



UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

# POPE FRANCIS AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

By Nwanka Ubani

**P**ope Francis' visit to the United Nations on September 25, 2015 was the fifth time a Pope would be at the UN, with four Previous visits by his predecessors - Pope Paul VI (1965), Pope John Paul II (1979 and 1995) and Pope Benedict XVI (2008). With world leaders seated, waiting eagerly for the Papal address, the Pope was escorted into the General Assembly hall by the president of the 70<sup>th</sup> Session and the Secretary-General.

Commencing his address, Pope Francis acknowledged the role of Member States in getting the organization

to where it is presently. "The story of the organized community of States represented by the United Nations, which is now celebrating its seventieth anniversary, is one of significant shared successes in a time of unusually rapid change". He went on to mention a few of the achievements of the UN since it came into existence in 1945 and they include; "the codification and development of international law, the establishment of international standards of human rights, improvements in humanitarian law, the settling of many conflicts, peacekeeping operations and reconciliations, and any

number of other achievements in every area of international activity and endeavor."

All of these, said His Holiness, are "lights that can banish the darkness of the disorder that results from unrestrained ambitions and collective selfishness". He acceded that though some unresolved problems still exist, without the above international actions, "humankind could not have survived the unchecked exploitation of its own potential." Every one of the progress he continued, paves way for reaching the model of unity and a means to truly getting

to that desired goal.

"That is why I would like to pay homage to all the men and women who have served humankind with loyalty and self-sacrifice in the past 70 years. I would especially like to recall today those who have given their lives for peace and reconciliation among peoples, from Dag Hammarskjöld to the many United Nations officials at every level who have fallen in the course of humanitarian missions and those of peace and reconciliation".

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