




PORTUGAL

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PORTUGUESE REPUBLIC

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 26 SEPTEMBER 2018



Madam President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Madam President, María Fernanda Espinosa,

Very special congratulations on your election.

Because of your personality and career. Because of the priorities you have defined.

Because of the progress you represent in gender equality at the United Nations.

Because of the previous informal interactive dialogue, a sign of increased transparency of the General Assembly.

Mr. Secretary-General, António Guterres,

Equal congratulation and continued support to all the priorities you have pursued and all the actions you have developed during your lucid and dynamic mandate.

Multilateralism, based on international law and the Charter of the United Nations, the reform of the United Nations System, conflict prevention, peacekeeping and the maintenance of peace, concern about migration and refugees, combating terrorism and international crime, the oceans and maritime security, climate change, the Agenda 2030, gender equality and support to young people.

All directed towards the permanent upholding of human rights.

Strengthened multilateralism, always.

For this reason, we do not understand, rather we deplore, unilateral tropism and disinvestment in international organisations. They represent a political short-sightedness, which runs the risk of repeating the mistakes of almost a century ago.

The reform of the United Nations requires the commitment of all Member States.

Maintaining the *status quo* is a way of gutting multilateralism and multiplying risks, conflicts without prevention, underdevelopment and the violation of human rights and human dignity.

Not reforming the Security Council with a broad-based consensus is to ignore the geopolitics of the 21st century, which requires, at the very least, the presence of the African continent, Brazil and India.

Preventing conflicts and maintaining peace in peacekeeping and institutional capacity building operations, as Portugal is doing in nine United Nations operations, six of them in Africa. I would especially mention our presence in *MINUSCA* and in *MINUSMA*, in the *Multinational Rotation Contribution*.

Migration and refugees, which involves understanding the causes of growing human mobility, the need for dialogue between societies of origin, transit and destination, the “Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration” and the “Global Compact for Refugees”, and promotion of the right to education in emergency situations.

Portugal unreservedly supports these “Pacts”, it accepts and will continue to accept migrants, refugees and other displaced persons. It launched – under former President Jorge Sampaio – the “Global Platform for Syrian Students” and calls for wider involvement in the “Rapid Response Mechanism for Higher Education”.

The fight against terrorism, which has led to the creation of the “UN Office of Counter-Terrorism”, the “1st Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies”, and the sixth revision of the “UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy”.

The guarantee of justice for victims of serious international crimes through the International Criminal Court, which began to consider the crime of aggression in 2017 – a step in which Portugal played an active role – and is expected to move towards universal adoption with the accession of more Member States.

Oceans and maritime security, meaning multilateralism and international law.

Portugal is actively involved in the preparations for the “Second United Nations Oceans Conference” in 2020, and stands ready to assume all the responsibilities that are involved in its organisation.

Maritime security in places such as the coasts of Somalia or the Gulf of Guinea, where Portugal is present in the *EUNAVFOR Atalanta* operation within the framework of the European Union, and in the Yaoundé process alongside the African Union and countries in the region. And we are going further, creating in the Azores a *Centre for the Defence of the Ocean*, a platform for the different international organisations.

Global governance of the oceans, with the “United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change” and the “Global Compact for the Environment”.

For us, these are structural issues which we do not change to suit short-term trends and players – we regard the right to a healthy environment as a fundamental right,

we support carbon neutrality by 2050, and with Lebanon we are jointly chairing the "Working Party on the Global Compact for the Environment".

Basically, there are two different views of the world.

One, short-term, is unilateral or unilateral, protectionist, with domestic populist discourse, minimising multilateralism in anything to do with sustainable development, prone to climate change denial, opposed to "Global Pacts" on migration and refugees, only interested in conflict prevention and peacekeeping where and when, occasionally, it matters to it, and matters more in terms of economic rather than political power.

The other, opposing, view, which we share, is multilateral, open, and favourable to the search for global governance, committed to sustainable development, regarding international law, the Charter and human rights as values and principles, never as means or conveniences.

And we are confident that, in the medium to long term, this view will prevail, as it has prevailed in the European Union, which has given Europe the longest period of peace in living memory and the highest levels of welfare and social protection.

And also the 70th Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights and the International Law Commission. This is the appropriate time to call for consensus on the adoption of the biennial resolution on "The moratorium on the death penalty", which is to be submitted to this General Assembly.

Madam President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Our view of the world situation and of the role of the United Nations – which, as I said, is in complete agreement with that of the Secretary-General – explains our positions on so-called regional questions, but which are global in scope. Let me now dwell on some that are of special relevance to Portugal.

The strengthening of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, currently presided by Cabo Verde, to be followed by Angola, whose contributions to stability and development I wish to highlight. The CPLP enjoys magnificent cooperation with the UN and pursues the goal of seeing the Portuguese language – one of the most widely spoken in the world – adopted as an official language of the United Nations.

The steps taken in Guinea-Bissau in preparation for elections in November.

The growing importance of the African Union, its key uniting role for peace and sustainable development, the intensification of the partnership with the United Nations and the historic step of the "Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship" between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Our wish that the elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo will be held in a safe, free and fair manner and that the results will be respected by all.

The important developments on the Korean Peninsula opening up positive prospects for complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation and demonstrating the commitment and courage of the parties involved and the contribution of the regional partners of the United Nations and of diplomacy for world peace and security.

The signing of the "Maritime Boundary Treaty" between Australia and Timor-Leste under the auspices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, confirming the effectiveness of the peaceful settlement of disputes through conciliation under the "United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea".

Unfortunately, certain parts of the Middle East and the Maghreb continue to show signs of permanent political, social and economic instability.

In Libya the international community must unite to assist with the humanitarian and security situation and the creation of a solid State.

Yemen remains the scene of one of the greatest humanitarian crises today, affecting especially the most vulnerable, women and children. Only negotiated political solutions, through the mediation of the United Nations and respect for international humanitarian law, will be able to reverse this increasingly tragic situation.

Equally tragic is the humanitarian crisis in Syria, with one of the largest flows of refugees within and out of the region.

Here also, only a substantive, inclusive and UN-mediated political solution will tend to ensure effective and broad-based international support for reconstruction, in the absence of which there will be apparent, sporadic and transitory agreements, but not the lasting peace.

In any case, stabilisation and peace in the Middle East will only be possible with the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Common sense demands the resumption of a credible negotiation process, addressing all the final status issues, including the question of Jerusalem, and leading to a practicable two-state solution based on coexistence by Israel and Palestine in peace and security.

Madam President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

As mentioned yesterday by Secretary-General António Guterres, true patriotism is only complete with cosmopolitanism.

Portugal believes that multilateral action, political dialogue and diplomatic wisdom are the only possible route to harmonious coexistence between nations and peoples.

And that a very short-term view or views, however appealing they may appear to be, are just a flash in the pan, which does not last, will not last, and will not solve the world's true problems: development, justice, security and effective respect for the rights of those who are the reason for our mandate and our presence in this General Assembly.

As Nelson Mandela said: "A fundamental concern for others in our individual and community lives would go a long way in making the world the better place we so passionately dreamt of". This is the noble mission of this Institution; it is also the reason for Portugal's deep commitment to the United Nations.

Thank you.