

# General Assembly Seventieth Session

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## General Debate

Statement by H.E. Ms. Erna Solberg  
Prime Minister of Norway

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President, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The UN is now 70 years old. At the start of the meeting in San Francisco where the UN Charter was drafted, President Truman said 'You members of this conference are to be architects of the better world. In your hands rests our future.' And he was right.

The UN Charter has served humanity well for 70 years, despite many challenges. There have been important milestones: decolonisation, the establishment of the universal human rights system and the Millennium Development Goals, as well as reduction in the number of interstate wars.

Unfortunately, as we celebrate these 70 years, the forces of disorder, discrimination, violence and disruption are on the rise again. International law, universal norms and human rights are being violated by States and non-state actors alike. One of the consequences is the massive refugee crisis we are seeing – with 60 million refugees and displaced people.

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All States benefit from a global legal order where right prevails over might. One of the most important rules of the new world order created in 1945 is respect for internationally recognised borders. This basic principle has been blatantly violated in Europe during the last couple of years, and Europe's security landscape has been changed. We must return to a situation where all States abide by their obligations under international law.

Mr. President,

The four most serious humanitarian crises in the world are, in fact, political crises. Power hungry politicians, armed groups and military leaders have ignored the plight of their people in the countries concerned: South Sudan, Yemen, Syria and Iraq. When state authorities ignore the rule of law or fail to live up to their human rights obligations, the result is often conflict and chaos. The regional and global consequences of these crises are far-reaching.

During the course of 2015, the UN has been carrying out three important reviews:

- of peace operations
- of the peacebuilding architecture
- of Security Council Resolution 1325

These reviews will be important tools for improving our work on peace, security, human rights, mediation and conflict prevention. We must ensure the UN has the funding and the political backing to prevent political exclusion and poor governance. Then we will be better able to prevent armed conflict – and the resulting humanitarian crisis.

The permanent members of the Security Council have a particular responsibility. Norway urges all States to join the proposed code of conduct to enable the Security Council to act decisively against mass atrocities. We support the French initiative to suspend the use of

veto in such situations. We will also step up our efforts to support UN peacekeeping and the UN's capacity to prevent conflict.

The flow of arms to conflict areas and the lack of protection for civilians further increase human suffering. The Arms Trade Treaty, with its humanitarian goals, gives us an important tool for addressing these problems. The UN Secretary-General has called on parties to conflict to refrain from using explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas. We support his call.

At the Oslo Conference on Safe Schools, we endorsed the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict. 49 countries have already endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration. They have committed themselves to protecting education from attack in conflict situations. We urge other countries to come on board.

Mr. President,

We see progress in Iraq, and we have hope for South Sudan. Norway is committed to supporting the transitional arrangements to help South Sudan out of its self-destructive conflict. The crisis in Syria started with peaceful protests calling for freedom. These were met with a violent crackdown. Upholding human rights is one of the fundamental obligations of any government. The exodus from Syria today is a direct consequence of the violence unleashed by the government.

The conflict in Syria has also allowed extreme terror groups like ISIL to gain a foothold. Now, both the government and non-state groups such as ISIL and the Nusra front are committing monstrous atrocities. The spread of these extreme groups needs to be stopped.

Norway will adhere to global norms in its response to the crisis. We are receiving refugees at our borders in line with the UN convention on refugees of 1951 and our international human rights obligations. We have agreed to take in a high number of refugees from Syria's neighbouring countries for resettlement under UN quotas. We are taking part in the rescue efforts in the Mediterranean. We have already doubled our humanitarian aid to Syria and the region this year, and we will increase our aid further.

We will be hosting a donor conference in cooperation with Germany and the UN. When leaders fail to shoulder their most basic responsibilities, the international community must make use of the tools the United Nations has at its disposal.

The UN has established many global standards. Fifteen years ago, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. It was a landmark resolution, but its implementation is taking too long. In several war-ravaged towns in Syria, groups of women are calling for a ceasefire and evacuation. They do this at great personal risk. Their bravery should inspire us. We must intensify the implementation of the Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security.

Mr. President,

70 years ago, we set out to eradicate extremism. The fight against extremism must be maintained, also in our countries. Extremism is once again raising its head in different shapes and forms. The ideology of disorder, discrimination, violence and disruption dominates the ideologies of ISIL, al-Qaeda and their various affiliates.

International cooperation at all levels is essential. In June, Norway hosted the European Conference on Countering Violent Extremism, where a European Youth network was

launched. The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy will remain a cornerstone of our efforts. We also welcome the Secretary-General's initiative to develop a new UN Plan of Action. And I would like to highlight the importance of including girls and women in the planning and implementation of efforts to counter violent extremism.

Mr. President,

The recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals is another example of the important role UN continues to play. We know that health and education are fundamental for inclusive growth and jobs.

Ebola was a wake-up call for us all. Education is also crucial for conflict resolution and rebuilding societies. However, we need to address the considerable financing gap in the field of education. A first step is the International Commission on Financing of Global Education Opportunities. The Commission was announced at the recent Oslo Summit on Education for Development. Norway will double its investment in education in the period 2014-2017.

Sustainable development will not be possible without respect for human rights. It is therefore vital for the UN to have a strong and assertive human rights pillar. Unless we provide adequate funding for the human rights efforts, we will not be able to achieve the results we want and need.

The UN should not be seen as a costly burden; it provides win-win solutions for all Member States. Let me highlight two areas where this is particularly clear:

- The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea has been called the 'constitution of the oceans'. It provides a clear framework for all activities in oceans

and seas. It regulates the rights and duties of various States. And it should be used to the full to decrease tensions, prevent conflict, and find peaceful solutions.

- Climate change is a fact. The climate summit in Paris later this year is our opportunity to shoulder our responsibility and take action. We, the Member States, must grasp this opportunity for the sake of our future as nations and as a global community.

Mr. President,

We can be the generation that defeats extreme poverty. We can be the generation that prevents political crises from becoming humanitarian crises. We are already the first generation to experience human-made climate change. Let us also be the generation that halts climate change. We can be the generation that finally realises the right to education for all.

With the UN Charter as our starting point, we must adapt our global norms to address new challenges. The forces of disorder, discrimination, violence and disruption must be stopped. The UN is a crucial arena for developing common measures to address common threats. We must use it to the full if we are to meet the threats we are facing today – from climate change to terrorism.

We can thus ensure that the UN continues to serve humanity well for the next 70 years. The UN Member States can still be, in Truman's words, 'the architects of the better world'.

Thank you, Mr. President.