

62nd SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TODAY AT THE GA

GENERAL DEBATE

27 SEPTEMBER 2007

GENERAL DEBATE

Speakers

LEGEND

HS= Head of State
HG= Head of Government
FM= Foreign Minister
VP= Vice-President

Morning Session

RWANDA (HS)
CROATIA (HS)
SERBIA (HS)
COLOMBIA (HS)
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (HS)
TIMOR LESTE (HS)
UNITED REP. OF TANZANIA (HS)
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (HS)
EQUATORIAL GUINEA (HS)
TIMOR-LESTE (HS)
GUATEMALA (HS)
CAMEROON (HS)
NETHERLANDS (PM)
KUWAIT (DPM)

Afternoon Session

GUINEA-BISSAU (HS)
MICRONESIA (FS) (HS)
NAURU (HS)
COMOROS (HS)
SLOVENIA (HG)
BANGLADESH (HG)
ANDORRA (HG)
THAILAND (HG)
PAPUA NEW GUINEA (HG)
ALBANIA (HG)
VIET NAM (HG)
GUINEA
BURUNDI (VP)
LIBERIA (VP)
GAMBIA (VP)
PALAU (VP)
TOGO (FM)
UNITED KINGDOM (FM)

UNITED NATIONS WEBCAST

<http://www.un.org/webcast>

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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GA BROADCAST BY TELEPHONE

x7.9420 (GA floor), x7.9421
(English),
x7.9422 (French)

Summary

Myanmar must end its use of violence against the Buddhist monks, cooperate fully with the United Nations envoy and work towards a peaceful transition to democracy – or potentially face “measures” through the Security Council and elsewhere, said delegations during Thursday’s General Debate. Many also called for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi along with other political detainees.

Speaking on behalf of ASEAN, of which Myanmar is a member, Thailand said it found it “unacceptable the commission of violence and bodily harm to Buddhist monks and other demonstrators in Yangon,” and demanded that the Myanmar Government “immediately desist from the use of violence against the demonstrators.”

“A strategy of isolating and punishing a whole community is not the best way to advance the cause of freedom and democracy,” said Timor-Leste.

The Netherlands condemned the “brutal use of force” by the Government of Myanmar and said that “if the Security Council should not reach an agreement, the European Community and the United States, along with other “well-intentioned countries” will decide on further measures.

Delegations also supported the Secretary-General’s decision to send his special envoy to Myanmar to help defuse the tensions, and urged the government to grant him access to all parties.

“It is good that the Burmese government has allowed the SG’s special envoy into the country, but it is vital that they now use this to start the process of reconciliation,” said the United Kingdom.

As during previous sessions of the General Debate, delegations, representing a range of regions and interests, used the opportunity of having the global ear to make strong statements about ongoing conflicts requiring international attention.

On peace in the Middle East, nearly every delegation urged progress toward a two-state solution that addresses the security, social and economic needs and rights of both the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Timor-Leste, called the Palestinians victims three times over: victims of obstinate Israeli policies, victims of regional power manipulations and victims of their own sectarian violence. It called for an immediate implementation of the road map.

On Iraq, The Gambia said the alarming rate of civilian death, suffering and displacement cannot be justified. It urged the international community to find alternate solutions to the resolution of the conflict. In Afghanistan, the UK called for back-up military efforts to secure safe space for economic, social and political reconstruction. On Palau said it would send peacekeepers to Darfur to play its part in a “critical demonstration of international concern.”

Highlights

Climate Change

Colombia reaffirmed its commitment to fight global warming and highlighted a new law that protects the rainforest. It also mentioned the remuneration of thousands of “forest keeper families” that have abandoned the production of coca and now work towards the recovery of destroyed forests.

Tanzania highlighted the effects that climate change has had on the environment of the region: frequent and prolonged droughts causing a significant drop of water levels in the Great Lakes, a decline in crop yields as well as a dramatic shrinking of the glaciers on Mount Kilimanjaro. In order to meet these challenges, Tanzania has adopted a National Adaptation Programme for Action, which give the framework for systematic needs-assessment for adaptation and poverty reduction.

Micronesia and Nauru said that as Small Island Developing States, they are extremely concerned about the implications of climate change and urged developed to support adaptation/mitigation fund.

The UK said that the climate change bill to be enacted in Parliament’s next session put into law its commitment to cut carbon emissions by at least 60 percent by 2050, against the 1990 level (the EU standard). It called for similar binding commitments across all rich nations.

Reform

Rwanda, Viet Nam and Tanzania expressed their appreciation at being selected as one of the first eight pilot countries for this reform.

Timor-Leste stated that it is an absurdity that Asia, which contains almost half of the world population, should be so grossly under-represented in the Security Council and called for its expansion to include India, Indonesia, Japan, Brazil, South Africa and Germany.

The Netherlands stated that ‘we have planted a forest of UN flags in various countries’ and that a more unified approach is needed in order to help the poorest developing countries effectively. It called for a pooling of resources in a single programme in each country to enhance the efficiency of the United Nations’ work, adding that the Netherlands now funds various UN organizations based on multiyear plans. It called upon others to do the same.

Liberia called on Member States to give meaning and expression to gender equality. It proposed that the UN recommit itself to ensuring an equitable partnership of women and men in the leadership of the organization. Reforming the United Nations also means reforming our attitude toward women and other minority groups worldwide and that there is no doubt that women would significantly contribute to the change process in this organization.

The UK said it could welcome the prospect of intergovernmental discussions on reform of the Security Council, and supported the permanent membership of Germany, Japan, India and Brazil and permanent representation from Africa.

Terrorism

While stressing the importance of the threat of terrorism, Equatorial Guinea highlighted that there has been a tendency to ignore a similar problematic phenomenon, that of mercenaries. Like terrorists they act to destabilize countries on behalf of private interests, such as oil companies have done in Equatorial Guinea.

Slovenia said that finalizing the UN Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism must remain one of the key priorities, as does the actual application of the responsibility to protect.

The UK said that if Iran wants to be a leading and respected country, it must cease support for terrorism groups in Iraq and Afghanistan and end its defiance of the Security Council resolutions with respect to its nuclear programme.

HIV/AIDS

Liberia said that there is a correlation between war, civil conflict and the spread of HIV/AIDS, as prevalence rates are known to rise in countries with mass population movements. It called upon the international

community to give special attention to HIV/AIDS post-conflict countries if the scourge of the pandemic is to be overcome.

Migration

Cameroon was the only country to mention the issue of migration, particularly the northern movement of thousands of young Africans to seek better lives. As this phenomenon will certainly increase, it called upon home, transit and host countries to find humane solutions that consider the root causes of migration.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation

Timor-Leste commended the six-party talks on North Korea and highlighted that patient diplomacy may advance even the most intractable conflicts. While expressing its deep concern with the climate of mistrust and confrontation over the Iranian nuclear issue, it called upon Iran to do more to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Kuwait welcomed the agreement reached between Iran and the IAEA and urged the international community to pressure Israel to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty and subject all its nuclear facilities to the safeguard of the IAEA.

Responsibility to Protect

The Netherlands stressed the importance of implementing principle of responsibility to protect rapidly.

The UK said that its version of the responsibility to protect includes improve our capacity to prevent conflict, particularly by controlling the spread of weapons, whose easy availability makes it easy to set up militias and promote violence and mayhem.

Region/ Country Issues

Asia

Thailand said that promoting closer cooperation between ASEAN and the UN on common values and goals will contribute to restoring faith in the multilateral system.

Great Lakes

Rwanda said that many of those responsible for the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 are still active in Europe, America and Africa where they continue to promote their ideology of genocide. It also said the presence of the costly MONUC mission in DRC has not diminished their activities.

Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and the formation of national armed forces are the main priorities for Democratic Republic of the Congo. It called for the United Nations to assist to disarm and repatriate non-state armed groups, if necessary by force. It said it also should, through all means and with urgency, resolve the residual problems of insecurity in North Kivu, as it is not reasonable that the Congolese people continue to be subjected to many forms of violence on a daily basis.

Chad/CAR/Darfur

Cameroon expressed its concern about the instable situation in its neighbouring countries Chad and CAR. As security is worsening within those countries, it also highlighted the enhanced insecurity across borders affecting Cameroon and other countries in the region. Cameroon also expressed its appreciation over the announced deployment of a UN-AU hybrid force in Darfur and highlighted the need to also address the root causes of the conflict, in particular the issue of access to water resources.

The UK said that following agreement on a course of action in resolution 1769, we need to get on with agreement on composition, swift deployment, the protection of the civilians on the ground, and a political process in which the legitimate grievance of the Darfur people is addressed through negotiations.

Kosovo

Serbia stated that it is ready to compromise on the issue of Kosovo, if the legitimate interests of democratic Serbia and the specific needs of the threatened Serbian community were taken into account..

Colombia

Colombia stated that with the backing of the United Nations it makes a great effort to assist displaced persons and that it has multiplied the budget by ten to protect them. It said that different UN entities constitute a "valuable support" in the task of assisting displaced people.

Comoros

Comoros said it is facing armed rebellion and called upon the international community to do more to help.

Liberia

Liberia welcomed the recent decision by the Security Council to lift the sanctions on the timber and diamond sectors in Liberia. It pledged its cooperation with the UN on strengthening good governance procedures and said that the sanctions helped to accelerate the adoption of new laws and mechanisms that will prevent the need for sanctions in the future.

Zimbabwe

The UK said the situation in Zimbabwe requires UN action to support African leadership to reverse the vicious cycle of economic and social devastation that now afflicts the country.