Mr. President,

I am privileged to address the General Assembly today. Allow me to begin by congratulating you on assuming the Presidency of the 67th General Assembly.

The Secretary-General’s annual Report on the Work of the Organization covers the wide spectrum of issues that inform the activities of the United Nations.

It underscores the global and interdependent nature of the challenges we face. It shines a spotlight on the unfinished agenda of development and reform. It points to the turbulent times we live in. It reinforces our conviction that the need of the hour is genuine multilateralism.

The socio-political upheaval in West Asia and North Africa since last year has unleashed profound change and transition that the region is still coming to terms with. India is very concerned at the escalating situation in Syria. We support UN efforts to find a solution to the crisis through dialogue and an inclusive, Syrian-led political process.

It is a matter of regret that the question of Palestine remains unresolved and we support their request for an enhanced status at the United Nations. India firmly supports the aspirations of the Palestinian people to achieve a sovereign, independent, viable and united state of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, living within secure and recognized borders, side by side and at peace with Israel.
Mr. President,

Even as we approach the finish line of 2015 for the Millennium Development Goals, there is already haste to look at the post-2015 agenda.

The quest for poverty eradication and sustainable development remain as salient as ever. Significant roadblocks still stand in the way of food and energy security, health and education for much of the developing world.

Countries are only tentatively emerging from the shadow of the worst economic and financial crisis since the Great Depression. The magnitude of the challenge is driven home by the fact that more than a billion people worldwide continue to languish in extreme poverty and hunger.

One thing abundantly clear is that unmet development priorities must be well integrated in the new post-2015 framework. The RIO+20 Conference handed us a robust agenda on sustainable development. We must now train our energy on the best way to implement it in an inter-governmental setting.

As we embark on a process of framing Sustainable Development Goals, crucial issues such as that of resource mobilization, be it ODA, technology transfer, trade or FDI, must find appropriate priority and be enshrined in the principles of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) and equity.

On Climate Change, India will work with others to design a comprehensive, equitable and balanced outcome at the upcoming 18th Conference of Parties at Doha, Qatar.

We ourselves are currently hosting the 11th Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Our expectation is that all Parties will work for a strong development oriented outcome and for early implementation of the Nagoya Protocol to ensure equitable sharing of the benefits of biodiversity.

In so far as our development partnership initiatives go, we are resolved to carry forward and expand our multi-faceted and vibrant cooperation with Africa, including through the framework of the India-Africa Forum Summit.

Similarly, we will continue to build on our commitments for enhanced cooperation with the Least Developed Countries, the Landlocked Developing Countries, and the Small Island Developing States within the rubric of South-South Cooperation.

Mr. President,

The international community has long acknowledged the ever present and pervasive threat posed by terrorism. No country, city or region is immune from this global scourge.
And yet, regretfully, we have failed ourselves by continuing to procrastinate on concluding the Comprehensive Convention against International Terrorism. It is high time that member-states summoned the necessary political will to agree on the CCIT as a sound legal framework for the fight against terrorism.

We need concerted global action. Such action should be predicated on ‘zero tolerance’ towards terrorism and aimed at systematically dismantling the infrastructure of terrorism.

Mr. President,

India has a proud and time-tested association with UN peacekeeping dating back to its very inception. We have contributed over 130,000 personnel so far to this flagship endeavour of the United Nations.

As peacekeeping moves forward, we must remain mindful of the challenges of operating in increasingly complex environments. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring that complex mandates are matched by adequate resources so as to get the job done safely and effectively. In this process, it is of utmost importance that there is real, effective, and continuous consultation with Troop-Contributing Countries in framing and implementing mandates.

It is also not lost on us that to be enduringly successful, peacekeeping requires to be seamlessly dovetailed with peace-building efforts. The UN needs to pay better attention to evolving a cogent and coherent peace-building framework that takes into account the capacities at hand and the complexities on the ground.

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Mr. President,

One final word on the Secretary-General’s internal reform efforts. We have taken note of the initiatives to modernize and reform the Secretariat, including through large-scale business transformation projects such as the new enterprise resource planning system (Umoja), International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and the Capital Master Plan. While each involves considerable investment, we see them as important drivers in modernising the UN.

Nevertheless, it is our deep-rooted conviction that the relevance of the United Nations ultimately hinges on more fundamental reform of its governance architecture that is frozen in another era that perpetuates the rights of the haves of the mid-1940s.

It is only through such governance reform that the UN can truly invigorate action on issues of pressing global concern, be it peace and security, climate change, development, or human rights.
Let me therefore conclude, Mr. President, by raising something that inexplicably does not find mention in the Secretary-General’s report. That is, the important issue of Security Council reform where intergovernmental negotiations have seen much movement and a clear affirmation by an overwhelming majority of the member-states for expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories.

We regard the omission of the progress made in the intergovernmental negotiations on the issue as a significant drawback of the Secretary-General’s report. We further hope to see it corrected in future reports.

In terms of the process itself, India looks forward to capitalizing on the momentum so far to see real, fruitful and productive negotiations in the current session of the General Assembly on this important reform.

I thank you.