

STATEMENT BY H. E. MR GEORGE TALBOT, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA, IN THE OPEN DEBATE OF THE UNITED
NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL MONDAY FEBRUARY 15, 2016, UNITED NATION'S
HEADQUARTERS

Mr President, Guyana greets you as a neighbour and congratulates Venezuela on exercising the Presidency of the Council for this month of February.

We thank you for convening this 'open debate' and for the theme (*Maintenance of international peace and security: respect for the principles and purposes of the UN Charter.*), which calls our attention in the context of the maintenance of international peace and security to the importance of respect for the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, a respect too often observed in the breach despite professions to the contrary. We also thank the United Nations Secretary-General for his insightful briefing this morning.

For us, as a small developing state, the current theme permeates our very existence both as the credo of our foreign policy and the standard which we expect others to observe in their conduct toward us.

The enduring relevance and validity of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter cannot be overstated. They point to the continuing need for collective effort and multilateral action in maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations, achieving international cooperation in solving global problems, and to the role of the UN in harmonising our several actions to these ends.

Respect for sovereign equality, sovereignty and territorial integrity, the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means, refraining from the threat or use of force in international relations, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, and fulfilment of the obligations assumed by states under the Charter, are among the cardinal underpinnings of the international order of today. They afford to all states, in particular the small and vulnerable, the prospect of protection in the face of a diverse

array of threats of increasing complexity, including climate change, the vagaries of transnational criminal networks, the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons and drugs, the spread of disease and the scourge of terrorism.

The faithful adherence by all to the purposes and principles of the Charter is essential to effectively promoting peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights in our world. It is incumbent on this Council, charged with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and by extension its members, to be exemplary in such adherence, and to eschew conduct inimical to the pursuit of this mandate, thereby providing a basis for enduring confidence in the efficacy and legitimacy of the actions of the Council in the eyes of the world community. But no member of the international community is exempt from the imperative of similar adherence. The Council and Member States all should be held accountable for compliance with the provisions of the UN Charter.

Mr President, we live in a global society that increasingly charges us to be our brother's and sister's keeper. To maintain peace, we must ensure that development is sustained and human rights respected. So, it behoves us to ensure that peace endures in our societies and that we not allow discord and violence to spill over into other societies. In these interlinked pursuits, the organs of the UN – the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the Security Council in particular – must work in cooperation and complementarity, as should Member States. And we should not discount the important role that the Secretary-General can play in upholding respect for the values of the Organisation through the exercise of his good offices.

We do well to be constantly minded also that the Charter is but a framework of values to be actualized by the actions countries take, or decline to take, in relation to it. It is the cornerstone of the rule of international law, the promotion of which is integral to the promotion of 'respect for the principles and purposes of the UN Charter'.

In that regard, the International Court of Justice, set up as one of the pillars of the internationalist system in 1945, has a significant role to play in contributing to the

respect for Charter precepts, affording recourse to the peaceful settlement of disputes and controversies where they exist, and facilitating the peace of the civilised.

Similarly, on the foundation of the regulatory framework of the Charter, the world has built monumental legal framework as complementary instruments, further codifying the rights and responsibilities of states in keeping with Charter principles. One such, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea – *The Constitution of the Oceans* – is one of the great achievements of the United Nations – subscribed to by the vast majority of the world's nations. The Convention, including the International Tribunal established thereunder, has made and continues to make an important contribution to international cooperation, dispute resolution and peace.

In this connection, Mr President, Guyana calls attention to the importance of respect for the sanctity of treaties without which the world falls apart.

In conclusion, Mr President, my country, as one of the smallest countries of our Hemisphere, looks to the United Nations for protection from all who would do us harm or in any way threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity with which we have been endowed. The Charter is not for big countries only; it is for small ones like mine. Its principles and purposes are not only for the rich and powerful; but for the poor and the powerless; it is the weak who need it most and whose adherence to it is often truest.

Mr President, I thank for this opportunity.