

**Department for General Assembly
and Conference Management
(DGACM)**

SYNOPSIS OF THE GENERAL DEBATE

2016



Preface

DGACM is “greening” its coverage of the general debate this session

As the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change become more and more a part of our daily lives and work, DGACM is “greening” its coverage of the general debate this session.

To complement the versions of each Member State’s remarks now available online (at <https://gadebate.un.org/en>), in both print and video, I am attaching, in its new, electronic format, the Consolidated Synopsis of the general debate prepared by this department.

This Synopsis contains: a brief overview of the major trends of issues across recent general debates; an overview of major positions, proposals and promises emerging from this session’s general debate; a table of topics covered at the general debate; a bar graph showing the relative rankings of the most frequently raised topics in this session; and a set of bar graphs reflecting the trends in some key issues over recent years.

It is my pleasure to share our Consolidated Synopsis of the general debate of the seventy-first session with you, and to thank all those in DGACM—and throughout the Secretariat—who contributed to the success of this session’s general debate.

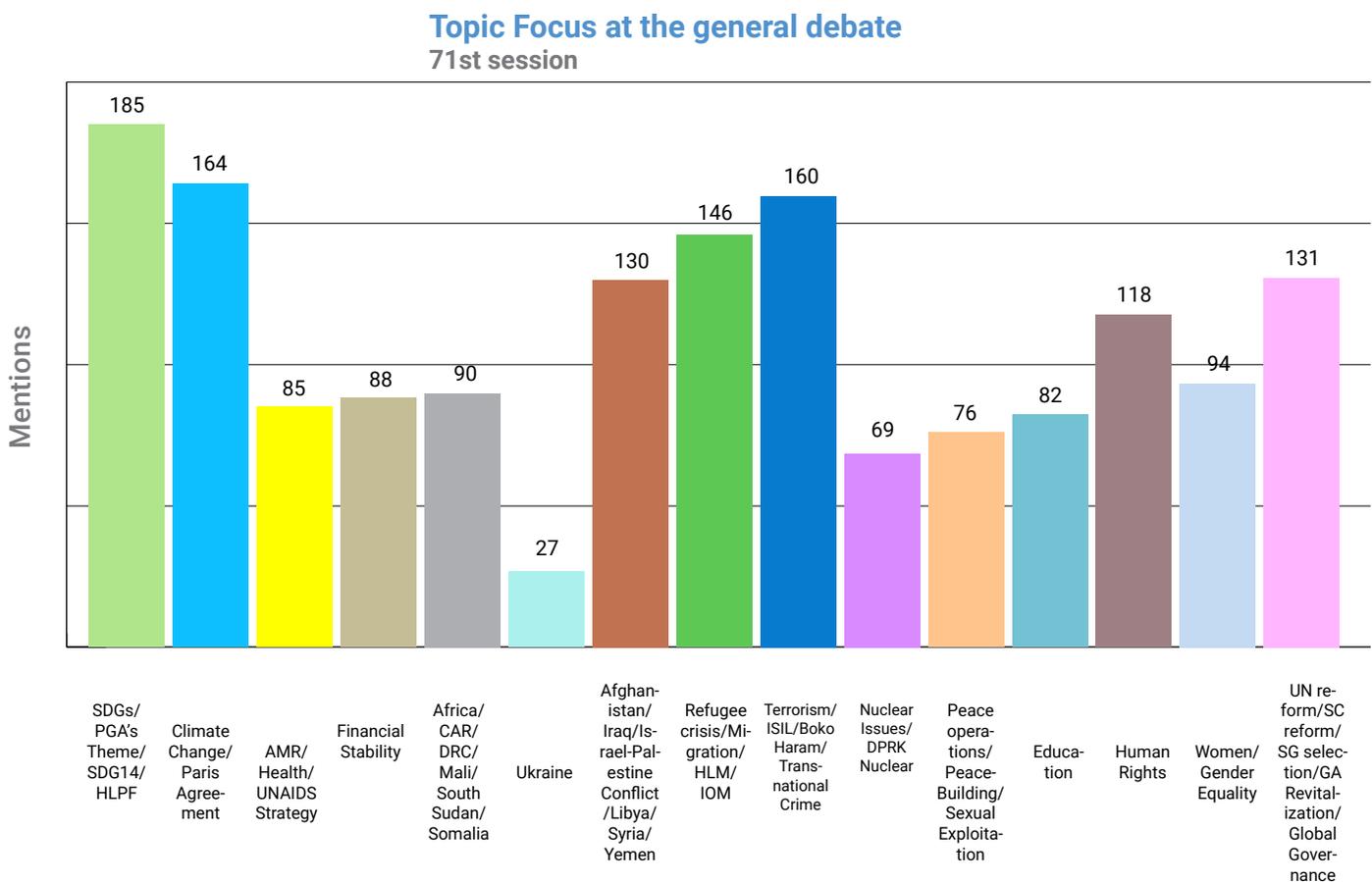
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Catherine Pollard', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Catherine Pollard
Under-Secretary-General for
General Assembly and Conference Management

Topic Focus at the general debate

71st session

The chart below summarize the topics most frequently raised or mentioned by the participants in the general debate.



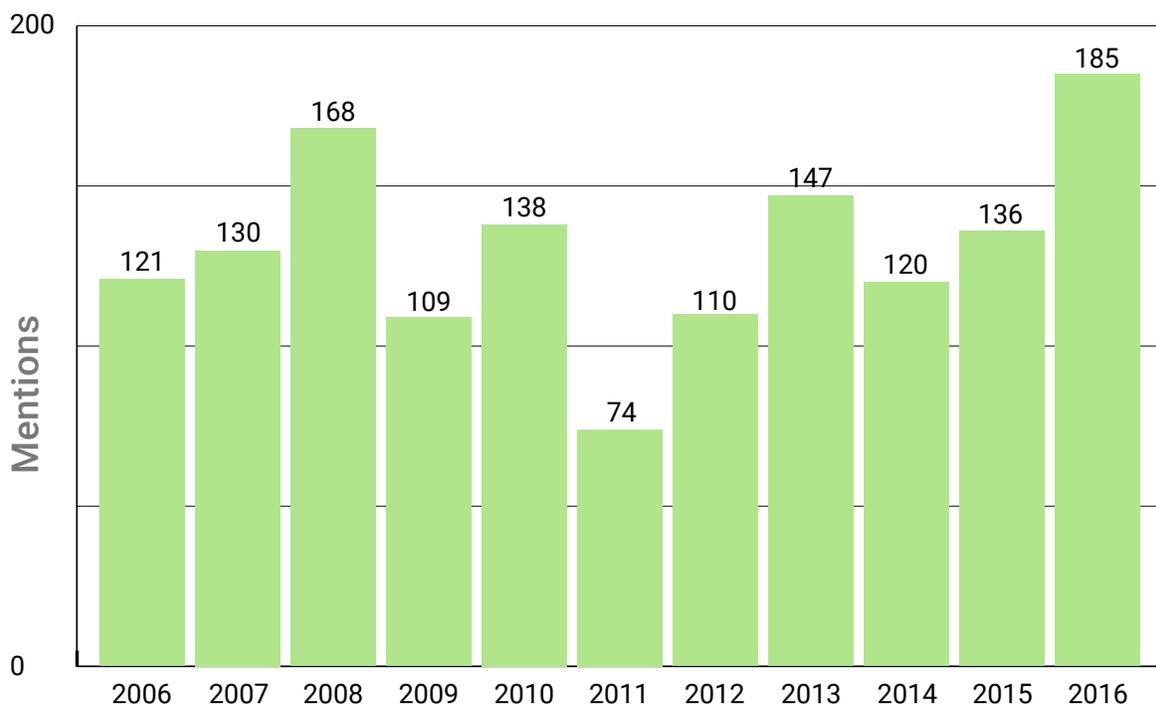
Major trends across recent sessions

Seven issues, many of which had figured prominently in previous sessions, received the greatest attention and mention by Member States during the general debate of the 71st session:

Discussion of sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) rose 25%

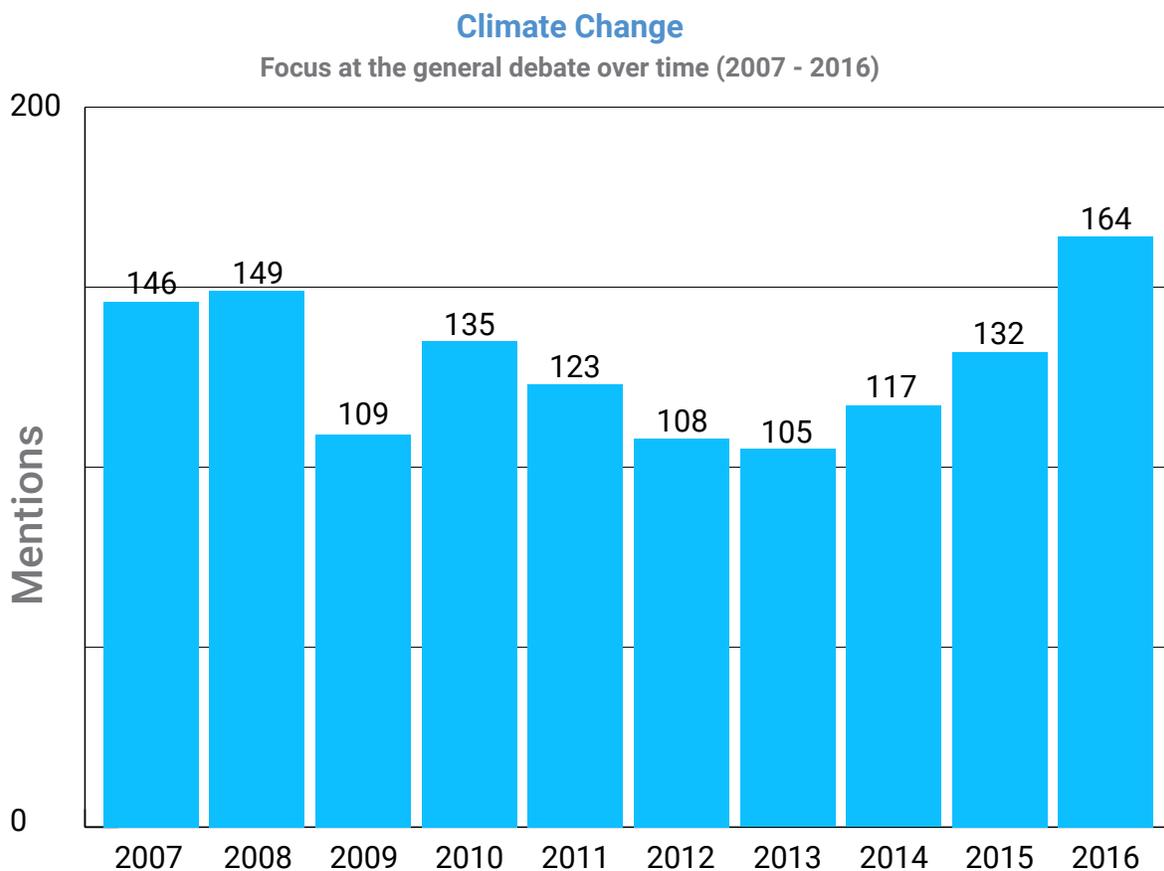
Discussion of **sustainable development**, and particularly the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, rose 25% from the general debate of the 70th session, with 185 Member States (95%) mentioning it this year. This represented a very pronounced increase over the 70th session [where 136 delegations (70%) mentioned it] and the 69th [where 120 delegations (62%) did]. As the great majority of these speakers stressed the importance of **implementation** of the SDGs, they also provided strong support for the **PGA's theme**, "The Sustainable Development Goals: a universal push to transform our world".

Sustainable Development and Development Agendas
Focus at the general debate over time (2006 - 2016)



Mention of climate change increased by 16%

Mention of **climate change increased by 16%**, with 164 Member States (83%) focusing on it this year versus 132 (67%) last session. Perhaps even more indicative, this session was the only one in the last decade where discussion of climate change surpassed its previous high of 149 (77%) during the general debate of the 63rd session in 2008, in the lead-up to the UNFCCC Climate Change Conference at Copenhagen. Of the delegations mentioning climate change, 78% also mentioned the **Paris Climate Change Agreement**. At the regional level, there was a notable increase in mention of climate change among African speakers [48 (90%) this session, a 26% increase from the previous session's 34 (64%)] and GRULAC speakers [32 (96%) this session, a 15% increase from last session's 27 (81%)]. Conversely, mentions of climate change remained relatively unchanged among WEOG member states and Eastern European speakers.

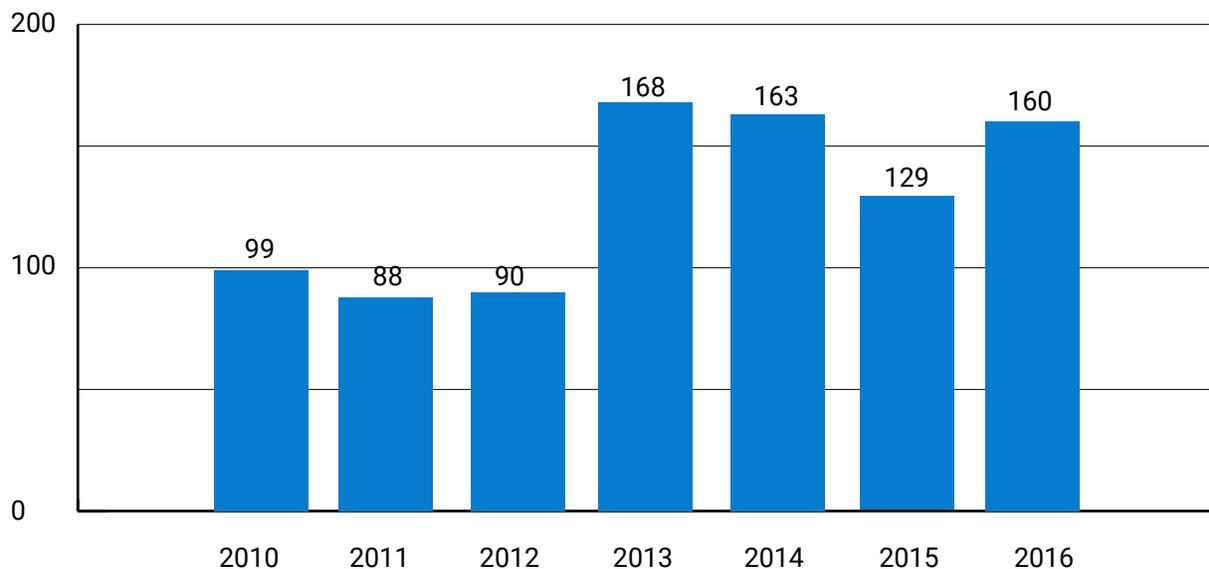


References to terrorism rose by 15%

Discussion of **terrorism and transnational crime** was the third most mentioned category, with 160 (81%) Member States mentioning it. References to **terrorism alone rose by 15%**, with a total of 157 (80%) speakers touching on it this session, versus 129 (65%) in the 70th session.

Terrorism Issues

Focus at the general debate over time (2010 - 2016)



References to refugees and migration rose 13%

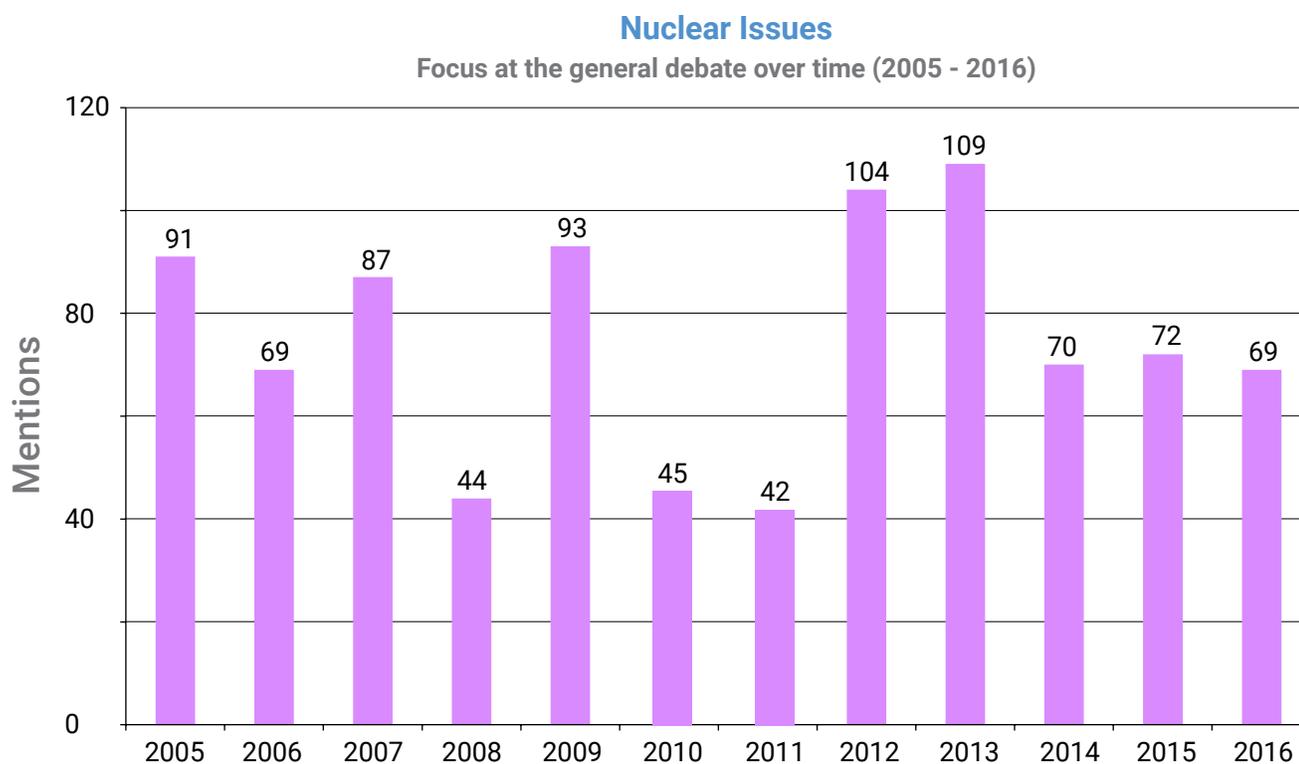
References to **refugees and migration rose 13%** from last session, being addressed by 146 delegations (74%) this session versus 120 speakers (61%) a year ago. The **High-level Meeting on Refugees and Migrants** and its **New York Declaration** were specifically mentioned by 30 member states. Among regions, the greatest increase in mention was in Africa [31 (58%) to 48 (75%)].

*Middle East and North Africa
was mentioned by 130 speakers (66%)*

The composite category of selected nations in the **Middle East and North Africa** was mentioned by **130 speakers (66%)**. Mentions were distributed among **Afghanistan, Iraq, the Israel-Palestine Conflict, Libya, Syria, and Yemen**. **Syria** received the highest number of mentions in this category, with its 103 references marking a 33% increase from last year.

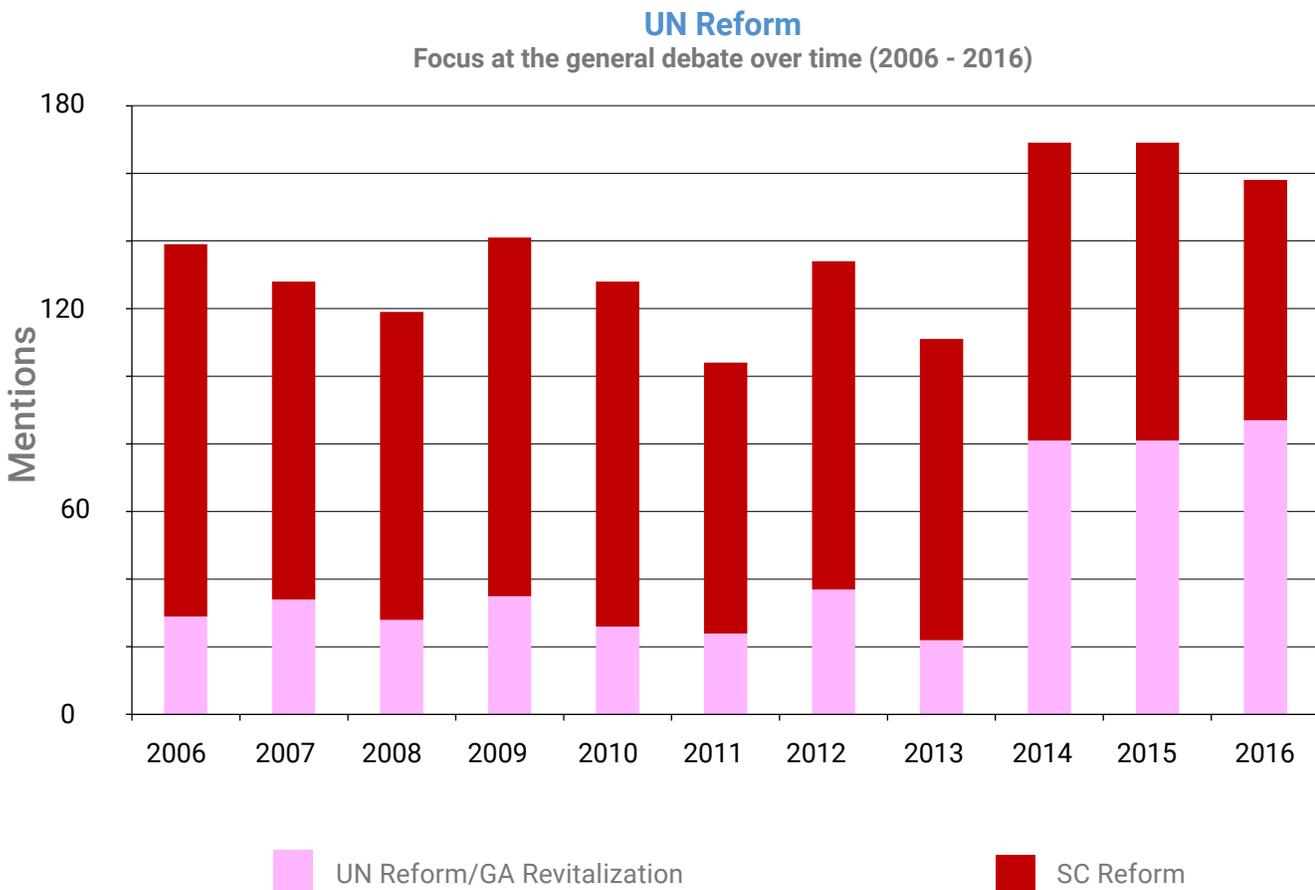
*Nuclear Issues were
mentioned by 69 speakers (37%)*

The threat of **nuclear weapons** was also of serious concern to speakers, as was the possibility that such weapons might be acquired by terrorist organizations. While many speakers expressed deep concern and frustration over the DPRK's nuclear weapons test, which occurred only a few days before the beginning of the general debate, mention of nuclear issues nonetheless remained fairly static, with roughly 36% mentioning it over each of the last three years.



*Reform issues were raised
by 131 delegations (67%)*

Lastly, reform issues were raised by 131 delegations (67%). These included United Nations reform, Security Council reform, General Assembly revitalization, the selection of the next Secretary-General, and global governance. Although mentions were, more or less, distributed equally among subcategories, it is noteworthy that the selection of the next Secretary-General, a significant event on the near horizon, was specifically mentioned by 54 speakers.



Major Positions and Proposals of the 71st General Debate

In the **194 statements** made during this general debate, on subjects from antimicrobial resistance to transnational crime, on conflicts from Afghanistan to Yemen, speakers laid out a wide range of positions and proposals. The purpose of this document is to capture, as succinctly as possible, the highlights among them.

As **sustainable development** and the implementation of the **SDGs** garnered the most comment among speakers, many of them stressed, as Brazil did, the extent to which “supporting **developing countries** will be crucial to the SDGs’ achievement”. The Holy See emphasized that “this commitment entails recognizing the need to strive not only for great macroeconomic goals but for **outcomes** that are specific, lasting, and equitably distributed”. Indonesia urged that “the global community must also provide sufficient means for the **implementation** of the [SDGs, including] predictable **funding** mechanisms and innovative approaches in financing for development.”

Thailand, stressed that “active engagement with and contribution of regional, political, or economic **groups** was vital”. Sierra Leone

cautioned that “as we move into the implementation of the first phase of the SDGs, we must remember that **fragile states** were unable to make remarkable progress in the implementation of the MDGs largely owing to the absence of **peace, justice and effective state institutions**”, underlining that it was “therefore urgent for all parties to cooperate with global initiatives in finding enduring peace”.

The SDGs could “drive reform of the international system by offering an opportunity to address many problems in one process”.

Hailing the extent to which the SDGs could “drive **reform** of the international system by offering an opportunity to address many problems in **one process**: namely insecurity, poverty, under-development, climate

change, and uncontrolled migration”, the European Union was among those who stressed that “we must strengthen and reform the financing of the UN”, while Sweden insisted that “this is the only way that the UN, with its **limited resources**, will be able to have greater impact at country level, and support all Member States in achieving the SDGs”.

Many speakers supported the choice of the **PGA’s theme**. Viet Nam was among those who found “‘The Sustainable Development Goals: a universal push to transform our world’ ... very opportune as we embark upon realizing our vision and turning our commitments into concrete results for our people”.

Climate change rivalled sustainable development in both the mention and the range of comments it attracted. The United States of America was

among those who echoed the sentiment that “we need to **follow through** on our efforts to combat climate change. If we don’t act boldly, the bill that could come due will be mass migrations, cities submerged and nations displaced, food supplies decimated, and conflicts born of despair.

“The Paris Agreement gives us a framework to act, but only if we scale up our ambition.”

The **Paris Agreement** gives us a framework to act, but only if we scale up our ambition.” While Saint Vincent and the Grenadines expressed deep misgivings that “the **promises** in the Paris Agreement to mitigate climate change and to provide climate finance are inadequate and unenforceable”, Fiji urged that “the two-degree cap is not enough”, insisting that “we need the world to go one better and embrace the **1.5 degree cap**”. A number of speakers saw the forthcoming **COP22** in Morocco as a means and moment to cement further commitment and courses of action.

“Protection of the oceans is vital for our common future.”

SIDS and coastal countries were particularly vocal in their concerns about climate change. The Federated States of Micronesia stressed the extent to which climate change posed an **existential threat**

to **SIDs** and Guinea-Bissau expressed alarm at the rate at which **rising sea levels** were threatening them. Chad warned of **ecological disasters** that could impact food security, political and financial stability, and other factors, while Chile stressed that “protection of the **oceans** is vital for our common future, and today it is under threat”. Croatia highlighted the potential threats from climate change by describing it as a “powerful weapon of mass destruction”.

“The oceans hold great promise for the future. We have only seen the beginnings of the blue economy.”

Several speakers looked forward to the upcoming **High-level United Nations Conference on Oceans** in June 2017 as a much-needed opportunity to foster a shared vision for healthy, productive and resilient oceans. Jamaica urged “the **development of a legally binding international instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction**” which it was helping to negotiate. The Solomon Islands, observing that “there is no single ocean entry point in the multilateralism system”, called for “the **establishment of a World Ocean Authority**”, explaining that it would “coordinate all ocean related treaties, entities and programmes and move beyond the current sectoral approach

to a single holistic and comprehensive framework”. Norway saw oceans as “a **major source of energy**”, arguing that “this resource must be developed further to meet the growing demands for clean and renewable energy. The oceans hold great promise for the future. We have only seen the beginnings of the **blue economy**.”

Linking climate change to a range of other issues, the Solomon Islands suggested that the “High-level Meeting Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants was also an opportunity to examine the issue of **climate-displaced populations and environmental migrants** with a serious eye”. Arguing that “current treaties are inadequate to address people forced out by climate change”, it called for “**a legal framework to address and protect the rights of forced climate migrants and compensate climate-impacted populations for the loss of their livelihood**”. Ecuador renewed its call for “**an International Court for Environmental Justice in order to litigate the attacks against nature rights and establish the obligations of environmental resource consumption**”. Nauru appealed to the **UN “to appoint a UN Special Representative on Climate and Security”**, insisting that “the security implications of climate change will define this century, and we must prepare”.

Global health issues also drew comment, particularly in the context of the **High-level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance** that was held during the general debate.

“Our grandchildren could die from the illnesses that our grandparents survived.”

The United States of America acknowledged that “we can’t combat a disease like **Zika** that recognizes no borders... unless we make permanent the same urgency that we brought to bear against **Ebola**—by strengthening our own **systems of public health**, by investing in cures and rolling back the root causes of disease, and helping poorer countries develop a public health infrastructure.” Norway was among those who urged strengthening “**epidemic preparedness** and **global health security** by developing new vaccines that can prevent new outbreaks”, expressing clear concern that, if we failed to do this, “our grandchildren could die from the illnesses that our grandparents survived”.

“Protectionism is a perverse barrier to development.”

Financial stability was also of concern to a number of speakers, particularly in the context of ongoing **sluggish global growth rates**. Regretting the extent to which “globalization has been

linked to a rise in **poverty**, the expansion of the **inequality** gap, and the undermining of the social contract in a number of developing countries”, as Egypt did, others, like the Dominican Republic, called specifically for “industrialized countries... to significantly reduce their **protectionism** and their **subsidies** during current trade negotiations, and at the same time, ensure increased funding for rural development”. Agreeing that “protectionism is a perverse barrier to development”, Brazil underscored the degree to which “the **multilateral trading system** is part of the fight against this evil”. South Africa, raising the **challenges** confronting that system, stressed that “money laundering, tax evasion and tax avoidance, **corruption**, and transfer pricing by multinational companies are some of the biggest challenges to economic growth and stability. They undermine the integrity of the **global financial system**, efficient tax collection and equitable allocation of resources.” South Africa also suggested that, if “this scourge” could be arrested, there would be enough resources for the implementation of the global development agenda. In this context, Ecuador pointedly renewed its **call for the creation of an intergovernmental body devoted to “fiscal justice”**, while Brazil cautioned that our “**prosperity** and well-being today should not impair the future of mankind. Economic growth should be socially balanced and environmentally friendly. We live on the same

planet. There is no plan B. We must take ambitious measures under the principle of **common but differentiated responsibilities**.”

“Conflict [is] taking an unprecedented toll on innocent civilians who, like all of us, wish to live their lives and raise their families in peace and security.”

Peaceful solutions to a broad range of **political conflicts** were also urged throughout the general debate. As Australia noted, “conflict—in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Libya, Yemen and other countries—is taking an unprecedented toll on innocent **civilians** who, like all of us, wish to live their lives and raise their families in peace and security”. From a brighter perspective, several delegations lauded the peace agreement reached between **Colombia** and the FARC, while also pledging their support to their reconciliation efforts.

Regarding **Africa**, the peace and electoral processes in the **Central African Republic** were welcomed as the start a new era. Angola cautioned, however, that this effort would require “support from the international community to promote national reconstruction and consolidate the country’s institutions”. Like other speakers, it also called “upon the parties to the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of **South Sudan** to honour their commitments and work towards

the full implementation of that agreement [as] the only basis for durable peace". Regarding the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, it encouraged "support for the **electoral process** in order to ensure peaceful and free elections and to preserve peace, stability, reconciliation and the consolidation of democracy". Burkina Faso, focusing on **Mali**, also appealed for international support in addressing its "security situation, which remains a source of great preoccupation".

Turning to **other conflicts**, those speaking on **Afghanistan** stressed, as Pakistan did, that there was "no military solution" and urged the parties involved to "work assiduously, through a meaningful dialogue process, for achieving reconciliation and peace at home". Strongly similar pleas were made regarding **Libya** and **Yemen**. A number of countries encouraged **Iraq** in its attempts to free itself and its people from the stranglehold of ISIL. On **Ukraine**, which was mentioned noticeably less than in the previous few sessions, speakers such as Slovakia repeatedly underscored that "the **Minsk agreements** still remain the only viable way out of the crisis". By far, however, the conflicts to which the largest numbers of speakers referred were Israel-Palestine and Syria.

Those speaking on the **conflict between Israel and Palestine** generally supported the need for a **two-state solution** and frequently condemned the building of **settlements**. Saint

Vincent and the Grenadines strongly expressed the concern that "with each passing day, and with each land grab and illegal settlement... a two-state solution becomes ever more remote, and **instability** in the Middle East becomes all but guaranteed". The United States of America was among those who urged that "Israelis and Palestinians will be better off if Palestinians reject incitement and recognize the legitimacy of Israel [and] Israel recognizes that it cannot permanently occupy and settle Palestinian land". Lesotho, insisting that "the plight of the Palestinian people has been on the agenda of the international community for far too long", called for "a **new initiative** that will buttress all efforts aimed at a two-state solution which will result in the state of Israel and that of Palestine existing in peace side by side". Brazil was among the many who also agreed that it was the international community's "common responsibility to give **new impetus** to the negotiating process".

Concerned about the deteriorating situation on the ground, speakers including Bulgaria repeatedly insisted that bringing "peace and reconciliation to **Syria** can only be achieved through a **Syrian-led political process** which involves an inclusive transition that takes into account the aspirations of all parts of society. This process should be based on the principles of the **Geneva Communiqué** and all **relevant Security Council**

resolutions. It is important to create favourable conditions to resume the intra-Syrian **peace talks** as soon as possible." The Holy See insisted that "the uproar of arms must cease so that peace may stand a chance, and above all so that **humanitarian assistance** may be brought to those who most need it", and Qatar invoked the "responsibility of the Security Council to stop the bloodshed of the Syrians by halting the barbaric **bombings** and **blockade**". Liechtenstein firmly insisted that, as "the **crimes** committed against its civilian population since 2011 are as atrocious as they are well documented", "a peace process for the country must have a strong **accountability dimension**. This is the least we can do—after we have failed the people of Syria for so long."

"It is a futile effort to look for peace behind barbed wire and high walls."

The plight of **refugees**, in Syria and elsewhere, also drew extensive comment and concern. A great many speakers commended, as the European Union did, the holding of the **High-level Meeting on Refugees and Migrants** that occurred during the week of the general debate, the **New York Declaration** that emanated from it, and the commitments that were coalescing around them. The European Union suggested that the New York Declaration could lead to "a sustainable and fair **rulebook** for global migration". Liberia

specifically called **for cogent inter-agency dialogue between the IOM and UNHCR**” on these issues. Finland appealed for “better **control [of] borders** while safeguarding the rights of those seeking international protection on the basis of a well-founded fear of persecution”, while Bulgaria called for “building **partnerships** between the countries of origin, transit, and destination and the entire international community”. As Turkey starkly put it, “it is a futile effort to look for peace behind barbed wire and high walls”.

“We must not forget that migrants contribute to the economies of their host countries as well as to the global economy.”

On **migration**, while the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland cautioned that “we need to improve the ways we distinguish between refugees fleeing persecution and **economic migrants**” and that “we need a better overall approach to managing economic migration which recognises that all countries have the right to **control their borders**”, Myanmar commented that “we must not forget that migrants **contribute** to the economies of their host countries as well as to the global economy”, believing that “building **cooperation and collaboration** between the host country and the country of origin in ensuring the rights of migrant workers will be mutually reinforcing for both economies”. Latvia urged

that migration crises could not “be addressed by the most affected countries alone” but were “a **global phenomenon** which requires joint efforts and shared responsibility”, while Slovenia noted that “as long as migration is not regulated, it will continue to cause the world’s paramount security problem”.

“Terrorism [is] a threat to the entity of the state, in favour of an extremist ideology that utilizes religion as a veil from behind which to conduct monstrous acts and menace the destinies of peoples.”

Terrorism, the cause of so much flight in recent years, was overwhelmingly agreed by speakers to constitute, as Egypt put it, “a **threat** to the entity of the state, in favour of an extremist ideology that utilizes **religion** as a veil from behind which to conduct monstrous acts and menace the destinies of peoples”. Regarding specific **terrorist groups**, including both **ISIL** and **Boko Haram**, the vast majority of speakers agreed with Latvia that “**military and security measures** are necessary to combat **Daesh** and similar groups”. Equally universal and strong, however, were speakers’ calls to address terrorism’s **root causes**, as countries including Argentina observed that “inclusive growth, dialogue, tolerance and opportunities reduce the marginalization and humiliation that are behind terrorism recruitment”. But a number of speakers also put

the sufficiency of the global **response** to date in question, one of them asking openly, as Jordan did, “What will our **legacy** be? Will we pass on to our children a world dominated by dread and division?”

“It is no secret that powerful transnational criminal organizations thrive on the differences between states.”

The **transnational crime** that has helped fund and fuel terrorist activity also troubled speakers. As South Africa explained, “the successful implementation of [our] development plans depends on the availability of resources. We are therefore seriously concerned about the **loss of resources...through illicit financial flows.**” Brazil commented that “fighting organised crime requires us to work hand in hand”, because “the safety of our citizens depends on the quality of our collective action”, as Guatemala observed that “it is no secret that powerful transnational criminal organizations thrive on the differences between states and are capable of occupying pockets within undefined territories that lack effective **control**”.

“We cannot escape the prospect of nuclear war unless we all commit to stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and pursuing a world without them.”

The threat of **nuclear weapons** was also of serious concern to speakers, as was the possibility that such weapons might be acquired by terrorist organizations. Many agreed with the United States of America that “we cannot escape the prospect of nuclear war unless we all commit to stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and pursuing a world without them”. Latvia was among those who encouraged “Iran’s diligent implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and cooperation” with the **IAEA**, believing that it could “contribute to greater stability in the Middle East”. Many other speakers, however, expressed deep concern and frustration over the **DPRK’s** recent nuclear weapons **test**. The Russian Federation, however, also cautioned that it was “inadmissible to use this situation as a pretext for massive **militarization** of North-East Asia”. Shunning these demands and criticisms, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea countered that “as long as there exists a nuclear weapon state in hostile relations with the DPRK, our national security and the peace on the Korean Peninsula can be defended only with reliable **nuclear deterrence**”. Unswayed, a number of

speakers called for collective **condemnation** of the tests by the international community, with the Republic of Korea specifically suggesting that the Security Council “should adopt stronger comprehensive **sanctions** measures that go beyond **resolution 2270**, close the loopholes in that resolution, and further expand and reinforce existing sanctions measures.”

“It is critical that the performance, behaviour and reputation of troops or civilians engaged in UN operations is to the highest possible standard.”

Turning towards other means of stemming aggression and securing peace, many speakers focused on the broad range of **United Nations peace operations and activities**. While a number of speakers joined in recommending “effective and responsible UN **peacekeeping** [as] an important means of preventing forced displacement at a time of conflict or uneasy peace,” Ireland, as a major **contributor** to the UN’s peacekeeping **operations**, underscoring the extent to which it regarded “**service** with the United Nations... as noble and important”, stressed that the “effectiveness of the UN depends on its positive **reputation** as a force for good in the world. Therefore, it is critical that the performance, behaviour and reputation of **troops** or **civilians** engaged in UN operations is to the highest

possible standard.” It then insisted that “**sexual exploitation and abuse** by UN peacekeepers, sent to conflict zones to protect innocent civilians from harm, is absolutely unacceptable” and called for “an **end to impunity** for these crimes”, adding that it “absolutely commit[ted] to holding [its] own troops accountable for their behaviour while deployed overseas”.

Regarding **other peace activities**, some speakers underscored, with Finland, that the UN could “help defuse latent conflict through **conflict prevention, mediation** and, if necessary, **preventive peace operations**. But the ultimate responsibility for redesigning societies lies with the respective peoples and their governments. **Local ownership** is the key.” The Republic of Korea flagged that “peace in the fullest sense can be achieved only when peace and security, development and human rights are advanced together. This is the essence of the new concept of ‘**sustaining peace**’.” Turning to the **gender dimensions** of conflict, Estonia urged that “amidst current conflicts and crises, it is important to ensure that women do not fall victim to **gender-based violence** and that they are also included in **conflict resolution and peace negotiations**. Therefore, it is important to continue to implement **UNSCR 1325** and related resolutions on women, peace and security.”

As a broader means of securing stable peace and development,

a number of speakers placed an “emphasis on **education**”. Andorra was among those who urged “extending quality education to everyone”, particularly “**education for global citizenship**: a citizenship that is aware of the challenges and the opportunities in our world, sensitive to the protection of human rights, and open and prepared for the dynamics of our times”. Estonia called for enhancing “**education of the children in refugee camps**”, arguing that “deprivation of education will damage the future prospects of refugee and asylum-seeking children, leave them behind, and, at the same time, increase the risk of the kind of alienation that often leads later to extremism”. Portugal stressed “the importance of **promoting higher education for refugees** in emergency situations so that no generations are lost”.

“Prevention of extremism and promotion of human rights cannot be separated. Inclusive governance and respect for the rule of law are of paramount importance.”

Human Rights was seen by many as an equally vital part of this broader endeavour, with a number of speakers sharing Georgia’s view that “sustainable development is not possible without human rights, access to **justice**, and effective, transparent, accountable, and inclusive **institutions**”. Bosnia and Herzegovina stressed that “**prevention of extremism** and

promotion of human rights cannot be separated. **Inclusive governance** and respect for the **rule of law** are of paramount importance. Political, economic and social injustices around the world contribute to the rise of despair and hopelessness, creating a fertile ground for the emergence of radicalism and violent extremism.” Ireland observed that “human rights abuses are among the root causes of **migration**. Moreover, migrants, refugees and IDPs, in particular **women, children and vulnerable people**, can also be at risk of human rights abuse both during their journey and on arrival at their destination.”

“In one century, women have seen great progress, even though this progress is uneven.”

The roles and rights of **women**, along with the question of **gender equality**, were also underscored by numerous speakers and tied to a range of other issues, with many speakers seeing “gender equality and the empowerment of women as key requirements to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”, as Denmark did. Costa Rica insisted that we “make women’s voices heard”, encouraging their “**greater participation in leadership and business and political decision posts**”. One of the female speakers at the debate, the Foreign Minister of Iceland, commented that “in one century, women have seen great progress, even though this progress is uneven. I stand

here today, one of only 30 or so female foreign ministers in the world, as a proof that we have come a long way—yet nowhere far enough. Women’s human rights lag severely behind in many countries, at great cost to women, men, and society as a whole”. She then firmly commended “the new process for **appointing the Secretary-General**”, observing that it “is a major milestone to see such a **strong field of women candidates**”.

Among **reform** issues, the **process of selecting and appointing the next Secretary-General** drew significant attention. Consolidating the views of many, Liechtenstein observed that “we have ... invested a lot in the process of the selection of the next Secretary-General. We have achieved a **new level of transparency**. This is an important step forward. But we should be honest with ourselves: We have started at such a low level that there is still a lot of room for improvement. The **opportunity to engage with declared candidates** is welcome. It should also be a given. We now must ensure that the entire membership is consulted with respect to the appointment itself. We strongly believe in giving the next Secretary-General a **single term** of office. This would enhance the independence of the office, as prior office holders have confirmed.”

“The veto should not render the Security Council powerless, especially when mass atrocities are being committed.”

Several speakers called for **Security Council reform**, from the perspectives of both membership and working methods. While positions on **membership** remained largely along well-established lines, many of them **regional**, the **working methods** issue that attracted the greatest attention—and censure—was clearly that of the **veto**.

As a current non-permanent Council member, New Zealand observed that “no matter how hard we work to find compromises, time and time again we come up against the veto, the use of the veto, the threat of the veto. The exploitation of the veto is well beyond what the founders of the United Nations envisaged.” The Netherlands stressed that “the veto should not render the Security Council powerless, especially when **mass atrocities** are being committed. Council members should feel the responsibility and be held more accountable if they block action against **breaches of international humanitarian law**.”

“We will not be able to deliver on the SDGs’ promise of an inclusive, fairer and better world without the reform of the United Nations.”

The **revitalization of the General Assembly** was also mentioned by a number of speakers, with Indonesia suggesting that one way of making the Assembly “more effective and efficient” was ensuring “the implementation of **systemwide coherence**... not just amongst its subsidiary organs and bodies but also between the areas of development... humanitarian assistance... and environment.”

“One way of making the Assembly “more effective and efficient [is] ensuring “the implementation of systemwide coherence.”

While several speakers focused more broadly on issues of **global governance**, discussing the roles and activities of other organizations and the cooperation of the UN with them, many also dwelt more broadly on **United Nations reform**, agreeing with Sierra Leone that “we will not be able to deliver on the SDGs’ promise of an inclusive, fairer and better world without the reform of the United Nations.” A number of speakers concurred with Kenya that “we must also commit greater effort to rebuilding and transforming the United Nations system as a whole. We need to transform our global organization into a more effective and responsive entity that reflects the complex challenges and realities of the 21st century”. Zambia urged that “the UN should be at the core of global governance and efforts to meet the challenges of collective peace, security

and development”.

Looking at the **successes** that the United Nations had achieved and the **progress** made, a number of speakers commended the **President of the 70th session**, Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, as Mozambique did, “for the dedicated manner in which he has fulfilled his mandate in the context of fundamental commitments that we assumed” and his “sterling leadership the past year [in] championing participation and transparency”. In the **President of the 71st session**, Mr. Peter Thomson, many “reposed special trust”, pledging “our cooperation and solidarity in your important mission”, as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines did. The **Secretary-General** specifically received commendation and praise for the progress across many fronts that he had championed throughout his tenure, with delegations like Iceland offering particular accolades for his laying “the groundwork for reforming the UN’s peacekeeping operations” and showing “strong leadership on gender issues”, while others, like Nauru, commended his “raising climate change to the top of the international agenda” and “leaving no one behind”.

Table of Topics Covered at the General Debate

Total Mentions	185	164	85	88	90	27	130	146	160	69	76	82	118	94	131
Categories	SDGs/PGAs Theme/ SDG14/HLPF	Climate Change/Paris Agreement	AMR/Health/UNAIDS Strategy	Financial Stability	Africa/CAR/DRC/Mali/ South Sudan/ Somalia	Ukraine	Afghanistan/Iraq/ Israel-Palestine Conflict/ Libya/Syria/Yemen	Refugee crisis/ Migration/HLM/IOM	Terrorism/ISIL/Boko Haram/Transnational Crime	Nuclear Issues/DPRK Nuclear Test	Peace operations/ PeaceBuilding/ Sexual Exploitation and Abuse	Education	Human Rights	Women/ Gender Equality	UN reform/SC reform/ SG selection/ GA Revitalization/Global Governance
2030 Development Agenda - SDGs	185	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PGAs Theme	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SDG14 (Oceans)	43	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
High-Level Political Forum 2017	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Climate Change	-	164	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Paris Agreement	-	129	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
High-level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Health	-	-	85	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UNAIDS Strategy	-	-	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Financial Stability	-	-	-	87	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Africa	-	-	-	-	90	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Central African Republic	-	-	-	-	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Democratic Republic of Congo	-	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mali	-	-	-	-	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Sudan	-	-	-	-	39	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Somalia	-	-	-	-	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ukraine	-	-	-	-	-	27	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Afghanistan	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Iraq	-	-	-	-	-	-	46	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Israel-Palestine Conflict	-	-	-	-	-	-	81	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Libya	-	-	-	-	-	-	56	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Syria	-	-	-	-	-	-	103	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Yemen	-	-	-	-	-	-	33	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Refugee Crisis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	127	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Migration	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	117	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
High-level Meeting on Refugees and Migration	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
International Organization for Migration	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Terrorism	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	157	-	-	-	-	-	-
ISIL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	44	-	-	-	-	-	-
Boko Haram	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transnational Crime	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	47	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nuclear Issues	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	69	-	-	-	-	-
Democratic People's Republic of Korea Nuclear Test	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	31	-	-	-	-	-
Peace Operations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	57	-	-	-	-
Peace Building	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	-	-	-	-
Sexual Exploitation and Abuse	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	-	-	-	-
Education	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	82	-	-	-
Human Rights	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	118	-	-
Woman/Gender Equality	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	94	-
UN Reform	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	69
SC Reform	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	71
SG Selection	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	54
GA Revitalization	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18
Global Governance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	60
Total Mention	185	164	85	88	90	27	130	146	160	69	76	82	118	94	131
Percentage of all Mentions	11.2%	10.0%	5.2%	5.3%	5.5%	1.6%	7.9%	8.9%	9.7%	4.2%	4.6%	5.0%	7.2%	5.7%	8.0%