denial of food and medical assistance for the Palestinian people due to the ongoing occupation.

Myanmar

Myanmar condemned neo-colonialist interference in the form of economic sanctions and media campaigns that “spread disinformation that the country concerned is committing gross human rights violations”. It warned the international community against such neo-colonialist attempts, saying that the destiny of each and every country can only be determined by its government and people. It said, however, that “normalcy had now returned” in the country, explaining that security personnel had “exercised utmost restraint”, taking action only to restore public order. Myanmar said it would continue to cooperate actively with the Secretary-General with regard to his good offices role mandated by the GA, and underlined that it had agreed to the visit of Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari.

Iraq

Yemen welcomed the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1770 on Iraq. It called on all foreign parties to cease interfering in Iraq’s internal affairs and urged the international community to reject any plans to divide Iraq.

Morocco called on the various factions to allow for dialogue and national reconciliation in the interest of preserving the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq.

Syria stated that there are 1.6 Mio Iraqi refugees in Syria today. In addition to security and social repercussions associated with their presence, Syria is bearing enormous financial burdens. Syria also mentioned its dissatisfaction over ‘the international community’s attitude to discharge its responsibility towards the Iraqi refugees until it becomes safe for them to return to their homes and countries.’ It also said that the occupying

power spends hundreds of billions of dollars on military operations inside Iraq but fails to allocate any resources to assist Iraqis who have been forced out of Iraq as a result of occupation and its concomitant repercussions.

Syria stressed the need for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Iraq, subject to the agreement of the Iraqi government, because this measure will contribute to curing the violence.

Nagorno-Karabakh

Armenia stated that the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh does not belong into the United Nations General Assembly because it is dealt with by the OECD. It also stated that it was inching towards a solution through negotiations with Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan stated that it is still facing the continued occupation by Armenia and that it is hosting around one million refugees and IDPs who were brutally expelled from their homes. It also stated that the negotiations on the conflict resolution carried out within the OECD have not yielded any results so far and called upon Armenia 'to recognize that their policy of breaching peace and stability in the region has very dangerous, counterproductive and disastrous implications on the long-term.'

Horn of Africa

Eritrea said "Ethiopia's invasion and occupation of Somalia had become a serious security concern in the region", and called for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Ethiopian troops. Eritrea also condemned the ongoing Ethiopian occupation of Eritrean territories which it said contributed to create a "climate of permanent and escalating tension" in the region, also calling attention to the issue of Eritrean IDPs displaced by the occupation. It thus repeated its call to the Security Council to take remedial action, notably regarding the border demarcation process.

Yemen welcomed the recent signature of a peace agreement between Somali factions in negotiations facilitated by Saudi Arabia. It called on the international community to support the Transitional Government, and emphasized the need to provide for a sufficient level of African peacekeeping troops in order to fully stabilize Somalia.

Somalia called for speedy action to meet humanitarian needs in Somalia and stated the protracted civil war and persistent fragmented conflicts over the last two decades has been exacerbated by natural disasters. Somalia further expressed its regret that 'its efforts in nation-building and state institutions development were confronted with unreceptive response and reticence of inexplicable nature' and added that the collective action of the United Nations was 'less consistent and devoid of vigor,' referring to the 'dragging adoption of the resolution on the timely deployment of a peacekeeping mission in Somalia.' It also paid special tribute to the helping hand of the Ethiopian forces and the Ugandan led African Union forces.

Ethiopia did not refer to Somalia directly and merely mentioned briefly that it will continue its support to stabilize the region.

Nepal

Nepal commended the role of the United Nations Missions in Nepal in supporting the peace process, including in the fields of arms monitoring and technical electoral support. It said it would establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and hold elections to a Constituent Assembly all within the agreed timeframe. It invited friendly countries and organizations to send observers during the elections. Nepal highlighted the 100,000 refugees from Bhutan sheltered in the country since 1990 and called on the Bhutanese government to facilitate their return and repatriation. Nepal said that it was however positively considering offers towards voluntary third country resettlement, and thanked UNHCR for its assistance in providing care for these refugees.

Western Sahara

Morocco said that the "Moroccan Sahara issue was witnessing a historical turning point". It welcomed the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1754 which recognized the Moroccan Initiative on a Status of Autonomy as a "serious and credible" path forward.

Uganda

Warning that peace talks were taking too long, Uganda told the General Assembly that the international community must step up the pressure on the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) to meet its commitments under an agreement aimed at ending hostilities in the long-running civil war in the country's north.

DRC

Uganda called on the Security Council to reinforce the mandate and resources of the UN Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC) to enable it to work more effectively with the Congolese national armed forces "to totally eradicate the threat of negative forces operating on the DRC territory."