



General Assembly
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General Debate

Statement by H.E. Erna Solberg
Prime Minister

President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The leaders who gathered at the UN Climate Summit have taken important steps to mobilise action and ambition on climate change. Now we need to make sure that the positive results are followed through and expanded as we prepare for an agreement in Paris next year.

When we meet at the General Assembly next year we will adopt the new set of global goals for our common future. The Sustainable Development Goals must build on the success of the Millennium Development Goals. They must be realistic as well as ambitious. Like the MDGs, the SDGs should be few in numbers, concrete and measurable.

Meanwhile, achieving the eight Millennium Development Goals will create a solid foundation for sustainable development. As co-chair of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's MDG Advocacy Group, I will use every opportunity to help build that foundation over the remaining 462 days until the deadline.

(Check against delivery)

We must accelerate our efforts – and to do so we need to enter into broad partnerships that include the private sector, civil society and governments. We need to make the best possible use of innovative solutions and technologies. Governments and national political leaders must take the lead and ensure local ownership. At the same time, we must support the remarkable work that many people are doing to implement the MDGs in practice.

The frightening Ebola epidemic in West Africa reminds us of the fragility of our progress and development. We must build health care systems that can support courageous and determined individuals like Josephine Finda Sellu. Ms. Sellu, the deputy nurse matron at a government hospital in Sierra Leone who lost 15 of her nurses to Ebola. Nevertheless, she never stopped working in this death trap. She is a true fighter for the MDGs.

Education, particularly for girls, is the ‘superhighway’ to ending poverty. Poverty, discrimination and the use of force often prevent girls from getting the education they are entitled to. Sexual violence, abductions and deadly attacks are the most despicable ways in which girls’ right to education is being violated. I condemn the abductions of schoolgirls by Boko Haram in the strongest possible terms. In the face of terrorists threatening to deprive children of their right to education we should be inspired by Malala. Malala brought to light the plight of the millions of children around the world who are denied an education. If one schoolgirl can take on the Taliban, then, surely, the world community can defeat extremism and terrorism.

President,

Terrorists and extremists are trying to stop us from educating children. Peace is vital for achieving universal primary education. The same can be said for the other MDGs, not least the goal on reducing poverty. This is why we must focus on conflict affected countries. A girl

child growing up in Syria today cannot look forward to going to school, because there is no school to go to. A pregnant teenage girl in South Sudan will not get the maternal health services she needs since it is too risky for health workers to travel.

From the chambers of the Security Council to modest homes in the Swat valley in Pakistan, we can all help to end poverty by promoting peace. But all these different efforts – at global, regional, national and local level must work in concert. It is 70 years since a group of leaders met in Washington to discuss the creation of the United Nations. One of the most fundamental tenets of the new world order created in 1945 was respect for internationally recognised borders.

President,

Norway condemns Russia's violations of international law and its continuing destabilisation of eastern Ukraine. Any settlement of the conflict must uphold international law and respect the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The ceasefire agreed on 5 September must be respected, and the provisions of the agreement implemented on the ground. Russia bears a particular responsibility in this regard.

The Security Council is mandated to maintain peace and security, but has failed to address the situation in Syria and Ukraine effectively. We know why. Some of the big powers still believe in outdated ideas of zero-sum games and spheres of influence. We are hopeful that the Council will continue to stand united against the threat of the terrorist group known as ISIL in Iraq. We support the US initiative and co-sponsored the UN Security Council Resolution 2178 on Foreign Terrorist Fighters. We encourage the countries of the region to take a leading role in fighting ISIL.

Armed conflict and civil war have created man-made humanitarian disasters in Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and Somalia. Earlier this year, Norway hosted a humanitarian donor conference for South Sudan and we will shortly co-host a donor conference to address the aftermath of the conflict in Gaza. Donor conferences are important, but we need to look beyond the emergencies. We need to build on and improve the current system, when we meet for the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. We must make sure that humanitarian aid supports not only short-term recovery, but also long-term development. Besides, long-term development cooperation should help countries prevent, prepare for, withstand and recover from humanitarian crises in the future.

President,

International peace, national security, social development and individual prosperity can best be fostered under a system of good democratic governance and human rights. Efforts to promote respect for human rights can help prevent armed conflict and mass atrocities. Nobel Peace Prize winner Shirin Ebadi, herself a leading human rights defender, stated in her Nobel lecture that: 'If the 21st century wishes to free itself from the cycle of violence, acts of terror and war, there is no other way except by understanding and putting into practice every human right for all mankind, irrespective of race, gender, faith, nationality or social status'.

I agree.

Human Rights is one of three pillars of the UN, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by this Assembly on 10 December 1948. Norway endorses the Secretary-General's 'Human Rights Up Front' initiative, which places the protection of human rights at the heart of UN strategies and operational activities. The UN needs a strong and assertive human rights pillar. Only if we fund the human rights pillar properly, we can achieve the results that we need and want from our world organisation.

The promotion and protection of human rights is first and foremost the responsibility of states. We are, however, facing large implementation gaps. Attacks, threats, intimidation and reprisals against human rights defenders are increasingly being reported. New laws restricting freedom of expression and the work of civil society are being adopted. Discrimination is widespread, particularly against minorities such as indigenous people and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender-persons.

The rule of law and civil liberties are also fundamental to the development of the private sector and attracting investment. Moreover, we know that enabling women to fully enjoy their social and economic rights unleashes tremendous economic growth.

President,

We must stay focused on accelerating progress towards the MDGs during the remaining 462 days. We must let ourselves be inspired by those who serve at the front line of these efforts like Ms. Sellu, and other doctors and nurses who are risking their lives to treat patients with Ebola.

As we set our future development agenda beyond 2015, we must also make some adjustments. Peace and stability must be included. Climate issues must be addressed. Good, democratic governance, with respect for the rule of law and human rights, will be crucial for achieving sustainable development for us all. And all this means quite simply to be 'doing the right things right'.

Thank you, President.