



**Remarks**

**by**

**H.E. Ambassador John W. Ashe**

**President of the 68<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations**

**General Assembly**

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on the margins of the UN General Assembly**

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President Rouhani  
Foreign Minister Zarif,  
Honorable Ministers,  
Secretary General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to address this Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). I thank the Permanent Mission of Iran, as Chair of NAM, for organizing this event.

While the geopolitical context for which the NAM was formed over fifty years ago, namely, one of competition between the two existing superpowers for the hearts and loyalties of the new states coming into being, the movement continues to be about independence of action, which WAS its original purpose, and it has steadfastly advocated a principled approach to the various issues on the international agenda.

More importantly, in the face of numerous complex global challenges, both enduring and emerging, the solidarity of the member States of the NAM is more critical than ever. Against a backdrop of increasing impacts from climate change, inequality between and among countries, and more than a billion people still living in extreme poverty, cooperation among and between the member States of NAM will be imperative for improving socio-economic development for the citizens of the planet.

Excellencies,

This past week, we spent significant time discussing how to advance our sustainable development agenda, with one track dedicated to accelerating achievement on the MDGs and the other to beginning work on the Post 2015 development agenda.

In discussions on the MDGS, we noted numerous successes including improving access to water and the lives of slum dwellers, reducing disease burden and halving the number of people living in extreme poverty. However, we acknowledged that progress has been uneven, and with less than 850 days until the deadline, we would have to redouble our efforts. In this regard, we saw a number of new commitments in the past week from governments, private sector, and philanthropists. We heard more than ever before a growing consensus that eliminating poverty is within our reach.

Moving toward that ambitious goal, we took a step further in the daunting task of adopting a development agenda with poverty eradication and sustainable development at the core. Representing two-thirds of UN membership and fifty-five per cent (55%) of the world population, NAM, and its member countries, will be critical in all aspects of moving forward on defining and ultimately implementing this new agenda, which will not only have to build on the MDGS, but take into account a whole new range of additional considerations.

Distinguished Guests,

To assist Member States narrow in on what needs to go into this agenda, I have selected a number of priority areas for further investigation. In this regard, many of these coincide well with priorities of NAM countries. Foremost, at least two events will look at the role of partnerships in the new agenda. One High Level Event will specifically focus on Contributions of South-South, Triangular Cooperation and ICT for Development. Increasingly, the South-South cooperation can be mobilized to influence trade regimes, improve access to markets, share knowledge and technology, and create political leverage on the world stage. Founded upon the virtue of solidarity, NAM can provide a supportive platform to encourage the development of new Southern partnerships, and contribute to influencing outcomes on the global stage.

Furthermore, looking at the role of partnerships, will also include public-private partnerships, as well as strengthening traditional partnerships, in a spirit of mutual respect

and accountability. As I told the G77 yesterday, part of the Global Partnership for development means that previous commitments on finance, capacity-building and technology transfer and know-how must also be kept.

The thematic debate on ensuring stable and peaceful societies coincides well the NAM priorities of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, which were abundantly clear by President Rouhani of Iran, speaking on behalf of the Movement, at yesterday's High Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament. This debate will also look at diminishing external stressors that contribute to conflicts, ensuring accessible institutions of justice, reducing violence, and enhancing the capacity and accountability of good governance mechanisms and practices that contribute to peace.

Further, I expect the outcome of your interactive debate will dovetail well with the High Level event on human rights and the rule of Law. "Cooperation for Enhancing the Rule of Law at the International Level" has become increasingly important in the international arena since 2006, when the General Assembly first took up this issue and I look forward to seeing how your debate feeds into our event. To that end, I know the human rights agenda is also a high priority for many NAM countries.

Not directly related to the post 2015 development agenda but of high priority nonetheless are the issues of reforming the Security Council and revitalizing the General Assembly, concerns I know I share with all of you. As you are all too well aware, Non-Aligned countries are clearly under-represented in the Security Council, which needs to evolve to give that body legitimacy, to reflect universality and to correct the existing imbalances. Further if our Assembly is to be effective, it will need to conduct itself inclusively transparently and efficiently and be more effective in implementing its resolutions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While the original focus of NAM has indeed changed, this group of nations is evolving with times, taking up new priorities and broadening its scope. In many ways you are diverse group, and yet you build your foundation upon your commonalities. As we move forward with the post 2015 development agenda, we will need to employ that very same strategy.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to your active participation in the upcoming events and thematic debates I have announced for the 68<sup>th</sup> session.