



**Statement by H.E.Mr. Luís Filipe Tavares,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Communities
of the Republic of Cabo Verde
on the occasion of the
71st Session of United Nations General Assembly**

New York, 26th September de 2016

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great satisfaction that we participate in this session of the General Assembly under your wise presidency, at a time of great challenges and also longings and legitimate aspirations of Humanity for a more just and solidary world. We are particularly proud and pleased to see a representative from a Small Island Developing State conducting the work of this august Assembly. We wish you success during your term in office and assure you, Mr. Peter Thomson, of the full cooperation and availability of the delegation of Cabo Verde.

To your predecessor, Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, we thank him for his excellent work and congratulate him for his tireless efforts and dedication, as well as the transparent and inclusive manner in which he conducted the process of hearing candidates for the position of Secretary-General. We are certain that, under his guidance, important steps were taken in the process of reform that is underway in our Organization.

And, on behalf of the Government of Cabo Verde, we would also like to applaud and thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, as we approach the end of his time in office, for his work and efforts during his two terms toward: building international peace and security; seeking more solidary, fraternal, and fair relations; combating poverty; and pursuing balanced and sustainable development for all. As a Small Island Developing State,

Cabo Verde much appreciated his dedication to a better world, and is particularly grateful for his contribution to the organization and success of the Third United Nations Conference on Small Island Developing States held in Samoa; for the adoption of the Agenda 2030; and for the agreement on climate reached in Paris last year. With respect to the latest, Cabo Verde is pleased with the number of States that have signed the agreement last April.

Mr. President,

A small island nation, Cabo Verde bases its foreign policy on the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, and is certain that multilateralism is the most appropriate way to approach issues in the International Agenda. Cabo Verde advocates for and privileges the pursuing consensus to keep International Peace and Security; promoting and fostering dialogue in conflict resolution; and defending international law as indispensable elements for advancement of Humanity.

We note with concern that armed conflicts are proliferating in general and, in particular, in Africa and the Middle East. We have seen the resurgence of instability in several areas of the world; the unprecedented humanitarian crisis leading to the high number of refugees; irregular migrations; massive violations of human rights; poverty and lack of social cohesion; the widening of the inequality between rich and poorer nations; increasing acts of terrorism and atrocities; as well as the growth of transnational crime, namely narcotrafficking. All of these phenomena that we have been observing and to which we cannot ignore, call on us and compel us to act collectively.

The conflicts and sources of tension that subsist in the African continent continue to be a concern for us, particularly the situation in Libya, South Sudan, Somalia, and Mali. Cabo Verde supports the African Union in the search for solutions for these problems that affect the peace and security of our sister nations.

Also in our continent, we welcome Morocco's recent decision to rejoin the African Union. We hope that the reasons that dictated their withdrawal will be solved within the framework of strengthened regional cooperation among the Member States of the Arab Maghreb Union, thus contributing to the stability and security in the Sahel region.

With respect to the Middle East, Cabo Verde understands the urgency of finding a solution for the existing conflicts and encourages the pursuit of negotiated solutions for them. We specifically refer to the need to resume negotiations that may lead to a lasting peace that would allow both States, Israel and Palestine, to exist side by side with security. In addition, we welcome the ~~ceasefire in Syria~~ and encourage the continuation of efforts to seek a negotiated solution that may end the conflict and the suffering of their people.

Mr. President,

Terrorism is a phenomenon that directly or indirectly affects all countries and all regions of the planet, and no one can remain indifferent to the immense suffering and violence that it brings on entire populations. As a global problem, it is one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, which requires

a global response, as no country, large or small, rich or poor, is in condition to fight it alone and effectively.

Cabo Verde condemns, without reservations, any act of terrorism in any form or manifestation, and reaffirms its will and availability to cooperate with other States, as well as the United Nations system, to implement recommendations toward preventing and combating this threat. Therefore, Cabo Verde congratulates the United Nations Secretary-General's initiative in launching last January the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, and welcomes the results of the Fifth Review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Considering the iniquities and inequalities that exist a little everywhere, it is the understanding of my Government that such scenario compels us to join our efforts toward the promotion and protection of human rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Optional Protocols constitute the basis for building more peaceful, just and inclusive societies, in which fundamental rights and freedoms are at the core of their development.

In addition, we consider the role of institutions that advocate for human rights and civil society to be indispensable in promoting the rights inherent to human beings. As highlighted in the High-Level Thematic Debate on Human Rights, which took place last July with the theme *“UN@70: Human Rights at the centre of the global agenda”*, the challenges associated with climate change, terrorism, and

violent extremism, with conflicts and humanitarian crises, require not only coordinated actions at all levels but also the continuous fostering of good governance and the rule of law.

Massive violations of these rights and the denial of civil, political, social, and cultural rights hinder the full achievement of the sustainable development goals, particularly the enjoyment of rights and the affirmation of the most vulnerable. We are also convinced that the Right to Development constitutes a basic principle for cohesion and reduction of social inequalities within and among nations. As we celebrate the 31st anniversary of the Vienna Declaration on the Right to Development, it is important that the principles established there be observed and fulfilled.

With respect to protecting the most vulnerable, Cabo Verde welcomes the Political Declaration adopted at the high-level meeting on HIV-AIDS, which took place in last June, advocating for access to treatment, particularly for the most vulnerable, based on the principle of non-discrimination and non-stigmatization.

Cabo Verde recognizes and is concerned with the humanitarian crisis resulting from the large number of refugees and migrants and welcomes the organization and adoption of the New York Declaration agreed at the High-Level Meeting on Migrants and Refugees, which took place on September 19th. We believe that a significant part of the current difficulties may be overcome with the effective implementation of the recently adopted Global Compact on Refugees as well as with the future Plan of Action for Migrants, which is expected to be agreed. Furthermore, we call for the correct application of International Conventions

related to this issue, and stress the need to fight against the root causes of these phenomena.

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The theme chosen for this session – “The Sustainable Development Goals: a universal push to transform our world” – could not have been more appropriate. Your choice was judicious and pertinent:

- Judicious because, indeed, a significant portion of the work and attention of the United Nations until 2030 will focus on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals; and
- Pertinent, because, one year after the historic adoption of the Agenda 2030, we have the opportunity to express our point of view on how we intend to achieve the goals that we established, and the challenges that persist and may jeopardize the global commitment to “leave no one behind.”

For us, the fulfilment of the Agenda for Sustainable Development implies enhancing the means of implementation, particularly financing, technology transfer, capacity building, and participation in international trade. Furthermore, we will need to develop the capacity to follow up and implement a system to monitor national and regional policies, of which the United Nations System cannot be unaware.

Mr. President,

Taking into account the significant environmental, economic, and social vulnerabilities, as well as the costs of modernizing and transforming, which Small Island Developing States are facing, it will be important for the International Community to pay attention to the unique and specific characteristics of this group of countries in their development process. It's important for us to recall that, besides having lack of resources, their capacity to attract foreign direct investments is very limited.

An equally significant challenge for Small Island Developing States is the exploration and preservation of seas and oceans. The survival, the economic growth and development of our countries depends on the oceans, to which we are inextricably connected. The ocean-based economy is therefore of fundamental importance for the development that we want to be sustainable.

Thus, Cabo Verde calls for a robust and transparent international legal framework as a *sine qua non* condition for the preservation and sustained use of marine resources. To this end, my country is encouraged by the results of the first two work sessions of the Preparatory Committee, established by this Assembly, to develop a legally-binding instrument of UNCLOS on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Mr. President,

The devastating consequences of natural disasters resulting from climate change, which impact is significant in the poorest and most vulnerable countries, remind us of the urgency of implementing the Paris Agreement on climate change and the importance of implementing the Sendai recommendations. Developing a low-carbon economy and creating resiliency and capacity to adapt are no longer just an option for many. They have become essential requirements to build a sustainable economy, particularly in island and archipelago countries, whose survival is threatened by climate change.

Despite the challenges inherent in the implementation of the Agenda 2030, its ambitiousness offers a unique opportunity to promote international solidarity and cooperation at an unprecedented level in the history of Humanity. Therefore, it is against this backdrop that the United Nations system will be called to work as a unified front, avoiding duplication, increasing monitoring and implementation capacity at the national and regional level, identifying emerging challenges, offering solutions that are not "*one size fits all*," and respecting the idiosyncrasies and specific context of each country.

Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Cabo Verde, as a Small Island State, strive for the development of a sustainable and dynamic economy with a robust private sector and strengthened regulatory institutions.

In order to build a resilient economy that is in line with the 2030 sustainable development goals, the Government that I am honoured to be a part of plans to develop strategic partnerships to reduce risks and minimize weaknesses. However, the challenge facing a small and vulnerable country like Cabo Verde goes beyond our national capacity to mobilize technical and financial resources and calls for a more coordinated and predictable support from the International Community in general, and the United Nations system in particular.

Thank you.