



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
NATION RELIGION KING



STATEMENT
BY
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General Debate
72nd Session of the
United Nations General Assembly

New York, 22 September 2017

Your Excellency Mr. President,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia and on my own behalf, I congratulate you, Excellency Miroslav Lajčák, on your election as President of the 72nd United Nations General Assembly. I would like to take this opportunity to thank as well His Excellency President Peter Thomson of Fiji for his commitment and dedication to the works of our previous UNGA session. I join with previous speakers in expressing my deepest condolences and sympathy to the victims of the earthquake in Mexico and their families.
2. My Delegation finds that the theme of this year's UNGA is extremely relevant and sums up quite appropriately the six overarching priorities of your Presidency which are responsive to the global megatrends that are facing our world nowadays. The interactions between population growth, massive migration movements, climate change and food insecurity render these megatrends all the more worrisome.
3. Similarly, the same forces of globalization, which in the past have made us so interdependent, are exposing deep flaws in the existing international order. A quarter century after the end of the Cold War, the world became by many measures more complex and challenging than ever before. Today, our multipolar world has gained its prominence in global affairs, causing chaos and turbulence as competition between the major powers is becoming more confrontational; we are more interdependent, but more unequal; we are more prosperous, and yet millions are still afflicted with poverty. All these factors have contributed to a sense of a world out of balance, and this is the paradox that defines our world today.

4. While sharing our deep concern on the situation in the Korean peninsula, we appeal to all parties concerned to further exercise their utmost restraint to avoid provocative activities and remain committed to the peaceful and constructive dialogue so as to diffuse tension and promote trust and confidence in the region. Another factor that destabilizes the collective security is the unilateral and illegal embargo on Cuba. We ask that this violation of the international law be brought to an end.
5. *Mr President*, it is true that globalization and technological progress have dramatically increased global trade and wealth all over the world but it is equally true that they have been factors of increase of inequality, social tensions and sometimes conflicts. These fragilities, to a large extent, are responsible for many of the conflicts and threats today.
6. One of those threats is terrorism from which no country is spared. To defeat this transnational threat would require a firm global resolve to address in the most comprehensive way this scourge in all its forms, starting from addressing the symptoms and root causes of radicalization, confronting issues of Foreign Fighters and terrorism financing and other forms of support.
7. *Mr. President*, let me touch upon two topics of relevance to this year's UNGA theme, namely the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Climate Change.
8. The 2030 Agenda is inextricably linked to many issues that perturb the world today, the most pressing one being climate change, which is not only a direct threat in itself but also a multiplier of many other threats -- from poverty, diseases and food security to mass migrations and regional conflicts. In our view, Climate Change is a global Human Security issue

that presents a serious and unprecedented threat to global peace and security.

9. Cambodia is regularly ranked among the top ten most vulnerable countries globally with extreme weather events damaging our infrastructure, severely impacting on agriculture, disrupting economic activities and hampering crucial social services for our vulnerable groups. While our contribution to climate change is negligible and our domestic resources quite limited, we have made nonetheless clear commitments to low carbon development and look forward to developing partnerships with other progressive nations who are committed to addressing this formidable challenge in a cooperative and fair manner.
10. I am pleased to note that the Paris Climate Agreement acknowledges the principles of 'Common but Differentiated Responsibilities', meaning based on the respective capabilities and different national conditions.
11. Indeed, the 2030 Agenda is our boldest agenda for humanity but it is an agenda aiming at a fair globalization. Cambodia has demonstrated its commitment to sustainable development over the past two decades. Concretely, our target of reducing the poverty rate to 19.5% by 2015 was achieved ahead of schedule. We have received a UN Award for halving hunger before the deadline. Cambodia is also among the top seven performers globally for its improvements in Human Development Index between 1990 and 2015.
12. *Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.* Speaking about peace and security, Cambodia is proud of its unwavering commitment to the UN peacekeeping efforts. More than 2 decades ago Cambodia received the UN Blue Berets on their peacekeeping mission. Since 2006, we have dispatched more than 4,700 troops to take part with great success and praise in UN peacekeeping missions in a number of countries that are hot spots in the

world, like Sudan, South Sudan, Lebanon, Central African Republic, Chad, Syria and Mali.

13. As you all know, peacekeeping operations are not without security risks. Peacekeepers continue to come under attack from armed groups and increasingly from terrorists. Last May, rebel ambushes in the Central African Republic have killed and wounded our Cambodian peacekeepers. Let's pay our tribute to those who have died while serving under the UN Flag and remind ourselves to acknowledge their contributions in the transformation of many countries from battlefields to peaceful States.
14. Mr. President, I now wish to address the issues of human rights and democracy since my country is regularly targeted by some countries, some UN agencies as well as by those international NGOs active in these fields.
15. I wish to reiterate that Cambodia upholds itself to the universal principle of fundamental human rights and therefore we do not see any issue of incompatibility with regards to the respect for national sovereignty as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations vis-à-vis the monitoring of the application of these rights, provided that it be done in an impartial manner, that it takes into account all the pertinent factors on the ground, and that there is neither prejudice nor conjecture on the part of observers against the democratically elected authorities.
16. So, what are the realities? I can go straight to the point! The assessment of the human rights situation varies depending on the political predisposition of certain great powers. The same reasoning holds true for the big international NGOs, whose agenda are far from being politically neutral.
17. The issue of human rights and democracy is raised only when the specific interests of certain major powers are at stake, at the vagaries of the moment. Otherwise, it is sheer silence, and often a conspiracy of silence.

18. Speaking of the deliberate political manipulation in the name of human rights and democracy, my country have suffered such prejudice for more than 12 years during which time the international community has denied the existence of the worst mass crimes. As a survivor of the Pol Pot genocidal regime, it pains me to hear nowadays the Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Cambodia referring to the crimes perpetrated by this regime as mere "troubles".
19. We are relentlessly assailed by incessant criticism on matters that are reported partially and in a biased manner. These reports without fail always condemn the government and portrays the oppositions as martyrs of democracy and human rights. Invariably, they are purposely drafted to go against the government. At no time, the wrongdoings and illegal behaviors of the opposition are mentioned.
20. I am keen to know which country as represented in this General Assembly would refrain from taking actions when their opposition politicians incite people to remove border posts, inflame the crowd with heinous racist remarks, publish false treaties and fake maps to make the people believe that some parts of the country are annexed by the neighboring state? Which country endorses defamation and slander? In most countries, calls for racial hatred, xenophobic statements and speeches of the extreme right are severely denounced, or even condemned, as we have just seen with the events of Charlottesville. While they are the daily language of the Cambodian opposition, never had it been condemned nor raised by NGOs and the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Cambodia.
21. The most recent attacks on the Royal Government of Cambodia pertain to the expulsion of an institute affiliated with a foreign political party which, under the cover of democracy training, deliberately supports the opposition and violates our law; the closure of a tax delinquent foreign

newspaper; and the arrest of an opposition official who, in a video recorded interview, confessed to be an agent of a big power working to overthrow our government. In what country, would such behavior of a foreign government be tolerated? We have acted totally in accordance with the provisions stipulated in our specific laws and I can assure you that these actions are not arbitrary as some critics would have led you to believe the contrary.

22. We can learn an important lesson from the history of my country: when we have been forced to choose the path set by some Western powers, we ended up suffering its worst consequences as manifested by one of the most horrific human tragedies of the last century.

23. We must recognize that it is the Cambodian government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Hun Sen, that has secured full peace for the country in 1998 with its own wisdom and means. We must admit that certain practices imposed from the outside are often forming part of the problem, not the solution.

24. Today we are accused of undermining democracy because, under existing laws, we are prosecuting and punishing people who violate these laws. Those who criticize us, even threaten us, refuse to take into consideration the crimes committed under the law by those whom they protect.

25. Mr. President. While acknowledging with sincere gratitude the great and positive contribution that many countries have brought to peace and economic development of our country, I will conclude by saying that the discourse of certain governments on human rights and democracy will be relevant and credible only when these countries choose to subject themselves first to the same standards as others when it come to their own assessments, criticisms and condemnations.

Thank you.