



General Assembly

Seventy-sixth session

17th plenary meeting
Monday, 27 September 2021, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Shahid (Maldives)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Turay (Sierra Leone), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

General debate

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Jean-Claude Gakosso, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Congolese Abroad of the Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Gakosso (Congo) (*spoke in French*): The United Nations, I need hardly recall, has a vocation to lead the peoples of the world towards collective well-being and prosperity, towards justice, peace, security and development, in line with its Charter. The United Nations remains, after all, the only Organization that can bring together all nations for effective collective action aimed at mitigating the consequences of the various and varied scourges that could destabilize whole swaths of humankind, if not all of humankind.

Even in the most difficult times in our common history, the United Nations has always held high the torch of universal solidarity. The Organization has always been able to mobilize the international community in the quest for lasting solutions when faced with collective danger. That is precisely why my country, the Republic of the Congo, has very deep faith and trust in the Organization, which has such a unique historical trajectory.

Unfortunately, we are compelled to acknowledge that despite its praiseworthy commitment to peace throughout the world, despite its tireless advocacy for the well-being of many, every year millions of people throughout the world die of hunger and as a result of lack of medication, and millions of others continue to die from perfectly curable diseases such as typhoid and malaria. Today we are talking about billions of people who cannot access vaccines to combat the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which will certainly leave an indelible mark on our century. The pandemic is a fearful common enemy against which we have to pool our intelligence and our forces. It is only by standing shoulder to shoulder, in a spirit of solidarity, that we will be able to overcome the virus, which threatens the very existence of human life. And as I say this, I am thinking especially of the inhabitants of this wonderful city of New York, who are hosting us today and who have suffered from it so.

In my country, the moment the first COVID cases appeared, the Government forcefully took the bull by the horns. To date, the Government has fully vaccinated about 180,000 people, or approximately 5.21 per cent of the population. We wish to take this opportunity to thank all the friendly countries and all the technical and financial partners that facilitated my country's access to vaccines through direct donations and under various initiatives such as the Coronavirus Disease Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility and the African Vaccine Acquisition .

Six years ago, in 2015, in this very Hall, we were swept up by a common impetus of solidarity and decided

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to include the fight against poverty and the promotion of health for everyone among our main challenges. We committed ourselves to working together to step up education for the most disadvantaged segments of society throughout the world. The Sustainable Development Goals that we adopted at that time thus represented the basis for the comprehensive development of all peoples throughout the world, with the lofty ambition of ensuring that no one is left behind.

Unfortunately, the gaps between rich and poor countries have only become wider. In many of the regions in the world, unacceptable inequalities have compounded poverty. That is a genuine challenge that has a bearing on the very credibility of the United Nations in the eyes of the peoples of the world.

The Government of the Republic of the Congo welcomes the return of the United States to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which is a major instrument bringing together the international community in the fight against climate-change-related imbalances. Within the framework of the implementation of resolution 75/17, on the protection of the global climate for present and future generations of humankind, the Republic of the Congo has made significant progress, placing special emphasis on adaptation.

Scientific studies are being conducted that focus on the vulnerability of forests and fragile ecosystems, on agricultural practices in the savanna and on the fight against erosion and cyclical floods. Those studies are aimed at providing specific responses to the challenge of climate change and strengthening the capacities for adaptation and resilience of local populations given the rapidly increasing environmental changes that we have seen.

In terms of preserving biodiversity, in February my country launched the Biodev 2030 initiative, whose goal is to encourage joint private-sector and civil-society funding for projects relating to preserving biodiversity. I reiterate here the appeal made by the Republic of the Congo to various development partners to invest significantly in sustainable development and in the effective management of the peat bog in the Congo basin, which, according to scientists, could be a storehouse for several billion tons of carbon.

For many years Africa has been trying to make its voice heard so as to ensure the rectification of what everyone agrees is a historic injustice against this part of the world. The recurrence of conflict on the continent

calls more than ever for better international governance. Indeed, how can we manage, within the United Nations and its Security Council, the various crises and conflicts in Africa without the effective participation of the continent, where more than 60 per cent of peacekeeping operations are taking place. It would seem to me that there exist here both an inconsistency and an anachronism that we must address.

That is why it seems vital to us that account be taken of the African concerns expressed through the relevant Sirte Declaration and the historic Ezulwini Consensus, to which we remain firmly committed. Africa today is a key player in the world and must take its rightful place in terms of rights and obligations; it must take its rightful place within a reformed Security Council — a Council that is more transparent, more dynamic, more democratic and more clearly representative of the wonderful diversity of our world.

The anachronism that I was just referring to — the African claim to a seat on the Security Council — dovetails with the embargo imposed on Cuba, an embargo that has been going on since last century and which has inflicted terrible suffering on the people of that country. It is long past time for the embargo to be lifted. Once again, from this lofty rostrum, we call for temperance and wisdom on the part of American leaders, especially those who are of the current generation, most of whom have nothing to do with this remnant of the cold war.

Among the major challenges facing the international community today is the Libyan crisis. In the course of recent months considerable advances have been made in that regard thanks to the joint efforts of the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States, the neighbouring States and actors of goodwill. Those efforts were boosted by the Berlin Process, which created fresh impetus in the quest for solutions to the crisis.

But in order to ensure that the general elections planned for the upcoming months take place — elections that are awaited as a turning point in the history of the country — all stakeholders must be aligned and persevere in the implementation of the decisions emanating from Berlin. Those decisions have been followed up regularly and closely in Munich, in Geneva, in Cairo, in Tunis, in Oyo and in Algiers, and even here in New York a few days ago. Those decisions essentially concern the consolidation of the ceasefire,

the respect of the arms embargo, unifying the military and financial institutions and a gradual, consensual and balanced withdrawal of foreign fighters, obviously without any prejudice to neighbouring countries.

The African Union High-Level Committee on Libya, chaired by President Denis Sassou Nguesso, on whose behalf I have the honour to be speaking, believes that there should be no ambiguity on those points. It is the Committee's view that as we approach the date of the elections, the Libyan people must imperatively intensify the dialogue among themselves, transcend the accumulated rancour and learn to forgive one another. They must break down the sectarian barriers that on occasion keep them imprisoned and establish everywhere bridges and pathways between tribes, customary authorities and other religious communities. We believe that only in this way can a definitive chance be given to peace and a new historical perspective opened for that country.

For his part, in line with his pan-African convictions, President Denis Sassou Nguesso reiterates, through me, his commitment to continuing with his mission at the head of the African Union High-Level Committee on Libya. He reiterates also his commitment to accompanying all Libyan brothers all the way on the path of inclusive dialogue, national reconciliation and the reconstruction of their beautiful country.

To conclude, I would like to welcome the strong resolve that we, the humble servants of our nations, allied from generation to generation since 1945, have always had and shared within this form of global responsibility, a will that is renewed time and again from this lofty rostrum to work towards a humankind that is more generous and stands shoulder to shoulder; and a will that is reaffirmed time and again to work faithfully for a world of peace and justice, a world of freedom and equality, a world where prosperity is truly shared among nations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Dominica to introduce a statement by His Excellency Kenneth Darroux, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Business and Diaspora Relations of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

Ms. Bannis-Roberts (Dominica): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by the Honourable Mr. Kenneth Darroux, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Business and Diaspora Relations

of the Commonwealth of Dominica, at the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly.

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex I and see A/76/332/Add.12).

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco to introduce a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (spoke in Arabic): It is my honour to present the pre-recorded statement of His Excellency Mr. Nasser Bourita, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates of Morocco.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates of the Kingdom of Morocco.

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex II and see A/76/332/Add.12).

The Acting President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Verónica Nataniel Macamo Dlhovo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Mozambique.

Ms. Dlhovo (Mozambique) (spoke in Portuguese): It is with great pleasure and honour that I take part in the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique, who, due to pressing issues related to his agenda, could not be with us here today in New York.

Let me convey our warm congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. We also wish to convey our appreciation for the excellent work of his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkır. To our friend, Secretary-General António Guterres, we express our gratitude for his exceptional leadership.

The General Assembly is gathered once again at a time characterized by multiple challenges of a global nature. The theme chosen for the current session reflects the unique and difficult context which all the countries in the world have been living through since 2019, on account of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

pandemic. Since its outbreak, we have witnessed notable efforts by different actors — Governments, regional and international organizations, the private sector, and civil society — to face this global phenomenon threatening humankind.

We commend the central role of the United Nations, including through the World Health Organization, in coordinating actions aimed at mobilizing means and resources to save lives and the world from the pandemic.

Mozambique has taken important steps, including the introduction of restrictive measures, increasing testing capacity, and community-awareness and capacity-building campaigns on the importance of preventive care in the fight against COVID-19. Preventive-care measures include putting in place public-health and social measures and the distribution of vaccines.

One of the main challenges developing countries such as ours are faced with relate to access to essential medicines and vaccines. We believe that the private-sector and international-cooperation partners have a crucial role to play in providing support and building the critical infrastructure needed to administer vaccines. We are in favour of a temporary waiver of certain clauses of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights to allow an efficient response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Vaccines today represent an essential good, intrinsically linked to the right to live and to life — a fundamental right that is incumbent on all of our countries to defend.

Historically, humankind has shown resilience when faced with great challenges. We are therefore hopeful that we shall once more overcome the pandemic. Given the scarcity of resources, it is imperative that we renew our appeal to the international community to channel its support so that we can jointly successfully defeat COVID-19. Its impact on developing countries challenges every one of us to find effective resource-mobilization means and mechanisms aimed at stimulating the economic recovery of countries strongly hit by the pandemic, thus ensuring that we are on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The pandemic had a negative impact on the economic slowdown in Mozambique in 2020. Estimates indicate that we will resume our economic recovery this year, averaging growth rates of 1.3 per cent of gross domestic product, followed by a more sustained recovery from 2022 onwards. We would once more like to thank our

international partners for the support rendered towards actions aimed at fighting the pandemic.

In this context, the revitalization of the United Nations and of multilateralism is of utmost importance. Further, it is vital to revive the reform agenda of the United Nations in order to give impetus to articulating cohesive, effective, efficient and inclusive decision-making processes. Accordingly, joint efforts and the strengthening of cooperation are essential to promoting the global agenda to bring about a more just, equitable, balanced and safe world.

The world continues to witness threats to international peace and security. The prevalence of terrorism and violent extremism, combined with the proliferation of and trade in arms, constitutes a serious threat to peace and security at national, regional and global levels. The African continent is among the regions most affected by terrorism and violent extremism. Terrorism warrants the unmitigated attention of the whole international community, particularly the United Nations, given the suffering and bereavement it causes in our respective countries. It is incumbent on all of us to come up with measures on how best to defeat it.

In our country, terrorist activities have been seen in some districts of the Cabo Delgado province in the northern part of Mozambique. The degree of unravelling of the socioeconomic tissue, the atrocities and massacres, the wanton destruction of infrastructure and looting of goods of communities have caused grief, pain and profound suffering, leading to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis.

Our Government has embarked on a coordinated response, with the involvement of various partners at national, regional and international levels, to address terrorism, and we can highlight positive developments and progress in the fight against this scourge. In this context, we count on the support of our region's regional organization, the Southern African Development Community. We also count on the help of the Rwanda Defence Force.

The European Union and other international partners and friendly countries have provided humanitarian assistance and training and modernization of our defence and security forces. We wish to thank the international community for the support rendered to our efforts in the fight against terrorism and its assistance in supporting the population displaced by terrorism. We would also like to thank the international

community for its support for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the former guerrilla elements of RENAMO in the framework of the Peace and Reconciliation Accord.

Climate-related issues are emerging as one of the most pressing challenges at international level. The preservation of the human habitat is intrinsically linked to the survival of human civilization. Africa is one of the most vulnerable continents and the most prone to natural disasters, which are increasing in frequency and intensity. Mozambique's location makes it vulnerable to natural disasters, particularly cyclones, which have been occurring with increasing frequency.

More than a year and a half after the country was hit by Cyclone Idai, efforts aimed at rebuilding and recovering from the social and economic damages caused by it are still ongoing. That is why Mozambique attaches particular importance to concerted efforts aimed at mitigating the effects of climate change within the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Climate change continues to pose a major obstacle to the implementation of socioeconomic development programmes in our countries. Despite our negligible contribution to greenhouse-gas emissions, our countries are the ones most affected by climate change, in particular by global warming. The cuts in international financing for programmes aimed at promoting resilience and adaptation to climate change have had an adverse impact and constitute a major challenge to developing countries.

We believe that the development goals inscribed in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness are important elements in efforts aimed at sustainably rebuilding our societies. Indeed, they are a factor to consider when renewing our commitment to the decade of action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals and in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The lack of resources could seriously jeopardize the achievement of the objectives set forth under the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, should current resource mobilization and disbursement patterns remain unchanged. In Mozambique, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is undertaken in tandem and aligned with the Government's five-year programme for 2020-2024.

Our country reaffirms our commitment to implementing international legal instruments aimed

at strengthening peace and security, particularly the Arms Trade Treaty, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Mozambique has made the decision to present its candidature for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the 2023-2024 term. In the words of His Excellency Mr. Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique,

"The importance we attach to peace and security at national, regional, and international levels drives this historic decision to present for the first time since our independence in 1975 our candidacy for the prestigious seat of a non-permanent member of the Security Council".

In this context, we humbly request the support of all States Members of the United Nations to help us achieve this objective. Our candidacy is an expression of our firm commitment to building and maintaining international peace and security, preserving and respecting human rights and promoting sustainable development.

We therefore reiterate our commitment to serving the international community with dedication and responsibility in order to ensure that the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter remain a source of inspiration to our peoples in building well-being, peace and global security. We intend to put the modest yet meaningful experience of Mozambique at the disposal of the United Nations in conflict- mediation and conflict-resolution processes through dialogue.

Let me end by once again stressing Mozambique's belief that under the stewardship of the United Nations and with the support of all Member States, the solutions for contemporary problems, despite the challenges, are within reach and attainable.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Trinidad and Tobago to introduce an address by the Minister for Foreign and CARICOM Affairs of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Francis (Trinidad and Tobago): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement of His Excellency Mr. Amery Browne, Minister for Foreign and CARICOM Affairs of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, at the general debate of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Minister for Foreign and CARICOM Affairs of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex III and see A/76/332/Add.12).

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Othman Jerandi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tunisia.

Mr. Jerandi (Tunisia) (spoke in Arabic): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Mr. Abdulla Shahid and the friendly Republic of the Maldives on his presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. I wish him every success in his noble endeavour. I also want to express my deep appreciation to Mr. Volkan Bozkır for his able leadership of the work of the previous session. And I would like to once again warmly congratulate Mr. António Guterres on his reappointment at the helm of the United Nations, and to assure him of Tunisia's support for his initiatives to strengthen the role of the Organization and ensure an effective response to the current international challenges.

Let me also take this opportunity to convey the heartfelt gratitude and appreciation of the Government and the people of Tunisia to all who have supported our national efforts to combat the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Their support has enabled Tunisia to overcome the dangerous initial phase and gradually begin recovering from the devastating pandemic.

The theme of the current session of the General Assembly, entitled "Building resilience through hope to recover from COVID-19, rebuild sustainably, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the rights of people, and revitalize the United Nations", reflects the desire of our Organization to overcome these challenges and find appropriate solutions. It also demands that we, the international community, develop the necessary mechanisms for transforming that hope into reality so that people all over the world can live on an equal footing, wherever they are. What is certain today is that the United Nations cannot overcome these challenges, exceptional in their size and complexity, by resorting to standard solutions and tools that for decades have failed to provide decisive and effective solutions to many crises. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the necessity of developing policies based on solidarity

and justice so that when faced with such crises, we can be more resilient and capable of building and finding solutions for the millions who have slipped into extreme poverty, the millions of children who no longer have access to education, the millions of displaced and refugees and the millions threatened by starvation, malnutrition, climate change and conflict.

Resilience cannot be achieved with the policies adopted by a number of States of protectionism, nationalism and shutting down. It will be achieved only through a strong and agreed multilateral framework that meets the needs and aspirations of all peoples. We are facing unprecedented challenges and circumstances today that will shape the future of our world, and the Organization must be fully prepared to develop the appropriate solutions to ensure a balanced recovery and a rapid response to our various challenges. It is high time that we considered long-term solutions, achieved more for young people and future generations and became better prepared for future challenges in order to establish a stronger, more coherent and effective multilateral system. In that regard, Tunisia assures the Secretary-General that it stands ready to actively engage with everyone to implement the recommendations of *Our Common Agenda*.

In Tunisia, we began building our capacities based on hope by establishing a true and sound democracy that responds to the united will of the Tunisian people and their legitimate aspirations for a system that guarantees their sovereignty, rights, freedoms and dignity. The dangerous situation threatening our country and society is the result both of a deeply rooted but futile political polarization and of our ongoing economic, social and health crisis, requiring President Kaïs Saïed to implement a number of exceptional constitutional decisions and measures designed to correct Tunisia's democratic course in line with the will of its people. We reaffirm that democracy in Tunisia is an irreversible choice to which we are committed, and that our human rights and public and individual freedoms are guaranteed and safeguarded by institutions established on a basis of the rule of law and the principles of good governance, something that our President has emphasized at every opportunity. It is impossible to establish a genuine and sound democratic system without combating corruption and ending impunity, which have weakened the State and its prestige, institutions and judicial system.

Building a stable State in which all citizens are treated equally is a prerequisite for a peaceful society,

sustainable development and respect for human rights, which will enable our State to play its part in maintaining international peace and security, building sustainability and respecting and applying our common global values and human rights. Through its membership in the Security Council, Tunisia has demonstrated its ability to contribute constructively to finding solutions to many international issues and reconciling divergent views, overcoming differences and building a new era of solidarity in international relations, as illustrated by the Council's unanimous adoption of its resolution 2532 (2020). My country will spare no effort to achieve our shared aspirations for the future and revitalize the United Nations that we want and need in keeping with *Our Common Agenda*. From this rostrum, I would like to assure all our friends and partners that as before, our President is committed to keeping Tunisia as a positive force and an active contributor to international peace and security, while promoting the values of cooperation and solidarity among all peoples and countries of the world.

Tunisia will also continue to play its influential role in the region by providing support and assistance to our brothers in Libya so that they can complete the political process and achieve their anticipated political, electoral and security goals, which will help the country to restore its security and stability and regain its role as a significant regional player without interference in its internal affairs. Tunisia once again welcomes the outcome of the recent meeting held in our sister nation of Algeria among Libya's neighbours, providing a pivotal regional mechanism for promoting their critical role in helping their Libyan brothers deal with their current situation, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the support of the international community.

Ending the occupation of Palestine remains a core issue that Tunisia will continue to steadfastly defend and support. We call on the United Nations, including all its entities and mechanisms, to put an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people. How can we build hope when the international community has failed to stop the Israeli occupation of Palestine for more than seven decades, despite hundreds of international resolutions and tremendous international and regional efforts and initiatives? How can we ensure respect for human rights throughout the world when the rights of the people of one country are being violated every day, especially their right to self-determination and to build their own independent State within the 1967 borders,

with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital? If we genuinely want a global recovery, the situation in Palestine today cannot be allowed to continue, because a genuine recovery will not be from the pandemic alone but from all our injustices and tragedies.

Similarly, the continued instability and human suffering of many peoples in the Arab region makes it incumbent on the international community to deal with this enormous responsibility by redoubling its efforts to reach a compromise in conflict areas, including Syria and Yemen. Neither will our world recover if Africa is not helped to settle the conflicts that are draining its resources so that the countries of the continent can achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and establish the Africa we want, in line with the African Union's Agenda 2063.

We stress the importance of concerted international and regional efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism, adopt a comprehensive approach to the issue of migration, fight climate change and its multidimensional repercussions, bridge the digital and development divide, transfer technology and develop educated societies.

Throughout its rich history, which predates Carthage — from Roman, Byzantine and Islamic times to the modern era — Tunisia has been a beacon of civilization, a pioneer in terms of reform and a bridge connecting various cultures, regions and States within a framework of the values of tolerance, moderation and the acceptance of others, with the active participation of every component of society and a firm and pioneering role for women throughout the ages. Accordingly, my country will host the eighteenth Francophone Summit on Jerboa Island from 20 to 21 November. The Summit will represent an important step towards promoting our universal shared values of coexistence among peoples and civilizations. We will also function as a bridge for economic and development cooperation to help achieve solidarity and equitable development by hosting the eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development next year.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm that the Government and the people of Tunisia will continue to be an active partner for all States, international and regional organizations and the United Nations to promote peace and security, achieve development and respect for human rights for all and build a more secure, just and stable world.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Narayan Khadka, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal.

Mr. Khadka (Nepal): I bring warm greetings to everyone in this Hall from the Government and the people of Nepal, and our best wishes for the success of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. I want to congratulate the President on his well-deserved election. It is very significant to see a South Asian chosen to preside over the proceedings of the Assembly at a time when the world is in a ferment in the midst of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the climate crisis. I assure the President of Nepal's full support in the discharge of his important responsibilities. Let me also commend the outgoing President, His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkır, for successfully leading the seventy-fifth session of the Assembly during trying times. I would like to place on record our warmest congratulations to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, on his reappointment for a second term of office, and to commend his leadership of the Organization.

I want to join other world leaders in expressing our deepest condolences to all those across the world who have lost their loved ones as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has silently and cruelly claimed more than 4.5 million lives. The crisis has brought the world to a grinding halt, devastated the global economy, pushed an additional 150 million people into extreme poverty and threatened to reverse hard-earned development gains. It has exacerbated pre-existing and perennial challenges, such as poverty, hunger, unemployment, inequalities and climate change, exposing systemic weaknesses, vulnerabilities and inadequacies in health systems around the world. Nowhere is that more visible than in the weakest and most vulnerable countries, where people remain deprived of access to even basic civic amenities.

The theme of the general debate, "Building resilience through hope — to recover from COVID-19, rebuild sustainably, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the rights of people, and revitalize the United Nations", is both timely and pertinent. Those tasks — recovering from COVID-19, rebuilding sustainably, responding to the needs of the planet, respecting the rights of people and revitalizing the United Nations — aptly mirror our pressing priorities, challenges and needs. Reviving hope is critical in times of crisis. We appreciate the efforts by the international community, including the United

Nations system, to address the challenges posed by COVID-19. We also welcome the pledges of funds and vaccines. We need greater commitment and resources for those initiatives. The growing vaccine inequality is having adverse socioeconomic effects in many low-income countries. Fair and equitable access to vaccines must be ensured for everyone, everywhere. People's lives should come first. Vaccines must be declared as public goods for the benefit of people's lives.

In Nepal, saving lives, strengthening the health system and pursuing economic recovery and transformation underpin our efforts to build a sustainable and resilient recovery. Despite constraints and challenges related to accessing COVID-19 vaccines, we have been able to vaccinate close to 20 per cent of our population. We remain grateful to our immediate neighbours, India and China, for their support in fighting the COVID-19 crisis. We also sincerely thank friendly countries such as the United States, Britain, Japan and others for providing vaccines, critical medical equipment and medicines in our fight against the pandemic.

Recent developments in Afghanistan are of shared concern to all of us. The people of Afghanistan deserve better. We call for unhindered humanitarian access to the country and a full resumption of public services, including health care and education for all segments of Afghan society. We urge all the parties involved to ensure peace, security and stability so that the Afghan people can live in dignity and enjoy their fundamental rights and freedoms. We also urge Afghanistan to engage with the international community on the basis of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law.

We call on all the parties concerned in Myanmar to respect the will of the people, restore the democratic and constitutional process and uphold fundamental rights and freedoms. We call for an immediate end to the hardships and suffering of the common people in Libya, Syria, and Yemen. In the Middle East, we reiterate our long-standing position and want to see peace and security through a two-State solution for Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized international borders.

For more than 63 years, Nepal has consistently contributed to United Nations peace operations to promote peace, security and stability in the conflict-ridden parts of the world. We attach great importance to

the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers and the need for adequate training, resources and modern technologies. It is in that spirit that we endorsed the Declaration of Shared Commitments in support of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. Nepal has endorsed the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians and supports the Secretary-General's system-wide zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and aims to achieve zero-case scenarios in peacekeeping. As one of the countries contributing some of the largest numbers of troops and police to United Nations peacekeeping, Nepal believes that such countries deserve more senior-level positions both at Headquarters and in the field, based on the level of their contributions.

Nepal condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and condemns all activities designed to fuel social discord, communal conflicts and intolerance. There is a need for robust global cooperation to effectively implement the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, combat and control the financing of terrorism and fight organized transborder crime. That underlines the urgency for the conclusion of a comprehensive convention against terrorism.

It is worrisome to see new signs of an arms race among the great Powers through the modernization of nuclear arms and the weaponization of outer space. We call on them to divert precious resources from military spending to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and lifting the most vulnerable out of poverty. Disarmament mechanisms, as well as non-proliferation and confidence-building measures, have stalled. Nepal calls for the general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction in a time-bound and verifiable manner. As the host of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, we are committed to supporting the work of the Centre and reviving the Kathmandu process to promote regional efforts on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation.

Whether it is manifested in rising sea levels or the melting of Himalayan glaciers, hurricanes, storms, floods or fires, climate change has become an existential threat to humankind. Reports indicate that warmer conditions have even prompted animals and plants to adopt new behaviours and evolve new traits.

Nepal is home to eight of the world's 14 highest peaks, including the top of the world — Sagarmatha,

also known as Mount Everest. Sagarmatha stands as an icon for adventure-seekers and of Himalayan heritage for us. As environmental concerns increase, we need to raise environmental awareness. While we welcome climbers from around the world, we expect climbers' cooperation in returning with their garbage from the high mountains so as to maintain their sanctity. Nepal has a number of snow-fed Himalayan rivers that are connected to its identity and civilizations and sustain one fifth of the global population. We have been focusing our efforts on doing due ecological diligence while undertaking development activities in the Himalayan region. Nepal is at the sharp end of climate change, despite its negligible share of greenhouse-gas emissions. For our part, we reiterate our commitment to delivering climate-resilient development pathways by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050. The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, equity and respective capabilities should be at the centre of the climate agenda if we are to ensure climate justice.

The twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Glasgow, must provide a breakthrough. The climate ambitions of developing countries must be met with easier access to adequate financial and technological support for adaptation and mitigation. The Conference must become a gateway to a greener, cleaner and smarter energy transition.

With just less than a decade left, the world is not on track to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The pandemic has strained our efforts to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As we strive for a resilient recovery and to build back better and stronger, achieving the SDGs should be at the centre of our priorities. Nepal has mainstreamed the SDGs into its national plans, policies and programmes. We have achieved significant progress across major sectors, such as education, health, gender equality and women's empowerment. Changing the lives of people lacking wealth, dignity and human rights has been our commitment.

The least-developed countries (LDCs) are the most vulnerable group of countries even in the first quarter of the twenty-first century. They should be freed from the dehumanizing conditions of poverty and underdevelopment. LDCs and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) need reliable and sustainable financing, partnerships and technology transfer so as to overcome their structural impediments and benefit

from globalization. As both an LDC and LLDC, Nepal's structural challenges are unique. We see our plan to graduate from the category of LDC countries by 2026 as an opportunity to bring about structural transformation and make our long-held national aspiration to graduation smooth, sustainable and irreversible. We look to the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Doha early next year, as an important opportunity to renew the bonds of international partnership. It must build on the unfinished business of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, with a commitment to enhancing the level of support for graduating countries.

For landlocked nations, the development of a multimodal transport infrastructure and unhindered transit rights are critical to their sustainable development. We call for the implementation of past decisions and programmes in full synergy and coherence with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and expect development partners to increase their support in order to establish a secure, reliable and efficient transit and transport system for landlocked developing countries. The ongoing crisis must not be a pretext for retracting official development assistance commitments.

The development potential of South-South cooperation in terms of trade, investment and technology must be fully exploited. It is time to reform the global economic governance architecture to ensure fair and equitable representation for all. We welcome the steps taken by the International Monetary Fund and the Group of 20 on debt relief and debt service suspension. Nepal calls for reformed and more equitable international debt restructuring to address the debt crisis of low-income countries.

The World Trade Organization is not only about maintaining the rules-based international trading order but must also be a platform to enable developing countries to benefit from an enhanced level of international cooperation in the areas of aid for trade, technology transfer and capacity-building. Connectivity is a lifeline for peace, progress and prosperity. Connectivity forms a premise for enduring cooperation, deeper integration and building trust and confidence among nations. Nepal attaches the highest possible priority to cooperation through connectivity and underlines the need to create a win-win situation in that regard between and among countries.

Nepal encourages concerted efforts to ensure the safety, security, dignity and well-being of all migrant workers. We call for the effective implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and underline the need for more robust international governance for the protection, safety and welfare of migrant workers. The protection of minorities and their rights makes the world more humane and contributes to world peace and security. Despite not being a party to the Refugee Convention and its Protocol, Nepal has hosted thousands of refugees, based on humanitarian principles. We consider the forced eviction of citizens a grave crime against humanity and call on the international community to respond responsibly and act decisively for refugees' right to return to their homelands in safety and dignity.

Nepal has chosen a democratic path to development. Democracy is about people, and is therefore indispensable to people's welfare. Nepal's Constitution accommodates the aspirations of all its citizens. The proportional representation of all segments of society is at its core. It guarantees a comprehensive set of internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Constitution establishes powerful commissions to promote and protect the rights and interests that are specific to women, Dalits, Muslims, Madhesi, indigenous people and other disadvantaged communities. It mandates that the representation of women in our federal and provincial parliaments is at least 33 per cent of their totals and 40 per cent at the local level. That has strengthened their role in politics and development.

We are committed to concluding our transitional justice process through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons. There will be no blanket amnesty in the case of serious violation of human rights. As a member elected to a second term in the Human Rights Council, we continue to add value through a political and impartial approach to human rights.

Nepal's world view is shaped by its adherence to the principle of amity with all and enmity with none. Our friendship with both of our neighbours, India and China, remains of paramount importance in the conduct of our foreign policy, based on the principles of *panchsheel* — the five principles of peaceful coexistence derived from the teachings of Lord Buddha, the enlightened son of Nepal. The relevance of those principles as a framework for inter-State relations

cannot be overstated in the present context. The purposes and principles of the Charter, non-alignment, international law and the norms of world peace form the basis of our foreign policy. The current Government of Nepal, led by Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, is committed to conducting foreign policy on a basis of sovereign equality, mutual respect and mutual benefit and remains engaged with all friendly countries in the wider international community.

Nepal firmly believes in the indispensability of multilateralism, with the United Nations as its core. We consider it to be the only way to build global understanding and cooperation, promote shared interests and secure our common future. We add our voices in support of the measures and initiatives aimed at United Nations reform. The underrepresentation of developing countries must be addressed in recognition of their growing contributions. We want to see a more representative, inclusive and transparent Security Council and a revitalized General Assembly. Reforms must be inclusive, representative, accountable and effective in their delivery. We consider regional cooperation arrangements important for building trust and confidence among nations, managing harmonious relations and making the best use of complementarities for shared prosperity. Nepal's active engagement in the South-Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multisectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation and the Asia Cooperation Dialogue is a demonstration of our ardent faith in regional cooperation, connectivity and integration.

Over the past 65 years, Nepal and the United Nations have enjoyed a strong partnership, driven by trust, cooperation and mutual respect. We thank the United Nations for its continued support in our development endeavours. Nepal commends the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on *Our Common Agenda*. We support the report's focus on the action agenda designed to accelerate the implementation of existing commitments.

We live in troubled times. There has been a dramatic shift in geopolitics and geo-economics in the post-Cold War era, posing unprecedented challenges on all fronts. The world's economic centre of gravity is shifting decisively towards Asia, centred on the economic growth of China and India. At the same time, the world is becoming more complex and polarized, with transnational challenges ranging from terrorism to climate change to food insecurity to mass

migration to political radicalism and extremism. Under the cumulative impact of all those factors, we are experiencing new ways of life in the midst of confusion and uncertainty. We see conflicts in various parts of the world, and more within nations than between nations. That has given rise to identity politics. Nations find themselves increasingly divided along lines of race, ethnicity, gender and religion. We must find common ground and practice tolerance and harmony to confront those unimaginable problems. My delegation considers that there is no alternative to democracy and multilateralism in overcoming the stresses and strains of the times. They are also the best antidote to the risk of civil conflict in ethnically diverse societies.

I feel happy to share with this audience our belief that unity in vast diversity is Nepal's strength. Thanks to our democratic culture and harmonious way of life, the Nepali people's resilience in the face of hardship and suffering has remained exemplary, as seen most recently in the aftermath of the devastating earthquakes of 2015 and the COVID-19 pandemic. As I stand here today, my thoughts go back to 1960, when the first elected Prime Minister of Nepal, the late Bishweswar Prasad Koirala, addressed the General Assembly, saying,

"As we look at the world, we find that it is the economic disparity between countries, as between the rich and the poor people within the nation, that is the source of much friction and tension" (*A/PV.878, p.255*).

"The main function of the United Nations at the present moment is the creation, or recreation, of a climate of confidence and trust" (*ibid., p.254*).

Creating a climate of confidence and trust is as relevant today as it was in 1960. It is incumbent on us to work together for a more equitable, just, fair, resilient and sustainable world.

In conclusion, I believe the time is now to turn crisis into opportunity, despair into hope and risk into resilience. The time is now to build a stronger, more interconnected and more inclusive multilateral system, grounded in cooperation, solidarity and mutual trust. We must rise to our responsibility to rebuild for the sake of the people we serve and the planet on which we live.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Denis Ronaldo Moncada Colindres, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Nicaragua.

Mr. Moncada Colindres (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are still living through a pandemic that is affecting humankind, especially developing countries. These are times that test the strength, faith and solidarity of humankind as a whole as we are confronted with major challenges. On behalf of the President of Nicaragua, Commander-in-Chief Daniel Ortega Saavedra, and his Vice President, Rosario Murillo, we would like to convey solidarity and condolences to the families across the world that have borne the serious consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and lost loved ones.

The global health crisis continues to undermine our efforts to overcome existing issues and challenges such as poverty, hunger, malnutrition, inequality, unemployment and climate change — all caused by an irrational and oppressive system of capitalist exploitation. The developed countries' hoarding of COVID-19 vaccines is unacceptable, as it prevents their fair and equitable distribution for all, including developing countries. It is essential and fair that we ensure the transfer of technology and financial resources and declare the vaccines a common good for all humankind. We must maintain our fighting spirit to enable humankind to address and overcome the pandemic with solidarity, unconditional cooperation and robust multilateralism, by ensuring access for all to vaccines and thereby preventing their unequal and politicized distribution.

The pandemic has affected every country on Mother Earth and demonstrated the need for a new international economic model based on inclusion, equity, social justice and respectful equality among States and Governments, while prioritizing poverty eradication and health as universal rights and emphasizing that resources earmarked for war, aggression and the destabilization of countries should be used in a humanistic spirit for life, peace, security and the progress of all peoples.

We must stand together against all the challenges and disasters affecting humankind. We must not forget the refugee crisis or the pain and suffering of migrants. It is clear that the wars and interventions waged and promoted by the Western Powers violate the sovereignty of our peoples and condemn to exile millions of children, women and vulnerable groups suffering from the adverse impact of the greed and avarice of the most powerful. It forces them to seek refuge in Western countries that violate their human

rights and protection with discriminatory policies that lead to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. At the same time, safe, regular and orderly migration is impeded by a lack of determination and will in Western countries. Millions from developing countries who are victims of the unjust neoliberal model migrate with the dream of finding better opportunities in developed countries, where they are then rejected and their dignity and human rights violated.

Recently, on 15 September, we commemorated the 200th anniversary of Nicaragua's independence as well as the independence of Central American peoples. That is two centuries of fighting for the sovereignty, self-determination and independence of Nicaragua. Those are the victories for which we continue our struggle, with conviction, perseverance and dignity. But while Nicaragua is a free and independent sovereign State, there are imperialist forces that threaten our development projects and undermine our efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular the goal of eradicating poverty, the cruellest pandemic in the world.

We are in urgent need of a United Nations that stands for peace, justice, security and comprehensive responses that benefit all humankind, while honouring the commitments of States outlined in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Only through a responsible global alliance in which the most powerful respect international law and the Charter of the United Nations will it be possible to counter the impact of other pandemics, imposed by some Powers, which are a threat to peace, international security, independence and the sovereignty of States and self-determination of peoples.

We still urgently need reform of the United Nations, as proposed by the Nicaraguan priest and former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann during his presidency of the General Assembly in 2008. We reiterate our support for the Common African Position, outlined in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, on the process for reforming the United Nations, including the Security Council. Nicaragua will continue to support multilateralism while building relations based on respect, sovereign equality, solidarity and mutual cooperation, and to respect and honour the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, which

include non-interference in the internal affairs of States and respect for international law.

As a peaceful nation, Nicaragua also advocates general and complete disarmament. We support the total elimination of nuclear weapons for the benefit of all humankind. It is unacceptable that in the midst of a pandemic, nations continue to modernize weapons of mass destruction, posing a threat to all humankind. It is part and parcel of the callous creation of unbridled capitalism in its insatiable appetite for accumulation to the detriment of peace, international security and human life. It is the hope of our planet's inhabitants that nuclear weapons will disappear completely because they are a threat to all humankind, including the peoples of the very countries that manufacture and possess them. Nicaragua is a party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, according to which we promised a number of years ago to forbid any country in Latin America and the Caribbean to manufacture nuclear weapons. We welcomed the recent entry into force of the historic Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which bans for the first time the very existence, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Nicaragua has ratified the Treaty.

Turning to Afghanistan, we underscore that peace must prevail. The United States and the countries of Europe must take reasonable and responsible action, while calling for an end to its war culture and practices. The lessons of Afghanistan are clear — interventions and unilateral coercive sanctions do not work. They are failed policies. The great Powers must take the road of peace and respect for international law in order to build relations with the peoples of the world, especially in developing countries. Nicaragua will continue to promote a culture of peace and peaceful coexistence among the sister nations that make up the United Nations. We will work to achieve stability, peace and regional security in Central America.

The States Members of the United Nations should continue making every effort to ensure that the Western Powers cease and desist in their belligerent policies and actions, including the threat or use of force, which leads to greater instability and insecurity worldwide. We emphasize the importance of the quest for the understanding and peaceful coexistence among nations that we all desire. We must continue promoting a culture of peace, while acknowledging the importance of the peaceful settlement of international disputes by means afforded by international law. That is why we uphold

the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and the right to self-determination of our peoples. We need to see illegal unilateral and coercive measures cease immediately if we are to guarantee stability, peace and the development of families, peoples and nations. The aggressive and coercive policies of imperialist Powers create overwhelming obstacles to poverty eradication and progress towards sustainable development. Amid a pandemic, such measures become a crime against humanity committed by those who impose them. For Nicaragua, they are unacceptable. We reject them and reiterate our condemnation and our solidarity with the more than 2 billion people suffering under such sanctions.

Nicaragua stands in solidarity with our brother peoples of the world in reaffirming our rejection of the inhuman, illegal, immoral and unfair economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States on the people and the Government of Cuba. Cubans are an extraordinary people, liberated after a monumental battle that lasted more than 60 years. They have resisted invasions, acts of terrorism, economic sanctions, embargoes and all the tools of imperialism and its destabilizing actions. We also reiterate our unwavering solidarity with our sister nation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Bolivarian people and the constitutional and legitimate Government of President Nicolás Maduro Moros.

As our peoples work, resist, respond to and recover from the pandemic, we should not forget the challenges posed by the threat of climate change and its devastating impact, especially on developing countries. It will remain a challenge even after we overcome the COVID-19 pandemic and our economies recover. To preserve and uphold the right to life on Mother Earth, it will be crucial to achieve concrete results at the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Glasgow. It is based on the principle of shared but differentiated responsibilities, which bolsters accountability and underscores the importance of honouring the commitments made for climate justice and the vital policy of providing reparations through direct and unconditional cooperation. If we allow time to pass without the developed countries honouring their commitments, the damage to Mother Earth caused by global warming will be irreversible. They will be historically responsible for that disaster. It is essential that the largest polluters responsible for our

environmental degradation acknowledge the losses and the damage done by helping to restore our ecosystems.

It has been shown that Central America and the Caribbean is a region that is highly vulnerable to the impact of climate change. In addition to other climate phenomena, weather events are increasingly frequent and intense. In November last year, in just two weeks, Nicaragua was hit by two devastating category 5 and 4 hurricanes that affected indigenous and Afro-descendant communities living on the Caribbean coast. They did considerable damage to infrastructure, production and our economy. Nicaragua joined the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2017 in a commitment to strengthening the interests of the most vulnerable countries and aligning its Government policies, strategies and instruments with it, with a view to helping to meet the goal of limiting the global temperature rise to 1.5°C. The largest polluters must shoulder that historic responsibility.

We would like to express Nicaragua's full solidarity and support to the cause and aspirations to self-determination, peace and justice of the historical Palestinian people. Nicaragua will not cease its call and support for a two-State solution, in line with the 1967 borders, in which both a State of Israel and a State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, are on an equal footing and can coexist while fully meeting their aspirations in peace, security, cooperation and harmony. We also reiterate our brotherly solidarity with the Government and the people of Syria as they defend their sovereignty and territorial integrity and struggle against foreign aggression and international terrorism. All acts of aggression against the people and the Government of Syria must end.

We reiterate our unwavering will to continue supporting the just fight of the Sahrawi people for self-determination and respecting their dignity and right to exist as a sovereign nation, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.

Nicaragua supports the full decolonization of our continent, including for the people of Puerto Rico, and the restoration of the sovereignty of the Republic of Argentina over the Malvinas islands.

Our people and our Government support an end to all sanctions on our sister Republic of Iran and urge for the full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, signed on 14 July 2015, which is a clear demonstration that dialogue and diplomacy are the best

ways to achieve a peaceful settlement and are essential to the proper functioning of multilateralism.

In the light of the pandemic, for humanitarian reasons, it is absolutely vital to implement the principle of universality so that Taiwan can participate in the mechanisms and relevant meetings of the United Nations system.

We condemn the North American aggressive hegemonic policies that undermine the peaceful settlement of conflicts and that represent threats to the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as political, economic, commercial and military actions against them. We must uphold the principles of dialogue and negotiation and of refraining from the use of force or the threat of its use as basic principles enshrined in the Charter. We support the Russian Federation in its efforts to promote peace, understanding and stability throughout the world. Where Belarus is concerned, it is important to respect the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States, in line with international law. We reject foreign intervention of any kind, as well as external pressure on Belarus's Government and people.

The Government of Reconciliation and National Unity remains firmly committed to preserving peace, stability and security in Nicaragua and making every effort to develop policies to guarantee prosperity for all Nicaraguans, without exception or distinction. In the international arena, that aspiration is reflected in our efforts to continue building relations based on respect, equality, solidarity and mutual cooperation, in keeping with the multilateral and multipolar spirit of the Charter. The Government of Nicaragua, with the participation of the Nicaraguan people, has developed economic and social policies for women and young people, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, farmers, senior citizens and persons with disabilities as an expression of developments in Nicaragua.

We reiterate that Nicaragua remains an important factor in ensuring regional and international stability and peace and security, with positive indicators in the areas of economic, political and social development, gender equality, citizens' security and poverty eradication, all of which is imperative if we wish to forge a culture of peace and human development. In our blessed Nicaragua, the motherland of General Sandino and the poet Rubén Darío, we declare to the

international community that we respect all peoples, all Governments and all countries of the world. We respect international law, the United Nations Charter and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States, and we demand equal respect for our Nicaragua as a free, independent and sovereign State that enjoys self-determination.

With that constitutional, sovereign and patriotic spirit in mind, on the first Sunday in November this year the Nicaraguan people will elect their authorities, with the participation, based on gender parity, of 15 political parties, nationally and regionally. They include, in Box 1, the Constitutionalist Liberal Party; in Box 2, the Sandinista National Liberation Front that heads the Sandinista National Liberation Front Alliance, the Nicaraguan Resistance Party, the Christian Unity Movement, Alternative for Change, the Nationalist Liberal Party, the Yapti Tasba Masraka Raya Nani Movement, the Multi-Ethnic Indigenous Party, the Autonomous Liberal Party and Moskitia Pawanka. Box 3 features the Nicaraguan Party of the Christian Path. Box 8 features Yapti Tasba Masraka Nanih Asla Takanka. Box 9 includes the Nicaraguan Liberal Alliance and Box 10, the Alliance for the Republic. Box 13 features the Independent Liberal Party.

There is no vote for the North American imperialist Power in Nicaragua. The Nicaraguan people are voting to reaffirm their commitment to continuing to work for peace, security and the tranquillity of people, family and communities. We are true to our principles and values — patriotism, solidarity, service, unity and gender equality. We are ready to continue reaping victory out of our love for Nicaragua, while promoting international peace and security on our path towards a better, more just and human world.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Marc Garneau, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada.

Mr. Garneau (Canada): Before I begin, I would like to make a personal observation. As I address the Assembly, I am conscious that I am speaking to virtually the entire world. In my previous career I was an astronaut, and I had the opportunity to see the entire world from the vantage point of space. I have flown over all of our countries and I have reflected a great deal on our planet, Earth. I have realized that Earth is the cradle of all humankind, that we all come from the same place and that, frankly, we have nowhere else to

go. We must therefore find a way to get along with one another and take care of our planet — a planet that we are visibly damaging.

Space offers the unique perspective of seeing beyond one's own national borders. In that sense, the United Nations offers that same perspective. I am honoured to be here today on behalf of Canada's newly re-elected Government, led by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. I would like to begin my address by respectfully acknowledging that the land on which we are gathering today is the traditional unceded territory of the Lenape people.

We are assembled today at one of the most challenging times in generations. The world is facing simultaneous and cascading crises, including climate change, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and threats to international peace and security, which serve to exacerbate inequalities, test our resilience and shine a bright light on the shortcomings of our systems and institutions.

But it is not the first time that this institution has faced such formidable challenges. We must not be querulous or fainthearted in the face of the hardships and difficulties of our modern world. That is not why we are here. We must learn from the vision and courage of those who have gone before and we must think of the hopes and aspirations of those who will inherit the world we leave behind. From the ashes of the Second World War, our parents and grandparents responded to the unprecedented social and economic collapse of the 1930s and 1940s, with its accompanying death and destruction, by building a new international order based on rules and strong international institutions to bring stability, prosperity and peace to the generations that followed. They did not wring their hands in despair. They rolled up their sleeves and went to work. Climate change, COVID-19 and the rise of authoritarianism and inequality are the challenges of our time. They are ours to solve and overcome. In doing so, we must look to the future with optimism. Just as our parents and grandparents stepped up to the challenges of their moment, so too must we recognize and seize our own opportunity to shape the future.

There is no more perfect example of where multilateral solutions and political will are needed than in addressing the impact of climate change. Like all of us in this Hall, Canada is not immune to the climate crisis. Earlier this year, our west coast faced a record-

setting heatwave, with temperatures in some places reaching more than 49°C. Hundreds of people died and an entire town in the province of British Columbia was destroyed. That is our new reality. We know that the world expects leadership from the United Nations. When we attend the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in November, young people around the world will be looking to us to increase our ambition and strengthen global cooperation. We cannot let them down. It is in our hands. Our Organization has a steadfast and dedicated partner in Canada. We are doing our part at home, including by putting a price on carbon, which will rise to \$170 per tonne by 2030, and by increasing our emissions reduction targets. We are also doing our part internationally, including by recently doubling our climate finance contribution to \$5.3 billion over the next five years.

(spoke in French)

Over successive generations, we have worked together to make multilateralism evolve to meet our needs, expand it into new areas and refine our old approaches. Together we have embraced hope, confronted fear and innovated to try to improve lives around the world. It has been complicated, difficult and often slow, but more often than not we have overcome the obstacles through a combination of ingenuity and political will. That capacity for human ingenuity still exists. It is that collective political will that we must rekindle. The future is in our hands. In this very forum, some argue that national sovereignty is the sole basis for international relations and that it is the essential purpose of the Charter of the United Nations. In response, I would say that challenges such as climate change remind us beyond any doubt that a multilateral response remains necessary. Governments acting alone cannot overcome the problems facing our world. Our founders knew that, said so and proved it with their actions.

(spoke in English)

The cost of turning inward will be catastrophic for people around the world and lead only to rising inequality. Last year, as all of our Governments focused on our domestic responses to COVID-19, we went backwards where meeting some of our Sustainable Development Goals was concerned. Extreme poverty spiked for the first time in three decades. The pandemic forced us to take stock of growing inequalities within

our own societies, with seniors, racialized people, women, the LGBTQ+ community and indigenous peoples bearing the worst of the economic slowdown. The pandemic also fanned racism, antisemitism and Islamophobia and exacerbated inequalities between countries, with the richest among us having speedy access to vaccines while citizens in poorer countries have struggled for their health and well-being. We know what must be done. We just need to choose to do it. It is in our hands.

In the immediate term, as the pandemic continues to rage in most parts of the world, we must focus on scaling up the production and equitable distribution of vaccines, as well as on the economic realities facing least developed and middle-income countries, such as rising debt levels and liquidity challenges. Addressing those inequalities and fostering a more robust spirit of global solidarity in the face of daunting challenges reflects the values and interests of the entire United Nations, not just those of Canada. It is in our hands.

We know that isolationism also contributes to growing authoritarianism. In the face of the COVID-19 crisis, some have seized opportunities to erode civil liberties, freedom of expression and other universal human rights. However, we do not need to look far back in history to know that politics based on lies, deception, exclusion and inequality creates hardship and pain for people around the world. The spread of systematic misinformation and propaganda on social media and through the Internet has made us realize that the digital revolution comes with risks and dangers we cannot ignore. Canada will continue to stand firm against the forces of lies and fear, oppression and hate and criminality and corruption, for that is fundamentally who we are as Canadians.

Our commitment to human rights and the rule of law extends well beyond our shores. Canada will continue its work to promote respect for the rights of people everywhere. For example, we will continue to press for democracy and the rule of law in Myanmar, where the overthrow of the elected Government by the Tatmadaw has caused much hardship and suffering to the people of Myanmar. We support all efforts to end the military dictatorship and ensure the rights of all peoples of Myanmar, including the Rohingya, whose lives are threatened by a genocidal regime.

Canada will continue to lead efforts to maintain judicial independence, media freedom and the rule of

law. We must all continue to fight against impunity. I stand here before the Assembly to say that that is not something we simply talk about; it is something we do. Two days ago, we welcomed back to Canada Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, who were imprisoned by the Chinese Government after Canada applied both Canadian and international law in response to a request for extradition of a Chinese citizen. Canada observed the rule of law and two Canadian citizens paid a heavy price for that commitment. We did so as a matter of principle and we are proud of the courage of our two citizens, the good faith and resilience of their families and the determination and creativity of our diplomats. We continue to oppose the way in which those two citizens were treated. In that connection, I want to recognize the support of our many international partners in standing with those Canadian citizens, as well as those who helped in the development and signing of the Declaration Against Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State Relations. Our solidarity in defence of human rights and international law is an important signal. We must continue to stand together, united in our shared determination to defend our values and principles. There is a reason why respect for human rights is one of the three pillars of the United Nations. Canada will never forget that experience and that lesson. We will continue to press for an end to arbitrary detention, wherever and however it occurs.

(spoke in French)

The institutions and rules we have established over the 76 years that the United Nations has existed have given us decades of world peace and growing prosperity. There have been no world wars and extreme poverty has been considerably reduced. However, the benefits of multilateralism have not always been evenly or fairly distributed, and the potential for peace is yet to be realized in far too many places. Every region of the world is affected by instability — whether in the Americas, the Middle East, Africa, Ukraine, Haiti, the Sahel or Afghanistan — and far too often we lack the political will to build peace.

I visited the Middle East earlier this summer and listened carefully to Israeli and Palestinian leaders and representatives of civil society. Canada fully recognizes Israel's right as a State Member of the United Nations to live in peace and security. We also believe that a two-State solution is the best way to address the needs and concerns of both Israelis and Palestinians, and we encourage direct negotiations to achieve that.

Conflicts, regardless of their geography or cause, are not simply a matter of national sovereignty. Insecurity somewhere invariably leads to insecurity elsewhere, and we all pay the price. The solutions to those problems are in our hands.

(spoke in English)

We know that climate change, food insecurity and conflict will continue to exacerbate the challenge of forced migration and humanitarian need in the years to come. Make no mistake. It will affect all of us and it requires that we address those issues together. The numbers of refugees and other forcibly displaced people are already hitting record highs, year after year. We must listen to their voices and give them a place at the table. Humanitarian assistance must keep pace, but should not be viewed as a substitute for addressing the root causes of the problems forcing people to flee in the first place.

For its part, through dedicated asylum policies, Canada will also provide a refuge for those who put themselves at personal risk by defending democracy and upholding human rights. Canadians are a welcoming people. When we saw the tragedy befalling the Syrian people, we opened our hearts and our homes, bonding together to personally help people rebuild their lives. Where some see risk, we see opportunity. In just a few short years, in communities across Canada, Syrians have built businesses, raised their children and become part of the fabric of our country, just as many other communities have before them.

That is Canada's competitive advantage. We welcome people in need, but we also understand that their hard work, talents and cultures enrich us all. Many flee to Canada to find a place where they can not only build a new life but from which they can build a better world. Now, faced with a heart-wrenching situation in Afghanistan, Canadians have once again shown their openness to those who do not wish to live under Taliban rule but prefer to stand up for democracy, human rights and gender equality. In fact they have overwhelmingly called on us to do more. In response to Canadians' generosity and welcoming spirit, we have now committed to welcoming 40,000 Afghan refugees so that they too can contribute to our success while we continue to support their efforts for a more peaceful, tolerant world.

(spoke in French)

Our participation in the United Nations comes with a commitment to freedom, truth and the rule of law. We also have a responsibility to speak out on behalf of those who have been marginalized or rejected.

We are proud of Canada's achievements in the area of gender equality, both at home and abroad, but we are not complacent. We will continue to strive to remove the barriers that prevent women from fully participating in the workforce and the economy, for example, by working to provide access to affordable child care, at \$10 per day, for every young family in Canada. A recovery that does not promote the full participation of women in the economy cannot be fully successful. At the international level, we will continue to work to improve girls' education, prevent early and forced marriages and support local women's movements around the world.

We also have a responsibility to hold one another and ourselves accountable. The rights of indigenous peoples have been the subject of deep national reflection in Canada due to a heightened public awareness of past failures and the ongoing challenges facing First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. We are committed to pursuing a path of reconciliation and we know that the eyes of the world are upon us. Earlier this year, we established a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and made the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples the law of the land. Prime Minister Trudeau has tasked every member of his Cabinet with its implementation. We are also committed to making systemic changes in response to the tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. We recognize the hardship that racist colonial policies have inflicted on successive generations of indigenous peoples. The Canadian Government remains fully committed to protecting the rights of indigenous peoples and improving their standards of living.

(spoke in English)

I am optimistic. We have heard this past week about the urgent and compounding problems that we face as a global community. We know that there is a digital divide; that millions of children have been locked down and locked out of schooling; that pluralism faces a struggle against the forces of extremism and even terrorism; and that many are bewildered in the face of new technologies that can invade our privacy, uproot our families and change the face of work. But we have

the necessary solutions and tools at our disposal. If we listen to each other and bring those critical issues to the centre of our work together, we can make progress. It is in our hands. We have a United Nations that, over the past year, has proven that it is up to the operational challenge of delivering in the most difficult of situations. We have a menu of bold ideas and proven solutions. Here I would like to thank the Secretary-General for putting forward his report entitled *Our Common Agenda*, which we must all consider seriously. We know what must be done and we must marshal the political will to do it. That will require a shift in mindset.

It is no secret that we spend too much time talking and not enough time making decisions. Our parents and grandparents rose to the challenge in 1945. Now it is our turn to work together to set the course for a fairer, more just and sustainable future for all. It is in our hands. My most distinguished predecessor as Foreign Minister and winner of the Nobel Prize, Lester Pearson, put it this way.

“The fact is that to every challenge given by the threat of death and destruction, there has always been the response from free [people]: it shall not be. By those responses [we] have not only saved [ourselves], but...ensured [our] future”.

In that noble effort, Canada can be counted on today and in the days, months and years ahead.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Song Kim, Chair of the Delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Song Kim (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (spoke in Korean; English text provided by the delegation): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Mr. Abdulla Shahid on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. I am sure that his able stewardship will lead us to great success. In the face of unprecedented challenges and crises, I hope that this session will serve as an important occasion for all States Members of the United Nations to share useful experiences with one another in order to overcome difficulties, promote socioeconomic recovery and open up a new future through hope.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has taken approximately 4.7 million precious lives, continues to rage. It is worsening socioeconomic situations around the globe due to economic stagnation, racial discrimination and the widening gap between rich

and poor. Global warming is giving rise to destructive abnormal weather patterns, affecting every part of the world simultaneously and teaching us the serious lesson that no one should turn a blind eye to climate change. To make matters worse, the selfish and unjust behaviour of some Member States and specific forces have ensured that conflicts and ethnic disputes among countries and nations are continuing, with innocent people suffering in many regions of the world, including the Middle East, Africa and South-East Asia. It is no exaggeration to say that the international community is facing its most serious crisis since the founding of the United Nations. That reality urgently requires all Member States to find appropriate solutions to our problems while remaining more faithful than ever to the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the fundamental principles of international relations, as well as pooling their political will and efforts and strengthening mutual cooperation.

I would first like to highlight the efforts of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the areas of fighting the pandemic and socioeconomic development, with a view to contributing actively to our discussion of the theme of this session, on recovering from the global health crisis and building socioeconomic resilience. Owing to external factors, my country's circumstances are extremely unfavourable compared with others. However, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is never daunted or restricted by circumstances. We are advancing vigorously along the development track we have been aiming for, based on the world's most stable and solid political environment and through our own efforts overcoming all kinds of disturbing factors and challenges in our path. Thanks to the steady efforts of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea towards socioeconomic development and improving people's living standards, we have made proud and valuable progress. Our Government's current core policy is designed to cope with the global health crisis and climate change with a far-seeing plan and to provide the people with more stable and improved living conditions while sustainably increasing agricultural production.

Since we consider it vital to quarantine thoroughly against COVID-19, the Government has taken comprehensive anti-epidemic measures showing empathy for all and ensuring united action. My delegation believes that as we work to recover from COVID-19, it is important for each country to take

anti-epidemic measures suitable to its own particular conditions, with a high sense of responsibility for the lives and safety of its own people. In the face of the protracted global pandemic, which continues to spread, we will reliably safeguard the lives and safety of our people and the well-being of our country by reinforcing the existing anti-epidemic regime with improved measures.

Despite the continued global health crisis and abnormal weather conditions, we have made a number of achievements in terms of social and economic development and the improvement of people's living standards. The industrial sector is moving forward, as we have focused various efforts on strengthening the country's capabilities in self-supporting development. Good prospects have also opened up in the agricultural sector with regard to putting fulfilment of this year's grain production plan on a sound footing by minimizing the disastrous effects of climate change.

As the supreme principle of its activities, the Workers' Party of Korea invariably upholds its duty to provide the Korean people with a stable life and to steadily improve it. In accordance with a decision made at an important meeting some time ago, our country has taken measures to regularly provide its children with nutritious food such as dairy products free of charge at the State's expense, even at this difficult time. Tens of thousands of modern homes will be built annually at the State's expense and allocated to the people, thanks to the people-oriented policy of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

With regard to climate change, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has formulated a plan that includes river improvement, afforestation for erosion control, dyke maintenance and tidal embankment projects across the country. The Government will manage those projects on a regular basis for a five-year period and is taking strict crisis-management measures in order to mitigate natural disasters, including floods and typhoons. I believe that our Government's achievements in dealing with the global health and climate change crises will contribute to the efforts of the international community to recover from COVID-19 and build sustainable socioeconomic resilience.

The world is facing greater difficulties than ever before, with challenges and threats, big and small, everywhere. Even in these circumstances, we have had

great success and have garnered our people's gratitude and support. Under the wise political guidance of our party and our State leadership, we are steadily effecting development changes through our own efforts. Our people trust in the party and the Government, united in mind and destiny. That is where the invincible power of our State and the source of its inexhaustible strength lie.

Thirty years ago, on 17 September 1991, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea became the 160th Member State of the United Nations when the General Assembly, at the 1st plenary meeting of its forty-sixth session, unanimously adopted resolution 46/1, welcoming the Republic to the community of nations. Since our country and nation have remained divided, the Republic initially considered joining the United Nations with a view to achieving reunification. To that end, we consistently maintained the position that northern and southern Korea should join the United Nations under a single name after confederating and reunifying, or alternatively that they should share one seat if reunification occurred after joining the Organization. But the anti-reunification and anti-national attempts became increasingly overt, making the national division permanent and legitimate and seeking to isolate the Republic internationally through the United Nations membership issue. Against that backdrop, we took the decisive measure of joining the United Nations on our own initiative.

The Korean nation and its people, who lived on the same territory for thousands of years and many generations with the same bloodline, were artificially divided by outside forces in the mid-twentieth century, and in the end joined the United Nations with two seats. That was a tragedy indeed. As a result of the Second World War, the United Nations was established with the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. Nevertheless, against the will and desire of the Korean nation, the Korean peninsula was divided in two and since then has experienced constant tension and instability. That was the root cause of the pain and misfortune inflicted on the Korean nation. No one can deny that fact. It will never be forgotten and it has been passed down from generation to generation.

The international community also wishes to achieve a peaceful resolution to the issue of the Korean peninsula, for the sake of the Korean nation. I therefore want to take this opportunity to clarify the position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the root causes of the still unresolved issue of the

Korean peninsula and on the fundamental ways to ensure lasting peace and stability there. We believe in identifying a problem's root causes before attempting to solve it. Three decades have passed since the end of the Cold War. But the Korean peninsula is still in a vicious cycle of looming tensions and confrontation. Its primary root cause is a policy of hostility towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. To this day, many Member States are unaware that the issue of the Korean peninsula has its origin in the hostile policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Worse still, they suffer from the misconception that the United States has become hostile to my country only due to the nuclear issue.

It is not my country's possession of nuclear weapons that has triggered the United States' hostile stance towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. On the contrary, it is the United States, the biggest nuclear power in the world, that has antagonized and posed a nuclear threat to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for more than 70 years. Its hostile policy is not at all abstract. We face military threats and hostile acts from the United States every day. From the first day of the foundation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the United States has not recognized our sovereignty, treating us as an enemy State and openly showing its hostility to the socialist system chosen by our people. The United States designated the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a communist State and one with a non-market economy. It has also completely blocked, both institutionally and legislatively, the establishment of relations between our two countries in the areas of politics, economics and trade, using the unreasonable pretexts of issues to do with human rights, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the sponsoring of terrorism, religious oppression, money-laundering and more.

If that is not a hostile policy, then what is it — a friendly policy? The hostile policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea finds its clearest expression in its military threats against us. Not a single foreign troop, not a single foreign military base exists on the territory of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. But in South Korea, almost 30,000 United States troops are stationed at numerous military bases, maintaining a war posture for taking military action against my country at any moment. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has never — not once — conducted a military exercise around the United

States, but the United States has staged all manner of war drills on and around the Korean peninsula and in Korean waters every year for the past several decades by mobilizing army, naval and air forces across the world, including its own troops in South Korea, and it has threatened us through intimidating military demonstrations, while it continues to deploy numerous weapons to South Korea. In August 2021, despite our repeated warnings, the United States and South Korea defiantly conducted a combined command exercise, which is an outright war drill of an offensive nature. The difference between those exercises and the joint military exercises staged by the United States for the past several decades is in name only.

Inter-Korean relations have never been free of United States interference and obstruction, as the United States has stationed its troops in South Korea and has bound it with the chains of military alliance. Moreover, the inter-Korean agreements have never been faithfully implemented owing to the hostile behaviour of the South Korean authorities, which prioritize cooperation with an ally over the harmony of the nation.

The international community must not overlook one fact, which is that the relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States are not merely an example of those between unfriendly countries without diplomatic relations, but rather of those between belligerent countries that are legally in a state of war. The possible outbreak of a new war on the Korean peninsula has been contained not because of any mercy shown by the United States to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea but because our State has been developing a reliable deterrent that can hold hostile forces at bay and deter their attempts at military invasion. We have acquired reliable power to defend ourselves through continuing efforts, with clear insight into the demands of the times, which require that we possess the power we need for national defence in the current geopolitical environment and balance of power on the Korean peninsula, as well as constantly strained international relations.

There is no country on Earth that is under the constant threat of war facing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and its people long for peace. What we mean by a war deterrent is literally the legitimate right to self-defence — one that can deter aggressive war and enable us to defend ourselves. As the whole world knows, and to the great concern of the United States, we do of course include powerful offensive means in

our war deterrent. However, we do not want to target anyone with those means. In other words, we would never violate or endanger the security of the United States, South Korea or our neighbouring countries. We are simply building up our national defence in order to defend ourselves and reliably safeguard our country's security and peace. For that reason, we do not imprudently say that we are building up military power that is good enough to deter provocation. However, the military threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from the United States and its servile forces are evolving constantly with time.

The United States spends astronomical amounts of money — more than \$700 billion annually — on developing supersonic weapons, long-range precision-guided weapons, new-generation intercontinental ballistic missiles and nuclear strategic bombers, all of which are bound to be used first against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in a future Korean war. The South Korean authorities have recently been hell-bent on developing ultramodern weapons with the tacit approval and patronage of the United States, and substantial war equipment has been shipped to South Korea. Such dangerous moves change the balance of military power on the Korean peninsula. Given that the United States and its military ally South Korea are increasing their military threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, no one can deny my country its legitimate right to defend itself by developing, testing, manufacturing and possessing weapon systems equivalent to the ones they possess or are developing.

In his report to the eighth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea, Kim Jong Un, Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, stated that the key to establishing new relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States will be the latter's abandonment of its hostility to my country. In addition, he expressed the principled position that we would also approach the United States on the principle of power for power and goodwill for goodwill in future.

The United States now has two options. One is to contribute to the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula and the world by wholly and boldly abandoning its anachronistic hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Successive United States Administrations have repeatedly expressed, both verbally and in writing, that they had no hostile intent

towards my country, advocating dialogue with us. But as reality has shown, that was nothing more than flowery rhetoric to cover up their hostility.

The current Administration should demonstrate its stated policy that it has no hostile intent towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea through practical actions rather than words. It should also end its double standards towards my country. If the United States makes the bold decision to give up its hostile policy, we are also prepared to respond in kind. But at the present time we do not believe that there is any prospect of the United States truly abandoning that policy. Nevertheless, we will not implore it to do so. In the course of the showdown between our two countries spanning more than half a century, we have grown quite accustomed to United States military threats and we now know well how to deal with that very hostile country. We have learned how to cope with the hostility and have gained rich experience. We will continue to keep our eyes on changes in its policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

If the current United States Administration tries to solve the issue of the Korean peninsula, something that the preceding Administration failed to do, by relying on the same anachronistic means and methods, the result will be no different. If the United States continues to act in the same manner in order to threaten and provoke us, and relies on Cold War legacies such as military alliances, it will not end well. Not long ago, when it withdrew its troops from Afghanistan, the United States announced that it had put an end to its longest war, which lasted for 20 years. But in reality, the Korean war has gone on for more than 70 years. If the United States wants to see the Korean War, its most protracted war, come to an end, and if it truly desires peace and reconciliation on the Korean peninsula, it should take a first step towards abandoning its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by permanently ending its joint military exercises and deployment of all kinds of strategic weapons targeting my country in and around the Korean peninsula. I am convinced that relations between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as inter-Korean relations, will improve if the United States refrains from threatening my country and abandons its hostility to it.

The coronavirus disease pandemic, climate change, the refugee problem and endless disputes among countries are emerging as burning issues. Underlying

these are the self-serving policies of interference by the United States and the West. The Afghan crisis has claimed the lives of tens of thousands of innocent people and triggered a flow of millions of refugees, as well as the collapse of the State and the country's social system. That is clear testimony to the tragic consequences of the open use of armed forces against a sovereign State and of interference in its internal affairs and occupation by foreign troops.

Reality urgently demands that the United Nations become a fair international Organization with strong executive power to discharge its mandate in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It is particularly urgent that we make the Security Council an impartial and responsible organ that substantially contributes to the maintenance of international peace and security, as explicitly stipulated in the Charter. The Council is not a political instrument through which certain global Powers take decisions on international relations and the destiny of sovereign States with a yardstick of double standards and on the basis of their own interests and priorities. The Security Council has not said a word about the reckless arms build-up and criminal war acts perpetrated by specific countries such as the United States and its servile forces. Instead, the Council takes every opportunity to find fault with the legitimate self-defence measures of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. That is telltale evidence that the United Nations does not represent the interests of a broad spectrum of the international community but has rather degenerated into a closed circle for the privileged few. In order to prevent high-handedness and arbitrariness in the Security Council, we should increase its representation of developing countries, which make up a majority of the United Nations. It is also imperative that the rules and procedures of the United Nations be revised so that resolutions adopted in the Security Council can be rejected, when necessary, by General Assembly resolutions, which reflect the will of an overwhelming majority of Member States.

Next, for the United Nations to be a fair Organization with practical abilities, we should revitalize its work based on the principles of sovereign equality and respect for peoples' equal rights and their right to self-determination. Ensuring sovereign equality and respect for equal rights and self-determination are core principles of the Charter and the cornerstone of the Organization's very existence. Some Member States try to unilaterally impose Western values and

the rules-based international order on sovereign States under the guise of defending democracy and protecting human rights. Such attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of any sovereign State are gross violations of the principle of sovereign equality. Chaos, disorder, bloodshed and violence continue unabated in some countries owing to foreign intervention. Those unhappy events prove that human rights are directly linked to sovereign rights and that without them, people cannot avoid the fate of stateless nations fraught with misery and disaster.

The United Nations should do away with double standards and the unjust tendency to favour the positions of some countries and forces. It should rather ensure full impartiality and fairness, as required by the Charter, whose backbone is the principle of sovereign equality and respect for equal rights and the self-determination of peoples.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to take this opportunity to extend its full support and encouragement to the Government and the people of Cuba, who continue to move forward holding aloft the banner of socialism in the face of efforts by the United States to impose illegal sanctions and blockades and to undermine Cuba from within. I also want to express our constant support to independent countries such as Syria and Palestine and their peoples and our solidarity with them in their unyielding struggle to protect their national dignity, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea maintains unchanged its underlying foreign-policy ideas of independence, peace and friendship. In future, too, my country will discharge its responsibilities and duties to strengthen its friendship and unity with every country in the world that respects our sovereignty, in order to achieve genuine international justice and equality and ensure peace and security on the Korean peninsula and in the rest of the world.

The President took the Chair.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Aly Diane, Chair of the Delegation of the Republic of Guinea.

Mr. Diane (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): First of all, Mr. President, on behalf of His Excellency Colonel Mamadi Doumbouya, President of the National Rally and Development Committee (CNRD), President of the

Republic of Guinea and Head of State, I should like to extend to you my warmest congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly of the United Nations at its seventy-sixth regular session. I am firmly convinced that our Assembly will greatly benefit from your rich experience, Sir, and you can count on the full support of my delegation in carrying out your important mission.

Mr. President, your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkır, and his team, deserve our respectful tribute for the efficiency with which they conducted the work of the seventy-fifth session of the Assembly.

I would also like to reiterate my sincere congratulations and encouragement to Mr. António Guterres on his reappointment as Secretary-General of the United Nations. Accordingly, we would express to him our great appreciation for the dexterity with which he has taken up his delicate mission. Since his accession to lead the Organization, he has never ceased to promote multilateralism as an essential tool in the management of world affairs. We reaffirm Guinea's firm support for the reform process he has undertaken.

The theme proposed for this seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly — “Building resilience through hope — to recover from COVID-19, rebuild sustainably, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the rights of people, and revitalize the United Nations” — is challenging in many ways. Indeed, this session of the General Assembly, like the previous one, is being held at a particular time, marked by the resurgence of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), with the appearance of new variants that continue to have a negative impact on the health, safety and lives of our populations, as well as on the economies of our States, which are already faced with a slowdown in international trade, a drop in investment and a reduction in the price of raw materials, all against a backdrop of a scarcity of sources of financing. This situation has considerably slowed down the pace of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, jeopardizing the gains made.

COVID-19 showed the world's dependence on technology and digital connectivity, to which more than half of the world's population does not have access. This state of affairs increases inequality, undermines the resilience of the most vulnerable and requires urgent action, including the restructuring of the international financial architecture, the building of

digital infrastructure and the production and equitable distribution of vaccines.

In this context, the Republic of Guinea welcomes the measures taken by financial institutions and specialized organizations for public debt relief, in particular the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Health Organization and the World Trade Organization, the allocation of \$650 billion in special drawing rights and the financing of the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) Facility, which must take into account the disproportionate consequences of COVID-19 on the States.

Like other countries, the Republic of Guinea did not sit back in the face of this pandemic. After the first case of COVID-19 appeared on 12 March 2020, the Guinean authorities drew up a contingency plan, which became a national preparedness and response plan against COVID-19, in order to better coordinate and strengthen the interventions and capacities of health services. The implementation of this contingency plan required such measures as continued screening and vaccination, the increase in the number of vaccination sites, the implementation of a priority vaccination strategy for students and housewives, and the observance of preventive measures.

With the support of its bilateral and multilateral partners, and with its own funds, the Republic of Guinea has endeavoured to improve the vaccination rate. However, in the light of the scale of the challenge, we still are requesting the support of the international community so that the entire Guinean population can have access to vaccines. Guinea is grateful to all donors who have been willing to assist it in this difficult phase.

Beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, poverty in all its forms and dimensions, hunger, climate change, terrorism, irregular migration, violent extremism, intolerance, racism, conflict of all kinds and inequality continue to plague the world. These scourges that inhibit our hopes warrant our sustained attention and a vigorous response. It goes without saying that peace and security have been undermined in various places around the world, despite the international community's immense efforts. Indeed, the Sahel region has been experiencing an upsurge in terrorist attacks for some time. Armed groups present in border areas continue to plunge the population into grief and undermine republican institutions. We therefore reiterate our full support for the actions of the Joint Force of the Group

of Five for the Sahel and renew the call for increased assistance from the international community.

The situation in the Middle East remains worrying. The resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict requires the creation of two States living side by side within secure and internationally recognized pre-1967 borders.

In Haiti, the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse remains engraved in our memories. We reiterate our deepest sympathies to the people and the Government of Haiti and call on the international community to do more to help this country as it faces a cycle of violence and natural disasters.

The Republic of Guinea reiterates its constant solidarity with the Cuban people in their legitimate struggle to lift the unilateral economic and trade sanctions that have been imposed on them for decades.

Never before has our planet been so threatened with the corollaries of deforestation, greenhouse-gas emissions and climate change. As we prepare to join the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, scheduled to take place in Glasgow, Scotland, my country, which has held the presidency of the Group of 77 and China since 18 January, is concerned about the delay in climate financing, as well as the failure of major polluters to meet their commitments. As the spokesperson for 134 States, my country intends to play its full part at this global meeting, which will allow for the review of global programmes aimed at reducing pollution, protecting health and promoting national economic recovery plans. We will not cease to insist on the need for the developed countries to support the developing countries, which are the main victims of global warming. We take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to all the Member States that have placed their trust in our country to preside over this important group, whose role is increasingly important in defending the interests of developing countries.

On 5 September, the CNRD, under the leadership of His Excellency Colonel Mamadi Doumbouya, took over the destiny of the Republic of Guinea. Since its accession to power, the CNRD has reaffirmed its dedication to all of Guinea's international commitments by extending a hand of cooperation to the international community. In the ardent desire to respond to the legitimate aspirations of the people of Guinea for peace and democratic progress, the CNRD has therefore

initiated, since 14 September, national consultations leading to an inclusive and peaceful transition for a return to constitutional order. These consensual consultations, for which real enthusiasm is giving rise to hope, will make it possible to draw up a road map for a transition, including the formation of a Government of National Unity, the revision of the electoral rolls, the drafting of a new Constitution and the holding of free, fair and universally accepted elections.

The CNRD has already taken measures to ease the sociopolitical and economic situation, including the release of people arrested during opposition demonstrations and the reopening of air, land and sea borders to ensure the free movement of people and goods and promote good-neighbourly relations. Steps were taken to allow political parties and civil society to operate freely.

In order to leave no one behind, the CNRD has invited the Guinean diaspora, wherever it may be, to make its contribution to the building of strong and sustainable institutions. In this historic undertaking to rebuild the country, the new Guinean authorities are asking for the support of all bilateral and multilateral partners, with a view to making Guinea a true State based on the rule of law.

In our common struggle to build a new world, Guinea values the promotion of multilateralism, the only way to lead humankind to a better tomorrow, within the framework of a reformed, revitalized and more democratic United Nations, conducive to inclusive and supportive cooperation.

The issue of Africa's representation on the Security Council must finally be resolved for the sake of the effectiveness of the United Nations and for the justice that Africa and Africans deserve. To that end, my delegation reiterates its full support for the Common African Position as outlined in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. Shared prosperity and peace in the world are at stake. As in the past, Guinea will spare no effort to make its modest contribution to realizing a world of peace, justice and solidarity.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Karlito Nunes, Chair of the Delegation of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Nunes (Timor-Leste): On behalf of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, I have the very great pleasure and privilege of reading out our national

statement in Portuguese to the General Assembly at its general debate.

(spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation)

I will read out a statement by His Excellency Mr. Francisco Guterres Lú-Olo, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

“Exactly 19 years ago, Timor-Leste became the 191st member of the United Nations, and it is an honour for me today to address the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. I congratulate you, Mr. President, and am grateful for the contributions of your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkır. I also commend you for your able leadership and determination in leading the Assembly during a difficult time, as well as for making this in-person session possible. In addition, Timor-Leste congratulates His Excellency Mr. António Guterres on his reappointment as Secretary-General. The theme chosen by the President of the General Assembly for the general debate this year accurately captures the opportunities and challenges facing the United Nations.

“The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has created global challenges that have not only affected the health sector but have also had a devastating impact on the socioeconomic front by reversing hard-won gains, creating economic recession and further exacerbating pre-existing structural challenges, deepening inequality among nations and causing the social distress, conflict and hunger that eventually push people into extreme poverty. The United Nations has a key political role to play in mobilizing international cooperation and solidarity to overcome the current multifaceted and interlinked global challenges related to the pandemic. It should continue serving as a platform for international cooperation and worldwide solidarity in addressing the current COVID-19 pandemic in order to build back better in a more resilient and sustainable manner.

“In that context, it is important to ensure that international cooperation addresses and focuses on COVID-19's socioeconomic impact on the most disadvantaged and vulnerable people and countries — especially the least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing States,

landlocked developing countries and countries in conflict or emerging from it — in order to mitigate their structural challenges, which the pandemic has further exacerbated.

“As of 27 September, Timor-Leste has recorded more than 19,000 cases, with more than 18,000 full recoveries and 113 deaths, since the beginning of the pandemic. As Timor-Leste is both a least developed country and a small island developing State, COVID-19 is putting great pressure on our already weak health-care system, with its lack of facilities and resources to cope effectively with the pandemic. My country continues to endorse vaccines as a global public good, which should be accessible to everyone, including developing and low-income countries and countries in special situations. The international community must address vaccination gaps in the low-income countries that have so far vaccinated as few as 1.1 per cent of their populations. Without equal access to vaccines, many countries, including Timor-Leste, will be unable to protect their citizens and people from the virus. Timor-Leste nonetheless commends its development partners, the United Nations, international organizations and other actors that have contributed to overcoming the circumstances created by COVID-19. We are deeply grateful for our partners’ generosity, which has enabled us to administer more than 600,000 doses and thereby vaccinate a total of 30 per cent of our adult population.

“Climate change continues to be at the top of our agenda. We are experiencing particular hardships caused by the impact of climate change while combating the COVID-19 pandemic. Countries in special situations, including Timor-Leste, are often forced to deal with the severe weather events that result from climate change, such as floods, landslides, droughts, sea-level rise and global warming, which ultimately jeopardize our existence and pose a threat to humankind and human rights. In our national context, my Government has been committed to reforestation and the correction of watercourse beds. It is also worth noting that we are taking measures to combat plastic waste. Reforestation activities ensure greater rainfall and a cleaner environment. To strengthen those actions, I launched a national campaign entitled “One citizen, one tree”, which has enjoyed particular

support from youth organizations. In reaffirming our action in these areas, I also recently appointed a special envoy and roving ambassador to ensure that Timor-Leste is represented and our voice heard at international discussions and negotiations on issues related to climate change.

“As we prepare for the twenty sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Glasgow this year, Timor-Leste is pleased with the preparatory process under way and looks forward to a constructive outcome for the Conference in generating international cooperation on scaling up global efforts to fulfil our obligations under the Paris Agreement, so that we can protect our planet for current and future generations based on common but differentiated responsibilities.

“We have nine years left to achieve the global targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. However, we are far from achieving the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the current slow pace in development. The LDCs are those left furthest behind. Many of them have high levels of external dependency and exposure and low levels of resilience to enable them to recover from socioeconomic shocks, problems that are compounded by the effects of climate change and have made achieving the SDGs even more challenging.

“Timor-Leste welcomes the recommendations in the Secretary-General’s report entitled *Our Common Agenda* for how we can best respond to our current and future challenges. In that regard, my Government has contributed \$50,000 to support the Secretary-General’s efforts. We have come to the end of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020. We have not, however, seen much progress in its realization. It is therefore important that our pandemic recovery efforts should focus on addressing the barriers that have prevented the realization of the Istanbul Programme of Action from doing the same to our achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Above all, Timor-Leste reiterates that SDG 16 will be a catalyst for development, given that peace, justice, inclusion and strong institutions will create the necessary conditions for economic growth and

constitute the foundations for decent work, health education and prosperous nations.

“Timor-Leste is fully committed to the principles of multilateralism enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, such as respect for sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States. Timor-Leste is considered one of the success stories of the engagement of the United Nations in enabling the realization of the principle of the right to self-determination.

“Our experience in undertaking the reconciliation process with Indonesia following its invasion and occupation illustrates the importance of reconciliation in restoring good relations and cooperation despite the pain and tragedy of the past. Timor-Leste will therefore continue to promote peacebuilding and State-building by sharing experiences related to reconciliation and justice through South-South cooperation and the Group of Seven Plus, which is a platform for cooperation and solidarity among countries that are affected by conflict and the fragility that conflict causes, and that are on a path towards resilience. We are also committed to upholding international law and the international rules-based order and promoting the use of peaceful settlement mechanisms to settle differences and disputes. Accordingly, Timor-Leste has led by example in resolving its maritime boundary dispute with Australia through compulsory conciliation proceedings — the very first of their kind — under the purview of the Conciliation Commission pursuant to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

“We underscore that unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargoes are contrary to the values and principles enshrined in the Charter. Timor-Leste therefore continues to be deeply concerned about the prolonged economic, commercial and financial embargo that has been imposed on Cuba for more than six decades and has had damaging effects on the lives of the Cuban people and the country’s development, including Cuba’s efforts to effectively deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. In that regard, Timor-Leste firmly supports the lifting of the embargo and opposes all extraterritorial measures.

“We are also concerned about the increasing levels of tension and conflict in Myanmar and Afghanistan, which have resulted in the loss of lives and homes, deteriorating respect for human rights and a lack of access to basic services. Timor-Leste calls on all the parties concerned to resolve their differences through dialogue and reconciliation in order to reach peaceful and permanent solutions. In Myanmar’s country-specific situation, we welcome the regional mechanism to address the security and socioeconomic challenges and appreciate the five-point consensus adopted by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations at its recent Leaders’ Meeting. With regard to Afghanistan, Timor-Leste calls for respect for women’s rights and the rights of Afghan people and foreigners who want to leave the country.

“With regard to multilateralism, we emphasize that language and culture connect us and foster our partnership with the countries and the people of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, which we are proud to be part of within the context of South-South and North-South cooperation. The culture and the language that we have adopted as one of our official languages has helped to foster quality education, spread knowledge and strengthen our people-to-people connection. We believe that the Portuguese language, which in 2021 is spoken by approximately 280 million people worldwide, could also be considered for inclusion as one of the official languages of the United Nations.

“As we embark on the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, Timor-Leste would like to take this opportunity to urge the United Nations to commit to the work of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, aimed at realizing the decolonization of the remaining 17 non-self-governing territories in order to enable the people in those territories to exercise their right to self-determination.

“Timor-Leste would also like to take this opportunity to refer to the situation in Western Sahara. The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara has been deployed in the area for approximately three decades, but there has been no real progress. We therefore once again call on the Secretary-General to have his Personal

Envoy for Western Sahara urgently relaunch the negotiation process between the Polisario Front and Morocco and enable the people of Western Sahara to exercise their right to self-determination, based on the Charter and the relevant United Nations resolutions. In another area of conflict, Timor-Leste maintains diplomatic relations with both Israel and Palestine, and we believe that a lasting solution will only be possible through coexistence, with the State of Israel and a State of Palestine living side by side.

“We are living in an ever-evolving world where the speed of change goes hand in hand with growing uncertainty. After the 76 years of the existence of the United Nations, new challenges and circumstances require effective global responses through cooperation and partnership. In order for us to remain on pace, we urgently need to restructure the Organization in its commitment to peace, security and development. In that regard, Timor-Leste appreciates the efforts to revitalize the Organization so that it can adapt to current challenges. We reiterate our full support for reforming the Security Council so that it better reflects the modern world and properly addresses global challenges in the areas of peace, security and development.

“Timor-Leste is fully committed to the protection and promotion of human rights and has ratified seven core human rights treaties and their protocols. We would like to take this opportunity to emphasize our commitment to the promotion and protection of women’s rights. Timor-Leste has made widespread efforts to achieve gender equality through the adoption of policies, legislation and programmes that contribute to achieving that goal. Although we continue to face cases of gender-based violence and difficulties in accessing justice, Timor-Leste is strongly committed to removing such obstacles from its path towards achieving gender equality.

“Timor-Leste is grateful for the support that it has received from the United Nations, its development partners and various civil-society organizations, which are helping us in our effort to eliminate gender-based violence in our society. We have made considerable progress in terms of complying with international human rights instruments and reporting and feel increasingly

confident in our right to participate in discussions and decisions on human rights issues.

“In addition, while Timor-Leste experienced the bitter impact of human rights violations on its path to restoring its independence, our existence as a country is a United Nations success story with regard to defending human rights principles and values. We therefore feel a moral obligation to contribute to promoting human rights at the global level. Timor-Leste has therefore decided to run for a seat on the Human Rights Council for the term from 2024 to 2026, in order to contribute to the Council’s work of promoting and advancing the principles and values of human rights at the national and global levels. We are counting on the support of Member States to be able to contribute in that regard.”

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate.

Before giving the floor to speakers in exercise of the right of reply, I would like to remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mrs. Pejic-glymph (Serbia): My delegation would like to exercise its right of reply in response to the statement made by Prime Minister Edi Rama of Albania during the general debate (see A/76/PV.13). Last Thursday we once again heard the Prime Minister of Albania speak of an imaginary “State of Kosovo” and call for its international recognition and membership in our Organization. I want to underline that the status of Kosovo was determined by Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), which confirms the territorial integrity and sovereignty of my country and stipulates that Kosovo and Metohija is an autonomous province within the Republic of Serbia.

I would also like to draw the Assembly’s attention to Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations, which directly envisages that Member States agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council, especially because Prime Minister Rama proudly announced that Albania will serve as a non-permanent member of the Council starting on 1 January 2022. We encourage Albania to demonstrate respect for the Charter and strict adherence to Security Council resolutions during its term on the Council and beyond.

Serbia's position on the status of Kosovo and Metohija and the dialogue with Pristina under the auspices of the European Union is well known and was discussed by our Prime Minister when she addressed the Assembly just a few days ago, on 24 September (see A/76/PV.13). She also presented a detailed picture of the dire situation in which Serbs and other non-Albanians live in constant fear for their safety and livelihoods.

Last Friday, the Secretary-General started his meeting with our Prime Minister by reiterating that where the United Nations is concerned, "Kosovo is not a State". We believe that that is the best response to false claims about its status.

Mr. Ghadirkhomi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am taking the floor to respond to the baseless allegations made this morning by the Prime Minister of the Israeli regime (see A/76/PV.16).

Like his notorious predecessor, he tried his best in his statement to disseminate as much disinformation and make as many unfounded allegations against my country as he could. He played the victim and desperately tried to portray the Israeli regime as innocent. That is not at all surprising. Deception has always been part of Israel's agenda. His malevolent objective is crystal clear — covering up all the expansionist and destabilizing policies and criminal practices of the Zionist regime in the region over the past seven decades. Instead of spouting such fabrications and accusations, he should have said that as the only occupying Power in the region, Israel has waged more than 15 wars and has invaded all its neighbours, without exception, and even countries beyond the region. It has continued to occupy territories and has committed all four core international crimes, not once but repeatedly and sometimes simultaneously. And that long dark record goes on and on. He did not refer even once to the inherent rights of the Palestinian people, who have continued to live for well over seven decades under the occupation and brutal rule of the Israeli regime.

Nor did he make any reference to the unlawful and inhumane blockade his country has imposed on the Gaza Strip, transforming it into the world's largest open-air prison. He also deceptively tried to portray his regime as the only democracy in the region, without mentioning that its rulers have always engaged in terrorist activities and that some of them are well-known for butchering innocent Palestinian civilians.

In just the 11 days of a brutal, all-out war against Gaza in May, Israeli forces killed 256 Palestinians, including 66 children and 40 women. That included 13 members of an extended family who were killed and buried in the rubble of their own home. Many of them were children, including one as young as six months old. The best title for the rulers of the Israeli regime is "child-killer terrorists". The Israeli Prime Minister should also have explained why it has continued its confiscation and demolition of Palestinian homes, its forced displacement of their inhabitants and its killing of peaceful Palestinian protesters. All the policies and practices of that brutal regime continue to be in flagrant violation of the basic principles of morality and humanity and the rules of international law, particularly international humanitarian law. It cannot deflect attention from its long-standing malign and destabilizing activities in the region by waging a widespread systematic Iranophobic campaign, illustrated by the Prime Minister's words about our peaceful nuclear programme.

Possessing as it does weapons of mass destruction of all kinds, as well as highly sophisticated conventional weapons, the Israeli regime continues to endanger peace and security in the region and beyond. It also brazenly ignores international calls to join the legally binding international instrument banning weapons of mass destruction, thereby continuing to seriously hamper the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East proposed by Iran in 1974. Yet it desperately attempts to portray Iran's conventional weapons capabilities and peaceful nuclear programme, which is subject to strict verification by the International Atomic Energy Agency, as a challenge to regional stability. That is nothing but a political move to distract attention from the real danger that the Israeli regime poses to regional peace and security, particularly through its nuclear-weapon arsenals and unsafeguarded nuclear installations and activities.

In his rejection of every principle on which our Organization and the Assembly are based, the Israeli Prime Minister once again used language threatening my country, in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations. He should be under no illusions about our ability and determination to defend our security and interests. Above all, his regime should avoid any miscalculations or adventurist moves in the region. We have demonstrated that we will not hesitate to exercise our inherent right to defend ourselves against any threat

at any time. My delegation categorically rejects all the baseless allegations made by the Israeli regime about my country and our President.

While I have the floor, I would also like to respond to the unfounded claims made by the representative of the United Arab Emirates about my country's territorial integrity with regard to the Iranian islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs. The Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates its consistent and principled position that it does not recognize the existence of any such dispute between Iran and the United Arab Emirates. The three islands are an inseparable part of Iranian territory and we therefore categorically reject any claim to the contrary. Nonetheless, and in order to show its great respect for the principle of good neighbourliness, Iran has always expressed its readiness to engage in bilateral talks with a view to ending any misunderstanding that the United Arab Emirates may have about Abu Musa island.

Mrs. Breshanaj (Albania): My delegation is taking the floor to reply to the statement just made by the representative of Serbia in response to the statement by Prime Minister Edi Rama of Albania on 24 September in the general debate at the 13th plenary meeting of the General Assembly (see A/76/PV.13). We would prefer not to have to use our right of reply, but for the sake of clarity and truth, we think it is important to highlight for the Assembly the following points about the status of the Republic of Kosovo and its worldwide recognition.

First, there is no room for calling into question the status of Kosovo, which the International Court of Justice has found to be in compliance with international law and the will of the people of Kosovo.

Secondly, the undeniable truth is the irreversible reality that Kosovo has been an independent and sovereign State since 2008. It is recognized by 117 States Members of the United Nations and has a number of diplomatic missions and consular posts worldwide. Today, Kosovo is very well oriented towards European Union accession, with a clear Euro-Atlantic perspective. It is a member and active participant in all regional initiatives of South-Eastern Europe and part of more than 60 international organizations. As we have stated in this very Hall, Albania believes that Kosovo's pursuit of bilateral recognition, full integration into the international community and membership in international organizations, including the United

Nations, would only contribute to the sustainable peace and development of the wider region.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm our firm support for the European Union-facilitated dialogue talks, launched in 2010, which established a process for fostering reconciliation and the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia, thereby paving the way for a definitive solution and an abiding legal agreement on mutual recognition.

Mr. Paulauskas (Lithuania): Lithuania would like to use its right to reply on behalf of Estonia, Latvia, Poland and my own country, Lithuania, to the statement made earlier today by Vladimir Makei, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus (see A/76/PV.16).

The Belarusian regime has recently made numerous attempts to spread disinformation in international forums regarding the migrant crisis at the European Union's external border with Belarus. It has deliberately and artificially created and directed flows of irregular migration after the European Union demonstrated its principled position in response to blatant and systematic human rights abuses by Belarusian authorities. The Belarusian regime exploits the vulnerabilities of migrants who are already suffering, thereby abusing their human rights, while at the same time using them as instruments of hybrid attacks aimed at destabilizing and pressuring the European Union and its member States. We firmly reject any attempts at sowing discord and call on Belarus to stop the attacks and address the humanitarian crisis, in line with its international obligations.

Mr. Liu Yang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China is taking the floor in response to the statement made by the Foreign Minister of Canada in the General Assembly Hall this afternoon, in which he mentioned Ms. Meng Wanzhou, who is a Chinese citizen. He also mentioned two Canadian citizens, Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor. His remarks were in total ignorance of the law and completely wrong, and China categorically rejects and opposes them. Thanks to the unrelenting efforts of the Chinese Government, Ms. Meng, who spent 1,028 days in illegal detention, left Canada to return to China, her homeland, on a charter flight on 24 September, and has been reunited with her family. Her case is nothing but a political incident and a frame-up. There was no legal basis for the case that the United States and Canada made against Ms. Meng. Its true purpose was to suppress Chinese high-tech enterprises and companies

as a way to hold back China's progress in the area of science and technology. Their actions are very typical of illegal and arbitrary detention.

With regard to Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, there is considerable evidence to show that while they were in China they engaged in criminal acts that endangered Chinese security on Chinese territory, and they have confessed to their crimes. I should emphasize here that Meng Wanzhou's case is completely different from the cases involving Mr. Kovrig and Mr. Spavor. We hope that Canada can face the facts squarely, correct its mistakes and draw lessons from what has happened so that it does not make further mistakes.

Ms. Alawadhi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to exercise my country's right of reply in response to the statement by my colleague from the delegation of Iran.

My country would like to stress that the three islands of the Greater and Lesser Tunbs and Abu Musa in the Arab Gulf are part and parcel of the territories of the United Arab Emirates. We unequivocally reject Iran's continued and unfounded occupation of them. We will continue urging Iran to respond positively to our request for a peaceful settlement of the issue of the three occupied islands of the United Arab Emirates, through direct negotiations or the International Court of Justice.

Mr. Evseenko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to respond to the joint statement just made on behalf of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Poland about the migration crisis.

Belarus did not initiate this conflict. It has always properly upheld its international obligations and continues to do so in accordance with international law. We did not start this crisis, and our European colleagues are well aware of the reason for the suspension in fulfillment of our obligations under the readmission agreement.

I would like to reiterate that we need to sit down at the negotiating table and calmly resolve the matter. We do not want an escalation of the issue.

Mr. Arbeiter (Canada): I would like to exercise our right of reply in response to the statement just made by the representative of China.

When my Foreign Minister spoke earlier today, he accurately depicted the situation as the application

of both Canadian and international law in response to a request for extradition. Ms. Meng was treated with respect. The process in the Canadian judicial system was independent and transparent. We respect our court system and judicial independence. At the conclusion of the process, Ms. Meng spoke outside the Vancouver courthouse to thank the court and the Canadian Government for "upholding the rule of law". She also expressed her gratitude to the Canadian people for their tolerance and apologized for any inconvenience.

The two Canadian citizens who were held arbitrarily in China did not benefit from a similar degree of transparency, respect, due process or judicial independence. We continue to oppose the way they were treated, and we will continue to speak out against arbitrary detention in State-to-State relations.

Mr. Ghadirkhomi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I feel obliged to take the floor for a second time to respond to the further statement and baseless claim repeated by the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

The three islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs in the Persian Gulf have been and continue to be an inseparable and integral part of Iranian territory. Iran reiterates its sovereignty over those islands, and we therefore categorically reject any claim to the contrary. As I stated before, in line with our policy of friendship and good-neighbourliness towards all of our neighbours, my Government stands ready to discuss any possible misunderstanding with the United Arab Emirates. However, it is obvious that the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran over these islands are non-negotiable. I would also like to remind the representative of the United Arab Emirates that the name "Persian Gulf" has been the correct appellation for the body of water situated between the Arab peninsula and the Iranian plateau since 500 B.C., and will remain so forever.

Mr. Liu Yang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I am exercising my right of reply for the second time. We have heard the response from the representative of Canada and cannot accept it. I would like to emphasize that whether or not we are talking about the case involving Ms. Meng or those involving Mr. Kovrig and Mr. Spavor, the facts cannot be denied and laws cannot be flouted. We believe that history will be the judge.

The President: I will now deliver my closing remarks from the rostrum.

We began the general debate last week with my opening remarks (see A/76/PV.3), in which I underscored the need for a presidency of hope. I was hopeful for a successful general debate and for the safety and security of each and every one of the members of the Assembly. Today I am grateful, because we did it. The United Nations has taken its biggest, boldest step yet to emerge from the pandemic. None of that would have been possible without everyone here and the support of so many. I would like to express my sincere appreciation for members' active participation in the seventy-sixth session of the general debate. I would also like to express my profound gratitude to our host country, the United States, the city of New York, the New York Police Department and all the other departments of the city of New York for their seamless logistical and security support over the past few weeks. That is no easy task. We are grateful to all of them for their relentless and untiring contributions.

I would also like to thank the city of New York and the Mayor's Office for making vaccines available for visiting delegations. I understand that approximately 93 attendees were vaccinated and 843 provided with the free testing facilities offered through the mobile vaccine vans. New York City has been an exceptional host, as always. We also thank the people of New York, who welcomed us back to their vibrant city with open hearts.

I also want to thank our colleagues across the United Nations Secretariat, in particular in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Department of Operational Support, the Protocol and Liaison Service and security and facilities management, who have untiringly provided us with countless hours of essential support on everything from photography to videography, from interpretation to health care and from diplomatic protocol to medical advice and security.

Finally, I would like to thank each and every member of my team in the Office of the President of the General Assembly. We come from more than 30 countries and have found a vibe that will keep us spirited in delivering on the year-long agenda that we have set for ourselves. It was a tremendous task to organize a high-level week of this magnitude amid a global pandemic. I am glad that delegations faithfully followed the sound mitigation measures put in place by the Secretariat and that we managed to have a successful debate.

Our success this past week demonstrates that mitigation measures combined with high vaccination rates do indeed work. We must build on that success and continue the momentum. Going forward, for the upcoming Main Committee session, I would like to inform members that with the cooperation of the Secretariat, a decision has been taken to increase the size of delegations to one plus three in the General Assembly Hall and one plus one in the combined Conference Rooms 1, 2 and 3. In addition, the Secretariat is making available the Trusteeship Council Chamber and Conference Room 4, with limited seating and interpretation. Conference Rooms 9, 10, 11 and 12 and the Alphabet Rooms will also be made available, with limited seating but without interpretation facilities.

The honour system that I announced in my letter dated 16 September continues. Reopening the General Assembly is indeed a success in times such as these. Yet our true measure of success remains our willingness and ability to engage in dialogue and to put our faith in the multilateral system. In that regard, I would like to thank all the leaders who candidly laid out the challenges that we are confronting and called for action. Over the past week, we heard from 194 speakers, including 100 Heads of State, 52 Heads of Government, three Vice Presidents and 34 Ministers. I myself held discussions with close to 70 heads of delegations of all levels. I trust that members are as encouraged as I am by the strong showing in our return to in-person diplomacy. We were all glad to see the halls and cafeterias of the United Nations filled with dialogue, debate, laughter and compromise. That is the United Nations.

A great deal was discussed over the past week but a clear set of issues arose time and again. They are the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), including both the recovery process and the need to expedite access to vaccines; the threat of climate change; the dangers of inaction and the need for success at the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and peace, security and the risks of instability. The fact that those issues were so dominant speaks volumes about what the world wants. It is now up to us and the United Nations system to address those demands and to do so in a manner that turns every challenge into an opportunity — an opportunity to strengthen multilateralism and deliver results on the ground. There is no time for complacency. The world is demanding more action, not less.

Another issue that was addressed at length, and which was sadly on display, was the deeply poor gender representation at the highest levels of our work. Only 18 of the 194 speakers in this year's general debate were women. We must do more. I have already held a dedicated discussion with female Heads of State and Government, as well as the European Union, on how to boost gender equality. I thank those leaders who shared their thoughts and reaffirm my commitment to taking forward that advice with concrete action.

With high-level meetings planned on COVID-19, climate and the environment, as well as efforts being made to empower women and girls and work towards greater participation by youth and civil-society organizations, I hope that the seventy-sixth session will be an active and inclusive one. I trust that members will join me in that endeavour. I would like to point to two truths that were on display this past week, which I hope members will take with them as they leave. First, we all share the same concerns and the same unwavering commitment to overcoming obstacles. However much we may disagree on tactics, our end goal is very much the same. Secondly, multilateralism is alive and well.

The fact that so many have come, spoken, engaged, deliberated and argued is a sign of a world that continues to believe in dialogue and diplomacy and that reposes its faith in a United Nations that is able and ready. Let us derive our hope from those truths and work with a sense of responsibility and determination for the rest of the seventy-sixth session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 8?

It was so decided.

The President: I would like to inform members that the programme of work of the plenary will be made available on the website of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly, under the heading Meeting Schedule, and published in the *Journal of the United Nations*. Delegations wishing to be inscribed on the list of speakers of the plenary meetings of the General Assembly are kindly requested to do so through the e-deleGATE portal.

The meeting rose at 7.40 p.m.

Annex I**Address by Mr. Kenneth Darroux, Minister for Foreign Affairs,
International Business and Diaspora Relations of the Commonwealth
of Dominica**

Secretary-General

President of the 76th Session

Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr. President, on behalf of the Government and People of the Commonwealth of Dominica, I congratulate you on your election to the Presidency of the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly and wish you every success.

Mr. President, we are convening this 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, at a time when our Planet Earth is at its warmest and each and every member state is grappling with the impact of the deadly COVID-19 pandemic.

Dominica's Experience:

Excellencies, the Commonwealth of Dominica recorded its first COVID-19 case on March 22, 2020, and for more than 12 months, even with limited resources, we managed to keep our number of active cases within double digits and without recording a single COVID-19 related death.... because from the onset, our Government adopted comprehensive COVID-19 containment measures and protocols.

We have however in recent weeks seen a spike in cases, and have recorded our first COVID-19 deaths and we have had to redirect scarce resources to combat this surge, while increasing investment in primary health care services.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, we consider ourselves fortunate and express gratitude for being a recipient of donations of vaccines from the Governments of Republic of India, the Peoples' Republic of China, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and through the COVAX facility.

We are fully aware, however, that there are still several countries with limited or no access to COVID-19 vaccines and we call on member states and the International Community by extension, to acknowledge the importance of resolution 74/274, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, which calls for the strengthening of supply chains that promote and ensure universal, fair, inclusive, transparent, equitable, efficient and timely access to medicines, vaccines and other health supplies in order to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dominica firmly supports the view that vaccines are a public good and that no one is safe until everyone is safe.

Excellencies, Science has proven that vaccines are an important way out of this pandemic, and a coordinated response to COVID-19 is not possible without an open and supportive multilateral system.

I wish to thank the World Health Organisation, the Pan-American Health Organisation, the Caribbean Public Health Agency and all our other bilateral partners

for their continued support in our effort at preventing, detecting, and responding to this pandemic and we are particularly appreciative of the leadership of PAHO and its provision of vaccines, technical support, medical equipment and supplies under the COVAX Mechanism.

Mr. President, Dominica would like to place on record our deepest gratitude to the Government of India for allowing us to be among the first of developing countries to begin the vaccination of our citizens.

We also express our gratitude to the Government of Republic of Cuba for allowing its medical brigade to compliment the services of our health care workers who have been stretched to capacity and to the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for supplying PPEs and test kits as part of our response.

The Government of the People's Republic of China continues to be a true friend to Dominica, by being one of the first countries to our aid, with the supply of masks, other Personal Protective Equipment, ventilators, testing and other diagnostic supplies and ventilators, especially during the early days of the pandemic, when these were in short supply.

Mr. President, to survive this pandemic and to better prepare for the future, priority must therefore be given to universal access to quality healthcare services to all citizens. This will require a greater role for the World Health Organization and its hemispheric counterparts such as the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), Caribbean Public Health Agency (CAPHA).

For small developing states like Dominica, the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to reverse the gains that we have made in the socioeconomic development of our people, by placing additional burdens on national budgets as our governments are forced to provide increased support to our citizens.

Excellencies, the closure of businesses, and the additional cost of operating businesses during the restrictions occasioned by the actions to contain the virus, is having an extremely debilitating impact on the private sector.

Our tourism industries have been dealt a devastating blow, as the impact has been most severe in the hotel, hospitality, and service sectors. We must therefore work collectively to end this deadly pandemic.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates; living with the COVID-19 pandemic and preparing for future pandemics must now become essential components of sustainable development.

Developing countries like Dominica are at risk of not being able to meet our Sustainable Development Goals if this pandemic continues to severely impact our people and countries.

Thus, our international development partners, both bilateral and multilateral, must be responsive to our new realities and calls for more creative financial instruments that take into account these new realities.

Dominica is of the view that, this new dispensation must also reward countries for progressive policies directed at creating sustainable systems for production and consumption.

Universal access to quality healthcare must now be pursued more aggressively, whilst at the same time, access to quality and relevant education must continue, if small states are to build capacity and advance their national sustainable development agendas.

Climate Change

Mr. President, rising sea levels coupled with more frequent and extreme weather events, make the Caribbean one of the most vulnerable regions in the world.

Recent weather phenomena in the Commonwealth of Dominica suggest that the climate is indeed changing, with increases in temperature, changes in the seasons and erratic temperature variations.

Fellow Delegates, according to the World Bank study entitled: “Turn Down the Heat”, the number of severe hurricanes is projected to increase by 40 per cent, with double the intensity, as warming rises by 2°C and up to 80 per cent in case of a 4°C warming.

A single disaster event can affect an entire territory or economy and cause a disproportionately high loss of GDP as was the case with Hurricane Maria, which affected all the economic and social sectors in Dominica with an estimated impact of 226 per cent of GDP.

Distinguished Delegates, Dominica continues to call on the major polluters to take more aggressive actions to reduce global warming, as our planet will not be able to sustain life as we know it, if they continue to pursue their unsustainable systems of production and consumption unabated.

Dominica is working on becoming the world’s first climate resilient nation and we are committed to doing more than just adapt to the impact of climate change but these major polluters MUST take up their responsibilities to support Small island developing nations like ours, to achieve these goals.

We would like to thank our International partners who have helped to create the Climate Resilient Execution Agency of Dominica (CREAD), to coordinate donor-funded climate resilient projects, as we mainstream resilience across sectors.

Mr. President, recently, the Government of Dominica approved the Comprehensive National Resilience Development Strategy and the development of Dominica’s Climate Resilience and Recovery Plan (CRRP), which further underscores Government’s commitment towards disaster risk reduction, resilience building at all levels and the development of sound response and recovery mechanisms.

Dominica looks forward to the renewal of discussions at COP 26 in a few weeks time, where commitments made under the Paris agreement can be revisited and honoured, especially as it pertains to climate financing.

This is a matter of climate justice!

As Dominica and other SIDS are not responsible for the warming of our planet but we are disproportionately impacted by the effect of climate change.

Renewable Energy

Mr. President, one of the major contributors to climate change is the consumption of fossil fuel for the production of electricity and for transportation

and the importation of fossil fuel, has over the years, had the greatest impact on the economic vulnerability of many Small Island Developing States.

The transition of the energy sector away from fossil fuel, therefore, is central to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, building resilience to economic and climate related events and ultimately, pursuing a sustainable development pathway.

Mr. President, the Commonwealth of Dominica continues to pursue the development of its geothermal resources as this will allow us to move away from the importation of fossil fuel for the generation of electricity within the next five years, while also reducing the cost of electricity to our people.

The development of geothermal energy also has the potential to sustain clean mobility and to create a new industrial revolution powered by a cleaner and more affordable energy.

To date, our efforts to develop our country's geothermal potential have been supported by several partners: the UK, World Bank, SIDS DOCK, Caribbean Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, the European Commission, the Government of New Zealand, the Clinton Climate Initiative and the United Arab Emirates., and we would like to thank them all.

Mr. President, the plight of our brothers and sisters in the Republic of Haiti continues, much to the concern of Dominica and the rest of the Caribbean Community. Over the last decade, Haiti has struggled with rising poverty levels, sustained political instability and numerous disasters, resulting in extreme hardship the citizens of this sister Caribbean nation.

Haiti is currently in the top 10 countries experiencing a food crisis.

The United nations must therefore take leadership in coordinating targeted support to the Haitian Government for the benefit of its people.

Excellencies, our Caribbean region also continues to call for the discontinuation of the economic, financial and trade embargo on our brothers and sisters in the Republic of Cuba.

Notwithstanding this decades-old embargo, the Republic of Cuba continues to make a positive impact on our region, and the wider world and we renew our call to the Government of the United States to allow the people of Cuba to be fully integrated into the global trading system, to improve their lives and to allow the world to continue to benefit from their tremendous contributions especially in science and technology.

Mr. President,

Dominica is convinced that as a collective we have the ability to solve all of the challenges which confront us.

The extreme pace of human advancement in the 21st century has demonstrated that we have the capacity and ingenuity to combat climate change, and to develop means of production and consumption to sustain humanity, while at the same time protecting our planet.

We must all recommit to playing our part to save our planet and to improve the lives of citizens worldwide: Those who suffer from hunger and starvation, and others who continue to be marginalized will be pointless without peace and security.

The destruction brought about by wars within and between countries continues to displace millions of people from their homes creating unprecedented refugee crises.

Mr. President, Excellences, Distinguished delegates, the United Nations is a critical player in maintaining world peace and security and Dominica remains committed to collaborating with the United Nations and all its agencies, as well as Member States, to strengthen the Mission of this noble institution.

We commend the leadership of the Secretary General in this regard and we reaffirm our confidence in the UN system as the ultimate negotiating and deliberating body for addressing major challenges confronting the world.

Mr. President, history will record both our actions and inactions that can result in educating and saving our generation from this pandemic, and from global warming and climate change, thus ensuring a safer planet for our children, and future generations.

I Thank You.

Annex II

Address by Mr. Nasser Bourita, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccans Living Abroad of the Kingdom of Morocco

[Original: Arabic]

Mr. President,

Excellencies, Secretary-General of the United Nations, ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I should like to congratulate Abdulla Shahid on his election as President of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly. I wish him success in performing his noble duties. I would also like to pay tribute to the tireless efforts of your predecessor, Volkan Bozkır, and the aplomb with which he presided over the previous session, against the backdrop of an unprecedented pandemic.

The Kingdom of Morocco reiterates its congratulations to His Excellency António Guterres on his election to a second term as Secretary-General. We express our full confidence in and support for his efforts to achieve the Organization's overarching aims. In these difficult circumstances, we eagerly look forward to the emergence of a more equitable and effective international order that meets the aspirations of our peoples for collective health security and sustainable development.

Mr. President,

No State has been spared the impact of a pandemic that has severely tested our national capabilities and governance as well as our collective will as an international community, threatening to destroy everything that we have accomplished over decades. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis has exacerbated inequalities in unprecedented ways and given rise to new inequalities among and within nations.

The political, socioeconomic, security and environmental impacts of the pandemic have reminded us of our fragility as human beings. The pandemic has wrought havoc with territorial boundaries and national priorities; disrupted the production, consumption and distribution of resources, and even exposed gaps in the medical, employment and social protection systems.

At the international level, the pandemic has exposed many deficiencies in multilateral governance. At a time when national policies have been at the forefront of global efforts to confront the pandemic and curb its spread, it is regrettable that multilateral action has fallen short.

While countries have indeed been aware that their fates were interlinked in combating the spread of the virus, that awareness has been expressed only in political statements that met with a consensus but failed to materialize as an effective system of international cooperation.

The aim here is not to criticize multilateral action, but instead to assess rationally and objectively the tangible and practical action that we, the States Members of the United Nations, have taken. The pandemic crisis has also been a comprehensive real-life test of the effectiveness of the international system; our responsibility is therefore a historic one.

Is it reasonable and acceptable for the United Nations to emerge from the greatest threat to human security since the Organization was established in the same state it was in at the beginning of 2020?

In the words of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God grant him victory, the United Nations is “the living conscience of humanity and the cornerstone of a new world order. Its pillars are peace, comprehensive security and common development, informed by the values of equality, tolerance, democracy and fraternity”. Therefore, we must work together to establish a new world order that will be a platform for effective joint action, action that enables us to move beyond statements of intent or intellectual argument to achieve transformational mobilization, on the basis of a practical road map that enhances every aspect of collective security and rises to current and emerging challenges.

We believe that multilateral action should not remain a language spoken only by Governments, inaudible to our peoples. Instead, it must be the lever of broad and pragmatic alliances that bring together States, the private sector, civil society and academia. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that there is an urgent need for pragmatic multilateral action whose legitimacy is rooted in the effective realization of the rights of citizens to security, health and development.

Mr. President,

The bid to deliver vaccines, our last line of defence against the pandemic, is in fact an opportunity to assert our will and demonstrate our ability to infuse multilateral action with a new impetus. While the tremendous work done by scientists and researchers to develop and test safe and effective vaccines is worthy of note, we emphasize in the strongest terms that the ultimate goal remains to ensure universal access to the vaccine, given that it is the common property of humankind, as well as to ensure the equitable distribution thereof in all countries and societies.

Equitable distribution of the vaccine is far more than an ethical obligation. It is a prerequisite for the collective security that our Organization was established to guarantee. Administering vaccines at diverging rates can only bring about a temporary recovery that will inevitably be followed by a setback, prolonging the crisis. When vaccines are scarce in any given region, it is only a matter of time before that region becomes a hotspot from which the virus — be it the known variants or mutations — will spread widely, with dire consequences for national economies and the well-being of societies. As King Mohammed VI said in July 2020 on Throne Day, “It is our duty not only to address the pandemic, but also to address its social and economic implications, with a comprehensive, forward-looking perspective that will allow us to draw beneficial lessons from this period”.

The Kingdom of Morocco salutes the tireless work of the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations agencies to ensure universal and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines and treatment. Morocco also expresses its support for the Only Together campaign launched by the Secretary-General, which calls for vaccines to be made accessible to all.

However, that initiative should serve as an opportunity to focus seriously and objectively on the issue of mutual recognition of available vaccines and of those that have yet to be manufactured, on the basis of internationally agreed scientific, health and ethical standards rather than political or marketing calculations.

My country looks forward to enabling WHO to make optimal use of available resources and mechanisms in carrying out its mission to the best of its ability, including by monitoring emerging health threats, as part of the One Health approach.

Morocco, which is in favour of drafting, under United Nations auspices, an international treaty on epidemics, intends to organize an international conference on pandemic preparedness and response in 2022, in cooperation with the Republic of Rwanda, WHO and the World Bank. The aim is to unify international efforts to strengthen the capacity of States to cope with epidemics and prepare for emergencies.

Guided by the noble directives of his Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God grant him victory, the Kingdom of Morocco has been carrying out an ambitious project to manufacture COVID-19 vaccines within the fill-finish industry. In addition to bolstering the health sovereignty of the Kingdom, this ambitious initiative also contributes to consolidating the health security of African countries and bring their vaccination rates closer to the global average. This is how Morocco implements its African solidarity policy.

The African continent's woefully and unacceptably low rate of access to vaccines — at just under 2 per cent — serves as a powerful incentive for collective action. Africa must become the top priority of the global health strategy, along with national development assistance policies. The world owes it to Africa!

Mr. President,

Although the pandemic currently tops the list of global challenges, it will not diminish our interest in such broad issues as migration, counter-terrorism and climate change.

While the consequences of the pandemic have also eclipsed the issue of immigration and human movement, the Kingdom's serious and sustained engagement with the issue remains unchanged. Resolute and steadfast, Morocco continues to implement its national strategy — the first of its kind in the region — on migration and asylum. The strategy is based on the monarchy's insightful vision of migration issues, informed by humane and responsible governance grounded in solidarity.

His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God grant him victory, has been recognized as a leader on migration issues in the African Union. Morocco hosted the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in Marrakesh in December 2018. In late 2020, the capital city of Rabat became the headquarters of the first African Migration Observatory in the African Union.

Along with the proven commitment of Morocco to the work of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, which it has co-chaired since 2016, the country's active involvement in counter-terrorism efforts have include the opening of a United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism programme office in Rabat. The choice of Morocco to host this important United Nations office constituted an explicit recognition of the Kingdom as a capable partner in combating this scourge and as a haven of security in its region and continent.

Morocco has been actively involved in promoting peaceful coexistence and dialogue between cultures and religions. It launched the initiative that led to the General Assembly's adoption by consensus last July of a resolution proclaiming 18 June as the International Day for Countering Hate Speech.

The involvement of Morocco in local, regional and international efforts to address the effects of climate change has been guided by the proactive vision of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, as the country embarks on a plan to shift towards the use of renewable energy and diversify sources of clean energy. The Kingdom of Morocco has voluntarily set the ambitious target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 45.5 per cent by 2030, after raising its initial reduction target from 42 per cent.

Mr. President,

The trying circumstances left in the wake of the pandemic have not deterred Morocco from continuing to pursue its development efforts, spearheaded by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God grant him victory, to allow the country to progress and its people to prosper. His Majesty has issued directives to hold large workshops for reflection, broad research and inclusive participatory action. That initiative led to the establishment of a new development model that will be implemented over the next 14 years. This ambitious national project overlaps with the Sustainable Development Goals and even exceeds them in certain areas.

The model has laid the creative foundations of a new development doctrine and labour principles informed by trust, mobilization and responsibility, in order to free up capacities and create conditions conducive to a more open, innovative and competitive economy; human capital that is stronger and better qualified to take on the future; greater inclusion, especially for women and young people; and more resilient institutions capable of coping with development and environmental challenges.

In line with the noble directives issued by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God grant him victory, the guidelines of the new development model will serve as the basis of a charter agreed by all national forces.

Mr. President,

Peacekeeping remains one of the pillars of the United Nations. We take this opportunity to hail the Blue Helmets, especially during the pandemic, and to lament the loss of those who have made the supreme sacrifice in service of the noble values and principles of the United Nations.

Moroccan forces are currently deployed as United Nations peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and South Sudan. The country is also contributing to the effort to adapt peacekeeping operations to contemporary challenges, per the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative launched during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, in 2022 Morocco and France will organize the second Ministerial Conference on Peacekeeping in the Francophone Area, which hosts roughly half of all United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Morocco is the Chair of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, presiding over that important committee on disarmament and international security for the first time. That Morocco was selected to represent Africa makes it clear that the country is regarded within the Organization as a committed and credible actor in international efforts to combat the nuclear and conventional arms races and that Moroccan efforts to achieve peace, security and regional and global stability are also recognized.

Mr. President,

Since the Kingdom of Morocco gained its independence, support for regional and global stability has been at the heart of its diplomatic creed. Morocco remains committed to reaching a definitive settlement of the regional conflict over the Moroccan Sahara, ensuring full respect for its territorial integrity and national sovereignty.

As you know, legislative, regional and local elections were held on 8 September 2021 in the Moroccan Sahara region, as they were elsewhere in the Kingdom. Electoral participation in the Moroccan Sahara was the highest nationwide, at 63 per cent. The electoral process took place in an atmosphere of mobilization and democratic organization, in full compliance with international standards, highlighting the calm and tranquillity of the Sahara region.

The Moroccan Saharan population's enthusiastic participation attests to its commitment to the territorial integrity of the Kingdom and undeniable desire to engage fully and effectively in implementing the new model for the development of the southern provinces launched by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God grant him victory, in 2015.

From this podium, Morocco reiterates that it stands ready to continue to cooperate with the United Nations as part of the Secretary-General's efforts to reach a realistic, practical, lasting and consensual political solution, ensuring full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Morocco.

The only way to achieve such a solution is for Algeria to bear full responsibility in the series of political round-table talks, inasmuch as it has been the party responsible for creating and prolonging the conflict. The autonomy initiative proposed by Morocco in 2007 remains the only prospect for a definitive political solution to this contrived regional dispute.

Morocco also expresses its grave concern at the tragic humanitarian situation of the population of the Tindouf camps. The host country, Algeria, has abdicated its responsibilities and ceded them to a separatist armed group, in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. We call on the international community to take action to compel the host country to abide by its treaty obligations, in particular, to allow the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to register and count that population, as the Security Council has repeatedly called on the host country to do.

Mr. President,

The Kingdom of Morocco, motivated by history, the shared destiny that binds it to Libya and the positive momentum generated by the Libyan Political Agreement of Skhirat, is still working to help reach a peaceful solution to the conflict in that country.

Under the noble leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God grant him victory, Morocco will always stand with the legitimate Libyan institutions and will support international efforts to resolve that Maghreb country's crisis, in line with the agreements reached by the various Libyan parties.

Morocco remains firmly convinced that the crisis in Libya can only be resolved by Libyans themselves, without foreign intervention or agendas. The Libyan dialogue

is the most effective means of meeting the Libyan people's aspirations for stability, national reconciliation and development.

Morocco believes that it is crucial that elections be organized in Libya as a decisive step on the path to achieving peace in that country. Morocco stands ready to provide assistance in coordination with all Libyan institutions.

With the same deeply rooted, robust and sustained commitment to peace in the Middle East, the Kingdom considers the cause of Palestine and the Holy City of Jerusalem to be among its top priorities and deems it equal in importance to the cause of Moroccan national unity.

The Kingdom of Morocco is hopeful that a just, comprehensive and sustainable peace will be reached in the Middle East, leading to the establishment of an independent State of Palestine, on its national territory within the borders of June 1967 and with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with Israel in peace and security.

Morocco believes that this hope remains contingent on the realization by all that neither party will be able to attain security until the other does.

To that end, all parties must make the courageous decision to agree to relaunch the peace process and put an end to all manner of violations, restrictions and provocations, which serve only to fuel hostility and undermine prospects for understanding and dialogue.

The Kingdom of Morocco, whose sovereign, His Majesty King Mohammed VI, is the President of the Al-Quds Committee of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, reiterates its firm and principled position regarding the importance of preserving the unique legal, historical and spiritual status of the Holy City. Owing to that status, the city is a land of coexistence among the followers of the monotheistic religions, an agent of rapprochement among peoples and of peace and stability in the region.

Convinced that peace begets peace, the Kingdom of Morocco is working to establish peaceful and sound relations with the State of Israel, in the hope of advancing the cause of peace in the region, enhancing regional security and providing new opportunities for the region as a whole, according to the tripartite declaration signed on 22 December 2020 before His Majesty King Mohammed VI.

Mr. President,

The time has come to take urgent, practical and coordinated action to strengthen the role of the United Nations as a global framework for international cooperation. In order to bring about profound changes in our international system, we need two things, namely, will and urgent intervention, that is, to induce States to act on their awareness of shared responsibility and to translate that awareness into an agenda driven by solidarity and effectiveness.

Resolute and in a spirit of earnest responsibility, the Kingdom of Morocco will continue to perform its role within the main organs of our Organization, thereby contributing to strengthening its credibility and effectiveness and expanding its influence.

May peace and God's mercy be upon you.

Annex III

Address by Mr. Amery Browne, Minister for Foreign and CARICOM Affairs of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Mr. President,

It is an honour to address this august Assembly of States on this the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. On behalf of the Government and People of Trinidad and Tobago, I extend congratulations to you on your election to the Presidency. My delegation is confident that with your experience and able leadership, this crucial session will be highly successful in advancing our work for peace, progress and sustainability for humankind.

Permit me, to also express our gratitude to His Excellency Volkan Bozkır for steering our work during the 75th session. Notwithstanding the innumerable challenges encountered during his presidency, he has effectively advanced a comprehensive framework to ensure the continuity of the work of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

I also take the opportunity to congratulate His Excellency António Guterres on his reappointment as Secretary-General. The continuity of his astute leadership serves to ensure that the United Nations remains a critical partner in our aspirations to build back better.

Mr. President,

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the profound fragilities of our interconnected societies and economies. None among us have escaped severe economic contraction and consequential loss of livelihoods. Most of all, the heavy death toll has created new and complex social issues in our societies that require intervention by governments. We are of the firm belief that multilateralism is the only vehicle by which we can jointly save humanity, safeguard livelihoods, and reenergize our economies.

It is happening right before our very eyes, COVID-19 has now become a pandemic of the unvaccinated, the majority of whom live in the Global South. As a responsible community of nations, we ought to take immediate measures to ensure equitable access to and distribution of vaccines across this globe. This would be the only secure way to protect our populations from further demise and our economies from further convulsions, as the current situation of vaccine inequity benefits only the virus.

In Trinidad and Tobago's experience, it has proven an uphill battle to source vaccines on the open market due, we were told, to our relatively small size and issues of low demand. Such dismissive and unfair responses really deny the universally accepted principle that every human being, whether they live in the Developed North or the Developing South, is entitled to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health.

Recognizing the dire consequences that countries of the Caribbean Community would have to confront, Trinidad and Tobago used its chairmanship of CARICOM to convene a Heads of State and Government Meeting to address the pressing question of vaccine availability. Such is our conviction of the relevance and power of multilateralism, that the Trinidad and Tobago Chairmanship took it one step further

and raised with the Director General of the World Health Organisation, the convening of a global summit on vaccine availability.

In the meantime, as a result of diplomatic initiatives taken at the bilateral level, Trinidad and Tobago and other members of the Caribbean Community received donations of WHO-approved vaccines from several Governments. We also received supplies via the COVAX facility and from the African Medical Supplies Platform.

The People of Trinidad and Tobago and their Government express once more, their grateful thanks to all those countries and mechanisms whose generous assistance permitted us to scale up an aggressive vaccination campaign.

It would be remiss of me not to express Trinidad and Tobago's deep appreciation for the critical leadership role continuously demonstrated by the United Nations and more specifically, by the WHO in spearheading the global efforts to combat the COVID-19 virus.

The evidence is irrefutable that human induced climate change, threatens the very survival of humankind. Yet greenhouse gas emissions are at record levels, and the devastating impacts of climate change continue to worsen, landing on the doorsteps of Small Island Developing States, sitting as they are, on the frontline of this crisis.

It is therefore Mr. President, our moral responsibility to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement through credible, concrete, enhanced commitments. The commitment made by developed countries to mobilize \$100 billion annually to support mitigation and adaptation in developing countries must be met.

Notwithstanding Trinidad and Tobago's miniscule contribution to global emissions, we have committed in our Nationally Determined Contribution to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 30 per cent in the public transportation sector, and to a cumulative decrease of 15 per cent in the other main carbon emitting sectors by 2030. Consequently, these commitments would remove over 100 million tonnes of carbon dioxide from our atmosphere; placing us among the most ambitious in our region. Even so, we are currently updating our NDC with a view to further increasing our mitigation ambition.

We hope that COP 26 will agree to complete the outstanding issues and to fully operationalise the Paris Agreement on a scale that will support cooperation on mitigation, adaptation and compliance. That approach would be in keeping with the calls for more ambitious commitments to ensure that the 1.5°C target remains within our reach.

Mr. President,

Our acute susceptibility to climate change stems from our inherently complex structural vulnerabilities as Small Island Developing States that trap us in a mire of compounding risks; sentencing us to a cyclical struggle of recovery, rebuilding and redevelopment.

Yet we are told time and time again, that our categorisation as middle and high-income countries render us ineligible to access concessionary finance and development support. It is as if the international system, almost by design, perpetuates the conditions that stifle our hard-earned albeit fragile progress.

The need to reassess the eligibility of SIDS for concessional finance, beyond income measures, has been widely acknowledged by the international community for almost three decades. In this regard, Trinidad and Tobago applauds the Secretary-General's efforts in advancing the development of a multidimensional vulnerability index that will more accurately reflect our composite challenges and open the door to SIDS-sensitive financing. The international economic and financial system must be transformed to better support the most vulnerable countries.

Mr. President,

We also recognize that the increasing incidence of violent crime domestically, bedevils our efforts towards achieving sustainable development and the maintenance of the rule of law. Much of this criminal activity derives from the operations of international criminal networks engaged in the illicit trafficking of small arms and increasingly sophisticated weaponry, illegal drugs, money laundering, human trafficking and piracy across our society.

Recognizing its value to us and to the members of CARICOM as a whole, Trinidad and Tobago played a highly constructive role in the process culminating in the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty. We remain keenly engaged to ensure that the Treaty fully achieves its objectives.

Mr. President,

As we reflect on the twentieth anniversary of the tragic events of September 11th in New York, we are reminded of our commitments to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. In this regard, the anti-terrorism act of Trinidad and Tobago establishes a robust legal architecture, including measures for criminal prosecution, to detect and interrupt the financing of terrorism, the collection and sharing of information, intelligence and evidence, and the enforcement of targeted financial sanctions in accordance with international law.

Mr. President,

What most preoccupies us, is an evident tendency for the entrenchment of a culture of violence in our society; most disturbingly, the prevalence of domestic violence and violence against women and girls. Trinidad and Tobago has therefore begun to create safe spaces for all women and girls and is now accelerating its efforts to change the negative behaviours and gender stereotypes, at all levels. Consequently, amendments to existing legislation on Domestic Violence, Sexual Offences, Child Protection as well as to allow for electronic monitoring of sex offenders were enacted recently, to provide further protection for women and girls.

Mr. President,

We are cognizant that in several parts of the world people continue to be systematically denied their fundamental human rights and human dignity. Such violations ought to offend us as a community of nations working to improve the standards of living and welfare of all our peoples. It is therefore necessary that we reject and punish impunity wherever it rears its ugly head.

Accordingly, Trinidad and Tobago remains unwavering in its commitment to the mandate and mission of the International Criminal Court, in the interest of banishing the worst forms of human rights abuses and violations from our civilization.

We urge those States which are not yet members of the Court to subscribe to it in order to achieve universality.

Mr. President,

Despite recent contusions, Trinidad and Tobago is seizing the opportunity to emerge stronger and better. As an economy predominantly dependent on the hydrocarbon and petrochemical industries, we are sparing no effort to provide the necessary support and the enabling environment to foster diversification, through substantial transformation in the creative sector as well as in manufacturing, finance, medicine, security, commerce, agriculture and renewable energy. Our newly established Ministry of Digital Transformation is leading these efforts to create a competitive digitally-driven economy that will stimulate greater opportunities for all of our people.

However, the misuse of digital technology can pose serious threats to the economy, national security, governance, and social stability. Therefore, we must develop appropriate mechanisms to protect and secure the integrity of our economies and societies and to minimize its use as a disruptive tool.

Mr. President,

The thrust in all our efforts in pursuing sustainable development is to shape a better collective future on this planet, not only for ourselves, but for generations to come. Trinidad and Tobago remains dedicated to ensuring our children and youth, including those in vulnerable situations, have the necessary opportunities, tools and a safe environment in order to reach their highest potential.

Mr. President,

Evidence from the pandemic has shown that severe inequities continue to exist in our societies and that crises do not impact men and women in the same way. Therefore, in building back better, women's participation in all sectors of society must be at the heart of creating more inclusive, resilient and sustainable communities and societies; with enhanced preparedness to respond to future emergencies.

The promotion of gender equality is a priority for Trinidad and Tobago and so we have taken specific measures in certain key areas including access to health care, education and training, employment as well as in the provision of social protection. The important role of the family in the empowerment of women and girls has also been fully acknowledged.

Mr. President,

This year's High-Level Meeting on the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action takes on even greater significance with the recent establishment of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent and the convening of the first Africa-CARICOM Summit a few weeks ago. Africa has been a vibrant partner of CARICOM both bilaterally and in several multilateral arenas, including here at the United Nations. In historical terms, these ties have been umbilical, but with the joint decision for regular dialogue, cooperation and coordination, they will now be forward-looking as we seek to secure our broader interests in the international system.

The lack of meaningful progress on Security Council reform remains a matter of deep concern. Our commitment to instil new life into the intergovernmental

negotiations should amount to more than mere rhetoric. It should serve as a clarion call to Member States to work collaboratively, in good faith, toward early reform of the Security Council to effectively respond to the urgent needs and challenges facing the diverse membership of the United Nations. A representative Council will add substantially to improving the effectiveness and credibility of our organization, as the leading international pillar for peace and security.

Mr. President,

As we have entered the Decade of Action and Delivery to implement the 2030 Agenda, it is important to ensure that no country is left behind. The unjust designation of Cuba as a state sponsor of terrorism along with the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against that country, undermine its ability to cope with the pervasive impacts of the pandemic and its potential to achieve sustainable development. Accordingly, Trinidad and Tobago reiterates its call for the unconditional lifting of the embargo against Cuba, in line with the fundamental principles of the UN Charter.

Trinidad and Tobago remains deeply concerned that so little progress has been made in the longstanding Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has led to extreme suffering on both sides. We urge both parties to respect and adhere to the temporary ceasefire, and to do nothing that would inflame the already tenuous situation. It is our hope that the parties will shortly resume the process of engagement to find a way forward that would guarantee the Palestinians a permanent homeland and recognize Israel's right to exist in peace and security.

Mr. President,

The United Nations provides us all with the opportunity to discuss our differences, to build understanding and to make common cause in protecting our planet and our civilization. Let me reassure you of Trinidad and Tobago's unshakeable resolve to support this effort as well as the work of the United Nations.

Mr President, I THANK YOU.
