



# General Assembly

Seventy-seventh session

**6**th plenary meeting  
Wednesday, 21 September 2022, 9 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Kőrösi . . . . . (Hungary)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Maniratanga (Burundi), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 9 a.m.*

## Address by Mr. Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

*Mr. Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Buhari:** On behalf of the Government and the people of Nigeria, I congratulate the President on his well-deserved election to lead the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session and assure him of the full support and cooperation of the Nigerian delegation during his tenure. I commend his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, for the Assembly's many remarkable achievements under his leadership during these challenging times. I would also like to congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, on his ceaseless and untiring efforts to promote peace, security and development, which are very much in line with his exalted role.

The first time I might have been able to address the Assembly was in 1984, when I was the Military Head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Some 31 years later, in 2016, I had the great privilege to personally address the Assembly as the democratically elected President of my country (see A/71/PV.4 A). As I approach the end of my second and final four-year term, I am reminded of how much has changed in Nigeria, Africa and the world, and yet how some challenges remain. We are now more severely tested by our enduring and our new global challenges, paramount among which are conflicts that are increasingly being driven by non-State actors, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, terrorism, violent extremism, the malignant use of technology, climate change, irregular migration and disparities in opportunities for improved standards of living.

Despite the challenging international environment, the United Nations has proved that it can be strong when the will of its members is harnessed for positive, collective action. The guiding principle of this extraordinary institution is the promotion of peace and security, development and human rights. The latest in a chain of events challenging those principles is the conflict in Ukraine, which has already created strains that may be unprecedented for an entire generation. Such a conflict will have adverse consequences for us all, hindering our capacity to work together to resolve conflicts elsewhere, especially in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Indeed, the ongoing war in Ukraine is making it more difficult to tackle the perennial issues that feature each year in the deliberations of the

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Assembly, such as nuclear disarmament, the right of Rohingya refugees to return to their homes in Myanmar, Palestinians' legitimate aspirations for statehood and the reduction of inequalities within and among nations.

The danger that the war in Ukraine will escalate further justifies Nigeria's resolute calls for a nuclear-free world and a universal Arms Trade Treaty, which are also necessary measures for preventing global human disasters. In that regard, we must find a way to reach a rapid consensus on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, with related commitments by the nuclear-weapon States. I remain firmly convinced that the challenges that have come so sharply into focus in recent years and months emphasize the call by Nigeria and many other Member States for reform of the Security Council and other United Nations agencies. We need a more effective and representative structure to meet today's demands, which have outgrown a system designed for the very different world that prevailed at its foundation in 1945. Change is long overdue.

This is the first meeting that we are having here in New York without the restrictions that characterized the past three years. The coronavirus disease pandemic ripped across national borders like a toxic whirlwind, leaving in its wake a legacy of pain and loss. Happily, we also witnessed an incredible level of innovation and creativity from those who devised treatments and vaccines. Those laudable achievements were underpinned by partnerships and international cooperation. We also saw the bravery, care and endurance of health professionals in every corner of the globe. With the coronavirus, we saw very clearly how States tried to meet the challenge of a threat that could not be contained within national borders. The results were mixed, but at its best, the cooperation among stakeholders was outstanding. It facilitated solutions that saved countless lives and eased a huge burden of human suffering. That same theme of multilateralism, as the promotion of national interests competes with the common cause in the face of an existential threat, has been our recurring experience in recent times.

In every address that I have delivered to the Assembly, I have dwelt on the issue of climate change, especially as it fuels conflicts and complicates food security. Climate change reduces opportunity and prosperity, which in Africa, Latin America and some parts of Asia also contributes to transnational organized crime. Last year, as part of Nigeria's effort to achieve our global net-zero aspirations, my Administration adopted

a national climate-change strategy that aims to deliver climate-change mitigation in a sustainable manner. The measures we took at the national level also require climate justice. Compared to industrialized economies, Africa and other developing nations produce only a small proportion of greenhouse-gas emissions. Yet we are the hardest hit by the consequences of climate change, as we are seeing in the sustained drought in Somalia and the unprecedentedly severe floods in Pakistan. Those and other climate-related occurrences are now suddenly becoming commonplace in the developing world. In effect, we are literally paying the price for policies that others pursue. That must change.

At the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Glasgow last year, I said that Nigeria was not asking for permission to make the same mistakes that others have made in creating the climate emergency. Fortunately, we now know what we can do to mitigate the effects of the climate crisis and the related energy challenges. As a first step, we must all commit to releasing the financing and the technology for creating a stable and affordable framework for energy transmission. Financial development institutions must prioritize de-risking energy projects to improve renewable projects' access to credit facilities. No country should be left behind in that area. The skyrocketing energy costs worldwide are in part the product of conflict and supply disruptions to Europe and the Americas, yet we are all paying the price. It is therefore our expectation that the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly and the upcoming COP 27 will help galvanize the political will required to drive action towards fulfilling the various existing climate change initiatives.

Another feature of the past decade has been the growing partnerships between States and increasingly influential non-State actors. There was a time when the most important events at the Assembly featured statements by the world's most powerful leaders. Now, a tweet or Instagram post by an influencer on a social or environmental issue may have a greater impact. Technology offers us limitless opportunities and sometimes runs ahead of the imagination of regulators and legislators. At its best, social media helps strengthen the foundation of our society and our common values. At its worst, it is a corrosive digital version of the mob, bristling with intolerance and division. In confronting those challenges, we must also come together to defend

freedom of speech while upholding other values that we cherish. We must continue to work for a common standard that balances rights with responsibilities to keep the most vulnerable from harm and help strengthen and enrich communities. Efforts to protect communities from the scourge of disinformation and misinformation must also be matched with efforts to reduce inequalities and restore hope to the poorer and most vulnerable members of our communities, as a means to curb the many socioeconomic conflict drivers that we face.

In spite of our efforts, humanitarian crises will continue to ravage some of our communities. Nigeria therefore implores its global partners to do more to complement its endeavours. Indeed, the multifaceted challenges facing most developing countries have left a debilitating chokehold on their fiscal space. That equally calls for addressing the burden of unsustainable external debt via a global commitment to the expansion and extension of the Debt Service Suspension Initiative to countries facing fiscal and liquidity challenges, as well as outright cancellation for countries facing the most severe issues.

Democracy is an idea that crosses time and borders. Sadly, it has its limitations. The wheels of democracy turn slowly. It can demand compromises that dilute decisions. Sometimes it bends too much to special interests that exercise influence, not always for the general good, in a manner disproportionate to their numbers. However, it has been my experience that a democratic culture provides a Government with the legitimacy it needs to deliver positive change. In Nigeria, not only have we worked to strengthen our democracy, but we have also supported it and promoted the rule of law in our subregion. In the Gambia, we helped guarantee the first democratic transition since independence. In Guinea-Bissau, we stood by the democratically elected Government when it faced mutiny. In Chad, following the tragic death on the battlefield of its President, the late Idriss Déby Itno, we joined forces with its other neighbours and international partners to stabilize the country and encourage a peaceful transition to democracy, a process that is ongoing. We believe in the sanctity of constitutional term limits, and we have steadfastly adhered to them in Nigeria. We have seen the corrosive impact on values when leaders elsewhere seek to change the rules to stay in power. Indeed, we are now preparing for general elections in Nigeria, scheduled for February. At the

seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly, there will be a new face on this rostrum speaking for Nigeria.

Ours is a vast country, strengthened by its diversity and common values of hard work, enduring faith and a sense of community. We have invested heavily to strengthen our framework for free and fair elections, and I thank our partners for all the support that they have provided for our elections. As President, I have set the goal that one of the enduring legacies I would like to leave is to entrench a process of free, fair, transparent and credible elections by which Nigerians elect the leaders of their choice.

The multiple challenges that we face are truly interconnected and urgent, and the choice of this session's theme, "A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges", is apt. In keeping with our obligations as Member States of the Organization, we must all do our utmost to work with the President to resolve them. In that regard, I reiterate my delegation's full and resolute cooperation.

Let me convey my final reflections from this famous rostrum. We live in extraordinary times, with interdependent challenges, but enormous opportunities. The pace of change can seem bewildering, with sometimes a palpable and unsettling sense of uncertainty about our future. But if my years in public service have taught me anything, it is that we must keep faith with those values that endure. They include, but are not limited to, such values as justice, honour, integrity, ceaseless endeavour and partnership within and between nations. Our strongest moments have always been those in which we remain true to the basic principles of tolerance, community and abiding commitment to peace and goodwill towards all.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran**

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

*Mr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Raisi** (*spoke in Farsi; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): The foundation of a better world is justice. All of the hopes and aspirations of humankind are built on justice. Humans have the capacity to create a framework of all-encompassing justice, which means eliminating injustice. The Islamic Republic of Iran defends the fight against injustice in all of its forms — against humankind, against spirituality, against the Almighty and against the people of the world — wherever it appears.

The desire to be closer to the Creator and the Creator's teachings exists in all humankind, and we have witnessed a willingness to change in revolutions throughout the history of humankind. Although many movements have never matured into revolution and many revolutions have deviated from their original path, the success of many people and nations, such as the nation of Iran in realizing its aspiration for an Islamic revolution, has strengthened such aspirations in the hearts of people around the world. The Islamic revolution of Iran was the result of Iranians' drive for justice and fairness. Despite the many conspiracies that Iran has faced over the decades, it has been able to safeguard itself. As a first step, and based on an advanced social and organizational order, the Islamic Republic of Iran was created in order to ensure justice internally and bring to the world a message of justice and fairness. Spirituality and multilateralism were key components in that path.

I am grateful and honoured to be the representative of a people and a nation who are the inheritors of a great civilization that has been free for millennia and has always managed to defeat the plots of the enemies who sought to conquer it — a nation that has always seen oppression as an existential enemy and has always fought to eradicate enslavement, from the Babylonians all the way to the Palestinians. We believe in a common fate for humankind, and we support universal justice. What we seek for ourselves, we wish for others, and

what we do not wish for ourselves, we do not impose on others. The nation of Iran believes that justice leads to unity and cohesion and warfare leads to destruction. A country that wants to have justice within its own territory, but then creates or trains terrorist groups and unleashes them on other nations outside its borders should be ashamed before humankind and ashamed in the face of the principles of freedom, justice and fairness. Humanity does not belong only to certain parts of the world.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, drawing inspiration from its Constitution and the spiritual values on which it is based, sees the protection of human rights as one of the most effective ways to ensure and contribute to the protection of the rights of all oppressed people across the globe and considers it one of its inherent duties. The Islamic Republic of Iran rejects the double standards of some Governments vis-à-vis human rights and sees them as a major factor rendering the subject of human rights banal in the eyes of many. In Iran there has been much discussion of the death of dozens of innocent women in a Western country, and as long as there are such double standards, where attention is focused solely on one party rather than on all of us, equally, we will not have true justice and fairness.

Human rights belong to everyone, but they are unfortunately trampled on by many Governments, as was shown by the recent discovery in a Canadian school of mass graves containing the bodies of hundreds of children of the native tribes of Canada and as is evidenced with regard to the rights of the Palestinians, the right to life of people whose lands are occupied, those who have fallen victim to terrorism and those who seek freedom and refuge only to see their children locked up in cages. All of that shows that who is accused and who the accuser must not be judged solely based on the representations of some. The right to claim to be protectors of human rights needs to be founded on something, which many lack these days. With regard to the savagery and crimes of Da'esh, which enslaved Christian, Yazidi and other religious minorities, women and children, it has been clear from our attempts to combat them that we have been defenders of human rights and that those who defended and promoted Da'esh are on the side of the accused.

Today we are witnessing a change in the world order away from a unilateral world, a hegemonic world, a world in which financial power controls the standards of behaviour, a world where criminal and oppressive



sanctions are imposed on nations and international organizations are used as tools of oppression in exerting pressure on defenceless nations, in other words, a world completely lacking in justice and fairness. Support for that order among the world's peoples and nations has been lost. A new order has taken shape and will undoubtedly be realized. From Lebanon to the occupied territories of Palestine and across our region we see the defeated policies of that outdated system. We see terrorism, we see native cultures and religions trampled on, we see unilateral actions and unjust opposition to multilateralism. All of that has created great obstacles to human progress.

We firmly believe that in order to address both old challenges and new contexts, we have no choice but to choose a path of cohesiveness and unity, on a basis of multilateralism, justice, shared human values and divine teachings. There is no other path. We believe that the hearts of all freedom-seeking nations are wedded to those deep-seated values, and their defence against oppressors throughout the world rests on our shoulders. What we are seeking are the rights of the Iranian people and nation. We will not tolerate any relationship based on oppression. We will stand firm and proudly defend our rights. We believe that any oppression is an act against peace and stability, which is a threat to the entire world.

Achieving global security through any path other than justice cannot be sustainable or lasting. That is therefore precisely what we expect the United Nations to support and pursue. Of course, implementing justice and fairness is enormously challenging and difficult, and perhaps it is for that reason that many who claim to be on the side of peace run away from the responsibilities of peace. To them we say, "If you do not wish to shoulder the burden, do you not even wish to shoulder the burden of fighting oppression?"

Our belief is deeply rooted in the Qur'anic culture, which instructs us to oppress no one, and the fate of many nations is dependent on exactly those principles. When we consider nations that flee the logic of character, fairness and justice and run towards unilateralism and oppressive power; nations that lack reason and rely on coups d'état, military interventionism and boots on the ground; nations that fight terrorism and many other injustices selectively or nations that use nuclear weapons, we can ask if that brought the world closer to fairness, justice and peace or did it rather become a basis for hegemony. What human value has the killing

of hundreds of thousands of Yemeni, Iraqi, Syrian and Afghan children served? Were those not the evil faces of the total lack of justice and fairness in many parts of the world? And in reality, what is it that the Islamic Republic of Iran seeks that has caused havoc and chaos among the oppressors of the world? Is it not the exercise of its own logical and just right?

A willingness to support hegemony has become a sore point for humankind around the world and poses a serious threat. Increasingly, nations around the world wish to achieve justice and independence while also enjoying security. The realization of the doctrine of resistance shows how sincerely and deeply many people wish to achieve true justice, while unilateralism has been used to hold many countries back on a selective basis. The United States cannot accept that certain countries have the right to stand on their own two feet, and it continues to confuse militarism with security. The situation of America's allies is no better. What is occurring today in Europe is a mirror image of what has occurred in Western Asia over the past few decades. The conduct and the result of moving troops throughout those regions have yielded the same results, and the fate of many countries has shown that America has pursued its own interests at the expense of many others.

The Islamic revolution in Iran was the beginning of the push of the great nation of Iran to seek its own place in the world. For decades we have confronted foreign plots such as coups d'état, oppressive sanctions and hegemonic interventions. None of Iran's successes have been acceptable to the great Powers. Some 40 years ago, the late President of the Islamic revolution Mohammad-Ali Rajai placed his feet, whose soles had been savagely tortured, upon a rostrum in the Security Council Chamber and showed the scars of the torture he had been subjected to at the hands of the Shah's secret police (see S/PV.2251 (1980)). He was later martyred by the hypocrites. A decade later, the late Imam Khomeini ensured that Iran was able to repel foreign aggression against its territory and take charge of its own destiny. The people of Iran who were themselves victims of terrorism have today become supporters who can be counted on in the fight against terrorism throughout the region.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has spent much capital to achieve its objectives — from the time when Saddam Hussein tore up the Algiers Agreement and attacked our country unprovoked, to the time when the American Government trampled on the nuclear agreement and,

we saw a new phase of crimes committed against humankind. Some time ago, the former President of the United States announced that it was the United States that created Da'esh. For us, it makes no difference which American Administration created Da'esh. What matters is that a Government on the other side of the planet decided to bring havoc and chaos to our region at the expense of the lives and blood of women and children and innocents. Nonetheless, the Islamic Republic resistance put an end to that destructive movement. And the leader who emerged in the fight against terrorism was none other than our beloved late martyr Qasem Soleimani — a seeker after freedom who became a martyr on the path to obtaining freedom for the nations of our region. And the previous President of the United States of America effectively signed off on that savage, illegal and immoral crime. What he said essentially showed that the oppression that was imposed on the nations of the region had managed to heal some of the hearts that were broken by that crime.

We will not waver in our pursuit of justice in the face of the crime that the American President admitted to having signed off on. We will pursue justice through a fair tribunal for those who martyred our beloved General Qasem Soleimani.

The history of Iran is the history of a nation that has learned to stand on its own two feet and not to depend on anyone else. Iran learned that lesson when in both world wars it declared its neutrality, yet in both wars was subject to foreign occupation. Afterwards, when it approached the United States in the 1950s and relied on it to achieve Iran's dream of nationalizing its oil industry, it was betrayed again. Even the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was signed and accepted in the framework of the Security Council, was unilaterally trampled on.

Iran has learned the policy of resistance and progress, which it has focused on pursuing because of an advanced and logical social order through which the Islamic Republic of Iran today, despite the oppressive sanctions imposed on it, has become a strong country and has achieved many impressive goals in the fields of technology, know-how and expertise. We believe that the world today needs a strong Iran that is able to export other products in addition to oil and gas.

We have distribution networks throughout our vast nation in electricity, knowledge-seeking, biosciences, nanotechnology and nuclear sciences. We are at the

cutting edge, and Iran's growth in those sectors is considerable. A good example of our social endeavours was when we sought to bring universal health-care coverage to 85 million people, which showed that the pursuit of the will of the people is a foundation of the system of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In contrast, during the times of the imposed war of Iraq against Iran, we were even prevented from being able to purchase barbed wire, but today we have been able to manufacture, through our own know-how and capabilities, the most modern systems to defend our nation.

Our enemies did not retreat, rather our nation managed to drive all of its enemies out of the arena by participating in an impressive and unprecedented fashion in the Islamic revolution in order to strengthen the values of faith and divine will, as well as the policy of good-neighbourly relations. Progress in economic and trade relations have now been brought to the forefront of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy.

We would like to have extensive relations with all nations throughout the world, particularly with our neighbours. War is not the solution to crises. Dialogue, conversations and negotiations are the true solutions.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a powerful country in the region, has a visible presence and is willing to solve crises. During the past few years, Iran's trade in its region increased at an impressive rate. We have now entered with our neighbours into a new era of the expansion of friendly, neighbourly and brotherly ties, which brings stability and security to all sides.

During the hard times of our neighbouring countries, we showed that we were their true friends. During the numerous conversations I have had with regional leaders, one of the main points raised was that regional security must be born from within and not from the outside. The way to realize that is through collaboration and cooperation, not by forming opposing blocs. We must rely on brotherly and friendly relations. If we leave nations and the regions in charge of their own destinies, then the occupiers will leave and neighbours will remain supportive of one another in eternity.

In the not-too-distant past, we saw the fires of war burning between the two brotherly nations of Iraq and Iran, because of the encouragement of enemy Powers throughout the world. Today we see the Arba'een pilgrimage in observation of the fortieth day of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, which is celebrated in order to renew our faith in those values and to respect

the descendants of the Prophet, who gave their lives for human dignity and human values.

I would like to direct the General Assembly's attention to one of the most egregious points that shows the oppressive Powers present in the region. The region has not previously had such an occupying Power as savage as the Zionist regime. The killing of women and children is recorded in the dark report card of the Zionist regime, which has managed to build the biggest prison in the world in Gaza. The illegal expansion of settlements and housing on Palestinian territories and farms and the killing of their children and their new generations shows everyone that seven decades of Israeli occupation and brutality are still with us and not coming to an end.

But the global Powers must show why they keep running away and evading the solutions proposed by the Islamic Republic of Iran to resolve the Palestinian crisis. The entire Palestinian territory, from the mountains to the sea, needs only one solution — allowing the votes of all Palestinians, including Muslims, Christians and Jews, in a comprehensive referendum. The occupying Zionist Power, which has occupied Jerusalem and occupies other lands in the region, cannot be a partner for security and stability.

Allow me to draw Assembly members' attention to another example of the lack of justice and fairness, namely, the double standards used when speaking of the nuclear science capacities of the Islamic Republic of Iran. And we all know that it is for only human and peaceful endeavours, but some countries are keen on portraying that as a threat in order to sweep under the rug what they should rightly face themselves, namely, denuclearization.

As the leader of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I announce that the Islamic Republic of Iran is not seeking to build or obtain nuclear weapons, and such weapons have no place in our doctrine. That has been issued as an official fatwa announced by His Eminence Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, and a Sharia-based fatwa issued by His Eminence is worth more than any measures with any outside or international agencies.

All of this is taking place in an environment where countries that seek to portray us, unjustly, as a threat keep pursuing nuclear-weapon development and testing and have made a gift of those weapons of mass destruction to the Zionist Government. In doing so, the Governments that must be disarmed are rewarded,

but those that are observing proper frameworks are even threatened by measures under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. And despite the fact that it accounts for only 2 per cent of nuclear activities worldwide, Iran has been the subject of 35 per cent of nuclear inspections.

I therefore ask all those here today to please listen carefully to the following points.

First, the Islamic Republic of Iran, in good faith, accepted an agreement, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, in 2015 and lived up to all of its commitments, without exception, in the first phase, but the result was America trampling upon that agreement. As they themselves said, in so many words, there were unprecedented oppressive sanctions measures imposed on the people of Iran as punishment for being freedom seekers. A weapon of mass destruction — that is what sanctions are. And abiding by, or cooperating in, the implementation of the same is helping oppression take root.

Secondly, it was America that trampled upon and left the agreement, not Iran. The International Atomic Energy Agency issued 15 different reports stating specifically that Iran had fully complied with all of its commitments.

Thirdly, while we have paid the price for having lived up to our commitments, Iran has not been given the opportunity to reap the rewards and rights of the agreement, due to the United States, in cooperation with Europe, trampling upon that agreement.

We gave ample opportunities for those who trampled upon and left the agreement to return to it. We have been extremely flexible, and had it not been for our flexibility, the negotiations would have stopped in the very first few days. Iran's logic of negotiations is a just analysis of what is going on, and our wish is only one thing — that commitments be honoured.

Guarantees, it seems, are simply things that might happen. We are basing that on lived experience. We are speaking of the experience of America having left the JCPOA. And we negotiated with the current American Government for a year and a half for it to renew its commitment to return to the agreement and fulfil its provisions.

Today, even as the American Government speaks of honouring their commitments to this deal, it keeps repeating the same old stories of the past, which casts

serious doubt on its true commitment to return to the agreement. That brings us to another challenge. Can we truly trust, without guarantees or assurances, that the American Government will live up to their commitment this time?

Of course, the Islamic Republic of Iran, with various well-established and vast relationships with countries across the globe, has managed in many cases to neutralize the sanctions and to create new opportunities. The United States Government itself has announced many times through various Government officials that the maximum-pressure policy has suffered an embarrassing defeat. We have found our path, independent of any agreement, and we will continue steadfastly on that path.

At the same time, while we are very earnest in the negotiations and have shown that if the rights of the people of Iran are respected, there is a great and serious will to resolve all issues, we believe that the knot of the nuclear deal must be loosened from the same place where they managed to tie it.

I will conclude by expressing the need felt around the world for justice and fairness. Every single human being must be a part of actively building a new world based on justice and human values. If we wish the new world to be acceptable, righteous, powerful and successful in resolving the challenges facing humankind, then it must be based in global fairness and justice. That requires following several principles.

First, throughout the world, we must feel collectively responsible and determined to fight against oppression.

Secondly, we must respect the wishes and will of the people and of nations and must refrain from direct engagement in their internal affairs.

Thirdly, we must eliminate double standards.

Fourthly, we must stand up to violence and war.

Fifthly, international organizations must act independently and prudently.

Finally, and most important, we must create roles for dignified and qualified humans with experience so that they can create that new system. Our views on the future horizon are very realistic. On the basis of divine promises, as delivered by the prophets, we firmly believe that justice will envelop the world, and those who are true followers of divine commands will be blessed by the reappearance of the last messiah.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

#### **Address by Mr. Ukhnaa Khurelsukh, President of Mongolia**

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of Mongolia.

*Mr. Ukhnaa Khurelsukh, President of Mongolia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Ukhnaa Khurelsukh, President of Mongolia and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Khurelsukh** (*spoke in Mongolian; English text provided by the delegation*): I wish to convey my heartfelt congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Csaba Kőrösi on his unanimous election as the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session and wish him every success in his work.

We have no doubt that the seventy-seventh session will play an important role in boosting the social and economic recovery of the countries of the world in the post-pandemic era, implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, combating climate change and desertification and determining ways to resolve international crises and conflicts through dialogue and peaceful means.

Last year we celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of Mongolia's full-fledged membership in the United Nations. This year we are observing the thirtieth anniversary of Mongolia's declaration of its territory as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and the twentieth anniversary of Mongolia's participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

On behalf of my country and my people, it is therefore a great privilege for me to state from this rostrum that, during those six decades, Mongolia has been a responsible member of the United Nations, actively participating and cooperating in multilateral



efforts within the international community, making tangible contributions to global peace and security and promoting the well-being and development of humankind.

The whole world is going through difficult ordeals and challenges, such as poverty, inequality, climate change, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and pandemic-related hurdles with regard to customs, transport and logistics, price increases and inflation, as well as geostrategic and geopolitical tensions.

According to a report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, even in these difficult times, when the countries of the world were closing their borders and imposing restrictions and quarantines in order to protect the lives and health of their citizens from the COVID-19 pandemic, often triggering economic crises, global military expenditures continued to grow in 2021, reaching an all-time high of \$2.1 trillion.

If that huge budget and funds spent on the military and armaments had been dedicated to the least developed and developing countries, how many millions of children's futures would have been brighter, how many millions would have been lifted out of poverty, how many millions would have been freed from hunger and disease, how many millions would have had food and opportunities for education and employment and places to live? It is time for all of us to ponder and reflect upon what progress could have been achieved if that colossal sum of money had been spent on the pressing issues of combating global warming and climate change.

It is truly regrettable that the situation in the world is deteriorating and that mistrust and misunderstanding are deepening even though humankind has suffered enough in the twentieth century due to the scourge of the two World Wars, the Cold War divide, interreligious conflicts and terrorism, among other things. In today's complex reality, we should therefore always strive to learn from the mistakes of the past, build mutual trust, understanding and respect and make every effort to resolve every misunderstanding, conflict or war by peaceful means and dialogue.

Eight centuries ago, our ancestor — the Great Genghis Khan — united all Mongolian dwellers, founded the great Mongolian State under the power of the eternal blue sky, put an end to the centuries-long wars and conflicts, brought peace to the West and East under the rule of justice and established the Pax Mongolica in the vast terrain of Eurasia.

Scholars and researchers around the world view the establishment of the Pax Mongolica as an important contribution of Mongols to world history and the advancement of humankind and emphasize that the Pax Mongolica played an important role in the development of free trade between countries, laid the foundation for diplomacy and exchange of envoys, as well as proclaimed the ideas of religious freedom and the rule of law without imposing one's culture and religion on others.

The General Assembly resolution entitled "Eight hundred years of Mongolian statehood", adopted in 2005, touted the contribution of Mongols to the history of humankind and recognized that

"nomadic civilization influenced, inter alia, societies across Asia and Europe and, in turn, absorbed influences from both East and West in a true interchange of human values" (*resolution 60/16, fifth preambular paragraph*).

It further recognized

"the important role played by a strong and persistent nomadic culture in the development of extensive trade networks and the creation of large administrative, cultural, religious and commercial centres" (*ibid., sixth preambular paragraph*).

Finally, it acknowledged the

"ever-increasing significance and relevance of a culture of living in harmony with nature, which is inherent in nomadic civilization, in today's world" (*ibid., seventh preambular paragraph*).

That indicates that the Pax Mongolica contained progressive ideas that would form the basis of the collective efforts of the international community to maintain peace and stability in the modern world. Therefore, we, the descendants of the founders of the Pax Mongolica, call on the international community to understand each other, cooperate and manage every conflict through peaceful dialogue so that our blue planet can be at peace and a "Pax Globalica" can be established. We further call on people of the world to combine efforts to achieve that noble goal.

Mongolia has consistently pursued a peace-loving, open, multipillar and independent foreign policy. During his official visit to Mongolia in August, Secretary-General António Guterres used the phrase "a symbol of peace in a troubled world" — a clear recognition of that

policy by the international community. Mongolia has actively participated in the promotion of international peace and security and in peacekeeping efforts and has put forward several proposals and initiatives. One notable example is the declaration of its territory as a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

In his statement at the opening of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in August, the Secretary-General warned that humankind is just “one misunderstanding, one miscalculation away from nuclear annihilation”. In that connection, I urge not only States Parties to the treaty but all States Members of the United Nations to exert political will and courage to build a world free of nuclear weapons and to unite and work together wholeheartedly and faithfully for the sake of our Mother Earth, peace and future generations.

Mongolia believes that nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones are the best and most effective means of building a world free of nuclear weapons. We therefore consider that international recognition of Mongolia’s nuclear-weapon-free status is our tangible contribution and effort to this cause.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of Mongolia’s participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations. During that period, more than 20,000 Mongolian military personnel served in United Nations and other international peacekeeping operations in hotspots around the world.

Mongolia sent its first female officer to a United Nations peacekeeping operation in 2006, and now we are ranked among the top 20 of 120 countries in number of female peacekeepers contributed to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Mongolia is firmly committed to the implementation of the resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, and to the call by the United Nations Department of Peace Operations to increase the number of women serving in the United Nations peacekeeping operations to 15 per cent by 2027. Within the framework of that objective, at my country’s initiative, we hosted an international conference on strengthening the role of women in peacekeeping, in June. The conference, which brought together female peacekeepers from more than 30 countries and representatives of international organizations, became a notable event for sharing

and exchanging knowledge, experience and lessons learned. We also put forward an initiative to host that conference every five years, and it is our hope that the relevant United Nations entities and troop-contributing countries will support that proposal.

At the same time, it is my pleasure to underscore that the United Nations and its leadership have greatly appreciated the genuine contributions of peace-loving Mongolia to United Nations peacekeeping operations and the sacred cause of strengthening international peace and security and have given full support to our proposals and initiatives.

Mongolia has consistently proposed the establishment of a dialogue mechanism with a view to contributing to peace and security in North-East Asia and to efforts of the international community to denuclearize the Korean peninsula. In that context, in 2013, Mongolia launched the initiative to organize the international conference “Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security”. In June, we organized the seventh international conference of the “Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security” and discussed a broad range of issues, including regional security, the power grid, green development, opportunities for humanitarian cooperation and the post-pandemic economic recovery. The results of the conference demonstrate that the significance of the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue initiative has grown, and it is transforming into an open and inclusive mechanism gathering Government officials and academia from countries in the subregion and beyond, as well as representatives of international organizations.

In the face of frequent natural disasters and communicable diseases, the creation of an integrated regional infrastructure for disaster risk reduction and humanitarian assistance is becoming one of the most pressing security issues in North-East Asia.

With that in mind, in 2018 Mongolia put forward an initiative to establish an integrated platform for disaster risk reduction for the North-East Asia region, and now we present a proposal to establish a regional humanitarian hub or warehouse based on the Ulaanbaatar International Airport-affiliated facilities. I am confident that those initiatives will be supported and assisted by other countries of the region, as well as by the United Nations system and specialized organizations.

Broad-scale economic restrictions and sanctions caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and

geopolitical conflicts have hit national economies hard. The global market prices for food, fuel, agricultural products, energy and raw materials have increased sharply like never before, causing fluctuation in the global economy and financial markets and creating major risks.

With the immediate support of the United Nations and its system organizations, as well as that of development partners, for Mongolia's efforts to fight COVID-19, as of today 70 per cent of the population is fully vaccinated, domestic restrictions have been removed and borders have been opened.

Although we are going through an uneasy period, the Government of Mongolia is implementing the new recovery policy developed in harmony with the Sustainable Development Goals. The policy focuses on improving road, railway and border infrastructure; increasing energy sources; boosting industrialization, as well as urban and rural development; and enhancing public-private partnership and productivity.

Furthermore, despite tough times of the pandemic and new normal, Mongolia is making efforts to accelerate the digital transition and adopted a package of new laws on digital development. We introduced the e-Mongolia platform in order to streamline public-service delivery to citizens and entities, to reduce corruption and bureaucracy, to increase information security and to promote good governance. Moreover, we are working to expand and develop our multilateral cooperation in those fields at regional and international levels.

Mongolia fully supports the major initiatives put forward in the Secretary-General's *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) and is sparing no effort to implement them alongside the Sustainable Development Goals, the national Vision-2050 long-term development policy and the New Recovery Policy.

We must not forget that the serious challenges we are facing, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, land degradation, shortages of water resources and droughts, are still awaiting solutions.

Mongolia is one of the countries most affected by climate change. Therefore, with a view to combating climate change, desertification and dust storms and in order to increase forest and water resources, Mongolia launched the Billion Trees national movement in order to plant, grow and protect billions of trees. The Mongolian people, its Government and our development partners

welcomed that initiative, and now the Billion Trees national movement is being successfully implemented throughout the country. I am pleased to inform the Assembly that the Secretary-General has personally joined and supports the movement.

In addition, Mongolia reiterates its commitment to actively cooperate and make a real contribution to reducing the negative impact of climate change and protecting the environment at regional and international levels. In that context, it is my pleasure to inform the Assembly that Mongolia will be hosting the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, in 2026.

Another issue that should be brought to the attention of the General Assembly is the scarcity of pastures, as the space for nomadic livestock is shrinking day by day, and nomadic civilization is facing the danger of extinction.

We Mongolians are a nomadic and pastoralist people. The lives of more than 200 million people who raise livestock and live in harmony with nature like we do are at risk now due to climate change, land degradation, desertification, drought and extreme winter events. In order to protect their interests, improve pasture management and use, preserve the ecosystem balance and provide global food security and supply, Mongolia initiated a General Assembly resolution proclaiming the year 2026 as International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (resolution 76/253), which was adopted on 15 March 2022.

We launched the Billion Trees national movement along with the national programmes Food Supply and Security and Healthy Mongolia in order to help attain the Sustainable Development Goals and create a healthy environment in which people can live a healthy life consuming healthy food. We highly appreciate the support and cooperation that the countries of the region and international organizations extended to those efforts.

Nowadays, with the drastic change in the international order and norms established after the Second World War, the importance of multilateralism and the role of the international community are evermore increasing. For that reason, we are of the view that it is important that every Member State take an active part in the process of United Nations reforms and constructively contribute to strengthening the position and role of the Organization. Mongolia is of the view

that the key to reforming the United Nations is the reform of the Security Council, which bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Since 2009, Mongolia has been regularly participating in the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, expressing its principled position.

Developments in recent years have shown that the General Assembly is the most important platform for discussing global peace, security, human rights and development issues. We therefore deem that strengthening the role of the General Assembly is important to ensure the balance of power among countries and highlight the voices of small and developing countries more vividly.

Lastly, I wish to call on Member States to support the United Nations quintet of change, outlined in the Secretary-General's report *Our Common Agenda*, for a more effective United Nations 2.0. Let us collectively make efforts to ensure global peace, security, development and prosperity.

May the eternal blue sky bless us, humankind, forever.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of Mongolia for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Ukhnaa Khurelsukh, President of Mongolia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

#### **Address by Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda**

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Rwanda.

*Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Kagame:** The Secretary-General's landmark report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) has only increased in value since it was launched a year ago. The world is in a state of turbulence, with intersecting

crises growing in scale and severity, including climate change, food price inflation, conflict and uncontrolled migration. Those challenges all require multilateral cooperation and efforts. Yet the perception that the international system is no longer up to the task has only deepened, particularly where the interests of powerful members are at stake.

In the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, recent setbacks have served to highlight that the security situation is fundamentally no different than it was 20 years ago, when the largest and most expensive United Nations peacekeeping mission was first deployed. That has exposed neighbouring States, notably Rwanda, to cross-border attacks that are entirely preventable. There is an urgent need to find the political will to finally address the root causes of instability in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The blame game does not solve the problems. Such challenges are not insurmountable, and solutions can be found. That would ultimately be much less costly in terms of both money and human lives.

Despite shortcomings, there are examples to demonstrate that international cooperation can successfully address the issues that matter to all of us. Global health is a case in point. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has helped save countless lives, in Africa and beyond, while also strengthening health systems. I hope that all countries will respond strongly and sustain their commitments at the seventh Global Fund replenishment meeting, to chaired by President Biden later today.

Africa is doing its part, but it must do more. For sustainability, external funding must go hand in hand with increased domestic financing for health. That is a priority, which the African Union is tracking on an annual basis, and which I am honoured to lead on behalf of the organization.

We are also working with partners to bring end-to-end vaccine manufacturing to our continent, notably through collaboration with BioNTech and strong support from the European Union. That is critical to increasing Africa's resilience against future pandemics.

I commend the Secretary-General for convening the Transforming Education Summit earlier this week. The future of billions of children and young people across the world depends on overcoming the challenges of inclusion and quality of instruction, particularly as we recover from the pandemic.



Away from the headlines, the United Nations and other multilateral institutions retain the ability to set an agenda around which we can all rally. At the recent Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kigali, leaders adopted an ambitious programme of action, including special instruments on living lands, urbanization and child-care protection and reform. We also agreed to prioritize public-private partnerships to create digital jobs for young people across the Commonwealth.

The future is digital, and transformation is happening now, as evidenced by the ongoing work of the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development and the Smart Africa secretariat. High-quality digital jobs are a practical response to the underlying drivers of irregular migration by closing the human-capital investment gap that separates high- and low-income countries. To ensure that the benefits are equally shared, we must continue to invest equitably in emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence.

In the area of peacebuilding and counter-terrorism, regional initiatives can complement the important work of the United Nations.

Regional and bilateral initiatives have been proved to make a big difference, whether in the Central African Republic or the successful engagement to contain violent extremism in northern Mozambique, conducted by Rwanda and the Southern African Development Community. If that approach were tried properly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as proposed by the Nairobi process, it would make a difference. However, to be sustainable, such efforts require consistent financial support from the international community.

A great deal is at stake, and time is not on our side. We cannot anticipate or prevent every crisis, but we can be better prepared to react quickly and effectively when needed, especially if we work together.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Rwanda for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

### **Address by Šefik Džaferović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

*Mr. Šefik Džaferović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Šefik Džaferović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Džaferović** (*spoke in Bosnian; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): As the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is my honour to address this organ.

I congratulate Mr. Shahid on successfully presiding over the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. Despite the difficult working conditions caused by the pandemic, he worked with dedication with the Secretary-General, Mr. Guterres, so that this organ of the United Nations could carry out its duties. I also congratulate Mr. Kőrösi on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session. He can count on the support and cooperation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in ensuring the productive work of this organ.

At the recent sessions of the General Assembly and other international forums, we regularly assessed that the global order was experiencing tectonic changes. Today, however, we can conclude that the world has irreversibly changed. The international relations on which the security architecture of Europe used to rest, as well as the wider international framework, now do not exist.

At a time when towns and villages in Ukraine are facing the terrifying reality of war, the least that we can do is not to be silent about it. We must not be silent, particularly in this building, the home of the United Nations, established in order to prevent and stop what is currently happening in Ukraine. We must not be silent in Bosnia and Herzegovina either. We owe that to our vivid memories of the horrors of war and aggression.

The United Nations system was unable to prevent or stop the war in my country in the period between

1992 and 1995. Unfortunately, that happened again in the case of Ukraine. I am primarily referring to the Security Council, the organ responsible for safeguarding international peace and security, in the light of the principles set out in the Charter of the United Nations.

Due to internal relations and barriers, the Security Council is clearly unable to fulfil its obligations. However, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on aggression against Ukraine (resolution ES-11/1) by an overwhelming majority. That resolution affirmed the undisputed principles of the Charter of the United Nations and other acts of international law, which prohibit the use of armed force. It orders States to resolve disagreements by peaceful means. The resolution expresses support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. It unequivocally refers to the actions of the Russian Federation as aggression. It calls for the aggression to stop. Finally, it rejects the secessionist moves of certain regions within Ukraine directed against its territorial integrity.

Bosnia and Herzegovina supported that resolution and stood on the right side of history, along with 140 other countries. That is in line with the obligations arising from the United Nations Charter, our previously held positions and our obligation, in accordance with the Stabilization and Association Agreement, to follow the foreign policy of the European Union.

Although the resolution does not have the power to stop the war, it has the power to stop the lies. The clear and unambiguous language of this highest international forum drastically reduces the space for those who try to relativize the truth. The first step towards any solution is to tell and respect the truth.

I hope that there will be peace as soon as possible so that people in Ukraine can live normal lives and the displaced can return to their homes

The war in Ukraine, as well as the consequences of the pandemic, led to drastic changes in all spheres of life. That is currently clearly visible in the serious energy crisis, inflation, a general recession and the threat to supplies, especially in the food sector. We are all facing a very difficult and challenging winter.

Global markets and international free trade enabled enormous progress in all corners of the world. The eradication of hunger, the availability of consumer goods and the continuous economic growth in all parts of the world are all unquestionable benefits of

global economic liberalization. Globalization tightly connected the various parts of the world and made us interdependent. Strong economic, security and political interrelations produced an increasingly integrated global framework. Within that framework, everyone relies on each another in various areas, from the economy to security.

At the same time, the interdependence of the different parts of the world is the source of the vulnerability of our global community. That became obvious during the pandemic, when transportation and supply channels were blocked. It is also obvious in the light of the current crisis related to the war in Ukraine. Due to the blockade of wheat exports from Ukrainian ports, developing countries in Africa and Asia are facing hunger. A large part of the European continent is facing an energy crisis due to dependence on Russian gas.

As a result of difficulties caused by the process of political and economic integration, in recent years we have often witnessed strong advocacy for political sovereignty and economic protectionism. The consequences of the transformation of developed countries from industrial to post-industrial nations, migration and, most recently, the pandemic led many to call for the construction of economic barriers, and even actual walls and wire fences.

That is the wrong path to take. The answer to the above problems is not to close up, but to open up. The solution is not less, but more, cooperation. The answer to the energy crisis in Europe, caused by dependence on a single source, is relying not only on one's own forces. The answer lies in diversification and in finding new, multiple channels of gas supply and other energy sources.

No one in the modern world has enough resources to be self-sustainable. Past crises show that dependence on individual external sources is not sufficient either. We can overcome such difficulties only by increasing our international cooperation.

We live in unstable times, unprecedented in recent history. As we face an extremely difficult winter, we are aware of the destabilizing potential of the current economic and energy crisis.

The twentieth century provided extremely valuable lessons about the correlation between an economic crisis and right-wing populism. The Nazi movement came to

power on the wave of a great economic depression. That led to the greatest cataclysm in the history of humankind. Following that, the United Nations was established and the United Nations Charter, as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and other United Nations acts, were adopted.

The fundamental idea of the United Nations is that of the equality of all people, regardless of their origin, skin colour, religion and national or other affiliation. All the acts of international law I mentioned are based on that idea. Modern civilization was built on that idea.

Today, almost eight decades later, we can hear voices openly or implicitly denying those basic tenets. Right-wing populists increasingly say that all people and nations do not have equal rights and that some are more valuable than others. It is becoming increasingly frequent that they openly advocate the ideas of ethnic and racial supremacy and claim that domination and brute force are the only principles on which interpersonal and international relations can, and should, be structured. It takes only one step from those ideas to violence.

From this rostrum, from the United Nations building, I call for caution and action. We will face enormous challenges in the coming period. We must fulfil our duty and fight for the ideas of civilization. We must defend those ideas at all costs.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has been home to many peoples, cultures and religions for centuries. Our long tradition of multiculturalism is something in which we take pride. We are proud of our Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Roma and other communities, as well as the culture of living together and mutual respect that we have developed over the centuries. All those communities, individually and collectively, make up the structure of the mosaic of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is the way things are, and that is how things will remain.

At the same time, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a meeting place of cultures, was a thorn in the side of policies based on the idea of the impossibility of living together and the necessity of confrontation. Such policies led to the terrifying war in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995. That war culminated in the genocide in Srebrenica.

The resolutions from that period adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as

the reports of the Secretary-General and the judgments of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, recognize the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina as an international armed conflict, in which neighbouring countries participated.

The judgments handed down by the International Tribunal in the The Hague conclude that joint criminal enterprises took place. The goal of those enterprises was the elimination of certain ethnic groups from parts of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina so that those territories would ultimately be annexed to neighbouring countries. That was the most serious violation of international general and humanitarian law.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has undergone an arduous peacebuilding process since the conclusion of the Dayton Peace Agreement. However, we still face numerous challenges. Some of the major challenges are certain policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the neighbourhood that have never abandoned the war-time goals of dividing our country.

There are parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina that are part of the broad wave of right-wing populism in Europe. They openly claim that Bosnia and Herzegovina is not sustainable because, according to them, it is not possible for Muslims and Christians to live together. Muslims and Christians live, and can live, together. Such a way of living has a perspective. What certainly has no perspective are retrograde policies that oppose that way of living

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a centuries-old history and is a living example and proof of the civilizational idea that people of different religions, nations and cultures can live together. The fact is that Bosnia and Herzegovina, even despite the war aimed at its destruction, managed to survive. That shows the exceptional resilience of my country.

The majority of people in Bosnia and Herzegovina want to live in peace with their differences. There is sufficient strength for such a Bosnia and Herzegovina to persevere. I am convinced that that will be the case.

The experience of Bosnia and Herzegovina shows that the rule of law is a crucial factor in peacebuilding. The International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, formed by the United Nations, granted the victims the minimum of justice. It sent a message to criminals that their actions would not go unpunished, and that they

would be brought to justice and face the consequences for their actions.

Moreover, there were other international community bodies that made a huge contribution to the building and safeguarding of peace, primarily the Office of the High Representative for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Peace Implementation Council.

Both those bodies were established on the basis of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, which mandates the intervention of the international community in order to maintain peace. The establishment of those bodies was also upheld by the relevant Security Council resolutions. Consequently, the closure of those bodies is possible only following a new decision of the Security Council. It is not yet time for that.

Allow me to remind Member States of the international supervision that was present in some significantly developed countries, such as Germany, with even greater executive powers than the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina. That supervision was ended after 45 years of existence, only once the necessary prerequisites for that had been created.

The Office of the High Representative and the Peace Implementation Council have been helping domestic political actors to implement reforms for the past 27 years. Through joint efforts, we managed to unite the three once-warring armies into a single armed force. We also united the three intelligence services, tax systems, judiciaries, et cetera.

Thanks to those reforms and the existence of the armed forces and other State institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, even after the gradual withdrawal of 60,000 international troops from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the peace remained intact.

The past year brought attacks against the 27 years of implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. In particular, there was an attempt to disband State institutions established on the basis of the clear provisions of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Thanks to the action of the Office of the High Representative and the Peace Implementation Council, Member States, led by the United States of America, the attack on State institutions was stopped and peace was once again preserved. That demonstrated

the expediency and efficiency of the international community institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

There were requests for the closure of the Office of the High Representative in the past. More recently, there have been frequent requests that the High Representative take steps that would weaken the unity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and introduce additional ethnic divisions. In accordance with the Dayton Peace Agreement and the United Nations Charter, it is the obligation of the High Representative to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and not to contribute to its disintegration.

In addition to the civilian international presence in the country, there is also an international military presence in the country, specifically the European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR-Althea) and the NATO headquarters, with a total of 1,100 troops. In that regard, Bosnia and Herzegovina is not special. Many more developed sovereign States need the presence of international military forces in much larger numbers than is the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The international military presence was established by the Dayton Peace Agreement. The Security Council reaffirms the mandate of the EUFOR-Althea mission on an annual basis. The Security Council will vote on the EUFOR-Althea mandate again in less than a month. It is very important for the stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region that the draft resolution be adopted. However, it is important to emphasize that in any case, in accordance with the Dayton Peace Agreement, NATO has the right and obligation to deploy its forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Also, the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina took decisions in the past that gave consent for the presence of EUFOR-Althea and NATO forces without any time limits. Those decisions are a sufficient legal basis for the presence of an international military mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina until the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina takes a different position.

Bosnia and Herzegovina's foreign policy goals are membership of the European Union (EU) and NATO. The June 2022 session of the European Council opened up the space for granting Bosnia and Herzegovina the status of a candidate for membership of the European Union if certain conditions are met. Bosnia and Herzegovina has recently made specific progress in terms of fulfilling the 14 priorities defined in the



opinion of the European Commission on Bosnia and Herzegovina's application for EU membership. We have fulfilled some of the said priorities in full and some partially, including, I am pleased to say, over the past few weeks.

I expect that we will continue making even more progress after the general elections scheduled to be held next month on 2 October. I also expect Bosnia and Herzegovina to be granted EU membership candidate status as soon as possible.

*The President took the Chair.*

Regarding our relations with NATO, Bosnia and Herzegovina is part of the membership action plan. In order to undertake the reforms that NATO expects from us as a potential candidate country, the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted its reform programme, which is our annual obligation.

Regional cooperation is one of Bosnia and Herzegovina's foreign policy goals. We want good relations with our neighbours, based on mutual appreciation and respect under the principle of reciprocity. That is the only way to build relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Everyone in our region must understand that the geostrategic and geopolitical configuration of the region is complete. The path to security and prosperity is the path of mutual cooperation and solving current issues, in accordance with the principles of international law. We are all equal in the region. No one can dominate anyone else. We all need peace and stability.

The whole world needs peace and stability. All ongoing disputes in the world should be resolved in accordance with the principles of international law, with the involvement of the international judicial institutions. That is why it is very important to strengthen multilateral mechanisms and institutions. I therefore believe that the strength and authority of the United Nations as a key multilateral mechanism must be enhanced.

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Šefik Džaferović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Chandrikapersad Santokhi,  
President of the Republic of Suriname**

**The President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Suriname.

*Mr. Chandrikapersad Santokhi, President of the Republic of Suriname, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Chandrikapersad Santokhi, President of the Republic of Suriname, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Santokhi:** I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to preside over the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly and assure you of my country's full support during your presidency.

At last year's general debate (see A/76/PV.6), I called on leaders to build a better world for those living today, and even more so for the generations yet to come. Today I would therefore like to take everyone back to 1992, when Severn Cullis-Suzuki spoke at the Earth Summit — the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro. She appealed to everyone to help stop the destruction of the Earth's resources. Now it is 2022, and the world in its current state does not need any more wake-up calls. It is time for real action. While some progress has been made, we have not yet succeeded in overcoming the challenges we face.

Meanwhile, the threats have been adding up: economic recovery from the coronavirus disease pandemic has slowed; the climate crisis is worsening, with extreme weather events, biodiversity loss and collapsing ecosystems; poverty and hunger are on the rise; and there is definitely a humanitarian crisis. The global community is faced with escalating consumer and fuel prices that have risen substantially, damaging living standards, particularly for the vulnerable.

I therefore want everyone here to take a moment to ask themselves the following questions. Have we treated the Earth in a sustainable way? Are we better prepared for the next pandemic? Has access to climate financing improved? Have we addressed the root causes of the humanitarian crisis and unregulated migration? Are we ensuring that the most vulnerable in our societies are being lifted out of poverty and hunger, and have we

provided for their needs? Are we taking enough action together as one?

We can all conclude that we are not ready and have not taken all the necessary measures. And as the leader of Suriname, a small country and one of only three carbon-negative countries in the world, I appeal to everyone today to ensure that we all uphold our firm commitment to international principles and international law when addressing global challenges and threats. Today I urge the United Nations to exert its important role and place in defence of those principles by using meaningful dialogue and constructive engagement as tools. Such action will bring us closer to achieving our shared objectives in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and keeping our promise to leave no one behind.

No country is immune to the climate crisis. Over the past few months, Suriname, has been affected by excessive rainfall, resulting in floods in many parts of the country. Owing to the inflow of salt water, fertile agricultural land has been adversely affected, causing economic loss and impacting food security and rural livelihoods.

The Secretary-General, who visited Suriname in July, witnessed first-hand the effect of climate change on low-lying coastal States. He lauded our nature-based solutions, such as preserving mangroves, rainforest and other essential ecosystems, and stated that the Caribbean is ground zero for the global climate emergency. That is why it is time to act now. We must deliver on the \$100 billion commitment to climate finance for adaptation.

In that regard, we call for support for establishing a research agenda that will help the region understand the cost of climate change for different sectors and economies and for scaling up the means of implementation, including financing, particularly adaptation financing, capacity-building and technology transfer — without technology-dumping.

We call for a scaling-up of finance for adaptation and responses to loss and damage, in a way that prioritizes the access of Caribbean and small island developing States (SIDS) to grant and concessionary financing, in particular through bilateral channels. We also call for the establishment of a loss-and-damage facility under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change that would provide

SIDS with resources to finance the losses and damage resulting from climate change.

In that regard, I commend the Secretary-General for his efforts to make the Adaptation Fund more accessible to the countries affected by climate change through his adaptation finance initiative.

Financing is the backbone of sustainable development. The time has now come for a real reform of the global financial architecture, which must take into consideration the unique and inherent vulnerabilities that hamper the ability of small and vulnerable economies to overcome economic, environmental and social shocks. I therefore welcome the appointment of the High-level Panel on the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index. We look forward to finding solutions to address the obstacles to realizing the index, particularly the lack of reliable data.

The political, economic and humanitarian crisis in Haiti remains of great concern to the region and requires the attention of the international community. In my capacity as the current Chair of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), I am committed to taking every effort to engage in dialogue with all stakeholders in Haiti with the aim of safeguarding peace and security. It is of the utmost importance that any support for resolving the situation in Haiti be based on a Haitian-initiated and -owned plan.

Conflicts and violence are currently on the rise globally in all regions, leading to hostilities and displacements and resulting in paralysing levels of poverty and food insecurity. As States Members of the United Nations, we should take responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. The achievement of sustainable development is inextricably linked to upholding democratic values, good governance and respect for human rights. We must allow countries to develop sustainable economies, without obstacles.

In today's world, differences must be resolved through dialogue and cooperation. Therefore, in our view, the long-standing embargo against Cuba and the Cuban people must be lifted.

I believe that young people are valuable and undeniable partners in every aspect of development and in shaping the future. In that regard, I would like to congratulate the Secretariat on the establishment of Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.

As lead head of the quasi-cabinet of the Caribbean Community responsible for regional youth development, I was pleased with the interactions among the region's young people at the most recent meeting of the Heads of Government of CARICOM held in Suriname. I commend the young people of the region for shouldering responsibility and inspiring their peers to not only demand a seat at the table but also show up consistently. For my part, I have pledged 10 hectares of land in Suriname to set up an innovative campus to facilitate research and development studies conducted by students and start-ups from the region.

Since I took office two years ago, my Government has made efforts to bring the economy back on track and guide our country's development away from an extremely unsustainable position onto the right path. Even though we have a homegrown recovery plan, a 36-month extended fund facility of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and a national multi-year development plan currently under implementation, my Government continues to face economic challenges and capacity constraints, owing to external and unforeseen shocks. The impact of several crises, coupled with economic reform measures, has brought great hardship to the population. International support is therefore of critical importance.

Seeking to prevent further hardship and bring some relief to our population, we decided to re-engage with the IMF in order to consider where the implementation of our programme can be adjusted based on the current realities in the world and how to minimize its social cost. We appreciate our bilateral and multilateral partners, who have expressed solidarity and provided valuable support to my country and people during these challenging times. In addition, our goal is to attract investment and improve productivity and capital allocation, which are critical for growth and poverty reduction.

In conclusion, effective and consensus-based multilateralism is the only option for solving the interlocking challenges our world faces today. National solutions to resolve global problems have time and again proven to be ineffective, and at times dangerous. Global solutions with adapted local or national implementation will enable us to achieve the future we want. We can, will and must do that together. Together we are stronger. God bless everyone.

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Suriname for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Chandrikapersad Santokhi, President of the Republic of Suriname, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the United States of America**

**The President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the United States of America.

*Mr. Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the United States of America, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the United States of America, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Biden:** In the past year, our world experienced great upheaval: a growing crisis in food insecurity; record heat, floods and droughts; the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic; inflation; and a brutal, needless war — a war chosen by one man, to be very blunt.

Let me speak plainly. A permanent member of the Security Council invaded its neighbour and attempted to erase a sovereign State from the map. Russia shamelessly violated the core tenets of the Charter of the United Nations, none more important than the clear prohibition against countries taking the territory of their neighbour by force. Just today, President Putin once again made overt nuclear threats against Europe, in reckless disregard for the responsibilities of the non-proliferation regime. Now Russia is calling up more soldiers to join the fight, and the Kremlin is organizing sham referendums to try to annex parts of Ukraine, an extremely significant violation of the Charter. The world should see those outrageous acts for what they are.

Putin claims that he had to act because Russia was threatened. But no one threatened Russia, and no one other than Russia sought conflict. In fact, we warned it was coming, and we worked with many who are here today to try to avert it. Putin's own words make his true purpose unmistakable. Just before he invaded, he asserted that Ukraine was "created by Russia" and had

never had “real statehood”. And now we see attacks on schools, railway stations, hospitals and centres of Ukrainian history and culture.

We have just seen even more horrifying evidence of Russia’s atrocity crimes and war crimes; mass graves have been uncovered in Izyum. The bodies, according to those who excavated them, show signs of torture.

This war, plain and simple, is about extinguishing Ukraine’s right to exist as a State and as a people. Anyone, anywhere, regardless of what they believe — that should make their blood run cold. That is why 141 nations in the General Assembly came together to unequivocally condemn Russia’s war against Ukraine. The United States has marshalled massive amounts of security assistance, humanitarian aid and direct economic support for Ukraine — more than \$25 billion to date.

Our allies and partners around the world have stepped up as well. More than 40 countries represented here have contributed billions of their own money and equipment to help Ukraine defend itself. The United States is also working closely with its allies and partners to impose costs on Russia, deter attacks against NATO territory and hold Russia accountable for the atrocities and war crimes. Because if nations can pursue their imperial ambitions without consequences, then we put at risk everything this very institution stands for — everything.

Every victory won on the battlefield belongs to the courageous Ukrainian soldiers. But this past year, the world was tested as well, and we did not hesitate. We chose liberty. We chose sovereignty. We chose principles to which every party to the Charter of the United Nations is beholding. We stood with Ukraine.

Like everyone here, the United States wants this war to end on just terms — terms we all signed up for — that a nation cannot seize the territory of another by force. The only country standing in the way of that is Russia. Therefore, we — all the members of the General Assembly who are determined to uphold the principles and beliefs we pledge to defend as States Members of the United Nations — must be clear, firm and unwavering in our resolve. Ukraine has the same rights that belong to every sovereign nation. We will stand in solidarity with Ukraine. We will stand in solidarity against Russia’s aggression — period.

It is no secret that, in the contest between democracy and autocracy, the United States — and I

as President — champion a vision for our world that is grounded in the values of democracy. The United States is determined to defend and strengthen democracy at home and around the world, because I believe that democracy remains humankind’s greatest instrument to address the challenges of our time. We are working with the Group of Seven and like-minded countries to prove that democracies can deliver both for their citizens and for the rest of the world.

But as we meet today, the Charter’s very basis of a stable and just rules-based order is under attack by those who wish to tear it down or distort it for their own political advantage. The United Nations Charter was not only signed by democracies of the world, but it was also negotiated among citizens of dozens of nations with vastly different histories and ideologies, united in their commitment to working for peace.

As President Truman said in 1945, the Charter of the United Nations is

“proof that nations, like men, can state their differences, can face them, and then can find common ground on which to stand”.

That common ground was so straightforward and basic that today 193 Member States have willingly embraced its principles. And standing up for those principles — for the Charter — is the job of every responsible Member State.

I reject the use of violence and war to conquer nations or expand borders through bloodshed. To stand against global politics of fear and coercion, to defend the sovereign rights of smaller nations as equal to those of larger ones and to embrace basic principles such as freedom of navigation, respect for international law and arms control — no matter what else we may disagree on, that is the common ground on which we must stand. The United States wants to work with all who are still committed to a strong foundation for the good of every nation around the world.

I also believe the time has come for this institution to become more inclusive so that it can better respond to the needs of today’s world. Members of the Security Council, including the United States, should consistently uphold and defend the Charter and refrain — I repeat — refrain from the use of the veto, except in rare, extraordinary situations, in order to ensure that the Council remains credible and effective. That is also why the United States supports increasing the number



of both permanent and non-permanent representatives of the Council. That includes granting permanent seats to those nations we have long supported to receive them, as well as to countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

The United States is committed to that vital work. In every region, we have pursued new, constructive ways to work with partners to advance shared interests — from elevating the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue in the Indo-Pacific and signing the Los Angeles Declaration of Migration and Protection at the Summit of the Americas, to joining a historic meeting of nine Arab leaders to work towards a more peaceful and integrated Middle East and hosting the United States-Africa Leaders Summit scheduled for December.

As I said last year (see A/76/PV.3), the United States is opening an era of relentless diplomacy to address the challenges that matter most to people's lives — all people's lives — including tackling the climate crisis, as the previous speaker spoke to; strengthening global health security; and feeding the world — I repeat — feeding the world. We made that our priority, and one year later we are keeping that promise.

From the day I came to office, we have led with a bold climate agenda. We rejoined the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, convened major climate summits, helped deliver critical agreements on the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and helped get two thirds of the world's gross domestic product on track in order to limit global warming to 1.5°C.

And now I have signed a historic piece of legislation here in the United States that includes the biggest, most important climate commitment we have ever made in the history of our country: \$369 billion allocated to climate change. That includes allocating tens of billions of dollars for new investments in offshore wind and solar energy, doubling down on zero-emission vehicles, increasing energy efficiency and supporting clean manufacturing.

Our Department of Energy estimates that this new law will reduce United States emissions by one gigaton a year by 2030, while unleashing a new era of clean-energy-powered economic growth. Our investments will also help reduce the cost of developing clean-energy technologies worldwide, not just in the United States. That is a global game changer — and none too soon. We do not have much time.

We all know that we are already living in a climate crisis. No one seems to doubt it after this past year. As we meet, much of Pakistan is still under water. It needs help. Meanwhile, the Horn of Africa faces unprecedented drought. Families are facing impossible choices, choosing which child to feed and wondering whether they will survive. That is the human cost of climate change — and it is growing, not lessening.

Therefore, as I announced last year, in order to meet our global responsibility, my Administration is working with our Congress to deliver more than \$11 billion a year to international climate financing to help lower-income countries implement their climate goals and ensure a just energy transition. The key part of that will be the President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience plan, which will help half a billion people, especially vulnerable countries, to adapt to the impacts of climate change and build resilience. That need is enormous. Let this therefore be the moment when we find within ourselves the will to turn back the tide of climate devastation and unlock a resilient, sustainable and clean energy economy to preserve our planet.

With regard to global health, we delivered more than 620 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine to 116 countries around the world, with more available to help meet countries' needs, all of it free of charge with no strings attached. We are also working closely with the Group of 20 and other countries. And the United States has helped take the lead in establishing the ground-breaking new financial intermediary fund for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response at the World Bank.

At the same time, we have continued to advance the ball on enduring global health challenges. Later today, I will host the seventh Replenishment Conference of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. With bipartisan support in our Congress, I have pledged to contribute up to \$6 billion to that effort. I therefore look forward to welcoming a historic round of pledges at the Conference, resulting in one of the largest global health fundraisers ever held in all of history. We are also confronting the food crisis head-on. With as many as 193 million people around the world experiencing acute food insecurity — a jump of 40 million in one year — I am announcing today another \$2.9 billion in United States support for life-saving humanitarian and food security assistance for this year alone.

Russia in the meantime is pumping out lies, trying to pin the blame for the food crisis on the sanctions imposed by many countries in the world in response to the aggression against Ukraine. Let me be perfectly clear: our sanctions explicitly allow Russia the ability to export food and fertilizer. There is no limitation. It is Russia's war that is worsening food insecurity, and only Russia can end it. I am grateful for the work being done here at the United Nations, including the leadership of the Secretary-General, in establishing a mechanism to export grain from Black Sea ports in Ukraine that Russia had blocked for months. We need to make sure that it is extended.

We believe strongly in the need to feed the world. That is why the United States is the world's largest supporter of the World Food Programme, with more than 40 per cent of its budget. We are leading support of UNICEF's efforts to feed children around the world. In order to take on the larger challenge of food insecurity, the United States introduced the Roadmap for Global Food Security — Call to Action to eliminate global food insecurity, which more than 100 Member States have already supported.

In June, the Group of Seven announced more than \$4.5 billion to strengthen food security around the world. Through the Feed the Future initiative of the United States Agency for International Development, the United States is scaling up innovative ways to get drought- and heat-resistant seeds into the hands of farmers who need them, while distributing fertilizer and improving fertilizer efficiency so that farmers can grow more while using less. We are also calling on all countries to refrain from banning food exports or hoarding grain while so many people are suffering. In every country in the world, no matter what else divides us, if parents cannot feed their children, nothing else matters.

As we look to the future, we are working with our partners to update and create the rules of the road for the new challenges we face in the twenty-first century. We launched the European Union-United States Trade and Technology Council with the European Union in order to ensure that key technologies are developed and governed in a way that benefits everyone. With our partner countries and through the United Nations, we are supporting and strengthening the norms of responsibility for responsible State behaviour in cyberspace and working to hold accountable those

who use cyberattacks to threaten international peace and security.

With partners in the Americas, Africa, Europe, the Middle East and the Indo-Pacific region, we are working to build a new economic ecosystem in which every nation gets a fair shot and economic growth is resilient, sustainable and shared. That is why the United States has championed a global minimum tax, and we will work to see it implemented so that major corporations pay their fair share everywhere.

That was also the idea behind the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity, which the United States launched this year with 13 other Indo-Pacific economies. We are working with our partners in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Pacific island States to support a vision for a critical Indo-Pacific region that is free, open, connected, prosperous, secure and resilient. Together with partners around the world, we are working to secure resilient supply chains that protect everyone from coercion or domination and ensure that no country can use energy as a weapon.

As Russia's war roils the global economy, we are also calling on major global creditors, including the non-Paris Club countries, to transparently negotiate debt forgiveness for lower-income countries in order to forestall broader economic and political crises around the world. Instead of infrastructure projects that generate huge and large debt without delivering on the promised advantages, let us meet the enormous infrastructure needs around the world with transparent investments and high-standard projects that protect the rights of workers and the environment and that are keyed to the needs of the communities they serve and not to the contributor.

That is why the United States, together with fellow Group of Seven partners, launched the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment. We intend to collectively mobilize \$600 billion in investment through that partnership by 2027. Dozens of projects are already under way — industrial-scale vaccine manufacturing in Senegal, transformative solar projects in Angola and a first-of-its-kind small modular nuclear power plant in Romania. Those are investments that will deliver returns, not just for those countries but for everyone. The United States will work with every nation, including its competitors, to solve global problems like climate change. Climate diplomacy is not a favour to

the United States or any other nation, and walking away from it hurts the entire world.

Let me be direct about the competition between the United States and China. As we manage shifting geopolitical trends, the United States will conduct itself as a reasonable leader. We do not seek conflict. We do not seek a cold war. We do not ask any nation to choose between the United States or any other partner. But the United States will be unabashed in promoting our vision of a free, open, secure and prosperous world and what we have to offer communities of nations — investments that are designed not to foster dependency but to alleviate burdens and help nations become self-sufficient, as well as partnerships that are not intended to create political obligations but are based on the conviction that our own success and the success of each one of us is increased when other nations succeed as well.

When individuals have the chance to live in dignity and develop their talents, everyone benefits. Critical to that is living up to the highest goals of this institution, increasing peace and security for everyone, everywhere. The United States will not waver in its unrelenting determination to counter and thwart the continuing terrorist threats to our world. And we will lead with our diplomacy to strive for the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

We seek to uphold peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. We remain committed to our One China Policy, which has helped prevent conflict for four decades. And we continue to oppose unilateral changes in the status quo by either side. We support an African Union-led peace process to end the fight in Ethiopia and restore security for all its people. In Venezuela, where years of political oppression have driven more than 6 million people from that country, we urge for a Venezuelan-led dialogue and a return to free and fair elections. We continue to stand with our neighbour in Haiti as it faces politically fuelled gang violence and an enormous humanitarian crisis. And we call on the world to do the same. We have more to do. We will continue to back the United Nations-mediated truce in Yemen, which has delivered precious months of peace to people who have suffered years of war.

We will also continue to advocate for a lasting negotiated peace between the Jewish and democratic State of Israel and the Palestinian people. The United States is committed to Israel's security — period. And a

negotiated two-State solution remains, in our view, the best way to ensure Israel's security and prosperity for the future and give the Palestinians the State which to which they are entitled, with both sides fully respecting the equal rights of their citizens and both peoples enjoying an equal measure of freedom and dignity.

Let me also urge every nation to recommit to strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime through diplomacy. No matter what else is happening in the world, the United States is ready to pursue critical arms control measures. A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. The five permanent members of the Security Council just reaffirmed that commitment in January.

But today we are seeing disturbing trends. Russia shunned the non-proliferation ideals embraced by every other nation at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. And as I said earlier, today they are making irresponsible threats to use nuclear weapons. China is conducting an unprecedented and concerning nuclear build-up without any transparency. Despite our efforts to begin serious and sustained diplomacy, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to blatantly violate United Nations sanctions. While the United States is prepared for a mutual return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action if Iran steps up to its obligations, the United States is clear: we will not allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon.

I continue to believe that diplomacy is the best way to achieve that outcome. The non-proliferation regime is one of the greatest successes of this institution. We cannot let the world now slide backwards, and neither can we turn a blind eye to the erosion of human rights. Perhaps singular among this organ's achievements stands the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the standard by which our forebears challenged us to measure ourselves. They made clear in 1948 that human rights are the basis for all that we seek to achieve.

Yet today in 2022, fundamental freedoms are at risk in every part of our world, from the violations in Xinjiang detailed in recent reports of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the horrible abuses against pro-democracy activists and ethnic minorities by the military regime in Burma and the increased repression of women and girls by the Taliban in Afghanistan. And today we stand with the

brave citizens and the brave women of Iran, who right now are demonstrating to secure their basic rights.

But here is what I know: the future will be won by those countries that unleash the full potential of their populations, in which women and girls can exercise equal rights, including basic reproductive rights, and can contribute fully to building stronger economies and more resilient societies; religious and ethnic minorities can live their lives without harassment and contribute to the fabric of their communities; the LGBTQ+ community and individuals can live and love freely without being targeted with violence; and citizens can question and criticize their leaders without fear of reprisal. The United States will always promote human rights and the values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations in our own country and around the world.

Let me end with this: this institution, guided by the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is at its core an act of dauntless hope. Let me say that once again: it is an act of dauntless hope. I ask everyone to think about the vision of those first delegates who undertook a seemingly impossible task while the world was still smouldering, and to think about how divided the people of the world must have felt, with their fresh grief for the millions dead and the genocidal horrors of the Holocaust exposed. They had every right to believe only the worst of humankind. Instead, they reached for what was best in all of us, and they strove to build something better — enduring peace, comity among nations, equal rights for every member of the human family and cooperation for the advancement of all humankind.

The challenges we face today are great indeed, but our capacity is greater. Our commitment must be greater still. Let us therefore stand together to once again declare the unmistakable resolve that nations of the world are united still, that we stand for the values of the Charter and that we still believe that by working together we can bend the arc of history towards a freer and more just world for all our children, although none of us have fully achieved it. We are not passive witnesses to history. We are the authors of history. We can do this — we have to do it — for ourselves, for our future and for humankind.

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the United States of America for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the United States of America, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

*The meeting was suspended at 11.40 a.m. and resumed at 11.45 a.m.*

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Jonibek Hikmat (Tajikistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

### **Address by Mr. Egils Levits, President of the Republic of Latvia**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Latvia.

*Mr. Egils Levits, President of the Republic of Latvia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Egils Levits, President of the Republic of Latvia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Levits:** I confirm Latvia's readiness to cooperate constructively with the President of the General Assembly. Our agenda is full and still growing. In the words of George Orwell, "Contrary to popular belief, the past was not more eventful than the present". Let me focus today on a few fundamental themes.

My first theme is about upholding international law, which is the basis for world peace and the order established by the Charter of the United Nations. At the core of that order is respect for the sovereignty of States and a prohibition on the use of force. Starting a war of aggression is the gravest possible threat to our world peace order. Nevertheless, for seven months, Russia has been waging an unprovoked and unjustified war against a sovereign United Nations Member State, Ukraine. Let me stress that this is not just a regional security issue. Russia's military aggression against Ukraine is a threat to global security and stability.

In the twenty-first century, Russia is maintaining a nineteenth-century ideology of imperialism, colonialism and racism. Russia invaded Georgia in 2008. It illegally annexed Ukraine's Crimea in 2014. It has used increasingly aggressive rhetoric towards other neighbouring countries. Those are all manifestations of its imperialist and colonial ambitions. Denying another nation's right to exist and promoting the idea of the supremacy of Russians and their special missionary



role in the world are all contemporary expressions of racism, which is exactly the opposite of what the United Nations stands for.

Russia's war in Ukraine has caused a humanitarian disaster. One third of the people of Ukraine have been forced to leave their homes. Russia is preventing Ukrainian-grown food from reaching the world market. Russia is also using its position in the energy market to exert pressure. High energy prices sustain high levels of global inflation, which most dramatically affects the world's most vulnerable populations. Russia continues to spread false narratives about the causes of the global food, fuel and financial crisis. Those lies must be debunked. Russia alone is responsible for the crisis.

We, the law-abiding States Members of the United Nations, are responsible for supporting Ukraine's self-defence and stopping the aggressor. Russia's ability to finance its war on Ukraine must be limited. Global sanctions in the areas of finance, trade, transport and energy, as well as restrictive measures against individuals and legal entities, must be maintained and strengthened. Belarus, being equally responsible for enabling Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, is also being sanctioned. Since the beginning of the war, Latvia has spent more than 0.8 per cent of its gross domestic product on military, economic, financial and humanitarian aid to Ukraine. We stand with the brave people of Ukraine, whose heroic defence is seeing success. Today we learned that a partial mobilization has been declared in Russia, as its once-mighty army is overwhelmed. The blitzkrieg envisioned by President Putin has turned into a long nightmare. In another sign of desperation, Russia plans to hold illegal referendums in the next few days on the annexation of the occupied territories to the Russian Federation, which is in blatant contravention of both Ukrainian and international law. Latvia will not recognize the legitimacy of those referendums, or their results, and I urge the international community to do the same.

Impunity translates into an invitation to commit further crimes, and the aggressor must therefore be held accountable. The International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court have already started proceedings on particular aspects of Russia's war against Ukraine. The European Court of Human Rights has also initiated proceedings. However, a legal gap remains. No international court has jurisdiction over the main issue — starting a war of aggression, the gravest possible violation of the Charter of the United

Nations and international law. I therefore call for the establishment of a special tribunal, whose main task would be to investigate the Russian State's responsibility for the commission of the crime of aggression. After the war, Russia will have to pay reparations to Ukraine for damages. The tribunal could be part of an international reparations mechanism and could be established through the adoption of a resolution by the General Assembly, by another international organization or a group of like-minded States.

Let me now turn to the issues of sustainable development and climate change. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is our common road map for overcoming our challenges and creating future-oriented, sustainable and inclusive policies. This year Latvia submitted to the United Nations its second progress report for the Sustainable Development Goals, highlighting the areas of education, gender equality, youth participation and international cooperation. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda is also the overarching goal of Latvia's development cooperation policy. Over the past 30 years, Latvia has developed expertise in democratic processes, good governance, socioeconomic change and gender equality. Good governance, especially strengthening the rule of law and democracy, accounts for more than 40 per cent of all the support provided by Latvia. As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, we are sharing our expertise in societal resilience. Joint efforts must also be continued to address the consequences of climate change, including through development cooperation efforts. For example, in Central Asia, we have been working on the promotion of clean energy technologies. The problem of global justice is particularly related to climate protection. Latvia supports the view that the greatest polluters should bear a greater burden for that protection. We therefore advocate for greater justice and solidarity regarding the global agenda.

We are convinced that digitalization is one of the most important agents of change. Latvia supports innovative and proven digital solutions that promote the efficiency of public administration, public participation in decision-making and the creation of new economic opportunities. In that regard, I would like to highlight the areas of security and fundamental rights in the digital space, which is an integral part of our lives and has enormous potential to contribute to the sustainable development of nations. We must therefore resist attempts to turn it into a battlefield where international

law is flouted and basic rights are ignored. The use of people's data in ways that are incompatible with their human dignity, rights and security must be prevented. The Internet must be open, free, reliable and secure. We support the proposal made by the Secretary-General in *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) to agree on a global digital compact aimed at reducing the digital gap between developed and developing countries. Both the coronavirus disease pandemic and current geopolitical challenges highlight the need to strengthen society's resilience by combating disinformation, promoting media literacy and strengthening media freedom. Accordingly, Latvia is actively preparing for the upcoming eleventh Global Media and Information Literacy Week. Critical thinking skills build up our immunity to disinformation.

The aggression by a permanent member of the Security Council against another Member State is undermining the basic principles of the multilateral system that we have been building for decades, a situation that once again confirms that meaningful reform of the Security Council is essential. As a first-time candidate for membership in the Security Council in the 2025 elections, Latvia takes the responsibilities of membership very seriously. We will strive to make the Council more effective, accountable, coherent and transparent. Latvia supports a more just and equitable representation of Member States, especially those in Africa.

The Baltic States have much to contribute to the work of the United Nations. For us, the horrors of war, occupation and harsh rule by a colonial Power are within living memory, as is the fight for liberty and restored independence and a transition to a successful, sustainable economy and the rule of law. We have no wish to dominate or intimidate anyone. We reject the idea of spheres of influence. As smaller States, we have an existential interest in effective multilateralism. Latvia will therefore continue to contribute to the work of the United Nations in a spirit of optimism and determination.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Latvia for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Egils Levits, President of the Republic of Latvia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Guillermo Lasso Mendoza,  
Constitutional President of the Republic of Ecuador**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Constitutional President of the Republic of Ecuador.

*Mr. Guillermo Lasso Mendoza, Constitutional President of the Republic of Ecuador, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Guillermo Lasso Mendoza, Constitutional President of the Republic of Ecuador, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Lasso Mendoza** (*spoke in Spanish*): Earlier this year, a young Colombian named Mateo was going about his daily student activities in Eastern Europe. Like many Latin American migrants, Mateo was focused on pursuing his dreams — in his case, a medical degree from Zaporizhzhya National University. One day in February, however, that dream became a nightmare, all because of Russia's senseless war against Ukraine. As the entire world, flabbergasted, watched the outbreak of a war of dimensions that had not been seen for decades, Mateo had to experience it first-hand. He came in very close proximity to dangerous military actions that I prefer not to discuss today, out of respect for him and his traumatic experience. Relying on his own ingenuity and the solidarity of others, he used various means of transport, including horses, to make his way to the nearest border.

Meanwhile, as all of that was going on, Ecuador was establishing a national crisis committee, which fulfilled its objective of repatriating 730 Ecuadorian citizens via humanitarian flights. Mateo, whose sister is Ecuadorian, thereby making him part of a transnational family, was able to board one of those flights. His Colombian parents now live in Ecuador, thanks to protection visas granted by our Government. And Mateo was not the only one — that same story was experienced by several Colombian, Peruvian, Latin American and even Ukrainian citizens who managed to escape the war thanks to the enormous diplomatic effort led by our country. I am relating all of this now because if everyone here takes only one message from me with them today, I would like it to be this — that Ecuador is here for the world and will leave no one behind. That is why I am confident that the world will not leave Ecuador behind when it comes to the challenges we face.

When I prepare for events like these, I usually consult with renowned international relations experts. They cite to me the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, which speak of the sovereign equality of States; good faith; the peaceful settlement of disputes; territorial integrity and political independence; the non-use of force; full respect for human rights and so on and so forth. Those are all admirable concepts that for almost eight decades have preserved a relative stability that is now being challenged. Nevertheless, I wanted to begin my address by talking about Mateo, a Latin American student who, like thousands of others, was in Ukraine chasing a dream. Those who know me know that I am neither a scholar nor an academic nor a regular speaker at international forums. The reality is that for most of my life, I have cultivated a very simple idea, which is that the only way to create value is to always put people — human beings — first in everything we do. It is always in human beings — in people — that I place my trust, and I want to explain exactly why that is important.

I want to explain the reasons why I argue that a people-first approach is vital not only to individual countries but also to building a more peaceful and stable world. I firmly believe that any political institution or system, whether national or international, derives its legitimacy from the good it is able to produce for its citizens. It must not only base its legitimacy on that principle but renew it daily with the consent of the people it serves. Here in this great institution, we are a family of nations, and nations are families of citizens. The welfare of our larger, extended family — as well as its stability and, ultimately, its peace — depends on what happens within each of our smaller, immediate families. Take it from someone who leads a country today where in the past, marginality and neglect have served as breeding grounds for the magic formulas of the most predictable kind of populism.

I refer here to the same populism that subsequently takes off the mask and shows its true authoritarian face; the same populism that when it is governing, flirts with dangerous actors who hide beyond the reach of our international institutions to sponsor some of the threats that bring us here today, when we ask ourselves what to do about them. That challenge is multifaceted, but I will always insist that if we want to keep those threats at bay, we must start by shunning the ugly face of authoritarianism. In order to do that, we will always circle back to the need to create opportunities for the

people themselves. We need a world order in which all citizens feel included, connected and represented; an interdependent order where opportunities flow freely from one corner of the world to another. We need to strike a balance whereby it becomes increasingly difficult for aspiring warlords to blame their failures on so-called asymmetries in the world order. We must open the doors of opportunity to more citizens and never again close them behind a false notion of sovereignty that in reality is simply hubris. We need to understand that international security is not a right to simply be demanded, but a duty that we all share.

My Government has in fact found itself in a strange position whereby it has had to inaugurate a fight against a threat that in the past was concealed rather than confronted. I am talking about shady actors who, rather than being countered, were quietly accommodated in hopes that no one would detect them. Today Ecuador is engaged head-on in an unprecedented fight against drug trafficking, as evidenced by the latest *World Drug Report 2022*, which confirms that Ecuador is third in the world among countries seizing cocaine. Today as never before we are increasing our activities to maximize narcotics seizures and dismantle the transnational gangs that transport them. We know that we are not the only ones fighting that monster, which incidentally has not one but several heads, including human trafficking, money-laundering, illegal arms trafficking and even illegal mining. It is estimated that transnational crime is shifting between \$1.6 and \$2.2 trillion in a year — a figure dozens of times the size of the economy of a country like Ecuador.

But it would be a mistake to quantify the consequences of transnational crime in economic terms alone. They must be measured above all in irreparable losses, in lives taken and dreams cut short, in the heart-rending cries of the families affected, but also in the fearful silence that they impose on some communities. Just two days ago, in the very centre of the city of Guayaquil, where I was born, a prosecutor was cowardly gunned down by organized crime assassins. He was an official whose investigations included major cases involving transnational mafias. His assassination means not only that Ecuador has lost a servant of the law but also that his children will grow up without a father. His murder teaches us an additional lesson, which is that transnational crime requires a transnational solution. We have two options in that regard. Either we suffer separately, due to a coordinated enemy that acts within

several countries to make a mockery of our laws, or we unite to defeat it. Recent events have made it clear that we need even greater collaboration, and I will never tire of insisting on that. Ecuador, with its record levels of drug seizures but also the sacrifices of its servants, has proved that it deserves international help and support in its fight against drug trafficking and to strengthen the institutions where those officers are based.

I would also like to take advantage of this forum to appeal for us to work together in the fight against gender-based violence. For Ecuador, the disappearance of a brave woman, a lawyer, a mother and a daughter, should serve as a symbol of the challenge of ending violence against women. Ecuador has shown that it is here for the world, and I am confident that the world will reciprocate that support in those challenges.

In terms of human mobility, we have taken decisions that have been applauded. Not only have we maintained our long history as a country of transit, reception and refuge for migrants, we have traditionally been among the States receiving the largest number of refugees in the entire Western hemisphere. And beyond that act of reception, I would like to point to the treatment that those refugees receive once they set foot on Ecuadorian soil. We make special efforts to guarantee the rights and, above all, the integration of migrants, particularly when it comes to families whose countries of origin offer no life alternatives beyond simply fleeing those nations. With half a million Venezuelans living in Ecuador today, we are one of the three principal hosts of migrants from that country. Despite our budgetary difficulties, we provide them with health care, education and other social services. We have also begun a broad regularization process. I would ask everyone here to think about what that means for a small country like ours and then about the impact that a population of that size would have on their own country. That is why I reiterate that Ecuador is here for the world and that I am confident that the world will support us in our regularization plan for our Venezuelan brothers and sisters who have had to leave their country.

I have firm hopes that this will be the case, but that is not the only issue at hand. Ecuador is also playing its part in confronting the climate crisis. As a country that emits greenhouse gases, we account for only 0.8 per cent of global emissions. Nevertheless, without hesitation or waiting for anyone to suggest it, my Government took the decision to make Ecuador the first country in Latin America — and only the fourth in the world — to adopt

a cross-cutting policy on our ecological transition, including by elevating it to the ministerial level.

Climate change does not ask to what extent we have industrialized in the past but how much we can contribute to the future. That is why, almost a year ago, at the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Glasgow, I announced the creation of the new Hermandad marine reserve in the Galapagos Islands, which increases the protected area of that natural heritage of humankind by 60,000 square kilometres. That was complemented this year by the signing of a declaration for the conservation and management of the ecosystems that make up the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor, which was signed with my fellow Presidents of Colombia, Costa Rica and Panama to lend a new dimension and political impetus to the corridor's objectives. That is how we are opening up new opportunities for cooperation, funding and technical assistance for the conservation of biodiversity in Ecuador, the region and indeed the world. But we are going much further — within this very Organization, we have pushed for the mandate of the United Nations Environment Assembly to include the negotiation of a future treaty on plastic pollution. So when it comes environmental conservation, too, Ecuador is here for the world.

In each of the issues I have outlined and in each of the challenges and unknown scenarios that the future holds, Ecuador believes firmly that we will find the answers within ourselves, given our recognition that as human beings who share this Earth, what we have in common is far greater than what divides us. We may even be unaware that we hold in our own hands the keys to solving the problems faced by other peoples or individuals. In fact that is what happened to Mateo, the student we were able to rescue from Ukraine. If we apply that way of thinking to every challenge and if we only dare to approach every threat from a united perspective, I know that we will be able to go much further.

Take, for example, the food crisis, which has been aggravated by the conflict in Ukraine and has exacerbated malnutrition in many countries. International figures show that 52 million children under five are suffering from malnutrition, 17 million from severe malnutrition and 155 million from stunted growth. In Ecuador, the disease affects almost 30 per cent of children under the age of two, and in some even more tragic cases, some



of our poorest provinces are seeing malnutrition rates of more than 35 per cent. My Government has been a pioneer in tackling that problem. We have created a technical secretariat, Ecuador Grows without Child Malnutrition, and set a very clear goal of reducing child malnutrition by six percentage points during my term of office and institutionalizing the process so that future Governments can continue that endeavour. To that end, we have encouraged the participation of civil society, academia, the private sector and local Government. But we can go much further if we only dare to think as a global community.

It is no secret that Ecuador's lands can be extraordinarily fertile and productive when they are sown with optimism and dedication. We are the country of cocoa, bananas and shrimp, but also of dragon fruit, avocados and many other agricultural products. It makes no sense that our children, or those anywhere else in the world, should suffer from hunger in any context — even less so when the land is there, ready to be harvested not only for food but also for opportunities. Today's new Ecuador offers advantages that can serve not only to alleviate hunger but to create a more stable and peaceful world, where citizens are increasingly included each day through the creation of opportunities. That is the world I see and the world that Ecuador proposes.

Finally, as former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has said, peace is a way of being, of relating to others and of living on this planet. It cannot be decreed solely through treaties. It must be nurtured through the dignity, rights and capacities of every man and woman. I believe that those words, in a nutshell, encapsulate the spirit of what I have said today. I would also like to take this opportunity to express Ecuador's support for the leadership of the current Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres.

I would like to conclude by thanking all Member States for their overwhelming support for my country's election to be a member of the Security Council for the 2023-2024 term. We will undertake our membership in a context in which humankind is experiencing a period of great uncertainty and exceptional challenges. But I want to assure the Assembly that Ecuador will be here as always, doing its duty for the world. We will conduct ourselves with coherence and transparency and with an emphasis on supporting humanitarian assistance, peace operations, the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict, the women and peace and security

agenda and the fight against arms trafficking, all while addressing emerging threats in the context of sustainable peace efforts.

In every decision, every mediation and every opportunity to contribute to the peace and stability of our planet, the President can rest assured that Ecuador will be here for its fellow Member States and their citizens. Ecuador will always be here for the world.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Constitutional President of the Republic of Ecuador for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Guillermo Lasso Mendoza, Constitutional President of the Republic of Ecuador, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

#### **Address by Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, President of the Republic of Zambia**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Zambia.

*Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, President of the Republic of Zambia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, President of the Republic of Zambia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Hichilema:** At the outset, we would like to congratulate Mr. Csaba Kőrösi on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session. With his vast experience, we are confident that he will successfully provide the leadership required during his tenure as President of the General Assembly. We pay tribute, of course, in the same manner to Mr. Abdulla Shahid, for his unwavering dedication and excellent stewardship of the Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

We are meeting here at a very difficult time when global challenges have not only multiplied but have become more complex. Those challenges include the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic; climate change; the war in Ukraine and its associated effects on and disruptions to supply chains; food insecurity around the world; and high commodity and energy prices, as well as the overall high cost of living. They have cast

a dark shadow over the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on our continent and around the world. The risk of reversal in our hard-won development gains is very real. COVID-19 unmasked global inequalities that stretch well beyond income and political boundaries, as the variations in access to vaccines have shown. The risks of further inequality are also real, especially for our developing countries, whose capacity to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change is inadequate, sadly, in spite of our insignificant carbon footprint. This is truly a defining moment of our time in which we must channel our collective efforts to address the numerous challenges that we face.

That is why Zambia welcomes the challenge to build on *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) and endorses the call to convene a summit of the future. We call for arriving at a pact for the future that underwrites a new form of multilateralism in our world — one where major challenges are faced together, in solidarity, within the context of a revitalized international order that is rules-based, fair and inclusive, with the United Nations at the centre of it all. As a country two thirds of whose population is below the age of 25, the outlook for the future and an emphasis on intergenerational equity are very important to us. Our Government seeks to harness that demographic dividend by investing in its youthful and energetic population for a better future. We therefore support the establishment of the United Nations Youth Office. That should encourage the meaningful engagement of young people in diverse ways, such as in political representation, access to lifelong skills training and education, support for youth innovation and entrepreneurship and indeed in decision-making in all areas of life, including climate change and environmental protection.

In spite of the steady progress that has been made in curbing the COVID-19 pandemic, we still need to remain vigilant to guard against the possibility of its resurgence. We have all experienced the negative impact of the pandemic, particularly with the loss of millions of our loved ones and disruptions to socioeconomic activities across the world. As the world continues to recover from the pandemic, it is therefore essential to find lasting solutions, including by investing in resilient health systems that will respond to future pandemics such as COVID-19, among others. That means establishing a versatile international public health regime that will shun the hoarding of vaccines

and related technologies in order to guarantee the rapid deployment of supplies from a global reserve for tackling future pandemics.

The re-emergence of polio in our world is of great concern. For that reason, together with a number of countries in our region, Zambia is participating in supplementary immunization activities in order to prevent and halt the spread of the wild poliovirus type 1. That is in addition to ongoing activities to fight other vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, as well as to strengthen our routine immunization and maintain essential maternal and child health services. As the Global Cholera Control Champion — with many thanks to the World Health Organization, which gave us the opportunity to serve in that role — we must continue our fight against cholera with vigour. We also need to remain alert to any possible outbreaks of monkeypox, the Ebola virus or other such threats. The international community must also work together to address the growing threat to environmental, human and animal health resulting from antimicrobial resistance, commonly referred to as drug resistance. Drug-resistant bacterial infections continue to cause millions of deaths. Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, bears the greatest burden of resistant bacterial infections, which account for a large proportion of deaths in our regions. That calls for better control systems when it comes to access to antimicrobial medicines for both human and animal use. I shall now focus on other areas of interest.

With regard to economic performance, the crisis in Ukraine has hampered the recovery that was slowly taking hold, particularly in the developing world, where large sections of society remain in extreme poverty and inequalities widen by the day. Countries that have seen their attainment of the SDGs go off-track must intensify their national consultative processes and stakeholder engagements and renew their commitments to reducing poverty, tackling energy poverty, supporting debt restructuring and enhancing access to concessional financing, which is very important for our own national development agendas.

For our part, we hereby indicate in that regard our intention to present our second voluntary national review in July 2023 to highlight Zambia's progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Despite the challenging external environment, our resolve to rebuild the Zambian economy is stronger than ever before. Our economic recovery is on track, as evidenced by positive growth

indicators and the stabilization of key macroeconomic variables such as interest rates, exchange rates, market stability and inflation, which we have been able to bring down from 25 per cent to 9.8 per cent in just one year in office. Zambia is on a path of growth from the economic contraction we experienced in the past, which was somewhere in the region of minus 2 per cent, to a gross domestic product now estimated to grow at approximately 3 per cent. That means we have seen economic growth of approximately 5 per cent in the past 12 months, which was difficult to achieve but was possible with a lot of hard work. Nevertheless, we still want to do more.

In terms of social economic benefits, our commitment to providing equal opportunities, especially for young people, has been demonstrated by the introduction of free primary and secondary education, as we believe that without a doubt, education is the best equalizer, the best investment and the best inheritance. Consistent with our pledge to invest in human capital, we have recruited more than 30,000 teachers and 11,000 health workers in 2022 alone. We are decentralizing service delivery and have increased the allocation of our constituency development fund by more than 1,000 per cent in our first budget in office. That is just the beginning. The expenditure of those funds at the community level is meant to ensure inclusive and sustainable economic growth that will support the development of small- and medium-sized enterprises and employment creation across all of our 10 provinces and 156 constituencies.

I am pleased to note that in principle we have reached an agreement with our creditors under the Common Framework for Debt Treatments to restructure the national debt we inherited. We have also effectively concluded a deal with the International Monetary Fund based on our important home-grown economic transformation plan. We are very grateful to the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the United Nations system as a whole and other cooperating partners for their support.

The adverse effects of climate change have continued to ravage our planet. In addressing the emerging global climate crisis, I would like to point to a recent situation in Zambia, where in a single season one half of the country experienced total crop failure due to extreme drought while the other half experienced floods. That is obviously not normal. Those are the negative effects of climate change. Such extreme weather events are a

timely reminder of the grave consequences of climate change. Without a doubt, we need robust solutions and cohesion in our approach at the global and regional levels to address the effects of climate change. As Chair of the African Group of Negotiators on Climate Change, Zambia calls for enhanced global efforts to address the issue, which should include increased financial support for countries with limited resources to mitigate and adapt to the negative effects of climate change. Zambia has mainstreamed green growth and climate-change proofing in its current national development plan, which has articulated broad policy measures for transitioning Zambia into a climate-resilient and inclusive green economy over time.

Thirdly, Zambia has continued to build on efforts to attain gender equality and inclusivity in various sectors of our society. Based on empirical evidence, the empowerment of women and poverty alleviation are positively correlated. It is therefore imperative that we dedicate corresponding efforts to ensuring that gender disparities are curtailed at all levels. Under its national gender policy, Zambia has been implementing affirmative action in favour of women and girls to ensure that their full potential is realized at all times. To complement those measures, Zambia is championing the campaign to end child marriage in Africa, and of course all over the world. In the same vein, we are proud to inform the Assembly that earlier today, Zambia, Canada and other cooperating partners held a side event to galvanize support and review the commitment of the international community to ending child, early and forced marriage. With the assurances made during that event, we are hopeful that we will be able to achieve target 5.3 of Sustainable Development Goal 5, on gender equality, in our programming, which aims to eliminate that harmful practice.

The world at large has grappled with growing instability and insecurity over the past year and the effects have been felt by millions of people around the world as lives and livelihoods have been lost everywhere. Zambia believes that without peace and stability, our joint development efforts will be in vain — I repeat, totally in vain. We are therefore committed to remaining strong advocates of peace and stability in Southern Africa, on the entire African continent and the world over. Our guiding principle is that instability anywhere is instability everywhere. That reminds us that ending war and conflict is not only the responsibility of those directly involved in the conflict

but also a shared obligation of every global citizen and every nation. I mean all of us, without exception. We cannot afford to allow instability to derail our noble programmes to better the lives of our people. We therefore take this matter seriously and will continue to actively participate in efforts to restore peace in all the troubled regions of our global village. As the incoming Chair of the Southern African Development Community organ for politics, defence and security cooperation, Zambia will prioritize the restoration of peace and stability in our own country, to start with, and in the region. As the saying goes, charity begins at home.

At the continental level, Zambia remains engaged and committed to the efforts of the African Union and the United Nations to promote peace in various conflict areas around the world. Going forward, I would argue that our United Nations system should tilt more efforts towards the prevention of conflicts, which is more cost-effective and palatable. As a signatory to various disarmament treaties and conventions, Zambia remains committed to promoting global peace and security.

Zambia joins other Governments in expressing particular concern about the ongoing war in Ukraine. As we stand with all who are affected, in both Ukraine and its neighbours, we also want to take this opportunity to stress the far-reaching negative consequences of the war, particularly for the price of food, fuel, fertilizer and other key commodities across the world. In any part of the world, war has a damaging effect on economic activity, which derails our collective fight against poverty and hunger. A few months of war can erase decades of progress, and I want to emphasize that. We must take note of it. We therefore categorically condemn war anywhere and continue to urge all the parties involved to pursue diplomatic solutions for conflict resolution. I would like to emphasize that our United Nations should continue its peace efforts in this particular conflict. The efforts of the President and all of us collectively are well recognized. I am grateful for that.

We would like to stress that global ambitions for peace and security largely depend on the effectiveness of the Security Council. However, the inadequacies of the Council's current structure have become increasingly pronounced, with the ceding to the General Assembly of decision-making on matters of global peace and security that would otherwise have been the preserve of the Security Council and that should be the preserve

of the Security Council. However, the burden has now been pushed onto the General Assembly. That is not right, and it brings to the fore the need for long-overdue reform of the Council. We appreciate the call from President Biden for greater inclusivity in the Security Council. We therefore continue to advance the African Common Position, as espoused in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, to ensure the effectiveness, credibility and legitimacy of our Security Council.

In conclusion, we would like to reaffirm Zambia's commitment to the fundamental principles on which the United Nations was founded and that safeguard our shared future of peace and prosperity for all nations, not just for some. I shall emphasize that point — the principles that safeguard our shared future of peace, stability and prosperity for all nations.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Zambia for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, President of the Republic of Zambia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Andry Nirina Rajoelina, President of the Republic of Madagascar**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Madagascar.

*Mr. Andry Nirina Rajoelina, President of the Republic of Madagascar, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Andry Nirina Rajoelina, President of the Republic of Madagascar, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Rajoelina (spoke in French):** At the outset, allow me to address Mr. Kőrösi, Director of Environmental Sustainability at the Office of the President of Hungary. His election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session sends a clear message about the road mapped out for us by this annual meeting of the United Nations. I offer him my sincere congratulations. I would also like to warmly commend the Secretary-General for his



ongoing commitment and dedication at the helm of the United Nations.

On behalf of the people of Madagascar, I would also like to take the opportunity provided by this forum to reiterate our deepest condolences to the British people. Queen Elizabeth II inspired several generations in her country and all over the world. I also want to congratulate His Majesty King Charles III and wish him good health and a blessed reign.

The annual meeting of the General Assembly is always an opportunity to highlight the aspiration that unites us, that is, universal peace. Now that we have learned to live with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which we have discussed at length over the past two years, we are still facing the consequences of the crisis, despite everything. It has shown us that it is at the most difficult times that we realize the importance of solidarity among nations. The theme of this session, “A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges”, is very apt. It gives us new hope, reassures us and gives us new hope that we can advance together along the path of development. When we had to tackle the health crisis, we chose to put our trust in our scientists and in the wealth of Earth’s natural resources. The establishment of the Pharmalagasy pharmaceutical plant, at the height of the health crisis, demonstrated that we could turn difficulties into opportunities in order to exploit our biodiversity and thereby protect our population. While we predicted the apocalypse for Africa, Madagascar’s infection and death rates are among the lowest in the world. We have been classified as a green zone, meaning a country with low risks of infection. At the moment no PCR tests or health certificates are required to enter Madagascar. We beat the statistics and emerged from the crisis stronger, and above all, more committed to ensuring our country’s development.

The world was just beginning to recover from the pandemic when new crises emerged. No country was spared the effects of COVID-19, and the conflict in Ukraine has worsened instability and heightened inequalities. That is yet another major obstacle to our efforts to achieve resilience and post-COVID recovery. Like every other country in the world, we are experiencing the full inflationary effects of this crisis. We firmly believe that all wars end around the table. Dialogue is the only way to bring about peace. Madagascar therefore reiterates its call for dialogue to resolve the conflict, because its effects are global and

becoming more burdensome by the day. Developing nations such as ours are feeling and paying the price. The crucial role of the United Nations must be to encourage multilateralism in order to find equitable solutions that take into account the strengths and weaknesses of every country and its people.

How can we accept the fact that in this time of crisis, countries with gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of more than \$100,000 and others with per capita GDP of less than \$600 are buying barrels of oil in the same market and at the same price? Our Organization should take measures to support low-income countries so that they can benefit from and supply themselves with oil at equitable prices, given that the current global situation is a source of major upheaval in a number of countries. Some States are now affected by instability. The social fabric is unravelling, and economies are increasingly fragile. Some States have been forced to raise fuel prices by 50 per cent, which has resulted in riots and socioeconomic disturbances. Recovery is a concern that we all share. Our solidarity is the only way we can heal our societies, revive our economies, support growth and establish peace.

Every country has now had to review its development strategies, and that has emphasized how essential it is for each of us to accelerate industrialization and become self-sufficient. We continue to believe that we should produce and process everything that our populations need domestically. There are weapons more powerful than bombs, tanks and missiles, which are our lands, our raw materials, our natural resources and our people. Local industrialization, agricultural innovation and leadership are our ammunition in the work of strengthening ourselves and our armour in order to protect our peoples.

In Madagascar, we have developed a detailed strategy to make up for the delays our development has suffered. We developed our 2019-2023 Madagascar Emergency Plan and began to implement it when I took office as President in 2019. Our vision is clear and reflected in our political will, which we have demonstrated through all of our actions. We have prioritized a sector- and project-based approach in order to raise Madagascar’s classification to that of a newly emerging country. We have launched an ambitious set of reforms to modernize our administration, develop our human capital and foster strong, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, with energy as the driving force of its development. Madagascar

is a country that is blessed with water resources for hydroelectric dams, a high number of sunshine hours for solar power plants and wind power for wind farms. Many countries are facing energy problems today, and we must therefore accelerate our renewable energy production so that we can achieve self-sufficiency in the next five years. We intend to double or even triple our energy production capacity.

It is 2022. Regrettably, Africa is still a continent where most families live in darkness and obscurity. More than 600 million Africans, including 85 per cent of Malagasy households, still use candles and oil lamps to light their homes. That is why we are launching a major operation to equip most Malagasy homes with solar kits by the end of next year, with some of them, of course, subsidized by the State. In achieving that, Madagascar intends to be the first or one of the first countries on the African continent to have brought light to all its people.

Climate change is one of the major challenges of our time and one that we all have to tackle. It is important and urgent that we mobilize our joint efforts to protect our planet. I would like to raise the alarm here about commitments that were made at the twenty-first Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and reaffirmed at COP26, regarding the creation of the Green Climate Fund, which was supposed to be funded annually in the amount of \$100 billion. Madagascar was the fifth African country to complete its national adaptation plan, and my country therefore should have been a beneficiary of the Fund. However, the access to funding is slow and so far none of the commitments have been upheld. It is unfair that the least-polluting nations should pay the highest price for the impact of climate change.

Madagascar is an island and therefore vulnerable to climate hazards. This year alone, five cyclones struck the island in the space of just two months. Some 178,000 hectares of arable land were flooded and destroyed. Our island is the first country to have endured a climate-induced famine. Water resources are drying up in the south of the country and the people in that area are the most vulnerable on the island. The effects of climate change are worsening. The global situation is calling us to action. How many high-level meetings, summits and international conferences have we already had? How many statements and commitments have we made? Now we have to transform our words into

actions. Today I am relaying the cries and the voices of the African continent in general and Madagascar in particular. Africa's young people and indeed the entire continent are waiting for polluting countries to comply with the agreements they have made. Keeping those promises will protect our planet. Our populations demand that those promises be kept, and future generations will hold us accountable later.

Environmental protection issues are particularly dear to my heart. We all know that forests are the lungs of the Earth, and yet the use of charcoal and firewood remains standard practice across the African continent, including by 92 per cent of the population of my country. A family using charcoal or firewood for cooking destroys approximately one hectare of forest every year, which is devastating. We must change the practice and the mindset. That is why Madagascar will equip 250,000 families with bioethanol stoves with the aim of preserving 250,000 hectares of our forest every year.

We have started major public works projects to transform the country because everything needs to be built or rebuilt. Everything is urgent, and everything is a priority. For the past almost four years, we have been constantly building and repairing roads. We have built schools, health centres, hospitals, dams, courts, prisons in line with international standards, sporting and cultural facilities and much more. And Madagascar is continually evolving, despite the successive global crises. Ours is a large country and considerable work has been done to ensure that all areas are accessible. However, the road is still a long and winding one. But we have faith, and we will continue to move forward with determination. The Madagascar Emergency Plan is literally paving the way for the future.

From north to south and east to west, all of Madagascar is under construction. Only last week we opened our state highway 5A in the north of the country, which until now had for decades been a dirt road that took a week to traverse in the rainy season. Now it takes only two hours. It has led to an immediate reduction in the costs of the transportation and movement of goods and people, considerably improving the lives of the local communities and contributing to socioeconomic development in my country's northern regions. In the south of the country, we are starting work on state highway 13 and will soon do the same for highways 10 and 44 in the east, thereby facilitating access to Madagascar's main granary. In the north-west, state

highway 31, which is currently under reconstruction, will be entirely restored, which will mean that we will have access to our second largest agricultural area. In a few weeks we will be starting work on the country's first major highway, which will link the capital to our largest port. Once the work is completed, the journey will be shortened from 10 hours to only two and a half.

The demographic dividend is a variable that we have to include in our equation. We must change the structure of our population. Our current demographic growth is not commensurate with our economic growth. In some areas, girls under the age of 18 are already mothers of families who on average have to care for between five and eight children. It is therefore harder for them to feed and properly raise, care for and educate those children. Our family planning programme, which has already been launched, is therefore a crucial part of our strategy for controlling our birth rate and transforming the current population from one that is dependent to one that is employed and economically productive. Our demography in Madagascar will be an asset to our development and no longer an obstacle to it.

With regard to education, we have made great strides. My Government has built more than 1,000 classrooms and has made huge investments in teaching tools and material. We have set up school canteens. We have published books and textbooks and distributed tablets so as to considerably improve the quality of education received by our children and young people. Access to basic education has increased by 146 per cent and the school dropout rate has significantly decreased. We have made education a national priority, and we reiterate our commitment to transforming and revitalizing schools and universities.

Last year, I had the opportunity to speak (A/76/PV.6, p.7) about my country's wish to finally see the implementation of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in 1979 (resolution 34/91) and 1980 (resolution 35/123), concerning the return and administration of the Indian Ocean Iles Éparses or Nosy Malagasy to Madagascar. We welcome the upcoming second meeting of the joint French-Malagasy commission on the subject, and based on those two resolutions, which confirm the legitimacy of our claim, we hope to have the support of the United Nations in finally reaching a fair, settled and peaceful solution.

During the pandemic, the sick needed oxygen to survive. Many countries are currently still struggling

to breathe, thanks to the effects of successive crises. They need the oxygen they require to breathe in the form of support, aid and assistance, which will help them tackle the challenges of socioeconomic recovery and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. We must accelerate the pace of the implementation of new financing mechanisms, such as the Resilience and Sustainability Trust, to ensure the disbursement of funding. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the friendly countries that have always stood with us in the most difficult times.

The Africa of tomorrow must be autonomous, independent and prosperous. We have a duty to change the history of the continent and to write a new chapter so that each of us and each of our countries can change and be transformed. Our Organization needs to strengthen its solidarity to provide shared solutions to our common problems.

May God bless each of our nations. The homeland is sacred.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Madagascar for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Andry Nirina Rajoelina, President of the Republic of Madagascar, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Mohamed Younis Menfi, President of the Presidential Council of the State of Libya**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Presidential Council of the State of Libya.

*Mr. Mohamed Younis Menfi, President of the Presidential Council of the State of Libya, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Younis Menfi, President of the Presidential Council of the State of Libya, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Menfi** (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, it is my pleasure on behalf of my country's delegation and myself to congratulate Mr. Csaba Kőrösi on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session. I wish him every success.

I also express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Mr. Abdulla Shahid for his efforts and invaluable work during his presidency of the General Assembly at its previous session. I further commend the continuing efforts of Mr. António Guterres, who leads the United Nations with wisdom and balance in times that are difficult all over the world.

My country, Libya, which I am honoured to serve and represent, has endured a decade of suffering and hope while building its institutions and establishing the principle of democracy. The Libyan people have demonstrated to the world that they are one fabric, knit together with the same cohesion as their land and shared future. In spite of all their challenges, the Libyan people have continued to work to build a united country thanks to their thoughtfulness, tolerance and patriotism. They give us the determination and hope we need to continue working to realize their aspirations to build our State and pave the way for peace, stability and prosperity.

Current events constantly remind us of the past. The Libyan Liberation Army, which was established even before the creation of the Libyan State, fought alongside the armies of the free world. After the fall of Nazism and fascism, Libya earned its full independence, born of our national struggle and a regional and international agreement that paved the way for our founding fathers to build our State, unite our homeland and embark on a path to development and prosperity that made Libya an example of development in record time.

International policies on Libya today are still far from the reality we need. The individual interests of the countries involved in Libyan affairs, combined with proxy wars and disagreements on how to resolve Libya's situation, have not given us an opportunity to establish our own national choice. Negative international interventions have led to contradictory solutions that push my country towards armed confrontations that do not spare innocent people and have resulted in intransigent political positions that do not allow for a middle ground where gaps can be bridged and national partnerships realized.

The Libyan Presidency Council remains committed to its role, pursuant to the Libyan Political Agreement. As the supreme political authority, the Presidency Council represents the country's unity, locally and internationally, while assuming the role of commander-in-chief of the Libyan army. It is also responsible for the noble task of leading inclusive

national reconciliation efforts in order to pave the way for a democratic and peaceful transition of power through simultaneous presidential and parliamentary elections. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the African Union for cooperating with us in launching the National Reconciliation Project, which is the most important pillar supporting all paths to the stability and peace we desire. Those responsibilities compel us to contribute to impartial and balanced national efforts, despite attempts by certain political parties to push us towards confrontation, which we are making every effort to avoid. We are trying to resolve political disputes, not participate in them. In that regard, the Presidency Council has also been closely following the rounds of dialogue between Parliament and the High State Council. That dialogue has yet to result in an agreement on the constitutional rules for holding the parliamentary and presidential elections. The Presidency Council continues to stress that such dialogue should not continue indefinitely and is ready to intervene to break the political deadlock, if necessary.

With regard to the economy, the Libyan Presidency Council supports all the efforts that have made it possible to restore gas and oil production in every region of Libya. That is certainly in line with national interests and helps to maintain stability in international markets, which have been under severe pressure, especially in countries that are major energy consumers. Furthermore, based on its balanced national position, the Libyan Presidency Council is committed to the transparent and fair management of oil revenues, which are a wealth that belongs to all Libyans. The goal is to ensure that public funds are not a cause for political conflict and are used to benefit all Libyans throughout the country without discrimination on political or geographic grounds. If we manage to achieve that goal, it will reduce the current conflict for power and create a more stable environment conducive to the democratic transition we desire.

My country takes a positive view of the role of the United Nations in Libya in spite of the recent slow pace of intervention, and we continue to expect it to play an active role through the new leadership of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya. We call on the United Nations to embark on serious efforts in support of inclusive national solutions that can help break the political deadlock. The current impasse has paved the way for individual ventures and initiatives that risk undermining all the political gains that have been made



thanks to the Libyan dialogue held under the auspices of the United Nations.

I also call for restoring momentum to our economic process. It is one of the three tracks of the Berlin Conference on Libya, which neglected issues related to transparency and justice in the management of oil resources, public expenditure and addressing corruption.

While we may have thought that the errors of the past would never be repeated, today's world is on the threshold of a new international order that brings reminders of the suffering that humankind endured in the early twentieth century. It is high time for human conscience to speak out in favour of peace and for the entire world to support the international principles adopted by the United Nations in order to uphold the principles of maintaining the sovereignty of States, resolving conflict by peaceful means, respecting good-neighbourly relations and refraining from destabilizing the security of nations.

I also call for respect for the right of people to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in line with the criteria defined by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Furthermore, my country is on the front lines in the fight against terrorism. I call for renewed unity in combating terrorism, as it remains a threat to every country and spares no race, religion or civilization. My country has taken on all of its responsibilities at the international level to stop the financing and spreading of terrorism.

I reiterate from this rostrum my country's permanent commitment to supporting the right of the Palestinian people to establish their own State, ending Israel's settlement-building and acts of aggression and upholding the international resolutions on the issue.

This month the Libyan people observed a minute of silence to mark Martyrs' Day. It is also a tribute to the martyrdom of our national hero, Omar Al-Mukhtar, who resisted the colonizers.

The Libyan people are inspired by the combat of its ancestors to learn patience and to be more determined in defending their rights. The Libyan people draw inspiration from their founding fathers to become more tolerant. The current period will be enshrined in the national memory. Future generations will recognize those who supported us and those who undermined our security and plundered our wealth.

*Mr. Araba (Benin), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Owing to its position in Africa with Arab neighbours, Libya is a link between civilizations and an economic hub where the interests of the world are concentrated. The damage that we have experienced has affected not only the Libyan people, but also the region and our international relations.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Unity of the State of Libya for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Mohamed Younis Al-Menfi, President of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Unity of the State of Libya, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

#### **Address by Ms. Maia Sandu, President of the Republic of Moldova**

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Moldova.

*Ms. Maia Sandu, President of the Republic of Moldova, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Ms. Maia Sandu, President of the Republic of Moldova, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

**President Sandu:** I stand before the General Assembly today proudly representing the Republic of Moldova, a future member of the European Union (EU). I am grateful for the unanimous support that we received from the 27 EU member States. I thank them for their recognition and vote of trust in our love for freedom, our dynamic democracy and our commitment to the rule of law.

A successful peace project, the European Union — through cooperation and integration — was forged to stop the cycle of wars that tormented our continent for centuries. This is another watershed moment in our history, and the EU has to do it again. By applying to join the European Union, we want the world to know that we are choosing democracy over autocracy, liberty over oppression, peace over war and

prosperity over poverty. The EU candidate status gives us hope, a clear sense of direction, a unifying goal, an anchor and a strong sense of belonging to the free world.

One year ago, none of us here would have imagined a major war in Europe. Russia's unprovoked war against another sovereign State, Ukraine, has shaken the world to the core, put to the test the fundamental principles of the United Nations, shattered global security and triggered a European energy crisis, global food shortages and an economic downturn. Seven months of bombings have killed thousands of innocent people and pushed millions of Ukrainians to flee their homes.

This war is not just an attack on our neighbour and friend Ukraine. It is an attack on the rules-based international order. It is an attack on nuclear safety. It is an attack on food supplies to countries in the Middle East and Africa. It is an attack on this very institution where we find ourselves in today.

We firmly condemn the war against Ukraine, as well as the recently announced additional mobilization of troops by Russia. We firmly stand with Ukraine and support its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

I would like to express my utmost admiration to all Ukrainians for their courage, resilience and inner power to continue this fight for survival, justice and freedom.

It is our moral duty, as an international community, to continue supporting Ukraine. Ukraine is fighting today to keep all of us safe, to keep Europe safe. It needs our support. All of us in Europe must help Ukraine.

As I stand at this rostrum, I represent a country that wants peace. I represent the citizens of Moldova, who, irrespective of the language that we speak — Romanian, Ukrainian, Russian, Gagauz or Bulgarian — and regardless of our ethnicity or political preferences, whether we live on the right bank of the Dniester River or in the breakaway region of Transnistria, we all want peace.

We are a country of fewer than 3 million people, but we have sheltered more than half a million refugees fleeing the war. At the peak of the inflow, our population grew by 4 per cent. Some 80,000 refugees chose to stay among us. I take this opportunity to pay tribute from this high rostrum to all Moldovan families who showed unprecedented solidarity with refugees by opening their homes and hearts to those in need. I am proud of my people.

I am also grateful to our international partners, including the United Nations, that have provided assistance in managing the humanitarian crisis. I also thank the Secretary-General and other high-level officials who visited our country in our hour of need in order to show support and solidarity. My deep gratitude goes to France, Germany, Romania and other partners for setting up the Moldova Support Platform, which stands by our country in these difficult times.

Moldova knows what it is to be a country divided by conflict. In 1992, we faced a brief but tragic war in the Transnistrian region of our country. Three decades later, we are still trying to overcome the consequences of that conflict and reintegrate our country. The only way to achieve that is through peaceful dialogue and respect for our sovereignty and territorial integrity.

As Russia has launched its war against Ukraine, we have worked harder than ever to maintain peace on both banks of the Dniester River. We have done our best to ensure that all citizens of Moldova, including those residing in the breakaway region, continue to enjoy peace. The illegal presence of the Russian military troops in the Transnistrian region infringes upon our neutrality and increases the security risks for our country.

We call for the complete and unconditional withdrawal of Russian troops. We call for the destruction of ammunition from the Cobasna stockpiles, which pose a security and environmental threat to the region as a whole.

As we strive to maintain peace, our economy and society are bearing the brunt of Russia's war against Ukraine. Our resources are strained, investments have slowed down, trade and transport routes have been disrupted and inflation is nearing 35 per cent. In addition, we are facing a wide spectrum of hybrid threats, from disinformation and propaganda to cyberattacks and energy pressures.

The abnormally high prices for natural gas and Russia's attempts to weaponize gas and oil supplies to Europe have triggered an unprecedented energy crisis. We are one of the most vulnerable countries in the face of this crisis. But that only makes us more determined to diversify our energy sources and decrease dependence on fossil fuels. We plan to increase the share of renewable electricity supplies from 3 to 30 per cent in the next three years. That will make our country stronger and our environment healthier and safer.

We all know that the only way to save the planet is through joint global action against climate change. The same goes for the fight against corruption. Corruption weakens States and erodes democracies. We should take it more seriously than we have ever done. We need clear international mechanisms to stop the flow of dirty money. We need better instruments for asset recovery and restitution. We need better information exchanges between law-enforcement and anti-fraud authorities in other countries. And we need to set up international sanctions regimes against corruption. Despite all the challenges, Moldova is pressing ahead with its reform agenda. We are building a stronger and more democratic State. Last year, Moldova moved up 49 positions in the press freedom index, ranking fortieth in the world. Justice reform and the fight against corruption are at the core of our transformation.

We are working hard to become a better place for investors to create jobs, boost the economy and bring greater prosperity to our people. We are investing in connectivity with Europe, and we are trying to bring our country closer to European standards. We are building roads and bridges, hospitals and a more modern education system. We are building stronger institutions that will benefit the citizens of Moldova. We are focused, persistent and relentless. We are determined to bring Moldova into the EU so that every Moldovan can have better living standards and more economic opportunities at home. That is the only way for Moldova to grow as a consolidated democracy in our part of the world during these difficult times.

As I come before the Assembly from a region weakened by war, an energy crisis, drought and rampant inflation, my message is this. In the face of human-made suffering and economic adversity, the countries of the world must stand together once again. We must do so to reaffirm the value of peace and the inviolability of human life, to defend democracy and freedom and to uphold the right of every country to decide its own fate.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Moldova for the statement she has just made.

*Ms. Maia Sandu, President of the Republic of Moldova, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

### **Address by Mr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia**

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Namibia.

*Mr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Geingob**: Namibia congratulates Mr. Csaba Kőrösi on his election as President of the Assembly at its seventy-seventh session. He can be assured of Namibia's full support as he provides leadership during his tenure. I would also like to express our appreciation to his predecessor Mr. Abdulla Shahid for his sterling stewardship as President of the Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

Since attaining our political independence 32 years ago, we are proud of the work we have undertaken towards the second phase of our struggle for economic independence. During this period we have built a strong foundation for our governance architecture with an emphasis on strengthening processes, systems and institutions. Given those advances in effective governance, we are optimistic in our quest to deal with the triple challenges of inequality, unemployment and poverty. Our impact plan, the Harambee Prosperity Plan II, which is accelerating the implementation of our national development plans, is fast-tracking our efforts towards our Vision 2030.

Since my term of office will end on 20 March 2025 and we are a nation with a Constitution that limits the Head of State to two terms, we have set in motion the process for an orderly succession to continue with our peaceful development. The ruling party, the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), which I lead, is currently conducting primaries. There is a real possibility that the next candidate of the SWAPO party for the national presidential elections will be a woman or a young man from the generation that was never in exile. The presence of women in the line of succession is a demonstration of the strides we have made in gender equality, with women's representation

at 40 per cent in the National Assembly. Moreover, 90 per cent of our banks are headed by women. Namibia is a child of international solidarity, midwived by the United Nations. We therefore believe firmly in solidarity and partnership as critical enablers of our development aspirations.

At this juncture I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), which makes clear recommendations for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and all existing global agreements through multilateralism, with the United Nations at the centre of our efforts. I commend the Secretary-General for his visionary leadership in proposing that we should meet in a summit of the future to reflect on the challenges and opportunities that await current and future generations. Namibia supports the convening of that important summit at the earliest opportunity.

Over the past few months, it has been encouraging to see concerted efforts to train a spotlight on transforming education and advancing SDG 4. Education is a sector that Namibia has consistently prioritized through its allocation of resources, both human and financial, and its consistent prioritization of policy development. In the context of the recently concluded Transformation of Education Summit, Namibia commits to transformative leadership, ensuring access to inclusive digital technologies and developing a strategy for innovative financing and resource mobilization. In Namibia, the education sector receives the largest share of budgetary support, equivalent to 8 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) and almost a quarter of the total national budget. The Namibian Government offers free primary and secondary education, which demonstrates its commitment to prioritizing and expanding access to education for all. Furthermore, we are proud of the recent landing of the Google Equiano sub-sea cable, which will figure largely in changing Namibia's digital transformation landscape and narrowing its digital divide, in line with our commitment to leveraging the fourth industrial revolution.

In Namibia, we have set up a fourth industrial revolution task force, which recently made recommendations on how Namibia can strengthen domestic capabilities to derive optimal gains from the fourth industrial revolution. In line with the recommendations of the task force, the Government is currently developing a consolidated national fourth industrial revolution strategy to provide overarching

direction and multisectoral planning. The strategy will prioritize education reform to close the fourth industrial revolution skills gap, as well as cybersecurity and the expansion of the information and communications technology infrastructure and services.

Global debt is at an unprecedented level and interest rates are rising. That reality limits our fiscal space. As we talk about our collective aspirations, we should remain acutely aware of the vulnerabilities facing developing countries. Namibia's classification as an upper-middle-income country presents challenges with regard to mobilizing resources to finance our development goals.

As I said, taking our GDP and dividing it by our small population, thereby deriving a high per capita income, is without doubt a flawed formula that requires urgent consideration. The formula does not take into account the vast income disparities between the wealthy whites and the poor blacks, which is a consequence of 100 years of colonialism and apartheid occupation. However, I am pleased to hear that a number of developing and developed countries are in agreement on the unfairness of that classification, which denies countries such as Namibia access to soft loans and grants, which are necessary to fight inequality and lift many out of poverty.

The motto for the seventy-seventh session, "Solutions through solidarity, sustainability and science", calls on us to deal with the issues that affect us all. Therefore, I am confident that the unfair classification of countries such as Namibia as upper-middle-income countries will enjoy priority attention.

Over the past few months, we have witnessed stark geopolitical tensions, a reminder of the fragility of our world order. Threats to peace and security come at great cost to the men, women and children trapped in such situations. The Russia-Ukraine conflict is now in its seventh month, with serious consequences for food and energy supply chains. Namibia believes that dialogue is the condition sine qua non for the peaceful resolution of any conflict. The United Nations was created for the maintenance of peace and security and should lead a peaceful resolution to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Namibia, as a member of the African Union Peace and Security Council and Chairperson of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, continues to demonstrate its commitment to regional and



continental stability by advocating the advancement of infrastructure for peace, democracy and the protection of human rights.

In that regard, as the new Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, I call for the holding of peaceful general elections in the Kingdom of Lesotho on 7 October. SADC is also seized with developments in the Kingdom of Eswatini and the Republic of Mozambique. In that vein, I have commenced a process of dialogue with the leaders of Eswatini, Lesotho and Mozambique in order to ensure the successful implementation of SADC decisions so that peace and stability may prevail in our region.

I always say that inclusivity spells harmony and exclusivity spells conflict. Africa is a continent of 1.2 billion citizens, and the exclusion of Africa from the Security Council is an injustice. As long as the Council fails to reflect current global realities in its stature and composition, it will not be able to adequately address global concerns. We therefore reiterate our call for the reform of the Security Council, in line with the Common African Position.

Self-determination is a human right. The continued injustices meted out against the people of Palestine are a reminder of the urgent need to start implementing the two-State solution as the only viable alternative that can end inequality and bring peace to the peoples of both Palestine and Israel and indeed the region as a whole.

In the same vein, the lack of progress in implementing United Nations resolutions to resolve the question of Western Sahara should be something for which we all feel collectively ashamed.

Namibia pledges unwavering solidarity for nations that continue to bear the heavy burden of sanctions. Namibia reiterates its long-standing call for the lifting of the unjust embargo against Cuba. I met a 50-year-old Cuban man who has not known anything but sanctions. Since he was born, sanctions were in place. How long will that be continued? If we are talking about building peace in the world, how can a country be sanctioned for such a long time? Children who are born there do not know any other reality except one in which sanctions are imposed. Please, it is time that the sons and daughters of Cuba be given their right to a decent life, free from an embargo that denies them their right to develop their own country. The sanctions should be ended now.

We also call for the lifting of sanctions against the Republic of Zimbabwe. Why are sanctions in place against a country that is making progress at all levels? President Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa and the people of Zimbabwe have made laudable progress and reforms, which should be given a chance to succeed without the weight of sanctions.

The health of our planet is in serious jeopardy. Our home is on fire. We are experiencing unprecedented impacts of climate change, including severe droughts and ravaging field fires. Time is a luxury we do not have. We have to act decisively to reduce carbon emissions as our contribution to the preservation of our planet and people.

Namibia, like many developing countries, remains vulnerable to the asymmetrical impacts of climate change. Therefore, at the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Namibia plans to announce major developments in its ambitions to decarbonize global hard-to-abate sectors through the production of green hydrogen. Furthermore, the first hydrogen-to-power project in Africa is expected to be operational by 2024 in the town of Swakopmund, Namibia. That is an example of what is possible when we pull together in the same direction.

Our ambitions are necessary not only to mitigate the ravaging impacts of climate change but also as a critical component of our post-pandemic economic recovery. Therefore, Namibia remains ready to work with the international community to ensure the most optimal utilization of its natural resources to combat climate change.

A just energy transition is about providing fair opportunities for developing nations to sustainably access the natural endowments at their disposal. Namibia recently discovered promising deposits of hydrocarbons and is exploring significant deposits of rare Earth metals. As part of our goal to ensure the sustainable utilization of our natural resources, I recently launched the Welwitschia Fund, our nation's sovereign wealth fund. The fund is a demonstration of our commitment to fiscal prudence and sustainable resource management for current and future generations.

In conclusion, today, on 21 September, we are convened in this Hall on the International Day of Peace to discuss the theme "End racism. Build peace". Peace is a wonderful gift, but it is a fragile one if it is not

handled properly. Peace is more than the absence of war; it is about inclusivity and the development of all nations. Our United Nations, as the premier guarantor of multilateralism, is our best bet for ensuring a peaceful and prosperous humankind.

Namibia will continue to place a high premium on the noble aspirations of the United Nations as a beacon of hope and equality for all nations. As a beneficiary of successful multilateral efforts, we hold in high regard the convening power of the General Assembly and recommit to working with fellow Member States to change the world for the better.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Namibia for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

#### **Address by Mr. Borut Pahor, President of the Republic of Slovenia**

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Slovenia.

*Mr. Borut Pahor, President of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Borut Pahor, President of the Republic of Slovenia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Pahor**: I was born after the Second World War. All my life the cry “Never again!” has echoed around the world, especially in Europe. With the exception of the war in the Balkans, even the major geopolitical changes in Europe since the fall of the Berlin Wall have been peaceful. That has made an important contribution to building hope for lasting peace.

That hope has been thoroughly shaken by the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Will that make us stop believing in the possibility of lasting peace? I think it will not. We must not leave our children in fear of war. For the sake of their secure future, we have a duty to do whatever we can to ensure that the precious

hope for a lasting peace returns to our hearts. After all, it was with that hope and our shared responsibility that the United Nations was founded.

The United Nations has set very clear rules of engagement to which all Members have committed themselves, including a commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes, cooperation and respect for fundamental human dignity.

I wish to speak about peace, climate change and multilateralism today.

First, with regard to peace and security, the Russian Federation’s decision to conduct a military attack on Ukraine has shaken those rules, as have many other armed conflicts in different parts of the world. The Russian aggression has put international security at risk.

Yesterday’s announcement by President Putin that a referendum will be held in parts of Ukraine is a continuation of aggression and is in breach of international law. I especially condemn his words about the possible use of nuclear weapons.

The war is threatening the already fragile stability of the Western Balkans. It has also threatened international food and energy security. I commend the Secretary-General for his engagement, and Türkiye for its support in reaching the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Peace, as I just said, is not just the absence of war. In peace, leaders should strengthen and nurture good relations with other countries. It is our obligation to resolve outstanding issues in a spirit of compromise and mutual understanding. Only in that way will we reduce the chances that old grievances and historical traumas will re-emerge.

I am grateful to many here for the opportunity to build good relations together for the benefit and well-being of our countries and the wider international community. Fostering good relations and building trust within and among societies is the most effective means of preventing armed conflicts.

Secondly, we need more cooperation for a better future. Nurturing and strengthening good relations among countries is also necessary to more efficiently address the challenges of our times, of which climate change is one of the most pressing. Our common task is to preserve the planet for future generations. What we need is more efficient measures and more solidarity.

Slovenia pledges special support to Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific to assist them in their efforts against biodiversity loss, water stress and climate damage.

We are contributing to the Least Developed Countries Fund of the Global Environment Facility.

Having initiated the Green Group, Slovenia is working with like-minded countries on the promotion of green policies.

We are deeply grateful to the General Assembly for the historic universal recognition of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Slovenia was one of its original proponents, along with Costa Rica, Maldives, Morocco and Switzerland. That was a much-needed boost for multilateralism, but we can and should do more.

The upcoming United Nations conferences on climate change, biodiversity and water are an excellent opportunity to commit ourselves to do more and do better.

I wish to thank the Secretary-General for issuing his report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). We support the proposed holding of a second world social summit in 2025 and expect it to address the challenges of structural inequalities.

There is no security and development without respect for human dignity. In all our efforts, we should lead with a rights-based approach. We should be attentive to all signs of human rights regression and should act accordingly.

Thirdly and finally, with regard to strengthening multilateralism and candidatures for the Security Council, the Charter of the United Nations is fundamental to our international system. A rules-based order is a sine qua non for maintaining peace and security, a just and balanced international system. Slovenia has proved itself a reliable and trustworthy member of the United Nations family and an honest broker. We are engaged in a genuine dialogue and a constant search for creative and good solutions to our common challenges. We are part of peacemaking and stabilization efforts that include humanitarian demining, rehabilitation and saving the lives of civilians all around the globe. We actively participate in efforts to strengthen the legal framework and respect for international law, including efforts to end impunity. We are building trust to secure

a better future. Slovenia has no enemies, but only friends all around the globe.

My country is well placed to become a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the term 2024 to 2025. We will strive unwaveringly for peace, justice, mutual understanding and reconciliation, both within and among societies, as well as for respect for ethnic, national and religious diversity and the promotion of sustainable development and solidarity. That is Slovenia's task, and it is our common task.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Slovenia for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Borut Pahor, President of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. William Samoei Ruto, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya**

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya.

*Mr. William Samoei Ruto, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. William Samoei Ruto, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Ruto:** I am grateful for the immense privilege of joining everyone here in the General Assembly — a privilege made possible by the peaceful democratic transition that followed the free and fair elections held in Kenya on 9 August. Those elections stand as a testimony of the universal power of democracy, as well as the manifest ability of African peoples to invest in stronger nations and a secure future by using robust institutions, effective constitutions and the impartial administration of the rule of law to guarantee the realization of our shared objectives.

The General Assembly's seventy-seventh session comes at a unique moment, as the entire world struggles with multiple grave challenges, including regional conflicts, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the triple planetary crisis, food insecurity and the rising cost of living.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the President on his election and to express my confidence that his wealth of experience offers us significant assurance of his good leadership. The motto of his presidency, "Solutions through solidarity, sustainability and science", succinctly captures with particular resonance the urgent imperatives of our time. I assure the President of Kenya's firm support and cooperation during his tenure.

I also take this opportunity to commend his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, for his bold steps in steering the United Nations community and for ensuring its business continuity under the unprecedented circumstances occasioned by multiple global threats such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Human well-being is under grave threat. The health of the planet requires urgent attention. The immense pressure exerted by conventional threats, such as climate change, the global food crisis, terrorism, cybercrime and armed conflict, has been compounded by the unprecedented and devastating disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. I express my approval of the President's theme for this year's session, "A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges", because it boldly signals the window of opportunity that we now have to step up our engagement from firm consensus to decisive action.

In many respects, the COVID-19 pandemic stripped us of many illusions and exposed stark justice and solidarity deficits in the face of existential crisis. It brought into sharp focus the global economy's two-lane highway, repressively patrolled by a rising tide of exclusionist nationalism — a spectre that undermines prospects for collective action and significantly impairs the resolve of the international community to guarantee the fundamental rights, including the rights to safety and dignity, of the world's vulnerable majority.

It is also for that reason that many nations, especially in the global South, now advocate the democratization of global governance and a reimagined multilateralism that is inclusive and works for the good of all. Kenya stands ready to work with other nations to achieve the

pan-Africanization of multilateralism and a more just and inclusive system of global governance.

It is important to reflect on those matters as we do our best to get our people, enterprises and industries back on their feet so that the engine of development can power our societies towards a prosperity that actually leaves no one behind. "Building back better" is the universal rallying call to incorporate lessons learned into doing more, in a better way, to recover from shocks. I would suggest that we have a golden opportunity to faithfully adhere to that motto by augmenting it, in word and in deed, with an additional "b" to make it "building back better from the bottom".

Building back better from the bottom upwards is essentially about including the marginalized working majority in the economic mainstream. The bottom millions relentlessly wage their daily battle for survival in a crowded arena that is characterized by scarcity of opportunity and a generally precarious existence. The ingenuity, optimism, resilience and energy demonstrated by those in that ever-bustling bottom segment is sometimes called hustling.

Invisible to policymakers and beyond the reach of many public services, those hustlers take nothing for granted, surviving overwhelming odds and frequently achieving great success. In the words of Abraham Lincoln, things may come to those who wait, but only the things left behind by those who hustle. It is time to bolster the resilience of our nations to mainstream those millions through deliberate strategies and efforts to advance economic inclusion by building back better from the bottom.

The interlocking challenges of conflicts, the triple planetary crisis and the global food crisis have impeded our momentum and obstructed our focus in achieving fundamental transformations towards sustainable development. In the Horn of Africa region, severe drought and the disruption of supply chains due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the Russia-Ukraine conflict, have left us food-insecure. Consequently, we have been constrained to repurpose our strategies to prioritize drought and famine relief to insulate education from disruption and improve social protection and health-care systems in order ensure people's well-being.

Many countries now bear witness to the unsettling phenomena of rivers, canals and water reservoirs drying up owing to droughts and heat waves occasioned by climate change. Kenya is no exception. The northern,



arid and semi-arid rangelands of our country have been gravely impacted by drought whose severity has not been experienced in 40 years. The scarce rainfall over three consecutive seasons has led to poor crops and pasture, leaving some 3.1 million residents of those rangelands severely food insecure. That unprecedented confluence of intensely adverse events has exacerbated water scarcity and starvation, which are worsened by rising food prices, thereby complicating Kenya's road map towards delivering a good quality of life to its citizens and hindering our progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals 6 and 2.

Severe drought has affected not only the Horn of Africa and the Sahel regions; it also continues to devastate many others, including in Asia, Europe and the Americas. If for no other reason, the fact that we are in this together must strengthen the case for concerted efforts across the continents. With that in mind, I call on Member States and all relevant stakeholders to demonstrate strong political will and showcase effective cooperation by supporting the most affected countries both financially and by sharing land-restoration and climate-adaptation technologies. Collaborating to expand inclusion can usher in a new paradigm of multilateralism for us.

The latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reminds us that we cannot afford to waste another moment debating the merits of doing something versus doing nothing. It will soon be too late to reverse the course of events, and then, even the best possible interventions will not suffice. Every day is an opportunity for us as leaders to expedite our efforts to confront the triple planetary crisis.

It should be recalled that during the Stockholm+50 meeting, which Kenya had the honour of co-hosting with Sweden, there was agreement among States on the need to act urgently to address environmental impacts. Given that consensus, it is deeply concerning that little progress has been made with regard to the action that is needed. It is time to collectively contemplate the urgent measures needed to implement the high-priority actions we must take in order to contain the ongoing disruptions, as well as deliberate on long-term implementation approaches to be undertaken. I fully agree with the Secretary-General's memorable statement, that "[w]e have a rendezvous with climate disaster" (A/77/PV.4, p.3). I add that we must not be taken by surprise. If being forewarned indeed means

being forearmed, this is our opportunity to mobilize with tremendous urgency and take action at once.

The agricultural sector has an important part to play in reducing the severity of climate change. A number of practices have a bearing, positive or negative, on various dimensions of the environment. Investing in modern agricultural technology is therefore one important avenue towards tackling prevailing environmental challenges. Kenya is responding through substantial investment in climate-resilient agriculture. At the core of our 10-year strategy for agricultural-sector growth and transformation are nine flagships. They include the registration of farmers to direct incentives, improving farmer practices through customized extension services, the monitoring of emergency food-reserve stocks using a digital food balance sheet and the use of an early-warning system to monitor food supplies and market prices.

Agriculture remains the bedrock of the development of many nations and will therefore continue to hold the key to ensuring equitable and sustainable growth for our people. No country, large or small, has ever attained significant growth without modernizing its agricultural sector. And as we rededicate ourselves to those targets, we must, in the immediate term, find answers to the severe deficit in the availability, flow and accessibility of fertilizer to our farmers worldwide. I could not agree more with Secretary-General Guterres' warning in this Hall yesterday, that

"Without action now, the global fertilizer shortage will quickly morph into a global food shortage" (*ibid.*, p. 2).

We are encouraged to note that education, health, agriculture and numerous other public services have become increasingly reliant on digital access. The world needs greater investment in the development of information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure, accompanied by policies that support innovation and increased acquisition and deployment of technology. In so doing, we should be driven by the conviction that those measures offer a viable shortcut to poverty reduction and the promotion of inclusive development. I call for stronger global partnerships to enhance ICT infrastructure in developing countries and bridge the yawning digital divide between the global South and the rest of the world.

The General Assembly's seventy-seventh session follows the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary

of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), UNEP@50, as well as Stockholm+50 and the Ocean Conference in Lisbon. The outcomes of those conferences demanded real commitment to addressing global environmental concerns as a matter of urgency and a just transition to sustainable economies that work for all people.

The fifth United Nations Environment Assembly's adoption in Nairobi of the March 2022 landmark resolution to end plastic pollution is a decisive signal that the world is prepared and motivated to act to address that menace. Kenya is committed to working closely with other nations to pursue legally binding instruments aimed at bringing an end to plastic pollution. As the host nation to UNEP and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Kenya affirms that those critical United Nations agencies have an indispensable role in the promotion of environmental sustainability globally, as well as in developing socially and environmentally sound sustainable cities.

In keeping with its strong commitment to multilateral institutions, Kenya has made more land available for the United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON) to facilitate the upgrading of its complex. I take this opportunity to call on Member States to complement that contribution through enhanced financing aimed at adequately modernizing the UNON facilities Nairobi.

Kenya remains a strong advocate for making the sustainable use of ocean and blue-economy resources a development priority, holding the firm belief that significantly increased investment in that essential sector can end hunger, reduce poverty, create jobs and spur economic growth. I urge the Secretary-General to continue calling attention to the urgent need to develop that vital sector. In particular, I call on developed countries to invest in sustainable fishing, protect marine ecosystems and share ocean-based climate solutions with developing countries.

For our part, I am pleased to report that, building on the historic 2018 Sustainable Blue Economy Conference, held in Nairobi, Kenya is reviewing its national blue-economy strategy in order to strengthen community structures in the participatory management of freshwater, coastal and marine resources and ecosystems. The strategy is expected to contribute to our economic development through food and

nutrition security, coastal and rural development and income increases along the aquaculture value chains.

It will also enhance maritime transport and tourism. We invite development partnerships to invest in Africa towards building the capacity to sustainably utilize marine resources. We must rally together to make the best use of Africa's vast blue resources in developing our economies while meeting our climate targets.

As we look forward to the twenty-seventh Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt, it is logical to expect that Member States will shift their attention towards the development and implementation of frameworks for climate change mitigation. Member States must complete their pending actions so they can turn to the implementation work that lies ahead. I therefore call on all of us to urgently deliver on all commitments made towards climate-change financing. It is critical to emphasize that we are running out of time in that regard.

Over the past decade, Kenya has sustained its aggressive pursuit of rapid socioeconomic transformation through three principal road maps. The first road map is the Kenya National Vision 2030, the formal long-term blueprint aimed at transforming Kenya into a newly industrializing, upper-middle-income country providing a high quality of life to all its citizens in a clean and secure environment by 2030. The second road map is the African Union's Agenda 2063. The third road map is the Sustainable Development Goals. Kenya seeks to tap into a variety of resources to catalyse the achievement of those interlocking and mutually reinforcing objectives.

The disruption and ensuing crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic compelled us to diversify our focus into new interventions, including an economic stimulus programme, a COVID-19 economic recovery strategy and a COVID-19 socioeconomic re-engineering recovery strategy, all aimed at mitigating the adverse impacts of the pandemic. I confirm that we have done our utmost in the circumstances. Nevertheless, it is not enough. Kenya and the rest of Africa, like other developing countries, are in need of greater international partnership and cooperation to avert economic crisis in the wake of the pandemic.

Developing countries, which are heavily burdened by external-debt servicing, run the risk of losing development gains because of the shocks inflicted

by the pandemic and associated disruptions. I call on global financial institutions and the international community to take urgent steps to release all existing financial instruments in order to provide much-needed additional liquidity and secure better fiscal space for developing countries such as Kenya to enhance social investment, support climate change adaptation and mitigation, address security needs and resolve development financing challenges.

On behalf of Kenya, I therefore join other leaders in calling on the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other multilateral lenders to extend pandemic-related debt relief to the worst-hit countries, especially those affected by the devastating combination of conflict, climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. I also urge the Group of 20 to extend and expand the scope of the common framework to suspend or reschedule debt repayments by middle-income countries during the pandemic recovery period.

I would like the Assembly to take a moment to consider the peace and security landscape — one that is currently beset with multiple challenges but also abounds with considerable opportunities. Our home region of East Africa and the Horn of Africa, in particular, is burdened by significant conflicts and challenges that have implications for the region's development. We stand on the cusp of a vast opportunity to galvanize confidence-building measures in order to generate and sustain momentum towards sustainable peace.

In its role as an anchor State in the region, Kenya has sustained our investment in diplomatic efforts to find lasting peace in multiple situations within and beyond the region. Although some processes have yielded undeniable success, challenges remain. I therefore strongly reiterate our call for partnership towards confidence-building measures and urge more concerted efforts to achieve sustainable peace and stability.

Kenya is currently serving on the Security Council. I am proud to confirm that our engagement over the past two years has prioritized regional peace and security, countering terrorism and violent extremism, peace support operations and climate and security as critical contributions to collective efforts to build a safer, more prosperous and peaceful world. I am also proud to state that Kenya has continued to champion closer cooperation between regional mechanisms and the Security Council as an effective means for achieving international peace and security.

Kenya continues to advocate the renewal of the African Union Peace and Security Architecture, which draws comparative strength from the highly productive complementarity among the United Nations, the African Union and the regional economic communities. Working closely with the other two elected African members of the Security Council, we are committed to finding a stronger African voice in the Council and achieving a consensus-driven, rules-based multilateral system. It is our manifest intention to see greater pan-Africanization of the global agenda in order to make multilateralism work for the people of the world in their diversity. It is time for multilateralism to reflect the voices of the farmers, represent the hopes of villagers, champion the aspirations of pastoralists, defend the rights of fisherfolk, express the dreams of traders, respect the wishes of workers and indeed protect the welfare of all the peoples of the global South.

Let me express my country's strong collective conviction that the relevance, legitimacy and moral authority of the United Nations will forever remain deficient and undermined in the absence of comprehensive reforms of the Security Council. We therefore remain firmly committed to reforming the Security Council to make it a more effective, representative and democratic global institution.

Given the magnitude and variety of challenges the world continues to confront, a more fit-for-purpose United Nations is urgently needed, one that possesses the legitimacy and efficacy required to deal with threats to international peace and security. A just and inclusive world order cannot be spearheaded by a Security Council that persistently and unjustly fails the inclusivity criterion. Similarly, threats to democracy will not be credibly resolved by an undemocratic and unrepresentative Security Council. It is vitally important for that critical institution to reflect the values it is entrusted to protect, defend and uphold on behalf of humankind. We welcome the call by President Biden this morning for the expansion of the membership of the Security Council as a significant step in the right direction and look forward to building consensus towards realizing that.

The COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted health systems, thereby seriously challenging the implementation of programmes that are vital for the realization of the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To place us firmly back on track and accelerate our progress towards the SDG

targets, it is imperative for us to foster sustainable partnerships among Governments, other State actors, civil society and the private sector. That modality of collective action is particularly vital for building resilient health systems, whose importance in enabling us to withstand future pandemics and other health crises can no longer be disputed.

For that reason, Kenya will continue to strongly support the development of legally binding World Health Organization international instruments in order to anchor global solidarity and promote equity. The fact is that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed, for all the world to see, the severe deficit of those critical values in our current multilateral configuration.

Global supply chains remained impervious to demand in the global South generally and to Africa in particular. Unequal access to vaccines underscored that unjust and unequal situation, with unforgettable clarity. Whenever human life, security and welfare are in jeopardy, it is immoral to administer interventions through frameworks that are anchored on fundamental inequality. We are all witnesses to admirable demonstrations of effective solidarity in response to crises in various parts of the world. Our knowledge of the possibility of spontaneous, yet resolute, global solidarity reinforces the African exception as particularly repugnant.

From genocides and civil conflict to famine and pandemics, the African continent is consistently left behind to bear the brunt of weak solidarity and the disastrous failure of multilateralism. History indicates that the last time that Africa was the focal point of strong and effective multilateral consensus was during the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, and the character of the ensuing interventions casts a long shadow to date.

Not to put too fine a point on it, but the failure of multilateralism during crises, which relegates the people of Africa outside the circle of moral consideration and normalizes humanitarian neglect and other casual injustices, is a failure of humankind. Nothing about Africa — I repeat, nothing about Africa or its peoples — makes it acceptable for that type of failure to persist in this era, and we have an urgent moral duty to do better and right that wrong.

For decades, Africa has borne the brunt of three epidemics — HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. I applaud innovative partnerships such as the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria for their progress

in addressing the three menaces. I also welcome the ambitious targets set for the seventh replenishment cycle. Kenya is committed to supporting the Global Fund and implementing agreed targets in order to actualize our pledge at the Replenishment Conference. Kenya calls upon all countries implementing the Global Fund programmes, especially fellow African States, to remain at the forefront in championing the successful replenishment of the Fund. In that way, the mobilization of much-needed resources will be enhanced, thereby bringing us closer to the elimination of those dangerous diseases.

In conclusion, Kenya joins the Secretary-General in calling for the strengthening of multilateralism as the only sustainable path to a peaceful, stable and prosperous world for all. That is the imperative of our time and the call of this moment. It is time to work on the trust deficit with stronger conviction that none of us is really safe until all of us are safe.

The theme of the seventy-seventh session, “A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges”, demands that we recognize that the crises we must confront are interlinked in a complicated way. They can be effectively addressed only through more imaginative strategies and innovative formulas. A population of 8 billion people, in a densely networked world, increasingly looks up to the multilateral system as the anchor of their individual aspirations, both directly and indirectly through robust national frameworks. Therefore, the United Nations system is increasingly expected to be responsive to those needs, and the proceedings in forums such as the General Assembly are expected to speak to ordinary people in the far-flung reaches of our incredibly diverse globe.

It is impossible to address all their individual needs directly, but it is possible to respond to all of them by speaking with conviction to the universal values of equality, inclusion, justice, solidarity and collective action, while making sure that all our interventions effectively reflect them, with clarity. The integrity of the international order must be measured by the distance separating our resolutions, consensus and agreement from decisive actions, committed interventions and effective solutions. A watershed moment therefore demands that we reduce that gap drastically and quickly.

Kenya pursues numerous essential domestic agendas through the multilateral framework. We are



heavily invested in the strength, effectiveness and eventual success of all the interventions formulated by the United Nations. It is important that the output of this forum and other similar forums achieve immediate resonance in the minds and lives of our young people, who still seek the opportunity to express and actualize themselves; our farmers, who work to feed our nations; our *jua kali* entrepreneurs, who strive in pursuit of success in the informal economy; and our professionals, who formulate policy, implement strategy and monitor service delivery in the public and private sectors.

Africa places immense value on the international community and the tremendous possibilities it can unlock through inclusive, sustainable and effective action to transform the lives of our peoples and establish lasting peace, security and shared prosperity. This watershed moment is our chance to turn the key and open that door of opportunity. We can make progress in addressing the triple global threats and liberate ourselves from the shame of the past failures of multilateralism. At this watershed moment, we must not only choose but also act decisively to bequeath to our children and their children a greener, safer, healthier and more abundant Earth. Let us do it together — inclusively and multilaterally.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. William Samoei Ruto, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

#### **Address by Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic**

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Gabonese Republic.

*Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Ondimba** (*spoke in French*): I warmly congratulate the President of the General Assembly on his election and wish him every success. I also pay tribute to and congratulate his predecessor, Mr. Abdullah Shahid, for his commitment during the seventy-sixth session. I reiterate my country's full support to Secretary-General António Guterres as he serves our Organization.

I am delighted once again to speak in earnest, for the situation demands just that. Indeed, the international system is at a critical juncture as the world struggles to recover from a pandemic and remains in the clutches of a multidimensional crisis. The emergence of new centres of influence results in entrenched positions and demands that we prioritize ongoing dialogue, instead of power struggles, to reach global consensus in addressing controversial issues within the multilateral system.

In the light of the rivalry among Powers and the multifaceted challenges that affect us all, it would be dangerously naive to continue focusing on power struggles or unilateral positions. The interconnected nature of global issues and national economies compels us to engage in dialogue in order to respond appropriately and above all collectively to the most serious threats to international peace and security.

We are in the last quarter of a year of increasingly difficult global challenges that have thwarted common and individual efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. With fewer than eight years left until the deadline for reaching those goals, it is crucial that we assess our progress in the light of the ongoing threat posed by the coronavirus disease pandemic to our economies.

A threat just as insidious now looms over our economies: inflation. Around the world, it is reaching tragic record levels. No one is spared — neither businesses nor households, neither the North nor the South. Its effects are devastating. As such, we must take action. Of course, we must take individual action, which is precisely what Gabon is doing by subsidizing certain commodities and controlling the price of others. Nonetheless, it that regard too, we will be successful in overcoming that problem only if we take collective action in a coordinated manner and in solidarity with each other. It is yet another challenge the world must face. We must all meet that challenge together.

*(spoke in English)*

This year marks many new beginnings for Gabon, as we arise from the tragedy and forced inertia of the coronavirus disease pandemic and reopen to the world. We are the newest member of the Commonwealth of Nations, which is home to 2.5 billion people — one third of the world's population — with shared values of respect for democracy, human rights and the rule of law. My country is broadening the horizons of its citizens and seizing the chance for our young people to benefit by studying, travelling and building business relationships far beyond our own borders.

At the same time, Gabon takes its place on the world stage — not alone but as a proud African nation. However, the problems that our world faces today are global, as are the solutions. We must all be outward-facing, not inward-looking, as we confront the difficulties of a world in which resources are finite and populations are growing.

This month, our Commonwealth family lost its leader — Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Through the union that she loved so deeply, the Queen offered respect, friendship and wise counsel to many independent nations around the world, small or large. She promoted peace, liberty and shared values and fostered a spirit of cooperation.

As the new Head of the Commonwealth, His Majesty King Charles III can be assured of my full support and that of the Gabonese people. As a dear friend of Gabon for many years, King Charles III shares my enthusiasm for protecting our natural environment and biodiversity and my concerns about global climate and sustainability.

Fifty years after the Stockholm Conference, humankind faces an unprecedented triple environmental crisis — climate change, the biodiversity extinction crisis and pollution, notably by plastics.

First, with regard to climate change, thanks to its 88 per cent forest cover and a rate of deforestation well below 0.1 per cent, Gabon is an exemplary high-forest, low-deforestation country. Since the fifteenth Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was held in Copenhagen in 2009, Gabon has net absorbed more than 1 billion tons of carbon dioxide. We absorb more than 100 million tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere every year. In other words, we have

already achieved and indeed have exceeded the Paris Agreement on Climate Change objective of carbon neutrality. We are counting on the creation of a net carbon sequestration market to enable us to maintain that performance through 2050 and beyond.

Secondly, I find the biodiversity crisis extremely alarming. The fifteenth COP to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Montreal, will be a decisive moment for humankind, and it is critical that we adopt an ambitious global biodiversity framework. The time has come to transition from billions to trillions by mobilizing 1 per cent of global gross domestic product to benefit the natural environment.

Thirdly, pollution has become a chronic problem for our cities, rivers and oceans. We must waste no time in adopting a binding international agreement on plastic pollution, as well as a treaty of the high seas. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, our international agreements and national policies must address the interdependence of those crises.

Threats to international peace and security continue to increase exponentially. Faced with the proliferation of armed groups, restricting their access to arms will be at the heart of my country's priorities during its presidency of the Security Council in October. In that regard, I would like to reiterate my country's call for a robust partnership to ensure greater security in the Gulf of Guinea.

Many countries face humanitarian crises that are exacerbated by armed conflict. That is the case in Ukraine, where the war has led to a worsening of the situation in countries and regions that were already experiencing food shortages. That is why my country has clearly expressed its opposition not only to that bloody war but to any form of war. Gabon, which has never experienced armed conflict, will continue to advocate and favour dialogue and negotiation over confrontation.

Access to education for children should be considered sacred. Therefore, I would like to express my country's resolute support for the sanctuarization of schools and places of education, particularly during armed conflicts. To compromise education is to place a mortgage on future generations. It is in that vein that I have made the promotion of women and young people a key priority. In 2015, I launched the Decade of the Gabonese Woman, which aims to reserve a place

of choice for women and children in all aspects of governance in Gabon.

Internationalism is at a turning point. We need to reform the United Nations to ensure better consideration of the aspirations of Africa. That is particularly applicable to the Security Council, where Africa's role needs to be consolidated. Africa has waited long enough, and we will not wait any longer.

In the light of the strong interdependence of nations, it is crucial that we put an end to the use of sanctions, while working instead to build bridges of prosperity. As such, I call once again for the total lifting of the embargo that has affected the Government and the people of Cuba for several decades. Inevitably, the principal victims of any embargo are the weak and the vulnerable.

In the Middle East, Gabon has always believed that the two-State solution is the only way to achieve peace and security. It is the responsibility of our generation to resolve that problem.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Gabon's commitment to the principles and values of solidarity at the heart of the Charter of the United Nations. To that end, I reiterate my country's solemn appeal to all members of the international community to live up to their shared commitments in order to ensure peace, security and dignity for the peoples of the world.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Gabonese Republic for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

#### **Address by Mr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana**

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

*Mr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Mohamed

Irfaan Ali, President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Ali:** I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the President of the General Assembly on his election. I am confident that his stewardship will lend further credence to the impactful role of multilateralism in resolving global challenges.

I thank his predecessor, Mr. Abdullah Shahid, for his shrewd leadership over the past year. I had the distinct privilege of welcoming him recently to Guyana and benefiting from his experience in championing an inclusive future for our young people. I extend congratulations to him, the Secretary-General and the General Assembly for the recently adopted resolution on the establishment of the United Nations Youth Office (resolution 76/306). One month ago, in Guyana, I launched the Youth Advisory Council as part of my Government's commitment to ensuring the involvement of young people in decision-making and development as the Government works towards building Guyana's future. We live in a troubled world that has lost its balance. Indeed, our collective actions as leaders today will convey to the next generation that their aspirations and their future and that of the planet are worth fighting for.

The international community faces a series of interlocking challenges — a global pandemic, climate challenges, energy and food crises and inter-State conflicts. As a consequence of the pandemic, approximately 97 million more persons are living on less than \$1.90 per day, thereby significantly increasing the global poverty rate and inequalities. The developing world lost revenues and income that were earmarked for achievement of many Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), pushing us farther away from our 2030 targets.

A United Nations report issued in March 2022 spoke definitively about the unequal distribution of coronavirus disease vaccines and its impact on widening economic disparity between the rich and the poor. The study found that low-income countries could have increased their gross domestic product by \$16.7 billion dollars in 2021 if they had had a vaccination rate similar to that of high-income developed countries. How will we address that inequality? How will we address that injustice?

Guyana's position is that there must be an immediate re-examination of the financing gap and debt portfolio of developing countries to open fiscal

space and create an opportunity for recovery, bridging the gap and attaining the SDGs. Guyana welcomes the global initiatives on pandemic preparedness. It is imperative that we collectively discuss how to address any potential pandemic and health threats so that we are better equipped in the future to avoid the inequalities that exist.

The global food security problem has disproportionately affected us. The prevalence of moderate and severe food insecurity has trended upwards since 2014, with an estimated increase in 2020 equalling that of the previous five years combined. In 2020, 2.37 billion of the world's population was food-insecure. In addition, the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) warned that acute food insecurity would worsen in 20 hunger hotspots from June to September 2022. Since the start of the pandemic, global food prices have surged by 65 per cent and are expected to remain high over the medium term as a result of supply chain constraints, a hike in energy costs, higher shipping costs, climate issues, the war in Ukraine and the fertilizer crisis.

Also, following the onset of the Russia-Ukraine war, global food prices increased sharply — to reach an all-time high in February 2022. FAO projects that the production of cereals — a crop heavily relied on throughout the world — will decline by 40 million tons, or 1.4 per cent in 2022 as compared to 2021. The trajectory of the global food import bill is a whopping \$1.8 trillion this year, a record high. The global food import bill is projected to rise by \$51 billion from 2021, \$49 billion of which reflects higher prices.

The question is what we are going to do about it. Can the reversal of export bans on rice and wheat and the freeing up of grains help that situation? The answer is a resounding yes. For example, export bans on rice from India and wheat from Russia contributed to a price increase of 12.3 per cent and 9 per cent for rice and wheat, respectively.

*The President returned to the Chair.*

As world leaders, we must find the balance now. In honouring our commitment to promote peace, stability, respect for territorial integrity and democracy and the human rights of all, we must work collectively to prevent situations that can widen inequality and create social and economic havoc. Now is the time for us to decide if a new approach is needed to guarantee food

security, energy security, climate security, access to health care and quality education, and security from conflict and wars.

According to the World Bank and Global Trade Alert, between January and June 2022, 135 policy measures were announced or implemented that affected the trade in food and fertilizer. During the same period, 34 nations imposed restrictive export measures on food and fertilizers. The question, therefore, is whether globalization is applicable only under normal conditions or whether it is opportunistic in its application. When a crisis arises, do we lock ourselves in and forget about multilateralism and globalization? The evidence is glaring, first with regard to COVID-19 vaccines and more recently with respect to access to food and fertilizer.

A welcome initiative is FAO's Global Food Import Financing Facility, which seeks to respond to the prevailing soaring food import costs and address the needs of those most exposed. However, there is a need to revise the eligibility criteria to accommodate countries beyond the categories of low-income and lower-middle-income groups. Those narrow groupings heighten the chance that many at-risk, economically vulnerable countries, including those in the Caribbean with large food and food-import needs, will be excluded.

We all recognize that there is climate crisis. We must review some of the decisions made. For example, at the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26), we agreed that there would be no more coal-fired power projects. What is the reality?

While policies and planning for climate change adaptation are expanding, financing and implementation are still far behind where they should be, according to the United Nations Environment Programme's *Adaptation Gap Report 2021: The Gathering Storm*. That analysis shows that the costs of adaptation are most likely to be higher than the predicted range of \$140-300 billion annually by 2030 and \$280-500 billion annually by 2050 for developing nations.

In 2019, \$79.6 billion was allocated to developing nations for planning and carrying out mitigation and adaptation measures. The gap between predicted adaptation costs and existing public adaptation finance flows is generally growing and ranges from a fivefold to a tenfold shortfall. The paltry \$100 billion pledge and the failure to meet it must be viewed in the context of the



likely costs of climate action for mitigation, adaptation and addressing loss and damage. It is not enough.

The adoption in Glasgow of broad rules on carbon markets has the potential to unlock critical resources for forest-rich countries. Forested countries such as Guyana can potentially earn billions of dollars through voluntary carbon markets. However, the current approximate price is \$10 per ton on the voluntary market, while according to an International Monetary Fund report the price should be closer to \$70 per ton. At the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties, we must make progress in refining the rules for the implementation of article 6 of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and make decisions that will increase the price of carbon traded in voluntary carbon markets.

The world is also faced with an energy crisis. In 2019, almost 10 per cent of the world's population did not have access to electricity. The volume of electricity generated by fossil fuels increased by 178 per cent between 2000 and 2021 — in particular, the volume of electricity generated by coal increased by 173 per cent between 2000 and 2021. Based on a recent energy outlook report issued by the United States Energy Information Administration, coal-fired generation is expected to be a key energy component as a result of several factors, including a drop in the share of natural gas and rising oil prices.

While all of that is occurring, the global energy demand is projected to increase by 47 per cent in the next 30 years. According to the International Energy Agency, global electricity demand grew by 6 per cent in 2021 and is projected to grow by 2.4 per cent in 2022 — only 50 per cent of which is expected to be met from renewable energy sources. As such, the other 50 per cent will have to be met from non-renewable energy sources. Also, analysis by the International Energy Agency indicates that getting on the path to net-zero emissions by 2050 would require a threefold increase in the current level of investments in the clean energy transition to reach approximately \$4 trillion by 2030.

The question, therefore, is how we realistically strike that balance. The conversation must be practical, comprehensive and fact-based. We all recognize that adjustments must be made to save our planet. But how will we craft that adjustment, considering that our energy and food crises are also critical, and how will we ensure that inequality and lack of access do not worsen?

In this energy transition, fossil fuels are still necessary. In that context, we believe that new entrants like Guyana must be part of that balanced approach. Even as a new entrant, at COP26 Guyana proposed ending subsidies for fossil-fuel production and advocated the need for a strong global carbon price. However, we do not believe that new entrants should be punished by removing access to financing and increasing financing costs. In effect, that will only protect an existing monopoly, drive up the costs of investment and deliver a higher-priced product.

We are committed to building a Guyana that addresses the issues of food security, climate change, energy security and inequalities within our country and the region. Under the banner of One Guyana, my Government has embarked on many initiatives to help bridge the gaps of inequality and access. We are on a path to reducing Guyana's food import bill and increasing food security through expanded cultivation and investments in new technology and climate-smart agriculture, all aimed at positioning Guyana as a leading food producer in the Caribbean Community. We are working to provide incentives, capital, land and opportunities for young people and women to participate in our agricultural transformation. To that end, we have earmarked 35 per cent of all new agribusinesses to be led by women, and we have increased youth participation in agriculture with the use of technology by more than 40 per cent.

We are pursuing a low-carbon development strategy, aimed at creating a model for value ecosystem services and sustainably developing and managing the blue economy, investing in clean energy and stimulating low-carbon growth, protecting against climate change and biodiversity loss and aligning with global climate and biodiversity goals. Our forests, whose area is equivalent to the size of England, store 19.5 gigatons of carbon with a deforestation rate of less than 0.05 per cent. We intend to continue the sustainable management of our forests as a key national and global good. Having already achieved net zero in emissions, we are working steadfastly in our transition from a 2020 status of 95 per cent dependence on heavy fuel oil and diesel to an energy mix that includes hydropower, solar, wind and natural gas, from which more than 500 megawatts of new generating capacity will come on stream. Of that generated energy, 87 per cent will be from clean and renewable sources.

Human resource transformation through education is a key driver of our development. The achievement of inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all are inextricably linked to attaining our Sustainable Development Goals, including full employment, poverty eradication and gender equality. Access to free, quality primary and secondary education will soon be followed by free tertiary education. The Government of Guyana has invested in our indigenous communities through infrastructure, education, training, health care and the installation of Internet access capabilities. We have also begun training our workforce for 2030 and beyond. Soon we will be offering coding skills at both the primary and secondary school levels.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in all areas of life are national priorities. We are committed to ensuring equal access to education for girls and boys. Indeed, more girls are attending school in Guyana and graduating from university, and our focus now includes ensuring that our boys are not left behind. We have initiated several programmes to create earning and employment opportunities for women and to promote their financial independence, recognizing that their empowerment is inextricably linked to addressing the root causes of discrimination and gender-based violence and eradicating them.

To achieve balanced growth and sustainable and resilient development for Guyana, our strategies must focus on developing a diversified economic base, strengthening our agricultural and food production systems, transforming our human resources, investing in the social sector to deliver world class health, education and housing for all our people, ensuring an inclusive and equitable society in which prosperity is enjoyed by all, and building our future through the strengthening of our democratic values and respect for the rule of law.

As part of the global family, Guyana subscribes to the rules-based international order and to the need for a resurgence of political will and commitment to protecting the multilateral architecture. We are deeply concerned about the number of persons living in conflict situations. The ongoing war in Ukraine is having terrible effects on that country and region,

with the impact disproportionately felt by women and children. We urge for a speedy and peaceful resolution of the conflict and express support for the efforts of the Secretary-General in that regard. In our own region, we again join an overwhelming majority of members of the international community in reiterating Guyana's rejection of the sanctions imposed on Cuba. Guyana also affirms its solidarity with the Palestinian people and its support for their dignified existence in their own homeland in accordance with a two-State solution.

Guyana does not condone or support the threat or use of force in relations between States or in the resolution of disputes. Consistent with the Charter of the United Nations, we subscribe to the use of peaceful means to settle disputes. In that context, we thank those who have expressed support for our candidacy for non-permanent membership in the Security Council.

With regard to the challenge and threat posed to Guyana's sovereignty and territorial integrity by Venezuela, we remain — in the words of the Secretary-General at the opening of the general debate yesterday (see A/77/PV.4) — “committed to making the most of every diplomatic tool available to us for the pacific settlement of disputes”, as set out in the Charter. In our case, that tool is a judicial settlement, as determined by the Secretary-General himself. The world's nations can rest assured that Guyana will remain true to those peaceful processes and deny any effort to depart from them. The International Court of Justice has already affirmed its jurisdiction on the matter.

The Assembly must reinvigorate the spirit of multilateralism in finding solutions to the challenges that continue to bedevil the global community of States. I would like to conclude by reminding us all of the old saying that “A hungry man is an angry man”. Global inequality is linked to global insecurity, and global security is linked to the prosperity of all humankind.

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

*The meeting rose at 3.20 p.m.*