



# General Assembly

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Official Records

*President:* Mr. Shahid ..... (Maldives)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Malovrh (Slovenia), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting resumed at 3.05 p.m.*

## Agenda item 112 (continued)

### Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/76/1)

**Mr. Ke** (Cambodia): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). At the outset, ASEAN would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization (A/76/1) and for presenting his detailed and insightful priorities for the months and years ahead. The Secretary-General's report underscores the importance of multilateral cooperation in coping with the global health, social, economic and human rights crises triggered by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. To that end, ASEAN will continue to work closely with the Secretary-General and all Member States to support comprehensive and multi-sectoral recovery in the context of our efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As we work towards the future we want and the United Nations we need, it is more important than ever to take action that reaffirms our collective commitment to multilateralism. Strengthening multilateralism remains key to tackling the toughest global problems and challenges. We must strengthen our response to the global pandemic health crisis and reinforce vaccine

multilateralism while aiming to ensure the accelerated production of COVID-19 vaccines and their fair and equitable distribution. At this juncture, we will continue to implement the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework, which serves as the region's consolidated exit strategy from the COVID-19 pandemic.

ASEAN consistently supports the work of the United Nations in promoting sustained economic growth and sustainable development and will seek to ensure that their benefits are tangible for the peoples across the region, leaving no one behind. We will pursue concrete action through the complementarities initiative between ASEAN's Community Vision 2025 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the development of the ASEAN community's post-2025 vision. Furthermore, by optimizing the utilization of the existing regional free trade agreements and ensuring their effective implementation, both in the broader context and beyond, ASEAN's Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership will ultimately accelerate ASEAN's transformation into a highly competitive and integrated region.

ASEAN takes note of the Secretary-General's reporting on the maintenance of international peace and security and supports his call for a global ceasefire to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. ASEAN aims to fully maintain its proactive momentum in contributing to the wide range of missions of the United Nations, including its peacekeeping operations, as part of our engagement in international efforts to achieve world peace, security and human dignity. In that regard,

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ASEAN reiterates its support to the efforts to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers.

The COVID-19 crisis has had far-reaching effects on our implementation of climate action, putting our efforts to combat climate change in great peril. We need urgent collective action aimed at getting back on track, especially by demonstrating our commitment to enhancing international cooperation on global mitigation efforts in order to promote climate-resilient development and achieve a genuine step-change. We welcomed the outcome of the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in particular its emphasis on the crucial role of climate financing and technology transfer in facilitating the transition in terms of mitigation and adaptation. The ASEAN region is also vulnerable to climate change. As we build one community in diversity to mitigate the climate crisis, taking into account different national circumstances, ASEAN will therefore never fail in its commitment to implementing the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We also look forward to the convening in June of the Stockholm+50 international meeting entitled “A healthy planet for the prosperity of all — our responsibility, our opportunity”.

ASEAN welcomes the Assembly’s adoption by consensus of its procedural resolution 76/6, on the follow-up to the report of the Secretary-General entitled *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). ASEAN stands ready to participate in the follow-up with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement, with the ultimate goal of fostering progress and improving the well-being of current and succeeding generations. In that regard, we look forward to engaging in productive discussions during the informal consultations to be held in the coming months on the report’s thematic clusters.

Cambodia has chosen “ASEAN ACT — addressing challenges together” as the theme of our chairmanship of ASEAN this year. It underscores ASEAN’s spirit of togetherness as one community and the common aim of our collective endeavour to address and overcome the challenges facing our region. The concept of togetherness supports ASEAN’s action-oriented approach based on openness, good faith, solidarity and harmony within the ASEAN family.

As the Chair of ASEAN this year, Cambodia will facilitate the implementation of resolution 75/15, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, to showcase our achievement and further ensure social progress, lasting peace and stability, sustained economic growth and shared prosperity in the region. In that regard, together with the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General, we look forward to convening the annual high-level ASEAN-United Nations ministerial meeting in the coming weeks in January to further enhance that partnership. In line with its integrated agenda for 2022, ASEAN stands ready to exert every effort across all the pillars of the work of the United Nations and to further strengthen the comprehensive partnership between ASEAN and the Organization. ASEAN remains committed to upholding and promoting multilateral cooperation and partnership based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law in order to address pressing regional and global issues.

**Mr. Mohd Nasir** (Malaysia): I would first like to commend the President for convening this meeting and the Secretary-General for sharing his priorities and presenting his report (A/76/1).

Malaysia aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the representative of Cambodia on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

My delegation also commends the Assembly’s consideration of the report at an early stage, as it allows us to engage in a timely and interactive discussion on our collective work in the Organization and to reflect on and address the gaps and challenges throughout the year.

Responding to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, maintaining international peace and security, tackling climate change and promoting human rights are all tasks that call for collective efforts and solidarity. The Secretary-General’s report reminds us that multilateralism is more indispensable than ever. Malaysia has always been a strong advocate and supporter of international cooperation. We believe that multilateralism and the rules-based international order can help ensure a level playing field for all States, large and small. Malaysia will continue to do its part in preserving multilateralism and the primacy and credibility of the Organization.

The Secretary-General's report notes the continued divisions between major Powers and fragmentation within States, which has contributed to creating a challenging environment for peace and security over the past year. It also underscores the importance of a global ceasefire. Malaysia is pleased to have facilitated the expression of support to the Secretary-General's appeal in 2020 for a global ceasefire. We continue to urge all parties to refrain from taking provocative action that could potentially escalate tension or spark conflict. The report also highlights the entry into force in January 2021 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Malaysia congratulates all States that are party to the Treaty and encourages others to expedite their ratification or accession to it. Malaysia also reiterates its unwavering commitment to nuclear disarmament and will continue to work closely with other partners to attain a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Secretary-General's report also underscores the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable groups and the importance of ensuring that human rights are at the centre of the pandemic socioeconomic response plans. As a current member of the Human Rights Council, Malaysia is committed to advancing that agenda, including the right to health and health care, particularly for marginalized and vulnerable groups. We also continue to support the call for affordable, accessible and equitable access to vaccines.

Regarding climate change, we share the Secretary-General's concern about the fact that the pandemic has affected and reversed years of development progress and deepened pre-existing inequalities and poverty. In that connection, we continue to call for urgent and collective action to address those challenges, especially those faced by least-developed countries, small island developing countries and middle-income countries. Malaysia also underlines the leading role that developed countries should play in supporting developing countries to deliver on the promise of climate action, which includes providing new, adequate and consistent financial assistance, as well as technology transfers to developing countries.

My final point concerns the effective functioning of the Organization. Malaysia supports the necessary reform of the United Nations with the aim of making it more inclusive, transparent and accountable. We also believe that the Secretariat should be accorded the appropriate resources so that it can effectively execute the mandates entrusted to it by Member States. Malaysia

is pleased to have paid its contributions to the United Nations regular budget and peacekeeping operations in full and on time. We join the Secretary-General's call for others to meet their financial obligations.

The pandemic continues to reveal our shared fragility and interconnectedness. We need more multilateralism, anchored within the Organization. Let me conclude by assuring the Assembly of Malaysia's support for its work and that of the Secretary-General, guided by the relevant mandates and the Charter of the United Nations. In the same spirit, we also look forward to the discussions in the coming months on the report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982).

**Mr. Lagardien** (South Africa): Allow me to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing today on the work of the Organization. We would like to once again assure him of South Africa's continued support and cooperation as he carries out his work in a constantly challenging environment.

It is unfortunate that despite the optimism that came with the roll-out of vaccines, we are still faced with the challenge of an ever-evolving global pandemic. What the unpredictable pandemic has proved, however, is that it is vital to ensure that no one is left behind where equitable vaccine distribution is concerned. That requires a reinvigorated multilateralism, based on the fundamental idea that no country alone can solve the problems facing the world today. The coronavirus disease pandemic has laid bare the promise of international cooperation but also shown its limitations, when in the face of a global challenge countries abandon solidarity and retreat to focus on their national interests.

We would also like to welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General to give practical expression to the commitments made during the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations through his report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). In that regard, we welcome the General Assembly's unanimous adoption of resolution 76/6, on the follow-up to *Our Common Agenda*. We are pleased with the acknowledgement that *Our Common Agenda* does not seek to replace existing agreements but rather to accelerate their implementation. Had the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development been sufficiently advanced, we believe we would have been better prepared for the pandemic. We also note that the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization (A/76/1) and *Our Common Agenda* bring

to mind the importance of trust as a vital ingredient for governance that responds to people's needs. Trust is vital at both the national and international levels, especially as it relates to implementing agreed commitments and ensuring that the means for implementing development goals are realized.

Among other things, the United Nations was created to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. We echo the call for sustained investment in prevention and peacebuilding. We need to recommit to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and stop the trend of modernizing weapons of mass destruction. South Africa also supports the goal of boosting partnerships, including by recommitting to building synergies between regional priorities such as the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda.

We also appreciate the Secretary-General's focus on young people and succeeding generations. That means engaging with and listening to the voices of young people on a full range of global issues. Initiatives such as those of the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and the focus on education are therefore important and merit further consideration by Member States. And we need to place women and girls at the centre of our common agenda, something that is essential to preventing conflict and promoting peace, sustainable development and human rights, as well as protecting our planet.

We look forward to engaging in the process of securing Member States' ownership of *Our Common Agenda* in order to upgrade the United Nations. In that regard, we cannot overlook the long-standing impediments to the functioning of the United Nations in the modern age. We must therefore instil new life into the intergovernmental negotiations on reform of the Security Council and continue the efforts to revitalize the work of the General Assembly, strengthen the Economic and Social Council and revive the peacebuilding architecture.

Finally, we believe that *Our Common Agenda* and the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization give Member States an opportunity to both take stock of the state of the Organization and move forward in the process outlined by the President so as to urgently engage on and concretize the recommendations in *Our Common Agenda*, and we look forward to taking part in the follow-up process in that regard.

**Mr. Ishikane (Japan):** Let me begin by thanking the President for convening this meeting and the Secretary-General for sharing his priorities for 2022.

Two years after the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the world has yet to overcome the variants of the disease, let alone its socioeconomic impact. The work of the United Nations, including its intergovernmental processes and activities in the field, has been constrained in many ways owing to the pandemic. We need to redouble our efforts to communicate our priorities and forge common understanding on the focus of the work of the United Nations. I will touch on six areas where Japan deems the role of the United Nations particularly important and intends to work closely with the Organization throughout this year.

The first is global health. COVID-19 has underscored the imperative of securing health as a global public good. Japan will continue its support to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for countries and regions in need while steadily implementing our Last One Mile Support programme, in collaboration with the United Nations, in order to ensure vaccination for every single person. All countries and regions need to strengthen their health systems to respond effectively to future pandemics. Japan will continue to lead the international effort to achieve universal health coverage in the lead-up to the high-level meeting on universal health coverage in 2023.

The second area is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We must admit that the first two years of the Decade of Action have been stifled by the pandemic. We have no time to waste and must strive to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and their 169 targets, which are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental. Japan welcomes the special reference to the development of Africa in the Secretary-General's report (A/76/1). As we approach the eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development, to be held this year, Japan looks forward to working closely with its co-organizers, the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and the African Union Commission.

The third is climate change. In addition to advancing our own efforts to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 and reduce emissions by 46 per cent by fiscal year



2030, as well as continuing our endeavour to meet our broader goal of reducing emissions by 50 per cent, Japan remains steadfast in its efforts to translate its climate commitments made at the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change into concrete measures and supports decarbonization and adaptation efforts worldwide. In particular, Japan attaches great importance to assisting developing countries in building their institutional capacities for adaptation. In that connection, which is not limited to the context of climate change, Japan will work closely with the United Nations to accelerate the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 towards its midterm review in 2023. Japan will support the special needs of small island developing States in tackling climate- and disaster-related challenges.

The fourth area is peace and security. The repeated launches of ballistic missiles over the past few weeks by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in flagrant violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, should not be overlooked. Japan will work closely with the United Nations towards achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges.

As an active member of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Japan will engage in further discussion on sustaining peace, with an emphasis on the promotion of institutions and capacity-building. We welcome the fact that the report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) articulates the importance of conflict prevention and call for expanding the role of the PBC as part of the New Agenda for Peace. We will continue to contribute to the capacity-building of peacekeeping operations through the triangular partnership programme.

It was truly unfortunate that the surge of the Omicron variant in New York City coincided with the planned dates of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which we hope will now take place as soon as possible. As the only country ever to have suffered atomic bombings, Japan will spare no effort to achieve a meaningful outcome of the Review Conference and calls on all States parties to the Treaty to contribute to our shared goal of realizing a world without nuclear weapons.

The fifth area is respect for universal values. The United Nations embodies internationally recognized principles and values such as human rights, freedom, democracy and the rule of law. Japan will support the United Nations work aimed at helping Member States build their capacity to uphold those universal values. Gender equality is among the priority areas where more assistance is needed on the ground. Japan will collaborate closely with UN-Women, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and others to protect and promote the rights of women and girls.

The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us of the need to refocus on people's well-being and dignity and find the best ways to protect and empower individuals and communities, particularly the most vulnerable. As the world strives to build back better from the pandemic, it is high time for the United Nations and its Member States to invest more in human security. Japan looks forward to deepening the discussion on human security among Member States. We will also work closely with the United Nations to deliver on the ground in order to strengthen human security for all.

The sixth area is the effective functioning of the Organization. If it is to deliver on the commitments made by our leaders in the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 75/1), it cannot remain outdated and ineffective. We must undertake reform of the Security Council, now or never. We should break the years of stagnation and instil new life into the discussion. Japan looks forward to seeing the President and the Secretary-General play their parts in leveraging the momentum to achieve tangible progress in that regard by the end of this session.

In conclusion, Japan looks forward to working closely with the United Nations, Member States and other stakeholders throughout 2022 to respond to current and future challenges and advance *Our Common Agenda*, including in the preparations for the Summit of the Future.

**Ms. Dautllari** (Albania): I would like to thank Mr. António Guterres for his vision and leadership and congratulate him on his re-election for a second term as Secretary-General of the United Nations. We welcome and support the priorities introduced by the Secretary-General today and feel very encouraged by his inspiration and untiring dedication to the work

of the United Nations on the most challenging issues around the globe.

Albania aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union this morning. I would now like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

First, as the world continues to combat the coronavirus disease pandemic and its devastating effects on individuals, societies and economies, we believe that safe, effective vaccines, the strengthening of health systems and international preparedness for future pandemics should remain priorities.

As the world struggles to mitigate the growing effects of climate change, Albania has fully embraced the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development and made the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development the focus of its national strategy for development and integration and its European Union integration process. We have responded positively to the Secretary-General's call for national plans to address climate change and have expressed interest in joining initiatives to mitigate climate change led by Member States and civil society. In that context, we share the concerns outlined in *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), which we consider a robust action plan designed to accelerate the implementation of existing commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

Secondly, as a member of the Human Rights and Conflict Prevention Caucus, we believe firmly that the human rights pillar should be fully integrated into the development, peace and security pillars of the Secretary-General's prevention platform. We will spare no effort to promote human rights as a crucial tool for conflict prevention, sustainable development and lasting peace.

Albania has made significant progress on the national level with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment. In the framework of our tenure on the Security Council, and together with other Council members, we have also adopted shared commitments to making the agenda on women and peace and security a priority during our respective Council presidencies and ensuring its implementation in concrete and tangible ways. Also, as a country with one of the youngest populations in Europe and with Tirana proclaimed the European Youth Capital for 2022, Albania supports all efforts and proposals that will deliver for young people.

Finally, over the past two decades, Albania has increasingly become an active contributor in responding to international security issues. As a member of the Security Council, we intend to actively contribute to the preservation and strengthening of the multilateral rules-based order by meeting global challenges through partnerships.

In conclusion, I would like to affirm our genuine appreciation for a new agenda for peace, as proposed by the Secretary-General in his report on *Our Common Agenda*, and we look forward to further engaging in the preparations for a summit of the future.

**Mrs. Baeriswyl** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the President for convening this important debate and to wish the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General every success in their second terms, as well as to commend the Secretary-General for his presentation of his important priorities to the Assembly this morning. I also want to take this opportunity to welcome the Secretary-General's new Chef de Cabinet. We wish him all the best in his new role and look forward to working with him. I echo the apt words of Helen Keller, whose efforts for world peace preceded ours more than a century ago, when she said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." To that end, everyone can count on our full support.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/76/1). However, while the report's new and innovative format is very reader-friendly, clear and well-structured, its content paints a bleak picture. The major challenges that the Secretary-General mentioned during his briefing this morning are also reflected in the *Global Risks Report 2022* of the Davos World Economic Forum. It emphasizes the urgent need to find rapid responses to the pandemic and its environmental, societal and technological risks, all of which can exacerbate ongoing global crises and conflicts. In that regard, I would like to make a few brief points on how Switzerland can provide concrete support to the Secretary-General's priorities and actions.

I want to address the issues of sustainable recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis, as well as climate change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. My country has contributed more than \$1 billion to COVID-19 recovery efforts. We are also continuing our commitment to helping the worst affected countries overcome the negative effects of the pandemic, in particular through our efforts to ensure

equitable access to vaccines and their distribution, as well as treatments and diagnostics.

Switzerland also supports efforts to combat climate change in all its aspects, including mitigation, adaptation and addressing climate change as a risk multiplier. We have a clear collective road map, the 2030 Agenda, to resolve the current crisis in a sustainable manner, and my country believes it is more important than ever to renew our focus on it. Digitalization and the rapid evolution of technologies represent important opportunities for accelerating our implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Switzerland therefore welcomes the ideas that the Secretary-General has proposed in *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) and commends the President of the General Assembly for taking the initiative to advance the dialogue on those issues. Switzerland will play an active role in the process.

Where peace and security and human rights are concerned, building sustainable peace has always been central to our international commitments and is all the more so in view of our candidacy for election to the Security Council for the 2023-2024 term. Through International Geneva, we are honoured to be able to offer the international community a platform for dialogue that we hope will contribute to finding solutions to disputes now and in the future.

Respect for international humanitarian law, as well as conflict prevention and peacebuilding, with the equal participation of women and men, remain our long-standing priorities. We look forward to contributing our expertise to the discussions on a new agenda for peace. Switzerland commends the Secretary-General for his efforts in connection with his Call to Action for Human Rights and welcomes the fact that the seven specific domains of the Call to Action are reflected in *Our Common Agenda*. We will continue our commitment to ensuring that human rights — which have recently been seriously threatened — remain central to the work of the United Nations, both in terms of the pandemic response and in our work on development and peace and security. As the Secretary-General said this morning, human dignity must be at the centre of our work.

Allow me to conclude with an observation that also echoes the Secretary-General's briefing this morning. In the global survey that was conducted on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Organization, young people expressed positive views of the United Nations and multilateralism, but only on the condition

that their voices be heard and their concerns and ideas be taken seriously. Let us follow their advice, including in our work on *Our Common Agenda*, because engaging with and investing in young people at all levels of decision-making mean investing in the future of multilateralism.

**Mr. Kariuki** (United Kingdom): I am grateful to the Secretary-General for joining us today and outlining his priorities for the year ahead. We know that 2022 poses both new and evolving challenges to multilateralism and are grateful for his leadership in advancing meaningful reform and preparing the United Nations for the future. We agree with him that the United Nations is at a pivotal moment. Today I will focus on three main challenges — the pandemic response, sustainable recovery and renewing multilateralism.

First, regarding the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, in 2022 we will redouble our efforts to achieve equitable global vaccination, work to strengthen health systems and take steps towards a global agreement to prevent future pandemics. We are encouraged by the announcement that the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility has now delivered its billionth vaccine dose, and we remain committed to closely engaging on that and other initiatives to bolster recovery.

Secondly, we need to show increased urgency and ambition in dealing with the setbacks to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals resulting from the pandemic. The United Kingdom will continue to prioritize sustainable recovery, focusing on the most vulnerable and providing transparent, reliable and responsible financing for development.

With regard to climate change, as we look to the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27), we will work with Egypt and the United Nations to build on the commitments made in Glasgow. We must keep up the momentum on mitigation and accelerate action on finance, adaptation and loss, which remain critical for many climate-vulnerable countries. We will also continue to work to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, and look forward to an ambitious outcome of the fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Kunming. We also look forward to this year's climate-focused session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and are proud to have held an inclusive COP26 in Glasgow.

Women and girls must be at the forefront of our global recovery and future ambition. The United Kingdom continues to prioritize global action to end violence against women and girls, which has only intensified during the pandemic. In the lead-up to 2023, we want to use the Summit on Transforming Education to help enable girls everywhere to receive quality education.

During our seventy-fifth anniversary year, the States Members of the United Nations agreed that reform is essential to renewing our Organization and ensuring the future success of multilateralism. We support the Secretary-General's ambitious reform agenda and want to see those reforms embedded sustainably and realizing their full benefits. We need an effective, efficient and joined-up United Nations family that fosters transparency and widespread engagement through a culture of continuous improvement and delivers real change for the people whom the United Nations serves. We welcome the report on *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), which offers recommendations to help achieve the future we envisaged during our seventy-fifth anniversary year, including for a transformation towards a United Nations 2.0. We agree with the vision for a networked, inclusive multilateralism across the scope of the United Nations agenda and with the need to involve all relevant stakeholders in order to adequately tackle twenty-first-century challenges.

**Mr. Wenaweser** (Liechtenstein): In 2022 we will mark the third year in which the work of the United Nations is taking place under the shadow of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. No organization is better equipped or more fully mandated to meet the challenge that the pandemic presents to the world. The reach of the United Nations is unparalleled for addressing the immediate health effects of the pandemic and its knock-on effects on the world's most vulnerable people, including by enhancing preparedness and ensuring that vaccinations can be delivered where they are needed.

We welcome the fact that the United Nations system, in taking a pragmatic and science-based approach, has significantly contributed to international solidarity in times of misinformation and disinformation, populism and nationalist tendencies. We stand behind that work, guided by resolution 74/270 and the leadership of the World Health Organization, among other things. Our response to the world's most pressing issues, with the pandemic foremost among them, must be grounded in

international solidarity, underpinned by a human rights perspective and guided by a commitment to reducing inequality. Unfortunately, the pandemic has served to demonstrate not only how far we still have to go, but also that in some key areas we are moving in the wrong direction. The spread of new COVID-19 variants and subsequent new waves of infection is directly linked to our inability to ensure equitable global vaccine distribution. Without that, other preventive measures can only stave off the inevitable.

We attach importance to the ongoing efforts to ensure business continuity at United Nations Headquarters, despite the volatile pandemic situation, and look forward to early opportunities to discuss that among the membership. Ensuring that the United Nations political organs are fully operational at all times is paramount. Going forward, one area in need of improvement is ensuring civil-society access to the United Nations premises, which we will continue to push for in the coming weeks.

The pandemic has also emphatically placed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the centre of our work. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a road map not only for addressing the consequences of COVID-19 but also for preventing such public health and other global crises from happening in the first place. If we are to harness the full potential of the SDGs, we need to consider them holistically rather than taking a piecemeal approach to their implementation.

The pandemic has also been a stress test for trust in institutions, with important lessons for making them more effective, accountable and inclusive. The lack of trust in institutions at a national level remains the primary challenge to the rule of law and to progress towards achieving our common Sustainable Development Goals. Trust can be built only through participation and accountability, often painstakingly and at the cost of great collective effort.

The United Nations needs to increase the meaningful participation of civil society in its work, in line with the Secretary-General's vision in the report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), for a stronger and more networked and inclusive multilateral system. We welcome the road map the report provides for achieving the priorities that the Secretary-General set out today, especially its focus on human rights and fundamental



freedoms and its new vision for the rule of law that puts people at the centre of justice systems.

The triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and rising levels of pollution highlighted in the Secretary-General's report (A/76/1) must remain at the forefront of the work of the Organization. The increasing tension between humankind and nature has not only led to today's climate emergency, but it has also manifested itself in heightened risks for zoonotic diseases, diminishing biodiversity and increasing desertification, among other things. In response to that, we must recalibrate our relationship with our planet in a sustainable manner, as promoted by the comprehensive One Health approach. That is as much a sustainable development and human rights matter as it is a security need.

While the Security Council has made tentative efforts to broaden its security paradigm beyond its narrow political-military focus, its collective failure to adopt a thematic resolution on climate and security is ominous, not just for climate ambition but for the Council itself. A much more preventive approach in line with the concept of human security is needed if the Council's actions are to remain relevant in the light of current and future threats. At this stage, the Council has very little to offer in response to the most pervasive cause of insecurity that the world has seen in decades. As much as we support the call by the Secretary-General this morning for Security Council unity, we are unlikely to see it in the near future. It would be irresponsible for the General Assembly to remain inactive in such a situation. The proposal of a new agenda for peace in *Our Common Agenda* has therefore come at the right moment. We need a new security paradigm that effectively addresses the threats to security that people around the globe experience on a daily basis, and we need alternative ways of decision-making to counter them.

**Mr. Mahmoud** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the Secretary-General for his valuable report (A/76/1), and especially for its information on responding to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. I assure him that Egypt will as always continue to support strengthening and developing the United Nations, driven by our belief in the importance of reviving multilateralism.

The pandemic has affected our economies and societies. It is threatening our achievement of sustainable

development, especially considering the predictions about its expected effects on efforts to address poverty and achieve international development and stability. We therefore need to strengthen international efforts to produce and distribute vaccines equitably to every country and to transfer relevant technology and information to the developing world. We also need to enhance international joint action to address the economic crisis resulting from the pandemic's effect on the economies of the developing world. In that regard, I would like to commend the role played by the United Nations Resident Coordinator's system in Egypt in reorienting development activities according to the challenges resulting from the pandemic, and in supporting the Egyptian Government in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Egypt commends the Secretary-General's continued efforts to address climate issues, particularly his call for allocating 50 per cent of climate finance for adaptation projects. As Chair of the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27), we underscore our commitment to strengthening the international efforts to address this existential challenge. We have already begun coordinating with the United Kingdom, the Chair of COP26, in that regard. During its chairmanship of COP27, Egypt will focus on a number of priorities, including the importance of accelerating the transition to implementation phases and setting a new financing goal for 2025 that addresses the needs of developing countries and means of implementation. We will also increase our ambitions with regard to mitigation and adaptation issues in a way that takes into account all the aspects of achieving sustainable development in developing countries, including small island States. Egypt will adopt a comprehensive approach to promoting trust and transparency among all parties, emphasizing that cooperation is the cornerstone for the success of COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh.

Egypt is always ready to provide every possible support to peacekeeping operations through the development of peacekeeping concepts, policies and strategies or through its contributions of military and police troops. Egypt ranks eighth among the countries that contribute to peacekeeping missions. Egypt is proud to have supported the establishment and development of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and chaired the Peacebuilding Commission at its fifteenth

session, and is eager to enhance its role in addressing peacebuilding priorities in conflict-affected countries, expanding the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission and building bridges and partnerships with the various organs of the United Nations.

Egypt welcomes the ideas in the Secretary-General's report on *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) regarding strengthening the peacebuilding architecture and providing it with sustainable funding. We also welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General and the United Nations to promote human rights and believe that the best way to do that is by advancing dialogue and international cooperation with the aim of helping all countries build their capacities, raise awareness and establish a culture of human rights in their societies. The events of the past two years have shown that no country is perfect in its implementation of all human rights. The pandemic revealed massive shortcomings in the protection of economic and social rights and the right to development, health and education. It also revealed growing racial discrimination and misinformation, hate speech, extremism and disregard for the rights of women and girls, all of which are major challenges that require more genuine international cooperation and enhanced international efforts if they are to be confronted and overcome. In that regard, I would like to highlight that in 2021 Egypt launched its first national human rights strategy as part of our national efforts to develop the human rights system in Egypt.

Egypt welcomes the fact that the Secretary-General's report (A/76/1) addresses the issue of achieving gender equality and discusses the additional burdens that women have borne during the pandemic. We stress, however, that we do not recognize any initiatives that have taken place outside the scope of the United Nations and the mandate of its main organs.

Given the importance of achieving the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and implementing all the obligations stipulated in the Treaty and its previous Review Conferences, including the responsibilities of nuclear-weapon States as outlined in article VI of the Treaty, we look forward to the convening in August of the Treaty's tenth Review Conference. I would also like to highlight a point that the Secretary-General's report did not mention, which was the convening from 29 November to 3 December 2021 of the second session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction,

and its important outcomes, especially with regard to adopting rules of procedure and establishing a working group to follow up on the internal consultations this year.

Egypt thanks the Secretary-General for providing an update in the report on United Nations efforts to combat organized crime at the international and regional levels and stresses the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach to confronting the increasing interconnection of terrorism and organized crime.

In conclusion, I would like to express my appreciation to the United Nations for the measures it has taken to ensure the continuity of its work in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Effective management reforms within the system have helped to improve the resilience and capacity of the Organization and its Secretariat in responding to the pandemic conditions. I also reiterate Egypt's continued support for achieving our shared goals and strengthening the international multilateral framework.

**Mr. Pary Rodríguez** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for presenting his priorities for the work of the Organization. I am also grateful for the convening of this debate, since it enables us to exchange views on those priorities within the complex context of the coronavirus disease pandemic and its new variants, which have had far-reaching effects over the past two years. While our Organization has been a vital space for dialogue and cooperation throughout this period, it is still far from being able to take the pragmatic action that is needed to provide a collective response to the health impacts of pandemics both now and in the future, and to other challenges such as natural disasters, climate change, biodiversity loss, food insecurity, gender inequality and the digital divide.

In that complex context, Bolivia believes that in order to reduce the new structural gaps, we must address the health and humanitarian effects within the framework of a global alliance, starting by making a commitment to strengthening the capacities of health-care industries in developing countries to produce vaccines and medicines, and then by mitigating heavy external dependencies and the impact of protectionism. In times of pandemics and epidemics, working to waive patents and other restrictions in order to achieve equitable access to vaccines and basic medicines must

be a priority. Life and health cannot continue to be used exclusively for profit.

It appears that the dynamics of the pandemic and economic growth, which have become more uncertain and complex every day, will give way to a slower recovery than expected. That could result not merely in liquidity problems but also insolvencies. We therefore hope to be in a position to achieve sustainable recovery. In that regard, we consider it essential for our Organization to work to relieve global debt through debt forgiveness or renegotiation. We need to move beyond the analytical stage and take actions and decisions.

We are also witnessing major consequences of climate change whose negative impacts on crop yields and food and water supplies are endangering our efforts to combat poverty and inequality. We believe that if we want to save Mother Earth and increase communities' resilience, rather than reinterpreting the content of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change or watering down the agreements already reached, we must work to strengthen their implementation and ensure the full and effective application of equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities. Humankind has continued to jeopardize its own survival.

The biggest impact of the pandemic crisis has been on our children and young people, especially school-age children, as the gap in access to technology also deepens educational inequalities. The use of technology may be a strategy for coping with school closures, but the digital divide clearly shows that there are limits to connectivity. We must therefore work to achieve the right to the Internet as a public good. That is how we can assure our children and young people of one of the most basic rights, the right to education.

In conclusion, we acknowledge our responsibility to operationalize the Decade of Action in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, while applying a realistic strategy that takes into account the problems of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as supporting recovery measures that address the climate crisis, invest in green and sustainable industries, reduce inequalities and exclusion and promote gender equality and conflict prevention. In that regard, Bolivia believes that now more than ever we must prove multilateralism's effectiveness and demonstrate a pragmatism that in the

future will enable us to save lives, protect societies and recover for the better, while addressing the fragilities and weaknesses that still plague us.

**Mr. Hadjichrysanthou** (Cyprus): My remarks complement those made on behalf of the European Union at the informal meeting this morning.

Let me start by thanking the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization (A/76/1) and for sharing his priorities with us earlier today. We also thank him for his stewardship of the United Nations over the past five years, including his personal involvement in the efforts to settle the Cyprus conflict, and wish him a productive and successful second term. We support his focus on the five emergencies he laid out this morning and agree with him that the challenges we face essentially represent failures of global governance and that our priority should be to keep multilateralism fit for purpose.

The discussion on peace and security in the Secretary-General's report conveys the complexity of that pillar by touching on some of its many components, but for us there is only one element that we can use as a barometer for the effectiveness of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and security, and that is the Organization's ability to uphold the prohibition on the use of force. Though it is hard to measure, it is plain to see that the threat or use of force have not been eliminated as we had hoped would be the case 75 years after we were compelled to establish the United Nations to put an end to aggression. The Secretary-General's statement today that we are dealing with the highest number of violent conflicts since 1945 indeed sounds the alarm that we must do better.

Relations among States are more polarized than they should be, 30 years after the end of the Cold War. We share the Secretary-General's concern about the deepening East-West divide, as well as the risk of ending up with fragmented or even parallel global systems in the future. This geopolitical polarization is in itself a source of anxiety and insecurity, particularly for small States. It puts on display the shortcomings of our system of collective security and its overdependence on power relations. It also shows that the rule of might has not been mitigated by a cooperative approach on a global level based on the rule of law and on universal values that bind all States together.

Multilateralism is still the best and only framework for an effective international system of collective

security that can ensure equality in security for all, zero tolerance of threats, consequences for aggressors and justice for victims. Where the unlawful use of force cannot be prevented, the United Nations must ensure that its outcomes are neither accepted nor legitimized. We have both the legal basis and the tools to enforce compliance with the rules-based international order that we have established, and that is precisely what we need to do, including by strengthening our institutions of global governance.

We concur with the Secretary-General's emphasis on conflict prevention, including in his proposed new agenda for peace. At the same time, the plethora of existing conflicts should not be left behind. The Secretary-General mentioned a number of them this morning, including the conflict in Cyprus, and we continue to be grateful for his good-offices mission to reunite Cyprus as a bizonal, bicomunal federation with political equality, as set out in the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. We hope that the Secretary-General will be in a position to appoint an envoy to facilitate a resumption of the peace process as soon as possible.

Inequality is another big concern, not only for its effects on human welfare and dignity but also for its impact on governance and the rule of law. Despite our best efforts, we see that the pandemic has resulted in the concentration of even more wealth in the hands of a few, creating a dangerous chasm. As the international community, we need to design more and better equalizers to prevent a dystopian future where extreme wealth and poverty are the norm. Our equalizers also need to take into account the fact that all crises — whether of poverty, climate or human rights — always affect women disproportionately.

The climate crisis is an existential one for many of us, mostly for small States that bear little responsibility for causing it. The prospect of countries becoming partly or wholly uninhabitable due to climate change is a real concern, as is the de-territorialization of States due to sea-level rise. As a conflict-affected State with part of its territory under occupation that has been experiencing the consequences of climate change for years, Cyprus is also extremely concerned about the threat that climate change poses to peace and security. The inability of States to share the burden of migrant flows gives rise to questions as to how the massive displacement of people due to climate change that is already happening will be addressed.

Before I conclude, I would like to make some comments on this debate itself. In recent years, the debate on the report on the work of the Organization and the presentation of the Secretary-General's priorities have been amalgamated and occur early in the calendar year, while the report continues to be issued at the beginning of the session. We believe that we would benefit from synchronizing and consolidating the outlining of priorities, the issuance of the report and the discussions on the work of the Organization at the beginning of each calendar year. Furthermore, we see merit in shifting the schedule of General Assembly sessions to coincide with calendar years so as to discuss where we are and where we want to go at the beginning of the session and then take stock of the year during high-level week towards the end of the session. Aligning those tools would better serve the overarching objective of strengthening the United Nations.

**Ms. Squeff** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing on his report on the work of the Organization (A/76/1) and to convey Argentina's appreciation for the work of the United Nations during the past year, despite the current exceptional circumstances in the context of the ongoing health crisis.

For the past two years, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has been disrupting our world, threatening our health, destroying our economies and deepening inequalities. The United Nations has never faced a global health crisis quite like this one. Now, more than ever, we must strengthen and renew the international community's commitment to multilateralism in order to respond to the consequences of the pandemic in a concerted and coordinated manner.

We fully agree with the view that the Secretary-General expressed in his report that the only way to end the pandemic is to deliver vaccines to every country. It is imperative to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines. The pandemic has propelled the unsustainability of sovereign debt even higher, and that has had a particularly negative impact on the economies of low- and middle-income countries. Many of them are still struggling to find the correct balance between financing their COVID-19 response and meeting their current and future debt obligations. It is essential for the international community to move forward decisively to reform the international financial architecture in order to achieve a lasting solution to the problem of unsustainable debt and prevent it from taking us even



further away from the possibility of achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As noted in the report, the central role of the United Nations in international law-making and its unique contributions to the development, codification and implementation of international law should be highlighted. In that regard, we commend the work of the International Court of Justice in promoting the rule of law and the peaceful settlement of disputes through its jurisdiction over contentious cases and in its advisory capacity. I would also like to highlight the efforts of the Secretary-General to mediate between parties to disputes, exercise his good offices and facilitate the search for peaceful solutions. Argentina reaffirms the need for such efforts to continue until the parties concerned find a definitive solution to their differences, especially when there is a mandate from the General Assembly or the Security Council.

My delegation took particular note of the references in the Secretary-General's report on his Call to Action for Human Rights, which has been useful in enabling the United Nations to redouble its efforts to ensure the integration of human rights into the centre of the work of the Organization, including its response to the pandemic, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups. Argentina is firmly committed to protecting and promoting human rights. This year my country holds the presidency of the Human Rights Council and from that platform we are working to continue strengthening the multilateral human rights system to enable it to respond efficiently and effectively to the challenges that lie ahead.

The Secretary-General emphasizes in his report that throughout the pandemic he has put gender equality and women's rights at the centre of his efforts. We appreciate his efforts to incorporate diversity and inclusion into every aspect of the work of the Organization. Argentina prioritizes ensuring the effective recognition of the human rights of women and children in all their diversity, as well as LGBTIQ+ persons, and their enjoyment of those rights. My country's commitment to the gender and diversity agenda is reflected at the international level, where Argentina represents the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States as Vice-President on the Executive Board of UN-Women and Vice-Chair of the Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women. We also currently co-chair the LGBTI Core Group of the United Nations. And it is equally important to work for the full protection and realization

of the human rights of older persons. Argentina believes that universal challenge must be addressed through the development of a legally binding instrument to provide the international community with the elements needed to guarantee older persons the full enjoyment of their human rights.

The Secretary-General's report also recognizes the increases we have seen in poverty and hunger, along with alarming levels of inequality within and between societies. We believe that the international community has a key role to play in the recovery efforts because the pandemic, like poverty, spares no one. In that connection, the Commission for Social Development, which Argentina currently has the honour of chairing, has become a crucial space for sharing good practices and following up on the Commission's objectives, which rightly include poverty eradication, achieving full employment and promoting social inclusion. At its next session, the Commission will specifically address the eradication of hunger and poverty, which will give us an opportunity to strengthen global solidarity and achieve concrete outcomes.

Argentina shares the Secretary-General's assessment in his report of the current problematic situation regarding disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. It is well known that Argentina will chair the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, during which we will commemorate its fiftieth anniversary. The Review Conference will be a unique opportunity for States parties to renew their commitment to the three pillars of the Treaty: disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Unfortunately, owing to the pandemic that we are currently dealing with, the Review Conference has been postponed once again. We call on the Secretariat to redouble its efforts to hold this important event as soon as possible this year. For our part, we will make every effort to ensure its successful outcome.

The issue of the climate crisis will undoubtedly continue to underpin the work of our Organization. The concrete contributions that we make on that issue must be in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and above all, aimed at ensuring that adequate means are provided for the implementation of our commitments. That is the only way we can make genuine progress towards a transition to a clean, lower-carbon economy that is resilient to the effects of climate change.

In conclusion, Argentina once again reiterates its firm support for every discussion that strengthens the role of the United Nations, given that the Organization will play a vital role in enabling us to redouble our efforts to ensure an inclusive world that can respond to current and future needs.

**Mr. Espinosa Cañizares** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I will not repeat the remarks that I made during this morning's informal meeting and will keep my statement brief.

I would like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his substantive report (A/76/1) and commend him for its content. I am pleased that to a large extent, several of the priorities raised by the Secretary-General coincide with the pragmatic and principled foreign policy pursued by President Guillermo Lasso in managing Ecuador's international agenda and delivering tangible results to the population as a whole.

This morning I referred to the challenging international circumstances that we are facing owing to the inequities laid bare by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, whose costs and consequences can be addressed only through concerted action on the part of the international community. I believe that the efforts made by all actors within the United Nations system should always be focused on striving for gender equality, as well as overcoming poverty, inequality and inequity, regardless of the scope or framework for action, whether in the areas of climate change in all its dimensions, human rights and humanitarian assistance or international peace and security.

We must move forward without delay in fulfilling our commitments towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. If we do not act, in 2030 we will be met with another disappointment for multilateralism. This is a good opportunity to reaffirm our commitments to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and justice and a rules-based order, which are the indispensable foundations for peaceful coexistence and cooperation among States.

As a candidate for Security Council membership for the 2023-2024 term, Ecuador, if elected, would act in accordance with its traditional attachment to peace and law, in line with the security pillar outlined in the Secretary-General's report on *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). I would like to acknowledge the Secretariat's contribution to advancing and

strengthening the preventive diplomacy approach at the United Nations. The Secretary-General can count on my country's full and unequivocal support and our efforts to achieve peace, a global public good that we must protect and manage.

In the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the use of new technologies and social networks has exacerbated disinformation, fomenting violence and intolerance. It is important to recognize that there are new platforms and interlinkages that have reshaped the threats of transnational crime, organized crime, terrorism and international drug trafficking, and that their perpetrators seek to infiltrate institutions. We need greater international cooperation in order to confront them.

The Secretary-General has highlighted the urgency of taking action to tackle the climate crisis and protect biodiversity on countless occasions. Scientific evidence is the basis of our common efforts for adaptation and mitigation, and that applies to specific actions such as eliminating subsidies for fossil fuels and prioritizing investments in renewable energies. However, the lack of resources for confronting climate change and protecting our ecosystems is evident. Also evident is the need to apply the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and for developed countries to fulfil their commitments and increase the provision of means of implementation — financing, capacity-building and technology transfer — for developing countries. Ecuador is doing its part on the road to a necessary ecological transition. This morning I mentioned the expansion of my country's marine reserve, an idea that I would like to flesh out by noting the commitment of the Presidents of Ecuador, Colombia, Costa Rica and Panama, who signed a pioneering declaration in Glasgow for the protection and management of the Cocos, Galapagos, Malpelo, and Coiba islands, as well as of the unique ecosystem among the islands that make up the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor. That initiative will make it possible to create one of the largest marine biosphere reserves in the world.

I agree that the discussions on financing for development in 2020 and 2021 will help us to join forces with international financial institutions, but greater efforts must be made to address the specific challenges and vulnerabilities of middle-income countries, including with the application of a multidimensional vulnerability index. In that context, and in response to the request of the Assembly, we hope that the Secretary-

General will map the current support available to middle-income countries with a view to developing a comprehensive United Nations system response plan.

Finally, the Secretary-General's report and its priorities set out in various forums remind us of the importance of ensuring that his management has the support of the membership in order to meet the challenges we face as an international community. Multilateralism and preventive diplomacy cannot be effective unless they are directly related to improving our peoples' living conditions. Secretary-General Guterres can count on our help.

**Mr. Hossain** (Bangladesh): I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing today. We share his concerns regarding the impact of the pandemic on the global socioeconomic and security situations, especially in the areas of the Sustainable Development Goals, climate, poverty and inequality, geopolitical volatility and humanitarian crises.

This year, 2022, has not had an auspicious start. Omicron has dealt a serious blow to our recovery efforts from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We are rapidly falling behind in achieving the shared promises we made through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Against that backdrop, I commend the United Nations system and its staff globally, including those working in the funds and programmes, for their remarkable role on the front lines in ensuring critical services to those most in need. We thank the Secretary-General for his outstanding leadership during this trying time. I would like to briefly highlight a few specific points in that regard.

First, we echo the resounding call to close vaccine divides by ensuring safe and affordable COVID-19 vaccines for everyone, everywhere. We must not fail in our shared ambition to vaccinate at least 70 per cent of the world's population by the middle of this year. That should be an overarching, system-wide priority for the United Nations in 2022. It is imperative to increase vaccine supplies to the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility and support local production through the immediate transfer of vaccine technologies to developing countries.

Second, we thank the Secretary-General for his report entitled *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). The report has identified key challenges of our time and outlined an ambitious road map to address them. My delegation will support efforts to advance the

key deliverables of that agenda in the upcoming thematic debates on the report led by the President of the General Assembly. We stress the importance of ensuring synergies in the initiatives of the Secretariat, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies aimed at pursuing the report's priorities. We look forward to broad consultations in the lead-up to the proposed education summit and the summit of the future with a view to taking the ideas forward.

Third, we commend the Secretary-General for organizing the leaders' event on climate change during the high-level week of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, in which our Prime Minister participated. The event added great value to the political momentum on the road towards the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Glasgow. We wish to build on our achievements in Glasgow to arrive at higher ambitions for COP27 in Egypt. As a climate-vulnerable country and the current Chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, we will work closely with the Secretary-General to create the necessary impetus towards higher nationally determined contributions, enhanced financing, technology transfer and the tackling of loss and damage issues.

Fourth, according to UNESCO, close to half the world's students have been affected by partial or full school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While advanced countries have been able to swiftly move to online platforms, the developing and least developed countries have been left further behind, due to insufficient resources and a lack of efficient and affordable technologies. My Prime Minister has called on the world's leaders to declare remote learning and online education a global public good. We count on the Secretary-General's support in putting this issue high on the United Nations agenda.

Fifth, the COVID-19 pandemic has seen an alarming increase in global poverty and inequalities. The job losses, halt in trade and business and absence of new investment have all helped to create the worst recession of our time. We see science, technology and innovation as a sine qua non for bridging those burgeoning gaps. We wish to work with the Secretary-General to leverage the power of science, technology and innovation and ensure the meaningful transfer of technologies to bring about transformative changes in our societies. We support the Secretary-General's

proposal for a global digital compact to leverage the power of digital goods, including frontier technologies for the benefit of all.

Sixth, the COVID-19 pandemic has hugely exacerbated the pre-existing economic disparities between the developed and developing countries. It is imperative that we work together with a clear vision to ensure a fair and equitable voice for the developing countries in the global economic and financial order. We encourage the United Nations to enhance its collaboration with the World Bank Group, the International Monetary Fund and the relevant economic and financial agencies to drive coherent actions in that regard. The least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and African countries are the furthest behind. They require reinvigorated international support.

As co-Chair of the recently concluded preparatory committee meetings for the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, we look forward to the support of the Secretary-General in making the upcoming Conference a success, as well as to the continued support of the United Nations agencies for the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action.

Seventh, we cannot overemphasize the need for increased efforts to ensure that durable solutions are found to protracted humanitarian situations and large-scale forced displacements. My country has been hosting more than a million Rohingya from Myanmar with no progress in sight. The deteriorating conditions in Myanmar, especially since the military takeover in February 2021, have worsened the situation, leading to frustration and desperation among the displaced Rohingya. We hope the new Special Envoy will be able to expand the scope and dimension of United Nations engagement in Myanmar and bring new impetus to the efforts of the United Nations to find a speedy and lasting solution to the Rohingya crisis.

Eighth, we take note of the Secretary-General's approach to the United Nations peace and security architecture. In that regard, we thank the Secretary-General for his proposed new agenda for peace, which calls for greater investment in prevention and sustaining peace. As a leading contributor of military and police troops to United Nations peace operations, we reaffirm our commitment to advancing peacebuilding and sustaining the peace agenda on the

ground. Our peacekeepers will continue to support host countries and other actors in developing critical peacebuilding capacities to address the root causes and drivers of conflicts in their societies. We look forward to the Assembly's continued attention to strengthening partnerships, coherence and financing in support of the growing needs of countries in transition.

Finally, we commend the Secretary-General's commitment to gender equality and his efforts to bring about gender parity in United Nations staffing. However, we believe that full equality cannot be achieved without diversity. Alongside gender parity, we want to see a balanced regional representation of United Nations staff at every level.

I would like to conclude by assuring the Secretary-General that he can count on Bangladesh's continued support as he takes our shared priorities and commitments forward.

**Mr. Gunaratna (Sri Lanka):** I would like to thank the President for convening this meeting of the General Assembly to reflect on the report of the Secretary General on the work of the Organization (A/76/1). My delegation is also grateful to the Secretary-General for presenting his priorities today for 2022.

As the Secretary-General says, the global health, social, economic and human rights crises triggered by the pandemic have underscored the importance of multilateral cooperation and tested it to the limit. However, underlying all those challenges are lingering questions about the nature of global health security today. We should remember that the International Sanitary Conferences of the nineteenth century, the forerunners of today's International Health Regulations, were concerned with ensuring that Europe was protected against epidemic diseases of particular origin while minimizing the interference with international commerce. We have yet to see the extent to which the new conception of global health built into the 2005 International Health Regulations truly departs from that Western bias. It has been said that the securitization of public health steers policy responses towards military solutions, quarantines and border controls, which are not conducive to achieving lasting responses that improve the health of our communities. We believe that we need to identify a concept or policy for global health that has the capacity to respond to those concerns. In that context, Sri Lanka commends



the Secretary-General for his leadership in steering the United Nations through these difficult times.

United Nations efforts have been central to the pandemic response through its assistance to more than 160 countries in tackling the disease's effects on the health, humanitarian, social and economic fronts, especially by creating and operationalizing the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator and its COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility, from which Sri Lanka has benefited through the administering of vaccines to our people. Vaccine equity is the key to overcoming this evolving pandemic. As we have repeatedly heard in the Assembly, no one is safe until everyone is safe. A recently suggested approach is to improve the integration of a concept of medical humanitarianism into the overall scheme of global health security.

The pandemic has had devastating effects on our hard-won development goals, creating significant setbacks to countries' Sustainable Development Goal agendas. The promotion of sustained economic growth and development should be at the core of our efforts through increased partnerships and cooperation on global agendas, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. We need sufficient resources allocated to the development pillar through the regular budget of the United Nations, without any caveats. It will also be crucial to scale up efforts in financing for development, and the Secretary-General's initiatives in that regard are noteworthy. It will be important to take account of the multifaceted challenges facing developing economies. Each country's specific challenges should be considered and resources should be made available in designing recovery efforts, especially for the hardest-hit sectors, such as tourism.

We commend the leadership of the United Nations on climate action, spearheaded by the United Nations Environment Programme. Our recovery from the pandemic should be cleaner and greener. We hope that the United Nations will continue the momentum generated by the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In that regard, Sri Lanka, as part of its nationally determined contributions, has said a firm no to new coal power plants and is implementing green policies aimed at ensuring that by 2030, 70 per cent of its energy generation will be from renewable

energy sources, with the long-term goal of making Sri Lanka a carbon-neutral country by 2050. It should be appreciated that in assessing whether climate change has security implications we must look at the nature of its effects. Climate change has had a serious impact on lives and livelihoods. We are all familiar with the list of its consequences. It has been suggested that we think of climate change as a human rights issue, to help us see that it is not just a matter of aggregate costs and benefits or of winners and losers but one in which the powerful prevent the political system from acting to protect the many who are powerless.

Sri Lanka also appreciates the expertise and technical assistance that the United Nations provides at the regional level, especially by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) in our region. Sri Lanka was also pleased to chair the fourth UNESCAP Ministerial Conference on Transport, in Bangkok, which adopted a ministerial declaration on sustainable transport development in Asia and the Pacific and a new regional action programme for the period from 2022 to 2026, aligned with the three pillars of sustainability and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We also appreciate the support extended by the United Nations across a range of activities in the area of international peace and security, through political, peacebuilding and peacekeeping operations, the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and the Action for Peacekeeping Initiative. We commend the service rendered by United Nations personnel all around the globe. Sri Lanka also reaffirms its commitments to international peace and security and stands ready to increase its contingent of peacekeepers in United Nations peace operations. We are mindful of the fact that in the decades since its creation, peacekeeping has undergone a number of changes. The traditional form of peacekeeping, whereby peacekeeping forces consisted of lightly armed troops deployed to serve in a neutral capacity, has today evolved into multidimensional operations largely as a result of the changing dynamics of conflicts from inter-State to intra-State.

In conclusion, while we assure the Assembly of our full support for the work of the Organization and look forward to the realization of the objectives outlined by the Secretary-General in what will undoubtedly be another challenging year, we must, however, keep in mind the critique that for a multitude of reasons the United Nations has been courting a loss of authority,

and that perhaps unfairly, our debates and discussions have been described as something akin to a dialogue of the deaf. Unfair though it may be, we need to change that perception without delay, in what has now been presented to us as a new normal in which we can build back better in a spirit reflective of the real humanity that we are all blessed with as members of one human family. I also want to take this opportunity to express my delegation's thanks for the work of the United Nations Office in Sri Lanka, which partners with our Government to give meaning to these common global values, which we share as part of our common vision. We would like to assure the Organization of our support.

**Mr. Margaryan** (Armenia): We thank the Secretary-General for presenting his report on the work of the Organization (A/76/1) in 2021 and highlighting his priorities for 2022.

As the international community has embarked on the long path to recovery, the United Nations continues to play its vital role in coordinating and leading the global efforts to respond to the health, socioeconomic, humanitarian and other consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The establishment of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund and the formulation of socioeconomic response plans to support inclusive and sustainable recovery have been instrumental in mobilizing and channelling the resources needed to reach the most vulnerable.

We appreciate the cooperation and support of the United Nations development system in operationalizing the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) Facility to ensure vaccine deployment to many countries, including Armenia. I also want to express my appreciation and support for the President's New Year's Resolution for Vaccine Equity, and hope that it will contribute to making vaccines available for all. Effective and responsible multilateralism with the United Nations at its core is crucial to fulfilling people's aspirations to build back a better world. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development remains an overarching framework for achieving a better future that leaves no one behind. The international community needs to ramp up its efforts to get back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. I would like to emphasize the importance of a stronger focus on the needs of countries in special situations, including landlocked developing countries, which have been particularly affected due to their systemic vulnerabilities.

With regard to the maintenance of international peace and security, the Secretary-General's appeal for an immediate global ceasefire, endorsed by Security Council resolutions 2532 (2020) and 2565 (2021), was a crucial initiative in enabling humanitarian access and assistance to the most vulnerable, especially those trapped in conflicts and crises. Unfortunately, the overwhelming support of the international community for that timely initiative did not translate into a cessation of hostilities in all parts of the world. On the contrary, in our region, for example, we faced a brutal aggression against Nagorno Karabakh in the autumn of 2020 that devastated entire communities, causing many deaths, displacing thousands, destroying critical infrastructure and precipitating a major humanitarian crisis. The obstruction and politicization of humanitarian access to Nagorno Karabakh has so far prevented the United Nations from providing comprehensive assistance to the people affected.

The pandemic has exacerbated divisions, tensions and structural inequalities, leading to increases in hate speech, xenophobia, violations of human rights and conflicts. Among the recent trends is the distortion and manipulation of international law to justify the brutal use of force, identity-based hate crimes and atrocities, the employment of terrorists and mercenaries to suppress people's inalienable right to self-determination and attempts to isolate war-torn populations from the international community. The challenges to multilateralism underscore the importance of strengthening the role of the United Nations as the guardian of international law and its core values.

We welcome the Secretary-General's proposed new agenda for peace, with its strong focus on prevention, which also highlights the role of regional arrangements under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. In that context, Armenia values the consistent support of the Secretary-General and the United Nations for the central role of the internationally mandated format of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Minsk Group co-Chairs in promoting a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. The resilience of the United Nations in the face of attempts at manipulation that try to legitimize the consequences of acts of aggression and war crimes is crucial to its credibility and moral stance in countering false narratives, violence based on ethnic and religious grounds and attempts to impose

unilateral solutions in utter disregard for the norms of international law.

We commend the Secretary-General's leadership in the work of promoting and protecting human rights and achieving gender equality and the full empowerment of women and girls in all areas of public life. We also appreciate the transformative measures outlined in his report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), related to the promotion of the full realization of women's rights and gender parity, facilitating women's economic inclusion and the eradication of violence against women and girls.

We acknowledge the efforts of the Secretary-General to further pursue an ambitious reform agenda and develop new capabilities that promote agility, integration and cohesion across the United Nations system. The ability of the Organization to quickly respond to evolving challenges and new emergencies and to effectively deliver on its mandates requires it to be properly equipped with the necessary means, and it needs Member States' timely fulfilment of their financial obligations if it is to overcome its financial crisis. We share the opinion that repurposing existing funds and adopting less rigid budgetary procedures would also contribute to better and more efficient use of available resources.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm Armenia's support for the Secretary-General in strengthening the efficiency of the Organization and its adaptability in the face of future global challenges.

**Mr. Koba** (Indonesia): I would like to thank the President for convening this important meeting. We commend the Secretary-General for his efforts and perseverance in steering the United Nations during one of the most challenging and turbulent periods in our history. The world is grappling with an economic downturn, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, growing rates of climate change and many humanitarian crises, in addition to increasing security risks, political tensions and weakening trust in the multilateral system. We also acknowledge the leadership and commitment of the Secretary-General, together with his team, in ensuring that during these hardships various United Nations programmes, offices and missions around the world have continued to operate and deliver humanitarian aid, serving peace, becoming partners for development and promoting vaccine multilateralism as well as reforms strengthening the United Nations development and management systems.

My delegation takes note of the Secretary-General's priorities for 2022 and stands ready to work with him to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including within the framework of Indonesia's presidency of the Group of 20 this year, which will focus on the issues of the global health architecture, digital transformations and the transition to sustainable energy. We also acknowledge with appreciation the Secretary-General's important work on the conclusions of his report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), as mandated by the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 75/1). That report merits additional consideration. We look forward to participating in further deliberations regarding its follow-up.

Peacekeeping has been an effective and indispensable tool in the work of the United Nations on maintaining peace and security. Indonesia remains committed to working with the United Nations on the issue, including through the implementation of the Action for Peacekeeping and Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiatives. Our peacekeepers continue to serve peace and save lives despite the rapidly evolving challenges in their areas of operation. We are deeply concerned about the fact that the number of attacks on peacekeepers remains high. On that note, my delegation puts special emphasis on ensuring the safety, security and well-being of all peacekeepers and remains committed to working with the Secretary-General and all stakeholders in identifying and responding to those challenges.

The safety and well-being of humankind is always our number-one priority. Aside from conflict, we are also facing increasingly frequent and severe natural disasters affecting humankind across the globe. In that regard, my delegation would like to express its solidarity with the Government and the people of Tonga during this difficult and untimely volcanic eruption. My country is one of the countries of the world most vulnerable to natural disasters, and disaster preparedness is therefore inherent in our national priorities and development agenda. Together with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, Indonesia is honoured to be co-hosting in Bali in May the seventh session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. That global forum will be held under the theme "From Risk to Resilience: Towards Sustainable Development for All in a COVID-19 Transformed World", and we hope

to advance the global disaster risk reduction agenda. We look forward to working with all Member States to achieve a successful outcome.

We welcome the President's commitment to leaving no stone unturned in the quest for peace and security in order to address emerging as well as long-standing conflicts. In that regard, my delegation reiterates its principled support for the Palestinian cause. We need to assure the Palestinian people's ability to attain their legitimate rights. We call for increasing the provision of humanitarian assistance to Palestinians who need it, including through more predictable and sustainable funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

I would like to conclude by expressing our readiness to work together to ensure that the United Nations delivers so that humankind can continue to benefit from our daily efforts.

**Mr. De La Mora Salcedo** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/76/1) presented this morning. The report is an exercise in accountability and reflection on the achievements, mistakes, challenges and opportunities that we must address through multilateralism.

The year was once again marked by the effects of the pandemic. We are still in a pandemic situation, which is now governed by a new variant. It now seems that the variant could have been predicted and to a certain extent avoided. Scientific experts have warned us repeatedly about future mutations as a direct consequence of the lack of equitable access to vaccines. The Secretary-General himself has stated — and many Member States have repeated — that no one is safe until everyone is safe. We regret the continued hoarding of vaccines and abusive practices by certain pharmaceutical companies that favour economic gain over human lives behind the shield of intellectual property rights. Mexico will work effectively within the Organization to ensure that vaccines become a global public good, and we will act on the basis of principle. If the World Health Organization has authorized a given vaccine or treatment, every State has an obligation to accept them and permit their distribution.

The Secretary-General's report gives an account of the work of the United Nations in helping millions of people around the world. Behind the successes of the Organization are the vocation to service and the

professionalism of its staff, as well as the political will and solidarity of Member States. Behind the lost opportunities, however, we should single out the lack of political coordination between Governments. As a current member of the Security Council, Mexico has assumed its responsibility in the areas of prevention and of a comprehensive vision for international peace and security. That is why during our presidency of the Council we hosted an open debate on preventive diplomacy (see S/PV.8906) and another on inequality, exclusion, poverty and conflict (see S/PV.8900). Those dialogues led us to a conclusion similar to that reached by the Secretary-General in his report on *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). His proposed new agenda for peace requires that we recognize the intrinsic links between problems such as climate change, corruption, the absence of the rule of law, poverty and human rights violations, instability and conflict.

From that perspective, the situation on the ground is very worrying. For the first time in decades we are seeing an increase in poverty. The pandemic has pushed more than 100 million people into poverty. The number of people with humanitarian needs is at a historic high. The time has come for us to take decisive and ambitious action. A good part of the Secretary-General's report focuses on the needs of the most vulnerable and that is where Mexico proposes accelerating our collective action. In November the President of Mexico proposed to the Security Council an alliance for well-being (see S/PV.8900), an attempt to support more than 700 million people living on less than \$2 a day through direct cash transfers. Direct transfers are an optimal way to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 1. As has been demonstrated, particularly in the context of the pandemic, direct payments do indeed work. By promoting the eradication of poverty and using the United Nations country teams, we could see positive outcomes across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its focus on people. We hope to have broad-based discussions on that initiative in the coming months.

As a firm promoter of disarmament, we appreciate that the United Nations has continued to support the membership in processes implementing international norms against weapons of mass destruction as well as making progress in regulating and limiting conventional small arms and light weapons. In the face of the challenges and opportunities presented by new technologies, we are encouraged to see the negotiations



taking place in the United Nations in the area of cybersecurity and cybercrime. In that context we want to stress the Security Council's adoption of its resolution 2616 (2021), introduced by Mexico together with 70 sponsors, which addresses the threat to international peace and security resulting from the violation of arms embargoes decided by the Security Council, owing to the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and undue use of small arms and light weapons.

The efforts to ensure that more than 300 million girls and boys will be able to continue their studies remotely during the pandemic is to be commended. Let us not lose sight of the responsibility of Member States and the Organization itself to continue to work to provide the conditions necessary for girls and boys to be able to return to school safely and permanently, which has positive results in the area of education and physical and mental health, including in cases of children affected by armed conflict.

Mexico recognizes the progress that has been made in the United Nations on gender equality, but much still remains to be done. We cannot conceive of human security without a gender perspective. Let us remember that we are not talking about a subgroup of people but about half of humankind, half of our human capital and half of our collective potential. We welcome the fact that the report mentions the success of the Generation Equality Forum organized by Mexico, France and UN-Women. The Forum identifies specific commitments for responding to the growing needs of civil society, young people and feminist movements. Together we have mobilized \$40 billion to help women and girls, and with the launching of the Group of Friends of Gender Equality and the Global Alliance for Care, we are moving towards greater gender equality. Building on its feminist foreign policy, Mexico will continue to promote a cross-cutting gender perspective across the entire United Nations system.

Over and above that recognition, the work of the Secretariat deserves our decisive support in rethinking our way of doing business. Mexico believes that the upcoming thematic consultations on the recommendations in *Our Common Agenda* will be an ideal opportunity for identifying the big steps that we need to take in the future. We see enormous potential for the United Nations to do more and better so that it can live up not only to its ideals but to the expectations of the people whose well-being depends on a more effective, inclusive and effective multilateralism.

**Mr. Sabbagh** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation has taken note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/76/1) for the Assembly's seventy-sixth session. The document is a comprehensive illustration of most of the challenges that are worrying Member States and the peoples of the world, especially in the light of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its disastrous repercussions for all of us. As with every disaster that humankind has faced, there are lessons that we must learn from it that, rightly applied, may constitute a fundamental basis on which to face future challenges and risks in terms of global health security. In that regard, my delegation appreciates the Secretary-General's efforts to promote the equal distribution of vaccines. We all remember his statement about the fact that no one is safe until everyone is safe. My delegation would now like to make the following comments on the report.

First, the report outlines the efforts of the United Nations to take coordinated and effective humanitarian measures to save lives and ease the suffering of people dealing with natural disasters, situations of conflict or other humanitarian emergencies. However, it does not mention the significant negative role played by the illegal imposition of unilateral coercive measures on the peoples of Member States and their devastating effects on various vital sectors, including basic services such as health care, education and energy. The Syrian Arab Republic appreciates the efforts of the United Nations on the humanitarian front, and we also stress the importance of lifting the unfair economic blockade imposed on the Syrian people by the United States and the European Union, which has exacerbated Syrians' suffering and significantly impeded their Government's action plans and programmes for overcoming the effects of the terrorist war and implementing projects aimed at achieving a speedy recovery, reconstruction and the voluntary, safe and dignified return of Syrian refugees and displaced people.

Secondly, the Secretary-General's report refers to the work of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security and helping to prevent and mitigate armed conflicts and settle them by peaceful means, as well as its peacekeeping operations around the world. However, it ignores the violations of the Charter of the United Nations represented by repeated breaches of the national sovereignty of some Member States and blunt interventions in their domestic

affairs, as well as acts of aggression and occupations of other States' territories, along with systematic policies causing chaos and instability. My country has unfortunately been subjected to all of those violations. Israel's occupation of the Syrian Golan has continued since 1967, as have its other serious violations, the most recent being the plan announced on 26 December 2021 by the Prime Minister of the Israeli occupation to redouble the number of settlers in the occupied Syrian Golan by creating two new settlements, which is a serious violation of Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and the relevant General Assembly resolutions. In addition, Israel has continued to conduct repeated acts of aggression against Syrian territories. Meanwhile, the efforts of the Syrian Government to restore security and stability are impeded by the illegal presence of United States forces in north-eastern and south-western Syria and that country's sponsorship of separatist militias, as well as Turkey's occupation in north and north-western Syria, which sponsors terrorist organizations there as they continue to loot our national resources.

Thirdly, the report notes the support that the United Nations gives Member States in addressing organized crime and terrorism and mentions many regions afflicted by terrorism around the world, particularly in Africa. However, it makes no mention of the terrorist organizations — such as Da'esh, Al-Qaida and the Al-Nusra Front, in addition to others that the Security Council has designated terrorist organizations — that are still working in Syria, Iraq and other countries of the region. My country stresses the importance of strengthening international cooperation to eliminate global terrorism and seriously implement the instruments and comprehensive strategy that we have adopted for fighting terrorism. We also demand that attention be paid to the problems resulting from the spread of terrorism and extremist ideologies and above all the issue of foreign terrorist fighters and their families. There are thousands of them in the Al-Hol and Al-Roj camps that are controlled by separatist militias supported by the United States forces present on the ground. Syria has repeatedly demanded that pressure be put on the States concerned to repatriate their terrorist nationals, make them accountable and rehabilitate them with their families so that they cannot form a new nexus for terrorism in future.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates my country's determination to support the work of the United Nations and its commitment to the purposes and principles of

the Charter. We believe in the role that our Organization plays in achieving our common objectives. We hope that future reports will address our concerns in the context of the work of the United Nations.

**Mr. Akram (Pakistan):** I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization (A/76/1), as well as his remarks this morning alerting us to the five alarms he has raised.

The United Nations is an indispensable organization. The world could not function without the norms and standards that it has established and the cooperation and coordination mechanisms that are managed by the United Nations and its family of organizations and agencies. In particular, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his critical and vital role in the response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, helping countries through the World Health Organization and the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) Facility. We also appreciate the role of the United Nations country offices and Resident Coordinators in coordinating national responses to the pandemic.

Pakistan is also deeply grateful to the Secretary-General and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for their mobilization of humanitarian and other assistance to Afghanistan's people. The September flash appeal and the recent appeal for \$5 billion to help the people of Afghanistan are timely and essential responses to its severe humanitarian and economic crisis. That mobilization of resources and delivery of humanitarian assistance and financial help by the United Nations, its agencies and civil-society actors may save hundreds of thousands of lives.

Similarly, the role of the United Nations in peacekeeping is a major success story. United Nations peacekeeping operations have helped to preserve peace and prevent the exacerbation of conflicts in several parts of the world, particularly Africa. Pakistan will remain a steadfast partner to the United Nations in ensuring the effectiveness of all of its peacekeeping measures, including the operation that is stationed in Jammu and Kashmir, the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan.

In his statement this morning, the Secretary-General rightly outlined the multiple challenges and crises that the global community is confronting today. They include rising tensions between the major Powers;

endemic disputes and prolonged foreign occupations, as in Kashmir and Palestine; new conflicts and flashpoints; a new arms race; the erosion of the consensus on disarmament; and the emergence of new military alliances. Peace and security must remain at the core of the functions and role of the United Nations. We fully support its efforts to address various crises and conflict situations. Peace must be promoted through adherence to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council. The United Nations and the Secretary-General can do much more to address and prevent threats to peace and security, especially by fully utilizing the authority provided by the Charter, such as in Article 99, and by resorting to action in the General Assembly if the Security Council is unable to act on an issue.

The primary threat to international peace and security in South Asia is the long-festering dispute over Jammu and Kashmir and India's blatant attempt to impose on Jammu and Kashmir what its extremist regime calls a final solution. India's attempt since 5 August 2019 to annex occupied Jammu and Kashmir and transform a Muslim-majority State into a Hindu-majority territory constitutes a grave violation of the Charter and the relevant Security Council resolutions. Those resolutions promised the Kashmiris their right to self-determination through a United Nations-supervised plebiscite. The Security Council has also declared that unilateral measures such as those being taken by India to change the status of occupied Jammu and Kashmir are null and void.

Today, the people of Jammu and Kashmir, as well as Pakistanis, are observing the grim anniversary of the Gawkadal massacre on 21 January 1990. On that day, Indian occupation forces brutally martyred at least 52 innocent and peaceful protesters in Srinagar for demanding freedom from Indian oppression. Since that day, India's brutal occupation has killed more than 100,000 Kashmiris. Its cruel occupation is continuing. Kashmiri political leaders are in jail. Hundreds of innocent Kashmiris have been killed in fake so-called encounters during the past year. Thousands of Kashmiri boys have been abducted and many tortured. Collective punishments are imposed by burning entire villages and neighbourhoods. Earlier this year, Pakistan circulated a dossier listing more than 3,300 specific crimes committed by Indian security forces. So far there has been no accountability for India's crimes. Draconian Indian laws provide complete impunity

for the 900,000 troops India has deployed in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan condemns the increasing harassment, illegal arrests and registration of fake criminal cases against journalists and civil-society activists, such as Khurram Parvez, in occupied Kashmir. The recent attack and ban on the Kashmir Press Club is another manifestation of India's entrenched use of brute force and coercion to silence all who raise their voices against its criminal and genocidal acts in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Yet despite India's extensive efforts to cover up its criminal behaviour, despite the reticence of countries who denounce human rights violations everywhere except those committed by India, the people of the world are beginning to pay attention. The Russell Tribunal on Kashmir held in Sarajevo last month was one such encouraging example. This week an application has been filed by a London-based law firm seeking the arrest of Indian officials over their alleged role in war crimes committed in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The law firm has reportedly submitted its report based on more than 2,000 testimonies taken between 2020 and 2021 documenting the culpability of India's military and civil leadership in the torture, kidnapping and killing of activists, journalists and civilians. Several Special Rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council have asked to visit occupied Kashmir to investigate reports of human rights violations. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has also asked for a commission of inquiry.

The Jammu and Kashmir dispute must be urgently resolved in order to halt India's atrocities and prevent a threat to regional and global peace and security. The Secretary-General stated on 8 August 2019 that the Organization's position on Jammu and Kashmir is based on the United Nations Charter, Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements. We urge the Council and the Secretary-General to exercise their considerable authority to promote a speedy and peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and bring the Indian reign of terror over the Kashmiri people to an end.

As the Secretary-General has observed, the world is also witnessing a disturbing rise in racial and religious hate and violence. One of its gravest manifestations is the growing Islamophobia in several parts of the world, and its worst manifestation is the officially inspired

campaign against Muslims by the Hindutva adherents in India. Besides the murders and lynchings by fanatical Hindu mobs, there are now calls for outright genocide of Muslims in India. I would like to draw attention to the recent statement by Mr. Gregory Stanton, head of the organization Genocide Watch, in which he said, “We are warning that genocide could very well happen in India.” We call on the Secretary-General and the United Nations to take decisive steps to combat Islamophobia and prevent any danger of genocide against the Muslims of India.

Pakistan concurs with the Secretary-General’s analysis of the triple threat posed by COVID-19, the reversal of progress on development in developing countries and the existential threat of climate change. Yesterday I had the honour to present the position and proposals of the Group of 77 and China on the response required to address this triple crisis for developing countries. We are heartened by the Secretary-General’s call for collective action to address inequality and promote universal vaccination on an emergency basis. We endorse his important call for restructuring the global financial architecture and providing the essential financial resources and support that developing countries need to recover from the pandemic, revive their prospects for economic growth, realize the Sustainable Development Goals and respond to the challenge of climate change.

My delegation looks forward to the consideration of the Secretary-General’s report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), which contains numerous proposals for action that are to be considered in the process initiated by resolution 76/6, of 15 November 2021, which the President will launch next month through discussions in five clusters. We expect to be briefed by the Secretary-General in advance of those discussions. Agreements on a reformed and strengthened multilateralism, a United Nations 2.0, can best be achieved through an open, inclusive and consensus-based process.

**Mr. Evseenko** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Republic of Belarus welcomes the priorities that the Secretary-General outlined for the United Nations this morning. Being a candidate for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the 2024-2025 term, our country remains committed to the goals and activities of the United Nations.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has continued to affect the activities of the Organization.

The Republic of Belarus welcomes the operational measures that the United Nations has adopted on the health-care, humanitarian and socioeconomic fronts through its consistent mobilization of resources for practical solutions for the post-pandemic recovery, with the ultimate aim of achieving the aims of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The pandemic is also behind a global drop in production that has made the threat of food insecurity even more acute. The adoption by consensus of a resolution on population, food security, nutrition and development will undoubtedly give fresh impetus to our efforts in that area. In order to combat social inequality within the framework of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals as soon as possible, special attention should be paid to encouraging the promotion of economic, social and cultural human rights. The United Nations Call to Action initiative is what is needed to strengthen the efforts in that regard. We welcome the introduction of a platform for involving investors in the Sustainable Development Goals, which will be an important tool for attracting the necessary capital, including from the private sector.

In terms of issues related to climate and biodiversity, the publication in April of last year of the first report on the progress of implementation of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 is extremely significant, considering that the pandemic continues to represent an immediate threat by reducing to a minimum the vital achievements that have been made in increasing afforestation around the world. Another positive during the pandemic has been the activities of the Resident Coordinator system of the United Nations country teams in helping to provide more than 240 million people with essential services, including water and sanitation supplies as well as other social protection services. And the launch of the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 enabled the mobilization of \$3.7 billion to meet humanitarian needs in more than 60 countries.

The Organization’s special political missions and operations have continued to help the international community to achieve its aims in maintaining international peace and security and protecting civilians in regions affected by military or political instability. United Nations field missions whose mandates include strengthening the rule of law have continued to work to reform various countries’ law-enforcement and prison systems. The consultative support that the United Nations



provides on disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the eradication of potential threats related to States' use of information and communications technologies should also reduce threats to humankind on both the military and information fronts.

Belarus welcomes the initiative of the Office of Counter-Terrorism to create the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Platform. Continued efforts to increase multilateral cooperation will help to create the necessary conditions for exchanging information on the basis of greater trust and thereby combating international terrorism more effectively.

**Mr. Ipo** (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the holding of this meeting dedicated to the presentation of the annual report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/76/1). We would like to take this opportunity to affirm our full support for the Secretary-General's multifaceted initiatives on peace, security and development, as well as in the quest for lasting solutions to the many challenges facing our world. My delegation takes due note of the report and its recommendations.

My country welcomes the various initiatives of both the United Nations and other partners to mitigate the effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. However, we are still deeply concerned about the persistent inequalities that this ongoing health crisis continues to exacerbate. The appearance of new and even more contagious and dangerous variants of the COVID-19 virus makes it clear that we must achieve vaccine equity if we are to save lives and recover from this pandemic. That is why my delegation echoes the Secretary-General's continuing appeals for making the vaccine against COVID-19 a public good that is accessible everywhere and to everyone. In that regard, we should pay particular attention to the African continent, which is struggling to achieve the vaccination coverage recommended by the World Health Organization.

The COVID-19 pandemic is also having a negative impact on progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063. It has complicated the interconnected challenges that the United Nations is trying to address, including terrorism, poverty, financing for development and the effects of climate change. Land degradation and restoration are issues of concern to my country as well. To that end, we have great hopes for the holding

of the fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, which Côte d'Ivoire is pleased to be hosting in May. In the face of those emergencies, which no State can deal with alone, it is up to us to adopt a global approach within the framework of an inclusive and reinvigorated multilateralism, with the United Nations as its cornerstone. In that regard, the Secretary-General's *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), which recentres essential concerns, will be a road map enabling us to diligently implement action plans with a view to restoring hope to humankind.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate its readiness to work with all stakeholders to achieve our common goals.

**Mr. Amde** (Ethiopia): Let me start by thanking the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing on the priorities for 2022. We appreciate the breadth of the report (A/76/1) and acknowledge the importance of all eight areas of focus. Ethiopia also appreciates the Secretary-General's continued and consistent messaging calling for real solutions to the challenges facing humankind, including poverty, inequality, the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and climate change.

We very much appreciate the fact that Africa has a stand-alone segment in the report, showing that the approach to Africa is not business as usual. Africa's political and security landscape is on a path of adversity. The forcible overthrow of Governments, the conduct of joint military exercises, acts of aggression and intervention in sovereign countries, the renewed scramble for natural resources and geopolitical competition are all on the rise. We hope the Secretary-General's encouraging focus on Africa and good-faith efforts will challenge the status-quo approach to Africa, which is rife with double standards and a saviour mentality, disenfranchising Africans in the management of their own affairs. That also relates to the work of various organizations, especially the United Nations. While recognizing that the main responsibility for reform of the Charter of the United Nations lies with Member States, we remain hopeful and confident that the Secretary-General's leadership will result in a reformed Organization that is relevant to its time and a staff who have the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity.

Beyond its devastating consequences, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed fundamental flaws in our global system. Added to that are unilateral coercive measures that have greatly damaged countries' ability to combat the pandemic. The United Nations must be vigilant in ensuring that the recovery of the wealthy does not obscure the massive needs in developing States. In that regard, we recognize the bold message and moral compass that the Secretary-General provided during the very unfortunate incidence of discrimination against variant-reporting States in Africa.

The report's emphasis on climate change is greatly appreciated. The Horn of Africa region, which has been barely coping with the consequences of a devastating desert locust infestation, is now facing a serious drought. Since resilience is key, we must strengthen our efforts to support countries, especially in Africa, in utilizing their natural resources for the benefit of their peoples.

We have taken note of the Secretary-General's remarks on my country, Ethiopia. The prevailing situation there is an internal affair of the State. Ethiopians are capable and ready to map out a path to independence, peace and prosperity for their country. In that regard, we commend approaches that respect our sovereign space and support the integrity and role of our regional organization, the African Union. We have no doubt that with the continuation of that principled leadership, we will achieve our objectives.

Finally, at this critical time, we should be pondering the generational question as it relates to our Organization. The United Nations is only as strong as its weakest link. But who among us is the weakest link? Is it the most powerful countries? Is it those that have dressed themselves in the moral mantle of salvation? Is it those that are ruthlessly measured and judged against a single concept of hopelessness? We will continue to ask that question. However, we believe that our collective source of strength lies in true equality, the respect for and dignity of nations, a genuine commitment to collective security and the sanctity of multilateralism.

**Mr. Vongnorkeo** (Lao People's Democratic Republic): At the outset, my delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Cambodia on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The Lao People's Democratic Republic joins others in thanking the Secretary-General for his briefing on

the work of the Organization and expresses its support for the proposed action areas for 2022. On this occasion, my delegation commends the Secretariat and all United Nations agencies for their achievements so far, despite the ongoing challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We remain hopeful and await further actions and results.

As the Secretary-General pointed out, we are facing a multitude of challenges in our efforts to achieve all of the Organization's key objectives and outcomes. Given the vast impacts of the still unfolding COVID-19 situation and the five alarms highlighted by the Secretary-General this morning, it is evident that the imbalances in the world's current recovery and development funding still exist. It will be crucial to recognize that many of our agreed programmes, including many of the Sustainable Development Goal targets, have been derailed and require due attention and every possible effort to bring them back on track.

For us, like many, addressing the effects of COVID-19 remains our most urgent and immediate concern. While it is cheering to see in the report that billions in resources are being mobilized to fund the COVID-19 response and recovery, it is also disheartening to compare that number to the trillions that more advanced countries are pouring into their own response and economic stimulus programmes. That is just a small example of the morally bankrupt global financial system that the Secretary-General mentioned. More can and should be done to really help those who are the most vulnerable first.

Where vaccination is concerned, the Lao People's Democratic Republic aims to reach at least 70 per cent of its population by the first quarter of 2022. That crucial threshold target can only be realized through further support from the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) Facility, along with other bilateral partnerships and supports. On that note, on behalf of my Government and people, I want to express our deep appreciation to our development partners and all the United Nations agencies involved for their invaluable support and assistance to the Lao People's Democratic Republic. While our forthcoming graduation from least-developed-country status in 2026 is cause for celebration, much work remains to be done to ensure a smooth and irreversible graduation in five years' time. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is therefore formulating a sustainable graduation strategy and has worked consistently to keep poverty reduction at the

top of the national agenda. To that end, we welcome every kind of cooperation on development in line with our national socioeconomic development plan, which has integrated the Sustainable Development Goal indicators since their inception in 2015.

Adding to our existing areas of concerns, climate change and natural disasters continue to remind us of another crisis facing humankind. We must address that on a global scale, and we must act now. We have already witnessed the level of destruction that the climate crisis has wreaked on decades of development, which is yet another reminder that there can be no sustainability without climate action.

In conclusion, the Lao People's Democratic Republic once again expresses its profound appreciation to the United Nations and all its development partners

for their continued support and assistance over the years. Despite being a country that is both least developed and landlocked, the Lao People's Democratic Republic hopes to contribute more to the work of our Organization, and has therefore for the first time in its history presented its candidature for membership in the Economic and Social Council for the 2023-2025 term. We stand ready to add a stronger voice by representing a group of countries in special situations on the Council, and we look forward to support from all Member States.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this afternoon. We shall hear the remaining speakers on Monday, 24 January at 10 a.m. in this Hall.

*The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.*