

ALL ENGLISH VERSION

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NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**ADDRESS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY:
"FROM TURMOIL TO PEACE"
New York, 24 September 2014**

It is a great honour to welcome you to this renovated General Assembly Hall.

This great Hall is home to "we the peoples". It has been restored, renewed and reinvented for the 21st century.

I thank all of you for making it possible.

The Capital Master Plan was not an easy project. But you, the Member States, embraced the vision. You made the investment. Now we see the wonderful results: a state-of-the-art space in which we shall work together to improve the state of the world.

Please watch.

[39-SECOND "VIRTUAL RIBBON-CUTTING" PHOTO MONTAGE IS SCREENED]

We wanted to have, in fact, a grand opening ceremony. Because of frugality and time we just wanted to have this virtual opening ceremony.

In the name of all peoples and all nations, I am now proud to officially declare this General Assembly Hall open for business. Thank you. You saved a lot of money by having this virtual opening ceremony. Thank you very much for understanding.

Every year at this time, hope fills this hall: the hope embodied in the Charter of the United Nations; the hopes of leaders who speak from this podium; the hopes of people across the world who hear those promises.

This year, the horizon of hope is darkened. Our hearts are made very heavy by unspeakable acts and the deaths of innocents. Cold War ghosts have returned to haunt our times. We have seen so much of the Arab Spring go violently wrong.

Not since the end of the Second World War have there been so many refugees, displaced people and asylum seekers. Never before has the United Nations been asked to reach so many people with emergency food assistance and other life-saving supplies.

Diplomacy is on the defensive, undermined by those who believe in violence.

Diversity is under assault by extremists who insist that their way is the only way. Disarmament is viewed as a distant dream, sabotaged by profiteers of perpetual warfare.

It may seem as if the world is falling apart, as crises pile up and disease spreads. But leadership is precisely about finding the seeds of hope and nurturing them into something bigger. That is our duty. That is my call to you today.

It has been a terrible year for the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. From barrel bombs to beheadings, from the deliberate starvation of civilians to the assault on hospitals, UN shelters and aid convoys, human rights and the rule of law are under attack.

After the latest tragedy in Gaza, Palestinians and Israelis seem more polarized than ever.

If we do not save the two-state solution, we will be left in a state of permanent hostilities.

The situation in and around Ukraine remains volatile.

In South Sudan, a struggle for political power has killed thousands of people and exposed millions to the threat of famine.

The Central African Republic is fractured and traumatized.

Mali and the Sahel continue to suffer from insurgency, terrorism, the illicit drug trade and organized crime.

In Somalia, a coalition of African States confronts the terrorist group Al-Shabab.

In Nigeria, Boko Haram's murderous onslaught gains strength, with shocking impacts on women and girls.

In Iraq and Syria, we see new depths of barbarity with each passing day, and devastating spill-over effects across the region.

As Muslim leaders around the world have repeatedly said, there is nothing Islamic about the terrorist organizations wreaking havoc in the region. These extremist groups are a clear threat to international peace and security that requires a multi-faceted international response.

We need decisive action to stop atrocity crimes and frank discussions on what created the threat in the first place. The people of the region have been forced to walk on the broken shards of bad governance and bad decisions that failed to respect international law and basic human rights.

Across the world, the fragility of States and institutions has never been more apparent. Some have been hollowed out by corruption; others have pursued policies

of exclusion that drive the victims towards anger, despair and violence. States must uphold their responsibility to govern – and govern for all their peoples.

Even where there is no overt warfare, violence still mars lives. Men prey on women across the globe, from battlefields to streets, from public spaces to the privacy of the home. Migrants face increasingly perilous journeys -- and closed doors upon arrival.

In many countries seen as models of integration, divisive politics are on the rise. People are very good at seeing prejudice in others, but less so in themselves. The trends that bring people together – instant communications, free trade and ease of travel – are also being exploited by forces that keep them apart.

The world's "fasten seat belt" light is illuminated. Turbulence is testing the multilateral system, national institutions and people's lives.

Human rights provide one touchstone for our response. The Human Rights Up Front initiative aims to place human rights at the centre of our thinking and our efforts in the field. The protection of nearly 100,000 people at UN bases throughout South Sudan has been an early milestone of this new approach.

The international community needs to be similarly sensitized to the value of human rights as an early warning mechanism. I urge Member States to fulfill their responsibilities to their populations. States also need to be open to discussing their own vulnerabilities. Let us recall that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights not only proclaims a set of freedoms; it also warns that people will not stand idle if they are not protected.

We need to do far more to anticipate problems and reach early political consensus.

To better meet the challenges before us, I have called for a review of United Nations peace operations and will appoint a high-level Review Panel in the coming weeks.

The unity of the Security Council is crucial. When the Security Council acts as one, we see results, such as the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons programme; agreement on a peacekeeping operation for the Central African Republic; timely support for the peace framework in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

By contrast, continued disunity over Syria has resulted in grave human suffering and loss of credibility for the Council and our institution.

The General Assembly must also uphold its responsibilities and play its rightful role.

We must not let the smoke from today's fires blind us to longer-term challenges and opportunities.

Hope may be hard to discern, but it is there. In clinics, classrooms and other places far from the spotlight, the development agenda is making remarkable progress.

Global poverty, child mortality and maternal deaths have been cut in half. More remains to be done, but these and other gains show the power of the Millennium Development Goals and what we can do when we work together.

Today an inspiring global conversation is taking place on an agenda for the next 15 years.

Earlier this month, small island developing states added their voices with the adoption of the Samoa Pathway, a far-reaching plan for addressing their unique vulnerabilities.

Two days ago in this Hall, we heard the appeals of the world's indigenous peoples for an end to marginalization.

That same day, world leaders reaffirmed the importance of continuing to implement the ground-breaking consensus of the Cairo conference on population and development.

The conversation for the future we want has been one of the most inclusive efforts in United Nations history. More than five million people have now voted in the My World survey. I encourage millions more to log on and chime in.

What is emerging from our dialogue is remarkable in its vision: a universal agenda, applying to all countries; and a determination not to reduce but eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, and to put all countries and communities on the path of truly sustainable development.

The Open Working Group of the General Assembly has placed before us a proposed set of Sustainable Development Goals that will help us to complete the unfinished business of the MDGs, overcome inequalities, protect the planet and build the future we want. At the end of the year, at your request, I will provide a synthesis report that will set the stage as Member States begin their negotiations.

Transformation is our goal. I can think of no better place to start than with opening doors and shattering ceilings for women and girls. Stereotypes continue to be deeply entrenched. Look at any crisis -- from poverty to disaster to disease to illiteracy -- and you will see women and girls suffering the most. We cannot fulfil 100 per cent of the world's potential by excluding 50 per cent of the world's people.

Climate action is integral to all our hopes. Three days ago in the streets of our host city, New York, I joined hundreds of thousands of people in marching for a cleaner, greener future. They sent a powerful message to the leaders -- of their impatience but also of opportunity.

Yesterday's Climate Summit was a landmark event. We saw a great coming together of countries, capital, CEOs and citizens. Multi-stakeholder coalitions took unprecedented action to reduce emissions, build resilience, and finance the transformation of our economies and societies. We must convert this momentum into a meaningful, universal climate agreement in Lima this December and in Paris

next year. As one of the banners in the march said, we have a duty to “do what must be done”.

Funding is crucial for the credibility of the climate and post-2015 development efforts. Now is the time to more properly match global wealth with global need. All resources, public and private, domestic and international, need to be tapped. When budgets are cut to the bone, people bleed. When resources are devoted to ever more sophisticated arms instead of ever greater human potential, we are all less secure.

Leadership is also about getting our priorities straight, our policies right, and our investments working for people. The next 15 months will be a defining period for global prosperity and stability. I urge you to keep your ambitions high.

The outbreak of Ebola in West Africa is an unprecedented crisis. That is why I have established an unprecedented health operation -- the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response -- to mobilize all the resources needed to reinforce the work being done by the countries and communities affected.

The mission combines the expertise of the World Health Organization with the logistical capacities of the United Nations. UNMEER personnel arrived in Ghana two days ago to establish the Mission’s headquarters. The international community is rallying to assist local health workers.

Now we need a twenty-fold surge in care, tracking, transport and equipment. Food security is a growing concern, as food prices have gone up and food systems are in danger of breaking down.

We must also fight the virus of fear and misinformation. Bans on travel or transport will not keep Ebola from getting out, but will keep medical personnel and supplies from getting in. We need to isolate people affected by Ebola – but not the nations struggling to cope with it.

With leadership and solidarity, we can help the people of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone bring the outbreak to an end and regain the path to a better future.

The world recently marked the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War.

Like so many conflicts, that war started less from grand design than from small problems badly handled.

After the Second World War, the founding of the United Nations was a feat of global resolve. The post-war planners were driven not only by the idea of “never again”, but by a vision of what the world could be if we “unite our strength”.

Today, we face a profusion of mounting challenges. People are crying out for protection from greed and inequality. The United Nations must answer that call.

We are a century removed from the First World War, and have 70 years of experience with the United Nations. Yet the world is still not as peaceful as it could and as it should be.

Today we face far more man-made crises than natural calamities. We may not control Mother Nature, but who else but us is responsible for securing peace and justice in our world?

War. Poverty. Ignorance. Crises caused by people can be stopped by people.

I do not think we can yet feel comfortable about the world our generation is leaving to our children.

Still, I have hope. I draw it from our Charter, our enduring guide in times of dramatic challenge and change.

I am continually inspired by the staff, peacekeepers, humanitarian workers, human rights defenders and others who bring our document, this Charter, to life.

Just as we have renovated this great Hall for a new age, I look to you, Excellencies, Distinguished Heads of State and Government, to rebuild leadership and restore unity of purpose. We can tackle any challenge – and we will, as united nations.

I thank you for your leadership. Thank you very much.