



General Assembly

Seventy-sixth session

103rd plenary meeting
Monday, 12 September 2022, 11.30 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Shahid (Maldives)

The meeting was called to order at 11.35 a.m.

Statement by the Secretary-General

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres.

The Secretary-General: I am pleased to join members for the closing of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly. Like the previous one, this session was marked by a series of deepening challenges — rising prices, the erosion of purchasing power, growing food insecurity and the gathering shadows of a global recession; a global pandemic that refused to be defeated and the emergence of another health emergency in monkeypox; and deadly heatwaves, storms, flooding and other natural disasters. I just came back from Pakistan. It is unimaginable to see a flooded area that is three times the size of my own country, Portugal, and the suffering of the people.

The devastation plays out against a backdrop of ferocious conflicts that put millions of lives in jeopardy every day; deepening poverty and inequality that continue to impede recovery and development; a morally bankrupt global financial system that penalizes developing countries and blocks their path to sustainable recovery; and the climate emergency that is literally setting our planet on fire.

As the General Assembly worked to address those many challenges over the past year, we all benefited from the leadership of His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid of the Maldives. With enormous skill, he led the Assembly during these unprecedented times,

bringing fresh vision to issues such as gender equality and climate action and the unique perspective of small island States. His support was also invariable as we embarked on the first year of *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), while facilitating the consultations among Member States that paved the path to progress. His presidency of hope delivered exactly that: the hope that we can come together and face the challenges before us in solidarity.

I thank you, Sir, for your strong leadership over the past year. I look forward to working with your successor, His Excellency Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, to carry forward that spirit of cooperation and hope.

The coming session will continue to test the multilateral system like never before, and it will continue to test cohesion and trust among Member States. The road ahead will be challenging and unpredictable, but by using the tools of our trade — diplomacy, negotiation and compromise — we can continue supporting people and communities around the world. We can pave the way to a better, more peaceful future for all people. And we can renew faith in the United Nations and the multilateral system, which remain humankind's best hope.

I once again thank President Shahid for his vision and his tireless dedication to this Organization, to multilateralism and to the General Assembly. I also thank all Member States for coming together during these unprecedented times.

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

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(spoke in Arabic)

My beloved country, the Republic of Maldives, is a small island nation with a small population, yet it is a country that respects international law, fairness, justice and peace and security and a country that is proudly independent under its own flag. The fact that a Maldivian national presided over the seventy-sixth session of this universal organ of the United Nations is the result of the robust foreign policy of President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih and proof that Maldivians have earned the respect and trust of the international community.

Over the past year, the red, green and white Maldivian flag, which all Maldivians salute and greet on sight, has flown at the highest point of the strong fort of the international community. On behalf of all Maldivians, I brought to the United Nations a presidency of hope. The international community is saying, in unison, that the hope brought by Maldives has given hope to the entire world. Those rays of hope have enriched our mornings and evenings with their light.

(spoke in English)

I stand before members today speaking for one final time as the President of the General Assembly. While I have generally spoken for about seven minutes on average from this rostrum, I apologize that this statement might be a tad longer.

We started this journey a year ago, promising a presidency of hope that delivers for the people, for the planet and for prosperity. Today, my friends, we complete that journey — a journey of unprecedented challenges and crimes; of twists and turns; but also of laughter and friendship; and of renewed hope.

It is a journey we would not have been able to make without the support, friendship and guidance of all Member States. I thank the Ambassadors for making me feel like part of the family from day one. Despite the difficulties and the difficult times we have endured, they have celebrated many occasions over the past year. We celebrated unity, camaraderie and hope together, as a family.

The Charter of the United Nations has always guided my work. Its first three words — “We the peoples” — are my inspiration. The people of the world do not differentiate between the Charter bodies, funds, programmes and specialized agencies. For them, we all represent the one United Nations. That is why I truly

appreciate the close working relationship I had with the leadership of the Charter bodies over the past year.

It has truly been a pleasure and an honour to work with the Secretary-General. I have greatly benefited from his incredible experience and extraordinary friendship. Six days ago, we held our last coordination meeting. I am saddened that it was the last of a year’s worth of meetings and interactions. Through those meetings, I came to appreciate the statesman extraordinaire that he is, but I also came to know a realist, a pragmatist, a diplomat and a silent negotiator who cares beyond measure; a person with a great sense of humour; and a true friend. I thank him dearly.

I remain in awe of the strength, compassion and commitment of my dear sister the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina Mohammed. I have greatly valued her wise counsel and kind friendship. I thank her dearly.

I also thank my dear friend and colleague, the President of the Economic and Social Council at its 2022 session, Mr. Collen Kelapile. Working together, we managed to further enhance the coordination between the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly and deliver several joint initiatives. I thank him dearly.

I thank the various Presidents of the Security Council for the close working relationship they maintained with the General Assembly. Our monthly coordination meetings were invaluable opportunities to remain updated on the issues of which the Council was seized.

My deepest gratitude goes to all my Vice-Presidents for being part of my team in delivering my presidency of hope. Despite the pandemic forcing us to work in a hybrid fashion, I am incredibly proud that we finished the work of the regular part of the session on time, including the adoption of the budget. That would not have been possible without the steadfast leadership and commitment of the Committee Chairs and their respective Bureaus.

As a gender champion, I am especially proud that we celebrated the first all-women Bureau of a main Committee during this session. My congratulations go to Ambassador Vanessa Frazier on a Second Committee that has made history.

I am also indebted to the support extended to my presidency by the various programmes, funds

and specialized agencies. Together, we delivered on several mandates.

A presidency is not just the person you see here at the rostrum; it is made up of several often-unsung heroes. I thank Under-Secretary-General Movses Abelian and his entire team, especially Ms. Ruth de Miranda and Mr. Kenji Nakano, for having my back. Whether in meetings or on document management, interpretation, translation, editing, protocol or intergovernmental media support, the team at the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management has never let me down.

I delivered 325 statements over the past year, many of them pre-recorded. My special thanks go to everyone at the Department of Global Communications and the team at the recording studio. I still cannot forget the day we managed to record 13 statements consecutively.

I also extend my heartfelt appreciation to Andrey, Dwayne and Katalyn, as well as other officers from the Department of Safety and Security who were attached to my Office. I thank them for their dedication and professionalism.

I also thank my pool of chauffeurs, Dermot, Robert, Jimmy and Evgeni. They ensured, whether in rain, hail and snow, that I made it on time, every time.

The Secretariat truly is the backbone of this Organization. I would not have been able to deliver on my mandate without the support of the various departments. I thank each and every one of them for their contributions.

I promised a presidency of hope built on five rays of hope: recovering from the coronavirus disease pandemic (COVID-19); rebuilding sustainably; responding to the needs of the planet; respecting the rights of all; and revitalizing the United Nations. Every day for the past 365 days, my team and I worked to deliver on that vision. We convened 103 formal plenary meetings and adopted 307 resolutions and 140 decisions. We held 15 high-level meetings and a further 28 informal plenary meetings, hearings, thematic debates and other events. That included important discussions on vaccine equity, as well as on the sustainable recovery of the tourism sector, which marked the first time that tourism was ever discussed at a high-level meeting of the General Assembly. It also included holding the “Moment for Nature” event, which, for the first time, looked at

the cross-cutting bottlenecks and solutions across the entire climate and environmental agenda.

We held the first International Migration Review Forum, whose Progress Declaration (resolution 76/266) we adopted by consensus. We convened the first commemoration of the International Day for Countering Hate Speech. We held events on the urban agenda, food security, climate change, commodities, road safety and on Africa — issues of critical importance for recovering sustainably and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A total of 15 mandated intergovernmental negotiations processes took place, for which 27 co-facilitators or co-chairs were appointed. I thank all the facilitators and their experts for the exceptional work they delivered on my behalf. We also began the process of finalizing the much-needed Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability Index for Small Island Developing States. I wish to thank Prime Minister Browne of Antigua and Barbuda and former Prime Minister Solberg of Norway for accepting my request to lead that charge.

In addition, we agreed on ways to finance peacebuilding efforts. I held more than 650 meetings here in New York and during my travels with the aim of gathering ideas, ensuring wider consultation and enhancing coordination. We opened up the General Assembly for the in-person participation of civil society for the first time after the pandemic. I continued the practice of morning dialogues or, as I called them, Holhuashi dialogues. For the first time, we held an expert-level morning dialogue focused on women in diplomacy. That meeting became the springboard for the landmark resolution celebrating the International Day of Women in Diplomacy (resolution 76/269), an initiative I am incredibly proud of. The morning dialogue on accessibility, for its part, galvanized greater advocacy and awareness, including a workshop for representatives and the Secretariat. We witnessed the substantive role and moral authority of the General Assembly grow.

At the request of the Security Council, we held — for the first time in 40 years — an emergency special session of the General Assembly in order to address the conflict in Ukraine. Moreover, the landmark resolution on the veto initiative (resolution 76/262) mandated a formal meeting of the General Assembly every time a veto was cast in the Security Council to debate the merits of that decision. We also managed consensus on the outcome document of the trafficking

in persons meeting (resolution 76/7), the review of the functioning of the reinvigorated resident coordinator system (resolution 76/4) and the Oceans Conference declaration (resolution 76/296). Despite difficult times, we came together on issues of importance. A noteworthy example of that was the finalization of the political declaration on road safety (resolution 76/294). Going forward, I am confident that we can come together on other issues as well.

Often, the United Nations is criticized for its shortcomings and inadequacies. Rarely are our wins celebrated. That needs a course correction. At the same time, we must acknowledge that there are many things we can do better. I truly believe that the report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) is setting us in the right direction. At the beginning of the year, the Assembly entrusted me with following up on the recommendations of that report. It was a responsibility I took to heart. After five intense rounds of thematic consultations including more than 350 statements, 10 interactive multi-stakeholder panels and more than 50 panellists, I am proud to say that we achieved success. I take this moment to thank the Vice-Presidents who chaired those sessions on my behalf. And I am very proud that within a record time we adopted resolution 76/306 to establish the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and resolution 76/307 on the modalities for the Summit of the Future, and for that I congratulate everyone. Those are the first important milestones towards realizing a United Nations 2.0.

During this session, we ensured that the gender-equality agenda was mainstreamed into all our discussions. I reconvened, upgraded and expanded the Advisory Board on Gender Equality. We made the United Nations more family-friendly by renovating and expanding lactation rooms. We brought together female Heads of State and Government during the high-level week. We held a focused discussion on violence against women in politics during the week that the Commission on the Status of Women was convened. We held a special event on shaping economies that work for women during the Stockholm+50 international meeting. We also launched, in partnership with UN-Women, the General Assembly's Platform of Women Leaders, institutionalizing for the very first time in United Nations history the hosting of a dedicated meeting of female Heads of State and Government every year during high-level week.

I kept my promise to not participate in panels that were not gender-balanced. I also kept my promise to make my Office gender-balanced; 55 per cent of my staff are women. I started a podcast series that amplified the voices of women doing extraordinary work. I met incredible and accomplished women, including victims, activists, scientists and Nobel laureates and worked to support their work and elevate their messages. Women should not have to work twice as hard just to prove a point. And while we are on the topic of gender equality, I want to reiterate my earlier call: let us ensure that the next Secretary-General of the United Nations is a woman.

There are 1.8 billion young people around the world today, and we cannot ignore them. I truly believe that investing in youth means investing in multilateralism. That is why I launched the President of the General Assembly's Fellowship for Hope during my presidency, which gave eight young diplomats from underrepresented countries the opportunity to work with my Office and in their countries' Permanent Missions. I am confident that those fellows and future young fellows, armed with new wisdom and experience, will work to advance their countries and uphold the values of multilateralism. I take this opportunity to thank all the Governments that supported the programme. We are also indebted to the United Nations Institute for Training and Research for its support.

Today I also placed in my Office the voices of youth time capsule, which carries the voices of young people from around the world and describes their aspirations for 2045, when the United Nations turns 100. The time capsule will remain as a constant reminder of the importance of youth's participation and aspirations. My advice to young people around the world has always been the same — to stay determined, engaged and hopeful. That is also my advice to women, civil society organizations, internally displaced persons, refugees, indigenous groups and academia.

In all my travels, largely to countries where Presidents of the General Assembly had never visited before, I made it a point to meet with those communities to enrich the discussions we have here in New York, to see first-hand how our deliberations here, the resolutions we adopt and the budgets we allocate get translated into action. And my dear friends, they are. Our actions within these halls of the United Nations are impacting lives. I applaud the United Nations country

teams around the world for their work on the ground, for making a difference.

There are many untold success stories of the United Nations work around the world. We need to bring those to New York and bring the United Nations closer to the people it is designed to serve. For a more effective and more responsive United Nations, that needs to happen.

None of that would have been possible without my team at the Office of the President of the General Assembly. My team of 73 came from 49 countries, representing all the regions of the world. We drew strength from that diversity. My team is the largest to date in the history of the General Assembly. I thank all the Member States, United Nations departments and international organizations that seconded staff and provided funds for the Office.

The team was very ably led by my Chef de Cabinet, Ambassador Nagaraj Naidu Kakanur, a truly outstanding diplomat, a steady hand in crisis, committed and hardworking.

I also thank the Deputy Chefs de Cabinet — Saada Daher Hassan, Fernando Marani and Midhfa Naeem. They are simply three of the most hardworking people I have ever come across and are always ready for a challenge.

Together, we endured triumphs and setbacks. We not only mourned the loss of a very dear colleague and friend, Gail, but also welcomed the arrival of little Mariam, born to my adviser El Hadj and his wife, Abeidy.

I am incredibly proud of everything the Office of the President of the General Assembly — my team — has achieved during this year. And I thank all of them wholeheartedly.

I would be remiss if I did not thank the Maldivian Government for seconding some of its best staff to my team.

I would like to make special mention of my Executive Secretary, Ahid Ahmed, who has been by my side throughout the session, and my Executive Assistant, Salman Zaki, who managed my unenviable calendar and made sure that my workday never ended. Let us give a great round of applause to my team at the Office of the President of the General Assembly.

The presidency has been a win like no other for my country, the Maldives, and the Maldives Foreign

Service. I thank President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih for trusting me with that responsibility. That is a win for his forward-looking foreign policy and his commitment to multilateralism.

My team at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has shown the world what a small team of highly determined and committed individuals who refuse to give up hope can achieve.

The team at Headquarters and missions around the world, under the incredible leadership and guidance of Minister of State Ahmed Khaleel, with the support of the Maldivian ambassadors around the world, continues to work hard day and night, with one objective in mind — to raise the Maldivian flag high. That is especially true of team Maldives in New York, led by the very excellent Permanent Representative and Special Envoy to the President of the General Assembly, Thilmeeza Hussain. I have one word for Team Khaarijee: *Kurevijje* — we have done it!

I am especially honoured that the Special Envoy of President Solih, one of my mentors, His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Hussain Zaki, is in the Hall with us today.

I would also like to thank my family, who made me the person I am today, especially my mum and dad. I express special thanks as well to all my friends around the world and in the Maldives.

Even as we open our borders and return to our once normal routines, COVID-19 stubbornly lingers. New conflicts are emerging, and old ones persist. Millions across the world are starving and impoverished. A fragile global economy and disrupted food supply chains add to their burdens and anxieties. We are facing a climate emergency. The politics of hate continue to divide us, even as we are in desperate need of unity. Migrants, women, minorities and other marginalized communities look on in despair as their hard-won rights are stripped away. The multilateral system itself is under assault.

Every crisis feels worse than the last. But the real crisis would be a loss of hope. Hope is not blind optimism or blissful ignorance. Hope is acknowledging and affirming our potential. It is about recognizing the wonders humankind is capable of when we are at our best and work together.

If we can produce and distribute multiple viable COVID-19 vaccines in record time, can we not get

everyone vaccinated, repair global supply chains and feed our hungry?

If we can launch super telescopes capable of peering into the farthest edges of space and studying distant galaxies, can we not reverse the damage we have done to our own planet?

If within a quarter century we can make quantum leaps in technology and transform the way we work and communicate, can we not revive and rebuild our economies to be sustainable?

If we can avert a third world war and sustain the current multilateral system for 76 years, can we not amend the United Nations system where it falls short? Can we not silence the guns, end conflicts and secure a true and lasting global peace? Of course, we can. And it will take hope.

Let us not lose hope and give in to cynicism. Let us not turn our backs on those who look to us at the United Nations for solutions. Let us use the instruments at our disposal to secure global peace and justice. Let us not stand idle and let the world drift to an uncertain future. Let us tell the next generation that their aspirations, their futures and their planet are worth fighting for. We owe it to ourselves, to our peers, to our children, to our grandchildren and to humankind to choose hope.

I congratulate President-elect Csaba Kőrösi and wish him and his team the very best as he takes on the responsibility of leading the seventy-seventh session.

Today the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly ends, but hope must live on. It is true that humankind faces challenges more complex and multidimensional than ever before. Solving them will take ambition and perseverance. But guided by our faith in humankind, by our aspirations for a brighter future and by our love for our children and grandchildren, we will succeed. With courage, with grace and with hope, we will succeed.

We are now coming to the end of the seventy-sixth regular session of the General Assembly. May I invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, President-elect of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session, to take an oath of office, in accordance with resolution 70/305, of 13 September 2016.

Mr. Kőrösi: I, Csaba Kőrösi, solemnly declare that I shall truthfully perform my duties and exercise the functions entrusted to me as President of the General Assembly of the United Nations in all loyalty, discretion and conscience, and that I shall discharge these functions and regulate my conduct with the interest of the United Nations only in view and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the code of ethics for the President of the General Assembly, without seeking or accepting any instruction in regard to the performance of my duties from any Government or other source external to the Organization.

The President: I thank His Excellency Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, President-elect of the seventy-seventh session, for taking the oath of office.

Closure of the seventy-seventh session

The President: I would like to invite the President-elect of the seventy-seventh session, His Excellency Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, to meet me at the side of the rostrum for the handing over of the gavel.

I declare closed the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.