



## Issues Highlighted by the countries in the South Asian Region at the 72<sup>nd</sup> Session of UNGA

### Afghanistan

The President of Afghanistan, Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, addressed the 72<sup>nd</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017. During his speech, the Afghan President covered both international as well as domestic issues. In the beginning, Ghani highlighted the relevance of those international institutions including UN, World Bank and IMF etc. which were founded to coordinate responses to international challenges and to make crimes against humanity a thing of the past. He also said that an effective, efficient and respected United Nations is the need of the hour.

Main highlights of his speech are as follows:

Issues	Highlights
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deficiency in the growth models of the advanced economies that has been witnessing high rate of unemployment and wealth inequality.</li> <li>• Afghanistan has to become the brokers of peace and hub for economic prosperity in the region to yet again become the Asian Roundabout for dialogue of civilization.</li> </ul>
Terrorism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terrorism is not only an attack on human life and basic freedoms, but an attack on compact of citizenship – an attack on the nation state's relationship with its people.</li> <li>• Talked about threat of violence by non-state actors which has taken the form of Fifth Wave of political violence and terrorism, particularly after 11 September 2001. This wave was driven by transnational terrorist networks, criminal organisation, cyber security and state sponsorship of terror.</li> <li>• Ghani mentioned about the 20 international terror groups with an imposed presence on Afghan soil.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ghani talked about the peace deal with Gulbudding Hekmatyar-led Hezb-e-Islami as an example of Afghan-led peace process.</li> </ul>
Rohingya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terming Myanmar democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi's silence as tragic, he said that his hopes of an icon of human rights would choose principle over power were frustrated.</li> <li>• He also welcomed a chance for Afghanistan to have a seat on Human Rights Council.</li> </ul>
President Trump's Policy on Afghanistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting the new US Strategy on Afghanistan, Ghani conveyed a message that Taliban and their backers cannot win militarily.</li> <li>• Afghan President urged Taliban to join the peace process and said that only through political settlement Afghanistan can achieve enduring peace.</li> </ul>
Regional Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• President Ghani called upon Pakistan to engage in a comprehensive dialogue on peace, security and regional cooperation leading to prosperity.</li> <li>• Afghanistan will again become a multi-faceted hub in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – for transport, energy, water and mining – for the benefit of the entire region. He also mentioned about the CASA, TAPI and the Turkmen railway project.</li> </ul>
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In three years of NUG rule Afghanistan has evolved as a platform of stability pursuing reforms by ending corruption in the security sector, replacing system of patronage with merit based system, and making financial processes transparent.</li> <li>• Generational change is taking place as youths are empowered at every level.</li> <li>• He added that special emphasis is being given to gender equality, saying that women empowerment is crucial to Afghanistan's future.</li> <li>• NUG is taking initiatives to empower the poor as 40 per cent of the Afghans still live below the poverty line.</li> </ul>

## Bangladesh

Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina addressed the 72<sup>nd</sup> United Nations General Assembly on September 21, 2017. In her address the issues that she stressed are the ongoing crisis in the Rakhine state of Myanmar, terrorism, the international criminal tribunal created to provide justice against the genocide that took place in 1971. She also stated Bangladesh's stand on migration and refugees, climate change and the role of Bangladesh in UN.

### **The Rohingya Issue**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina termed the crisis as 'ethnic cleansing' and argued that Myanmar was committing atrocities and human rights violation in Rakhine state. Bangladesh was presently

sheltering over 800,000 forcibly displaced Rohingyas and hundreds of thousands were still entering her country to flee the violence.

She called upon the UN and the international community to take immediate action for a permanent solution for this crisis and proposed a 5 point formula. As per the proposed formula, Myanmar should immediately stop the ethnic cleansing in the Rakhine state, Secretary General of the UN to send a fact finding mission, create “safe zones’ inside Myanmar under UN supervision to protect all the civilians, and show sustainable return of all forcibly displaced Rohingyas to Myanmar and implement the recommendations of the Kofi Annan Commission Report.

### **Terrorism**

She strongly condemned all kinds of terrorism and violent extremism and mentioned that Bangladesh maintains a “zero tolerance” policy against such menace. She asserted that countries should first stop supplying arms to the terrorists, stop terrorist financing; and then settle all international disputes peacefully. She also urged UN to address the growing threats emanated from the cyber space to prevent money laundering, terrorist financing and other transnational organized crimes.

### **1971 War of Liberation**

She mentioned how Pakistan military while carrying out its infamous ‘Operation Searchlight’ during the 1971 liberation war, killed 3 million people, violating the modesty of more than 200,000 women. She stated how Bangladesh had to endure such extreme form of genocide. She mentioned how the perpetrators of such genocide are being brought to justice through the International Crimes Tribunal.

### **Migration and Refugees**

Voiced her commitment for promoting safe, orderly and regular migration and stated her satisfaction that the UN is delivering on the formation of a governance framework of an understanding on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

### **Climate**

Bangladesh considers the Paris Climate Agreement as the bastion of hope for climate justice. Bangladesh has experienced the vagaries of climate vulnerability, which has made significant impact on its health and food security. She mentioned about the potential that Blue Economy held for the sustainable use of the ocean and seas. She also underlined the success Bangladesh achieved in building resilience against flood and other disasters. She further emphasised that “crop intensification and invention of water resistant crops” have helped Bangladesh achieve self sufficiency in food. Bangladesh has ensured access to safe water for 87 per cent of its population by 2015, and aims to attain full coverage of the population by 2030.

### **UN and Bangladesh**

Bangladesh’s participation in peace keeping operations has contributed significantly in the maintenance of peace and security in the areas of conflict, while contributing more female peacekeepers. She also announced the contribution of USD 100,000 to the Victim Support Fund established to combat "Voluntary Compact" on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

## **Sustainable Development Goals and Bangladesh**

PM voiced her commitment towards implementing the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and stated that SDGs compliment her vision of transforming Bangladesh into a middle income country by 2021 and a developed country by 2041. Speaking on economic growth and development, PM argued that Bangladesh economy posted a GDP growth of over 7.24% in 2016-17 and the country's foreign currency reserve US\$32.1bn. She also underlined Bangladesh's achievements in the field of poverty reduction which came down from 56.7% in 1991 to 23.2% in 2017.

## **Bhutan**

Prime Minister of Bhutan, Dasho Tshering Tobgay On September 22, 2017 addressed the 72<sup>nd</sup> United Nations General Assembly. In his address Prime Minister Tobgay underlined the importance of the United Nations in addressing some of the key international issues and stated that Bhutan would continue working with all member states to ensure that United Nations plays an instrumental role in resolving global issues. In this regard, he flagged a number of issues having national and international importance such as climate change, terrorism, poverty, Security Council reform, state of democracy in Bhutan etc.

### **Climate Change**

Speaking on climate change, Prime Minister Dasho Tshering Tobgay stated that natural disasters in one or the other country are not isolated incidents; these are linked with climate change which must alarm all of us. Since our wellbeing is at stake and survival of future generations is at risk, we should leave no room for complacency, hesitation, finger pointing, excuses or procrastination. He further highlighted that because of centuries of neglect, fighting with climate change has become complex and expensive. He applauded the contribution of Global Environmental Facility in financing more than 4000 environmental projects in 170 countries. He called for scaling up support for organisations like Global Environmental Facility and Green Climate Fund which will enable and help countries fight climate change on a war footing.

Prime Minister Tobgay emphasised that Bhutan, a landlocked mountainous country, was especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change. And that's why Bhutan is alarmed at unchecked environmental degradation. He categorically mentioned Bhutan's ratification of the Paris Agreement and its commitment to fulfil the pledges. He stated that Bhutan was the only carbon neutral country of the world as 72 percent of Bhutan was under forest cover and more than half of the country was protected as national parks, wild life sanctuaries and nature reserves.

### **Poverty**

Prime Minister Tobgay invited attention of the assembly on the World Bank estimates of global poverty which suggests that over 800 million people live in poverty. He emphasised that international community, at present, has unprecedented wealth, knowledge and technology that could be used to eradicate the scourge of poverty from the surface of the earth. He further stated that all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals give us reason for hope and provide us a realistic roadmap for this important task. Referring to internal situation of Bhutan, Prime Minister talked about the philosophy of Gross National Happiness that guarantees all citizens free education and free healthcare. He further stated that Bhutan's efforts in this regard were bearing fruit, as multidimensional poverty had fallen by half and the nation was on its way to reduce that further

to 5 percent within next few years. He also acknowledged the support received from the United Nations and other development partners especially India, Japan, the EU, ADB and the World Bank.

### **Terrorism**

Prime Minister Tobgay pointed out that recent terror activities had brought pain and suffering to countless people throughout the world. The acts of terrorism undermine global peace and security. He joined the call for united action to combat extremism. In this context, he emphasised multilateralism and global cooperation and called for reform of the United Nations Security Council to reflect the changing realities of the world. He was particular about the inclusion of India, Japan, Brazil and Germany as permanent members. He also stated that Africa must be appropriately represented.

### **Democracy in Bhutan**

Speaking on the democratic transition in Bhutan, Prime Minister Tobgay highlighted that the nation embarked on the democratic path some nine years ago which was an unprecedented move in the history of humanity as the King, at the height of his popularity, himself made way for it. At present, democracy in Bhutan is well entrenched and irreversible. Bhutan has been able to establish all the institutions of democratic governance and these are functioning well. Today, there is a growing body of civil society, and a strong and vibrant media. The nation has seen two successful elections in 2008 and 2013 and is gearing up for the third election in 2018.

## **Maldives**

Dr. Mohamed Asim, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives, while acknowledging the contribution of the United Nations in fighting for freedom, peace and sustainable planet, touched upon country specific issues as well as issues of global concern such as terrorism and climate change. He also touched upon Maldives stand on developments in Palestine, Syria, Myanmar and in North Korea and Maldives expectations as member State of the UN.

### ***Positions taken on international issues***

At the UN Mr. Asim took a stand that “an independent, sovereign State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, established along the 1967 borders”, should be a solution and the only way out. While referring to Syria, he said the suffering should end and there is a need to find long term solutions to wellbeing and welfare of migrants and refugees. He also urged North Korea to return to dialogue and to choose peace over war.

On the situation in Rakhine state after the incidents that occurred on 25<sup>th</sup> August involving ARSA and Myanmar military leading to large scale migration and killing of innocent civilians, he pointed out that, Rohingya Muslims are one of the “most persecuted people in the world” and acts of ethnic cleansing is alarming. In this context he said, those responsible for barbaric actions must be brought to justice swiftly.

### ***On Terrorism***

While criticising Dae'sh for spreading their own brand of terror, their own version of religion and brutal methods of fear, Mr. Asim noted that combating terrorism, fighting violent extremisms and radicalisation became the national priorities of Maldives. He pointed out the initiatives taken by

Maldives in this regard such as enactment of national legislation and formulation of comprehensive national policy to fight against violent extremism and establishment of National Centre for Counter Terrorism. He also extended its support to UN's new Office of Counter Terrorism and insisted that terrorism has no single face, no single identity and no single country and strategy.

### ***Achievements in various sectors***

Dr. Asim highlighted the achievements of Government of Maldives in sectors such as health, gender equality and access to safe and affordable housing. He said that Maldives spends nine percent of its budget on health related expenses and highest in South Asia.

Mr. Asim urged the UN to help Maldives to achieve higher growth through large scale investments which are not only means to support Maldives's economic development, but a means to support social development as well. In this context, he noted that, it has become increasingly difficult for Maldives to access concessional financing for development projects.

### ***On Climate Change***

Mr. Asim elaborated on the achievements by Maldives to address the issue of climate change globally as well as at domestic level and supported the full implementation of the Paris Agreement. He said that, Maldives as the chair of AOSIS and in collaboration with IRENA has launched the initiative for Renewable Island Energy (IRIE), which can facilitate support for Small Island States in their transition to renewable energy and in achieving energy efficiency. He emphasised on Maldives' support for traditional methods of fishing and conservation of ecologically significant marine creatures. He said that, Maldives is part of "Save Our Sharks" Coalition, since 2010, Maldives entire EEZ of nearly one million square kilometres has been declared a shark sanctuary.

### ***Expectations from UN***

Mr. Asim, while stressing upon Maldives firm belief in the power of multilateralism mentioned that, Maldives first foreign policy decision as an independent country was to seek membership of the UN and it had served the UN for fifty-two years. He said that, every nation, large and small should have a voice and equal representation and in this context, sought for the first time, a seat on the UN Security Council for the term 2019-2020 for Maldives.

### **Conclusion**

Mr. Asim address at the UN indicate that climate change and handling of terror spare headed by Dae'sh are concerns of Maldives as these issues directly impact on the development of the country. He did not touch upon the measures the government of Maldives is planning to take to address the human rights violations as well as political unrest.

## **Myanmar**

In his speech Myanmar's Vice-President focused on global climate change, Rakhine State issue, initiative taken by the government to address the issue; bilateral relations with Bangladesh and terrorism.



## ***Climate change***

The Vice- President expressed his deepest sympathy to the government of Mexico as well as to the US who had experienced the natural disasters recently such as earthquake and hurricane. He also said that, Myanmar is also “highly vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change”. He welcomed the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and informed the Assembly that Myanmar deposited with Secretary-General the instruments of ratification on the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol.

## ***On Situation in Rakhine State***

While welcoming the theme “Focusing on people — striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet”, he spoke on the initiatives taken by the government of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi “to end decades of internal armed conflict”. He mentioned about the brief by the State Counsellor to the Diplomatic Corps regarding the situation in Rakhine state in which she said “Myanmar shares the concern of the international community regarding displacement and suffering of all communities affected by the latest round of terrorist attacks. She also stressed that Government condemn all human rights violations and unlawful violence”.

He elaborated on the efforts Myanmar Government has taken to address the situation in Rakhine State such as:

- Central Committee on Implementation of Peace, Stability and Development of Rakhine State, chaired by the State Counsellor was established on 30 May 2016 to address the specific needs of the State
- in Aug 2016, a commission headed by Dr. Kofi Annan to advice the government on sustainable solutions to the complex situation in Rakhine was established and on 5 August 2017, the Kofi Annan Commission released its final report
- adopted an integrated national strategy to address this problem
- Government launched a committee chaired by the Union Minister of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission.
- Government is intending to establish an Advisory Board comprised of eminent persons from both Myanmar and abroad.
- Dedicated significant national funds and resources to humanitarian relief operations and a new government-led mechanism, established in cooperation with the Red Cross Movement for humanitarian assistance activities.

His address acknowledged problem faced by the people in Rakhine State, due to the violence and many had to abandon their hearth and home, not just Muslim and Rakhine, but also small minority groups such as Daingnet, Mro, Thet, Mramagyi and Hindus and “most of the world has been oblivious to their existence and plight”. He said that, “the Government of Myanmar is concerned by reports that the numbers of Muslims crossing into Bangladesh which remain unabated and the Government would need to find out the reason for this exodus. He emphasised

that, what is little known is that the great majority of the Muslim population decided to remain in their villages”.

### ***Bangladesh-Myanmar Relations***

He said that, the Government of Myanmar is working hard to enhance relations with Bangladesh and he mentioned about the visit by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and the National Security Advisor to Bangladesh in January and July 2017.

About the repatriation of displaced people, he conveyed the stand taken by the State Counsellor that “Myanmar was prepared to start the verification process at anytime”. He recalled that both the countries ‘have had the experience of such a process in 1993 through the establishment of a joint working group for implementation of repatriation process and Myanmar is willing to develop a process based on the experience of 1993’.

### ***On Terrorism***

He emphasised that, “terrorism constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and Myanmar cannot condone terrorism”. To deal with the issue, Rakhine Advisory ‘Commission provided Myanmar with a clear roadmap’.

### ***On National Reconciliation and Peace***

Vice-President mentioned that national reconciliation and peace process are the top priority of Myanmar Government and “the vision is to achieve a democratic, federal Union, based on the principles of freedom, justice, equal rights and self-determination”. To achieve this goal he said Myanmar ‘held the second session of Union Peace Conference and was able to discuss and define key principles that will form the basis of a federal, democratic Union’.

### ***Conclusion***

The address by the Vice-president at the UN mainly focused on recent developments in Myanmar’s Rakhine State and the platform was used to convey to the world the initiative taken by the Government of Myanmar to address the situation.

At the UN countries such as Mauritius, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Denmark, Comoros, Pakistan, Maldives, Thailand, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and Singapore asked for speedy resolution of the problem as well as implementation of Koffi Annan report recommendations.

## **नेपाल**

प्रधानमंत्री देउबा ने सर्वप्रथम नेपाल की सरकार, भगवान बुद्ध और माउंट एवरेस्ट की भूमि की तरफ से इस सत्र की सफलता के लिए शुभकामनाये दी. देउबा ने संयुक्त राष्ट्र की महासभा के 72 वें सत्र की सभा के अध्यक्षता के लिए चुने जाने पर अध्यक्ष को बधाईयाँ दी.

देउबा ने सभा के अध्यक्ष को संबोधित करते हुए विभिन्न वैश्विक मुद्दों को उठाया. उन्होंने कहा कि बीते दशकों में विश्व विभिन्न व्यापक परिवर्तनों से गुजरा है. इसी दौरान उल्लेखनीय उपलब्धियां भी हासिल की है, जैसे गरीबी उन्मूलन, स्कूलों में नामांकन, लैंगिक समानता और संक्रामक रोगों पर रोक. लेकिन यह बहुत सारी पेचीदा चुनौतियों से लड़ने के



बाद प्राप्त हुआ. वैश्विक समुदाय धुर्वीकृत माहौल में कई वृहद स्तर की चुनौतियों से लड़ रहा है, जैसे आतंकवाद, जलवायु परिवर्तन, उर्जा की अपर्याप्तता, खाद्य असुरक्षा और बड़े स्तर पर शरणार्थी और कट्टरवाद की समस्या. संजातीय संघर्ष अंतर राज्यीय झगड़ों से लाखों लोगों की जान जा चुकी है. सीरिया, ईराक, लीबिया और यमन में लोग इस समस्या से जूझ रहे हैं. दुर्भाग्य से इस दिशा में हमारे प्रयास काफी कम हैं और इनमें काफी बार देर भी हो जाती है. ये सभी चुनौतियां संयुक्त राष्ट्र की भूमिका और जिम्मेदारियों को सुदृढ़ करती हैं.

देउबा ने मानव अधिकारों की बात करते हुए नेपाल के संविधान का भी जिक्र किया. उन्होंने कहा नेपाल का संविधान सभी नागरिकों की इच्छाओं को पूरा करता है. यह संविधान सभी नागरिकों को अंतर्राष्ट्रीय रूप से माय मानव अधिकारों और मूलभूत अधिकारों की गारंटी देता है. संविधान के तहत एक ऐसे आयोग की स्थापना की गयी है जो कि महिलाओं, दलितों, मुस्लिमों, मधेशियों, मूल निवासियों और अन्य वंचित समूहों के अधिकारों और हितों का संवर्द्धन और संरक्षण करता है. नेपाल ने पृथक से एक सुदृढ़ मानव अधिकार आयोग की स्थापना की है और हम जीवन के अधिकार के प्रति काफी संवेदशील हैं.

देउबा ने नेपाल की विदेश नीति पर बोलते हुए कहा कि हमारी विदेश नीति पंचशील के सिद्धांतों पर आधारित है जो कि भगवान बुद्ध की देन है. हम गुटनिरपेक्षता में विश्वास रखते हैं. स्वतंत्र विदेश नीति का अवलंबन करते हुए हम प्रत्येक मुद्दे को बिना भय और पक्षपात उसके महत्त्व के आधार पर परखते हैं.

देउबा ने नेपाल के वर्तमान विकास की भी बात की, उन्होंने कहा कि नेपाल में एक दशक से संघर्ष चल रहा था लेकिन हमने बातचीत के जरिये शांति स्थापित की, जो कि हमारी राजनीतिक शक्ति को बताती है. यह शांति प्रक्रिया 2006 से शुरू हुई और 2015 में समावेशी संविधान की घोषणा के बाद समाप्त हुई. हमारे समाज का समानुपातिक प्रतिनिधित्व नेपाल के समावेशी लोकतंत्र का मूल है. अभी हाल ही के स्थानीय चुनावों में महिलाओं की भागीदारी सुनिश्चित दिखती है जैसा कि संविधान महिलाओं को 40 प्रतिशत प्रतिनिधित्व की गारंटी देता है. 20 साल बाद स्थानीय चुनाव की सफलता के बाद अगले दो महीनों में संघीय और प्रांतीय चुनाव की तिथि घोषित की गयी है.

## Pakistan

Pakistan Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi addressed the 72<sup>nd</sup> UNGA session on its general debate on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017. Facing the recent challenges that rose out of the South Asia policy by President Trump, PM Abbasi's address harped mostly in countering such position, accusing India and Afghanistan of making constant attempts of de-stabilising Pakistan. Without mentioning about its own internal threats and strife, it went on speaking about the issues of Jammu and Kashmir. While mentioning about the rising challenges posed to international peace and security by policies adopted by some states on the use of unilateral force and coercion against other states, he affirmed that for Asia, the threat emanates from 'emerging big power friction and rising tensions in South, East and West Asia'. While stating the various menaces that pose a threat to humanity, PM Abbasi re-iterated the growing need of a strong and unified United Nations.

### **UN Reform**

Due to the presence of UN, the world has been able to save itself from global conflagration. However, the principles of the UN Charter have been progressively eroded in the new millennium. In recent years some countries have displayed a growing proclivity to resort to unilateral force and intervention against other States. Rising tensions in South, East and West Asia, Middle East (involving Syria and Yemen and the threat of Daesh), Africa, Israel's illegal occupation, dispute of Jammu and Kashmir, rising xenophobia and Islamophobia, the ethnic cleansing of Rohingyas challenges the collective conscience of nations. He stated that a powerful UN is the need of the day, to provide the parameters, processes and platforms for global cooperation that is essential to address the wide ranging challenges to peace, security, and

development and supports the efforts of revitalizing the United Nations' capabilities in Peace and Security, Development and Management. Pakistan also remain committed to reform that transforms the Security Council into a more representative, democratic and accountable body rather than an expanded club of the powerful and the privileged. The PM Abbasi recalled Pakistan's role in UN in fighting for decolonization, development, trade, international law, human rights, refugees, peacekeeping, security, disarmament and the United Nations' budget and management., along with being one of the world's top troop contributors to UNPKF.

### **Issue of Jammu and Kashmir and India**

PM Abbasi tried to portray a picture where India continuously overlooks the writs of the UN with regard to Jammu and Kashmir. Trying to legitimise militancy in Jammu and Kashmir, PM Abbasi criticised the manner in which Indian law enforcement agencies have used force (including use of pellet guns) to counter such militancy and law enforcement problems. He stated that India continuously violates the ceasefire along the LoC and plans to go ahead with a 'limited war' against Pakistan, which Pakistan will give a befitting reply to. The international community should intervene for preventing it from happening. He stated that Pakistan remains open to resuming a comprehensive dialogue with India to address all outstanding issues, especially Kashmir and discuss measures to maintain peace and security. He stated that "this dialogue must be accompanied by an end to India's campaign of subversion and state sponsored terrorism against Pakistan, including from across our western border". He however did not mention about the role of Pakistan and its role in the promotion of cross border terrorism.

### **Afghanistan**

He squarely blamed Afghanistan's political instability in the last four decades, as one of the main reasons for the constant flow of extremists and terrorists, guns and drugs as well as an influx of millions of refugees from Afghanistan to Pakistan. He stressed that peace cannot be achieved in Afghanistan through military force and Pakistan cannot be a scapegoat in hiding the failures of others. He mentioned that Taliban "safe havens" are located not in Pakistan but in the large tracts of territory controlled by the Taliban in Afghanistan. He stated that he was not ready to allow Pakistani soil be used for fighting the Afghan war as Pakistan already has suffered a lot through militancy and terrorism. He asserted that the most realistic and important goal should be employ a concerted action to eliminate the presence of Da'esh and their affiliates from Afghanistan.

### **Terrorism and Pakistan**

Countering the recent allegations made against Pakistan by the US President, PM Abbasi stated that it was through Pakistan and its counter terrorist efforts, that one was able to successfully wage a war on Al Qaeda and terrorism. But by taking war to the terrorists, Pakistan paid a heavy price. Including thousands of lives being lost, PM Abbasi stated that for terrorism Pakistan had economic losses of more than \$120bn. Over 27,000 Pakistanis including 6,500 military and law enforcement personnel have been martyred by terrorists. 50,000 Pakistani nationals have been injured, including 15,000 army personnel. He stated that the international community had failed to address the issue of state sponsoring terrorism, and to eradicate terrorism, one should look into the factors of foreign intervention, oppression and injustice. The Pakistani Prime Minister tried justifying it's over militarization and maintenance of nuclear weapons citing the only reason of India. He asserted that its nuclear arsenal remains under effective control, he sought the global leadership to enable Pakistan to join global non-proliferation arrangements, such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group, on a non-discriminatory basis.

## **Climate Change**

PM Abbasi stated that climate change poses a new and existential threat to mankind's future. Extreme climate events are multiplying: Their consequences – flooding in Texas, landslides in Nepal and Sierra Leone, devastation in the Caribbean and Puerto Rico, disappearing Himalayan glaciers – are global and indiscriminate. As one of the most vulnerable states to climate change, Pakistan believes that it is in its collective interest to pursue and realize the goals of the Paris Agreement and build a new and greener model for growth and development.

## **Belt and Road Initiative and CPEC**

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals represent the most ambitious development agenda in history. The development challenge has become more imposing due to the combined constraints of climate change, rising protectionism, fraying international cooperation and proliferation conflicts. The vision of shared growth – spelt out in Chinese President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road initiative – offers a solid path to prosperity and a model of South-South cooperation worthy of emulation. Pakistan's economy has recorded a remarkable revival in the past four years. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will further contribute to our economic upsurge. This will expand exponentially as the Pakistan-China partnership extends beyond energy and transportation to many other sectors. Pakistan's integration into the Eurasian Belt and Road network will provide a firm foundation for Pakistan's rapid economic development.

## **Declarations Countering other Speeches**

On countering the various speeches delivered by the President of Afghanistan, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh and the External Affairs Minister of India by using the option of right to reply, the Pakistani representative to the UNGA reiterated that Pakistan would not allow India to establish its hegemony in the region. It also asked Afghanistan to put its house in order before accusing Pakistan on terrorism, and called on Bangladesh to abstain from giving a malafide picture of Pakistan's role in the liberation movement of Bangladesh, emphasizing that the issues of 1971 had been agreed and settled.

In a second right of reply, without mentioning anything about the illegality of the Pakistani occupation in Kashmir, it challenged Jammu and Kashmir to be an integral part of India, and called the territory disputed.

In a third right of reply on September 25<sup>th</sup>, the Pakistani representative again alleged India's actions in Jammu and Kashmir, again accusing India of being a hegemon.

## **Sri Lanka**

The President of Sri Lanka while addressing the UN said that the theme of the Assembly “Focusing on people: striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet” is timely. The focus of his address was on initiatives taken by him after coming to power in 2015 January to bring in transparency and promotion of democracy and how these initiatives are examples to both national politics in Sri Lanka as well as to international politics. He cited few examples such as transfer of powers of Executive Presidency to Parliament and removal from office those political groups that wield extreme, excessive power and autocratic governance. He said that Sri Lanka is successful after he assumed office, in restoring freedom of the people, in protecting human rights and in nurturing fundamental rights.

He mentioned that in line with the UN's goal of eradication of poverty, Sri Lanka named the year 2017 as the "Year for Alleviation of Poverty" and initiated development projects to strengthen domestic economy such as "vision 2015" and "Grama Shakthi".

The President said that, Sri Lanka succeeded in defeating the separatist movement in the country and his government is looking towards a forward journey to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He emphasized that, conservation of environment is important and climate change can be tackled through implementation of Paris Agreement.

His address mentioned about the steps taken by Sri Lanka to protect children, women's rights and steps to combat drug abuse at the national level. In this context he said that, in the new constitutional amendments the government included provisions to ensure 25% of the candidates at elections should comprise women. For the eradication of drug abuse, he suggested that the UN can "explore the possibility of reaching an international plan of action through consensus".

### ***On Post War Challenges***

He said that Sri Lanka faced two main challenges after the war ended in 2009. One is the severe debt burden and the other is the implementation of Human Rights Council resolutions pertaining to allegations of violations of human rights. To address debt burden he said, the Sri Lankan government has taken steps to establish target oriented measures, including the debt burden. He emphasised that, Sri Lanka is firmly committed to strengthen national reconciliation in a holistic manner through strengthening of the domestic economy; rule of law and righteousness.

### **Sri Lanka's expectations from the UN**

President of Sri Lanka emphasised that, the country is looking forward to receive greater support from the UN in nation building process as Sri Lanka is a member of the UN for the past 62 years.

He sought the support of United Nations and international community to address allegations of human rights and to implement solutions. He also emphasised that, protecting the independence and sovereignty of Sri Lanka is the priority of his government and quick solutions to problems faced by the country as expected by some cannot be possible.

He urged the UN to assist in the journey under taken by Sri Lanka to ensure non-recurrence of conflict and to forge unity and friendship among all communities.

### **Conclusion**

The address by the President mainly focused on initiatives taken by his government to achieve reconciliation as well as UN SDGs.

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*Disclaimer: The views expressed are that of the Researcher and not of the Council.*