



General Assembly

Seventy-fifth session

72nd plenary meeting
Monday, 7 June 2021, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Bozkir (Turkey)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 4

Election of the President of the General Assembly

Election of the President of the General Assembly for the seventy-sixth session

The President: I invite members, in accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to proceed to the election of the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

May I recall that in accordance with paragraph 1 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 33/138, of 19 December 1978, the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session should be elected from among the Asia-Pacific States.

As members are aware, I have received the candidatures of Mr. Zalmai Rassoul of Afghanistan and Mr. Abdulla Shahid of Maldives for the presidency of the General Assembly for the seventy-sixth session.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the election will be held by secret ballot. As indicated in my letter dated 2 June 2021, all representatives are advised to pick up their ballot papers from the East Documents Counter, located towards the back of the General Assembly Hall, before being seated. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers.

Representatives are requested to remain in their seats until they are called to cast their ballots in the

ballot box located at the base of the podium. While the 1+1 format outlined in my letter dated 21 May 2021 will apply to this meeting, only one representative per delegation should walk from the national seat to cast the ballot.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of Ecuador, Japan, Norway, the Republic of Moldova and Togo acted as tellers.

One ballot box has been placed in front of the General Assembly Hall, where tellers will be able to observe the box and the casting of ballots.

For the casting of ballots, the Secretary will call the name of each delegation following the General Assembly seating arrangement protocol, starting from the delegation of Iceland, and ask the representative concerned to proceed to cast their ballot. In that regard, all representatives are requested to practice physical distancing of no less than 2 metres and to proceed to cast their ballot only when the previous representative has completed casting their ballot. That will continue until the last representative has cast their ballot.

After casting their ballot, representatives will leave the Hall through the exit on the west side and return to their seats through the doors located on the east side. Signs marked "re-entry" have been placed to guide representatives back to the General Assembly Hall. Once all ballots have been cast, the voting will be declared closed and the meeting will be suspended. The tellers, accompanied by Secretariat staff, will proceed to the Trusteeship Council Chamber to count the ballots. While the ballots are being counted,

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consecutive meetings of the Main Committees, for the purpose of electing the Chairs and Bureaux of the Main Committees for the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly, will be held in the General Assembly Hall.

Upon receipt of the results certified by the tellers, the plenary meeting will be resumed to announce the results and to declare elected the candidate that has received the greatest number of votes and a simple majority of the members present and voting. The proceedings of the plenary meeting, including the announcement of the results, will be webcast.

Following statements by the President of the General Assembly, the President-elect of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, the Secretary-General, the Chairs of the regional groups for the month of June and the host country, the Secretary-General will draw lots for the purpose of determining the Member State that will occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall at the seventy-sixth session.

The General Assembly will then hold the election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

Consecutive meetings of the remaining Main Committees for the purpose of electing the Chairs and Bureaux of the Main Committees for the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly will continue, if necessary, until 1 p.m.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly,

“After the President has announced the beginning of voting, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting”.

In accordance with Assembly resolution 71/323, of 8 September 2017, the names of the two candidates that have been communicated to the Secretariat at least 48 hours prior to the election today have been printed on the ballot papers. Also, an additional blank line corresponding to the number of the vacant seat to be filled, in the present case, one, has been provided on the ballot papers for inscribing another name as necessary.

Representatives are requested to use only those ballot papers that have been picked up from the East Documents Counter and to put an “X” in the box next to the name of the candidate for whom they wish to

vote, or write the name of an individual from among the Asia-Pacific States on the blank line provided on the ballot paper.

Ballot papers containing more than one name or containing only the name of a country will be declared invalid. If the box next to the name of a candidate is checked, the name of that candidate does not have to be repeated on the blank line.

If a ballot paper contains any notation other than votes in favour of specific candidates, those notations will be disregarded.

If a mistake is made in filling out the ballot paper, delegations should request a new ballot paper from the Secretariat at the East Documents Counter.

Also, consistent with past practice, in the case of a tie vote, and when it becomes necessary to determine the candidate who will proceed to the next round of restricted balloting, there will be a special restricted ballot limited to those candidates who have obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to these procedures?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now begin the voting process.

I request representatives to use only those ballot papers that have been provided to them.

Members may now start marking the ballot papers.

The Secretary will now call on delegations based on the seating protocol order and invite them to come forward to cast their ballots. Representatives should proceed to the ballot box only after the name of their delegation has been called. I would like to remind members that only one representative per delegation should walk from the national seat to cast the ballot.

Once representatives' ballots have been cast, they should leave the General Assembly Hall through the doors located on the west side and return to their seats through the doors on the east side of the Hall.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 10.35 a.m. and resumed at 11.40 a.m.

The President: Before proceeding further, may I request members to remain seated after the announcement of the results of the voting in order to enable the meeting to continue.

The result of the voting is as follows:

Number of ballot papers:	191
Number of invalid ballots:	none
Number of valid ballots:	191
Number of abstentions:	none
Number of members voting:	191
Required simple majority:	96
Number of votes obtained:	
Mr. Abdulla Shahid (Maldives)	143
Mr. Zalmi Rassoul (Afghanistan)	48

Having obtained the required majority, His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid of the Maldives was elected President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

The President: I wholeheartedly congratulate His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid on his election as the next President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

He brings to the position extensive experience in multilateral diplomacy, having served twice as Minister for Foreign Affairs of his country. As the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continues to devastate communities around the world and climate change threatens people's lives and livelihoods, Mr. Shahid has been a strong voice in calling attention to the resulting impacts on small island developing States. I have no doubt that he will lead the General Assembly in a dedicated, transparent and inclusive manner.

With his dynamic personality and extensive experience in the United Nations halls for many years, the General Assembly will surely have a great President and leader during the next session. I personally know what a great source of pride his election represents for the Government and the people of the Maldives, a country that has faced political challenges in recent years and has overcome them to put forward a candidate for this august office. Mr. Shahid's promise to "lead a presidency of hope" resonates very well with the Member States and the United Nations family at large, especially in the difficult times we are going through.

I would also like to recognize the strong candidacy of Mr. Zalmi Rassoul of Afghanistan. With his extensive experience in multilateral diplomacy,

including as Minister for Foreign Affairs, and a comprehensive vision for his candidacy, Mr. Rassoul earned the respect of Member States. At this important time in his country's history, the international community's support of Afghanistan's long journey towards democracy is as essential as ever. I wish Mr. Rassoul all the best for the continuation of his endeavours in London as Afghanistan's Ambassador to the United Kingdom.

There is still much to accomplish during the final three months of the seventy-fifth session. I am confident that our efforts to ensure that the General Assembly remains relevant and effective as the world recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic will continue under Mr. Shahid. My door will always be open to the President-elect for advice and support as he prepares to take office on 14 September. My team and I stand ready to support a seamless transition for a successful seventy-sixth session

I now invite His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid of the Maldives, who has just been elected President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, to take the floor.

Mr. Shahid (Maldives) (*spoke in Dhivehi; English text provided by the delegation*): Standing here today as President-elect of the General Assembly, I am proud to speak on behalf of all Maldivians in our own mother tongue, Dhivehi, remembering the great Maldivian heroes who sacrificed their lives for the independence and sovereignty of the country and to ensure that the red, green and white Maldivian flag continues to fly proudly; drawing courage from the many heroes who continue to work to bring development, progress and democracy to the Maldives; and finding strength from the unyielding aspirations of the Maldivian people for a better and brighter tomorrow.

I offer thanks to the almighty Allah for bestowing this honour on the Maldives. Winning the trust and confidence of the whole world with this vote has proved that the whole world accepts the Maldives today, supports the Government of President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih and endorses his foreign policy. On behalf of all Maldivians, I offer our heartfelt gratitude to the international community for this proud honour and the extraordinary trust it has placed in the Maldives. I thank one and all for their support.

(spoke in English)

I am deeply humbled by the trust and confidence placed in me and humbled by the honour bestowed on my country, the Maldives.

As I stand here today, I am reminded of my days as a young foreign service officer. Of course, back then I had much more hair on my head. I remember walking through these halls and into this Hall, inspired by its history, fascinated by the power of multilateralism and convinced that it was the way forward.

We were and still are a small Mission, with few diplomats and even fewer resources, but our spirit has always been strong and our belief steadfast. We have always remained on the moral high ground. We have always worked for a better tomorrow, hoping for a better tomorrow. That unrelenting spirit and unyielding hope is the Maldivian way and ethos — one I am keen to bring in with the presidency of hope.

We approach the seventy-sixth session in challenging times. Disease, despair and devastation have characterized the past year. Inequality, injustice and instability have increased. The environment, the ocean and our planet are suffering. We need to get moving again, rebuild communities, rescue the planet, recover economies and above all restore hope. We need to move to a different normal. My five rays of hope — my five priorities — are geared towards that.

My immediate priority will be recovering from the coronavirus disease pandemic. Building on existing initiatives and approaches, I will be looking to address the health of our people and our economies and work to ensure vaccine equity. We need to vaccinate the entire world. No one is safe until everyone is safe.

We need to rebuild sustainably. Our decade of action will now also have to be a decade of recovery, focused on building back better, stronger, greener and bluer. Targeted interventions will be needed to ensure that no one — no country — is left behind.

I believe that the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly can be a super session for nature, during which multiple conferences and meetings on the environment will be held, such as the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the second United Nations Ocean Conference, the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the

fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Energy Dialogue and conferences on sustainable transport and food systems. There is momentum on responding to the needs of our planet.

Addressing the needs of our people is equally important. Ensuring that we respect the rights of all, mobilizing the collective will and conscience of humankind, is a process that requires constant work.

I will ensure that more voices and young voices are heard in the General Assembly. I will raise my voice against gender discrimination and advocate for gender equality. Here and now, I reiterate the pledge I made at the interactive dialogue — as President of the General Assembly, I will not participate in any panels that are not gender-balanced.

Addressing the demands of the day will most definitely require a stronger United Nations — a transparent, efficient, effective and accountable United Nations — as well as coordination, coherence and cooperation within the United Nations system and among its organs. We will therefore need to continue working on revitalizing the United Nations, building on our gains and exploring new avenues.

I have promised to be fully compliant with the rules of procedure and the code of ethics and to be guided by the Charter of the United Nations.

I have promised to be transparent, inclusive and representative. In the past weeks, I have interacted with all 193 Member States, shared my vision, listened to their views and hopefully addressed their questions.

I have promised to engage with civil society and other relevant stakeholders. I truly believe that they enrich our debates at the United Nations and add value to our discussions.

I have promised to bring the United Nations closer to the people — the people whose interests we promote, on whose behalf we work and speak in the true embodiment of the Charter's first three words, "We the peoples".

I have promised a team in my Office that is gender-balanced and multinational, with geographical diversity, including people from both developed and developing countries and from various groups of countries.

I have promised to be independent and impartial.

I assure the Assembly that I am a man of my word. I will keep those promises. The international community can count on that. I intend to get to work right away. Starting tomorrow, I will be working on finalizing my team and firming up my calendar and initiatives so that I can hit the ground running in September.

Today is a special day for the Maldives. With the Assembly's support, today I become the first President elected from the Maldives in the Organization's 75-year history. In the 55 years since the Maldives became a United Nations member, I am the sixth President from a small island developing State — a step that I believe brings us closer to true representation.

I thank the President and the Secretary-General for their wise leadership here at the United Nations. I look forward to working with them and their teams over the next three months, in preparation for the seventy-sixth session.

I also thank my colleague Mr. Zalmi Rassoul for his dignified conduct throughout this campaign. I wish him the best in his service to his nation. As Islamic countries, neighbours, friends and partners, we will always stand with Afghanistan.

I take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt gratitude to President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih for nominating me for this election to represent the Maldives and for his trust and confidence in me.

This win today is truly an honour for all Maldivians, for the entire Maldives. I therefore receive this honour proudly on behalf of the citizens of our proud country.

Around the world, my team — Team Khaarijee — continues to work day and night, tirelessly, with conviction and passion in order to deliver for our people and to make Maldivians proud. I thank our ambassadors and teams around the world, our team at the Ministry in Malé and our team here in New York at the Permanent Mission, headed by the very able and remarkable Ambassador Thilmeeza Hussain. They have all made the Maldives proud.

I would like to express my gratitude in particular to State Minister Ahmed Khaleel. As young officers, State Minister Khaleel and I dreamt of the Maldives presiding over the General Assembly one day. Today, I am so happy we are here together, bearing witness to this moment.

On a personal note, I would be remiss if I did not mention two people who have guided and shaped my career and that of many foreign service officers and the entire foreign service we see today in the Maldives — the longest-serving Foreign Minister in South Asia, the late Fathulla Jameel, and former Cabinet Minister and Foreign Secretary Ibrahim Hussein Zaki. Today, I applaud them for their invaluable service and thank them for their mentorship.

I would also like to thank my family and friends in the Maldives and around the world for their continued support during this journey and every other chapter in my life.

We started this journey many months ago with an undying belief in multilateralism, with an ardent desire to serve the international community, with commitment, conviction and courage, dreaming of a presidency that delivers — for people, the planet and prosperity. Today, we are here. Today, with the international community's support, we bring in the presidency of hope together. Today, my dear friends, is the beginning.

The President: I thank His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid of the Maldives, President-elect of the General Assembly, for his statement.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency António Guterres.

The Secretary-General: It is a pleasure to be here with one and all to witness the election of the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. First and foremost, I offer my sincere congratulations to Mr. Abdulla Shahid of the Maldives on his election and I look forward to working with him.

I also take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkır for his exceptional leadership as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth anniversary session.

As our most representative organ, the General Assembly is the foundation of all of our work at the United Nations and is essential to our effectiveness as an Organization. In 2021, the world needs that effectiveness more than ever. We are a world in mourning for the millions of people we have lost to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The crisis has dealt a body blow to communities, societies and economies. Until everyone, everywhere has access to vaccines, it continues to pose an enormous threat. The seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly will

grapple with the impact of the pandemic across the three pillars of our work — peace, sustainable development and human rights. I wish Mr. Shahid every success in his task.

Mr. Abdulla Shahid's long-standing diplomatic experience, including in his current role as Minister for Foreign Affairs, has given him a deep understanding of the importance of multilateralism in addressing today's global challenges. I commend him for his selection of hope as the central theme in his vision statement. Coming from a small island developing State, Mr. Shahid will bring unique insights to the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly as we prepare for the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Glasgow in November.

I also want to express my deep appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Zalmay Rassoul and thank him for contributing to this dynamic process.

On behalf of the entire Secretariat, I wish the President-elect the greatest possible success. We look forward to working with him when he assumes his duties in September and members can count on my full support as we strive to reach our shared goals and uphold our universal values.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of Eritrea, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Ms. Tesfamariam (Eritrea): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the Group of African States, as we begin the transition into the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly.

I wish to convey my profound congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, President-elect of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, on his election. We have no doubt that under his leadership, the General Assembly will steer the United Nations towards strengthened multilateral cooperation in achieving its objectives. That is what is needed for every country and every world entity to contribute to global cooperation and address the challenges facing the world.

The coronavirus disease pandemic will most certainly be a focus of discussion at the seventy-sixth session and beyond, especially with regard to the

coordination of health responses in pandemic-affected countries, ensuring equitable access to vaccines and supporting countries in overcoming its socioeconomic impacts and the many other problems caused or exacerbated by it.

That issue must be addressed in addition to the fundamental issues of concern to the United Nations, including rebuilding sustainability; the issue of climate change; upholding and defending human rights; financing for the development of the Global South; preventing armed conflicts; and the revitalization of the Organization itself. Those and many more issues will dominate Mr. Shahid's presidency and, with it, the trust of the 193 States Members of the United Nations as they seek to address and deliver actionable solutions for the people and the planet.

As the President-elect strives towards his noble objectives of achieving a better world through a stronger United Nations, we urge him to always consider the views and interests of all Member States and to build trust and cohesion among them and between the Secretariat and other international organizations. We also urge him to always be guided by the principles of equity, inclusivity, equal representation and transparency in the pursuit of all his priorities.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Kiribati, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States.

Mr. Tito (Kiribati): It is indeed a great honour and privilege for me to address the General Assembly today on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States. I wish to express my gratitude to the Office of the President of the General Assembly for inviting the Chair of the Group of Asia-Pacific States to make this intervention.

At the outset, I would like to convey, on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States, our warmest congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. We wish him every success as he assumes and discharges the functions of such a high office.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to you, Mr. President, as well as the entire membership of the United Nations, for preserving and upholding the important principle and practice of regional rotation in the leadership of the General Assembly. That is vital for the continuing solidarity,

vitality and effectiveness of our multilateralism and has allowed the members of our Asia-Pacific family the honour and privilege of taking their turn to provide the leadership and stewardship over the General Assembly during its forthcoming seventy-sixth session.

As the Assembly is aware, our Group presented the equally capable and suitable candidatures of two of our member States, namely Afghanistan and the Maldives. They both fully assured us that they would do their utmost to further advance the political leadership role of the General Assembly, building on the excellent work of their predecessors on all matters of concern to humankind and the world, in accordance with the principles and values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

I thank you, Sir, and the entire membership for the decision taken today to finalize the choice between the two excellent candidates who have graciously offered to serve the General Assembly and humankind on behalf of our Asia-Pacific family. Even though only one could be chosen out of the two, we thank both candidates and their countries for their kind readiness to serve, particularly at a time when the world is still not entirely free from the scourge of the coronavirus disease pandemic, not to mention the multiple outstanding issues and concerns affecting the lives of people all over the globe.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your stewardship of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, especially for your leadership in charting the course of the Assembly during these very trying times. I would also like to commend you for your efforts for the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, the alignment process, the review of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Economic and Social Council, as well as the reform of the Security Council. I assure you, Sir, of our continued strong support during the remaining tenure of your presidency.

In the same vein, I would like to take this opportunity to commend and thank, on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States, the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, for his stellar leadership of the administration and management of the United Nations Secretariat over the past four years. It has enabled Asia-Pacific Member States not only to

play a greater role in the affairs of the United Nations but also to benefit from its services and resources.

Let me conclude by once again congratulating my good friend, our new President-elect His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, and his country, the Maldives — a very low-lying small island developing State that is about to disappear under the waves — and assuring him of our full support. The members of the Group of Asia-Pacific States stand ready to play their part and to do whatever is required of them by the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

The unprecedented challenges before us as we prepare to enter the seventy-sixth session serve as a stark reminder of the significance, relevance and urgent need for solidarity and cooperation now more than ever before.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Mlynár (Slovakia): On behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, I have the honour and pleasure to extend our warmest and most sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

As the world continues to face its biggest challenge since the founding of the United Nations, the General Assembly is in the public eye, as its main deliberative and policymaking organ and the only organ with universal representation. Therefore, the President of the General Assembly plays a critical role in guiding the United Nations membership and assisting it in overcoming current and emerging crises.

We are confident that, based on the professional qualities and proven leadership experience of the President-elect as a seasoned diplomat and politician, he will make significant contributions to the success of the upcoming session of the General Assembly.

Let me also express our sincere gratitude to you, Mr. President, for the excellent work and leadership you have provided thus far in steering the work of the Assembly in the midst of the pandemic. Your personal dedication in discharging, with utmost care, the great responsibilities that the role of the President of the General Assembly entails has contributed significantly to renewing the global commitment to multilateralism and the central role of the United Nations therein

throughout the celebratory seventy-fifth session. You can count on the support of the Group of Eastern European States until the end of your mandate as President of the General Assembly at its current session. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

Let me conclude by once again reaffirming the full support of the members of the Group of Eastern European States to the new President-elect of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, during his upcoming term of office. We fully share his commitment to hope and to working for a better tomorrow. We wish him every success in fulfilling his forthcoming mandate.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Carazo (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC).

We express our sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid on his appointment as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. GRULAC also congratulates the Government and the people of the Maldives on that important achievement.

No other intergovernmental body in the world enjoys such a universal membership while covering such a broad spectrum of issues as the General Assembly. It deals with critical issues, many of which are interlinked, that are related to development, disarmament, education, environment, health crises, humanitarian assistance, human rights and counter-terrorism, inter alia. Effective policymaking in all those areas by the General Assembly is of crucial importance to the peoples of the world.

With conviction, we shall join in the efforts of the President-elect to revitalize the work of the General Assembly, as we indicated during the virtual exchange in which he kindly participated with our regional group a few weeks ago. As we stated at that meeting, our common global challenges require comprehensive and collaborative action. There is no better platform to address those challenges than the General Assembly, which has the adequate scope and representation of the entire United Nations membership.

In conclusion, GRULAC would like to express its deep appreciation to Your Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkır

for your excellent work during the current session of the General Assembly. Your unwavering commitment and leadership, despite the many challenges presented to us by the coronavirus disease pandemic, helped us to focus our joint efforts and achieve significant progress. We look forward to working with you during the remaining months of your mandate.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): On behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, I would like to extend our congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid of the Maldives on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

Mr. Shahid has had a distinguished career in public service both as a diplomat and as a politician, including as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Maldives. He is dedicated to supporting the Maldives' role in the international community and committed to multilateralism. It is beyond doubt that he will make full use of his skills and United Nations experience to lead the General Assembly capably and efficiently. We look forward to working under his leadership.

We are facing unprecedented challenges. Now more than ever, we are reminded of the need for closer international cooperation with the United Nations at its core. The United Nations membership can work together to build back better for a more resilient and sustainable future. In these extraordinary times, we count on the President of the General Assembly to build unity between Member States. We place our trust in his leadership and welcome his commitment to the United Nations system, human rights for all and progress on the Sustainable Development Goals during the decade of action. We have a range of international priorities to address in the year ahead.

With regard to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the President-elect has set out a vision for recovery that recognizes its multidimensional impacts and the need to rebuild better. We welcome his vision for his presidency, guided by the five rays of hope and underpinned by a belief that the crisis enables us to see the best the world has to offer. We also welcome his commitment to securing a path to COVID-19 recovery that is sustainable, makes progress on the 2030 Agenda

for Sustainable Development, cares for the most vulnerable people and respects the rights of all.

With regard to climate change, the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session will be a key moment for action, including in the buildup to the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in November. We are confident that the President-elect will help bolster global action to take decisive steps to tackle climate change.

We also commend the President-elect for his commitment to the protection of our ocean and marine environment. A sustainable ocean economy is essential to building back better and reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. We look forward to resuming preparations for the Ocean Conference to take place next year. We welcome the dedication of the President-elect to achieving gender equality, including gender parity at all levels of the United Nations.

Concerning reform, we agree with the President-elect that the General Assembly's agenda is substantial. The General Assembly revitalization process is vital to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Assembly's work. Therefore, such revitalization should be in line with the values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions and rules that support the work of the Assembly, including multilingualism. As the United Nations most representative intergovernmental body, we need to strive to meet the goals that we set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure that nobody is left behind.

We commend the ethos of the President-elect to persevere and his commitment to working for a better tomorrow. We welcome his presidency of hope and assure him of the full support of the Group of Western European and other States on these and other priorities during his term of office. We extend our sincere congratulations to Mr. Zalmi Rassoul and our friends from Afghanistan for an excellent campaign. The Group appreciated his contribution of ideas and policy proposals and tireless outreach to Member States throughout the campaign.

We would also like to express our deep appreciation to you, Sir, for your work throughout the current session of the General Assembly under enormously challenging and unusual circumstances. During a year of unknowns, your unwavering commitment, innovative solutions and

leadership have enabled us to continue the important work of the General Assembly. We commend your emphasis on COVID-19 recovery, including vaccines for all and future resilience.

We also thank you, Mr. President, for your accessibility to Member States, clear communication and personal drive to make progress on our agenda. We commend your efforts to promote inclusion, civil society engagement and the empowerment of youth and women. We look forward to working with you during the remaining months of your term in office and wish you and the President-elect the best for the upcoming handover.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, who will speak on behalf of the host country.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): On behalf of the United States, the host country of the United Nations, we extend our sincere congratulations to President-elect Shahid upon his election as President of General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. He will assume his new role at a critical time during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, when some countries continue to grapple with its affects and others are experiencing improved conditions. The pandemic has underscored that the greatest challenges that we all face are often not contained within our own borders, reminding us that the global recovery and building back better are shared challenges that we must continue to take on together.

Throughout the unprecedented crisis, the role of the President of the General Assembly has proven critical in managing the complexities of business continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic, while developing solutions to ensure that the critical work of the General Assembly is accomplished. As the President-elect assumes his new role, the United States looks forward to a constructive working relationship as host country. The United States, in consultation with local and state public health agencies, is committed to supporting the work of the General Assembly and planning for the future as we begin to emerge from the crisis here in New York.

The campaign promise of the President-elect was to focus on five rays of hope: pandemic recovery, rebuilding sustainability, addressing climate change, respecting the rights of all and maintaining an efficient and transparent United Nations system. The success of

that ambitious agenda will rest not only on our collective commitment to revitalizing the General Assembly so it can effectively advance those initiatives, but also on ensuring that all voices are included and heard.

That means keeping the doors of the United Nations open to civil society participation and expanding public-private partnerships. We appreciated his statement concerning this during the candidates' forum and we look forward to supporting his work to advance that as part of his broader agenda. On this occasion, we would also like to recognize President Bozkır's leadership and work over the past year. We thank you very much, Sir, for your service.

As we begin to look ahead to the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly, I also want to thank all fellow diplomats within the entire United Nations community for their fortitude throughout the crisis and the support that they have shown to the United States as host country, and particularly the city of New York. I know that some of them and their missions have experienced the challenges and the pains of the pandemic here and have been personally and professionally affected. Through it all, their collective resolve in taking steps to limit the spread of the virus locally — everything from modelling risk mitigation to fundraising for local pandemic relief efforts and hosting vaccine clinics — has been inspiring.

Despite changing conditions and procedures amid multiple waves of the pandemic, the United Nations community has embodied resilience, adaptability and generosity. As the host country mission, we have been proud to stand with them and work together through this, and we look forward to our collective efforts in the months ahead. We thank everyone for everything that they have done to ensure that our shared hometown can also recover and build back better.

The President: I would like to remind members that in accordance with resolution 70/305 of 13 September 2016, the President-elect of the General Assembly will take an oath of office of his own at the moment of handing over the gavel at the final plenary meeting of the seventy-fifth session.

We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda item 4.

Drawing of lots for the seating protocol for the seventy-sixth regular session

The President: As indicated in my letter dated 2 June and also as announced in the *Journal of the United Nations*, we will now proceed to the drawing of lots to determine the member State that will occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall at the seventy-sixth session. In accordance with the established practice, the Secretary-General draws the name of one Member State from a box containing the names of the States members of the General Assembly. The delegation whose name has been drawn will occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall, and the other countries will follow in English alphabetical order. The same order will be observed in the Main Committees.

I now invite the Secretary-General to proceed with the drawing of lots.

Having been drawn by lot by the Secretary-General, Suriname was chosen to occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall at the seventy-sixth session.

Agenda item 6

Election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly

Election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for the seventy-sixth session

The President: I should now like to consult members with a view to proceeding to the election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

In accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly,

“The Vice-Presidents shall be elected after the election of the Chairmen of the six Main Committees referred to in rule 98, in such a way as to ensure the representative character of the General Committee”.

It is my understanding that, since the elections of the Chairpersons of the Main Committees will conform with paragraph 48 of resolution 72/313 of 17 September 2018, on the pattern for the rotation of the Chairs of the Main Committees from the seventy-fourth to the eighty-third sessions of the General Assembly, it will not have an impact on the geographical distribution of the

Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and the representative character of the General Committees.

May I take it that the General Assembly therefore agrees to proceed to elect the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly?

It was so decided

The President: In accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of the annex to resolution 33/138, of 19 December 1978, the 21 Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session shall be elected according to the following pattern: six representatives from African States; four representatives from Asia-Pacific States; one representative from Eastern European States; three representatives from Latin American and Caribbean States; two representatives from Western European and other States; and five representatives of the permanent members of the Security Council.

In accordance with paragraph 16 of decision 34/401, the election of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly by secret ballot will be dispensed with when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled.

We shall proceed accordingly.

I shall now read out the names on the slate of candidates:

African States:

Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and the United Republic of Tanzania

Asia-Pacific States:

Bangladesh, Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Philippines

Eastern European States:
Slovenia

Latin American and Caribbean States:
Costa Rica, Haiti and the Dominican Republic

Western European and other States:
Belgium and Finland

Since the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled in each region, I declare those candidates elected, in addition to the five representatives of the permanent members of the Security Council.

The following States have therefore been elected to vice-presidencies of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session: Bangladesh, Belgium, China, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Finland, France, Haiti, Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mozambique, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania and the United States of America.

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the States that have just been elected Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda item 6.

I wish to remind members that, immediately following the adjournment of this meeting, the meeting of the sixth Committee for the purpose of electing the Chair and Bureau of the Sixth Committee for the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly will take place.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.