

Mr President, Mr Secretary-General, Fellow Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sixty years ago, UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld said these simple words, summarising our task here today:

“The United Nations is an expression of our will to find a synthesis between the nation and the world, [...] to serve the world by serving our nation, and to serve our nation by serving the world.”

We will never forget Dag Hammarskjöld’s life, and we welcome a new resolution examining his death; but now, more than ever, we need to ensure that his idea of international solidarity lives on.

The current refugee situation is a global crisis, a global responsibility, and now also a global crisis of responsibility. The UN system, and all leaders of the world, need to come together to ensure that those fleeing from war and repression are treated in a safe, orderly and dignified way.

We should dramatically increase the number of resettlement places, expand legal avenues for migration, and base all our efforts on the principle of non-refoulement and the right to seek asylum. And it is extremely urgent that all countries of the European Union treat the people seeking refuge in the Union in a spirit of humanity, solidarity and shared responsibility.

Sweden will do its share. We are the largest per capita receiver of asylum seekers in Europe, and we are increasing our funding to UNHCR, which is in dire need of more resources. But this is something no country or continent can tackle alone. It’s time for us all to step up and solve this crisis. It is not only our task. It is our duty – in the serving of our nations, and of the world.

To solve this crisis, we also need to stop the horrors in Syria. Extrajudicial executions, sexual and gender-based violence, atrocities that may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity cannot be tolerated by our international community.

Sweden supports the efforts to secure humanitarian assistance for the Syrian people. We stand behind Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura’s proposal to form working groups with Syrian participation to put into operation the Geneva Communiqué. To support this process we want to see an international contact group comprising key international and regional actors. And time is of the essence. The Security Council and its major powers must shoulder this responsibility. This bloodbath must end.

Meanwhile, other conflicts should not be forgotten. A seven-year-old child in Gaza has already lived through three wars. Peace talks need to be resumed so that the State of Israel can live alongside a democratic, coherent and viable Palestinian State. Sweden has recognised the State of Palestine. We want to see a more equal relationship, to pave the way for the two-state solution that Israelis, Palestinians and a broad international community view as the right path to peace.

Sweden will also step up efforts for peacekeeping and crisis management.

We are contributing civilian personnel to missions in South Sudan, Afghanistan, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Middle East, and we have sent military personnel for the UN Stabilisation Mission in Mali and the international coalition to combat ISIL.

We stand ready to contribute to future UN missions and are continuing research on developed doctrines and methods for peacekeeping, to share within the UN.

Working to keep the peace also means following through on our mutual promises of disarmament:

- to pursue legal, practical and technical solutions to fully rid our world of its remaining 16 000 nuclear weapons;
- to finally destroy what remains of other inhumane arms, such as biological and chemical weapons;
- to realise the Arms Trade Treaty; and,
- to fight the spread of small arms and light weapons, including ammunition.

If we sway from these goals, humanity will suffer for our faults.

And if peace is more than the absence of war, peacebuilding is more than the direct prevention of military conflict. Lack of resources, rising sea levels and natural disasters have already wreaked havoc for women and men living in vulnerable states. Climate change can work as a conflict multiplier, threatening peace as well as our chances of achieving all of our Sustainable Development Goals.

We need a course of action to create a low-carbon and climate-resilient world economy. We must protect land and ocean ecosystems. It's not a choice, but a necessity for survival. The world must reach a fair, ambitious and legally binding agreement in Paris in December, which over time keeps the rise in global temperature as far as possible below two degrees Celsius.

And Sweden will play its part, becoming one of the first fossil-free nations in the world, and having no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050. We will be strong financial supporters of the Green Climate Fund and international climate action, to support adaptation and transfer of technology on a global scale.

The coming decade will also need to see major investments in the schooling, higher education and professional training of our young.

We need fair and equal societies, where the just contributions from those who have, finance the giving of knowledge and power to those who have not.

This is a foundation for peace that is too precious to neglect. And this is closely connected to the potential of gender equality. The barring of women from power and public debate, from work and education, from their human right to decide over themselves, including their bodies, reproduction and sexuality, is a global disgrace. It is time to once and for all get rid of structures that discriminate against and belittle people, on whatever grounds.

It is time to fully realise UN Security Council Resolution 1325, granting women their crucial role in peace and state building. It is time to see sexual violence as one of the most destructive weapons of all and to fight it with the full force of the international community.

And new times demand a new mindset. As several leaders of island countries have told me: "We're not a small island nation, we're a large ocean state". To fully grasp the potential of the new world economy, we need to remove old colonial prejudice and false conceptions of large and small, North and South, East and West.

We should welcome and enhance the transformation and expansion of the global economy through free and fair trade, and create a Global Deal for decent work, while also working to free about 160 million child labourers and end modern slavery.

Sweden is taking concrete measures to maintain political support at the highest level for our common Agenda 2030, and we will continue to allocate 1 per cent of GNI to official development assistance. For me, words that are not followed by actions are not worth being spoken.

But the challenges for the international community also show the dire need for a strengthened and reformed UN. Sweden contributes resources, but we also want to contribute reforms. We want to make the UN more effective, transparent and fit-for-purpose. We will work to strengthen cooperation between the UN and regional organisations, not least the African Union.

Dear friends,

In 2017 it will be twenty years since Sweden last took a seat on the Security Council. Over the years, we have stood by those fighting for independence and dignity, and against repression, colonialism, apartheid and inequality. We now seek your confidence to champion the perspective of small and medium-sized states, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council.

We will strive tirelessly for a Council that can respond swiftly to the security challenges of our time; a Council that is more representative, transparent and effective. A reformed Council must reflect the realities of today, with adequate representation of Africa, Asia and Latin America, and we support efforts to limit the use of the veto.

And although we see distress, we also see hope. The agreement on the Iranian nuclear issue was indeed a victory for the idea of diplomacy and shared efforts creating shared progress. Our decision on the new Sustainable Development Goals will, if thoroughly implemented, have the chance to form another landmark in human history. And the upcoming climate summit in Paris will give us the opportunity to act: late, but hopefully not too late.

Sweden is fully committed to these tasks. We believe that international solidarity is the first and foremost foundation for our shared peace and prosperity. International cooperation is the only way to transform this solidarity into substantial change.

2015 must be the essential milestone for global development and for future generations. So let's create that milestone, serving our nations – serving the world.

Thank you.