



# General Assembly

Seventy-fifth session

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Seventy-fifth session

Agenda item 8

General debate

## Note by the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to circulate, pursuant to decision 74/562 of 22 July 2020, the present compilation document of the statements delivered by Heads of State or other dignitaries by means of pre-recorded statements during the general debate and submitted to the President no later than the day on which the pre-recorded statement is played in the Assembly Hall.

The statements contained in the present document were delivered on the afternoon of Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 9th meeting of the General Assembly (see A/75/PV.9). Document A/75/592 and its addenda 1 through 11 contain the statements delivered in the 4th through the 15th meetings of the General Assembly (A/75/PV.4-A/75/PV.15).

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In accordance with decision 74/562, and without setting a precedent for mandated high-level meetings planned for future high-level weeks, the official records of the General Assembly will be supplemented by annexes containing pre-recorded statements submitted by Heads of State or other dignitaries, submitted to the President no later than the day on which such statements are delivered in the Assembly Hall. Submissions in this regard should be made to [estatements@un.org](mailto:estatements@un.org).

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**Azerbaijan** (see also A/75/PV.9, annex I)

**Address by Mr. Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

*Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 9th meeting of the General Assembly*

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Distinguished Heads of State and Government,

I congratulate the President of the 75th session of the General Assembly, Mr. Volkan Bozkir, on his election. We were delighted with the election of a representative of the brotherly Turkey to such a distinguished post. You can be sure that Azerbaijan will spare no effort in extending its support to you in this responsible and honorable endeavor.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals stipulates that, “there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development”. To achieve sustainable international peace and security, there must be put an end to occupation. Adherence to the norms and principles of the international law and implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions must be ensured.

Almost 20 per cent of the territory of Azerbaijan remains under occupation of Armenia for almost 30 years. Armenia used military force against Azerbaijan, in brutal violation of the UN Charter and occupied Nagorno-Karabakh and seven other regions of Azerbaijan. More than one million Azerbaijanis became refugees and internally displaced persons.

Armenia carried out the ethnic cleansing against the Azerbaijani population in the occupied territories. All Azerbaijanis have been forcibly expelled from occupied territories. Armenia committed a number of war crimes and crimes against humanity against Azerbaijani civilians. Armenia established the criminal, terrorist puppet regime in these territories to hide its responsibility for occupation of our lands.

Armenia committed Khojaly genocide in 1992 killing 613 peaceful residents of Khojaly, among them 106 women and 63 children. More than ten countries have recognized the Khojaly genocide.

Four UN Security Council resolutions demand immediate, complete, and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from Azerbaijan’s occupied territories.

In some case, UN Security Council resolutions have been implemented within days. However, Armenia continues to ignore the UN Security Council’s resolutions for almost 30 years. International sanctions must be imposed on Armenia as an aggressor state.

In blatant violation of the international law norms, Armenia implements a policy of illegal settlement on the occupied territories. While the international community, including Azerbaijan is concentrating on eliminating the consequences of Beirut explosion, Armenia misuses the situation by settling Lebanese people of Armenian origin in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

The illegal settlement is a gross violation of international law, including the Geneva Convention of 1949. This is a war crime. The illegal settlement in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan cannot have any legal effect.

Cultural heritage of Azerbaijani people on the territory of today's Armenia has been demolished and plundered. Armenia also destroyed all Azerbaijani historical and religious monuments in the occupied territories. The aim is to erase all Azerbaijani traces there.

Armenia illegally exploits natural resources and uses water reserves to create an artificial environmental crisis in the occupied territories. Armenia extracts gold and other precious metals and minerals of the occupied lands of Azerbaijan and exports to the international markets. It is a scheme of illegal business activities and money laundering.

International companies illegally exploiting Azerbaijan's natural resources on the occupied territories will face legal responsibility, if they don't stop their illicit activity immediately. Azerbaijan has already started to take legal action against persons and companies illegally exploiting our natural resources on the occupied lands.

Armenia deliberately targets civilian population and perpetrates provocations along the Line of Contact and Armenia-Azerbaijan border.

In April 2016, Armenia launched a large-scale military attack against Azerbaijan. As a result of this attack, 6 Azerbaijani civilians, including one child were killed, 26 civilians were wounded.

Armed Forces of Azerbaijan took counter-measures and liberated a part of occupied territories.

Deliberate attack by Armenia in 2017 led to death of 2 years old Zahra Guliyeva and her grandmother.

On 12 July 2020, Armenia perpetrated another provocation along the state border. Our military servicemen and a 76-year-old civilian were killed due to the artillery bombardment of Azerbaijan's Tovuz district, while extensive damage was done to civilian infrastructure.

The purpose of this provocation by Armenia was to create a new source of tension in the region, set aside the issue of Armenia's occupation of Azerbaijan's territories, involve third parties in the conflict, and damage Azerbaijan's strategic infrastructure projects. They also attempted to distract its people's attention from growing socioeconomic problems in Armenia.

However, Azerbaijan retaliated resolutely, and Armenia failed to achieve any of those objectives. Armenia faced another military defeat. Armenia appealed to ODKB (Collective Security Treaty Organization) for military assistance, thus admitting its defeat.

Recently, Armenian sabotage group attempted to penetrate through the Line of Contact. The head of this group was detained by Azerbaijani military servicemen on 23 August this year. He confessed that the group was planning to commit terror acts against Azerbaijani military servicemen and civilians.

The Armenian Government turned down Azerbaijan's proposal to exchange all captives based on the principle "all to all". Azerbaijani civilians Dilgam Asgarov and Shahbaz Guliyev, who visited the graves of their parents in the occupied territories, were taken hostage and tortured. They remain in captivity for more than six years.

The so-called "elections" this March on the occupied territories of Azerbaijan were yet another provocation. These so-called "elections", like previous ones, were strongly condemned and rejected by the international community, including OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs, Non-Aligned Movement, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, European Union, European Parliament and others.

Illegal presence of the armed forces of Armenia in the occupied lands of Azerbaijan remains a major threat to regional peace and security. Armenia tries to derail the peace process under the mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs. The aim pursued by Armenia is to maintain the current status-quo of occupation and to annex the occupied territories. Contrary to the constructive engagement of Azerbaijan, the Prime Minister of Armenia deliberately undermines the format and substance of negotiation process. His statement that "Karabakh is Armenia" seriously damages the negotiations process. His unacceptable and groundless so-called seven conditions to Azerbaijan have been rejected by us. We have put forward only one condition to achieve the peace. The armed forces of Armenia must withdraw from all occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The entire world recognizes Nagorno-Karabakh as integral part of Azerbaijan.

The Armenian Prime Minister announced the establishment of civilian militia consisting of tens of thousands of civilians who will be forced to undertake military actions against Azerbaijan. The minister of defense of Armenia calls for "new war for new territories". Armenia threatens Azerbaijan to strike major cities, critical civilian infrastructures such as Mingachevir water reservoir and Sangachal terminal, which is one of the world's biggest oil-gas terminals situated near Baku and providing energy security to tens of countries.

Armenia recruits and uses mercenaries and terrorists from different countries against Azerbaijan. Armenia is a state sponsoring terrorism. Armenia committed more than 30 terror acts in Azerbaijan. We have credible information about the presence of Armenian ASALA terror organization on the occupied territories.

Armenian terrorists have killed 24 Turkish diplomats. Varuzhan Karapetian, member of ASALA terror organization who committed a terror act killing many people of different nationalities, in the airport Orly in Paris later was extradited to Armenia and then pardoned by the president of Armenia. This terrorist was treated as a hero in Armenia.

Recently, Armenia has adopted its aggressive and offensive military doctrine and National Security Strategy. The National Security Strategy contains racist, chauvinistic and "Azerbaijanophobic" ideas.

The glorification of Nazism is the state policy of Armenia. Nazi general Garegin Nzhdeh has been turned into "national hero". After the Second World War, he was detained and sentenced to 25 years in prison and died there. Almost 6 meter high monument was built in the memory of Nzhdeh in the center of capital of Armenia. Members of a number of Armenian terror organizations like ASALA are glorified in this country.

Hostile, Azerbaijanohobic statements and provocations of Armenian leadership demonstrate that Armenia is preparing for a new aggression against Azerbaijan. We call on the UN and international community to urge Armenia to refrain from another military aggression.

The military-political leadership of Armenia will bear all responsibility for instigating provocations and escalation of tensions.

Regretfully, the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chair's activity has not yet delivered any results. Negotiations must not be conducted just for the sake of negotiations, they must be target-oriented and meaningful.

Presidents of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chair countries — France, Russia, United States — in their statements stressed that the status-quo is unacceptable. We welcome these statements, but statements are not enough. We need actions.

Our involvement in the negotiation process for almost 30 years is a clear demonstration of our commitment to peace. All 11 members of Minsk Group should be actively involved in the process.

In accordance with the UN Security Council resolution 853 (1993), updated timetable for withdrawal of armed forces of Armenia from occupied territories of Azerbaijan must be prepared. Appropriate UN institutions must contribute to the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions and return of Azerbaijani internally displaced persons to their native lands. The UN Security Council resolutions are not timespecific. These resolutions are valid until they are implemented. Misinterpretation of UN Security Council resolutions is unacceptable.

The Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict must be resolved on the basis of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan's territorial integrity has never been and will never be a subject of negotiations. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan must be completely restored. Nagorno-Karabakh is ancient and historical Azerbaijani lands. Karabakh is Azerbaijan.

We are seriously concerned by increasing cases of arms supply to Armenia, especially right after the military provocation of Armenia in Tovuz district of Azerbaijan. Active military clashes at the state border stopped on 16 July. Next day starting from 17 July until September, we witnessed delivery of more than one thousand tons of military equipment to Armenia by military cargo planes. Taking into account that Armenia is one of the poorest countries of the world and can not afford paying for weapons billions of US dollars, we assume that it gets weapons free of charge.

Supply of weapons to an aggressor and a country that perpetrated ethnic cleansing significantly undermines the peace negotiations and encourage the occupying state to instigate new military provocations. In this context, we urge all countries to refrain from supplying arms to Armenia.

Because of aggression against Azerbaijan, Armenia continues to face deep demographic, social and economic crisis. Regime change happened in Armenia two years ago, but fascist ideology of this failed state remains unchanged.

Human rights are massively violated in Armenia. Judges are pressured and blackmailed, journalists, opposition activists and political opponents jailed by despotic regime. In fact, a dictatorship has been established in Armenia.

Criminal cases have been opened against two former presidents of this country. Members of parliament despite their immunity are detained.

Mher Yegiazarian, an Armenian journalist and politician died in prison following hunger strike in January 2019. But there was no reaction from international organizations whose duty is to observe democracy and human rights worldwide. Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Freedom House and others turned blind eye on unhuman and brutal actions of despotic regime of Armenia. The reason can be that Pashinyan regime is financed and supported by Soros who sponsors many so-called human rights non-governmental organizations worldwide.

Political relations in this country have reached the point of crisis. The country has been ruled by warlords over 20 years. Incumbent political leadership continues the practice of previous regimes. There is no prospect for development of Armenia unless the consequences of military aggression against Azerbaijan are eliminated.

Armenia was the only country to oppose the initiative of holding the Special Session of UN General Assembly in response to COVID-19, whereas in Armenia, the situation with coronavirus is the most desperate. Armenia objected to this initiative only because Azerbaijan has launched it. The objection to such an endeavor is a product of irrational thought. It is another demonstration of the policy of “Azerbaijanophobia” that has prevailed in Armenia and promoted by the government. Hatred against Azerbaijani people is instilled in the young generation.

Despite the enormous difficulties caused by Armenian occupation, Azerbaijan managed to build a stable, modern, democratic and multicultural country. Development of democracy and human rights protection are among top priorities of our government. All fundamental freedoms are fully provided, including freedom of expression, media freedom, freedom of assembly, religious freedoms, as well as development of civil society. We launched broad political dialogue initiative several months ago. All major political parties supported this initiative. The political dialogue which successfully started would help to strengthen our political system and serve the cause of sustainable development of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan’s economy has developed rapidly, and GDP tripled in the last 17 years. Poverty in Azerbaijan went down from 49 per cent to 5 per cent within 17 years. Over 3700 schools have been built or completely renovated in Azerbaijan in the last 17 years. The literacy rate is close to 100 per cent in our country. As a country with significant progress in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, Azerbaijan has been one of the few states to submit voluntarily national reviews to the UN twice. Azerbaijan ranks 54th among 166 countries in the Sustainable Development Goals Index, according to the “Sustainable Development Report 2020”.

Azerbaijan has participated actively in regional connectivity projects, such as East-West, North-South, North-West transportation corridors, becoming one of Eurasia’s primary and reliable transport and logistics hubs. We have also commissioned the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad and the Baku International Trade Seaport with the potential of handling capacity of 25 million tons. According to the Davos Economic Forum’s Global Competitiveness Report 2019, among 141 countries, Azerbaijan ranks 11th for “Efficiency of railroad services”, 12th for “Efficiency of air transportation services”, 25th for “Efficiency of seaport services” and 27th for “Quality of road infrastructure”.

Azerbaijan is a member of the international space club. Today we have 3 satellites — 2 for telecommunication and one earth observation satellite. 80 per cent of our population uses the internet.

We have launched efficient measures to tackle the problem of freshwater shortage due to the climate change. Azerbaijan has ratified the Paris Agreement, with a voluntary obligation to achieve a 35 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to the base year 1990. In Azerbaijan, we use environmentally friendly natural gas and hydroelectric power stations for electricity generation.

Multiculturalism is the way of life for the people of Azerbaijan. We present to the world the example of tolerance and coexistence. The “Baku Process” launched by Azerbaijan in 2008 to strengthen dialogue and cooperation between the Muslim world and Europe, is supported by the United Nations. The UN General Assembly’s resolutions have recognized the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue held in Azerbaijan every two years as a “key global platform for promoting intercultural dialogue”.

The 7th Global Forum of the UN Alliance of Civilizations was held in Azerbaijan in 2016. Furthermore, Azerbaijan hosted the first ever European Games and 4th Islamic Solidarity Games in 2015 and 2017 respectively. These sporting events are our great contribution to the promotion of multiculturalism as well.

Pope Francis paid a visit to Azerbaijan in 2016. This February, I visited the Vatican and had a meeting with Pope Francis. During our meeting, Pope Francis referred to Azerbaijan as a “true example of tolerance”.

Azerbaijan attaches great significance to the restoration of religious monuments, mosques, churches, and synagogues. We have implemented joint projects to restore such religious and historical monuments in different countries.

The coronavirus pandemic has changed the situation in the world entirely, and as a result, new realities have emerged. Initially, the virus was expected to affect developing nations. However, the pandemic has had a significant impact on the developed nations as well. It shows once again that the virus recognizes no borders. It is only through mutual support and joint efforts we can overcome the pandemic.

Azerbaijan has taken timely and necessary preventive measures to stop the spread of the virus. Azerbaijan’s attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals has enabled us to conduct an effective fight against the pandemic. The healthcare infrastructure in Azerbaijan has been developed and renovated significantly, with almost 700 hospitals and healthcare facilities built or completely renovated in the past 17 years.

Thanks to measures undertaken, the country’s situation with COVID-19 has remained under control. Our citizens’ life and health is priority for us, despite the economic difficulties caused by pandemic.

The socio-economic stimulus package worth over \$2 billion has been released to ensure economic stability, tackle employment issues, and ensure macroeconomic and fiscal stability. The social relief measures cover nearly 5 million people, which is a half of our population.

The World Health Organization named Azerbaijan an example in the fight against the pandemic.



We have made voluntary contributions to the World Health Organization in the amount of \$10 million in 2 equal tranches. The second tranche was allocated for the Non-Aligned Movement's member states. Azerbaijan has provided humanitarian and financial assistance to more than 30 countries with respect to coronavirus.

With a unanimous decision of all 120 countries of Non-Aligned Movement Azerbaijan was elected as a chair of this body. In October 2019 Azerbaijan assumed the chairmanship of Non-Aligned Movement during the 18th Summit of the Heads of State and Government held in Baku. In my statement at the summit I stressed that Azerbaijan will do its utmost to advocate for interests of Non-Aligned Movement's countries. Azerbaijan will defend justice and norms of international law.

The Non-Aligned Movement's Extraordinary Summit in response to coronavirus via videoconference, was held on our initiative in May 2020. During that Summit, I suggested holding of the Special Session of the UN General Assembly in response to coronavirus at the level of the heads of state and government. This initiative was supported by more than 130 UN member states.

I think the Special Session will serve as a framework for addressing the pandemic's impact on all spheres and contribute to the efforts of eliminating its consequences.

International peace and security problems, the pandemic's impact on the countries of the world call for solidarity between the countries. I want to put forward several proposals to this end:

The reforms within international organizations are particularly timely and essential in the post-pandemic period. In this regard, particular attention should be paid to increasing the UN's role and prestige on the global level and its ability to undertake more adequate response measures concerning the challenges of modern times.

The non-fulfillment of the Security Council resolutions undermines the prestige of the United Nations. Implementation mechanisms must be created for the UN Security Council resolutions.

Refugees and IDPs have become the most vulnerable group of the pandemic period. The return of these vulnerable groups to their native lands in safety and dignity gains great urgency.

Ensuring affordability and fair distribution of a vaccine is necessary, while the least developed countries should get it free of charge. In this regard, additional oversight mechanisms should be developed.

The scope of the pandemic's negative impact on implementing the Sustainable Development Goals by the countries must be carefully analyzed, and solutions must be formulated.

Thank you for your attention.



**Zambia** (see also A/75/PV.9, annex II)

**Address by Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia**

*Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 9th meeting of the General Assembly*

Your excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkir, President of the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly;

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres;

Distinguished Heads of States and Governments;

Honourable Ministers;

Heads of intergovernmental and other organisations;

Excellencies;

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

Let me join the previous speakers in congratulating Your Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkir on the assumption of the presidency of the 75th regular session of the United Nations General Assembly.

I Am optimistic that your excellency's wealth of knowledge and experience as a diplomat and parliamentarian will indeed serve us well during the 75th session.

I wish to also extend Zambia's sincere appreciation to His Excellency Prof. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande for his able leadership during the 74th session.

Mr. President,

The theme for this session, "the future we want, the United Nations we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism-confronting COVID-19 through effective multilateral action" presents us an opportunity to evaluate the existing multilateral approaches to address the challenges affecting our peoples.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only decimated economies and exacerbated poverty, but it has also shown us how interconnected and interdependent our world is, and how we must work together to respond effectively to these challenges that confront us today.

Under these circumstances, an opportunity has manifested itself on the need to maximise our comparative advantages, as well as share expertise, innovations and indigenous knowledge to be utilised for the betterment of our people's livelihoods. I remain confident that with concerted efforts and unity of purpose, together we can conquer this pandemic on a global scale.

The post-coronavirus landscape will require urgent action to guarantee recovery and to lay a solid foundation for a better world.

Accordingly, Zambia supports the calls for major interventions such as: (I) debt relief and or cancellation for developing Member States; (II) enhanced collaboration in research for the vaccination and cure of COVID-19; and (III) mobilisation of resources from the local and international community.

Mr. President,

Prior to the onset of COVID-19, young people were already three times more likely to be unemployed compared to their adult counterparts. As the pandemic pushes the global economy into a deeper crisis, the young generation is once again at risk to disproportionately bear the brunt of mass unemployment and under-protection.

In this regard, I wish to share that the Zambian Government launched a multi sectoral youth empowerment programme to support the young entrepreneurs. The multi-sectoral approach has helped ensure that programmes and activities to empower and create employment opportunities for the youth are mainstreamed across all sectors.

Mr. President,

In 2015, we the members of the UN pledged to leave no one behind and shift world onto a path of sustainable development prosperity for all. This commitment is indeed still alive to most of us.

Although the road before us is laden with challenges, we should neither waiver, nor surrender to any cynicism on the accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

For its part, the Government of the Republic of Zambia, working closely with the and other key stakeholders such as the private sector and civil societies developed the national SDGS coordination framework to guide the implementation, monitoring and reporting on SDGS and integrated it into the country's national development plan.

Mr. President,

Zambia remains supportive of international efforts aimed at the peaceful resolution of conflicts through advocacy and support shown for peacekeeping missions. Zambia remains an active player in peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations in the region.

In this regard, we would like to urge the United Nations to remain resolute in its duty of protecting these vulnerable persons, and to redouble its efforts to bring about a more peaceful world. This is the bedrock of the UN foundation, as espoused by its Charter.

Mr. President,

As we mark the 75th anniversary of this, our great institution, we cannot but conclude that, the United Nations' importance and continued relevance to mankind is beyond question. It is in this context that we need to revitalize it so that it can fulfil the ideals for which it was established.

I thank you.

**Equatorial Guinea** (see also A/75/PV.9, annex III)**Address by Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President and Head of State of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea**

*Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 9th meeting of the General Assembly*

[Original: Spanish]

Mr. President,  
Distinguished Heads of State and Government,  
Mr. Secretary General,  
Your Majesties, dear Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I wish to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkir of the Republic of Turkey on his unanimous election as President of the United Nations General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session. Please be assured, Mr. President, of the support and cooperation of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

I would also like to express my gratitude and appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande of the sister Federal Republic of Nigeria, for his leadership and magnificent work at a particularly sensitive time. We wish him every success in his new endeavours.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Antonio Guterres, for his contribution to the search for peace and development in the world. As fate would have it, our commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the creation of our great Organization has coincided with the greatest health catastrophe that humankind has had to face in recent years, namely the coronavirus disease pandemic (COVID-19).

The COVID-19 pandemic has entered our lives abruptly, with a significant number of human victims in addition to incalculable collateral damage to the global economy. Humankind must show solidarity, as we are stronger when we act together, cooperate with one other and share our experiences. Only strengthened cooperation will lead us to the eradication of this pandemic.

COVID-19 is an enemy to us all and must be fought as such. It is not enough to eradicate it — it is equally important to agree upon measures to expedite post-COVID recovery, which requires emergency action to accelerate and enable rapid growth and stimulate the economy with the aim of a swift return to normality, leaving no one behind. That also demands common efforts and, in that regard, we agree with the United Nations in its call for a global response to the crisis.

Mr. President,

Unity and solidarity were decisive factors 75 years ago when the United Nations was created in response to the results of the Second World War. The victors of the war, despite their conflicting interests, were able, for a moment, to unite and put the salvation and liberation of the world before their own interests, which was an absolute priority and necessity due to the damage and devastation caused by the war.

They were able to create this great Organization with the objective of preventing the world from the scourge of war.

The Charter of the United Nations is the foundation of international law and multilateralism, which have proven to be the best tools to face the challenges of humankind and to make our planet a more just, prosperous and peaceful place. There are no viable alternatives to multilateralism, nor to the prevalence of the spirit of the Charter.

Seventy-five years have passed and the world is obviously no longer the same, but the values and spirit of the Charter remain. While the United Nations has played an important role in the resolution of many conflicts, it has been instrumental in the struggle for decolonization and has addressed humanitarian crises in many regions of the world.

At the same time, it is important for the United Nations to adapt to the current times and realities. It must be reformed on the basis of justice, equality and solidarity. We support the reforms undertaken by the Secretary-General, which must lead the Organization to be more effective, more agile and closer to the people and their problems. The main organs of the United Nations must be reformed. We need a revitalized General Assembly with greater influence on Member States.

But the organ that best portrays the current immobility of the United Nations is the Security Council, which clearly no longer reflects the reality of today's world. Therefore, Equatorial Guinea remains firmly aligned with the demands contained in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, which state, in short, that Africa must not be underestimated nor disadvantaged in any way. The historic injustices against the African continent must be repaired. It is ironic that, while African issues make up 75 per cent of the agenda of the Security Council's agenda, Africa's voice is stifled and underprivileged in that organ when it comes to addressing issues of vital importance to the continent.

Mr. President,

Equatorial Guinea firmly believes in the three pillars of the United Nations, namely development, human rights and peace and security, which have inspired our political direction when designing the programmes that guide our political action. We therefore defend the supremacy of international law, which is based on the Charter of the United Nations. The Charter is the result of jointly agreed rules that are based on the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and respect for their territorial integrity. Any misinterpretation of those principles leads directly to confrontation. International conflicts and disputes should be resolved by peaceful means and in accordance with the principles of justice and international law.

All States must refrain from the threat or use of force against the integrity or political independence of another, or any other act that runs counter to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

Equatorial Guinea's term as a member of the Security Council came to an end in December 2019, where its voice was heard loud and clear. The contribution of our country was perceived on an equal footing with the most important countries in the world in the search for solutions to major issues of international peace and security

and stability. We have contributed independently and rigorously to the fight against the drivers of conflicts in the world, including phenomena such as mercenaries, as well as playing a part in the pacification and resolution of many wars.

Our departure from the Security Council does not, in any way, imply that we have given up on our goals; on the contrary, we have reaffirmed them and will use the valuable experience we have acquired to continue fighting for peace and security and prosperity in the interest of the entire world.

The international community must combine its efforts to help Africa implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development alongside the African Union's Agenda 2063; begin work on building infrastructure in the areas of health, education, economy and trade; and focus on addressing the problems facing Africa in the areas of youth, women, refugees and employment with a view to improving socioeconomic development in African countries.

The Security Council should strengthen communication and coordination with the African Union Peace and Security Council; create mechanisms for joint planning, decision-making, assessments and briefings; undertake joint work in the areas of early warning and the strategic review, design and deployment of mandates in order to enhance cooperation.

Mr. President,

The sad reality is that most of the conflicts affecting the world are still active, including long-lasting conflicts such as the situation in Syria, the clashes in Libya, the war in Yemen, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the situation in Afghanistan, instability in the Middle East, the conflict in the Central African Republic and the war in Somalia. These conflicts, among others, remain unresolved without clear and just solutions and are aggravated by phenomena such as the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons and the plundering of natural resources.

We are even more concerned about the situation in the Sahel where, despite the significant efforts deployed, the necessary stabilization of the situation has not been achieved, preventing this troubled region of Africa from optimizing its undeniable potential.

Equatorial Guinea believes that political changes should be made only through democratic means and that the use of force to achieve political objectives is unacceptable.

Stability in Africa will have repercussions throughout the world. If Africa does not succeed in satisfactorily resolving its problems, then other continents will not be able to achieve sustainable stability — for instance, thousands of our young people are risking their lives on dangerous journeys to migrate to other shores. Denying the evident globality of the world will lead us only to perpetuate the common problems that require our joint efforts.

Mr. President,

Equatorial Guinea requests the lifting of the economic, financial and commercial blockade against Cuba so that this country can optimize its enormous potential and meet the needs of its people.

The phenomenon of climate change deserves the same attention of the international community. It has already had devastating effects on our lives in the

form of hurricanes, cyclones, fires and floods, inter alia. The degradation of the environment negatively impacts many of the activities that sustain a large part of our people, so we must urgently mobilize to find a lasting and sustainable solution to this phenomenon.

In conclusion, Mr. President, we hope that the world will choose the path of solidarity. If we unite in our efforts — which are by no means insignificant — and focus them in the right direction, we can make today's world a better place and ensure a peaceful and promising future for present and future generations.

Thank you very much.

**Haiti** (see also A/75/PV.9, annex IV)

**Address by Mr. Jovenel Moïse, President of the Republic of Haiti**

*Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 9th meeting of the General Assembly*

[Original: French]

Mr. President of the General Assembly,  
Mr. Secretary General of the Organization,  
Ladies and Gentlemen of all ranks and titles,  
Distinguished delegates,

Allow me, at the outset, to commend His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkir of Turkey on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session. The unanimous vote is a token of recognition and a guarantee of the success of the work the General Assembly at this ordinary session.

I would also like to commend the remarkable work of His Excellency Ambassador Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, who led the work of the seventy-fourth session with great dexterity, despite the difficulties related to the coronavirus pandemic.

At the same time, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, on his courageous and ambitious initiatives aimed at strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations system for the common good of our planet.

Mr. President,

Our world is currently facing a major health crisis caused by COVID-19. The multidimensional consequences of the virus, coupled with new conflicts and asymmetric wars, terrorism and violent extremism, global socioeconomic inequalities and climate change, demand our response.

Today, more than ever, we need a more cohesive and effective multilateral system that will enable the States Members of the Organization to develop strategies to address challenges and achieve the holistic vision of a better future for all, in accordance with the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations on the future we want.

Mr. President,

It is no coincidence that “eradicating poverty in all its forms and throughout the world” is the number one goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It is unfortunate to note that global efforts to implement that central objective are far from meeting real needs. Even today, a large percentage of the world’s population still suffers from poverty and hunger. We will not be able to reverse this trend without a broad mobilization of financial resources.

There is still a striking gap between the commitments we have made and the actions underway to eradicate world poverty. Haiti has received several billion US dollars in aid from the international community over the past 10 years.



However, the living conditions of Haitians have not improved. The billions of dollars spent have often not taken into account our priorities, our needs or even our strategy to fight poverty.

From a sustainable development perspective, we call on donors and all friendly countries to conduct a critical analysis of international aid to Haiti in order to assess its effectiveness.

We want projects that are adapted to our needs, that respond to our priorities and that allow us to implement economic development focused on people, on national production and on strengthening the capacities of our institutions. We want projects that have a positive impact on poverty and that integrate the country's social and environmental issues.

Some donors are beginning to understand the need to align themselves with the will of the Government of the Republic of Haiti in choosing its priorities. We congratulate them!

Mr. President,

We are 10 years away from the target date for the universal achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Many countries have already made significant progress towards this goal.

Others, despite their efforts, are still lagging behind. In Haiti, our emergency, recovery and long-term development needs remain immense and require consistent investment in several areas. From where my country currently stands, the pursuit of sustainable development objectives is a major challenge.

Major and sustained efforts must be deployed in priority areas such as road, agricultural, electrical, digital, port and airport infrastructures; education; health coverage; social housing; the mobilization of foreign direct investment; reforestation; environmental protection; revival of agricultural production; universal access to energy from renewable sources; and universal access to credit, especially for young people and farmers.

Mr. President,

I am fully aware of my responsibility to ensure that the essential conditions are in place to guarantee Haiti's long-term security, stability and development. My Administration, which has been facing a complex socioeconomic crisis and the excessive and violent polarization of the political class for several months now, will not be able to deal with it alone. The Republic of Haiti will recover, but only with sustained, coherent, effective and well-coordinated support from the international community.

Today, the Republic of Haiti has been stripped of an institution that is indispensable to the smooth functioning of democracy: its Parliament. We have established a new Provisional Electoral Council to conduct credible, transparent, inclusive, free, honest and democratic elections.

Faithful to its historic traditions, the Republic of Haiti has always strived to promote and defend the values and principles of universal freedoms, lasting peace and cooperation among nations around the world.

In that regard, my country continues to stand alongside the Member States of the international community that wish to build a more just and balanced world

order, in accordance with the purposes and principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations.

It is in this spirit that I welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General, who has made relevant proposals to reform the Organization. I encourage him to intensify his efforts to strengthen the United Nations so that it is can match up to the new challenges of the twenty-first century.

To that end, I encourage all States to commit not only to developing a common understanding and taking collective action in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, but to accelerating the implementation of action programmes in line with the three pillars of the United Nations, namely development, peace and security and human rights.

To Member States,

While I offer my sincere condolences to the countries that have been greatly affected by COVID-19, I would like to thank all the partner countries that have helped the Haitian State to better manage the pandemic, in particular the Republic of China (Taiwan).

It is time for the world to recognize this nation's right to exist and afford it its rightful place in international forums, particularly the United Nations.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like, on this exceptional occasion, to invite the members of the General Assembly to reflect and meditate on this concise yet crucial quote by C. Wilfred Jenks on the future of peace, development and security in the world: "The choice is simple yet brutal: either we live together, or we perish together".

I thank you.

**Viet Nam** (see also A/75/PV.9, annex V)

**Address by Mr. Nguyen Phu Trong, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam**

*Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 9th meeting of the General Assembly*

[Original: Vietnamese; English translation provided by the delegation]

Your Excellency Volkan Bozkir, President of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly,

Your Excellency António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to congratulate Your Excellency Volkan Bozkir upon your election as the President of the 75th United Nations General Assembly. I am fully confident that under your experienced and able leadership, our session will be a success.

Let me also voice my appreciation for the important contributions that His Excellency Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, President of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, and Secretary-General António Guterres have made despite the tremendous challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. President,

We are celebrating the 75th anniversary of the United Nations and entering the third decade of the 21st century in extraordinary circumstances.

For the first time in history, the Leaders of Member States are unable to gather at the UNGA General Debate . This, however, does not diminish our resolve and ability to deliberate and seek solutions for issues of common concern.

I echo the Secretary-General's assessment that we are facing the most formidable challenges since the birth of the UN, in particular, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy, society, politics and, most of all, human life.

Mr. President,

Against this backdrop, I welcome the theme of our Session: "The Future We Want, the UN We Need: Reaffirming our Collective Commitment to Multilateralism — confronting COVID-19 through effective multilateral action". Allow me to share some of my thoughts along that line.

First, global and regional multilateral mechanisms must be strengthened. We need a United Nations that is truly cohesive and inclusive, where every member, large or small, rich or poor, can have a voice in deciding matters of common concern. The UN must serve as the "incubator" for multilateral cooperation initiatives for peace, development and prosperity. Further reforms should be undertaken to transform the UN into a stronger and more effective organization that can fulfill its role of harmonizing the interests and behaviors of states in the face of the monumental changes of our time.

Second, the United Nations Charter and the fundamental principles of international law must be upheld and advanced as the norms of behavior for

all countries in contemporary international relations. We must be resolute and perseverant in advancing cooperation and friendship to counter conflict and hostility. We must choose dialogue over confrontation, and peaceful settlement of disputes over unilateral acts of imposition. In this spirit, Viet Nam calls for the removal of unilateral sanctions that adversely affect countries' socio-economic development and people's livelihoods, especially the embargo imposed upon Cuba.

Third, the COVID-19 pandemic serves as a stern warning to us all, requiring our stronger commitments and stronger actions to promote sustainable, inclusive and human-centered development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should continue to be the framework for our cooperation to overcome this pandemic for sustainable recovery. Our policies and actions should have the interest of our people at the heart, so that no one, and no country, will be left behind. Developing countries should receive financial assistance, technological and commercial facilitation to realize the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. President,

Seventy-five years ago, on 2 September 1945, President Ho Chi Minh delivered the Declaration of Independence that proclaimed the birth of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam (now the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam). Since those early days, President Ho Chi Minh, on multiple occasions, sent letters to the founding members of the UN, expressing Viet Nam's desire to become a member of the Organization. While it was not until 1977 that this aspiration became reality, the long and tenacious struggle of Viet Nam to win and defend national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity served as a concrete contribution to the worldwide movement for peace, democracy and social progress — ultimately the same noble goals to which the UN aspires. Let me take this occasion, on behalf of the Vietnamese people, to express our deepest gratitude to countries and international friends for your generous support towards our past righteous struggle for national independence and present national development.

Viet Nam was once a poor and backward country ravaged by war, strangled by embargo. After thirty-five years of Doi Moi reform, Viet Nam has emerged as a middle-income developing country and is aiming to be a high-income industrial country by 2045. In the fight against COVID-19, difficulties notwithstanding, Viet Nam has recorded positive and noteworthy outcomes. We have successfully contained the pandemic while promoting social and economic development. Out of international solidarity and with the understanding that the pandemic is only defeated when we all win, Viet Nam has engaged in cooperation and experience sharing with many countries, including support provided to those worst affected by the pandemic and to the common international efforts.

Viet Nam pursues a foreign policy of independence, self-reliance, multilateralization and diversification of relations. As a reliable partner and an active, responsible member of the international community, Viet Nam attaches importance to the work of the UN and has been expanding our comprehensive cooperation with the Organization. Viet Nam will work with member states to make the UN more democratic, transparent and effective.

As a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the term 2020-2021, Viet Nam promotes dialogue, de-escalation of tension and confrontation, and fair and reasonable solutions to regional and global peace and

security issues. We champion multilateralism and the respect for international law and the UN Charter, and strengthen relations between the UN and regional organizations, especially ASEAN.

As the 2020 ASEAN Chair, Viet Nam is working with fellow member states to build a region of peace, friendship and cooperation, in order to realize the vision of ASEAN as a politically cohesive, economically integrated and socially responsible community. Together with countries within and outside the region, we are committed to the maintenance and promotion of peace, stability, maritime security and safety and freedom of navigation in the East Sea (South China Sea), in accordance with international law, particularly the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We call on all concerned parties to exercise restraint, avoid unilateral acts that would complicate the situation, and settle disputes and differences through peaceful means with due respect for diplomatic and legal processes.

Mr. President,

Over the last 75 years, member states have painstakingly built a United Nations for peace, cooperation and development. We are duty-bound to strengthen and reinvigorate the world's largest multilateral organization, particularly in face of the immense challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

Thank you for your kind attention.

**Zimbabwe** (see also A/75/PV.9, annex VI)

**Address by Mr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe**

*Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 9th meeting of the General Assembly*

Your Excellency, Ambassador Volkan Bozkir, President of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly,

Your Majesties,

Your Excellencies, fellow Heads of State and Government,

Your Excellency, Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Allow me first to congratulate you, Ambassador Volkan Bozkir on your election to the Presidency of the 75th Session of the General Assembly. Zimbabwe is confident that under your able stewardship, the General Assembly will proficiently address the challenges that are presently facing our organization and our world.

I also wish to convey our sincere gratitude to the President of the 74th Session of the Assembly, Professor Tijjani Muhamad-Bande, for skillfully executing his responsibilities during his tenure.

This year we celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of our United Nations organization. It is gratifying that we continue to make a qualitative difference in the lives of many people throughout the world. Our jubilation has sadly been marred by the COVID-19 pandemic which has brought to the fore the importance of unity and effective multilateral cooperation in building a future we want.

The theme of this 75th Session, “The future we want, the United Nations we need: reaffirming our collective commitments to multilateralism-confronting COVID-19 through effective multilateral action”, is therefore apt and most appropriate.

Today humanity is at a crossroads as we are confronted by complex challenges that do not respect any borders.

Multilateralism is under increasing threat from the blind pursuit of narrow interests. We must therefore strengthen international amity and goodwill as well as uphold mutual respect and observe the sovereign equality of States.

Your Excellencies,

Zimbabwe is on a new path. Like other nations in the region, we are facing humanitarian challenges which in our case have been worsened by the illegal sanctions, the negative impact of climate change, and compounded by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, my administration continues to record notable achievements towards sustainable development which leaves no one behind. Our macro-economic stabilization reforms have seen the reduction of our budget deficit to a single digit,

as well as a positive balance of our current account, coupled with foreign exchange rate and prices stability.

Major infrastructure projects are ongoing, such as the rehabilitation and construction of health service facilities, water and sanitation infrastructure as well as roads, dams and bridges across the country. Investments in mining, agriculture, tourism, energy and manufacturing sectors are on the increase.

We are optimistic that the implementation of the second phase of Ease of Doing Business Reforms will help to further improve our World Bank rankings.

Similarly, my Administration is decisive in entrenching Constitutionalism, democracy and the rule of law, including the protection of property rights. The commitment of my Government to these cardinal principles remains unwavering. It is in this spirit and in line with our Constitution that in July this year, my Government concluded the landmark Global Compensation Deed, with former farm owners. We count on the support and goodwill of the international community as we mobilize resources to implement the Agreement.

The alignment of our laws to the Constitution is almost complete, while new pieces of legislation continue to be enacted to strengthen our institutions. The raft of political reforms will benefit the generality of Zimbabweans as we consolidate our respect of human rights.

My administration places great importance on fostering national unity and cohesion. The culture of dialogue across all sectors is taking root, with activities and programmes under the auspices of our homegrown Political Actors Dialogue (POLAD), gaining momentum.

Recently, the UN Secretary General; the High Commissioner for Human Rights; and the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, all acknowledged the deleterious effects of the illegal economic sanctions on our country. These are a breach of international law and compromise Zimbabwe's capacity to implement and achieve Sustainable Development especially SDGs 2, 3, 8, 9 and 17. We, therefore, call on the General Assembly to strongly pronounce itself against these Unilateral illegal sanctions.

Your Excellencies,

Let me assure you that Zimbabwe continues to implement measures to battle the COVID-19 pandemic. Over and above instituting phased lockdowns, following the World Health Organization guidelines, my Government has also provided ZWL\$18 billion (approximately US\$720 million) economic stimulus package.

Zimbabwe welcomes calls by the UN Secretary General and the Director General of the WHO, Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus, for the COVID-19 vaccine to be treated as a global public good with guaranteed fair distribution and mechanisms to ensure equal access.

We are encouraged by the ongoing cooperation between the UN Secretary General, the G20 and the Bretton Woods institutions towards finding solutions to developing countries' debt and related issues. While the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have supported a debt standstill up to the end of the year, more needs to be done.



As a committed partner in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Zimbabwe welcomed the launch of the Decade of Action. In this spirit, we hosted the 6th Africa Regional Forum for Sustainable Development in Victoria Falls in February 2020, which adopted the Victoria Falls Declaration on the Decade of Action for Sustainable Development in Africa.

As we move forward, we believe that strengthening public health systems, international solidarity and partnerships are critical.

Your Excellencies,

As we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the 4th World Conference on Women on 1 st October this year, I am gratified to highlight that Zimbabwe has taken major steps in implementing the Beijing Declaration. These include the adoption of a gender responsive Constitution, establishment of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission, enactment of several pieces of legislation to outlaw all practices that infringe on the rights of women and girls such as forced and child marriages and discrimination against women in inheritance matters. My Government has also set up a Women's Bank to facilitate access to finance by women-owned businesses and projects.

Your Excellencies,

It is now more than 15 years since the adoption of the Ezulwini Consensus, reaffirmed in the Sirte Declaration. It is deeply regrettable that reform of the Security Council and implementation of Africa's position has not been achieved. We cannot continue with a situation where over 16 per cent of the world's population does not have a voice in decision making. This is a serious indictment to our avowed commitment to multilateralism and the basic principles of natural justice, fairness and equity.

Peace, security and stability are a pre-requisite for sustainable development. This can only be achieved in an inclusive process characterized by equally shared commitment and responsibilities. We count on the international community to strengthen its support for AU-led peace efforts. We also look forward to greater collaboration between the AU and the UN in maintaining sustainable international peace and security in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, more particularly in ensuring the effective implementation of the AU's campaign on "Silencing the Guns".

Self-determination and independence are intrinsic and fundamental rights that should be enjoyed by all without distinction. We call on the Security Council to increase its efforts towards ending the occupation of Western Sahara.

Zimbabwe also calls upon the Secretary-General to appoint his Personal Envoy for Western Sahara without further delay.

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me conclude by reaffirming Zimbabwe's commitment to work for a better world. There is no better way of achieving a peaceful and stable world than through mutual respect, genuine multilateralism buttressed by much needed reforms and

respect for international law. Recommitting ourselves to these ideals will pave way for the just world that we all yearn for.

I thank you.

**Timor-Leste** (see also A/75/PV.9, annex VII)

**Address by Mr. Francisco Guterres Lú-Olo, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste**

*Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 9th meeting of the General Assembly*

[Original: Portuguese; English translation provided by the delegation]

Mr. President of the United Nations General Assembly,  
Ambassador Volkan Bozkir;

Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres; Excellencies,

I greet all participants, with the hope that this sui generis meeting will be one more decisive step in the search for a more humane world, with international peace and security, in an environment of fair and balanced relationship between all nations.

I congratulate you Mr. President, on your election. I wish you success during your term.

I appreciate Ambassador Tijjani Muhammad-Bande's successful mandate during these difficult times. My fellow countryman, Emanuel Tilman, had the opportunity to work in your office. The experience he gained working with the President will be precious for his life.

The topic chosen by the President is a challenge. For my country, this is a real commitment. On behalf of my People, I thank and pay homage to all who are on the front line and express condolences to those who have lost their loved ones.

To the fear and insecurity that have seized people, health systems have been weakened and the socio-economic fabric has been totally shaken, causing the loss of millions of jobs. On March 21, the first positive case was confirmed in my country. Before the first State of Emergency was decreed, our citizens already took action.

In preventing and combating COVID-19, the Government worked in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO).

The borders were closed, quarantine and isolation units were created, and teams were formed to sensitize our people.

The establishment of an Integrated Crisis Management Center allowed a coordinated work between all sectors involved in this fight.

Also important was the support of other partners such as China, Australia, Cuba, the United States of America and the European Union, with support in human resources and the donation of equipment, needed for this fight. Timor-Leste has recorded, since March, 27 positive cases, of which 26 have been recovered. To date, no one has gone into intensive care.

As President of the Republic, and in strict agreement with the Government, we took advantage of the impact of COVID-19 to establish an Economic Recovery Plan, centered on people, which will reactivate the national economy, with measures in the short, medium and long term. It is a means of stopping the loss of jobs and income.

We take it as an opportunity to correct and address structural weaknesses.

May the vaccine to be produced become a global public good. Also, in the spirit of collective and solidarity action, the Secretary General, my dear friend António Guterres's Response Plan to COVID-19, and the various initiatives to alleviate the burden of debt and the financing for development are worth mentioning. I am deeply convinced that together in a genuine spirit of solidarity, the Humankind will overcome this challenge.

Despite the cruelty, the pandemic has given us the opportunity to be increasingly aware of the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda.

Global cooperation and partnerships, both at the regional and national levels, are crucial to build a resilient, sustainable and inclusive world.

In the spirit that no one will be left behind, we must pay attention to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and, moreover, to the most vulnerable, fragile countries and to the Small Island Developing States (SIDS). We are a post-conflict country and under the spirit of solidarity, Timor-Leste was the basis for the establishment of a coalition of Fragile States, known as the g7+, whose Secretariat is based in Dili.

It is also in the spirit of contributing to peace and stability in the Region, and in the context of the challenges that any State faces and that concerns its insertion in the region in which it finds itself, that my country is committed to the process of joining ASEAN, regional block with more than 600 million inhabitants.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The disrespect for Nature has caused climate changes with negative impact on Humankind. The destruction of ecosystems and biodiversity is linked to the new diseases of which COVID-19 is an illustration.

Thus, Timor-Leste believes that the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals embody essential means and issues on the road to the reconstruction of our countries. The development of family farming, the rational and planned use of natural resources, the fight against pollution and intelligent policies to protect the environment, with the engagement of citizens are crucial issues that must be respected so that Life can be possible on our planet.

As Head of State, I develop in my country the program "A citizen, a tree" which is progressively being implemented. To the citizens who contributed to the well-being of the communities, the Presidency of the Republic awards, annually, the Sérgio Vieira de Mello award. In 2019, the prize was awarded to a civil society organization that reforested affected mangrove areas, In order to reduce plastic waste pollution, the country has adopted a recycling policy and we already have a small unit for processing and treating plastic bottles in order to produce relevant application material (brick for building houses and chairs for domestic use).

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Indonesian invasion and occupation resulted in a prolonged conflict that seemed untractable. The UN's engagement was very relevant, and it became a success story. Allow me to emphasize the fact that the process of reconciliation between Indonesia and my country is an example of good neighborhood and cooperation, despite the painful and tragedy past.

We have been a full member of the United Nations for eighteen (18) years.

As an internationally recognized sovereign State, we are giving our contribution to shape a more updated and needed UN. One of our distinguished citizens, the former President, José Ramos Horta, chaired the High-Level Panel for peace operations. The panel aimed to reinforce the effectiveness of peace operations.

As an active member of the United Nations, we made our contribution to reinforcing the awareness on the Sustainable Development Goals. Our own experience pointed to the need for States to have strong institutions capable of facing the challenges and threats of modern times. We are convinced that international conflicts must be resolved through negotiation and dialogue. These tools allow the promotion of the peace that is so necessary for humankind. We are concerned by the recent increase in tension over the maritime dispute in the South China Sea. I proudly say that we were the first country to use the compulsory conciliation mechanism, advocated by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We call on all parties involved to resolve their differences through dialogue and negotiations in order to achieve a peaceful solution.

We feel that it is just, to call for an end to the embargo suffered by the People and the Government of Cuba. The solidarity of Cuban scientists, doctors and health professionals, in the fight against COVID-19, deserves our respect and admiration.

History and language ties us to the countries and peoples that make up the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, the CPLP. We were honored to preside over this Community for 2 years. We are concerned about the terrorist violence that befalls the north of Mozambique, a brother country.

Time and again, we are all faced with racial and sexual violence. We strongly defend gender equality and the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples. Racism is unacceptable and absolutely abominable.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year of 2020 is the last year of the third international decade for the eradication of colonialism. In Western Sahara, the United Nations Mission — MINURSO — has been in the territory for almost three decades, but we have not yet seen satisfactory progress. It is urgent to appoint a Special Envoy of the Secretary General for Western Sahara in order to speed up the process of negotiations between the parties in conflict and find a solution that guarantees the Saharawi People the exercise of the right to self-determination, according to the United Nations Charter and other relevant Resolutions.

We have established diplomatic relations with both the Israeli and the Palestinian States. We are for the peaceful solution and the coexistence of two States in that so prone conflict region.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with humility that I say to you: I myself have experience of suffering and adversity however I am deeply convinced that together we will come out stronger and we will win as humankind.

**Sao Tome and Principe** (see also A/75/PV.9, annex VIII)**Address by Mr. Evaristo do Espirito Santo Carvalho, President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe**

*Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 9th meeting of the General Assembly*

[Original: Portuguese; English translation provided by the delegation]

Honorable President of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Honorable Secretary-General of the United Nations

Honorable Heads of State and Government

Honorable Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

Your Excellencies

I would like to begin my remarks by congratulating Mr. VOLKAN BOZKIR for his election as President of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, and offer him our full support during his term in office, which we wish to be full of successes.

Indeed, his election reflects the recognition, among the Member States of our Organization, of the role that his country has played in the international arena and his extensive experience. We are certain that this will greatly contribute to the success of this Session's work, and will allow him to identify better paths toward the resolution of the major issues facing the International Community.

We would also like to express our gratitude to Professor TIJJANIMUHAMMAD BANDE and congratulate for the wisdom and dedication with which he conducted the work of the 74th Session.

Finally, we could not fail to express our appreciation to Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for the competence, selflessness, and zeal with which he has led our organization.

Mr. President,

The theme chosen for the 75th Session of the General Assembly is pertinent to the current moment that we are experiencing in our world. We are convinced that Multilateralism is the best way for us to combine our efforts and together mitigate the effects of the economic and financial crisis that the COVID-19 Pandemic has imposed on the world.

We do believe that multilateralism will allow us to overcome the enormous challenges facing the world. Indeed, the health crisis caused by the COVID-19 PANDEMIC that is ravaging the world has shown us that a combination of efforts and international solidarity can help us mitigate its nefarious and worldwide impacts.

We must not lose sight of the unceasing struggle against poverty. In our view, this is the greatest scourge on humanity, and that it is the main cause of famine, soil degradation, unbridled exploitation of natural resources, armed conflicts, population displacements, South-North migratory flows and its continuing toll in human lives.

Therefore, we take the privilege of this opportunity to reaffirm our support for renewed multilateral cooperation on behalf of the people we serve, and for more multilateralism, more solidarity, and more effectiveness in both the combat against the effects of poverty and the maintenance of international peace and security, which is an indispensable condition for inclusive and sustainable development.

In this regard, we unfortunately continue to see persistent tension spots with major humanitarian repercussions all over the planet.

Political and military conflicts persist in the Central African Republic, the Eastern Provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Libya, the Sahel, with emerging terrorist groups, and the actions of the terrorist groups El Chebab in East Africa and BOKO HARAM in Central and West Africa.

We are concerned and apprehensive with respect to the flare-ups of violence in the Mozambican Province of Cabo Delgado, and call for greater International Community involvement in the fight against the tragic terrorist actions in that region of Mozambique.

The perennial issue of Western Sahara continues to be a cause of concern for us and demands greater involvement from all of us in the search for a permanent solution in this prolonged negotiation process. Therefore, we reiterate our call for the involved parties to resume negotiations and reach a mutually acceptable political resolution.

In addition, the situation in the Middle East also continues to cause concern in us, in light of the constant hostility between Israel and Palestine, as well as the situation in Syria and Yemen. Therefore, we must find a compromise that will put an end to hostilities and pave the way for open dialog and negotiation toward a political solution that establishes lasting peace in that region of the world.

The economic, trade, and financial embargo imposed on Cuba many years ago continues to be, in our view, another cause of major concern. For this reason, São Tomé & Príncipe reiterates our call for these sanctions to be lifted in order to allow Cuba to face the challenges of economic and social development without the constraints imposed by unfair sanctions and take better advantage of opportunities in trade relations on an equal footing with the other Member States of our Organization.

The persistence of violent extremism must continue to receive our attention but not to the detriment of other equally important challenges to human existence, which are reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals, such as combating poverty, climate change, and sea piracy, among others.

Mr. President,

Honorable Heads of State and Government

Our planet is profoundly distressed by the COVID-19 pandemic caused by the new coronavirus, with incalculable consequences both for our health and in social and economic terms.

In light of the high mortality level and devastating effects of this disease, and its high rate of spread, we must continue to use the mechanisms that multilateralism offers us in terms of international solidarity, in order to intensify the combat against the disease, deter the loss of human lives, and relaunch the economic development process in our countries.



We take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the wave of bilateral and multilateral solidarity that has benefited São Tomé & Príncipe, which has allowed us to escape a potential disaster. We offer our sincere and profound gratitude to the International Community.

However, in light of the devastating effects of the COVID-19 PANDEMIC on the economies of fragile countries, such as São Tomé & Príncipe, a Small Island State, we renew our call for a continued spirit of solidarity and support for a post-COVID-19 economic recovery, which is likely to be very challenging.

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

It seems indisputable to us that the reason for the existence of the United Nations is the Maintenance of Peace and Security in the world, which is essential to foster development.

We should note, however, that the world has changed significantly since the creation of our Organization in 1945, and that we urgently need to adapt it to the new challenges of our time.

Therefore, we once again reiterate our call for the reform process underway at the United Nations to be accelerated in order to give it greater momentum and increase its representation, effectiveness, capacity, and legitimacy in actions that lead to the maintenance of international peace and security and thus drive development throughout the world.

Mr. President

Heads of State and Government

Mr. Secretary-General

São Tomé & Príncipe is preparing to graduate to the category of medium-income country in December 2024, a fact of which we are proud, as it reflects a recognition of the efforts that our country has undertaken and the progress achieved in key areas of sustainable development.

However, we are aware of the internal efforts that will be required for us to overcome the enormous challenges that we will face after this graduation. Therefore, we strongly appeal for the International Community's continued support in this new stage of our country's development.

Mr. President

Honorable Delegates

Your Excellencies,

In closing, we would like to express our wishes that the world may see better days after this 75th Session of our august General Assembly, with peace and security, and progress toward the sustainable development that our countries long for.

Thank you very much for your attention.

**Comoros** (see also A/75/PV.9, annex IX)

**Address by Mr. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of the Comoros**

*Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 9th meeting of the General Assembly*

[Original: French]

His Excellency the President of the General Assembly,

His Excellency the Secretary-General,

Majesties, Highnesses and Excellencies,

Distinguished Representatives of countries and institutions in your ranks and qualities,

*As-salamu alaykum!*

Let me, Mr. President, warmly congratulate you on your brilliant election as the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session and assure you of the complete readiness of the Comorian Government to work for the success of your presidency.

At the same time, I congratulate your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, for the efficiency with which he led the work of the previous session and for having honoured Africa and his country, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in carrying out his mandate.

I pay well-deserved tribute to His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), for his commitment to serving the Organization, the responsibilities and challenges of which are becoming increasingly numerous and complex.

Majesties, Highnesses, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This session, which coincides with the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the UN, is taking place in the context of a serious global health crisis as a result of COVID-19.

It has required the international community to take resolute action to address it.

It has awakened the collective consciousness, which, in this difficult situation, has transcended the separation of continents, inspired unprecedented international solidarity and united the world around the same goal to contain and defeat COVID-19.

I would like to take this opportunity to convey the most painfully heartfelt condolences of the Comorian people and Government to the countries of the world, in particular to all those who, in the Comoros like everywhere else in the world, have lost relatives, friends, brothers and sisters.

The virulence that COVID-19 has raged and continues to rage upon populations has left them helpless. Of course, no country has surrendered, but we have had to rely on world solidarity, as that is our only salvation!

Let me, therefore, sincerely thank our brotherly and friendly countries, the various institutions, the non-governmental organizations, the agencies and the people of good will who have realized that need and demonstrated their solidarity with our country. The unfaltering action taken by countries and institutions has benefited and enabled the Union of the Comoros to deal with the pandemic.

Since the first case of COVID-19 was diagnosed in the sisterly island of Mayotte on 14 March 14, we have taken the measures needed to effectively respond to the disease, in particular through establishing coordination among the various national and island structures, with a view to effectively manage and monitor the pandemic.

A weekly interministerial council has been set up to monitor and give the needed guidance to these different structures.

Many social-distancing measures were also taken with the support of law enforcement agencies to prevent the potential spread of the disease, in addition to closing borders and banning all gatherings.

Finally, in the economic, financial and banking areas, other measures were taken to support economic drivers and avoid any disruption in the delivery of fuel or shortages of basic needs.

That is how we have succeeded in controlling the COVID-19 situation in our country, while we must continue to be vigilant.

I would also like to take this opportunity to appeal for international solidarity and, above all, acknowledging the work of everyone involved in the daily and extremely difficult battle, which we must all wage against the invisible enemy.

I find it truly regrettable that some countries are claiming the right to place others on the list of red zones affected by COVID-19, while disregarding actual data publicly in national bulletins and reports.

At this extremely sensitive time, it would be wiser to exclusively delegate the weighty task of classifying countries to the parent organization of the WHO, based on the updated and verified data available to it.

I also commend the actions taken by the entire Comorian medical corps, political and religious leaders, local leaders, the private sector, all social actors and especially the women's and youth organizations, which continue to demonstrate to us that they are a great source of strength on which the country can depend to deal with any situation.

Moreover, in its capacity as the Chair of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), the Union of the Comoros is closely following the pandemic situation in the Indian Ocean region.

Accordingly, a teleconference connecting the Ministers of Health of the countries of the region was set up to share information concerning the pandemic situation in the region and the measures to be taken together to better safeguard their populations and effectively manage the pandemic.

Majesties, Highnesses, Excellencies, Honourable Audience,

The COVID-19 pandemic has entered our discussions at the national, regional, and even family levels, whereby nothing can be projected without considering this new reality beforehand.

Concurrently, however, at the global and individual country levels, our collective commitments to peace, development and the protection of our environment constitute even more acute challenges that we must take up together to create the conditions necessary for a peaceful and decent life for the citizens of the world.

Therefore, although our organization, the UN, is going through this health crisis, other crises call for considerable efforts on our part.

That is why the debate on the reform of its main organs to reflect the reality of today's world and better respond to the issues at stake will always remain topical and part of every one of our meetings.

In that regard, let me warmly congratulate the new non-permanent Member States elected to the Security Council.

I hope that the representation of the world's continents within the Council will be effective, so that they can see themselves represented within the Organization, which must guarantee perfect inclusion.

The UN must also be able to continue its fight against exclusion and contribute to prioritizing respect for human rights.

In the Union of the Comoros, major efforts are being made to that end.

Subsequent to our accession to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the most recent measure taken in that regard was the establishment of the High Council of Magistracy.

That represents a decisive step towards realizing the goals that I set for myself — making the Comorian justice system a framework that protects the weakest individuals while safeguarding them from being arbitrarily treated.

The continued violation of the inalienable rights of certain people in the world today is quite simply a disgrace in the twenty-first century.

The brotherly Palestinian people are an example of the latter, perfectly illustrating what oppression a people can experience. The Palestinian people have the right to live peacefully in their territory and to enjoy all their rights, just like all other citizens of the world.

The Union of the Comoros therefore continues to believe that a viable and just solution must be found, which will lead to the establishment of a Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side in peace with the State of Israel.

I commend what the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, responsibly said in opposing any plan seeking to annex the Palestinian territories.

The situation of oppression in the world cannot be ignored.

Rights, and particularly the right to worship, are enshrined in international instruments that are binding on our States and that must be applied at the national level. The role of the UN is crucial. The principles and values it stands for are today at the centre of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which every country has adopted as its own.

For its part, the Union of the Comoros, like several other countries, presented, via a video-conference organized under the auspices of the United Nations, a report

on its implementation of the SDGs, which accounted for the work accomplished in that area so as to be part of the global dynamic to ensure a better future for humankind.

In that regard, the Government is working closely with the United Nations system in Moroni and all the relevant actors to implement the SDGs, and I commend the impeccable collaboration of those agencies with my Government.

Honourable Audience, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As everyone knows, my country held the Development Partners Conference for Comoros in Paris in 2019 to create the conditions necessary for it to meet the ambitious commitment to achieve the status of emerging-market country by 2030. The Conference was attended by hundreds of bilateral and multilateral partners and members the private sector, and the pledges made there are reflective of its success.

I thank France once again for agreeing to sponsor that important event.

I also reiterate my thanks to the World Bank for having agreed to host the Conference at its Paris headquarters.

Finally, I once again thank all those who, in an exemplary spirit of solidarity, accepted our invitation to attend.

At the end of the Conference, we raised a significant amount of money in overall pledges, which fills us with pride, as the sum largely exceeded our expectations.

In April, I established an executive secretariat to follow up on the commitments made at the Conference and to allocate the necessary resources to make the Comoros into an emerging-market country.

I therefore solemnly call on our partners to honour those commitments so that we can establish the work timetables that will enable us to move forward with the work and communication tools available to us, as we await the return to a normal state to follow up.

Moreover, I underscore that the health crisis facing the whole world has not led us to forget our important and crucial issues, especially those related to our national sovereignty.

Accordingly, Mayotte will always remain at the forefront of our foreign policy and our demands. It is a struggle that has been legitimized by the Assembly, with which every person worthy of being called a Comorian should identify.

In that regard, let me recall that in July 2019, President Emmanuel Macron and I met in Paris, and our respective Ministers for Foreign Affairs signed a document enshrining the common will of both parties to move forward in the search for a just and viable solution to the thorny problem of the Comorian island of Mayotte, with a shared concern to preserve the interests of both sides.

I am counting, then, on the goodwill of the French and Comorian authorities, who must understand that it is time to find a solution to the unpleasant dispute, in the words of the late President Mitterrand, as the ties and interests that unite us make it incumbent upon us to preserve the best interests of our two peoples and of present and future Comorian, French and Franco-Comorian generations

Majesties, Highnesses, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I sincerely hope that the whole world will overcome the terrible coronavirus pandemic so that we will all be able to resume our daily lives and so that the UN, our prestigious institution, which brings us together around noble values and principles, will also be able to survive myriad vicissitudes in order to pursue its mission — a role that no other institution in history has ever had to play.

I thank you for your kind attention!

**Nauru** (see also A/75/PV.9, annex X)

**Address by Mr. Lionel Rouwen Aingimea, President of the Republic of Nauru**

*Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 9th meeting of the General Assembly*

Mr. President,

It is an honour to participate in the opening of this historic 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly. On behalf of the Republic of Nauru, I would like to congratulate Your Excellency on your recent assumption of the Presidency. Let me assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support as you steer our important work during this session.

I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Tijiani Muhammad-Bande for his exceptional leadership during this unprecedented time as our outgoing President.

Mr. President,

In light of the current global challenges that face the international community, it is more critical than ever to have a United Nations that is fit for purpose. Many countries were caught off guard when a tiny virus exposed systemic vulnerabilities in our global and national institutions on how we protect and care for our people. Your chosen theme for this session "The Future We Want, the United Nations We Need: Reaffirming our Collective Commitment to Multilateralism — Confronting COVID-19 Through Effective Multilateral Action," is timely and appropriate.

For a country like Nauru, as one of the smallest UN member state and most vulnerable, we looked to the leadership of the World Health Organisation mandated to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable.

Before the outbreak of the pandemic, we heard cases of a new virus spreading across the globe and we waited in anticipation for the WHO's guidance and assessment of the situation.

Following WHO's declaration of the outbreak as a pandemic, Nauru responded immediately by declaring a State of National Disaster for the Management and Preparedness of COVID-19 in March of this year. This action enabled this government to address our national emergency responses to the pandemic. Our goal like many of yours, is to protect the people and citizens of Nauru.

We also recognised that WHO played a leading role in managing the Pacific region's response which later led to the formation of the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway for COVID 19 (PHP-C). This new modality - developed for the purpose of consolidating donor funding into a regional mechanism proved onerous, confusing and thus ineffective. At the height of any crisis we should not alienate further the people we are supposed to help. We should not miss out simply because we did not do it right or because we lack the capacity to navigate our way through new modalities of operations.

While we recognise these are unprecedented times, we believe that the UN has the capability, the expertise and the know-how to deliver effectively in times of crises and taking into account the challenges faced by the smallest members.

Our experience is that access to, support and assistance in a timely manner, is critical to ensure the effectiveness of the PHP-C. We also found ourselves competing against each other for much needed resources and those of us who have had far greater experience in engaging with the United Nations system was better placed to access the support required.

Mr. President,

Fortunately, I am pleased to share that my small island country, Nauru remains free from COVID. For us this is truly a milestone achievement.

This government took steps to enact national laws to support new policies and measures to deal with the pandemic. We created a national COVID Taskforce to ensure that our responses are coordinated and coherent taking a whole-of-government approach working with the private sector, civil society and the community at large. We took measures to secure our borders by implementing travel restrictions with quarantine protocols while at the same time have an open and controlled border policy in place. We used the borders of other countries as our bulwark. This is our capture and contain policy.

Mr. President,

Why does this government place such importance on the effectiveness of our national and multilateral responses to the pandemic?

Allow me to put this into context. Nauru has a land area of 21 square kilometres and a circumference of 19 kilometres. The population is estimated roughly at 11,000 and the expected growth rate of 4.5 per cent, which by 2050 will make us 27,000 people.

Taking this into account Nauru has had a history of population decimation. In the 1920's the population was ravaged by the influenza epidemic and again by the scourge of the Second World War. These external factors threatened the very survival of our people and nation with the population falling dangerously below 500. We struggled to bring the level up to 1,500 to gaining independence in 1968 and become a sovereign nation.

Our history therefore reminds us that an outbreak in one part of the world can produce a catastrophic and devastating effect on this tiny country. The lessons of the past cannot go unheeded.

Through the Grace of God — we remain COVID free today.

Mr. President,

Our experience has shown us that the World Health Organisation was slow in declaring the pandemic. This tells us there is much room for improvement. We must ensure that every country regardless of size is not left behind. We must do more.

At the regional level, Nauru is one of the 10 countries covered by the United Nations Multi-Country Office in Fiji and benefits the least. The pandemic exposed the weakness of the UN Development System and the disconnect between a coordinated regional response to meeting our national needs and priorities. The pandemic has also taught us the need to be better prepared next time. Greater investment needs to flow into our public health systems to build our capacity and capability for future pandemics.



Allow me to applaud the efforts of the Secretary-General in spearheading the reform of the United Nations development system to be more effective and fit for purpose, in particular, we look forward to the early establishment of a new multi-country office in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). We view this as a positive step that will enable a responsive, focused and targeted support coordinated between the North Pacific small island developing States (SIDS) and the United Nations.

Mr. President,

Despite the sometimes-dour commentary on the current state of multilateralism, I think it is important to acknowledge the strikingly prolific decade we have just concluded here at the United Nations. Our commitment to multilateralism has delivered historic agreements on sustainable development, climate change, disaster risk reduction, and development finance, just to name a few. This body of work, which reflects the views of every UN Member State — from largest to the smallest — has the potential to deliver a more resilient, more just, and more equitable world.

Your challenge, and ours, is to bring these agreements to fruition as a matter of urgency. This will be the test of multilateralism going forward — Let's not fail this.

Mr President,

One of the core pillars of Nauru's sustainable development strategy is economic sustainability, consistent with this objective this Government launched its Desperate Imagination Vision this year. The vision is one of innovative thinking towards a financially sustainable and resilient Nauru. We placed emphasis on boosting all partnerships and identified the need for strengthening these networks to help us realise our vision for a financially sustainable and stable future.

No longer can sustainability be brushed aside as an issue and that in the language of Nauru "will take care of itself" because alternate means to sustain the economy are now more important than ever. Sustainability of the nation must be front of mind now and always.

And in this regard, this country holds a dubious distinction as the only country denied access to concessional financial resources from the World Bank. Nauru is currently ineligible for International Development Assistance (IDA) grants and concessional loans, because our GNI per capita exceeds the current threshold for small island economies. We are also barred from receiving loans from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) because the World Bank has determined that our economy does not generate sufficient revenue to service new loans. Why are other countries given access to these financing tools and not Nauru?

Nauru may be an extreme case, but it is well in line with the experience of many developing countries which, despite the best of development plans, cannot access the financial resources to actually implement them. This state of affairs was shameful before the pandemic, but it is now a crisis in its own right. Years, perhaps decades of economic gains across the developing world could be at risk without a rapid response from the Bretton Woods Institutions to relieve countries of unsustainable debt burdens and provide fiscal resources for a robust economic recovery.

We need a global financial system that is more responsive to the urgent needs of developing countries, and I strongly urge you to take on this issue as part of your effort to reaffirm multilateralism.

Mr. President,

Many have compared the humanitarian impacts and economic disruption of COVID to what we might expect from climate change. Therefore, I think it is important that we recognize foresighted leaders on this issue. Today, I would like to specifically thank the Government of Germany for continuing to place the issue of climate change and security before the United Nations Security Council.

The most basic responsibility of any Government is to protect the safety and security of its citizens. Failure to do so risks social and political unrest. It is now uncontroversial that climate change will make it more difficult to fulfil this most basic responsibility of government by undermining food and water systems, increasing competition over declining natural resources, disrupting global supply chains, and displacing communities. Most of these challenges exceed the capacity of any one nation to address alone. Therefore, addressing the security implications of climate change requires a multilateral response.

We believe these functions are best taken up by a new Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Climate and Security.

However, we will only succeed in protecting the security of vulnerable countries and communities if our political system shows the courage to make the fundamental changes that the climate crisis requires.

We want a United Nations that addresses the climate crisis by taking urgent action, safeguard us from an economic regression and depression that will further exacerbate the existing inequalities among nations.

Mr. President,

Limited land space is an overarching challenge for us.

Nauru will need to accelerate efforts on the Higher Ground Initiative which is reclaiming the 80 per cent of mined-out land located at the central plateau of the island. Climate Change exposes environmental risks for coastal dwelling. We have begun preliminary scientific assessment on our physical environment to collect data that will contribute to informed decisions. We are still in the very infant stages and recognise this is only the beginning of a very long journey. Laying the right foundation is critical for future generation to continue the work we have started.

With innovative planning and the incorporation of sustainable best practices, we are confident that the Desperate Imagination Vision can bring about jobs, cultivate new business trade and investment opportunities, and also restore our natural environment. Combined with construction of the new, GCF-funded port facility, our new shipping line and our national carrier, Nauru can become a regional hub of commerce, including our aspiration for a regional health and sports tourism industry. This is our pathway to achieving our Sustainable Development Goals.

However, we cannot do this alone. And this is where our renewed commitment to multilateralism must focus — on mobilizing the means of implementation for those that need it.

Mr. President,

It would be remiss of me to not to recognise that Nauru is a big ocean state. We are highly dependent on marine resources for its sustenance and economic development.

UNCLOS as the constitution of all ocean activities had the foresight to provide opportunity for developing States like mine to participate in the new seafloor mineral industry and balance the historical disparities that exist between the North and South.

Specifically, I am speaking to the important work of the International Seabed Authority (ISA), as the international body tasked with organizing and controlling all mineral resource-related activities in international waters for the benefit of mankind as a whole, while ensuring the effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from deep seabed related activities.

It gives us the confidence in the development of the new regulatory regime for the collection of seafloor minerals, the ISA will ensure that this new industry will be managed responsibly while providing benefits for all mankind. Moreover, this will help us achieve SDG Goal14, namely Targets 2 and 7, on the sustainable management and protection of marine ecosystems and increase economic benefits to SIDS, respectively.

I encourage ISA members to continue to work towards a timely development of the regulatory regime. I also commend ISA's capacity-building development programme and in particular the Abyssal Initiative for the Pacific Sponsoring States.

Mr. President,

Our efforts in responding and containing the coronavirus would not have been possible without the valuable support rendered through our development partners and for this we are truly grateful to our genuine friends Australia, Taiwan, New Zealand, India, Japan and the United States.

We also ask our friends the United States to not forget the people of Cuba who are also struggling like us under this pandemic.

Mr. President,

Seventy-five years ago, the nations of the world came together to draft a charter that would stand the test of time. It was created on the principles of universality and equality, respecting the worth of every individual. It is not enough to proclaim the virtues of multilateralism if we fail to strengthen our commitment to upholding the core principles of the Charter.

We therefore call on the United Nations to fulfil our commitments to the human family and ensure that the 23.5 million people of the Republic of China (Taiwan) enjoy the same rights as the peoples of other nations. While the world grapples with the COVID pandemic, the people of Taiwan must not be left behind, nor should its exemplary response to the global pandemic be ignored. Taiwan is an important partner in the world's response to this pandemic. More than ever today we need inclusivity and solidarity in responding to the global challenges we face.

Mr. President,

As we forge ahead in a future that is covered with COVID-19 and other things that we really do not know, 'Let's hand-in-hand, shoulder-to-shoulder as Scripture tells us, walk forward to meet the challenges of tomorrow'.

Thank you, Mr. President.

May God bless the Republic of Nauru and may God bless the United Nations.

**Guinea-Bissau** (see also A/75/PV.9, annex XI)

**Address by Mr. Úmaro Sissoco Embaló, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau**

*Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 9th meeting of the General Assembly*

[Original: French]

His Excellency Mr. President, His Excellency the Secretary-General,  
Excellencies Heads of State and Government, Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of my people and my country, allow me to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkir on his honourable and distinguished role as President of the United Nations General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session.

Your Excellency's election to this highly representative body of the international system shows the confidence that your country, Turkey, a friend of Guinea-Bissau, and all Member States of our Organization have placed in you. We express our most ardent wishes for the success of this noble office.

I assure you of the fullest cooperation of my country, Guinea-Bissau, during the deliberations of the session under your leadership.

His Excellency Mr. President, Excellencies,

First of all, I would like to extend my deepest condolences to the Member States of the Organization following the loss of life among their populations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic currently wreaking havoc around the world.

I would like to thank health professionals throughout the world, in particular those from my country and those from all international organizations now present in Guinea-Bissau, who, together and on a daily basis, alongside our authorities, are on the front lines helping to control the spread of COVID-19 and save the lives of those infected.

The agenda of the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in Response to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic is of particular importance. We must all cooperate with the scientific community in its efforts to find solutions and support the most vulnerable so as to address the immediate negative impacts of COVID-19, by helping to strengthen health systems and develop and equitably distribute treatments and vaccines.

The challenges encountered daily in various parts of the world — as remote as they may appear in the globalized world in which we live today — should remind us that they could end up being common problems.

The pandemic has underscored that truth and taught us the importance of uniting our efforts to combat COVID-19 and all other scourges and challenges we face on our planet.

That is why, this year, as we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, we must work together to restore to the United Nations the values and ideals for which it was created. To build the United Nations that we want and truly need to guide and combat the global adversities of today's world, the

time has come to reiterate our commitments and strengthen multilateralism. Only in this way will we be able to move forward with the humanitarian agenda, while considering vulnerabilities, promoting gender equality and finally achieving the 2030 Agenda that guarantees everyone's well-being.

His Excellency Mr. President, Excellencies,

I am honoured to address this great Assembly today, 24 September — the day when my country, Guinea-Bissau, marks another year of its existence as a free and independent nation. Our independence was achieved with great honour and sacrifice. I congratulate my people.

During these 46 years of our history, our country has experienced challenging times in its quest for a path to stability and sustainable development that would ensure the well-being of its sons and daughters. The support of the international community, in particular the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, has been essential to ending for good the conflicts that have plagued our country. I deeply thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, and all the friends and partners of Guinea-Bissau for their assistance throughout this period.

However, as we approach the end of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), and as we assume, through national efforts, primary responsibility for stabilizing our country, with the normalization of the functioning of all State institutions under way, the continued and indubitable assistance of the international community, through its cooperation and coordination with the authorities of the country, is crucial for us to conclude the necessary reforms and continue along our path to development.

In this regard, I would like to take the opportunity offered by this noble forum to reaffirm to my people that, under my presidency, I will do my best to turn this tragic page of crises and conflicts in our history. I will work hand in hand with all Guineans to meet the challenge of rebuilding a new Guinea-Bissau — one well aware of our problems, but with collective national strength within the country and the diaspora alike, in order to move forward together and guarantee a better future for the next generations.

The year 2020 has been a year of challenges for the world without exception, but it is proving more difficult for the most vulnerable countries, such as Guinea-Bissau. It is an extremely vulnerable country as it is a post-conflict African country, a least developed country (LDC) and a small island developing State (SIDS), facing considerable threats from climate change.

The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded already existing vulnerabilities, thereby exacerbating the socioeconomic problems of the country and the lives of our peoples.

In the light of the volatile supply chain and commodity prices that have had a negative impact on international trade, Guinea-Bissau, a country dependent on agriculture and its waters, has not been spared. The cashew campaign for its main export product has been severely affected and that will have an adverse effect on the economy and well-being of its people. Negative growth is influencing poverty trends in many countries like ours and putting at risk those who were already without social protection.

Climate change is irrefutable. Although it already affects small island developing States, including Guinea-Bissau, it is a danger to us all because it is a threat to the existence of our planet.

The Government has developed national strategies and sectoral policies with international partners to address these challenges. It has also implemented medium- and long-term climate change adaptation plans. It has made available more than 26 per cent of its territory to the National System of Land and Marine Protected Areas, among several other initiatives, such as its contributions to the mitigation of greenhouse gases and NDCs.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

Gender equality is a crucial issue for Guinea-Bissau. The participation of women is unequivocal in all spheres of our society. Since the struggle for independence — and this year marks another year of independence — women have always stood alongside men to take political and social decisions in the country. Guinean women are the drivers of positive change. They are the best mediators of conflicts, promoters of dialogue and peacemakers.

On our new path to recommit to multilateralism, women must have a place as one of the main driving forces.

Young people are another important group given that in many of our countries they account for the majority of the population. In Guinea-Bissau, we have the strength and support of this sector of society, which has actively participated in dialogue processes for peace and stability.

We count on our young people and call on our development partners to continue to assist us with instruments, such as qualified education and technologies, to better empower our youth. In this way, we assist not only in reducing the unemployment rate in our country, but also in ensuring a bright future for the next generation.

We cannot talk about multilateralism while allowing the economic and financial embargo to continue to be imposed on one of the most supportive members of our Organization — Cuba. Despite the negative impacts of this embargo, Cuba has been a leader in all global health challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic. Cuba remains on the front lines in providing assistance to the world.

We demand that the economic and financial embargo imposed on Cuba by the United States of America be lifted without delay. The Cuban people deserve the opportunity to make the most of its potential and freely seek economic relations with other States and peoples.

With regard to Palestine, we hope that the main actors in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process continue to be engaged in diplomatic negotiations in the quest for lasting peace and for the peaceful coexistence of the two States living in harmony, side by side and with mutual respect.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

Before concluding, I would like to reaffirm our country's commitment to working towards the United Nations we want and need. We expect strong commitment from our development partners in renewing multilateral commitments aimed at building a more just and brotherly world, while guaranteeing human security for the well-being and progress of all peoples and cultures.

I cannot end my statement without thanking and aligning myself with the statements made by those who spoke on behalf of the G77 and China, the SIDS and the LDCs, of which my country is a member.

I thank you.



**Somalia** (see also A/75/PV.9, annex XII)

**Address by Mr. Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia**

*Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 9th meeting of the General Assembly*

Honourable President of the Assembly, Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentleman,

It is a great honour and privilege to address you all on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations. On this special 75th anniversary of our multilateral global union for peace, progress and prosperity, it is fundamental to recommit ourselves to the UN Charter and its broad-based consensus on effective cooperation for common sustainable international development. Consensus, cooperation and targeted common action have never been more important than at this time, where the world is challenged politically, socially and economically by the COVID-19 health pandemic.

In assessing the way forward to achieving the agreed Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic, we must also re-examine the future we all want and the United Nations we need to attain it. COVID-19 has been a devastating lesson and the loudest possible wake-up call in the need for global cooperation, effective partnerships and the firm commitment to multilateralism to confront it together. COVID-19 recognizes no borders, nationality, gender or economic status of nations or individuals — we are all equally victims. Therefore, a unifying solution must be found to protect every human being from it.

In Somalia, our government and people have worked closely together to mitigate the worst effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Like most governments across the world, we prioritized the health of our citizens and did as much as possible to save lives. Through direct medical provision and consistent, updated and effective public health information, our government did its utmost to keep our population as safe as possible. COVID-19 cases, which were rising quickly at the early stages of the pandemic, have fallen steadily as a result of our government's swift actions.

Again, this successful response would not have been possible without the effective partnership between our government, citizens and international partners. I want to pay special tribute to all of our courageous and dutiful health personnel who risked their lives to save others. I also recognize the patience and contribution of the Somali private sector, which worked with the government to keep the economy functioning, providing vital services to the Somali people at the most critical hour of need.

Yet, the success of our common efforts in Somalia does not mean that we are unscathed. According to official statistics, over 3,000 Somalis were infected by the virus and around 100 tragically lost their lives as a result. Many more who were diagnosed had to live with the pain and the suffering of COVID-19 and others still remain vulnerable given the weakness of Somalia's overstretched health systems and infrastructure.

Given the grave health challenges posed to the world, in particular the most vulnerable nations like Somalia, I feel confident that with greater public health



collaboration, information sharing and an equitable distribution of the potential COVID-19 health treatments currently in development, we can permanently reverse the deadly impact of the virus for every human being on the planet. This is the only way we can secure our common future and, therefore, it is a must that we, as a community of nations, reaffirm our collective commitment to multilateralism and confront COVID-19 through effective and coordinated multilateral action.

Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentleman,

Across the world, economies of all sizes have been severely impacted by COVID-19 with the most vulnerable affected the most. In Somalia, like everywhere else in the world, we are challenged by a painful contraction of the economy, job losses and the need to continue investing in our essential basic public services to protect our citizens from the deadly virus. You can all appreciate, this is a huge task for a recovering post-conflict state like Somalia but our government will remain steadfast in rising and responding to the diverse challenges that lie ahead.

Our government's economic policy response to COVID-19 has, once again, been to put our people first with tax relief for most key staple food items. Now, hoping that the worst is behind us, we are cautiously starting to open up our economy to ensure that normal life can resume for our people. However, we also understand the huge challenge that building back better, stronger and more equitably from the COVID-19 impact will be for Somalia.

In reiterating the importance of confronting COVID-19 through effective multilateral action, I want to recognize the enabling economic and financial support provided to the Somali Federal Government to mitigate the worst of the COVID-19 economic pressures by the International Financial Institutions and many other multilateral institutions after Somalia successfully reached the Decision Point and attained debt relief from many of its major international creditors. As we progress towards achieving debt cancellation through our enabling economic reforms, we remain cognizant that Somalia's economic future and the prosperity of its people are closely interlinked with that of the rest of the world. In this regard, the future we want in Somalia is one which promotes greater partnership for international trade, enhances foreign direct investment in key productive sectors which has the potential to feed the world and the development of human capital to create further opportunities for us all. The United Nations we need is an inclusive global multilateral platform for propelling not just the ideas and aspirations of change but their realization too. COVID-19 has economically challenged us all and if the Sustainable Development Goals are to ever be realized, the world must recover better, for all, and together.

Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentleman,

Global crises like the COVID-19 pandemic provide both an opportunity for renewal and a challenge to overcome. We have seen the devastating health and economic impact of the virus and we are all feeling and living with the painful results. No nation, no matter how well resourced, is immune. Yet, despite our common suffering and pain, I am fearful that COVID-19 has, and will continue to, exacerbate the already existing gulf between the developed, developing and fragile states that make up the UN family. This is something that must be avoided at all costs as tackling today's major global challenges, including insecurity, climate change, poverty and the increasing inequality, which is the driver of much division and discontent across

the world, depend on effective cooperation and multilateral actions which bring the Sustainable Development Goals to fruition.

Somalia is working through, and with, the UN to create a better future for Somalia and the world. We are taking the lead in delivering development to our people and working with our valuable international partners to ensure we rebuild a democratic, inclusive and economically prosperous Somalia. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, we are still working hard to undertake inclusive national elections where the Somali people can determine their future. We are firmly committed to promoting and instilling a strong tradition of democracy and accountable governance which serves the Somali people first and foremost.

We are also successfully defeating the menace of global terrorism with the efforts of our brave armed forces in collaboration with AMISOM and other international partners to make the world a safer place. I am confident with our government's efforts and the continued support of our important international partners, Somalia will not only confront COVID-19 but it will contribute positively to the multilateral effort required to make the world a better, more resilient and equal place for all.

Looking forward, it is fundamental that we fully realize the Sustainable Development Goals for each and every citizen of this world. We cannot afford to leave anyone behind. This means that the United Nations will also have to improve further, innovate faster and deliver better for the most fragile nations and vulnerable communities. The UN can do this by supporting national and personal development through assisting and strengthening national institutional frameworks, systematic knowledge transfer and investment in human capital. These are real long-term investments that will actually contribute to poverty alleviation and the creation of opportunities for all.

In conclusion, the United Nations and the family of nations which comprise its membership must work together through renewed partnership to confront COVID-19. We must also continue to engage each other positively to create the inclusive and prosperous future we want with and through the United Nations we need. In this regard, we, in Somalia, reaffirm our commitment to multilateralism to overcome all common global obstacles and to capitalize on every opportunity to create a better, safer and equal world.

**Central African Republic** (see also A/75/PV.9, annex XIII)**Address by Mr. Faustin Archange Touadera, Head of State of the Central African Republic**

*Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 9th meeting of the General Assembly*

[Original: French]

President of the United Nations General Assembly,  
Excellencies Heads of State and Government,  
Secretary-General of the United Nations,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Although at a virtual event, I am again honoured to address our august Assembly, on behalf of the Central African Republic, on the occasion of the seventy-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

I would like to extend to you, President Volkan Bozkir, my warm and heartfelt congratulations on your election as President of the seventy-fifth Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Your election is a well-deserved honour and tribute paid to all continents and, in particular, to your country, the Republic of Turkey.

We believe that your perfect knowledge of the international landscape, as well as your outstanding personal attributes are an asset and will ensure the success of our work.

I would also like to acknowledge the excellent work and the results achieved by Professor Tijjani Muhammad-Bande during the seventy-fourth session. We acknowledge his efforts and convey our recognition and satisfaction.

Mr. President,

From this rostrum, on behalf of the people and the Government of the Central African Republic, I would also like to take this opportunity to convey our gratitude for the kind attention that my country, the Central African Republic, receives from the international community, despite your many commitments and requests.

Allow me to reiterate all our gratitude to and confidence in Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his sustained commitment to global peace and development, and, in particular, for his constant and multifaceted support to the Central African Republic.

Mr. President,

This year's Assembly is being held amid special circumstances, as humankind, as a whole, faces the regrettable COVID-19 pandemic, which has claimed several lives throughout the world.

We pay tribute to the memory of all those across the world who succumbed to this pandemic, which humankind combats daily and collectively.

Since the start of this health crisis, the Central African Republic, as other countries in the world, has not been spared. Our assessment of the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 indicates that my country's economy is expected to contract between 0.8 per cent and 1.2 per cent.

I therefore call on the entire international community to make a greater investment in the quest for common measures and solutions to eradicate this health crisis.

Mr. President,

In light of the many challenges facing humankind related to security, the environment, climate change, human mobility, human rights, terrorism, denuclearization, the dismantling of weapons of mass destruction and the COVID-19 pandemic, the choice of this year's theme — "The future we want, the UN we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism" — reaffirms that multilateralism has always been and remains the instrument to effectively combat certain scourges and the means to minimize certain antagonisms at the international level.

On the occasion of this seventy-fifth anniversary, it is essential to recall the purposes and principles that govern our great Organization through our commitments contained in the Charter of the United Nations, namely to prevent and remove threats to peace; to develop friendly relations among nations; to fight against inequality and all forms of discrimination; and to protect human rights.

The present session is also an opportunity to reflect on how our common Organization will be able to face the new challenges affecting the world and our societies.

Today, more than ever, we must, in spite of our differences, advocate for international cooperation and dialogue, joining our efforts for a better future for humankind.

The United Nations remains, and will continue to be, the multilateral framework par excellence.

Mr. President,

No human endeavour is perfect, and therefore we must bear in mind the weaknesses identified over the past 75 years and find effective and lasting solutions to them.

In that regard, the Central African Republic wishes to add its voice to the call of some States and the African Union for Security Council reform.

It is a matter of looking beyond narrow self-interests and giving priority to common interests, while avoiding confrontation, in favour of a joint strategy for our world, which is facing unprecedented changes and upheavals.

It is also a matter of African representation in the organs of our shared Organization, in particular the Security Council, which is the central decision-making body.

Through multilateralism, we can ensure a more secure and stable future for humankind, which aspires only to peace, justice and sustainable development for all.

Mr. President,

I would also like to take this opportunity to share developments in the situation in my country. Thanks to the combined efforts of the international community and under the auspices of the African Union, the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic was signed between the Central African Government and 14 armed groups on 6 February 2019.

Since the signing of the Agreement, the Central African Government and the guarantors and facilitators of the Agreement have spared no effort to implement and respect the commitments contained therein.

In addition, the Government has made a great deal of progress in the area of security sector reform, which will facilitate the gradual redeployment of the defence and security forces and the continuation of the national DDRR programme, which has already been launched in preparation for the upcoming elections scheduled for the 2020-2021 period.

Despite the Government's willingness to respect the commitments contained in the Political Agreement, massive violations of international humanitarian law and human rights continue to be perpetrated against the civilian population by certain armed groups that are signatories to the Agreement. Those groups are also continuing to rearm through illegal means, thereby undermining the peace and national reconciliation process, which is a guarantee of social cohesion.

Mr. President,

Notwithstanding the considerable progress made in the implementation of security sector reforms in the Central African Republic, many challenges are yet to be addressed, including the genuine commitment of armed groups to DDRR and the special joint security units; the sustained support of the international community in the implementation of the APPR-RCA; the conduct of operations and the means for operational engagement; and the mobilization of resources at the national level and from development partners.

Mr. President,

In order to adhere to the constitutional deadline, the National Electoral Authority is working, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure that the elections are held according to the established timeline.

To date, the census and dismemberment operations are continuing outside the country and will be immediately followed by the publication of the electoral roll — a condition for the convocation of the electorate for the first round of elections.

The Government is working closely with the organizational structure of the Electoral Assistance Project (PAPEC) 2019-2022, which is built around key coordination mechanisms.

Mr. President,

The Government, with the support of MINUSCA, continues to make progress in the restoration of State authority throughout the national territory, the redeployment of defence and security forces and State services and the restoration of basic social services.

The Central African army is now steadily regaining its operational capacities and I can assure you of my determination to create the necessary conditions for the reconstruction of the Central African Republic in order to restore confidence and joie de vivre among Central Africans.

To that end, I reiterate the appeal of the Central African people to the Security Council to fully lift the arms embargo, the burden of which limits our national army in its role as a republican army, in order to ensure the true authority of the State and guarantee the integrity of our national territory.

Mr. President,

Before concluding my remarks, I would like to recall that my country continues to make efforts in the implementation of the National Plan for Recovery and Peacebuilding (RCPCA), which is evaluated regularly with our partners.

While tangible progress has been made, much remains to be done. To that end, we are committed to preserving and consolidating the gains made, improving on our weaknesses and continuing to make progress in the search for peace and economic recovery.

The task at hand is immense and, as the saying goes, “The bird can only take flight when it is supported by the air”.

I therefore hope that the international community will remain mobilized in that spirit of international solidarity alongside the Government and people of the Central African Republic in order to achieve my country’s recovery.

I hope for great success in our work.

Long live multilateralism!

Long live international cooperation and solidarity!

I thank you.

**Djibouti** (see also A/75/PV.9, annex XIV)

**Address by Mr. Ismaël Omar Guelleh, President and Head of Government of the Republic of Djibouti**

*Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 9th meeting of the General Assembly*

[Original: French]

Praise be to God and may peace and blessings be upon the Prophet, his family and his companions.

Mr. President of the General Assembly,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen Heads of State and Government,

Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr. President,

Allow me at the outset, Sir, to congratulate you most warmly on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session.

This historic session, under the triple banner of the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2020-2030 decade of action for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, over which you have the distinct honour to preside, is of profound significance to Member States.

I can assure you of my country's full support and cooperation.

I would also like to extend our sincere congratulations to your predecessor, Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, and his team for the decisive efforts made to ensure the continuity of the General Assembly's activities from the very beginning of the global health crisis.

We reiterate our deep gratitude to the Secretary-General for the presentation of his annual report containing a pertinent analysis of current global issues and the major challenges we face. While it does not contain a miracle recipe, the solutions for which he advocates are a sure antidote to pessimism and the temptation of despair.

In our analysis of the state of the world last year, we were already expressing our concerns about some of the major trends that were emerging. Those trends included poverty, inequality, climate change, low levels of investment, slow progress in mobilizing the resources needed to effectively implement the Sustainable Development Goals, continuing conflicts and the rise of terrorism.

We also stressed the negative impact that ongoing geopolitical upheavals, rising tensions due to the trade war and the projected decline in economic growth could have on the fight against poverty and the promotion of international cooperation.

But the year 2020 is nothing like previous years! It will remain forever etched in the annals of history as the year in which the world was shaken by unprecedented violence. The eruption of the COVID-19 pandemic was a major event with a considerable health, political, economic and humanitarian impact.

The major upheavals that it has caused have had serious economic consequences and affected all sectors of the economy, particularly tourism and the informal economy sector, which employs a significant proportion of the population in low-income countries. The containment measures that States had to adopt to prevent the spread of the virus led to massive job losses and generated real liquidity problems. According to the World Bank, COVID-19 would plunge Africa into its first recession in more than 25 years.

Projections of widening public deficits in our countries are worrying, hence the importance of an adequate response from international financial institutions and bilateral partners in favour of developing countries. While those countries are making considerable efforts to cope with the crisis, they will clearly not be able to contain its devastating effects alone.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected women, children, the elderly, migrants and refugees. We must ensure that, in our response, special attention is paid to those groups.

Allow me to re-emphasize here the critical importance of accelerating our efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5, which is to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls as a cross-cutting foundation for the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Mr. President,

In Djibouti, we very quickly realized the severity of the crisis and put urgent health measures in place to contain the spread of the virus. Thanks to a policy of border controls, containment, mass testing and treatment of infected people, the assessment we are drawing up today is largely satisfactory.

Here we would like to commend all the health personnel, whose professionalism and dedication have been exemplary. We also owe our success to the cooperation of the people of Djibouti, whose discipline and motivation in the fight against COVID-19 is a source of inspiration for us.

We also commend resilience in the face of the proliferation of false information described as an “infodemic” by the WHO. It is only through the establishment of relationships based on trust and genuine and permanent dialogue with citizens that we can overcome this epidemic.

Despite the successes achieved, our action is characterized by the rejection of complacency and the exhortation to be vigilant at all times.

With regard to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the economy and employment, although it is difficult to measure the medium- and long-term effects, particularly on maritime traffic, Djibouti, like other African countries, has been hit hard by the health crisis. In response, we have undertaken emergency measures to support the economy and employment and created a special fund for social solidarity and the fight against coronavirus. Those measures have contributed to containing the effects of the crisis and we have also been able to rely on the valuable support of international financial institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF and the AfDB, as well as the support of friendly countries.

It goes without saying that, due to its vulnerability to external shocks, lasting disruptions in the global supply chain, declining flows of foreign direct investment,



the disruptive effects of climate change and the continued flow of refugees fleeing instability and conflict, Djibouti hopes to be able to rely further on the solidarity of its partners and friends.

Mr. President,

Despite the close link established by scientists between climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, including the possible explosion of zoonoses, efforts to implement the Paris Agreement have not made the expected progress. Given the severity of the health crisis and the exclusive media attention given to COVID-19, climate change has been relegated to a secondary priority.

But make no mistake! We must remain vigilant! Our success in preventing future pandemics will depend on the attention and resources we devote to fighting climate change!

Mr. President,

The shockwave caused by the pandemic could also have a detrimental impact on the fight against terrorism and conflict management in many theatres. Some terrorist groups have seen it as an opportunity to reorganize and take advantage of the security vacuum created by the fight against COVID-19. Peacekeeping operations, despite initial difficulties, have fortunately been able to adapt and reorganize themselves in order to pursue the vital mandate with which they were entrusted.

The Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire has been widely heard and we support his appeals to the international community to "redouble its efforts to make it a reality by the end of the year".

Mr. President,

We welcome the economic and political progress made in Somalia despite the triple shock of COVID-19, the locust invasion and devastating floods. The results of the consultations initiated in Dhusamareb, the agreement on an electoral model and the election of a new Prime Minister provide grounds for the belief and hope that Somalia is on a positive and irreversible path towards lasting peace and stability.

We strongly support the mission of AMISOM, which is aimed at degrading the threat posed by Al-Shabaab. We call on the international community to continue to provide adequate material, logistical and financial support.

We are closely following the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, which has led to the establishment of a Transitional Government of National Unity. We hope that the armed groups that are not signatories to the Revitalized Agreement will join the peace efforts led by the region and supported by the international community as soon as possible. The people of South Sudan are tired of war! They have made huge sacrifices! They deserve peace!

Djibouti reiterates its support for efforts to achieve lasting peace in Yemen in accordance with Security Council resolution 2216 (2015), the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and the decisions made at the National Dialogue Conference. We further call on all stakeholders to work in good faith to implement the provisions of the Riyadh Agreement and reaffirm our commitment to the unity and territorial integrity of Yemen.

We remain extremely concerned about the major environmental risk and threat of oil spill posed by the oil tanker *FSO SAFER*. We urge the Houthis rebels to urgently cooperate with United Nations experts to carry out the appropriate inspections and urgent work necessary to contain the threat.

Mr. President,

On 21 September, we celebrated the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations virtually and took the opportunity to reaffirm the central place that our Organization must occupy in the collective efforts to address the challenges we face.

The fight against the COVID-19 pandemic dictates that we have a compelling duty to collaborate and work together because it has now been proven that, if one of us is in danger, we are all in danger! This is not a hollow formula nor a superficial generalization.

The cost in human lives and economic loss is a concrete demonstration of the danger of inaction.

In order to save lives, protect the most vulnerable and rebuild on a more solid foundation, we must act urgently make a long-term commitment. Yes, times may appear bleak! But, as the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin would say, “where the danger is, also grows the saving power.”

Long live international solidarity! Long live international cooperation! And long live the United Nations!

Thank you for your attention.

**Burundi** (see also A/75/PV.9, annex XV)

**Address by Mr. Evariste Ndayishimiye, President of the Republic of Burundi**

*Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 9th meeting of the General Assembly*

[Original: French]

Your Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkir, President of the United Nations General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session,

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,

Majesties,

Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Dear colleagues, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, all protocol observed,

At the outset, I would like first and foremost to thank Almighty God, who has enabled us to come together to debate the issues that are dear to our hearts on behalf of humankind.

Of course, we would have liked this debate, which coincides with the seventy-fifth anniversary of the creation of our Organization, to take place in the General Assembly Hall as is customary, but alas — the COVID-19 pandemic, which has hit all the nations of the world head-on, requires us to meet virtually.

We express our hope that the next sessions will be held under better circumstances, once we have overcome this health crisis that spares no one.

Allow me, then, to express my warm congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkir of the Republic of Turkey on his brilliant election as President of the United Nations General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session.

His great qualities and talents are certainly a guarantee for the success of the work of this session. Indeed, the central theme of this year's General Assembly has been well thought-out, namely "The future we want, the United Nations we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism — confronting COVID-19 through effective multilateral action".

Naturally, you can count on Burundi's full cooperation in the accomplishment of your noble and exhilarating mission.

At the same time, I would like to pay a well-deserved tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, not only for his admirable professional and personal qualities, but also for the exceptionally professional manner in which he presided over the seventy-fourth session, which we have just successfully concluded in a particularly difficult context marked by the COVID-19 crisis.

I take this opportunity to present, on behalf of the Burundian people, my deepest condolences and solidarity to the nations that have lost citizens as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This indiscriminate pandemic has highlighted

the importance of multilateralism, international solidarity and cooperation in the management of global crises and paradoxes.

Furthermore, allow me to commend the remarkable work of the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, and his ongoing courageous action to reform our common Organization in order to increase its efficiency and credibility and bring it closer to the citizens of the world, without any discrimination. Burundi reiterates its full support and cooperation in that regard.

Mr. President, in terms of domestic policy, Burundi is well advanced in its process of consolidating peace and democracy, despite the challenges facing my country.

Indeed, Burundi held general elections between May and August. All of those elections were fair, free, democratic, transparent, peaceful and financed entirely by Burundian taxpayers' own resources.

The full financing of the electoral process from national resources is a testimony to the will of the Burundian people to definitively take ownership of the political, administrative and economic governance system of our country without external interference.

Now that all the foundations for a strengthened democracy are in place, all that remains is to get down to the work of development — the linchpin in the fight against poverty.

We are aware that this struggle will require wisdom, bravery, courage, perseverance and a high sense of patriotism and love of work. Together, in unity, we will succeed.

With regard to the security situation, I am pleased to inform you that the situation in Burundi is stable, calm and fully under control throughout the country.

With regard to the humanitarian situation, we welcome the massive and voluntary return of Burundian refugees who had fled the country following the events that plunged Burundi into deep mourning.

In addition to several thousands of Burundians who are returning on their own without UNHCR assistance, between 1 August 2017 and 31 August 2020, 92,285 refugees have been voluntarily repatriated to Burundi from Tanzania, but also from Kenya, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda.

This massive voluntary return movement is a clear manifestation of the return of peace, tranquillity, confidence and stability in the country.

At the diplomatic level, our ambition is to build friendly relations and strengthen cooperation based on the principle of mutual respect and the sovereign equality of States. The tendency of some States to use both subtle and illegal means to manipulate geopolitics in the countries of the South and their power to supplant the international community to oppress other countries by imposing unilateral coercive measures in violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations must stop. Burundi is an advocate for multilateralism whereby every country, regardless of its size and level of development, has a role to play in addressing humankind's many shared challenges.

In that regard, Burundi remains open to cooperating with countries and international organizations that seek to further develop mutually beneficial and respectful cooperative relations.

We therefore firmly condemn the unjustified political and diplomatic aggression against Burundi and its people by foreign Governments, some of which were known to have attempted regime change in 2015 through unconstitutional means. Power diplomacy must give way to mutually beneficial and respectful cooperation.

While the nature of relations between Africa and countries with a colonial past should be redefined in order to transform the painful history of colonization into opportunities through mutually beneficial cooperation, we cannot lose sight of the fact that the conquests to enslave Africa and the strong resistance of the peoples of Africa to defend themselves against invasions and free themselves from the colonial yoke have claimed millions of lives in Africa and left deep wounds that remain unhealed.

With regard to Burundi's presence on the Security Council's agenda, we have always said that Burundi is unfairly included on the Security Council's agenda for political reasons and the self-interests of certain Powers, which have nothing to do with the welfare of the Burundian people who in no way whatsoever pose a threat to international peace and security.

That acts as a destabilizing factor for our country instead of promoting peace and tranquillity.

We therefore reiterate our legitimate call for the immediate removal of Burundi from the Security Council's agenda so that it can use its precious time to address socioeconomic development and support national efforts to implement its national development plan for the period from 2018 to 2027 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Concerning the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in addition to the integration and alignment of SDGs with the 2018-2027 national development plan, the Government of the Republic of Burundi has highlighted several priorities that require immediate and special attention. They are the fight against poverty, promoting good governance, public health, agriculture and animal husbandry, environmental protection, human capital development, countering youth unemployment and free health care for retirees. In the area of good governance, the Government is implementing a zero-tolerance policy on corruption, social injustice and the misappropriation and wasteful use of State assets, and a policy of best practices in managing State employees.

Like other countries committed to sustainable development, Burundi has taken every measure needed to produce a regular follow-up report on the implementation of the SDGs and the national development plan.

In order to share its experiences on the road it has travelled in implementing the SDGs, its successes, current and emerging challenges and lessons learned, Burundi has submitted to the voluntary national review mechanism in 2020. We remain convinced that, in order for the SDGs, which we all adopted in 2015 to become a reality, we require additional commitment, initiative, effort and, above all, resources.

Mr. President, with regard to global challenges, this session is an excellent opportunity for Member States to reflect on how the Organization must face new

emerging challenges. More than ever, the world we live in today requires a consensus approach to addressing major challenges, such as climate change, terrorism, the peaceful settlement of conflicts, the reform of the Security-Council, migration and the management of health crises.

With regard to climate, it is necessary to recall that the planet, on which we live and will live for generations to come, is facing a crisis that is worsening by the day with the dramatic rise of climate sceptics. The climate crisis is putting decades of progress at risk and is jeopardizing all the projects we have undertaken to bring about inclusive and sustainable development, while, at the same time, the clock continues click without waiting for us to act.

Accordingly, in order to contribute to restoring the environment and the improving the country's environmental, social and economic situation, in November 2017 the Government of the Republic of Burundi launched the Ewe Burundi Urambaye project to significantly reduce the effects of deforestation.

Concerning the fight against terrorism, while we strongly condemn terrorism in all its forms, my country, Burundi, believes that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnicity. It is a borderless threat that requires a global solution by unconditionally tackling the root causes of this evil of our time.

As it is aware of the magnitude of terrorism today, my country, Burundi, will continue to make substantial contributions to combating terrorism in Somalia, where my country has deployed more than 5,000 troops and United Nations peacekeeping operations, as well as in the Central African Republic, where Burundi has a military battalion, which is doing excellent work.

With regard to the process of regional integration, we welcome the commendable initiative to establish the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which will allow for the free movement of goods and people on the Continent. There is no doubt that the African Continental Free Trade Area represents a genuine opportunity to stimulate growth, reduce poverty and broaden economic inclusion in Africa.

Concerning the subject of the reform of the Security Council, which has been under negotiations for more than a quarter of a century, my country, Burundi, remains firmly committed to the Common African Position, as contained in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. The Common African Position aims to correct the flagrant injustice committed against Africa, which is the only continent not represented on the Security Council in the category of permanent membership, and which is also underrepresented in the non-permanent category.

With regard to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has led to an unprecedented global crisis, which has literally claimed hundreds of thousands of lives, affected millions of people and threatens to erode before our eyes all the progress already made in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and those of Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

The pandemic has exposed the vulnerabilities of today's world and highlighted the broad divides in national and global development efforts, such as high levels of poverty and inequality, raging climate change and the continued discrimination of the elderly, poor communities, women and girls, all of which erode social cohesion.

All these challenges can only be met through international solidarity, cooperation and the promotion of multilateralism, based on the rule of international law.

Mr. President, in conclusion, my country, Burundi, has never stopped believing in international solidarity, multilateralism and the rejection of power diplomacy. Blessed with that belief, my country Burundi reaffirms its commitment to fully participate in building a world order based on the rule of law, which is peaceful, equitable, prosperous and respectful of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

I thank everyone for their kind attention. May God bless everyone!

**Sierra Leone** (see also A/75/PV.9, annex XVI)**Address by Mr. Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh, Vice-President of the Republic of Sierra Leone**

*Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 9th meeting of the General Assembly*

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary General,

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the responsibility to steer the work of the Seventy-Fifth Session of the General Assembly and assure you of Sierra Leone's full support during your tenure.

I commend His Excellency, Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande of Nigeria, for his effective and efficient leadership of the 74th UNGA session — a period that was very challenging.

I commend Secretary-General Antonio Guterres for his astute leadership and profound commitment to the work of the Organization. In particular, I acknowledge, with appreciation, his call for a global ceasefire during the current pandemic, the setting up of the COVID-19 response fund, advancing the urgent need to address Climate Change, and implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

From the outset, let me also, on behalf of the Government and People of Sierra Leone, express heartfelt and deep condolences to all Member States of the United Nations for the loss of lives due to the COVID-19 pandemics. We salute the selflessness of all frontline responders to this global emergency.

I also applaud the adoption, by this Assembly and the Security Council, of various COVID-19-focused resolutions as well as initiatives by Secretary-General António Guterres aimed at promoting global solidarity and cooperation to fight COVID-19 and address its impact on lives and livelihoods now and in the long term.

Sierra Leone, therefore, supports the call for global solidarity and cooperation for the prevention, curtailment, and treatment of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as all associated recovery programmes.

To that effect, I would like to encourage the Secretary General to work with this Assembly and all other stakeholders to expedite the implementation of all COVID-19-related resolutions. I would also like to encourage Member States of this august Assembly to share relevant information, scientific knowledge, and best practices about the disease, as well as enhance equitable and fair access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to all nations.

Mr. President,

Given the global health pandemic, the theme for this session, "The future we want, the United Nations we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism — confronting COVID-19 through effective multilateral action" is therefore appropriate, relevant, and very timely.



As a global family, it is only through our collective commitment to Multilateralism that we can effectively tackle the COVID-19 pandemic and meaningfully address the prevailing universal challenges of poverty, hunger, diseases, natural disasters, climate change, terrorism, human rights violations, cybersecurity, and transnational organized crime.

Mr. President,

At a time when isolationist sentiments, geopolitical tensions, and economic uncertainties are escalating, the multilateral rules-based system is severely being tested. The UN Charter remains the foundation for that multilateral system, international cooperation, and global peace and security. It provides the framework for maintaining peace and security, upholding human rights and dignity, promoting sustainable development and international cooperation to tackle both longstanding and emerging challenges.

In view of this, Sierra Leone reaffirms its firm commitment to multilateralism as embodied in the Charter of the United Nations.

We are, in this regard, committed to promoting international cooperation to address present and emerging challenges that confront our world, including our collective engagement in the prevention of conflict as well as advancing durable peaceful settlement of conflicts and disputes.

We must continue to build on gains made in our preventive diplomacy efforts, continue to heighten collaboration, and utilise experiences that have helped the United Nations to achieve relative international peace and security over the last 75 years.

Mr President,

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to disrupt and destroy lives and livelihoods and also pose substantive risks to international peace and security. This is especially so in countries that are in conflict or emerging from conflict, those experiencing humanitarian crises, and those with weak and fragile economies where peacebuilding and post-war state-building could be undermined or reversed.

This brings me to the current political crisis in Mali and related insurgencies in the Sahel that are of grave concern and to which we should respond urgently by providing unambiguous support to ongoing efforts initiated by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Mr. President,

Our collective multilateral aspiration and hope for a safer and more secure world is embodied in our adoption of the 2030 agenda and its 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Paris Climate Change Agreement.

As the COVID-19 pandemic makes our timely attainment of the objectives of the 2030 agenda unlikely, it is imperative that we respond cooperatively to the pandemic in a way that will put nations back on track to accelerate progress towards achieving the SDG. Reduced economic activity, revenue losses, budget constraints and the huge cost of managing the pandemic are adversely affecting our efforts to achieve sustainable development, strengthen resilience, and walk out of fragility.

The implementation of Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan (2019-2023), that is aligned to both the SDGs and the AU's Agenda 2063, is faced with challenges of generating required domestic revenue to fund projects and

other sundry capacity and management constraints. We must also strengthen our public health institutions, and where we rebuild, build back better.

In this regard, Sierra Leone fully supports current efforts by this Organization and International Financial Institutions, and continues to call for emergency debt relief and standstill mechanisms from International Financial Institutions.

Given the magnitude and impact of COVID-19 and other persistent disease burdens, we aim to invest in our health and other service delivery systems, and in a sustained and robust post COVID-19 recovery process. We therefore seek additional grants, access to finance and technical assistance from our development partners, and more budget support, to deliver that much-needed fiscal space.

But beyond short-term, quick-fix-and-exit-strategies that characterise this general global pandemic response, Africa needs a global commitment to Debt Cancellation for the least developed countries that are working hard to address long-term structural problems with their economies.

Mr. President,

In Sierra Leone, we believe that it will be impossible to make the necessary progress on global agendas such as education, health, gender equality, and climate change if we do not reduce inequality, violence, injustice, and corruption. Our Medium-Term National Development Plan (2019-2023) prioritises Human Development Capital. We are therefore working to implement all critical drivers of sustainable development.

The empowerment of women and Girls is central to my Government's Medium-Term National Development Plan. We have established a standalone Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs, developed a national Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy, supporting entrepreneurship and economic inclusion, implementing affirmative policies for women and girls in all sectors from education to agriculture, promoting women's health and reducing maternal and child mortality, toughening sexual offences laws, and introducing one stop centres for rape and sexual offences models courts.

Since the launch of our country's free quality education flagship, we have increased allocations to 21 per cent of budget, increased enrolment at all educational institutions nationwide in spite of, and prioritised innovation and science in all aspects of governance and national development through the establishment of a Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation that works closely with the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education.

We have increased investments in purposeful infrastructure that will generate economic productivity and improve standards of living. We are constructing and resurfacing more roads, expanding access to carbon-neutral energy in off-grid and other locations, extending ICT penetration, and improving access to potable water and sanitation facilities.

We have launched mitigation and protection strategies to forestall the adverse effects of climate change especially on our vulnerable populations. We urge more international cooperation and the urgent implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Mr. President,

As Chair of the G7+ group of countries that brings together countries affected by conflict and fragility, Sierra Leone remains committed to fostering peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. Among local action Sierra Leone has taken to foster

these goals are ramping up the fight against corruption and preparing to establish a permanent Commission on Peace and National Cohesion. Following a pledge I made at the 74th Session of this august body, we have now expunged a 55-year old law that criminalises seditious libel. We are working closely with journalists, civil society, women's groups, and other stakeholder groups to nurture and strengthen our democracy.

With the support of the Peacebuilding Commission, we have made great progress in fostering and sustaining peace in Sierra Leone over the years. Although Sierra Leone will withdraw from its formal agenda, we will continue to engage the Commission as and when the need arises.

Mr. President

At the World Summit held in 2005, we made a commitment to an early reform of the Security Council in order to make it “more broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions”.

As Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten on the reform of the United Nations, I should underscore that the people of Africa are convinced now more than ever before that the present geopolitical realities and the current global health pandemic are compelling for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council to make way for the representation of Africa in the Permanent category and address its under-representation in the Non-Permanent category of the Council.

The growing and broad support for the Common African Position is evident in the recent intergovernmental negotiations as more Member States expressed and affirmed the call to correct the historical injustice done to Africa. In this vein, we would like to encourage this Assembly to address this long-standing injustice by adopting Africa's demand outlined in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. We look forward to constructive engagement that will build on progress made in the past in order to achieve the comprehensive reform of the Security Council during this session.

Mr. President,

Sierra Leone reiterates its commitment to multilateral efforts geared toward the total elimination of colonialism in all its forms and manifestation, and supports the adopted decade plan of action. If we are to remain true to the fundamental principles of the United Nations that is fit for purpose, then it becomes absolutely necessary to relegate the chapter of colonialism to history within the period 2021- 2030. The global paradigm of engagement, partnership, multilateralism, and mutual respect for the aspirations and views of all peoples must prevail.

Let me conclude, Mr. President, by reiterating Sierra Leone's call for the establishment of resilient healthcare infrastructure and services to both curtail and protect people against the risk of COVID-19. Only in that way can the international community reestablish confidence and stability in the financial markets and create the right environment that supports global business and trade, investment, and job creation. We must put back on track progress toward achieving our sustainable development goals.

I thank you!