

English rendering of Prime Minister's Statement at the General Debate of the 69th Session of the UNGA**

September 27, 2014

Honourable President Mr. Sam Kutesa, Under Secretary General Mr. Gettu, distinguished delegates and friends

Let me first congratulate you on your election as the President of the 69th session of United Nations General Assembly.

It is truly a great honour to address for the first time as the Prime Minister of India. I stand here conscious of the hopes and expectations of the people of India.

I am also mindful of the expectations of the world from 1.25 billion people.

India is a country that constitutes one-sixth of humanity; India as a nation is experiencing comprehensive economic and social transformation on a scale which is rare to be seen in history of the world.

Every nation's world view is shaped by its civilization and philosophical tradition.

India's ancient wisdom sees the entire world as one family. When I say this, I make it clear that each country has its own philosophy. I am not talking about ideology. A country with inspiration of that philosophy marches ahead. India is a country; since its Vedic times has followed the tradition of Vasudeva Kutumbkam.

India is a country, where we have a dialogue with nature, we never struggle with nature, and it is a part of India's way of living. Under that philosophy India has been moving forward.

Each country, each nation, its culture is shaped by its civilization and philosophical tradition. India's ancient wisdom, as I said before, sees the world as one family.

It is reflected in a tradition of openness and diversity; co-existence and cooperation.

This is why India is a country which speaks not just for itself, but also for the cause of justice, dignity, opportunity and prosperity around the world.

It is also because of this timeless current of thought that India has an unwavering belief in multilateralism.

Today, as I stand here, I am equally aware of the hopes and expectation that are pinned on this General assembly. I am struck by the sacred belief that brought us together.

An extraordinary vision and a clear recognition of our shared destiny brought us together to build this institution for advancing peace and security, the rights of every human being and economic development for all. From 51 nations then, today 193 sovereign flags fly over this building. Each nation, born into freedom, has sought a place here with the same belief and hope.

We have achieved much in the past seven decades in our mission in ending wars, preventing conflict, maintaining peace, feeding the hungry, striving to save our planet and creating opportunities for poor children. 69th UN Peacekeeping Mission has made the "Blue helmet" as a sign of peace in the world.

Today, there is a surge to democracy across the world; including South Asia; in Afghanistan, we are at a historic moment of democratic transition and an affirmation of unity. Afghans are showing that their desire/aspiration for a peaceful and democratic future will prevail over violence. Nepal has moved from violence to peace and democracy; Bhutan's young democracy is flourishing with strength. Democracy is trying to find a voice in West Asia and North Africa;

Tunisia's success makes us believe that this journey of democracy is possible.

There is a new stirring for stability, peace and progress in Africa. There is unprecedented spread of prosperity in Asia and beyond, rising on the strength of peace and stability. Latin America, a continent of enormous potential, is coming together in shared pursuit of stability and prosperity, which could make it an important anchor of the world.

India expects a peaceful and stable environment for its development. Our future is linked with our neighbourhood. That is why my Government from its first day has given the highest priority on advancing friendship and cooperation with our neighbouring countries.

I have the same policy towards Pakistan too. I am prepared to engage in a serious bilateral dialogue with Pakistan in a peaceful atmosphere, without the shadow of terrorism, to promote our friendship and cooperation. However,

Pakistan must also take its responsibility seriously to create an appropriate atmosphere for bilateral dialogue.

Some doubt, raising issues in this forum might derail the efforts to resolve the issues between our two countries. Instead, today, we should be thinking about the victims of floods in Jammu and Kashmir. In India, we have organized massive flood relief operations and have also offered assistance to Pakistan occupied Kashmir.

India is part of the developing world, but we are prepared to share our limited resources with all those countries which are in dire need of assistance as much as we do.

This is a time of great flux and change. The world is witnessing tensions and turmoil on a scale rarely seen in recent history. There are no major wars, but tensions and conflicts abound; and, there is absence of real peace and uncertainty about the future. Even today there is poverty rampant all over. An integrating Asia Pacific region is still concerned about maritime security that is fundamental to its future. Europe faces risk of new division. In West Asia, terrorism and dividing lines are growing. Our own region continues to face the destabilizing threat of terrorism. We are facing this problem for the last 4 decades.

Terrorism is emerging in new shape and new name. No country, big or small, in north, south, east or west, is free from its threat.

I remember when 20 years ago, I used to meet some world leaders and talk about terrorism, they would not quite understand this and say it's a law and order problem, but today entire world is witnessing that how terrorism is spreading all over, but are we really making integrated international efforts to fight against these forces? I understand it is a serious question. Even today, states allow terrorist sanctuaries on their territory or use terrorism as instruments of their policy.

When we hear about good terrorism and bad terrorism, it raises a question mark on our struggle to fight against terrorism.

We welcome efforts to combat terrorism's resurgence in West Asia, which is affecting countries near and far. The effort should involve the support of all countries in the region. If we are really serious to fight against terrorism, then why not all the countries come forward and why not we request for that.

Today, even as seas, space and cyber space have become new instruments of prosperity, they could also become a new theatre of conflicts. The sea which used to connect us, from the same ocean; we are hearing news of disputes. We used to see space as a potential for our achievements and cyber space which used to connect us, today in these important areas we see new threats arising.

Today, the need for international solidarity, which is the foundation of the United Nations, requirement for such forum is stronger than ever before.

While we speak of an interdependent world, have we become more united as nations? We need to think, in spite of having a great platform like UN, we still operate in various Gs with different numbers, like G4, G7, G20, and India too is part of this. When UN is celebrating 70th anniversary, we should think beyond G1 and move towards G-All but the focal point should be how we can create a G-All atmosphere; how this platform can become a solution to all our problems, how we can trust more. We talk about togetherness but then we get divided into different groups.

On one hand, we say that our policies are inter-linked, on the other hand we still think in terms of zero sum game. If other nation gets benefits, I stand to lose... Who is getting benefits and who is getting losses; these are the standards on the basis of which we move forward.

It is easy to be cynical and say nothing will change; but if we really do so, we run the risk of shirking our responsibilities and we are putting our collective future in danger.

Let us bring ourselves in tune with the call of our times.

First, let us work for Global peace.

No one country or group of countries can determine the course of this world. There has to be a genuine international partnership. This is not just a moral position, but a practical reality.

We need a genuine dialogue and engagement between countries. Our efforts must begin here - in the United Nations.

We must reform the United Nations, including the UN Security Council, and make it more democratic and participative. Institutions that reflect the imperatives of 20th century won't be effective in the 21st century. It would face the risk of irrelevance; and in accordance with the circumstances of the last century; the

policies and rules we emphasized on will face the risk of continuing turbulence with no one capable of addressing it. World in 21st century has changed and will be changing at a faster pace. It becomes imperative that we formulate according to the changing times and new ideas of 21st century to sustain our relevance.

We should put aside our differences and make comprehensive and united international efforts to combat terrorism and extremism. As a symbol of this effort, I urge you to adopt the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. It needs to be emphasized. It will help in providing strength to fight against terrorism. India, which has gone through so many terrorist activities, thinks that UN does not take initiative on this issue. We cannot make them believe unless we do not adopt the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

We should ensure that there will be peace, stability and order in the outer space and cyber space.

We should work together to ensure that all countries observe international rules and norms.

We should energize the noble task of UN Peacekeeping; we should involve troop contributing countries in the process of decision making. They are ready to sacrifice, give their time and energy. If we keep them uninvolved in decision making process, how can we make UN Peacekeeping force more live and this issue needs to be seriously considered.

Let us double our efforts to pursue universal global disarmament and non-proliferation.

Second, we must pursue a more stable and inclusive global development endlessly.

Globalization has created new poles of growth; new industries; and new sources of employment.

At the same time, billions of people live on the edge of poverty; countries that are barely able to survive through global economic storm. There has never been a time when it has seemed more possible now to change this.

Technology has made a lot of things possible; the expenses to make it available have reduced substantially. If you think of the speed with which Facebook or Twitter has spread around the world or the speed with which cell phones have

spread, then you must also believe that development and empowerment can also expand with the same speed.

Each country has to take its own national measures; each government must fulfil its responsibility to support growth and development.

At the same time, we also require a genuine international partnership. At one level, it means a better coordination of policy so that our efforts become mutually supportive but not damaging to others.

It also means that when we craft agreements on international trade, we must upkeep each other's concerns and interests.

When we think of absence of basic necessities of the world – today 2.5 billion people are without access to basic sanitation; 1.3 billion people without access to electricity; or 1.1 billion people without access to drinking water, we need more comprehensive and concerted direct international action. We cannot wait only for the economic development.

In India, the most important aspects of my development agenda are precisely to focus on these issues and address them in a definite time frame.

These issues must remain at the core of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and command our fullest attention.

Third, we must seek a more habitable and sustainable world.

There are debates and documents available on these issues. But, we see so many things around us which should make us alarmed and alert. There are also such things that are making us concerned and worried – like forests, birds and animals, clean rivers and lakes and blue sky.

I want to say three things.

One, we should be honest in shouldering our responsibilities in meeting the challenges.

The world community has agreed on a beautiful balance of collective action – common but differentiated responsibilities. That should form the basis of continued action.

This also means that the developed countries must fulfil their commitments for funding and technology transfer.

Second, national action is imperative. Technology has made many things possible, for e.g. renewable energy technology. What we require is imagination and commitment.

India is prepared to share its technology and capabilities, just as we have announced for a free satellite for the SAARC countries.

Third, we need to change our lifestyles. Energy not consumed is the cleanest form of energy.

We can achieve the same level of development, prosperity and wellbeing without necessarily going down the path of reckless consumption. It doesn't mean that economies will suffer; it will mean that our economies will take on a different character.

For us in India, respect for nature is an integral part of spiritualism. We treat nature's bounties as sacred. Today I would like to draw your attention to another aspect. When we talk about climate change, holistic health care, connecting with the nature, going back to basics; on this topic I would like to say one thing specifically. Yoga is an invaluable gift of our ancient tradition.

Yoga embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfilment; harmony between man and nature; a holistic approach to health and wellbeing. It is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and the nature. By changing our lifestyle and creating consciousness, it can help us deal with climate change.

Let us work towards adopting an International Yoga Day.

Finally,

We are at a historic moment.

Every century is defined by its sociology; and, each generation is remembered by how it faced its challenges.

We have that responsibility to rise to our challenges now. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in this great assembly.

Next year we will be 70 years old. We should ask ourselves whether we should wait until we are 80 or 100 years old. I believe, next year is an opportunity for UN. After a voyage of 70 years, when we look back to see where we started, why

we started, what was the motive, where we have reached, where we are supposed to reach, types and challenges of 21st century. We should mutually exchange views, and see how we can connect universities and our new generation, analyse & evaluation this journey and also suggest new thoughts and ideas.

I would like to say that 70 years in itself is a great opportunity which we should use it with a new awareness, ambition, aspiration, belief and give this journey of UN a new form.

Let us fulfill our promise to reform the United Nations Security Council. Let us fulfill our pledge on a Post-2015 Development Agenda so that there is new hope and belief in us around the world. Let us make 2015 also a new watershed for a sustainable world so that it becomes a memorable year in history of mankind. This is our collective responsibility and I firmly believe that we will fulfill this responsibility. Let it be the beginning of a new journey together.

Thank you everyone.

Namaste.