

ADDRESS
by H.E. Mr. Kairat ABDRAKHMANOV,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan,
at the general debate of the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly
New York, September 2017

«Focusing on people - striving for peace and a decent life
for all on a sustainable planet».

*Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

In his first statement at the United Nations in October 1992 President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev endorsed the concept of preventive diplomacy – the idea which is now very much prioritized by the Secretary General and President of the General Assembly.

This concept has been very instrumental for Kazakhstan, which in 25 years of its independent development has proven to a proactive and responsible member of the international community. My country has become a net contributor to peace, security and stability, economic and social development – not only in the region but far beyond.

We carefully preserved peace and harmony in our multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, stressing and enforcing the equality and dignity of every citizen.

We have achieved this while also creating an efficient economic model – our economy has grown 20-fold and major international corporations have established and strengthened their presence in Kazakhstan by investing more than 265 billion US dollars. This year Kazakhstan achieved 32nd position in the IMD World Competitiveness Ranking – a remarkable rise of 15 places, and 35th ranking in the Ease of Doing Business Index, going 16 places higher.

Looking forward, Kazakhstan has a clear vision for its future development. By 2050 we seek to become one of the top thirty most competitive economies in the world, meeting the most advanced global standards in terms of economic performance and transparent governance, especially those of the OECD.

A new model of economic growth, the **Third Modernization** of Kazakhstan, announced by President Nazarbayev in his annual address earlier this year, outlines the path for our country to achieve those ambitious goals. In economic sphere Third Modernization makes heavy emphasis on the rapid technological modernization of Kazakhstan with focus on new high-tech industries, information and communication technologies as well as massive improvement of the business environment, economic productivity, human development, and institutional reforms.

We have committed resources to streamline and upgrade our road, rail, airport and pipeline infrastructure and ensured effective conjunction between Kazakhstan State Programme Nurly Zhol (the Bright Pass) and Chinese Belt and Road initiative.

With a purpose to build a more efficient, sustainable, modern system of governance, this year, President Nazarbayev initiated a **constitutional reform in Kazakhstan**. This reform, now well under way, sets the goal of considerably redistributing powers between its three branches and further democratizing the political system as a whole. The key step is the transfer of some presidential powers to the Parliament and the Government and strengthening of a genuine system of checks and balances.

These processes of economic and political modernization will be accompanied by our quest for a **modernization of Kazakhstan's national identity and its own cultural code** to create conditions for a new generation of competitive and pragmatic citizens and leaders with a thirst for knowledge, progressive consciousness, and an open attitude.

Mr. President,

The agenda of the current session focuses on people, encompassing issues of sustainable development, peace and security, and stresses our common responsibility for the future. No one can ignore tough realities on the ground – lack of trust and unity, global and regional inequality and injustice, poverty, xenophobia, conflicts, terrorism and extremism, as well as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

That is why this agenda truly reflects the magnitude of the challenges that the United Nations faces and, at the same time, underlines the undiminished importance of this organization.

Indeed, the UN machinery is subject to criticism and long-awaited reform to enhance its crisis preparedness and response capabilities. But at the same time the UN remains a **beacon of hope for billions of people across the globe, a universal institution that brings the promise of better, safer and more sustainable life.**

We believe that the UN Secretary General is on the right track in this regard in uniting member states to revitalize the United Nations. We also support convened on September 18 by the United States President Donald Trump a special meeting on UN reform, which we believe will give a fresh incentive to turn our Organization into an effective and efficient tool serving the whole of mankind.

Kazakhstan is actively working on establishing and hosting a **UN Regional Hub for multilateral diplomacy in Almaty** focusing on sustainable development, humanitarian assistance, disaster risk reduction and resilience building in the region and the wider area. This initiative comes in line with the Secretary General's idea to optimize the service delivery mechanism of the United Nations and to increase the effectiveness of the UN field missions' activities through proper planning and management.

My country persistently pursues the notion of *Security-and-Development nexus* – the concept that echoes an intrinsic interdependence of peace and security and development. Sustainable development is unimaginable without peace and vice versa. Erosion of security architecture along with regional confrontations and international terrorism undermines the achievements reached within MDGs and jeopardizes the objectives of SDGs. Peace is an integral requirement for social, economic and environmental propulsion.

Mr. President,

When we speak of opportunities unfolded by global modernization, we need to bear in mind the dangers that prevent all of us from realizing our potential. In our inter-dependent and connected world, **nuclear weapons are**

no longer an asset but a danger. It is with moral authority and responsibility emanating from my nation's bitter experience of the hundreds of nuclear tests my President states that eliminating the nuclear danger is the most urgent task of humanity in 21 century. It includes a whole range of important and urgent steps - a complete ban on nuclear testing, the total prohibition of nuclear weapons and complete and verifiable destruction of nuclear arsenals.

We are deeply concerned by the nuclear tests conducted by the DPRK – the only state in the 21st century continuing such tests despite condemnation from the entire international community. I want to specifically stress that the **DPRK's actions to further develop its nuclear and missile programs are totally unacceptable** and Pyongyang must undertake serious steps to restore trust and re-commit a much needed political settlement.

In 2009 the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted its resolution designating August 29 – the day the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site was officially closed in 1991 by the Decree of President Nazarbayev – as the International Day Against Nuclear Tests. This day has been widely commemorated in Kazakhstan and in the UN from 2010 onwards. This year was also marked by several important events of international significance.

From August 25 to 29 Astana hosted the Conference of the Pugwash Movement of Scientists to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Movement and International Day Against Nuclear Tests, where hundreds of scholars, practitioners and officials from around 50 countries gathered to seek ways of achieving a nuclear-weapons-free world.

The same day, my President and IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano opened the IAEA Low Enriched Uranium Bank Facility in Kazakhstan, with a view to making a significant contribution to the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and strengthening the global nonproliferation regime.

At the opening ceremony President Nazarbayev outlined a number of important initiatives that I would like to share with you.

First, to convene a summit of all states possessing nuclear weapons to collectively discuss further steps towards their nuclear disarmament and attaining nuclear-weapon-free world.

Second, to enhance the role of the nuclear weapon free zones as effective instruments to end further nuclear proliferation and to combine efforts of states-members of such zones at the meeting of all nuclear weapons-free zones in Astana.

Third, to renew the process of global nuclear security summits and to host the first recommenced nuclear security summit in Astana.

And fourth, to call for joint efforts to ensure that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons enters into force by 2020 – this is the 50th anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons entering into force.

Mr. President,

Our common response to barbaric terrorist actions requires more coordination. Kazakhstan fully supports the efforts of the United Nations, especially the creation of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, with a view to developing a long term comprehensive approach.

This goes in line with the proposal by Kazakhstan President set forth in 2015 to jointly establish the Global Anti-Terrorist Coalition. My country is looking forward to actively and constructively participating in the first ever meeting of the national counter-terrorism agencies heads next year, to forge a new International Counter-Terrorism Partnership.

As practical contribution to the global partnership in fighting against terrorism, my country has initiated to elaborate a Code of conduct for the achievement of a terrorism free world as one of the ways to expedite the work on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

We are also committed to implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and have recently **allocated 300,000 US dollars for its implementation in Central Asia.**

Kazakhstan advocates for the widest implementation of multilateral mechanisms and instruments to combat foreign terrorist fighters, and to shut down the channels of financial support for their activities through the illegal trade in drugs, natural resources and cultural artifacts.

Since there is a wide range of approaches to the issue of controlling Internet content, the United Nations needs to take concerted action to prevent use of the Internet for recruitment, spread of terrorist ideology and radicalization of the population, especially amongst the youth. In Kazakhstan we are working on creating a National “Cyber Shield” System.

Mr. President,

The unspeakable suffering of millions of people in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen, ongoing humanitarian crises and gross violations of human rights leave none of us indifferent. Kazakhstan is hosting the **Astana process on Syria** to contribute to the peaceful settlement in Syria and promote UN-led negotiations in Geneva. We believe that the Astana Process, which commenced earlier this year with the support and direct involvement of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, has brought obvious positive results aimed at strengthening the ceasefire regime, creation of the de-escalation zones and developing monitoring mechanism.

Success in the Geneva and Astana platforms is critical and should be supported by all as saving innocent lives in Syria is a moral imperative for all of us.

Kazakhstan has a clear and consistent position on **the Middle East Peace Process**, based on the two-state solution approach: a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living within secure and recognized borders, side by side in peace with Israel.

As an active member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation my country along with other OIC member states strongly protects ideals of dialogue among nations and peoples of diverse religious identity.

Recently in Astana we hosted the OIC Summit on Science and Technology on the margins of the International Exhibition EXPO-2017. Although devoted to Science and Technology matters, the Summit meeting was not in a position to ignore the sufferings of the Rohingya community. The OIC member states condemned continued violation and called for dialogue between the UN, OIC and the government of Myanmar to stop the humanitarian crisis. Events in

this country once again stressed the relevance of our initiative on the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

Mr. President,

Kazakhstan is fully committed to strengthening and improving United Nations **peacekeeping activities** and believes that the new approach of the Secretary General on peacekeeping reform with a cross-pillar approach, focusing on prevention and sustaining peace, will result in an increase of the effectiveness and accountability of peacekeeping operations.

We are confident that flexibility and partnerships, as well as enabling the active involvement and engagement of new countries could increase the effectiveness of peace operations.

Kazakhstan is committed to augmenting its contribution to UN peacekeeping by sending more military observers and staff officers to UN missions. Just recently we declared in the UN Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System the 2nd level of Kazakhstan peacekeeping unit preparedness for deployment to UN peacekeeping missions.

Mr. President,

Earlier this year I presented **President Nazarbayev's Policy Address to the Security Council**. The seven priorities of this document called to ensure humanity's survival through a world free of nuclear weapons by 2045; the prevention and end to military confrontations at regional and global levels; generating a model for a regional zone of peace, security, cooperation and development in Central Asia. It calls for global efforts of all stakeholders to combat international terrorism and extremism; promoting peace and security in Africa; implementing SDGs and working for the reform of the Security Council and the United Nations system.

Kazakhstan will assume chairmanship of the Council in January 2018. We are planning to hold **high level open debate** on global peace and security as the major event during this period. I would like to use this opportunity to extend our invitation to all UN member states to participate in the debate at the highest level.

During our presidency particular focus will be attached to the security and stability in Afghanistan and Central Asia through the prism of peaceful economic and political integration of Afghanistan into regional and global processes.

Mr. President,

My country remains deeply committed to **sustainable development**. Reckoning the reality of climate change, Kazakhstan, despite its abundant conventional energy resources, is deeply committed to a green economy through diversifying and developing alternative energy sources.

This thinking led us to choose “Future Energy” as the theme **for the Astana EXPO 2017 International Exhibition**. Throughout the summer, 115 countries and 22 international organizations showcased their creative experiences.

This enormous undertaking is a clear evidence of Kazakhstan’s pledge to carry forward the Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030. One the best way to promote green economy and green business we see the use of the heritage of the EXPO infrastructure. With the support of five UN agencies we are establishing the International Centre for Green Technologies and Investment Projects “Future Energy”. Its activities will be in full compliance with the Kazakhstan “Green Bridge” Partnership Programme reflected in the Rio+20 Outcome Document.

The EXPO infrastructure will also host the Astana International Financial Center and IT Start-ups Center.

As I already mentioned earlier in my statement, we hosted the first ever **OIC Summit on Science and Technology** within EXPO, an event that underlined the need for technological modernization for the sake of unity, and solidarity of the 1.5 billion strong Islamic world. The high-level meeting attended by 15 presidents and dignitaries from 57 states manifested a clear and undeniable link between security and development and recognized that building a sustainable future for their nations was the only course of action to eradicate challenges and threats to their security.

To support the OIC’s endeavors, the President of Kazakhstan proposed to create a 15-member OIC forum designed to streamline scientific and economic

cooperation. He invited Islamic nations to jointly develop our EXPO legacy in the areas of Islamic finance and green technologies, and established a Prize for Islamic science and innovations.

Mr. President,

To conclude, I would like to stress the utmost importance of preserving peace and stability and to ensure the incremental and sustainable development of our fragile world. We don't have the luxury of being able to make mistakes and then going back to correct them. We call on all world leaders to redouble their efforts and goodwill to head towards lasting peace and prosperity for all.

I thank you.