



STATEMENT

by

His Excellency Mr. Carl B. Greenidge
Vice President and Minister of Foreign Affairs
Cooperative Republic of GUYANA

at the

SEVENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Friday, September 28, 2018

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS

Mr/Madame President, I thank you.

I am pleased to extend warmest congratulations to Foreign Minister Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garces and the people of Ecuador on the occasion of her preferment to the Presidency of our august Assembly. That election is all the more gratifying because Mme Espinosa represents the Latin America and the Caribbean region. She joins a small but distinguished group of women who have presided over the Assembly during the 72 years of its history. Guyana pledges its unwavering support to Mme President as she discharges her responsibilities.

Let me also take this opportunity to pay tribute to your distinguished predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajcak, for his successful stewardship of the seventy-second session of the Assembly. Thirdly, I would like to take a moment to salute the memory of former Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan, a son of Africa and a servant of the peoples of the world, whose dedication to the global community was epitomized in a lifetime of selfless service to the United Nations.

Madame President,

Guyana is persuaded of the value of multilateralism (sometimes termed liberal multilateralism) within which Guyana has operated since independence. This rules-based system with a pivotal role for nation States alongside key international and multilateral institutions is valued by Member States. It is largely predictable, based on the rule of law and has enabled extensive economic development and improvements in human welfare across the globe since its establishment after the 1939-45 War.

In spite of that success, multilateralism is now under attack in some quarters and there have been recent calls for it to be replaced. Some of the challenges feeding such calls are obvious. The rapid expansion in the number of States over the last few decades has contributed to the exponential growth in the number and complexity of decision-making in the

system. The consequences of the latter have been most evident in some of the very areas in which global multilateral governance have had the greatest success in the past - trade, economic growth and peaceful resolution of conflicts. At the UN we are faced with stymied Security Council reform.

The debate about the reforms needed to move us forward and out of this impending cul-de-sac has yielded many ideas. But rather than turning to outdated models, solutions based on misconceived economic goals, or some form of national exceptionalism, we need to explore complementary organizational forms and arrangements that could simplify decision-making. In attempts to look outside of the box for solutions some observers have turned to the idea of the inclusion of new partners, such as NGOs and social networks working alongside states and governments and/or some degree of regionalization of organizational structures etc - the so-called 'Web 2.0' option. It may also be worth exploring other voting rules for decision-making. In other words, we need to fashion a more equitable and just variant of multilateralism rather than its replacement.

Serious proposals should seek to preserve the valued elements of multilateralism because the more intractable problems we face are beyond the capacity of individual States to solve. It is small wonder then that the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization asserts that the United Nations offers a platform where Member States, regional organizations and civil society can find solutions to global problems that no nation acting alone can resolve. Working together is not optional. It is the only answer. Guyana therefore pledges its full support, [Madame] Mr. President, for your strategic vision of "Dialogue and the Strengthening of Multilateralism as a Catalyst for the well-being of All Persons in a Sustainable Planet".

Madame President,

Global governance and peace are inextricably linked. In that regard Guyana has noted with satisfaction the efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Antonio Guterres, in close collaboration with Member States, to reform and streamline the machinery of the United Nations to make it more fit for purpose. We fully support the reform of the peace and security pillar with its emphasis on preventive diplomacy. Peace is also inextricably linked to sustainable development. In this regard, the United Nations disarmament agenda is a central tenet in our efforts to achieve a stable, secure and peaceful world order. Guyana has demonstrated its commitment to this agenda most recently in its signing and ratification of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We recognize, however, that the commitment of every Member State to the disarmament agenda is key to achieving the world to which we aspire and the onus is on all of us to fulfill the obligations we have taken on ourselves by becoming States Parties to the various legal instruments concerned with questions of disarmament and non-proliferation.

For Guyana and the wider Caribbean, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their associated ammunition poses one of the most serious threats to human security and sustainable development. International drug trafficking, transnational organized crime, unregulated cyber space, and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons divert resources that could otherwise be invested in other critical areas. We believe that with effective international cooperation and assistance, small countries like Guyana can tackle this illicit trade and ultimately create safer communities, safer countries and regions, and a safer world.

Madame President,

Adherence to the cardinal principles of the sovereign equality of States, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, and the peaceful resolution of disputes are the most effective guarantees of peace. You will no doubt be aware of the controversy that has arisen between Guyana and its neighbor Venezuela over the latter's contention that the Arbitral Award of 1899 that settled the boundaries between the two countries is null and void. On 30 January 2018, Secretary-General Guterres took the decision that the controversy with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela should be referred to the International Court of Justice. The decision of the Secretary-General is binding on the parties.

Accordingly, in March of this year, Guyana filed its application in the Court seeking an affirmation of the validity of the 1899 Arbitral Award and the international boundary that it established. Unfortunately, notwithstanding its obligation to do so, Venezuela has thus far refused to participate in the proceedings. Guyana sincerely hopes that it will change its mind. There is still time for it to do so. Guyana wishes to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General for his important contribution to the resolution of this longstanding matter and looks forward to a final judgment by the International Court of Justice. The rule of law must prevail.

As a responsible member of the global community, Guyana seeks peace not only in our region, but throughout the world where the scourge of war and conflict are an obstacle to development. They divert attention away from the pressing problems of development and the enhancement of human well-being. In the Middle East, the region of the world that has given birth to the three great monotheistic religions of our age, we reiterate our call for a two-State solution to the generational conflict between the peoples of Palestine

and Israel. These two peoples have much to gain by living side by side in peace. The people of Palestine, including the inhabitants of Gaza, like people everywhere have a right to life, to a dignified existence and to their own homeland.

Similarly, Madame President, we deplore the suffering being borne by the Rohingya population. We call on the international community to take the necessary steps to ensure respect of the human rights of the affected population. At the same time, we salute the efforts of Bangladesh to provide a safe haven for the refugee population, with the assistance of international agencies.

Closer home, in the Caribbean Region, we again join the overwhelming majority of the international community in calling for the removal of the trade and economic embargo against our sister Caribbean nation of Cuba, which frustrates the right of the Cuban people to development and material well-being.

Madame President,

Guyana also welcomes the measures being taken to reposition the United Nations Development System in order to better align its functioning with the goals set out in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. We accept that repositioning is a shared responsibility and Guyana is committed to doing its part.

Madame President,

Guyana has fully embraced the holistic and people-centred approach to development set out in the Sustainable Development Goals and our nation is currently engaged in efforts to mainstream and integrate those Goals into our national development strategy known as the Green State Development Strategy. The GSDS seeks to ensure that development is not achieved at the expense of the environment and to wean Guyana away from its current near-total dependence on non-renewable sources of energy. We are turning to renewable sources, such as hydroelectricity, wind, solar and biomass.

Guyana is unalterably committed to the principles of sustainable development and to working with the international community and all partners to help combat the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels. For this reason, Guyana strategy is to place emphasis on inclusive transformation, sustainable natural resources, energy transition, resilient infrastructure, human development and well-being, government and institutional foundations and international cooperation, trade and investment.

Madame President,

Guyana fully recognizes the necessary, nay critical, contribution of women and girls to its sustainable development. Women and girls constitute more than half the world's population and the underutilization of their potential represents a serious loss of resources in the global effort to promote human development.

We are trying to ensure that the management of this development is

undertaken with women and girls fully represented at the helm of decision-making. We applaud the steps taken by the Secretary-General to ensure parity in the appointment of senior managers of the Organization, including Resident Coordinators in the field.

Madame President

I wish to express Guyana's satisfaction at the successful conclusion this year of the intergovernmental negotiations of a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The provisions of the Compact are consistent with the 2030 Agenda and the commitments made in the New York Declaration for Refugees. It is our hope that this global framework will help to manage international migration flows in all their dimensions for the benefit of all States, sending and receiving, and of migrants themselves. Guyana looks forward to the successful adoption of the Global Compact in the intergovernmental conference to be held in December 2018 in Marrakesh, Morocco.

Madame President,

We meet this year in disconcerting times. Our planet, the only one we have, faces grave threats on multiple fronts, including threats to the very existence of life as we know it. As I have already hinted, there are many who question whether our Organization, the Nations of the world United, will be able to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, while promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom and reaffirming faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity

and worth of the human person, and in the equal rights of men and women. It is for us to decide and to summon the will to work towards those ends. Our children and our children's children will judge us. Guyana reaffirms its strong resolution to doing its part within the limits of our capacity and resources.

I thank you.