



**Remarks**

**by**

**H.E. Mr. John W. Ashe**

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

**General Assembly**

**Thematic Debate of the General Assembly**

**“Ensuring Stable and Peaceful Societies”**

Opening Session

**New York**

**24 April 2014**

*Please check against delivery*

Excellencies,  
Secretary-General,  
H.E. Mr. José Miguel Insulza, Secretary-General of the Organization of American States,  
Ms. Rosa Emilia Salamanca,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The quest to ensure that members of the human family live without the scourge of war, the threat of bombs, the destructions caused by arms, the sight of loved ones falling from the fatal wounds of weapons and that young people do not lose limb and life in needless wars, has been one of the most enduring ideas of all time. It has been the primary goal at the heart of the work of our United Nations since our forefathers met in San Francisco in 1945 and declared that this Organization would be designed to [quote] "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war." [End quote].

At today's Thematic Debate, we carry forth and reinforce this fundamental principle and right for all the world's citizens by examining ways in which stability and peace can lead to a more effective and successful post-2015 development agenda. Today's is the fourth of six events which my team and I are using to definitively "set the stage" for the post-2015 development agenda. Indeed, many of the broad goals and values that underpin sustainable development assume the existence of stable and peaceful societies, which can address urgent development issues such as health, education and access to water, to name a few. Yes, it is true: development can only take root within a stable and peaceful society.

Excellencies,

When the Millennium Development Goals were launched in 2000, peace and security were not factored in as goals and targets. Yet the relationship between peace and development cannot be disputed. Some of our most revered documents within the multilateral system have clearly articulated this nexus. Principle 25 of the 1992 Rio

Declaration states that peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible. The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document acknowledges that peace and security, development and human rights are the pillars of the United Nations system and the foundations for collective security and well-being. More recently, the outcome document of the Special Event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, which we adopted last September, called for the post-2015 development agenda to [quote] "promote peace and security, democratic governance, the rule of law, gender equality and human rights for all" [end quote].

Stability and peace are essential enablers of sustainable development, just as violence is one of its greatest obstacles. Nearly seventy years have passed since our founders declared their commitment to spare humankind from the travesties of future wars, and the international community continues to grapple with the stranglehold of violent conflict. We have been fortunate in that inter-state wars and conflicts have significantly decreased, yet instability and extreme violence within states have continued to increase and, sadly, result in unnecessary loss of lives and widespread destruction all over the globe. And people who live in these societies are amongst those who today suffer the worst consequences of instability and violence.

Distinguished Delegates,

The devastating impacts of conflict destroy hard-won development gains and hold back development progress by diverting critical finance away from development toward activities that prevent development. At the same time, there are numerous additional stressors that lead to unstable and fragile societies, such as organized crime; corruption; trafficking in persons, arms and drugs; illicit trade and illicit financial flows; as well as economic and financial shocks. We are also increasingly seeing conflicts that are likely connected to or exacerbated by scarcity of natural resources. These conflicts may become more frequent and intense as the global population increases and greater demands and stress are placed upon diminishing resources and fragile ecosystems.

Within the process we have collectively begun to elaborate a new development agenda, it is now time to look more broadly at the relationship between peace, security and sustainable development. The post-2015 framework must address the root causes of instability, conflict and violence in order to build sustainable peace, and it must recognise that it is impossible to achieve sustainable development in the context of violence, threats to the rule of law from criminal enterprises, fragility and armed conflict.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While the root causes for conflict and instability are complex and vary widely, we as an international community must re-double our commitment to bring a lasting peace to our world.

Let me assure you that our discussions today are not aimed at the securitization of the development agenda or encroaching upon the work of the relevant UN structures responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. Far from it. Rather, central to this dialogue will be ideas intended to complement the efforts of the organs and bodies of the United Nations tasked with the extremely important work of maintaining peace and security, as well as assisting countries emerging from conflict. To achieve the goal of peace, global stability and sustainability, collective action and partnerships are critical including those with international organizations such as the UN, regional and sub-regional organizations, civil society, and the business sector. Predictable and sustained support and partnerships from the international community form an integral part of our efforts to build stable societies.

Furthermore, sustained national, regional and global efforts are prerequisites for ensuring stable and peaceful societies, and our work should also support national ownership and the strengthening of national institutions in line with government's sovereign responsibilities.

For example, the resolve of national governments will be needed to manage the harmful effects of external stressors including organized crime, various forms of trafficking and illicit trade. However, many of these issues span across national boundaries and cannot be addressed only at the government level. Effective interventions require regional and international cooperation as well as collaboration among the public and private sector and civil society. The complex tasks of restoring trust and re-constructing shattered social cohesion in a post conflict situation also require our concerted efforts. Without these crucial ingredients of restoration and reconstruction, the process of promoting development remains seriously at risk.

Distinguished Guests,

Achieving the overarching goal of the eradication of extreme poverty will simply remain an elusive ideal and dream, out of reach of those who most need it, unless we work together to end conflict and instability, and to promote inclusiveness, good governance, the rule of law, and human rights, including the right to development for all.

Over the course of the next day and half we will benefit from three panels comprised of a very interesting array of high-level officials and experts. The first panel will explore the nexus between sustainable development, peace and stability and how they are mutually reinforcing; the second panel will discuss the role of national institutions, how they can help address external stressors and how their importance can be reflected in the post-2015 agenda; and the third panel will cover the contributions of global partnerships in strengthening domestic institutions and supporting national and regional efforts.

I know you are all here today to make a contribution to our collective endeavor to define a Post-2015 Development Agenda that can and must ensure peaceful and stable societies. Not only is peace critical to our core values, it is perhaps the greatest gift and legacy that we can bestow upon future generations and in that regard, it is our responsibility to work to achieve it and then pass it on. I therefore look forward to your thoughtful and meaningful contributions.

Thank you.

\*\*\*