



United Nations Summit adopts the 2030 Development Agenda

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The General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during a United Nations Summit on Development held on 25-27 September at the UN headquarters in New York.

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UN Summit adopts the 2030 Development Agenda

The United Nations held a Development Summit on 25-27 September, attended by many top political leaders. The Summit adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which will have a major impact on how development will be dissected and monitored in the UN and at country level in the next 15 years. The centrepiece of the 2030 Agenda is the Sustainable Development Goals. This article traces the background to the SDGs, comparing them to the previous MDGs, describes the new technology mechanism and the follow up process for monitoring the Agenda and the SDGs. It makes a brief conclusion on the limits to the SDG approach which must be complemented with systemic analyses of the sustainable development issues.



UN Photo/Ola Pak

General Assembly approved draft resolution on the Agenda 2030 concluding three years of work and endorsing a set of 17 sustainable development goals to be implemented in the next 15 years.

By Martin Khor

The world's political leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during a United Nations Summit on Development held on 25-27 September at the UN headquarters in New York.

The 2030 Agenda is the outcome of two to three years of wide ranging discussions and intense negotiations, mainly held in New York.

The outcome document, whose full name is "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", is contained in a resolution (A/

RES/70/1) of the special session of the UN General Assembly, which met as the Summit on 25-27 September.

The Summit itself saw many heads of governments and states making plenary speeches and taking part, with other participants, in roundtables organised around eight themes.

The centrepiece of the 2030 Agenda is a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), accompanied by 169 targets.

The SDGs are meant to be goals for each country to strive for. They are mainly the result of two years of nego-

tiations in a working group on SDGs, following up on a mandate given by the 2012 Sustainable Development Summit in Rio.

Following the working group's adoption of the SDGs, further negotiations on the SDGs were carried out as part of the preparation of the September 2015 Development Summit, resulting in some changes.

The outcome document, Transforming our world, comprises 35 pages, with about half the pages in the style of a political declaration and the remainder a reproduction of the SDGs.

The SDGs are a follow up to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which had targets for achieving mainly social goals with a deadline of 2015. The SDGs in turn have targets to achieve by 2030, and thus the term "the 2030 Agenda" that is now attached to the Summit document and the SDGs.

Comparing the SDGs to the MDGs, there are areas of significant improvement. Firstly, the process of formulating the SDGs was far more participatory, involving member states, civil society groups and experts, sitting through two years of several sessions in the SDG working group.

They discussed the format and principles of the SDGs, clusters of issues, and then eventually homed in on specific SDGs, of which there were 17 in the end. Each SDG was accompanied by its own targets, which were then also negotiated. There is thus a sense of ownership and belonging by governments as well as civil society organisations, even though each of them may not be happy and have reservations about various aspects of the SDGs.

In contrast, the MDGs had been formulated by or under the charge of personnel of the United Nations, with governments and civil society not having a role. Thus a major criticism is that the MDGs lacked transparency as to its authorship and process, and lacked ownership among the governments and people in the countries that are to implement them.

Secondly, the SDGs are meant to be universally implemented, meaning that developed countries are also obliged to fulfil the goals. This is different from the MDGs, which were

meant for developing countries to implement. Thus, a goal like ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns (Goal 12) should be taken as seriously (or even more so) in the developed countries, which have many examples of unsustainable technologies, products and lifestyles.

Thirdly, the SDGs are much more balanced in terms of the categories of issues that are included. The developing countries in particular, championed by the Group of 77 and China, had insisted that there be a fair balance in the SDGs to be adopted among the three components of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental.

Under the auspices of the African Union and UN Economic Commission for Africa, African countries devised a Common African Position at the beginning of the SDG discussions which called for structural transformation and industrial development.

Many developing countries, and many experts and NGOs, had criticised the MDGs for being almost solely focused on the social dimension, such as tackling hunger, poverty, health and education. This had inadvertently turned the MDG exercise into an aid agenda: donors would provide external resources if the recipient country was willing to increase its spending on social sectors.

Perhaps this was a legacy of the times when the MDGs were created: structural adjustment programmes had caused many developing countries to cut back on social spending and to go into recessionary or low-growth conditions as financial resources were diverted to external debt repayment. The MDGs were seen as a kind of international safety net to help the poor survive.

By the time the SDGs were being conceptualised, many developing country delegates at their own meetings and at the working group, were insisting that the SDGs needed to boost the economic capacity of the developing countries, so that they can generate their own growth and have the resources to make their social development programmes sustainable.

At the same time there was an acceptance that the environmental pillar had also been neglected and with the

worsening of the environmental crises, it was also important to include many environmental goals.

And all this, without neglecting or downgrading the social dimension which had been the centrepiece of the MDGs. Moreover besides poverty and hunger and health, there are new pressing socio-economic issues, especially inequality, that need to be given priority.

The result is that the SDGs have economic, social and environmental goals. There are many goals that contain more than one dimension. The mainly economic goals include promoting economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (Goal 8), build resilient infrastructure, sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation (Goal 9) and reduce inequality within and between countries (Goal 10).

Environmental goals include sustainable cities; sustainable consumption and production patterns; climate change; oceans and seas; land, forests and desertification. Social goals include ending poverty; hunger, food security and nutrition; health; education; gender equity; water and sanitation and energy. There is also Goal 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice for all; and accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, a goal that was intensely negotiated.

Finally, there is the issue of the means of implementation and the partnership for development, two inter-related overarching issues that were all-important to the developing countries. They argued that without financial resources and technology (the means of implementation) and without an enabling international environment that is friendly to development and developing countries (the global partnership), it would be difficult or impossible for them to achieve the SDGs.

If one believes that the SDGs surpasses the MDGs in terms of ambition, the means of implementation and global partnership for development should also surpass those achieved under the MDGs.

This issue was perhaps the most controversial and hotly debated. Eventually, Goal 17 was adopted: “Strengthen the means of implementa-

tion and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.”

Though the title of Goal 17 may be comprehensive, the targets under the goal are far too general and do not contain new specific targets (such as the need for regulating the global financial system), and in some ways is backwards compared to the MDGs Goal 8 on global partnership. Perhaps this is a sign or a result of the waning of multilateral North-South cooperation of the past few years. Hopefully some of this can be rectified in the exercise of formulating indicators for the targets, which is now taking place.

A New Technology Facilitation Mechanism Launched

Although in general the “means of implementation” are disappointing, there is one significant area of progress in the Declaration (The 2030 Agenda) outside of the SDGs, in the launching of a Technology Facilitation Mechanism to support the Sustainable Development Goals. (This Mechanism had actually been earlier established by the Financing for Development conference in Addis Ababa earlier in 2015).

The Technology Facilitation Mechanism will be based on a multi-stakeholder collaboration between Member States, civil society, the private sector, the scientific community, UN entities and other stakeholders and will be composed of a United Nations inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, a collaborative multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals and an online platform.

The UN inter-agency task team will promote coordination within the UN system on science, technology and innovation-related matters, and will work with 10 representatives from civil society, the private sector and the scientific community to prepare the meetings of the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as in the develop-

ment and operationalization of the online platform, including preparing proposals for the modalities for the forum and the online platform.

The online platform will establish a mapping of, and serve as a gateway for, information on existing science, technology and innovation initiatives, mechanisms and programmes, within and beyond the United Nations. The online platform will facilitate access to information, knowledge and experience, as well as best practices and lessons learned, on science, technology and innovation facilitation initiatives and policies. The online platform will also facilitate the dissemination of relevant open access scientific publications generated worldwide.

The multi-stakeholder forum will be convened once a year, to discuss science, technology and innovation cooperation around thematic areas for the implementation of the SDGs. The forum will provide a venue for facilitating interaction, reviews, and recommendations.

The Follow Up Process

The 2030 Agenda also contains a section on follow up mechanisms to monitor and review the progress of the SDGs and the Agenda.

At national level, countries are called upon to develop ambitious national responses to the overall implementation of this Agenda to support the transition to

the SDGs and build on existing planning instruments, such as national development and sustainable development strategies. They should also conduct reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels which are country-led and country-driven. Such reviews should draw on contributions from indigenous peoples, civil society, the private sector and parliaments.

At regional level, regional and sub-regional commissions are encouraged to contribute, and the UN regional commissions are encouraged to continue supporting countries in their region.

At the global level, the high-level political forum (for sustainable development) will have a central role in overseeing a network of follow-up and review processes, working with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and others. It will facilitate sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, and provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for follow-up. It will promote system-wide coherence and coordination of sustainable development policies. It should ensure that the Agenda remains relevant and ambitious and should focus on the assessment of progress, achievements and challenges faced by developed and developing countries as well as new and emerging issues.

This follow up process will be assisted by a Secretary General's annual progress report on the SDGs and the Global Sustainable Development Report.

The high-level political forum shall carry out regular reviews that are voluntary. They shall be State-led, involving ministerial and other relevant high-level participants. They shall provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders.

Thematic reviews of progress on the SDGs will also take place at the high-level political forum, supported by reviews by the ECOSOC functional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies and forums which should reflect the integrated nature of the Goals as well as the inter-linkages between them.

The Declaration also welcomed the Addis Ababa Action Agenda's follow-up and review for the financing for development outcomes as well as all the means of implementation of the SDGs which is integrated with the follow-up and review framework of this Agenda. The conclusions of the annual ECOSOC forum on financing for development will be fed into the overall follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda in the high-level political forum.

Meeting every four years under the auspices of the General Assembly, the high-level political forum will provide high-level political guidance on the Agenda and its implementation, identify progress and emerging challenges and mobilize further actions to accelerate implementation. The next high-level political forum under the auspices of the General Assembly will be held in 2019.

The Secretary-General was also asked to prepare a report during the 70th session of the General Assembly which outlines critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level.

Some Concluding Thoughts

All in all, the 2030 Agenda adopted by the UN Summit is comprehensive and ambitious in scope. It provides framework with recognisable goals and quantitative targets for individual countries and their publics to aim for. The preamble to the Declaration states: "The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets which we are announcing today demonstrate the scale and ambition of this new universal Agenda.... They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustain-



The UN Sustainable Development Summit held in New York on 25-27 September formally adopted an ambitious new sustainable development agenda with 17 Goals.

able development: the economic, social and environmental. The Goals and targets will stimulate action over the next 15 years in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet....

“The inter-linkages and integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals are of crucial importance in ensuring that the purpose of the new Agenda is realized. If we realize our ambitions across the full extent of the Agenda, the lives of all will be profoundly improved and our world will be transformed for the better.”

However, the structural limitations of an SDG goals-and-targets approach should also be recognised. It provides the goals and concrete targets in ways that help governments, international organisations and the public to focus on what the issues are and what are objectives and the outcomes that are aimed at. However by themselves the SDGs do not provide an analysis of the causes of the problems, the obstacles that need to be overcome, and the road map or maps needed for the solutions.

Moreover, a major adverse event, like another global financial or economic crisis, may throw the process of fulfilling the SDGs off track or perhaps into a chaos. Countries embroiled in a fall of export revenue, a balance of payments and debt crisis, and sharp reduction in government revenue, cannot be expected to stay on track with the SDG targets. However the SDG framework, including indicators (when they are ready), would still be useful in monitoring performance, including if it is negative.

Therefore we should make good use of the pragmatic usefulness of the SDGs and the Agenda 2030 that frames them, but not exaggerate their utility and role. The SDG approach must be complemented with the old-fashioned and all-important analyses, of what are the structural and systemic issues and challenges of development and of each component (be it mainly in the economic, social or environmental), how to overcome the problems, and the possible options and roadmaps. Reality is complex and qualitative analysis (backed up of course with data) is required, and therefore the SDGs should not displace the complex task of analysis by an overly simplistic approach to devel-

Sustainable Development Goals

- Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*
- Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

* Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.

opment. On the other hand, analysis of a complex problem can be supported by having priority goals and clear targets and indicators. Thus, the SDG approach should be accompanied by and not replace or downgrade the need for rigorous analysis. Together, the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development will be more meaningful and stand a better chance of getting

the world on track to tackle the manifold crises afflicting humanity and the Earth.

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SDGs – a Course Correction?

The SDGs are a step forward from the old MDGs in addressing systemic causes of poverty and inequality. However the most transformative goals and targets could be neglected in implementation through selectivity, simplification and national adaptation. This analysis is by a renowned expert on development policy analysis who is Professor of International Affairs at The New School, and was for many years director of the UNDP Human Development Reports.



Sakiko Fukuda-Parr



UN Photo/Cia Pak

Ahead of the UN Sustainable Development Summit from 25-27 September, and to mark the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, a 10-minute film introducing the Sustainable Development Goals is projected onto UN Headquarters.

By Sakiko Fukuda-Parr

The launch of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015 at the UN General Assembly was met with some harsh words. Viewed largely as 'bloated' and lacking in coherence, commentators suggested SDGs should more appropriately stand for 'Silly Development Goals' (The Economist¹) or 'Senseless, Dreamy, Garbled' (William Easterly²).

Yet for those who had been engaged in the 3-year negotiations – or rather battles – that led to the 17 goals and 169 targets, there was a measure of satisfaction with the wide scope and depth of these goals. In large part, this is because the SDGs were a welcome departure from the MDGs. For example, the *Center for Economic and Social Rights* that lobbied hard for an agenda that would reflect the core principles of human rights – universality, equality and non-discrimination, justice, participation, accountability – cautiously opined "We can declare partial success in every category – which is more than we might have dared hope for in

2010 under the 'reign' of the deeply inadequate MDGs"³.

The SDGs are a major departure from the MDGs, reflecting a significant shift in 'development' as a project of the international community. They differ not just in the number of goals and targets but in their very purpose, conception and process.

The MDGs were a North-South aid agenda, driven by aid ministers seeking a new rationale for aid in the context of post Cold War geopolitics and neoliberal globalization. They were useful for donors, enabling them to mobilize support for aid budgets around a short list of memorable priorities. The SDGs are universal goals, and set targets for all – not just poor – countries, and are as relevant for the US as for Liberia.

The MDGs created a narrative of development as ending poverty and aid as charity. The SDGs recognize it to be a more complex process, involving economic growth that is also environmentally sustainable and socially equitable. The

MDGs were drafted by technocrats in a closed room in the UN. The SDG process was both participatory and political, involving 3 years of broad and open consultations and debates in meetings around the world and over the internet, and complex inter-governmental negotiations in the 'Open Working Group' of the General Assembly'.

Broader, more transformative agenda

The SDGs address many of the key shortcomings of the MDGs and promise a more transformative agenda.

While critics of the SDGs bemoan the lost simplicity of the MDGs, it was also their major weakness, and the source of their deeply flawed agenda as I have argued in earlier publications⁴.

The 'simple' list of 8 goals and 21 targets may be memorable, but when they came to dominate the agenda and define policy priorities, simplicity became simplification. It was not just a campaign rhetoric but pretended to be a serious set of priorities with time bound targets. It was supposed to be an agenda for implementation that should lay claim to priority resources. No one would disagree with the importance of what was in the list of 8 goals and 21 targets, but what was critical was what was not there. Some most pressing contemporary challenges were left out: inequality, unemployment and stagnant wages, climate change, financial market volatility, migration, the ineffectiveness of global institutions to manage globalization, to name a few. Focused narrowly on basic needs, in fact there was nothing developmental in the MDGs, understood more expansively as a long term process of structural change in the economy and society.

The outcome focus, with concrete and measurable targets was another claimed virtue of the MDG. But this was another source of weakness as quantification is inherently reductionist. The

MDGs created a narrative of development as meeting these basic needs targets. The use of numerical goals decontextualized and reified what are quintessentially context specific and intangible processes of societal change. The goals served to justify target driven strategies that rely on short term fixes, obscuring the need to address the root causes of poverty and unequal development that lie in power structures and social relations whether it is women's access to land or trade rules that disadvantage developing countries. The vociferous controversies of the 1990s over the liberalization agenda of structural adjustment programmes subsided in the 2000s under all the attention paid to meeting the basic needs.

Yet another so called virtue of the MDGs was their ambition to achieve the 2015 goals in all countries. But this meant neglecting national contexts. They were one size fits all targets to be achieved in each country and against which governments would be held accountable. Ignoring the starting point, they were a biased metric, unfair to countries farthest behind with the largest challenges to meet the 2015 targets.

The SDGs reverse some of these shortcomings and include stronger elements for transformative change. To begin with, they include 'means of implementation' as a goal of its own (Goal 17) and as targets for each goal, recognizing the need to change policies and institutions if transformative change is to take place. To illustrate, in the field of health they include targets for important policy choices: (i) target 3b on Research and Development in vaccines and medicines, access to essential medicines, and affirmation of TRIPS flexibilities; (ii) target 3c on health financing; (iii) target 2c to stabilize food commodity markets; (iv) target 1b on pro-poor and gender sensitive development strategies; and (v) target 6b on local community participation in water management.

The adoption of a stand alone goal on inequality (Goal 10) that addresses disparities within and between countries is a significant departure from the MDGs. A sensitive issue for many politicians this is a goal that requires a reversal rather than acceleration of current trends in many countries, and relevant to all countries regardless of the level of income.

Another important reversal is the inclusion of goal 16 for just and inclusive institutions. This speaks not only to institutions of national governance but also global governance, including an explicit reference to "strengthening the participa-

tion of developing countries in institutions of global governance" (target 16.8).

Potential pitfalls in implementation: selectivity, simplification and national adaptation

While the SDGs offer a broader agenda that has potential for course correction, will they make a difference? There is a risk that the most transformative goals and targets would be neglected in implementation through selectivity, simplification, and national adaptation.

With 17 goals and 169 targets, which handful will receive policy attention, mobilize effort and resources? *Selectivity* could lead to neglect of goals and targets that would address structural issues. It is widely believed that the MDGs mobilized action, yet not all goals and targets were the same. Some such as employment and hunger were poor cousins until the 2008 financial crisis and recession hit. Will SDG 10 to reduce inequality within and between countries, or target 5.a to ensure legal right of women to land ownership receive attention?

The carefully negotiated language of the 17 goal agenda emphasizing intangible qualitative objectives of equitable and sustainable development has led to a complex language. The temptation would be to simplify this language and strip away the important qualifiers. Already, a private initiative to publicize the SDGs - Global Goals - has simplified them, shortening the titles and reinterpreting them in the process. Barbara Adams⁵ points out in her recent Social Watch blog, 'the concept of "sustainable development" is completely lost' as words like 'just', 'inclusive', 'sustainable' are removed and replaced by 'responsible' and 'strong'.

Another risk is the process of national adaptation that reduces political pressure on national governments to address the political causes of poverty and inequality. It can then be an invitation to water down the ambition of the SDGs. Implementation of the inequality goal is particularly challenging as it is one of the few goals that requires a major change in course from the trends of the last decade⁶, including shifts in the economic model that has been promoted over the last decade.

For these Goals to be a 'course correction' in reality, the challenge will be to ensure that the hard won gains on politically contentious issues are not lost in implementation. Global goals are a politically negotiated consensus that has no enforcement mechanism built in. Their

power lies in the normative value of a call to action. They make a difference when championed by committed individuals and organizations. MDG8 on trade, aid and technology was not championed. The onus now falls on civil society groups to leverage the SDGs as course correction.

Endnotes:

- ¹ The Economist, March 28, 2015.
- ² William Easterly, Foreign Policy, September 28, 2015.
- ³ CESR blog post "Strong Commitments to Human Rights Survive in Final SDG Text, Despite Sordid Final Compromises", <http://www.cesr.org/article.php?id=1758>, accessed December 7, 2015.
- ⁴ See Fukuda-Parr, S. (2012). Should global goal setting continue, and how, in the post 2015 era? UN Department of Social and Economic Affairs (DESA) Working Paper 117. http://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2012/wp117_2012.pdf; Fukuda-Parr, S., A.E. Yamin, and J. Greenstein (2014). The Power of Numbers: A Critical Review of Millennium Development Goal Targets for Human Development and Human Rights. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*. 15 : 2 - 3. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19452829.2013.864622>.
- ⁵ Barbara Adams (2015). Public SDGs or Private GGs? <http://www.socialwatch.org/node/17055>.
- ⁶ Susan Nicolai, Chris Hoy, Tony Berliner, Thomas Aedy (2015). Projecting progress: reaching the SDGs by 2030. <http://www.odi.org/publications/9895-sdgs-progress-scorecard-projecting-2030-development-goals>.

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World leaders affirm commitment for Agenda 2030

At the landmark Sustainable Development Summit held from 25-27 September at the UN in New York, a new agenda for global sustainable development (Agenda 2030) was adopted. In the three days summit over 150 leaders addressed the plenary and there were six interactive dialogues. They committed to work together for a successful implementation of the agenda over the next 15 years. Below is a report by Adriano José Timossi with excerpts of some of the speeches at the UN Summit.

misuse of available natural resources and to the exclusion of the weak and disadvantaged. Economic and social exclusion is a complete denial of human fraternity and a grave offense against human rights and the environment.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon opened the Summit hailing the Agenda 2030 as a universal, integrated and transformative vision for a better world. He said that "it is an agenda for people, to end poverty in all its forms" and "an agenda for the planet, our common home." The adoption ceremony was presided over by Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen and Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. The 193 members of the UN gave universal approval with loud applause.

Excerpts of leaders' speeches at the UN Summit for the Adoption of the Post 2015 Development Agenda

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi quoted Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, who said, "One must care about the world one will not see". Modi hailed the fact that the goals recognize that economic growth, industrialization, infrastructure, and access to energy provide the foundations of development. He also welcomed the prominence given to environmental goals, especially climate change and sustainable consumption.

Since Independence, his country has pursued the dream of eliminating poverty from India. "We have chosen the path of removing poverty by em-



Pope Francis addresses the General Assembly.

By Adriano José Timossi

The opening of the UN summit on the post-2015 development agenda was preceded by an address by Pope Francis to the General Assembly members on Friday, 25 September. The General Assembly hall was fully occupied, as hundreds of leaders and other government officials, youth, CSO representatives, Nobel peace prize recipients and famous global stars appointed as UN goodwill ambassadors were all gathered together.

Pope Francis said the experience of the past seventy years has made it clear that "reform and adaptation to the times is always necessary in the pursuit of the ultimate goal of granting all countries, without exception, a share in, and a genuine and equitable influence on, decision-making processes.

The need for greater equity is especially true in the case of those bodies

with effective executive capability, such as the Security Council, the Financial Agencies and the groups or mechanisms specifically created to deal with economic crises," the Pope said. "This will help limit every kind of abuse or usury, especially where developing countries are concerned," he stated.

Pope Francis also spoke vocally on the role played by International Financial Agencies and stressed that they should care for the sustainable development of countries and should ensure that they are not subjected to oppressive lending systems which, far from promoting progress, subject people to mechanisms which generate greater poverty, exclusion and dependence.

He stressed the need for preservation of the environment and the challenges posed by climate change. A selfish and boundless thirst for power and material prosperity leads both to the



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon



Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India

powering the poor.”

“The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities is the bedrock of our collective enterprise,” Modi stated. “When we speak only of climate change, there is a perception of our desire to secure the comforts of our lifestyle. When we speak of climate justice, we demonstrate our sensitivity and resolve to secure the future of the poor from the perils of natural disasters.” The Indian government has dedicated strong support for the development of renewable energy technologies and a national plan for the next seven years is underway.

“In addressing climate change, it is important to focus on solutions that can help us reach our goals. We should forge a global public partnership to harness technology, innovation and finance to put affordable clean and renewable energy within the reach of all. Equally, we must look for changes in our lifestyles that would make us less dependent on energy and more sustainable in our consumption.” He called upon world leaders to transform international partnerships on the strength of solidarity with fellow human beings and also, he said, our enlightened self-interest.

John Dramani Mahama, President of Ghana, called upon world leaders to redefine a new paradigm of development while pursuing the SDGs. He said that the current high consumption of wasteful societies we classify as developed cannot be the model for sustainable development.

If the current attraction of the big cities of the so-called developed world,

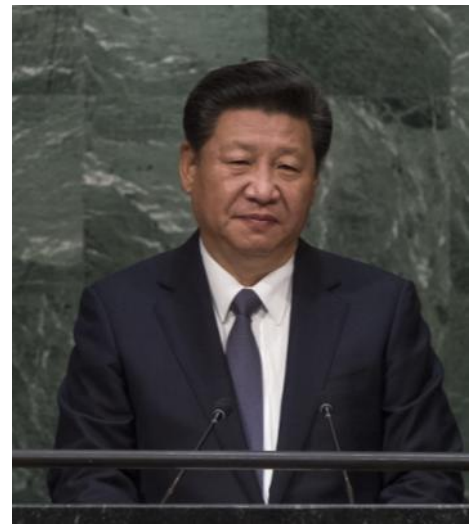
such as shopping malls bursting at the seams with all kinds of consumer goods, glitzy neon lighting and fast food franchises are the standard to be classified as developed, then we will need two more planets, the size of our earth, to maintain and sustain the human race. The world’s resources are not infinite. If we are to attain the objective of a sustainable consumption and production pattern under Goal 12, then it will be necessary for us to review the relations between labour, production and capital.

President Mahama said that the path to sustainable development for his country Ghana and many other African countries has been a difficult one. “We are still in the main, producers of primary commodities, while secondary and tertiary processing is done in the developed world and finished goods exported back to us. If the teeming youth of Africa must find jobs at home and stop attempting to cross the Mediterranean to enter the greener pastures of Europe, then we must review the role Africa plays in world production. A significant portion of processing and value addition must relocate to the continent.”

Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff said that SDGs reaffirm the basic tenet of Rio+20: it is possible to grow, include and preserve and protect. The innovative agenda will require global solidarity, determination from each one of us, and a commitment to confronting climate change, overcoming poverty and creating opportunities for all. She called for the



President Dilma Rousseff of Brazil. Photo credit: UN



President Xi Jinping of China

strengthening of the Climate Convention while fully implementing its provisions and respecting its principles. Our obligations should be ambitious and consistent with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, the Brazilian leader said. Brazil will reduce 37% of its greenhouse gas emissions by 2025 and ambition is to reach 43% by 2030 she said, and informing that the baseline for both would be 2005. Brazil also recognizes the important role South-South Cooperation can play in global efforts to combat climate change, she said.

President Xi Jinping of China called upon the international community to take the post-2015 development agenda as a new starting point, and together seek an equitable, open, comprehensive and innovation-driven development path in an effort to achieve common development of all countries.

The Chinese President said that, in these years, we have witnessed both continued growth worldwide and severe impacts of the international financial crisis, and both the sweeping rise of developing countries and the lingering unbalanced development between the North and the South. While elated at the fact that over 1.1 billion people have since shaken off poverty, we cannot but feel deeply worried that still over 800 million people must go to bed everyday with an empty stomach he said.

On the way to implement the new agenda, there is a need to ensure equitable development to make access to development more equal. He stated the need to ensure open development

to deliver its benefits to all parties. It is important for all countries to uphold the multilateral trading system, build an open economy and come to share its benefits through mutual consultation and joint collaboration he said. We should respect each other's choice for development, draw on each other's experience therein and make our different paths cross at the point of success, thus bringing the rich fruits of development to our peoples.

We need to ensure all-round development to make the groundwork of development more solid. While striving to eliminate poverty and improve people's livelihoods, it is important for us to uphold equity and social justice and ensure that everyone has access to opportunities and benefits of development. We need to ensure innovation-driven development to fully tap the development potential. Innovation has brought with it vibrant drivers for development.

The international community is to redouble their collective efforts for the joint implementation of the post-2015 development agenda in the interest of cooperation. He enumerated four main actions: 1) build up the development capacities; 2) improve the international environment for development; 3) update the partnership for development; and 4) strengthen the coordination mechanisms for development.

President Xi listed a series of initiatives including the establishment of a fund for South-South cooperation, with an initial pledge of US\$2 billion in support of developing countries' implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

Ramtane Lamamra, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria, called upon world leaders for a renewed global partnership in order to make progress on the Goals. The Algerian Minister remembered that 15 years ago the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted as ambitious targets to create a new world. Those targets created unprecedented mobilization to deal with the challenges of development he said. His country has made important achievements in many of the MDGs, including on eradication of poverty, education and the advancement of women, Minister Lamamra pointed out. As we face a complex

period, there is a need to create an environment for common responsibility to achieve a better future for everyone and future generations he said. Algeria calls for strong engagement of the international community to work on the basis of a common conscience and vanquish its selfishness so as to assist future generations and provide a safe future and dignity and prosperity for all he said.

Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, former President of Tanzania, expressed concern over the non-completion of the MDGs. The new Agenda had taken on the unfinished business of the MDGs but time and money were needed to achieve it. The lack of financial resources had been the greatest hindrance to enacting the MDGs. Each country must shoulder the cost of achieving the SDGs but developing countries could not do so alone. International funding was needed to complement countries' own responsibilities. A global partnership was needed to ensure follow-up and review.

President Jacob Zuma of South Africa said that despite progress made in the last seventy years, the world has not adequately addressed underdevelopment, inequality, increasing poverty and economic exclusion.

On the way to implement the Agenda 2030, the triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality is the primary focus of South Africa.



President Jacob Zuma of South Africa

The Goals are also aligned to South Africa's National Development Plan as well as to the African Union's Agenda 2063. While the 2030 agenda is universal in that the goals apply to both developed and developing countries, there is a clear recognition of the Principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities.

He said: "We welcome the commitment to the Global Partnership in the post-2015 development agenda. We call on the Development Partners to upscale Overseas Development Assistance, with binding timetables. We also reiterate that climate financing is new and additional to and cannot be counted as ODA, nor can it be mixed with tradi-



Women make essential contributions to agriculture in developing countries, but their roles differ significantly by region and are changing rapidly in some areas. Women comprise, on average, 43 percent of the agricultural labour force in developing countries, ranging from 20 percent in Latin America to 50 percent in Eastern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Women are a powerful force in agriculture.



Vice-President Muhammad Jusuf Kalla of Indonesia



The UN Sustainable Development Summit in session.

tional development finance.”

Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, Vice-President of Indonesia, said that in 2015 we stand witness to a historic juncture in development. The post-2015 development agenda represents our oath to our future generation, that we will strive together to leave them a legacy of a more prosperous world through sustainable development. Inequality amongst and within countries as well as poverty remain as the main global challenges. Besides that, new global challenges have also risen such as energy inequality, infrastructure gap, unsustainable consumption, limitation in production, and climate change.

Based on lessons learned and best practices in achieving MDGs, we need to intensify our efforts and enhance shared responsibilities in accordance with national capabilities as a solid foundation for the new agenda. Here developed countries have to give the examples that others can follow, he said.

There is a need to strengthening global partnership. It is critically important that international commitments be met, including on ODA. This should be coupled with knowledge sharing, technology transfer and wider access to markets including for the Middle Income Countries (MICs) which face many challenges, not least the impacts of the recent global economic turmoil. Development cannot take place in the absence of peace, within the state or between states.

Boni Yayi, President of Benin, and coordinator of the LDCs, called for spe-

cial attention towards LDC countries in the implementation of the Agenda 2030. He stressed the importance of Means of Implementation. LDCs called for attention of taking the specificities of vulnerable countries in the UN Climate Conference in Paris in December 2015. The LDC group which contributes the least to greenhouse gas emissions needs particular attention in order to better prepare to adapt and become resilient to the negative effects of climate change.

Milner Tozaka, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Solomon Islands, an important representative of most vulnerable island countries, gave a concrete example of the impacts of climate

change and its close relations with the implementation of the Agenda 2030. He said that small island developing States could not have a discussion on sustainable development without talking about climate change. The climate-related disasters last year had cost more than 9 per cent of his country's GDP. Only in 2015, his Island has been victim of two cyclones which kept the country under the constant stress of disaster response.

Adriano José Timossi is a Senior Programme Officer of the Global Governance for Development Programme (GGDP) of the South Centre.



Change in production and consumption patterns is one of greatest challenges in the implementation of the Agenda 2030. Food waste is one of main challenges. According to FAO, roughly one third of the food produced in the world for human consumption every year – approximately 1.3 billion tonnes – gets lost or wasted.

UN Celebrates 70th Anniversary

Below is a report by Adriano José Timossi on the outcomes of the General Debate of the General Assembly 70th session and with excerpts of some of the speeches at the UNGA.



After a weekend of intense diplomatic activities leaders reconvened again on Monday, 28 September for the traditional annual general debate of the General Assembly marking this year's 70th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations.

By Adriano José Timossi

After a weekend of high diplomatic activity in New York at the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, leaders of the 193 members of the United Nations reconvened again on 28 September to 3 October for their traditional annual General Debate of the 70th session of the General Assembly.

The theme this year was "The United Nations at 70 - the road ahead for peace, security and human rights". The session reviewed achievements of the UN in its first 70 years and debated on pressing issues of the global agenda.

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in his opening statement hailed the important achievement made over the weekend with the endorsement of the 2030 Agenda including 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the SDGs. He called world leaders to build on the momentum with a robust agreement on climate change. Facing the threat of the risk of temperatures rising above the 2°C threshold, the UN Secretary General called upon the international community to work in synergy and urged developed countries to meet the agreed goal of \$100 billion per year by 2020 on climate financing and also, reminded them on their commit-

ments with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the renewed pledge by developed countries to invest 0.7 per cent of the gross national income in official development assistance (ODA).

The UN Secretary General also spoke on the global humanitarian catastrophe which is taking place with proportions "not seen in one generation". Today there are over 100 million people requiring immediate humanitarian assistance and 60 million people living outside their homes or their countries. Referring to the trillions in wasteful military spending, he ques-

tioned world leaders: "Why is it easier to find the money to destroy people and the planet than it is to protect them?". While commending Europe for their efforts in providing asylum he also encouraged the old continent to do more. "After the Second World War, it was Europe seeking the world's assistance," he recalled in addressing the current refugee and migration crisis.

Mogens Lykketoft, President of the 70th session of the General Assembly, said that eradicating poverty in all its forms is only possible with a much more complex transformation of the entire global economy, the environment and social structures. "We cannot rely only on the traditional growth model of the past fifteen or the past seventy years," he said, adding that inequality in income, wealth, access to resources and to quality education and health must be overcome. Each and every person has a legitimate demand for a decent life he said. People in developed countries could not continue to consume and produce in the manner to which they were accustomed.

Developing countries' leaders reaffirm their strong support for multilateralism and call for a more robust UN that can help to fight global injustice and inequality

Several leaders of the South countries have used the UN General Assembly



The Palestinian flag being hoisted at the UN in an emotional ceremony on 30 September 2015.

The United Nations' 70 years of history

After two months of intense meetings, the United Nations Conference on International Organization concluded on 26 June 1945 with the adoption of the **Charter of the United Nations** by representatives of 50 countries. Poland which was in process of forming a new government added to the group three days later. The United Nations officially came into existence on 24 October 1945 with the ratification of the Charter by majority of its signatories.

As we celebrate its 70th year, and with 193 members today, leaders gathered in New York reflected on its achievements and the challenges ahead for the organization. They have called for enhanced global efforts in order to make justice to the principles for which the organization was initially thought – to build an era of peace, justice and development for all humanity.



Delegates of fifty nations met at San Francisco between 25 April and 26 June 1945 to hold the United Nations Conference on International Organization. Photo credit: UN Photo/Lundquist



1945, San Francisco Conference – UN Charter opens for signature: Brazil signs United Nations Charter. Photo credit: UN Photos/McLain

to denounce the unfairness of the current injustices of the international economic and political system which have contributed to spread poverty, raising inequality and destabilization with peace and development turning into a dream so far not achieved for many people in the developing countries and, ironically, now also a problem of developed country nations despite all their resources. They made a strong call for a new era in which the principles en-

shrined in the Charter of the UN signed in June 1945 can be truly implemented so that a more equal and inclusive society and a more balanced and peaceful international order can be achieved. Terrorism and climate change were identified as two key emerging threats also largely addressed by the leaders.

One significant event was the raising of the Palestinian flag in front of a

large crowd of diplomats, for the first time in the history of the UN Headquarters in New York. An overwhelming majority of world leaders from South and North have expressed their solidarity and support for the establishment of the State of Palestine in peaceful coexistence with Israel and denouncing the expansion of settlements in the occupied territories.

The International Monetary Fund and World Bank systems created under an era of global dominance by developed countries and the colonial system were also at the centre of attention of developing country leaders as the economic and financial crisis, which begun in 2008 in the United States, is still an issue and now impacts severely many in the south. The decision making process in economic and financial issues is unbalanced and most of the promised reforms are yet to be implemented. Their policies led to great crises in the south and as result new south led architectures of economic and finance governance are now emerging and will serve as an alternative to north dominated structures as well as to push them for long awaited reforms.



Palestinian flag flying over the UN .

Extracts from South leaders' speeches in the GA 70th session

Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, traditionally the first speaker in the General Debate, congratulated the UN for its achievements over the past 70 years recognizing that there have been progress and setbacks for the organization. "The decolonization process has shown notable evolution, as can be seen from the composition of this Assembly. The UN has broadened its initiatives, incorporating the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, in other words, issues related to the environment, poverty eradication, social development and access to quality services. Matters such as urban challenges and gender and race issues have become a priority". President Rousseff also recognized that despite achievements the organization "had not had the same success in addressing collective security". She warned about the proliferation of regional conflicts – "some with destructive potential".

As the host nation of the Rio 92 and Rio+20 summits, the latter leading to the process which culminated in the sustainable development goals, Ms. Rousseff called for global solidarity, and "determination from each one of us and a commitment to confront climate change, overcome poverty and generate opportunities". She called upon leaders to strengthen the Climate Convention, while fully implementing its provisions and respecting its principles. "The obligations to be undertaken must be ambitious - including with regard to financial and technological support to developing countries and small islands in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities," she said.

Chinese President Xi Jinping said that seventy years ago, the earlier generation of mankind, with vision and foresight, established the United Nations. This universal and most representative and authoritative international organization has carried mankind's hope for a new future and ushered in a new era of cooperation. It was a pioneering initiative never undertaken before. Xi Jinping said that "History is a mirror. Only by drawing lessons from history can the world avoid repeating past calamity. We should view history with awe and human conscience. The past cannot be changed, but the future

can be shaped". He made a strong call for equal partnership and mutual understanding among nations. The Cold War mentality should be abandoned.

The Chinese leader also added that "the 2008 international financial crisis has taught us that allowing capital to blindly pursue profit can only create a crisis and that global prosperity cannot be built on the shaky foundation of a market without moral constraints. The growing gap between rich and poor is both unsustainable and unfair. It is important for us to use both the invisible hand and the visible hand to form synergy between market forces and government function and strive to achieve both efficiency and fairness". China announced the decision to establish a 10-year, US\$1 billion China-UN peace and development fund to support the work of the United Nations, to advance multilateral cooperation and contribute more to world peace and development.

Hassan Rouhani, President of Iran and current chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, a group of over 100 developing countries established in 1961, acknowledged the role of all the negotiators, the leaders and the heads of state and government of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, Germany, China and Iran in achieving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between Iran and the six world powers that was immediately turned into an international instrument with the ratification of the United Nations Security Council.

The JCPOA sets a strong precedent where, for the first time, two sides, rather than negotiating peace after war, engaged in dialogue and understanding before the eruption of conflict, the Iranian leader said. Referring to the sanctions imposed against his country in the past decades, the leader said that "though, we protest the adoption of unfair resolutions against the Islamic Republic of Iran and the imposition of sanctions against the Iranian nation and government as a result of misunderstandings and sometimes overt hostilities of some countries, however, we believe, as an old Iranian saying goes, "the sooner you stop harm, the more benefit you will reap". Today is the very day that harm is stopped", Rouhani said.

The Iranian leader also said that the

nuclear deal, an example of "victory over war", should herald a new era with sustainable peace and stability in the region.

President Jacob Zuma of South Africa, current Chairman of the G77 and China, said that the UN Charter "embodied, through its principles and objectives, the aspirations of the oppressed people world-wide". President Zuma also acknowledged the role of the UN General Assembly in the past 70 years. "Rooted in the principle of sovereign equality, UNGA is the most representative international institution and organ of the United Nations". Over the past 70 years, the General Assembly remained central to the provision of support to the disadvantaged, marginalised, occupied, colonised and oppressed peoples of the world, he said, and remembered its role in support of the South African struggle for liberation internationally when it declared apartheid as a crime against humanity.

The South African President called for an independent and impartial Human Rights Council mechanism for the entrenchment of a human rights culture throughout the world. "It should avoid the pitfalls of its predecessor, the Commission on Human Rights, which was beset by politicisation and was caught up in the divide between developed and developing countries," he said. As a strong voice representing the interests of the African continent in global and regional affairs, President Zuma also emphasised that the "UN Security Council must take into account the views of the African Continent and its sub-regional organisations when dealing with conflicts in Africa in future".

As the host nation of the climate conference in Durban which led to the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action, President Zuma stated that South Africa has a special interest and a commitment to the success of the UNFCCC's Paris conference. However for that to happen, the continent requires the fulfilment of all three parts of the Durban Mandate; namely:

(i) the closing of the current ambition gap in the pre-2020 period through the honouring of existing legal obligations by developed countries and enhanced action,

(ii) the entry into force of the sec-

ond commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and,

(iii) the adoption of a new agreement for the post-2020 period in Paris that contains all the essential elements, including the means of implementation, loss and damage and response measures.

President of Egypt, Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, said that recently Egypt and the world witnessed the inauguration of the New Suez Canal, an achievement that will have a major impact on a number of economic fields, such as transportation, trade and services. It is also a statement of the determination of its people to overcome obstacles. The Middle East and the world at large are confronted with a perilous danger and are in dire need of a model that presents new prospects for our youth, providing them with opportunities for a brighter future. They must be shown that, with diligent work, they can participate in crafting this future. He announced Egypt's intention to launch, in coordination with the UN, and with wide participation by the youth of all nations, an initiative labeled: "Hope and Action for a New Direction".

He said the increasing plight of refugees fleeing from destructive armed conflicts reaffirms the need to work towards resolving these conflicts and confronting the scourge of terrorism, a major aggravating factor. It also necessitates creating channels for legal immigration and facilitating transportation as well as linking international migration and development. Egypt hosts ever increasing numbers of refugees. Egypt hopes that solutions to this crisis will be found, whether in the short-run to alleviate the humanitarian suffering of refugees, or in the long-run through overcoming the fundamental causes of this crisis.

President of Ecuador, Rafael Correa, currently president *pro tempore* of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) created by the 33 nations of the region, said that the UN was born from the ashes of WWII to maintain international peace and security. In the 21st century, 70 years after, peace must be all about the presence of justice, dignity and development. Correa quoted Mahatma Gandhi, who said that "poverty is the worst form of violence."

President Correa highlighted that



President Rafael Correa of Ecuador. Photo credit: UN

CELAC has declared the region a zone of peace but that outrageous opulence of a few, next to the most intolerable poverty, are also daily bullets against human dignity. The 164 million people in Latin America living in poverty, 68 million of whom remain in extreme poverty, are still waiting for justice, freedom and real democracy, which should not only be reduced to holding elections regularly. Overcoming poverty is the major imperial moral for the planet, and for the first time in the history of mankind, poverty is not the result of lack of resources or natural factors but of unfair and exclusionary systems, the result of perverse structures of power.

The Ecuadorian President also said that it is believed sometimes that environmental services do not have costs but the reality is that it can be very costly. Only by compensating for the consumption of environmental services are we able not to have the need of having financing for development. He also said that conservation in poor countries will not be possible in the absence of clear and direct improvement in the standards of living of their population. As Pope Francis said in his encyclical, "a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach". He denounced the environmental disaster in the Ecuadorian Amazon caused by contamination by oil company Texaco (later sold to Chevron). Correa called upon leaders of the world to adopt a binding treaty to sanction companies that violated human rights and damaged the environment.

Nicolas Maduro, President of Venezuela and the incoming chair of the

Non-Aligned Movement, said that 70 years after the birth of the UN, the people of the planet are still suffering from the scourge of inequality, poverty, looting, exploitation, which are the true causes of all wars we have known.

From the bipolar world of confrontation, we went to an unipolar world of impositions. The time has come to build a multipolar world, a multicenter world, a world without hegemony, a world of equals, a world that acknowledges the specific weight of the new emerging centers of political, economic, cultural and human power, a world that acknowledges the new regionalisms that increasingly strengthen in the various regions of the world, a world that can consolidate a new way and enforce the inspiring text of the UN Charter that guarantees the right to human existence, to self-determination, to independence and to life for all peoples.

Evo Morales, President of Bolivia, emphasized that it was important to take deep stock of the political, social, cultural and environmental achievements of the United Nations since its founding. He said that 70 years on, wars and invasions continued caused by ambitions of certain regions and nations, and the policy of keeping capital in the hands of the few. "We are convinced that capitalism is not the solution for humanity," he said and emphasised that the principle of "living well" - living in solidarity and complementarity, at one with Mother Earth - is the key for humanity. Morales said that living well means en-



President Nicolas Maduro of Venezuela



President Evo Morales of Bolivia

sureing that basic services and natural resources belonged to all people, not private companies. "This is how we freed ourselves economically," Morales stated. As many leaders spoke before him in the UNGA tribute on peace, he was emphatic in saying that there is no peace without social justice, a reasoning made by numerous South leaders in the debate of the UNGA 70th session. Some governments claimed to be spending billions of dollars to save Mother Earth, but they were really spending those billions on military aims which would ultimately lead to the destruction of the planet.

Sushma Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs of India, said that 70 years ago the foundation of the United Nations was laid on the western shores of this country through the San Francisco Charter. India was one of the countries which signed the Charter although we were not independent at that time. We got our independence two years later. When the United Nations was established, a rather diminutive looking man with the powerful weapon of non-violence was writing out the final act in a struggle that would become a symbol of hope for the colonized and the oppressed everywhere. She also emphasized the exemplar role played by India on peacekeeping operations and the need for a more democratic representation in the UN Security Council as the prerequisite for preserving the centrality and legitimacy of the UN as the custodian of global peace and security.

The United Nations has been successful in preventing a third world war, in assisting decolonization and

dismantling apartheid, in combating global epidemics and reducing global hunger, and in promoting democracy and human rights. Yet, when we ask ourselves whether we have been able to prevent conflicts taking place in several parts of the world, the answer is no. If we ask whether we were able to find permanent solution to these conflicts, the answer is no. If we ask whether we were able to show the path of peace to a world which is going on the way of violence, the answer is no. On these parameters, the United Nations appears as an ineffective institution in the area of international peace and security. It has failed to effectively address the new challenges to international peace and security.

"Even as we counter the menace of terrorism, we must acknowledge that real social and economic progress remains a critical goal. The elimination of basic human want leads almost invariably to more peaceful societies, as is evidenced by a map of the conflicts that engulf parts of the world" she stated.

The Minister referred to the COP in Paris, where the world expects us to deliver an ambitious and credible agreement on climate change. We have a duty for common action but in doing so we must keep in mind the larger historical contribution of some and the differentiated responsibility of others. If today Mahatma Gandhi was among us, he would ask if we have used the resources of the planet for our needs or for our greed? Also if adapting our lifestyle choices and reducing extravagant consumption would help us correct the course. For this reason, the agreement in Paris needs to be comprehensive and equitable, while delivering concrete action. Developing countries can do more if they are enabled in their efforts with the provision of finance, technology transfer and capacity building support from developed countries. India has always been and is a willing partner in global efforts towards this goal. "We will play our due role in reaching a meaningful, equitable and effective agreement in Paris," she said.

Indonesia's Vice President, Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, said that notwithstanding the achievements of the UN we must not be complacent: indeed, there are still numerous challenges confronting us. As we speak, there are still numerous armed con-

flicts around the world. The suffering of the Palestinian people is still taking place, while the realization of a two-state solution is still elusive. The recent conflict in Gaza has caused over two thousand human casualties, displacing more than five thousand people. Sectarian conflicts, including the threat of ISIS, continue to threaten political stability and cause a multitude of humanitarian crises in the Middle East, especially in Syria, Libya, Yemen, and elsewhere. Violent conflicts have not only torn countries and nations apart, but in Syria, ISIS has also destroyed remnants of a great ancient civilization that is our shared historical legacy. "We ask: has the United Nations done enough when faced with these unfolding and recurrent tragedies?"

We are also witnessing the worst year for human displacement and irregular migration since World War II due to political crises, sectarian conflicts and other humanitarian crises globally. In the past weeks we have seen a flood of refugees fleeing from the violence in Syria, where well over one hundred thousand people have been killed, to seek a safe haven in Europe, despite the dangers and hardships they have to endure on the way. We also ask, does the United Nations have sufficient political will to face these issues? Meanwhile, economic disparity, poverty and global inequality continue to haunt us. Even today, more than 800 million people around the globe are suffering from severe undernourishment.

The rich nations, comprising a mere 20 percent of the world's population, consume 70 percent of the world's resources. In many parts of the world, women, children, youth, persons with disability, the elderly, people living in conflicts and emergency situations remain marginalized and untouched by the progress of development. 20 years after the first Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC, we have yet to produce a universal agreement on climate change. In the context of trade, we have yet to see progress and concrete results from the Doha Development Agenda to support a rules-based, open and equitable multilateral trading system.

(Continued on page 18)

Near universal support to end US embargo on Cuba

A highlight of the 70th UN General Assembly was the huge applause for Cuban President Raúl Castro, in recognising the recent developments towards the normalization of US-Cuban relations. A month later the UN reaffirmed its condemnation of the remaining US embargo by a vote of 191 out of 193. Below is a report by Adriano José Timossi followed by extracts of Castro's speech.



Cuban President Raúl Castro addressing the UN General Assembly .

By Adriano José Timossi

One of the highlights of the 70th General Assembly was the warm welcome and applause given to Cuban President Raúl Castro when he spoke to the Assembly on 28 September. It was the first time he addressed the UN body. It marked an important moment as only a few months ago, US-Cuban diplomatic relations were established after 54 years of isolation. Still, two important issues remain on the agenda: the return of the occupied area of Guantanamo and ending the US economic embargo against Cuba of over 53 years.

At the end of his speech, a warm applause begun from all the corners of the General Assembly hall, as delegations stood to acknowledge the Cuban leader, and the applause lasted minutes. It was an emotional moment

as the Assembly acknowledged the coming to the end of decades of unjust unilateral behaviour towards the small Caribbean country. In October, another important victory was obtained by Cuba when the UN General Assembly voted 191 out of 193 members on a resolution voted for its 24th time and entitled "Necessity of Ending the Economic, Commercial and Financial Embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" condemning the US embargo on Cuba with just the United States and Israel voting against. Unlike previously, this year there were no abstentions. The first time this resolution was introduced by Cuba in 1992 only 59 countries voted in favour; three against with 71 abstentions and 46 countries did not take part.

The US President Barack Obama has recognized that the time has come for putting an end on the US embargo

against Cuba and called upon US Congress for revisiting this policy. Public support in the US has also grown to end the embargo. These recent developments towards Cuba, once isolated from the world community as one of key targets of the Cold War, mark a historical moment.

Extracts of the speech by President Raúl Castro

Seventy years ago, on behalf of their peoples, the member States of this organization signed the United Nations Charter. We pledged ourselves to preserve future generations from the scourge of war, and to build a new type of relationship guided by a set of principles and purposes that should bring about an era of peace, justice and development for all of humanity.

However, as from that moment, there have constantly been wars of aggression, and interference in the internal affairs of the States; the ousting of sovereign governments by force, the so-called "soft coups" and the re-colonization of territories; and all of these upgraded with new ingenious actions employing new technologies, and under the pretext of alleged human rights violations.

The militarization of cyberspace, and the covert and illegal use of information and communications technologies to attack other States is unacceptable, the same as the distortion of the advancement and protection of human rights used with a selective and discriminatory approach to validate and impose political decisions.

Despite the fact that the Charter calls to "reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person", to millions of people the fulfillment of human rights remains a utopia. Humanity is denied the right to live in peace, and the right to development. It is in poverty and inequality where the cause of conflicts should be sought out; conflicts generated first by colonialism and the plundering of the original peoples, and later by imperialism and the distribution of spheres of influence.

The pledge made in 1945 "to promote social progress and better standards of life" for the peoples, along with their economic and social devel-

opment, remains an illusion when 795 million people go hungry, 781 million adults are illiterate, and 17 thousand children perish every day from curable diseases, while annual military expenses worldwide amount to more than 1.7 trillion dollars. Barely a fraction of that figure could resolve the most pressing problems afflicting humanity.

Even in industrial nations the “welfare society”, usually presented as the model to imitate, has practically disappeared. The election systems and traditional parties that rely on money and publicity, are growing increasingly detached and distant from the aspirations of their peoples.

After 56 years in which the Cuban people put up a heroic and selfless resistance, diplomatic relations have been reestablished between Cuba and the United States of America.

Now, a long and complex process begins toward the normalization that will only be achieved with the end of the economic, commercial and financial blockade; the return to our country of the territory illegally occupied by Guantanamo Naval Base; the cessation of radio and TV broadcasts, and of subversion and destabilization programs against the Island; and, when our people are compensated for the human and economic damages they still endure.

While the blockade remains in force, we shall continue introducing



TelesurTV

27 October 2015 - Historic 191 votes in favour of Cuba's resolution against the blockade.

the Draft Resolution entitled “Necessity of Ending the Economic, Commercial and Financial Embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.”

To the 188 governments and peoples that have sponsored our just demand, here and in other international and regional forums, I reaffirm the eternal appreciation of the Cuban people and government for your continued support.

Cuba is celebrating with profound commitment the 70th anniversary of the United Nations Organization. We acknowledge that efforts have been made throughout these years, alt-

hough not enough has been done, to save present and future generations from the scourge of war, and to protect their right to sustainable development without exclusions. The United Nations should be saved from unilateralism and deeply reformed to democratize it and bring it close to the peoples.

The international community can always depend on Cuba to rise its honest voice against injustice, inequality, underdevelopment, discrimination and manipulation; and for the establishment of a more equitable and fair international order that really focuses on the human being, his dignity and wellbeing.

UN Celebrates 70th Anniversary...

(Continued from page 16)

Najib Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia, said that despite that we are in a world of nation states, new conflicts and threats imperilling our peace and security do not recognise borders. Non-state actors, such as the so-called Islamic State, threaten to destroy sovereign states, he said.

He said Malaysia had followed up on his idea, made at the GA 5 years ago, to establish a Global Movement – of Moderates of all religions, of all countries – to marginalise extremists, reclaim the centre, and shape the agenda towards peace and pragmatism.

Central to this effort is reaffirming Islam's true nature. So it is more important than ever that we spread awareness of authentic Islam, most especially when conflicts persist and people lose hope.

PM Najib said that new international solutions are needed to deal with the migration crises. The millions fleeing are people—like us. They should concern us all. We must respect our common humanity. Over the years, Malaysia has set an example by receiving many people fleeing war, starvation and persecution. The desperate migrants, he said, the victims of extremists and those whose lives had been degraded by poverty and hunger, should not be seen as strangers but rather as brothers and sisters.



UN

Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia

South Centre side event debates developing countries' views on the FfD process and its linkages with Agenda 2030

The UN's Third International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) took place on 13-16 July 2015, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This conference sought to assess progress made in the implementation of commitments from the Monterrey Consensus (2002) and the second FfD conference in Doha (2008), to address new and emerging issues and to reinvigorate international development cooperation. Developing country delegates debated the achievements, challenges and failures of the FfD process at a side event organized by the South Centre. Below is a summary of the meeting by the South Centre delegation.

By Adriano José Timossi and Manuel F. Montes

On the first day of the Third UN Conference on Financing for Development (FfD), high level developing country representatives debated views on the role of the FfD process in the post-2015 development agenda implementation. The event organized by the South Centre on the theme "Developing Countries' Perspectives on Financing for Development and the Linkages to the Post-2015 Development Agenda" took place on 13 July on the sidelines of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The programme included key authorities on the topic, including Dr. Carlos Lopes, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA); Dr. Manuel Montes, currently Senior Advisor on Financing for Development at the South Centre; Mr. Raymond Landveld, Permanent Mission of Suriname to the UN in New York and lead coordinator for FfD3

negotiations of the G77 and China; Mr. Puneet Agrawal, Joint Secretary (UNES), Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India; and Ambassador Carlos Cozende, Undersecretary-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil. The meeting was moderated by Ms. Bhumika Muchhala, Third World Network.

Dr. Manuel Montes, South Centre, recalled for the participants that when the FfD process began with the Monterrey Consensus in 2002, one of its key purposes was the expansion of an international cooperation that increases the flow and stability of financial resources for development. Nonetheless, it has not happened and there are still greater shortfalls in achieving ambitious goals of the "Monterrey Consensus".

FfD's substantive structure had been organized into six chapters of "leading actions," which signifies the key areas where developing countries face both obstacles and opportunities

in mobilizing financial resources to sustain long-term investment in new economic activities critical to promoting structural change. These six chapters deal with domestic resource mobilization, foreign direct investment and portfolio flows, international trade, official development assistance, external debt, and systemic issues.

According to Dr. Montes, the 7 July 2015 draft outcome document of the Addis conference which later became the final text could only be understood as the outcome of a failed effort to expand international cooperation, a failure that can only be seen as relocating the international community farther away from the FfD's own objectives. Moreover, given the developed countries' advocacy for the Addis outcome's candidacy as the main - if not the sole - means of implementation (MOI) for the 17 sustainable development goals (goals) and 169 associated goals by 2030, the contents of the 7 July draft are almost a guarantee of failure in meeting these goals.

Dr. Montes listed outstanding issues which appear to be either unaddressed or inadequately addressed in the proposals. These are: international cooperation in tax matters; harnessing private sector risk taking and innovation to development priorities; international rules, including in trade, that enable development efforts; ensuring the external debt problems do not cause development reversals; re-



Dr. Manuel Montes, South Centre addresses the participants of the side event on developing countries' views on the FfD3 process. From left to the right: Manuel Montes, Puneet Agrawal, Carlos Lopes, Carlos Cozende, Raymond Landveld and Bhumika Muchhala



Participants attending the South Centre side event held in Addis Ababa on the first day of the Third Financing for Development Conference, 13 July 2015.

structuring the global system so that it works for development (systemic issues).

Dr. Carlos Lopes, Executive Director of UNECA, spoke on uniqueness of the Addis Ababa conference on FfD which would be crucial for the successive events namely the SDGs and the climate agreement taking place later in the year. He stressed the need to address fairly the universality of the Post-2015 Development Agenda with the reality of the different levels of development. Speaking on sustainable development, he highlighted that the three dimensions must be effectively integrated and not considered in different layers, speaking on the “cappuccino paradox” as an example. The Executive director of the UNECA said that in times of crises, it is evident that environmental and social dimensions are sacrificed to the benefit of the economic

pillar. He said that there has been no new financial commitment in the text as a negative side of the text. It only has policy recommendations which will increase even more pressure on domestic resource mobilization in developing countries. He also alerted to the growing risk of double counting of climate finance as ODA and they should be maintained as two different tracks of funding.

Mr. Lopes however welcomed the proposal to substantially reduce illicit financial flows by 2030 with a view to eliminating them. “This is an issue very dear to us,” he said as \$50-60 billion a year is taken away from the African continent. He also spoke on the need for tackling the issue of debt restructuring, absent in the text, contrary to Monterrey and Doha FfD conferences and the need and means for a strong agenda for industrialization of

Africa as one of main outcomes of FfD for the African continent.

Dr. Lopes explained that for Africa the ultimate means of implementation of sustainable development itself is industrialization as expressed in the AU-ECA program Africa 2063. From the earliest days of the negotiations toward the sustainable development goals, African countries had arrived at an African Common Position, many of whose propositions are in the SDGs. He asked, is it untimely to try to industrialize when the planetary boundaries are closing because of climate change? Dr. Lopes said that on the contrary it is a fortuitous time for Africa to seek to industrialize. First of all, many of Africa’s environmental problems precisely emanate from its lack of industrialization, especially noting that extractive industries are a big economic sector in the continent. It is also the case that technology is increasingly aligned to make it more feasible for Africa to industrialize with the rapid decreases in the cost in clean energy supply. Finally, if the issue is poverty and inequality, there is no other path but industrialization for Africa.

Ambassador Cozendey of Brazil highlighted that the Addis Ababa conference was mainly focused on conceptual issues as there has been no new money on the table. He said that convergence between the FfD and the Agenda post-2015, in the format proposed by the developed countries was not adequate. The integrity of the FfD process should be retained and it must have its own follow-up mechanism. Brazil is of the view that the two agendas would be integrated in a follow-up mechanism to be announced in Addis Ababa and in New York. FfD can contribute a mechanism to see, for instance, where the SDGs are not working, where financing is insufficient. The two mechanisms would then feed into the High Level Political Forum. He said that the SDGs would indicate which goals would have its implementation threatened and the FfD follow-up could discuss and stimulate efforts on how to mobilize more resources for its financing. Brazil, one of proponents of the tax committee saw this initiative as an important element to improve international cooperation in the tax issue. This critical importance of the issue has been recognized since Monterrey, which recog-



South Centre Senior Advisor on Finance and Development, Dr. Manuel Montes, delivers a statement to the Third United Nations Conference on Financing for Development held in Addis Ababa in July 2015.



Government official of the hosting country (right) talks with delegates on the hall of the Third FfD.

nized that developing countries need to have their own resources for development. As of today, we do not have such a forum where developing countries could engage discussion on this issue, he said.

Raymond Landveld, Permanent Mission of Suriname and lead coordinator for FfD3, presented an overview of the position of the G77 and China for the conference to the latest text presented by the co-facilitators. The delegate from Suriname highlighted the importance of the conference in setting a strong mechanism for international cooperation. He focused on some of the key elements under negotiation. On tax cooperation, he reaffirmed the voice of the largest negotiating group of the UN in defending the need for an intergovernmental commission of the UN and the need to create an environment in which developing countries could mobilize more domestic resources for their

own development. An intergovernmental tax mechanism would give developing countries a voice in rule-setting in the global economy and on systemic global governance, a pledge made so long ago.

Landveld said that G77 and China wanted a strong commission to follow-up on the FfD process but it has not happened yet but with the new negotiating text, there is an opportunity to install a follow-up and review forum. This forum will be placed under the auspices of the ECOSOC and will articulate with other existing mechanisms such as the existing dialogue with the Bretton Woods Institutions, UNCTAD, and the WTO.

Landveld defended the call of the G77 and China for incorporating the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) in the final outcome of the Addis conference. He said that it was natural that it should

be included in the text as it comes from the inclusion of environment across the SDGs. As the FfD process is integrated with the agenda on sustainable development, there was a clear need to incorporate the Rio+20 principles. The FfD process is the basis for the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Landveld proposed that FfD is the fridge with the food stuff in it, and the post-2015 development agenda is the menu of what needs to be created or cooked. FfD must provide the ingredients that are needed to achieve the sustainable development goals. Nevertheless, the Surinamese delegate did not agree with proposals for a full convergence of the two processes within the new agenda of the SDGs, with an end-date of 2030. The FfD, on the other hand, is a forum for debating policies and mobilization of resources required to promote development, a priority which will not end in 2030, he said.

Puneet Agrawal of India said that the Addis FfD Conference takes place a time when the international community is struggling to genuinely revive the global partnership for development. The poor performance of developed countries to step up to the plate in doing their share needs to be corrected. We are, of course, disappointed with the overall lack of ambition in North-South aid, the fact that several Northern governments have found it impossible to fulfil, let alone exceed their aid commitments. More aid is crucial if developing countries are to make headway. On the issue of taxation, the ongoing discussion indicates sadly that the notion of shared responsibility is mere rhetoric and that its proponents have no intention of making it a practice. A concrete, dedicated institutional time and space to the follow-up of FfD outcomes is of critical importance. We hope therefore that at the stage of implementation of the outcomes of the FfD and the post-2015 development agenda there will be mechanisms created that ensure an adequate level of political accountability.

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Flag ceremony at the UNECA office in Addis Ababa marks the opening of the Third UN Financing for Development Conference.

General Statement of the South Centre to the 2015 WIPO Assemblies

Below is the statement of the South Centre to the 2015 World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Assemblies held at its headquarters in Geneva on 5-14 October 2015.

Honourable Ministers, Your Excellencies Ambassadors, Director General, Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The South Centre is an intergovernmental organization and think tank of developing countries. We applaud the important step that the United Nations (UN) as a whole has taken in adopting the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), achieved by consensus. The SDGs, that will become applicable from January 2016, embrace a common vision to transform our world for the better by 2030 through increased global collaboration.

We look forward to the future preparation of a new strategic framework for the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) with strategic goals aligned to those of the broader UN system. We also look forward to the strengthened cooperation between WIPO and other UN agencies and the continued work of the WIPO Member States and the WIPO Secretariat to realize this shared vision within the framework of WIPO's mandate as a specialized UN agency and under its convention.

We encourage WIPO Member States to guide the work of the organization towards shaping a more inclusive and balanced international intellectual property system. One that is part of a broader knowledge governance system that works for all—the variety of industries, big and small firms, entrepreneurs, artists, researchers, students, indigenous peoples, farmers and patients - around the world. One that promotes knowledge creation and diffusion, that accelerates transfer of technology and know-how, especially of essential technologies for global health, food sovereignty and to respond to climate change. One that promotes sharing of innovations developed with public financing. One that is conducive to the exercise and realization of human rights. One that allows all States sufficient policy space to carefully assess and manage the effects of intellectual protection and enforcement assessing the benefits against costs. One that promotes the use of safeguards to ensure balance between protection and access, and to prevent misuse and abuse of intellectual property rights.

Sustained effort towards realizing a Development Agenda for WIPO, including the implementation of the agreed 45 recommendations, is a key enabler for this task.

We hope that the discussions this week by the 2015 WIPO Assemblies will succeed in a spirit of collaboration, compromise and consensus, as that which allowed UN Member States to arrive at the post 2015 Development Agenda. In particular, to build the necessary political will to advance in good faith the text based work to arrive at effective solutions to tackle the continued misappropriation and misuse of genetic resources and traditional knowledge through the IP system, and at long last give due recognition to the role of traditional knowledge in foster-

ing creativity and innovation and promoting good health and poverty reduction.

We also call on the 2015 WIPO General Assembly to provide guidance on a number of other pending issues, including: to finalize discussions on the report of the independent review of WIPO technical assistance and implement its recommendations; guide the Standing Committee on Patents towards a balanced and concrete work plan that includes development of new tools to inform technical assistance on the use of patent related flexibilities in the public interest and in particular in the area of public health; advance norm-setting work to remove copyright and digital restrictions on the cross-border transfer of works based on limitations and exceptions, to promote learning, research, education by all, including persons with disabilities; and reach agreement on the application of the coordination mechanism on the WIPO Development Agenda recommendations to all WIPO bodies.

The South Centre also encourages WIPO Member States to ratify, for its rapid coming into force, the groundbreaking Marrakesh Agreement to Facilitate Access to Published Works by Visually Impaired Persons and Persons with Print Disabilities.

Finally, the South Centre reaffirms its commitment to fully supporting developing countries and Least Developed Countries in shaping their national IP policies and systems. In this context, we highlight our full support for the duly motivated request of LDCs to the WTO TRIPS Council to delay pharmaceutical patent protection in the context of the WTO TRIPS Agreement, and call on WIPO as the leading provider of technical assistance to both WIPO and WTO Member States, and on WIPO Member States, to strengthen its support to LDCs to use this flexibility for access to medicines and to build local pharmaceutical capacity.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.

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