



General Assembly

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Official Records

President: Ms. Espinosa Garcés. (Ecuador)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 7 (continued)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now draw the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 7 of its resolution 73/127, of 12 December 2018, adopted under agenda item 15, entitled “Culture of peace”, in which the President of the General Assembly is invited to organize, on 24 April 2019, a one-day high-level plenary meeting of the Assembly to commemorate and promote the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace.

The General Assembly will recall that, at its fifty-first plenary meeting, on 12 December 2018, it concluded its consideration of agenda item 15. In order for the Assembly to proceed with the high-level plenary meeting, it will be necessary to reopen the consideration of agenda item 15.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen its consideration of agenda item 15 and to proceed immediately with a high-level plenary meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace?

It was so decided (decision 73/504 B).

Commemorative meeting on the occasion of the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace

Agenda item 15 (continued)

Culture of peace

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I feel truly privileged to preside over the first commemoration of the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace. I want to acknowledge the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries as well as all the Member States that promoted and supported the declaration of this International Day. The unprecedented message from all the principal organs of the United Nations that we heard in the presentation preceding this meeting coincides perfectly with our determination to preserve and strengthen multilateralism.

Today I will address three essential points.

First, I will address global issues and the challenges of multilateralism. In this very Assembly, we have heard that multilateralism is being questioned and that we are facing a deficit of confidence in institutions in general, and in the United Nations in particular. That is because we live in an increasingly polarized and fragmented world, with more conflicts and problems to resolve, from hunger to humanitarian crises, from climate change to terrorism. This coincides with the resurgence of extreme forms of nationalism that call into question the validity and very existence of a rules-based international order.

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There are today a multiplicity of challenges of a supranational and multidimensional nature. We know, for example, that no country can escape the devastating effects of climate change, which poses an existential threat to humankind and the planet. Six hundred and fifty million people live in extreme poverty, while more than 821 million suffer from hunger. In addition, women in all countries, without exception, continue to suffer from multiple forms of discrimination and violence just because they are women.

Furthermore, geopolitical tensions and conflicts have not disappeared. Wars continue to take the lives of innocent people — women, girls and boys. Terrorism persists, without respecting borders, nationalities, age or faith; nothing justifies it. On the subject of this scourge, I wish to reiterate once again my sorrow and solidarity with the Government and the people of Sri Lanka and with the victims of the atrocious terrorist attacks that took place on Easter. I strongly condemn those events. I dedicate this International Day and our efforts to those and all victims of violence.

We cannot restore confidence in multilateralism if we exclude those for whom we work, those who, together with us, the States, can provide solutions and make commitments. Our peoples yearn for inclusive global governance. That is why bringing the United Nations closer to people and people closer to the United Nations has been a constant priority of my presidency. To do that, we must learn to communicate better for people outside this building, which brings me to my second point.

I want to highlight the legacy of multilateralism and diplomacy for peace for our peoples and nations. The Organization has given birth to fundamental agreements of universal vocation that have made the world a safer, healthier and fairer place with greater opportunities for all. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the seventieth anniversary of which we celebrated last December, emerged from the General Assembly, as did the conventions, agreements and declarations that refer to peace, human rights and development, including, of course, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Over the past seven decades, the United Nations has been a central force in the peaceful resolution of conflicts and controversies. The United Nations has saved millions of lives. There is no region in which the United Nations has not helped build peace. Its peacekeeping missions work within harsh

environments, while protecting the civilian population and those most vulnerable. The staff deployed in such missions are helping foster peace and reconciliation on a daily basis. The United Nations has incontrovertibly transformed the fate of humankind.

As the main platform for dialogue and agreements among sovereign States, the United Nations has had a meaningful impact on the health, security, well-being and dignity of millions of people. The ceaseless search to reach agreements and foster cooperation, while respecting the diversity and the differences among Member States, is at the heart of our daily work. With the adoption of resolution 73/127, the General Assembly reaffirmed our peoples' faith in the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and reiterated the relevance of multilateralism and international law to further the shared goal of achieving lasting and sustainable peace through diplomacy.

Multilateralism is not only the most effective, but also the sole way possible to achieve and maintain peace and sustainable development. We must end the misconception that multilateralism undermines the sovereignty of States, when, in fact, to the contrary, it strengthens it. As I always say in carrying out my functions, within and outside the Organization, and I say it again today: no country, no matter how powerful, can alone solve the challenges facing us. Most world leaders share that view; they expressed it at the general debate in September 2018 when they called for strengthening a rules-based international system and our Organization. That same support for multilateral diplomacy was also manifest in the informal meeting held among seven former Presidents of the General Assembly that I convened in February. Clearly, we have achieved much, but the road that lies before us remains long.

Thirdly, I refer to the need to revitalize the Organization and build trust in multilateralism, in the name of which I am calling for action. We can and must bring about a stronger and more effective Organization. From this day forward, every year, today's date — 24 April — will provide us with an opportunity to assess the contribution of the Organization to humankind. In order to always achieve better results, it is key to be able to rely upon a more effective, transparent and flexible Organization that genuinely responds to the aspirations of the peoples. We must also achieve a fairer and more equitable

international order. Redoubling efforts to transform our commitments into reality is crucial, including in eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, ensuring health care and education for all persons, protecting the environment and ensuring peace. It is also imperative to first reach those who are most vulnerable and excluded and remain steeped in mistrust, fear and poverty. We must ensure that the United Nations will be relevant for all people.

In order to expand the scope of our dialogue, I convened an informal policy forum yesterday on the importance of multilateralism. The exchange was especially meaningful, but one conclusion stands out in particular for me. If we achieve tangible progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, that concrete reality will meaningfully improve every individual life of the people on the ground and will be more powerful than any speech we make in this Hall.

Let us show the courage and commitment to change and improve our working methods with regard not only to the quality of the draft resolutions we adopt, but also to their implementation. Let us show the courage to realize and implement the reforms upon which we agree. Let us ensure that the Organization and all its bodies function in unison like the gears of a chronometer. Let us support the revitalization process of the most democratic and representative body — the General Assembly. Let us take the most appropriate measures to modernize its structures and the daily work of multilateral diplomacy.

We will celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations in just two years' time, which will provide a unique opportunity to reinforce the foundational principles of the Organization, such as achieving a world free of wars and hunger and with less suffering, in which all peoples are free and enjoy the same development opportunities and level of well-being.

We have the unique opportunity to historically tip the scales on the side of justice. The response to the dilemmas facing us lies with increased multilateralism and cooperation. The response to resolving mistrust lies in increased effectiveness and transparency. The response to violence lies in an increase in diplomacy and dialogue. The response to unilateralism lies in heightened solidarity and taking greater collective action.

Lastly, as President of the General Assembly, I assure everyone that this mission will continue to be at the core of my work to bring about increased levels of dialogue, cooperation, consensus and action — and action above all — so as to ensure the achievement of a more peaceful, inclusive, less unequal and more humane world, of which we have been dreaming for 73 years and which we can still realize.

In accordance with the provisions of rule 70 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I now give the floor to Ms. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Chef de Cabinet of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, to make a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General.

Ms. Ribeiro Viotti: It is a pleasure for me to join members for this important observance, proclaimed in December 2018 by the General Assembly. This is a welcome addition to the United Nations calendar but, of course, the fact that it was felt that such a day was necessary speaks loudly about the current state of our common project of international cooperation. It is therefore timely to reflect on multilateralism as we continue our efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, prepare for a series of high-level events in September and look towards next year's observance of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations.

In that spirit, I convey warm greetings from Secretary-General António Guterres, and I am pleased to deliver the following message on his behalf.

“This first observance of the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace underscores the value of international cooperation for the common good. For nearly 75 years, the multilateral arrangements established after the Second World War have saved lives, expanded economic and social progress, upheld human rights and, not least, helped to prevent a third descent into global conflagration. From the articulation of international law to the advancement of gender equality, from protecting the environment to limiting the proliferation of lethal weapons and deadly disease, multilateralism and diplomacy have a proven record of service to peoples everywhere. But such cooperation cannot be taken for granted. This new International Day comes at a time when multilateral efforts are under pressure from

unresolved conflicts, runaway climate change, widening inequalities and other threats.

“New technologies are creating diverse opportunities, but also the potential for disruptions to job markets, social cohesion and the enjoyment of our rights. We are living with a paradox — global challenges are more connected, but our responses are growing more fragmented. We are seeing an increasing deficit of trust in Governments, political establishments and international organizations, and the rising appeal of nationalist and populist voices that demonize and divide. This is very dangerous in the face of today’s challenges, for which collective action is essential.

“In this difficult context, we need to recall the urgency felt by the founders of the United Nations and reinvigorate the Organization’s tools. The principles of working together endure, but the specifics must take account of our rapidly changing world. We need stronger commitment to a rules-based order, with an effective United Nations at its centre. We need networked multilateralism, with close cooperation among international and regional organizations, including development banks. And since Governments and international organizations cannot do it alone, we need inclusive multilateralism, rooted in partnerships with the business community, civil society, parliaments, the academic and philanthropic communities and other stakeholders, in particular young people.

“But it is not enough to proclaim the virtue of multilateralism; we must prove its added value. Nor is it acceptable to dismiss the doubters; we must show that multilateralism can respond to global anxieties and deliver a fair globalization that lifts all. The Charter of the United Nations points the way, with its vision of people and countries living as good neighbours, defending universal values and recognizing our common future. Strengthening multilateralism means strengthening our commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and building a safer, more just world for future generations. That commitment is needed now more than ever — from the United Nations and from leaders and citizens everywhere.”

That ends the Secretary-General’s message. He and I look forward to continuing to work with the

members of the Assembly towards the goals we share and hold dear.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Chef de Cabinet for her statement.

Before we proceed, I would like to appeal to all speakers to make their interventions brief and concise, in order to make maximum use of the limited time we have for this high-level meeting. To enable everyone on the list of speakers to be heard, statements in plenary meetings should be limited to three minutes when speaking in the national capacity and five minutes when speaking on behalf of a group, as announced in my letter dated 26 March 2019.

As members will recall, in its resolution 71/323, of 8 September 2017, the General Assembly called for strict adherence by each speaker to the time limits in the Assembly, in particular during the high-level meetings. Participants with longer statements are encouraged to read out a shorter version of their text and to submit their full statements to the Secretariat for posting on the PaperSmart portal.

Also in accordance with resolution 71/323, the “all protocol observed” principle is recommended whereby participants are encouraged to refrain from the listing of standard protocol expressions during their statements. Bearing in mind the time limit, I would like to appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at a reasonable pace so that interpretation into the six official United Nations languages can be provided properly.

I appeal for the cooperation of all speakers in observing the time limits for statements, so that the nearly 80 speakers inscribed on the list can be heard in a timely manner.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jorge Arreaza, Minister of the People’s Power for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, who will speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Mr. Arreaza (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for me to be able to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and to say that we have been successful. I say this to the President and to the Secretariat team. We now have a day for celebrating multilateralism and diplomacy for peace, which is essential, particularly now.

Allow me now to read out the statement on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

There are 120 member States that make up the Non-Aligned Movement. Our States and their people address the General Assembly at this historic high-level meeting to celebrate and commemorate the very first International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace. We thank the President for convening this meeting and for her continued efforts throughout her mandate to make the United Nations relevant once again to all peoples, which necessarily means ensuring that we have a strong and efficient multilateralism to collectively address the many and complex issues facing the world today.

We also welcome Ms. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General, and other senior representatives to the Hall today.

The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has long believed that there is an urgent need to promote, defend and strengthen multilateralism and multilateral decision-making processes through strict adherence to the purposes and principles enshrined in the sacred Charter of the United Nations. That is why, on 26 September, after having held a meeting on the margins of the high-level segment of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session, and having engaged in frank discussions on the need to defend the purposes and principles of the Charter, the ministers of the States members of the Movement unanimously adopted a political declaration in which we decided to begin consultations with the full membership of the Organization to establish this important International Day, which we commemorate today following the adoption of resolution 73/127, which we submitted and was subsequently adopted on 12 December. That is why I repeat that we have been successful.

The International Day that we celebrate today is therefore a way to promote the values of our Organization, to reaffirm the faith of our peoples in the validity of the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter, to reaffirm the importance and validity of multilateralism and international law and to advance towards the common goal of a lasting and sustained peace through diplomacy.

Today we live in a world that faces multiple, complex and emerging threats and challenges to international peace and security, which we believe must certainly be addressed jointly as responsible members of the

international community and through multilateralism, within the framework of being able to make progress together. In international relations, double standards cannot be applied to topics as important as weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons, terrorism, climate change, and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. It is in these areas that multilateralism must become entrenched. We must work together in a coordinated fashion to reach the sacred goals that humankind requires in today's world.

In that context, the States members of the Movement take this opportunity to reiterate their deep concern and firm opposition to the growing tendency to resort to unilateralism, arbitrariness and unilaterally imposed measures, which undermine the Charter of the United Nations, and international law as a whole, including the use and threat of use of force, as well as the use of pressure and unilateral coercive measures as a mechanism to achieve national political objectives.

We therefore reiterate our determination to continue working towards the establishment of a multipolar world, through the strengthening of multilateralism and multilateral diplomacy, and through the United Nations and multilateral processes, considering these to be the most appropriate frameworks to preserve the interests of our countries and to resolve, through dialogue and cooperation, the problems that affect humankind. International law, diplomacy and multilateralism are the pillars through which and upon which we must effect the great changes that humankind needs.

In conclusion, today, as we commemorate the sixty-fourth anniversary of the historic Bandung Conference, which laid the foundations for the establishment of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, we call on the members of the international community, from the very edifice of multilateralism and from this emblematic Hall of the General Assembly, to join the South in our efforts to bring about the realization of the Organization's three pillars: peace, sustainable development and human rights. Let us become champions of effective multilateralism and diplomacy for peace in order to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

Allow me now to add some brief comments in my national capacity.

Venezuela, as members are aware, is a country that believes in the need for a multi-centric world in which there is a balance of powers and no country seeks to dominate another. We firmly believe in multilateralism,

tolerance and respect for the diversity of political, economic, social and cultural systems, which must interact and co-exist in the world. We therefore highlight the role of the United Nations as the highest expression of multilateralism, which, as set forth in the Preamble to its founding Charter, brings together all the peoples of the United Nations. It is not a club of friends, but a forum for all, where the broad diversity of humankind is represented in its plurality.

That is why we must reaffirm on this occasion the full validity of the basic principles of international law, all enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations — equal rights and the self-determination of peoples, abstaining from the use or threat of use of force, and non-intervention in matters that are largely within the domestic jurisdiction of States. Those principles should serve as a guide to counter the threats of those who today seek here to undermine the rights and privileges of a full Member of the Organization, such as Venezuela. The General Assembly should not allow the use of the United Nations for addressing bilateral issues, much less its instrumentalization as a tool for intervening in the internal affairs of another State in order to designate its national authorities and diplomatic representatives as illegal.

We should recall that from this sacred rostrum, from this temple of multilateralism, the President of the United States in September announced coercive and unilateral measures against my country and other countries (see A/73/PV.6). That is exclusionary. That Member State is assuming the role of eschewing multilateralism. It excludes itself from pursuing the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Two weeks ago in the Security Council (see S/PV.8506), United States Vice-President Mike Pence also decided not only to take unilateral measures in the name of his Government so as to impose embargoes, blockades and sieges to cause the suffering of nations, but to also impose a United States dictatorship over the United Nations to shamelessly order Governments of Member States to exclude or not recognize the rights of full-fledged Member States, such as Venezuela. That is also exclusionary and unacceptable.

Multilateralism cannot be made to bend in the face of pressure, extortion and the flouting of the very Charter of the United Nations from within. We express our solidarity with countries like Cuba, which

is once again being subjected to earlier laws that served to impose and strengthen the embargo people have borne for over 60 years. We express our solidarity with countries like Iran, which is being crippled by unilateral, illegal, arbitrary measures that punish the nation and subjugate the will of its Government and the majority of its people.

We conclude our statement by calling on the General Assembly to reaffirm, with one voice, the meaning, purpose and reason behind our Organization. To that end, it is essential to protect the legal validity of the rights of all Member States of this forum. Let us defend the multilateral spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. Let us defend what we call diplomacy for peace. President Nicolás Maduro has nurtured Bolivarian diplomacy for peace, the brainchild of Commander Hugo Chavez.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Javad Zarif, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran): Iran has long advocated multilateralism and diplomacy for peace. I have come here today to make the case that such collective diplomatic efforts are no longer the prudent option, but rather the only solution. If there was ever a unipolar moment in international politics, it is definitively gone. All our challenges, from the environment to security, are global in nature and scope. Any solution, therefore, must be global and multilateral. My country has consistently shown its commitment to multilateralism as the tenet of a robust foreign policy. A brief review of our diplomatic engagements just these past few weeks makes that abundantly clear.

To our west, speakers of parliament of Iraq's neighbours gathered in Baghdad last weekend to explore a new, inclusive approach to multilateral regional engagement, while last week I led a delegation to Damascus and Ankara to further our cooperation with Syria, Turkey and Russia on the multilateral Astana track.

To our east, our new special envoy to Afghanistan is engaged in a regional multilateral approach to peace and stability, while two days ago, we hosted Pakistan's Prime Minister for talks on a multilateral approach to regional stability and fighting terrorism.

To our north, senior officials of Caspian Sea littoral States gathered last week to operationalize the historic

multilateral Convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea, which we concluded in 2018, after some 22 years of negotiations. Meanwhile, we are making progress on economic integration, including through the multilateral Eurasian Economic Union.

To our south, we facilitated the Stockholm process on Yemen and have also proposed a regional dialogue forum in the Persian Gulf as an inclusive multilateral approach to cooperation and dispute settlement.

And globally, 14 reports from the International Atomic Energy Agency validate our commitment to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a multilateral accord that is enshrined in Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). We have kept our word in spite of the failure of the Western participants in the JCPOA to provide the promised economic dividends to our people following the unlawful, unilateral United States withdrawal.

I do not need to list the extensive, unlawful unilateralist policies of the United States Administration towards my country, our region and the rest of the world, as we have heard from the Foreign Minister of Venezuela, but here is just a glimpse: extraterritorial imposition of domestic legislation; the flouting of international accords and the rejection of International Court of Justice orders; the arbitrary designation of the armed forces of a sovereign State as a terrorist organization; the breeding of radicalism through reckless and pointless unilateral forever wars; the unilateral shielding of terror-sponsoring clients from their war crimes; and unilateral recognition of illegal and racist annexations. As if that lawlessness were not enough, the United States is also punishing those who seek to fulfil their multilateral obligations under Security Council resolution 2231 (2016), which calls for the normalization of economic relations with Iran. That is the first time in the history of the United Nations that a permanent member of the Security Council has punished countries for observing a Security Council resolution. It is unheard of.

To defend multilateralism, it is imperative to deny the United States any perceived benefit from its unlawful unilateralism and to forcefully reject any pressure it brings to bear on others to violate international law, Security Council resolutions and multilateralism in general. In rejecting unilateralism, we all have a responsibility to collectively hold any

Government, however powerful, accountable for the consequences of its destructive unilateralism.

Ms. Navarro (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin by thanking you, Madam President, on behalf of Panama, for organizing this first high-level commemorative meeting on the occasion of the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, which is in itself the very essence of the United Nations and embodies the cross-cutting nature of the pillars that guide the work of our Organization: sustainable development, peace and security, and human rights.

As a country of dialogue and consensus, Panama strongly supports the role of the United Nations as the embodiment of multilateralism. As a founding country of the Organization, Panama has from the outset embraced the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We saw in multilateralism the mechanism par excellence for effectively addressing the international agenda and the appropriate framework for cooperation to promote a peaceful order that is more just and fair for all.

In that regard, the time is right to reaffirm Panama's commitment to multilateralism and those principles at a particularly significant juncture in which collective efforts to address the global agenda are not only necessary, but crucial. Multilateralism presents various challenges, and they are increasingly complex, but we need to be optimistic. The achievements of the Organization in the past five years reaffirm the purposes and principles of the United Nations. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the Paris Agreement on Climate Change; the Addis Ababa Action Agenda; the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration; the Global Compact on Refugees; the call for action of the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14; the joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem; the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons; and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons are all important efforts that show that the multilateral system, which is based on our collective will, is the only way forward.

As I mentioned earlier, we are aware of the complexity of the global context and the growing threats posed by conflicts in different regions, which threaten international peace and security. Terrorism,

extremism, xenophobia, drug trafficking, and humanitarian crises, including massive migrations, climate change and the violation of human rights test the effectiveness of the United Nations, and therefore demand our determination and political will to address them, while always prioritizing a culture of peace. However, probably the greatest challenge facing multilateralism today is ensuring respect for and recognition of the equality of States, even when our communities are diverse and heterogeneous. Through multilateral efforts, no unilateral approach can take precedence over the collective good.

In 2015, when we adopted the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by consensus, we committed ourselves to an agreement that would transform our world and that will be possible only with renewed multilateralism, based on principles that promote sustainability along social, economic and environmental lines.

The challenge posed by the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals also requires new cooperation frameworks. Strengthening multilateralism also requires greater space for participation by developing countries, in particular in global governance. Furthermore, bearing in mind the value of active participation by women and young people in all aspects of the global agenda, we must redouble our efforts to expand the constructive role that women and young people can and must play, and we must maintain a comprehensive and ongoing commitment to empowerment.

The Organization is called on to be a builder of peace. With that vision, we must urgently move from dialogue to action. We need to concentrate on what unites us and not on what separates us. An initial road map has been proposed for next September, in which the climate, the SDGs, financing for development and universal health coverage demand that we start from and build on a diplomacy of dialogue and utmost political commitment. The United Nations will undoubtedly be as capable and relevant to people as States want it to be.

Panama, as the host country of multiple United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, will continue to support all those efforts and the Secretary-General's resolute commitment to the renewal of this house of multilateralism, so that the Organization can be more effective and efficient.

I conclude by renewing Panama's commitment to a stronger multilateral system based on the principles that led to the founding of the United Nations.

Mr. Khaleel (Maldives): At the outset, I would like to express my Government's condemnation of the terrorist bomb attacks in Sri Lanka last Sunday, which killed more than 350 innocent people and injured many more. The Maldives, as one of the closest neighbours of Sri Lanka, will always stand shoulder to shoulder with the Government and the friendly people of Sri Lanka. In fact, before coming to New York, I visited Colombo as the Special Envoy of President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih and assured the Government of Sri Lanka of our solidarity during this critical time of national emergency and distress.

Let me congratulate you, Madam President, on convening this important meeting to mark the first International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace.

There is no doubt that we are marking this day at a very opportune moment. Never before has multilateralism come under the immense pressure we are witnessing now. The rise of unilateral ultranationalism and racial and religious prejudices is being harnessed by populist authoritarianism. Those ideologies seek to suppress the principles upon which the United Nations was founded and thrived for the last seven decades.

The very first foreign policy decision that the Maldives took after gaining independence in 1965 was to join the United Nations. We were convinced then, as we are now, that the common challenges that we face require solutions shaped at the global level. No country, no matter how big and powerful, can single-handedly stop climate change — it will require us to work together and determine the best possible way forward for humankind.

No country, on its own, can prevent or stop violent extremism and terrorism. Attacks such as the bombings in Sri Lanka require us to work collectively. In fact, almost all the key challenges require all of us to work together and achieve consensus, leaving no one and no country behind. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development shows us how.

When a country isolates itself from the global community, it becomes weaker, poorer and unable to meet the aspirations of its people. The 20-year crisis that the world witnessed from 1919 to 1939 shows that

isolationism and ultranationalism will inevitably lead to conflict and war.

Let us therefore renew our pledge to uphold and promote the values and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, to renounce prejudices of various types and take measures to prevent the spread of such dangerous ideologies and to foster the common interests of humankind.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Timo Soini, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Finland.

Mr. Soini (Finland): First of all, I would like to thank you, Madam President, for convening this high-level event to celebrate the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, as well as for your dedication to this important topic.

I align myself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union.

The United Nations forms the foundation of effective multilateralism and the rules-based international order. Solutions created through dialogue in which all relevant actors can take part in a meaningful way are more effective and durable than those reached by only a powerful few. The Charter of the United Nations today still represents the most important multilateral treaty for regulating the relations among States. The United Nations system as a whole has evolved into a comprehensive framework of multilateralism that covers virtually all aspects of international life, including peace, security and development. There is no better alternative to a common set of rules and universal respect for them. For smaller countries, that is self-evident. Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States is vital.

When we rely on the normative framework that the United Nations represents, it strengthens our overall security, respect for human rights, the well-being of our citizens and economic development. That is also why defending the rules-based international order has been one of my priorities as Foreign Minister. I would argue that the rules-based international order is also the best possible alternative for the great Powers. Global challenges such as climate change, cybercrime, terrorism, conflicts, humanitarian crises and migration affect us all, and no country is able to address them alone.

The norms and institutions that we have been building for decades are under increasing pressure. The role of the United Nations and other international organizations is being questioned. International treaties are being challenged and interpreted in ways that jeopardize their gains and their potential.

Nowhere is that negative trend more pronounced or more dangerous than in international arms control. Reversing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is crucial. Moreover, securing and strengthening the existing arms control architecture, which has served us so well, must be a key priority for us in the coming months and years.

The world does not stand still. We need new multilateral rules and regulations. Digitalization and artificial intelligence continue to change the world faster than we realize. To harness the opportunities and tackle the challenges those new technologies will bring, we need ever-deeper cooperation to craft new, commonly agreed rules.

To have a functioning multilateral system, we need to ensure that institutions work as effectively as possible. We should strive to make the present order more effective and more just. In that regard, I would like to commend the reforms launched by Secretary-General Guterres. A transparent, efficient and accountable United Nations is fundamental for effective multilateralism.

I would also like to stress the importance of partnerships, not only in the traditional sense — among States — but also with and among civil society, regional organizations, non-State actors and the private sector.

Finland has made a conscious choice to work for a world order based on the rule of law, not on the law of the rulers or the strongest. Human rights and equal participation for all in society have been key driving forces in our own development. International law and the rules-based international order is a foundation of our prosperity and a cornerstone of our security.

We remain fully committed to multilateralism and stand ready to work together with all present.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Rwanda, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mrs. Rugwabiza (Rwanda): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of African

States on a topic that is important to our Group. I will begin with a brief historical overview of the centrality of multilateralism and diplomacy for Africa.

We know that centuries before the colonization of Africa, diplomatic and trade delegations from Africa visited world capitals to advance trade relations and build alliances. Records show African ambassadors visiting several world courts as early as the thirteenth century, at times astonishing many of their counterparts with their mastery of various languages and cultures. Those early instances of African diplomacy, while predating the modern nation-State system, clearly show that multilateralism and diplomacy have long been essential tools with which our people have advanced and defended their interests. The African Union is rooted in the belief that multilateralism can contribute to a world that is relevant and beneficial to all peoples and that a rules-based multilateral system is ultimately essential to securing peace and prosperity for all.

In more recent times, Africa has taken significant steps towards closer, increased and better multilateral diplomacy. It is worth mentioning some of those initiatives, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area, an ambitious continental market for goods and services and the free movement of people and investments, and the African Union Peace Fund, which is a bold, fully operational initiative and a central component of African peace and security capabilities. I say all this to stress the point that multilateralism and diplomacy are the bedrock of Africa's transformation. As I have just underlined, as a group our long history has shown us the importance of multilateralism and diplomacy, and in that spirit we reaffirm our commitment to preserving the values of multilateralism and international cooperation.

Beyond our continental experience and aspirations, what we see today is that multilateralism is at a crossroads, as many have emphasized. Paradoxically, as the complexity of the issues and calls for global responses grow, we are witnessing increased attacks on the multilateral system and its institutions. Given this situation, there is no doubt that multilateralism needs to be defended by us all. The United Nations must also be strengthened to deal with complex global challenges, and there is no better forum in which to do that than here, at the centre of multilateralism. The African Group recognizes that the contemporary challenges in the international system also require a reinvigorated multilateral system. Climate change, terrorism, poverty

and inequalities are all challenges that go beyond our individual States. Isolationism and protectionism may temporarily build national legitimacy, but history has shown that they have never been a viable strategy in the long term.

(spoke in French)

I would now like to say a few words in French. The vitality and effectiveness of multilateralism depend on its capacity to enable genuine dialogue among States. In that context, multilingualism is part of the foundations of effective multilateralism. We must maintain a balance for the dignity and equality for all. Every country must have the same opportunities to take part in debates and have access to information in the official United Nations languages. Appropriate representation, both linguistic and geographic, as well as gender equality within the United Nations, are conditions for trust in the multilateral system that we have continued to create to this day. We cannot revitalize multilateralism without rooting multilingualism in the day-to-day functioning of the United Nations. The African Group is very committed to a diversity of languages and cultures.

(spoke in English)

In closing, the Group commends you, Madam President, for convening this important plenary meeting, which has given us an opportunity to reflect on the importance and benefits of multilateralism and diplomacy for peace. You may rest assured that in the African Group you have a solid ally in advancing practical solutions to strengthen multilateralism and international cooperation, including the Secretary-General's reform agenda. We owe it to all our peoples to deliver tangible results that benefit their lives.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Vale de Almeida (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 member States.

I would like to thank you, Madam President, for convening this important meeting today, but also for the informal policy forum yesterday, which I am told was a very productive session.

Let me start with two observations. The first is that these are challenging times for supporters of the rules-based international order. The second, which comes as a kind of positive side effect, is that there has never

been more attention given to the state of multilateralism than there is today. Last year's general debate showed overwhelming support not just for maintaining the multilateral system but for strengthening it further. Occasions such as this one today and tomorrow, and next year's seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations even more so, offer a huge opportunity for engaging our citizens in collectively shaping multilateralism with the United Nations as its cornerstone — a multilateralism that delivers to all to ensure that no one is being left behind.

The European Union and its 28 member States see no alternative to a functioning rules-based international order with a revitalized United Nations at its core. The European Union and the United Nations have been and will remain the champions of dialogue, cooperation and multilateral diplomacy for one simple reason, which is that the benefits clearly outweigh the costs of forging a compromise. International agreements such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Iran nuclear deal all demonstrate collective leadership, vision and ambition, and they and many others deserve our continued support.

Europe's commitment to multilateralism is derived from our values and the strong conviction that today's global challenges can only be tackled collectively. That is why we will continue to invest in a strong United Nations system based on the ideals and values of the Charter of the United Nations. Only together can we have a real impact on ensuring sustainable development, peace and security, as well as the universal promotion and protection of human rights. Only together can we live up to our commitments to sustaining peace, fighting climate change, achieving gender equality and education for all, and once again to leaving no one behind.

The upcoming climate and Sustainable Development Goals summits in September will be opportunities to turn our commitments into action. As the Secretary-General has said repeatedly, we must step up collectively if we do not want to fall short of our ambitions. That is valid both for the climate and the 2030 Agenda. The delivery on our common priorities will define our collective credibility and the credibility of this institution. An effective multilateralism needs a strong United Nations that is equipped with the tools to address current and future challenges. That is why we will continue to strongly support the Secretary-General's reform

efforts to make this Organization more efficient, more representative and more flexible, which have already borne positive results. In that context, we would also like to emphasize the importance of multilingualism, which is a core value of both the United Nations and the European Union.

That said, we should not be complacent, but should rather look ahead and put this Organization in a position to be able to adequately respond to any complex crisis or challenge that might arise in the future. The European Union and its 28 member States will continue to contribute their fair share to the Organization, as they have done in the past, so that it can continue to play its role as the backbone of the multilateral system. The amount and complexity of crises and challenges will only grow further in the future.

In conclusion, next year's seventy-fifth anniversary is a unique opportunity to showcase to our citizens, and our younger generation in particular, the benefits of multilateralism and why it remains relevant to their daily life. We must use the opportunity to engage young people from across the globe in collectively forging a multilateralism for the future. We should all cherish this Organization and multilateralism in general, not only on this International Day, but every day.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): It is significant that the United Nations has dedicated a day to reflect on the importance of multilateralism. Today is a day to recognize and reflect on the value of multilateralism. More importantly, today is a day to reaffirm and renew our commitment to multilateralism and to the rules-based multilateral system. The multilateral system as we know it is far from perfect, but it has brought peace and development for more than seven decades. All States, big and small, have benefited from and continue to benefit from the multilateral system. For small countries like Singapore, the multilateral rules-based system is critical to survival and prosperity, but it is a fallacy to think that the multilateral system is designed to benefit only small States. The larger countries, the great Powers, the super-Powers, have benefited as much from the multilateral system, which brings stability and predictability for them and their policies as much as it has for everyone else at the United Nations.

In recent months we have seen increasing anxiety and concern that the multilateral system is being tested and challenged. There has clearly been a resurgence of nationalism, isolationism and xenophobia, and a

rejection of some of the basic principles of trade and global economic integration. At the same time, it is also clear that the scale and transboundary nature of many of the challenges we face today far surpass the capacity of any one nation to manage and resolve, and that unilateralism cannot solve global challenges. Whether we are talking about climate change, pandemics, humanitarian crises, terrorism or the disruptive effects of new technologies, we need global solutions, we need international norms and rules and we need the multilateral rules-based system.

The key to managing global challenges lies in strengthening the multilateral rules-based system, not retreating from it. In a world that is interconnected and interdependent, we need stronger rules to manage inter-State relations and inter-State commerce. Agreements signed must be respected and implemented. We must strengthen international institutions, not weaken them. We must support regional cooperation based on respect for the rule of law. And we need new global norms and rules to deal with the challenges posed by artificial intelligence and cybersecurity. The fact that multilateralism is being tested is of course a challenge, but it also gives us an opportunity to mobilize support in order to defend and strengthen the system that we have painstakingly built over the past seven decades.

The United Nations is the only universal and legitimate multilateral forum available to us today. We all know that it is not perfect, but we also know that it can be adapted to become more agile and responsive. That is why we in Singapore welcome the Secretary-General's efforts to reform the United Nations and make it fit for purpose. Singapore strongly believes that the United Nations, especially a United Nations that is reformed and revitalized, can substantially improve the lives of people around the world.

In conclusion, I want to say that every country, large or small, has a responsibility to support and strengthen the multilateral system. Naturally the big Powers, the great Powers, have a special responsibility to safeguard the multilateral system and contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. However, that does not mean that other countries have no role or responsibility or influence. The smaller countries in particular must continue to speak up and show their support for multilateralism and for the important role played by the United Nations. As

a small country, Singapore remains deeply committed to the multinational system and to the United Nations. We look forward to working closely with all countries here to strengthen the multilateral system, the United Nations, in order to make it fit for purpose and fit for the future, our common future.

Mrs. Bogyay (Hungary): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this important meeting.

Hungary aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union, but I would also like to say a few words in my national capacity.

I was thinking about the whole concept that we are discussing today and I could not find a better seed for our actions and thoughts than one from the thirteenth-century Persian poet and scholar Jalal Al-Din Rumi, who wrote,

“Half of me comes from here, half from everywhere.
Half of me comes from the pearls of the sea, half
from distant shores.”

As we know, the world today is facing many challenges, which as members of the international community we have to face and solve together. When the United Nations was established, 74 years ago, the goal of the world's leaders was to make sure that we used multilateralism to avoid the terrible consequences that result from failing to work together for a better future. Since then, as we know, multilateralism has had its peaks and troughs. While it is true that the shifting geopolitical landscape and our questions about the ongoing changes in the established multilateral order dominate our discussions, and the multilateral order is under pressure from emerging and recurring challenges, we who believe in multilateral institutions and the mindset and power of dialogue must still stand together.

We believe that multilateralism and its underlying philosophy and state of mind will survive. It will persist because it is based on common sense, and because we must inevitably strive for common frameworks to tackle today's challenges. But the preservation of international institutions in their current form, however intertwined they are in our lives, is far from certain, and we know that may also be an inevitable fact. We should fight to preserve the achievements of the past 74 years, but we should also accept that all institutions have to adapt and evolve. Reform is crucial for the United Nations,

including the full implementation of the initiatives proposed by the Secretary-General.

Even the best-constructed multilateral institutions are mere shiny shells if they lack the concerted political will of our leaders and the support and hope of our citizens. If we want to have the full support of the world and make it work, the United Nations has to change as life changes, according to its demands. We must be proactive, demonstrate our mutual value and trust in one another, and our willingness to reform and share our burdens. Good governance, whether within or outside the walls of the United Nations, is measured by the transparency of its institutions and processes. Multilateralism is all about action and reaction — a dialogue, as I said — that we realize when we work together. Prevention and mediation by all is therefore key to defending and improving the multilateral order. We must address the multidimensional root causes of conflicts through prevention, mediation, the protection of human rights and sustainable development.

Hungary is a strong supporter of preventive diplomacy, including cultural diplomacy, scientific diplomacy, water diplomacy, sports diplomacy, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, education and awareness-raising. Only a complex approach will enable us to successfully combat radicalization and intolerance, break down stereotypes, build trust and mutual respect and promote the peaceful coexistence that is so badly needed in our multilateral world today. In undertaking that huge task, I would like to underline that we should not forget about women, who have an important role to play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian responses and post-conflict reconstruction. Their inclusion is crucial to achieving sustainable peace.

In today's interconnected and globalized world, there are no real alternatives to multilateral solutions. My personal credo goes back to the twentieth-century Hungarian composer Béla Bartók, who wrote before the United Nations was born that his guiding philosophy had always been the idea of different nations uniting in brotherhood, despite all our wars and hostility, and that he had tried to serve the aims of that idea as best he could in his music. For that reason, he said, he did not shrink from any influence, no matter what its source, as long as it was pure, natural and vital.

Mr. Almunayekh (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to thank you, Madam President, for convening this important high-level meeting on multilateralism and diplomacy for peace, and also for your tireless efforts in leading the General Assembly towards strengthening multilateralism as the international system in our contemporary world. We are here today to celebrate the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, which provides the international community with an important opportunity for renewing its commitment to the international multilateral system and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Our world today is facing both new and traditional challenges, as well as transnational threats that are more complicated and intertwined than ever before. Threats to peace and security have unfortunately been on the rise in recent years, and the threat of terrorism continues. No region is safe from it. The world is witnessing numerous armed conflicts, humanitarian crises and natural disasters, which have damaging effects on many States and regions owing to their sheer size. We are united around a common objective, which is to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals while addressing the problem of climate change and other issues that require concerted efforts by the international community. All the challenges that our world is facing today therefore require us to take a collective approach. International challenges require international solutions.

Multilateralism is the core of the global system that we built together when we established the United Nations, more than seven decades ago. The cornerstone of that multilateral global system is the Charter of the United Nations, which is considered an instrument of international law and sets out a clear framework for organizing relations between States, while all States Members of the United Nations are obliged to uphold both the letter and the spirit of the purposes and principles of the Charter. The Charter remains important because it constitutes the foundation of our collective security while providing us with various tools for collectively and effectively overcoming the challenges that we face together. We must implement it by uniting and working collectively to curb violence and aggression, build cordial relations among States, respect the principle of sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, uphold equal rights and a people's right to self-determination, and promote respect for human rights.

With regard to the importance of multilateralism and the role of the United Nations, I cannot fail to mention the liberation of the State of Kuwait in 1991, an example of the effectiveness of international efforts, under the auspices of the United Nations and the relevant Security Council resolutions, in establishing the rule of law and justice. The operation that led to the liberation of Kuwait is a historic model of collective security in action and a successful demonstration of multilateralism and the role of the United Nations in stopping an aggression that was a clear and explicit violation of international law and the Charter. That liberation, after the painful invasion that preceded it, made Kuwait more confident that the first line of defence of small States like Kuwait itself is the multilateral international order, based on law and justice and ensuring the rights, security and safety of small States.

We are concerned about the fact that multilateralism is increasingly being questioned and that the unilateral measures taken by certain States are prioritizing narrow national interests over global interests, undermining the global system that we have built together since the end of the Second World War. We believe that no single State, regardless of its physical size, military strength or economic power, can address global challenges by itself.

Mr. Bessedik (Algeria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In conclusion, the State of Kuwait believes firmly in the importance of multilateral diplomacy at the regional and international levels and of strengthening collective efforts among States and their partnerships with regional organizations with a view to finding solutions to the challenges facing us regionally and internationally. We emphasize that the United Nations plays an important role in leading global action to address such challenges, including international humanitarian work to alleviate the suffering of people affected by armed conflicts and natural disasters, and that it contributes effectively to the various regional and international efforts aimed at resolving disputes by preventive, peaceful and diplomatic means, as well as conducting mediation, ensuring the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, addressing the effects of climate change and promoting human rights and the rule of law. There can be no progress on those and other issues without effectively and seriously engaging in collective action and constructive dialogue.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Bandung Conference of 1955 gave birth to the Bandung spirit of unity, friendship and cooperation that helped advance national liberation movements across Asia, Africa and Latin America. It proposed 10 principles for handling relations between countries, based on the five principles of peaceful coexistence. The designation by the General Assembly at its seventy-third session of the closing date of the Bandung Conference as the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, as reflected in resolution 73/127, as well as the holding of today's high-level meeting, are of great significance.

The world is currently facing major changes for which there has been no precedent in the past 100 years, and humankind is dealing with many shared challenges. At the same time, the rise of protectionism and unilateralism has put global governance systems and multilateral mechanisms under attack. The world needs multilateralism more than ever. Countries should work together to uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the spirit of consultation, follow the established rules and procedures and solve problems through collective efforts.

First, the vision of joint consultations, joint contributions and shared benefits should be upheld with regard to global governance. We should address global challenges and build a community of a shared future through multilateral cooperation. Secondly, there should be more dialogue and consultations. All parties should work together to seek common ground, while remaining aware of their various differences, with a view to increasing strategic mutual trust and building global partnership. Thirdly, we should embrace the concept of common, integrated, cooperative and sustainable security, and resolve disputes by peaceful means. Fourthly, the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries should be respected. The representation and voices of developing and small- and medium-sized countries should be strengthened in international affairs.

The United Nations represents the banner of multilateralism. China looks forward to seeing the United Nations continue to take the lead in maintaining world peace, promoting common development and deepening international cooperation. We are resolute in our defence of the authority and status of the United Nations and support it in playing an active role in international affairs. China has always defended the

international order and practiced multilateralism. In his statement at the closing ceremony of the March global governance forum organized by China and France, President Xi Jinping said that in the face of serious global challenges, countries should assume responsibility for the world. He called for fairness and equity in order to address our deficit of governance, consultations and understanding to address our deficit of trust, joint efforts and mutual assistance to address our deficit of peace, and mutual benefits and win-win results to address our deficit of development.

China's Belt and Road Initiative is an important contribution to multilateralism and international cooperation. It enriches the practice of multilateralism within the present changed environment. The second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation will be held from 25 to 27 April. We believe that all parties at the Forum will speak with one voice to support multilateralism and the building of an open world economy.

Mr. Sinirlioğlu (Turkey): The multilateral system is experiencing perhaps the gravest crisis it has seen since its emergence after the Second World War. For some, a rules-based system based on multilateralism is no longer the best guarantor of international security and prosperity. Consensus-building and compromise are viewed not as virtues of strength but as signs of weakness. Long-standing legal norms have been eroded. The threat of force is used all too frequently. As a result, people are losing faith in international institutions, including the United Nations, which are viewed as ineffective and weak.

We must protect multilateralism. We must defend international rules, norms, agreements and institutions. Without multilateralism and respect for the rules-based system, there is a risk of reverting to relations solely based on power. We must emphasize that multilateralism is not a threat to sovereignty. On the contrary, it is the only way to safeguard national interests in an interdependent world. No country can effectively counter transnational threats such as terrorism, drug-trafficking and irregular migration on its own. The multilateral system has produced many success stories over the past seven decades. It has developed institutions and has adopted rules that help us resolve our conflicts peacefully. They enable us to establish norms and platforms for dealing with global challenges, from climate change to weapons of mass destruction. Two recent examples of such efforts

are the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (resolution 73/195) and the global compact on refugees.

We are all aware that multilateral institutions and rules are imperfect. We must reform, re-energize and strengthen them. The United Nations will continue to be at the core of those efforts. It will serve as the main platform to discuss our next steps and our main instrument for successfully partnering with regional organizations, civil society and the private sector.

The United Nations itself will also be the object of our efforts. We will strengthen multilateralism by reforming the Organization itself. We support the reform agenda of the Secretary-General in its aim of making the United Nations more effective and relevant. We must also reform the Security Council and make it a more transparent, democratic, representative and accountable body. True multilateralism requires that all Member States, regardless of their size or power, have an equal opportunity to voice their concerns and expectations. That is why, as the most democratic and representative organ of the United Nations, the General Assembly is the most important venue for advancing our common goal of sustained peace and prosperity. To strengthen multilateralism, we need a stronger General Assembly, and we support the intergovernmental process for its revitalization.

Multilateralism is all about people and countries coming together, respecting one another and establishing the norms of cooperation that guarantee peace and prosperity for all. In our interconnected world, we are all vulnerable if some are insecure. Multilateralism and international cooperation are therefore imperative. Many world leaders are now increasingly endorsing multilateralism, and we must build on that momentum. Today, the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace is an important opportunity to reaffirm our faith in the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. We should all work together to commemorate and promote this International Day.

Ms. Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba associates itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace should be commemorated not

as a simple celebration, but as a reaffirmation of our collective duty and responsibility to preserve peace. As a founding Member of the United Nations, Cuba ratifies its commitment to the defence and promotion of multilateralism. In a global context marked by growing threats to international peace and security in the form of unconventional wars, gross violations of State sovereignty, policies of domination through force, attempts to reimpose a unipolar order, breaches of international law, dangerous and arbitrary violations of international treaties, increasing unilateral sanctions and trade wars, the only possible response is to preserve and revalidate multilateralism, based on strict respect for the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States, non-intervention in the domestic affairs of States, refraining from resorting to the threat or use of force and ensuring the peaceful settlement of disputes must continue to be the basic foundations of international law and must always guide State action and international relations.

It is time to put an end to manipulation, politicization and crude double standards on issues of global importance, including human rights. We strongly reject the enactment and application of extraterritorial laws such as the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States on Cuba more than 60 years ago, in flagrant violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the 27 resolutions adopted by the General Assembly that demand its immediate removal. The blockade against Cuba is not only maintained but is reinforced by the recent decision of the United States Government to permit legal action to be taken in United States courts from now on against Cuban and foreign entities outside the jurisdiction of the United States, and to further restrict the entrance of executives and family members of businesses that legitimately invest in Cuba in properties that were nationalized. Such measures undermine multilateralism and pose enormous challenges and threats to international law and the peaceful norms of coexistence among States. We also reject the decision to once again limit the remittances that Cuban residents of the United States send to their families and relatives, further restrict United States citizens' travel to Cuba and apply additional financial sanctions.

For nearly 60 years, Cuban foreign policy has maintained the principles of revolutionary diplomacy. Internationalism, anti-imperialism, solidarity and unity among third-world countries are the backbone of Cuban foreign policy. Cuba has contributed to improving the living conditions of other peoples and nations through international cooperation projects and solidarity aid, a genuine expression of South-South cooperation.

Today, the Latin American and Caribbean region is a scene of persistent threats that are incompatible with peace and the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, signed in Havana in 2014 by the Heads of State and Government during the second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. In the context of that threat, we reiterate that our firm solidarity with our sister Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is Cuba's right as a sovereign State and a duty under the tradition and inalienable foreign-policy principles of the Cuban revolution. It must also be clear that no threat of retaliation against Cuba, no ultimatum or blackmail by the current United States Government is going to divert the internationalist conduct of the Cuban nation, despite the devastating human and economic damage that the genocidal blockade has inflicted on our people.

In conclusion, Cuba reiterates its unshakeable commitment to continuing to work with the United Nations and its Member States for the establishment of a democratic and just international order that responds to the demand for peace, development and justice of the peoples of the third world and that guarantees the preservation and strengthening of multilateralism.

Mr. Wahib (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express to the President my thanks and gratitude for convening this high-level meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace.

My country's delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

We emphasize that strengthening multilateralism and diplomacy is the foundation for advancing the pillars of the United Nations, which are sustainable development, peace and security and human rights. The nexus among those pillars is clear to all of us. There can be no sustainable development without peace and security. By achieving those pillars, we can live

with dignity and attain all our rights under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

My delegation believes in ensuring that the United Nations takes the lead role in addressing complex and multidimensional challenges, because it is our most representative international organization and a true embodiment of multilateralism. In that regard, Iraq supports all the steps and initiatives undertaken by the United Nations and its bodies aimed at strengthening multilateralism and diplomacy with a view to achieving peace and sustained security. We also believe in the importance of the role of various international, regional and subregional organizations in consolidating and strengthening multilateralism, one example being the Non-Aligned Movement, whose founding principles emphasize supporting and enhancing diplomacy for peace, while all the documents issued by NAM's summits confirm those principles.

Given the circumstances we are in today and amid the challenges and dangers facing the entire world, this meeting sends the clear message to extremists all over the world that without lasting peace there can be no dignified life anywhere. That lasting peace can be achieved through diplomatic communication and mutual understanding among all of us, not through isolationism. It is through strengthened multilateralism and diplomacy that we will be able to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and its pillars across the world. My delegation calls on all States Members of the United Nations to work together, renounce their differences and resolve them through diplomatic means, focus on building friendly diplomatic relations based on the purposes of the United Nations, respect the interests and sovereignty of States and avoid policies of hegemony that benefit no one. Today, the goal of us all is to spread peace and security across the world, and this meeting is the best proof of that.

In conclusion, I reiterate my thanks to the President and to all Member States for the Assembly's adoption of resolution 73/127, on the International Day on Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace. I want to assure them that Iraq will be at the forefront of States supporting the President in promoting this approach.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): It is hard to imagine a topic that requires our determined focus more than this one. It highlights the real-life test that each of us here faces as we cross the threshold of the United Nations every day, endeavouring to live out our own

commitments to multilateralism in our own day-to-day jobs. That is not theory. It is practice. But of course the scale of the challenge seems enormous, even daunting, as we advance headlong into issues like climate change, migration, sustainable development, conflict prevention and gender equality. The fact is that we have two choices — acting collectively, or going it alone in our own self-interest. If we choose the latter, we know from history that the likely outcomes will be profoundly negative and even dangerous.

By any standard, Ireland is a small State. That is a status that we proudly share with the majority of Member States represented in this Hall here today. We will shortly celebrate 100 years of our own independence. We firmly believe that we only truly found our voice on the world stage on the day we joined the United Nations, in 1955. That day, our sovereignty grew. Similarly, our economic and social development has benefited enormously from our membership in the European Union. Strong and stable multilateral structures have enabled us to grow and prosper. They have amplified our voice and strengthened our sovereignty. Even the largest and most powerful countries benefit from a stable and predictable multilateral order. It seems that some of us just need more reminding than others that the problems we are facing today are problems without passports, problems that simply cannot be addressed without that stable multilateral order. So what do we do to support it in 2019? I will briefly mention three points.

First, our shared institutions must reflect the world as it is and demonstrate their value. We need more women at the top of our institutions. We must reform the Security Council so that Africa and other regions are properly and justly represented there. We must reform the way this house, our precious United Nations itself, operates to make sure that it is delivering on the ground for those most in need.

Secondly, we must stand by our commitments. The Security Council's resolutions, for example, are binding on all Members but are frequently ignored. International law and international humanitarian law are fundamental to how nations interact. My country believes that it is vital to uphold the applicability of international law and ensure accountability for violations. Similarly, when sovereign Governments collectively agree on declarations and other outcomes, we should recognize them as clear political commitments, not aspirations that we discard when they are no longer convenient. We must implement the Paris Agreement on Climate

Change, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (resolution 73/195). We must ensure that the necessary financing to enable these agreements to be realized is available and that they are implemented.

The President returned to the Chair.

Thirdly, we must be creative. In particular, we must find new ways of operating in language and in law. The relationship between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations should be radically changed and developed. We also need a much deeper level of cooperation with civil society and engagement with the private sector.

Finally, we must connect with our citizens. Our precious United Nations achieves things every day, from providing life-saving humanitarian assistance to standing up for human rights and human rights defenders and brokering peace agreements. We should be much better at letting our citizens, particularly our young citizens, understand what we do in this building every day. Let us invite them in and thereby strengthen the United Nations.

Mr. Lauber (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Almost exactly 100 years ago, on 11 April 1919, the International Labour Organization was established in Geneva. With it, the fundamental idea of multilateralism based on dialogue was born. In the aftermath of the First World War, the goal of universal and lasting peace, including the protection of workers, essential in that context, was already central to that multilateral project. A hundred years later, at a time when so many issues divide us, as we have heard this morning, we must remember what unites us. Like the International Labour Organization before it, the United Nations was created in the aftermath of a devastating world conflict and in the belief that future generations must be protected from the scourge of war.

To this day, the Charter of the United Nations remains our common denominator and the point of departure for our dialogue. The Charter provides for friendly relations among nations and insists on international cooperation to solve international problems. It urges all Member States to settle their differences peacefully.

The multilateral system has facilitated our attainment of major milestones over the past century, including the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights, the construction of an extensive disarmament architecture, support for decolonization processes, the establishment of peacekeeping missions and, more recently, the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Over its nearly 75 years of existence, the United Nations has been able to adapt to the far-reaching political, economic and social changes that have reshaped our world. It has remained relevant to demands in endless mutation. Be that as it may, the challenges facing the international community have become no less complex over the years; quite to the contrary. Therefore, a strong multilingual multilateral system that facilitates genuine dialogue among States is more important today than ever.

Like any relationship, multilateralism requires the constructive and continuous commitment of its members. As a federal State, Switzerland is accustomed to building bridges between different political viewpoints, cultures and languages. Commitment to a strong, rules-based multilateral system is therefore part of our DNA.

Geneva is the second headquarters of the United Nations and the operational hub of the multilateral system. Switzerland has a tradition of lending its good offices to parties in conflict and of providing platforms for international peace talks. Switzerland's commitment to the pursuit of peace and mediation is further anchored to our belief that only through dialogue can we solve conflicts and build lasting peace.

The multilateral system is built on its institutions and mechanisms just as a house is its foundations. It is therefore vital to remain engaged within the multilateral institutions that we have built together. Supporting strong institutions also means ensuring that the United Nations is fit for purpose, equipped to respond to emerging crises, and able to improve conditions on the ground where it works.

We are convinced that the reforms Member States adopted last year will allow the United Nations to work in a way that better integrates the three pillars of the system: peace and security, development and human rights. To tackle these different challenges, the constructive commitment of all Member States is more necessary than ever. The alternative to multilateralism is an abyss for which future generations would never forgive us.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramirez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I welcome the holding of this high-level meeting to reaffirm our vision of multilateralism. The adoption of resolution 73/127 in 2018 reflected the commitment of Member States to promoting the values and principles of the United Nations. In this regard, we reiterate, as we did in 1945, that the principles of the Charter of the United Nations remain vital today.

Since international relations tend to involve varying elements of complexity and difficulty, multilateral forums were established so that nations could discuss problems and define joint solutions to those of concern. The simplistic view that international organizations function only when external conditions and international relations are ripe for forging agreements has no place in the real world we find ourselves in today. Multilateralism is profoundly democratic and inclusive. It permits States, regardless of territorial magnitude or economic strength, to meet one another on the international stage on a more equal footing and under conditions of greater certainty. Multilateral forums, the United Nations chief among them, not only lend or grant legitimacy to matters, but also develop norms, instil customs and promote values.

In a globalized and interdependent world, it would be naive to think that States alone, without the support of the international community, could solve problems of a global scale or effect large-scale regional or national change. The vast majority of States support multilateral institutions, especially the United Nations, not only as a matter of principle, but also because strong, healthy and effective global governance is at the very heart of our national interest. For this reason, the supposed clash between sovereignty or nationalism and multilateralism is a false dichotomy; nations exercise our sovereignty through multilateralism, and we all benefit to varying degrees. But let there be no doubt that multilateralism benefits everyone.

It may therefore seem somewhat disconcerting to have to hold a high-level meeting today in support of multilateralism. Multilateralism as a whole is not at risk when one or more countries decides to break international agreements or believe that it is better to act in isolation. Multilateralism would truly be undermined only if all members of the international community decided to give up on seeking global solutions and normalize selective or conditional respect for agreements forged through collective effort.

Nonetheless, it is worthwhile considering some of the criticism, whether justified or not, levelled at multilateral forums, especially the United Nations. I will address three such groups of critics, if only very briefly: those who decry as inefficient our efforts to tackle the most serious and urgent challenges; those who are dissatisfied with their quality of life and see empty words in our collective action; and those who resort to misinformation to call into question all multilateral efforts.

Much of this criticism is driven by the frustration generated by the lack of satisfactory responses to the legitimate demands of our peoples. While we undoubtedly live in times of uncertainty, the real problem is a lack of trust. We must therefore work to ensure that multilateral forums function as effective tools for building trust through dialogue and mutual respect and not as platforms for confrontation, hate speech or deadlocked decision-making. The United Nations system must be improved by focusing at the heart of all its actions and decisions the needs of human beings. We must save humanism. We need to expand pluralistic, inclusive and multisector discussions so that everyone, without exception, is represented.

That is why Mexico, since the inception of the United Nations, has been committed to multilateralism and continuously seeks to translate that commitment into action. The new Government of Mexico has launched a series of initiatives to enhance public policies in line with our multilateral commitments, seeking the support and assistance of the United Nations. The national development plan for the next six years is fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals.

Over the Organization's almost 75 years of existence, undeniable progress has been made in numerous areas, but much unfinished business remains in the areas of peace, security and development. All the agreements that we have forged over these years, whether binding or not, will have a positive impact in people's lives only if we incorporate them into our national legislation, reflect them in the design and implementation of our public policies, and make them a reality on the ground. Just as trust can be restored, it can be dashed when efforts on the ground fall short. The challenge lies in putting our multilateral agreements into practice in such a way as to have a tangible positive impact on people's lives. To restore the trust that has been lost, let us breathe into multilateralism new life imbued with the necessary humanist spirit.

Mr. Al Khalil (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country's delegation would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for the initiative of holding this high-level meeting on multilateralism and diplomacy for peace.

We also align ourselves with the statement delivered by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. I should like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

The Government of my country, the Syrian Arab Republic, has always believed that a culture of peace can be established and implemented only through respect for the principles of international law, the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and resolutions of international legitimacy. However, unfortunately, momentous challenges remain on the path towards achieving those great aspirations — similar to those faced by the founders of the United Nations and others that led to tragedies for humankind.

It is no secret that first among such challenges is the attempt by some powerful States to dominate and exploit our Organization to serve their own narrow interests and cover up practices that undoubtedly run counter to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, in particular respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in the domestic affairs of Member States. The Government of my country stresses the urgent need to strengthen and protect multilateralism, while promoting multilateral decision-making. That can be done by strictly abiding by the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.

However, we regret that multilateralism is still under the greatest attack against it since the creation of the United Nations, as a result of pressures and double standards applied in international relations and in the implementation of many resolutions of international legitimacy by certain influential States Members of the United Nations. Those resolutions pertain to the fight against terrorism, the growth of radical movements, and violent rhetoric and racism, as well as resolutions pertaining to the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan and other Arab territories occupied since 1967. All those obstacles have impeded the desired peace from being achieved and undermined multilateralism. They have broadened the gap between peoples.

Many of our peoples continue to pay with their blood for colonial ambitions, intervention, military aggression, terrorist wars and direct or proxy wars. In addition, they continue to pay for the imposition of illegal unilateral coercive measures that destroy great achievements made in the areas of development and infrastructure by many developing countries, including my own, the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): There has never been any doubt for Indonesia that common global challenges can best be tackled through multilateralism and upholding the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Indeed, the reason Member States chose 24 April as the day to commemorate multilateralism and diplomacy for peace harks back to that historic moment seven decades ago when the Asian-African Conference in Bandung resolved to build a world order that was based on the sovereign equality of all nations, equity, justice, freedom and enduring peace. We are proud that this day coincides with that historic moment.

I do not understand why multilateralism should be brought into question today. It has been the very lifeblood of the General Assembly for years. The United Nations has been and must remain the ultimate global Organization that harnesses the diversity and wisdom of all Member States to ensure that everyone plays their role responsibly so that development, peace and security and human rights — the three indispensable pillars of the United Nations — take unshakable root everywhere.

With the rise of conflicts in recent years and re-emergence of Great Power geopolitical rivalry, not to mention the alarming increase in intolerance, xenophobia and isolationism in certain places, some have opted for unilateralism and the dismantling of multilateral agreements and norms. It is becoming ever-clearer that no country or group of countries, however powerful by itself, can resolve challenges of a global, interconnected and complex nature. Today more than ever, partnership and cooperation are essential, and we reiterate once again that there is no better proven platform for such cooperation than the United Nations, which, through its multilateral processes, norms and rules, can facilitate the joint efforts of the whole spectrum of countries, regional organizations and other stakeholders towards workable solutions over which they have a sense of ownership.

We must enhance our support for United Nations reform: stronger multilateralism requires a stronger

United Nations. United Nations reform is critical to ensuring that the United Nations remains relevant and fit for purpose and that it has an impact on the ground. All these words and all this jargon must be translated into concrete action. United Nations reform, including discussions on the revitalization of the General Assembly and Security Council reform, should aim to make the United Nations closer to the people, results-oriented and visible.

Indonesia, during its present non-permanent membership of the Security Council as well as its participation in other United Nations and regional forums, has worked and will continue to work tirelessly to prioritize prevention, political diplomacy and dialogue to help resolve conflicts peacefully. By tirelessly upholding the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, we must all do our part to bring about the wholehearted embrace of multilateralism, credible prevention and the peaceful settlement of conflicts by addressing their root causes. If we fail in this collective undertaking, the interconnected agendas of the Sustainable Development Goals and sustaining peace will fall short. If we fail, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the multilateral trading system and many other international commitments will all be at stake.

Indonesia believes in multilateralism because for centuries we have believed in the principle of *gotong royong* — a way of life in Indonesia, loosely translated as “working together, shoulder to shoulder, for the greater good”. Multilateralism is working together for the greater good in the face of global challenges.

Let me conclude by reminding everyone here today that if we in the United Nations fail to fight for multilateralism, then we fail to fight for a better world for humankind — we fail our sons and daughters.

Mr. Guillermet-Fernandez (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the holding of this International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace and we thank you, Madam President, for the central focus you have placed on this topic in during your tenure.

Costa Rica shares your vision of multilateralism as a key tool for promoting peace, respect for human rights and sustainable development. My country considers international law and active multilateralism essential instruments for strengthening and defending our unarmed democracy. Perhaps Costa Rica is a good example of the importance of multilateralism, because

over 70 years ago it decided to place the defence of its sovereignty in multilateralism by abolishing its military.

The multilateral system, especially since the San Francisco Conference, has provided States with the means to pursue dialogue even at the most difficult moments in history. Moreover, the international system, and in particular multilateralism, has become increasingly sophisticated, allowing us to develop an international rule of law that has managed to set rules for State relations, discourage the use of force and provide clear rules for States to follow.

Multilateralism has allowed us to develop processes for the well-being and development of all peoples, to recognize the dignity of all human beings equally and to set collective goals to ensure that sustainable development for everyone is ensured, as was the case of the Millennium Development Goals and is currently the case of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, we must stay vigilant and not allow the petty interests of some forces that seek to destabilize and undermine what we have so arduously built over the past seven decades to weaken our international system. The challenges are daunting and today, on this day of commemoration, we should take the opportunity to reflect on the very essence of multilateralism and its ultimate goal — achieving agreements through negotiation in good faith and for the well-being of everyone.

We feel that unilateral positions and a reluctance to negotiate jeopardize the ways in which we deal with global challenges that are as complex as climate change and as urgent as women’s empowerment, nuclear disarmament and the defence and promotion of human rights, among many others. On a day like today, we must commit ourselves to strengthening multilateralism. We must say it loud and clear, so that, as my country has done, we collectively declare multilateralism a global public good.

Costa Rica therefore wants to see a strong institution, a multilingual and more dynamic United Nations with more democratic bodies and plural forums where all States can defend their interests and the well-being of their peoples on an equal footing and in which human beings are the engine and centre of the work of States and the Organization.

In conclusion, my country reaffirms its commitment to defending international law and multilateralism as the only tools to address the current global challenges

and ensure progress in the maintenance of peace, the protection of human rights and the promotion of sustainable development. Let us commit today to following the path of dialogue, negotiation in good faith and strong agreements.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): I thank you, Madam President, for having called for this meeting today.

It is very important that we defend multilateralism. Multilateralism stands for cooperation and common solutions, and it is against competition and confrontation. But multilateralism is more than pure cooperation as such — there are terrorists groups that cooperate; multilateral cooperation is about cooperation on a rules-based order. As previous speakers have underlined, the basis of our cooperation must always be the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, whose anniversaries we celebrated and will celebrate. Germany maintains that rules-based multilateral solutions are better, fairer and more lasting than unilateral solutions.

I would like to refer to the speech that you, Madam President, gave this morning, in which you said clearly that multilateralism bolsters the sovereignty of States; it does not undermine the sovereignty of States. That is at the basis of the European Union. In that context, I would like to align myself with the speech that was made by the Permanent Observer of the European Union. In the European Union, we took the lessons that we learned from the Second World War. We pool our resources. We work closely together to safeguard the future of our people. But, as others have said, there are, unfortunately, a number of threats to this rules-based multilateral system.

Yesterday in the Security Council, we adopted resolution 2467 (2019), a new resolution on sexual violence in conflict (see S/PV.8514). However, unfortunately, it was not possible to just repeat our adoption of Security Council resolution 2106 (2013), which clearly guaranteed sexual and reproductive health and rights, because the United States Administration basically said that it is no longer sticking to commitments made by previous Governments. If that is a general practice, we will have a lot of problems in our international system. The same holds true for the nuclear agreement with Iran, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which is again a successful multilateral agreement that the United States is not abiding with. At the same time, Russia is violating the Budapest

Memorandum and the Charter of the United Nations by invading Ukraine. Russia is undermining the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and violating the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. China is ignoring international law in the South China Sea and violating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in its treatment of minorities. We therefore have to, as Ms. Bachelet said, push back the push-back and reverse that trend.

Germany defends multilateralism. We want to form a strong alliance for multilateralism, which is at the core of our foreign policy. That alliance has three goals.

First, the alliance wants to defend multilateralism and preserve the existing standards and institutions when they are under pressure. That also holds true for human rights in particular. We support Michelle Bachelet in her work. We support her condemnation yesterday of the execution of 37 Saudi men in Saudi Arabia. We defend the freedom of the media. We appeal to the Government of Myanmar to free the two journalists who have investigated the heinous crimes that have been committed against the Rohingya in Myanmar.

The second task of the alliance is to look at the future and to respond to questions concerning ways to deal more effectively with the challenges of the future. That has to do above all with regard to climate change, and we very much support the summit that the Secretary-General has called for in September. We think that cyberspace and new high-tech weapons have to be looked at through a multilateral system, and we have to find common rules.

My third and last point is that we have to make multilateralism more efficient and more representative. We support the Secretary-General in his reform of the United Nations. We are in favour of a reform of the Security Council to make it more representative. We have to include non-State actors and civil society in that alliance. Many citizens today are afraid that they are falling behind in the multilateral order. They have fears of downward mobility. Therefore, we need, if necessary, to reform the rules of the game. We have to update them and better explain them.

Mr. Peñaranda (Philippines): Our discussion today is timely, with the growing trend towards unilateralism and increasing attacks against it because of shifting political realities, power configurations,

waning commitments and waxing self-interest, and the inevitable confusion of public reaction throughout the world. The Philippines supports the Secretary-General's call for a renewed and, in the present context, stronger commitment to a rules-based order and a robust return to multilateralism that gives voice to the small, counsels patience against provocations until the facts are in, weighs options for practicality and sustainability, and imparts to actions finally taken a credibility often rightly denied to unilateral, not to say impulsive, decisions.

As one of 50 founding Members of the United Nations, the Philippines vigorously promotes the multilateral process. At the United Nations, a community of States finally has a forum for talking before fighting, or submitting without being heard, threshing out differences and working on shared priorities; an experiment in world governance, but without domination; a venue where the universal values of equality, tolerance and human dignity are unchallenged assumptions. All men and women are created equal with those entitlements. As the only world forum, the United Nations remains the main platform to fight the enemies of those values: ignorance, disease, poverty, injustice and extremism. With successes, continuing challenges and unceasing criticism, the United Nations has shown resilience without compromise in a world where once again the weak suffer, as they must, and the strong do as they please.

The Philippines is coordinating and facilitating multilateral issues that really matter to its people — migration and development; the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; trafficking in persons, drugs and arms; protecting persons with disabilities; and promoting biological diversity. We have been advocating the Global Compact for Migration, which is anchored on human rights and just plain decency.

With regard to peace and security, the Philippines has championed nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We cooperate closely with the United Nations on counter-terrorism. We have been partnering with Pakistan on a resolution under the culture of peace agenda since 2004, among others.

With regard to maritime cooperation at the regional level, and while recognizing differences and never compromising its core interests, the Philippines has the coordinating role for the next two years towards

the adoption of a common code of conduct in the South China Sea — a code that recognizes no deciding role for great Powers near or far.

The United Nations is a cooperative collective of sovereignties. It is not and never will be a sovereign collective controlled by a handful of great Powers, most of them living off the shadows of their former greatness. There can be no other world order than the one established with the United Nations as its guardian. Any other kind substitutes the meaning of order with the substance of suppression. We believe that the United Nations remains the essential world Organization.

Mr. Margaryan (Armenia): We recognize the essential role of multilateralism and diplomacy in advancing the peace, security and sustainable development agenda. Multilateralism provides important avenues to identify and broaden the areas of potential agreement through collective and concerted efforts so as to restore faith in humankind, fundamental freedoms, human rights and international cooperation.

As we mark for the first time the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, the Armenian people, in Armenia and worldwide, commemorate and pay tribute to the victims of the Armenian genocide. The date 24 April carries special meaning for the Armenian people. It marks one of the darkest pages in the history of humankind in the twentieth century, when 104 years ago our people faced the ultimate crime — the crime of genocide. That genocide is a stark reminder of the extent to which humankind can debase itself in the absence of strong multilateral institutions and in the face of a crisis of the international order.

Today, Armenia bears a special duty in advancing the human rights agenda, in particular the prevention of crimes against humanity and mass atrocities. As such, we have been at the forefront of international efforts to prevent and counter identity-based hate crimes, including the crime of genocide. The adoption of resolution 69/323, in 2015, which designated 9 December as the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime, was a landmark achievement in that regard. Armenia hopes that the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace will serve as another important platform to advance international cooperation for peace, development and human rights at multiple levels.

Multilateral institutions offer platforms where Member States, regional organizations and civil society can discuss and agree on solutions to global problems that no nation acting alone can resolve. Collectively, we need to do more to reverse the alarming trends in the decline of commitment to multilateralism and address the complex challenges facing the world in a cooperative, peaceful and negotiated manner. In addressing the challenges to multilateralism, it is important to highlight the centrality of strong collaboration with regional arrangements, platforms and formats, while avoiding the duplication of action.

Armenia is resolute in its commitment to contribute to efforts aimed at strengthening multilateral institutions to prevent exclusion, hatred and radicalization and to protect human rights and human dignity throughout the world.

Mr. Pildegovičs (Latvia): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this debate and for your resolute personal commitment to strengthening multilateralism and making the United Nations relevant for all.

Latvia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union.

Latvia has been and remains a strong supporter of multilateralism. In an interdependent and globalized world, we can address and resolve global problems only through multilateral means, including dialogue and international cooperation. History shows that a strong multilateral, inclusive and rules-based international order is essential to the maintenance of global peace and security. It is our joint responsibility to defend and strengthen it.

The United Nations is and will be the central forum for multilateralism and a rules-based global order. This is the place where all nations should come together in good faith to carry their shared responsibility to deliver peace and security, advance human rights and sustainable development, and cooperate for a better future.

Since regaining its independence and since its accession to the United Nations, in 1991, Latvia has always been a staunch supporter of international law and a promoter of the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We are convinced that those principles are fundamental to maintaining international order based on predictability, stability and the security of all States. Relations among States must be exclusively

based on law and dialogue, and not force and coercion. Territorial integrity and sovereignty, as enshrined in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, must be respected by all States Members of the United Nations. Latvia will continue to defend those fundamental principles.

One of the United Nations achievements has been to develop and strengthen international law, including by adopting many important multilateral treaties. For example, the Arms Trade Treaty, currently presided over by Latvia, is an example of a comprehensive and uniform response to existing challenges — in this case, the negative impact of conventional arms trade. Latvia also strongly values the work of international organizations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, including the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the International Atomic Energy Agency. They facilitate transparency, accountability and the rules-based order, which is particularly important when international norms are being challenged.

As the only truly global organization, the United Nations must be able to effectively respond to serious global issues and conflicts — humanitarian crises, the threat of terrorism, climate change, inequalities and poverty, to name a few. Individuals and their need for peace and a decent life are at the centre of all those challenges. We must be able to deliver on those needs, as individual nations and as the United Nations.

Latvia strongly believes that multilateralism can drive positive change for future generations. Yes, multilateral diplomacy can be challenging. But even with different views among Member States, important global agreements, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, have been achieved, in recognition of the pressing need to act now for the benefit of all people and the planet. However, for the sake of the credibility of the multilateral system, we all must ensure the success of these agendas by acting and by implementing them — not only by saying all the right words, but by taking practical actions. We must every day practice what we preach.

Another challenge to the credibility and effectiveness of the system is that too often resources are spent on managing and responding to crises instead of preventing them. The world has seen the inaction of the United Nations when its Members cannot agree

on a collective response or action. Latvia believes that early action by the Organization is critical in situations of concern, and that the rightful place of conflict prevention is at the centre of the United Nations agenda. We wish to see the United Nations be more effective, more transparent and more flexible so that it can bring positive, concrete assistance to people on the ground. We fully support the ongoing reform agenda of the Secretary-General.

In conclusion, Latvia believes that the upcoming high-level meetings in September, as well as the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations next year, will provide excellent opportunities for reinvigorating the multilateral system and promoting the full participation of young people in that process. Latvia is ready to do its part.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): As we mark the first International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, this momentous occasion not only serves to affirm our stronger commitment to a rules-based multilateral system, but also offers us an opportunity to recommit to its most sublime expression, the United Nations. The United Nations was founded on the abiding faith that hostility and discord can be turned into a spirit of cooperation for the common good of humankind. However, as we near the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Organization, that self-assurance is increasingly giving way to doubts.

Across many parts of the world, a conflation of economic distress and nationalistic passions has found refuge in a populist discourse that seeks to turn the widespread sense of resentment and frustration into a rejection of the international order. In our increasingly interconnected world, international cooperation is imperative, underpinned by the core values of mutual respect and tolerance. Global challenges, after all, require global responses. The only alternative to a rules-based global order is global disorder, which is where unilateralism can lead us. Let me make five brief points.

First, the Charter of the United Nations is not only an instrument of security against the horrors of war; it is also an instrument of hope against the privations of injustice and oppression. If indeed the primacy of “We the peoples” is to be more than just words, the fundamental rights enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations must be ensured for all peoples. It is obvious that the inalienable right to self-determination

continues to be denied to countless millions, including the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir and the people of Palestine. That is not only a travesty of justice, but also an egregious violation of the Charter.

Secondly, we are also witnessing a growing tendency by some to erode well-established norms of international law, including respect for sovereignty and the territorial integrity of States, and the prohibition of the use of force. Sometimes, legal sanction for those illegal acts is sought from within the Charter itself. The principles of the Charter should not become tools in the hands of a powerful few to suit their interests. They represent a touchstone for Member States to modulate their international conduct. The international community must stand united against any attempts to undermine the sanctity of the Charter or to reinterpret its fundamental provisions to seek self-serving, narrow aims.

Thirdly, in ensuring human dignity through the provision of basic economic needs, the right to development provides an essential link between the three pillars of the United Nations. It also provides a short pathway to the achievement of the ambitious global agenda outlined by the Sustainable Development Goals. The right to development must be mainstreamed as a basic human rights. After all, economic distress spawns the deprivations that translate into disenchantment with multilateral institutions.

Fourthly, the pacific settlement of disputes must not be an afterthought to Chapter VII of the Charter. A surge in diplomacy for peace is possible only if the full repository of measures outlined in Chapter VI are placed front and centre of the global peace and security architecture.

Lastly, if the United Nations is to remain true to its Charter, it must be fully imbued with the democratic spirit of our times and be representative of the aspirations of all Member States — small, medium and large.

We have a common stake in ending conflicts, fostering peace, fighting terrorism, strengthening democracy, promoting human rights and overcoming the challenges of climate change. We can achieve those goals and create a new, peaceful and prosperous world order only through the United Nations and strict adherence to the principles of its Charter.

Mr. Ke (Cambodia): The United Nations is the most representative organization. It embraces the virtues of multilateral cooperation as a means of addressing some of the most challenging problems of the twenty-first century. Indeed, it is by working together that the global community is able to attain crucial, mutually beneficial outcomes. We have seen tangible results and multiple successes of our working together, not the least of which is the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

The 2030 Agenda clearly highlights the transcending power of diplomacy in pursuit of a common goal for the greater good. Yet when countries subscribe to protectionist policies and unilateralism, it only harms the interests of the entire global community. Trade and investments have brought prosperity to countries big and small. Cambodia, for its part, has attained peace and stability and enjoyed rapid development, with high economic growth at 7 per cent per annum over the past two decades.

Those achievements would not have been possible without trade, diplomacy and cooperation from our partners. The global community should take heed because without multilateralism and without cooperation, people would only become poorer, economies would decline and financial capital would shrink. The ability to achieve the ambitious goals of the 2030 Agenda would be seriously jeopardized. Those failures, in turn, would prop up the dangerous ideologies of terrorism, thereby worsening regional conflicts.

Having prospered as a result of globalization, Cambodia believes in the importance of rules-based international cooperation. Against that backdrop, the Royal Government of Cambodia strongly believes that global trade should not be hindered by the imposition of unilateral sanctions for political objectives. Indeed, unilateral sanctions and other such coercive measures should be avoided, as they violate international law, undermine human rights and stand in direct opposition to multilateral diplomacy and cooperation.

On the contrary, trade and investment practices should be improved through the granting of preferential treatment for developing countries. The sharing of information and technologies should be supported. Moreover, it is necessary to promote stability and the diversification of the financial sector, thereby encouraging innovation and boosting the role and dynamism of the private sector to meet the financial needs of realizing the ambitious nature of the 2030 Agenda.

Global efforts should be focused on sustainable socioeconomic development, avoiding conflict at all cost through cooperation and diplomacy. Those efforts are essential to strengthening peace and security while promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels, which could then contribute to friendly relations among nations, in line with the three pillars of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Preamble to the Charter clearly specifies that the peoples of the United Nations are to practice tolerance and live together in peace with each another as good neighbours. They are to unite in the maintenance of international peace and security and work together towards common interests, specifically for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples. It is only by working in solidarity that the global community will be able to address the most difficult challenges of the day.

In conclusion, Cambodia would like to reiterate its unwavering commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. It is my delegation's strong belief that, with dedicated commitment from all Members of the United Nations and their reinvigorated pledge to respect and promote the purposes and principles of the Charter, the global community will succeed in advancing peace, development and progress for all.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker for this meeting. We will hear the remaining speakers in this commemorative meeting this afternoon at 3 p.m. here in the Hall.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.