



# General Assembly

Thirty-first special session

**2**<sup>nd</sup> plenary meeting  
Thursday, 3 December 2020, 9 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Bozkir . . . . . (Turkey)

*The meeting was called to order at 9.05 a.m.*

## Opening segment

**The President:** I will now make my opening statement from the rostrum.

It is an honour to welcome representatives to the thirty-first session of the General Assembly special session on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) — the first-ever special session to address a pandemic. Today marks an overdue and much needed moment of reckoning. None of us could have imagined this time last year what was to come. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted life for everyone around the world. It has challenged our world in ways unlike any other crisis in the 75-year history of the United Nations.

COVID-19 is, first and foremost, a global health crisis. But it is at the same time an economic crisis, a development crisis, a humanitarian crisis and a human rights crisis. We face the deepest global recession since the Great Depression and the broadest collapse in income since 1870. The world economy has shrunk by 4.4 per cent. Global extreme poverty is expected to rise for the first time in over 20 years. Up to 115 million people are at risk of being pushed into extreme poverty. Foreign investments have been evaporating. Trade and travel restrictions, steep declines in export earnings, tourism and remittances all put at risk the livelihoods of billions all around the world. Our global development trajectory has been hijacked. Each country feels the pressure. Yet, those that were already lagging behind took the worst hit. Ongoing humanitarian crises have worsened as a famine of unprecedented proportions

threatens the poorest people in the world. We are faced with a grave risk where half of the Decade of Action to implement the Sustainable Development Goals will have been spent simply getting back to where we were at the beginning of the year.

The pandemic has disproportionately affected the most vulnerable members of our societies — women, children, the elderly, the disabled, refugees, migrants, those living in slums and the homeless. It reveals the structural inequalities and obstacles to the full enjoyment of human rights. Lockdown measures have led to increased gender-based violence and domestic abuse of women. Many women will not be returning to the workforce, as they disproportionately shoulder the burden of unpaid care and home schooling. Young people feel frustrated as their education, community engagement and employment opportunities are restrained.

Pandemic-related disruptions in health and nutrition services could result in increased rates of child deaths from preventable causes. The digital divide between developing and developed countries, as well as between urban and rural settings, is exacerbates exclusion and inequality. In communities around the world where Internet connectivity is scarce, millions of children have no access to remote learning. Already far from their homes due to conflicts, disasters and persecution, refugees and internally displaced persons are suffering further due to the pandemic and increases in racist discourse, hatred, stigmatization, stereotyping and misinformation have accompanied the pandemic.

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).



The Assembly Hall is where nations come together; where they unite. The General Assembly is the voice, will and conscience of humankind. The world is looking up to the United Nations for leadership to step up and take demonstrable action to address the greatest challenge our world faces today. The crisis compels us to shake up how things are done; to be bold and to restore confidence and trust in the United Nations. No other institution is as far-reaching as mandated or as normatively better placed. The United Nations must lead on the issue. This special session is a historic moment for Member States, the United Nations, the scientific community and other stakeholders, including civil society, to hear from each other and engage in dialogue on the multifaceted consequences of the pandemic, as well as on the ways to recover better and stronger.

It is not a time to point fingers. We have convened here to forge a path forward and end the suffering of the people we serve. Since the beginning, I have been convinced that holding this special session was a test for multilateralism, defined by our collective action on the most critical issue of our time. And it is in no way the end of our joint response and recovery from the pandemic. We were not prepared for COVID-19 but we have to be prepared for the next pandemic, climate catastrophe or global recession because a crisis of this magnitude will require that we meet it when it does.

We must be able to rise to the challenge and our response should not simply target the return to the status quo ante. What we need to do is clear. First, we must start with ensuring fair and equitable access to vaccines. Providing everyone with access to COVID-19 vaccines is both the right thing to do and the smart thing to do. From a moral standpoint, we have an obligation to leave no one behind and to protect the most vulnerable. From a practical standpoint, the value of any vaccine is entirely dependent on how many people can get it so we must strengthen political and resource mobilization for multilateral initiatives that aim towards fair and equitable distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Secondly, we must work together to protect the most vulnerable countries that are lagging behind, most notably the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. We must ensure that adequate financial resources are available to achieve an inclusive and resilient recovery. We need to join forces to address the challenges of that vulnerability and diminished fiscal space. I encourage international financial institutions and partner countries

to do what they can to ease debt burdens, facilitate investment and leverage development assistance during this crucial period. If necessary, we must pool financial resources to create investment funds.

The pandemic has also highlighted that we need more investment in social and health services all around the world. We need to develop projects for the social inclusion of the most vulnerable groups. We must ensure universal health coverage. While tackling the immediate consequences of the pandemic, we must also work towards the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), uphold our pledge to leave no one behind and ensure that our recovery efforts spur on the SDGs. We do not need to prioritize among those Goals. Indeed, the underlying urgency of ending extreme poverty, halting climate change, protecting the oceans or building inclusive societies is more pressing than ever. Investments towards the SDGs can serve as both a means and an end towards a post-COVID-19 recovery.

The environmental root causes must also be addressed. COVID-19 is a zoonotic infectious disease, originating from animal populations being placed under severe environmental pressure. This is our last warning. We must get to the bottom of how it happened to ensure it does not happen again. We simply have to protect biodiversity and look towards a green recovery.

Finally, we must ensure that the policies we implement to combat the pandemic do not undermine the democratic institutions that underpin the long-term health of our economies and societies. Our response to the crisis must be shaped by and uphold respect for human rights. Our policies should be universal, open, transparent, accountable and inclusive. Promoting good governance, respecting the rule of law and allocating resources for the most vulnerable people will, in fact, support our response to the pandemic by making our societies more equitable and resilient.

As a global community, we are at the beginning of the largest socioeconomic recovery since the creation of the United Nations. If properly planned and coordinated, our recovery has the potential to jump-start the SDGs, accelerate action on resilient infrastructure, improve access to education and health care and better protect the natural world around us. In 1945, sceptics thought that the idea of a multilateral system, with an Organization of unparalleled legitimacy at its core, to be impossible. But even at that time of unimaginable tragedy, the world came together for the sake of humankind. I am

sure we will be able to do that once again. Right now, we all dream of the day the pandemic is over; the day we can take a deep breath of fresh air, without fear; the day we can shake the hands of our colleagues, embrace our families and laugh with our friends.

After months of adjusting to life during this pandemic, it will be easy to feel frustrated but members should not be deterred. We are working for members. We are working for refugees who are taking every precaution to protect their families in camp settings. We are working for people with underlying conditions, while self-isolating at home; for the girls and boys who wish, above all else, to return to school; for people in line, waiting for COVID-19 testing, and for those who do not have access to such diagnostics; for the healthcare workers who continue to work tirelessly on the front line; for the people battling the effects of COVID-19 and for the families around the world, who are grieving the loss of their loved ones. The United Nations is working for them. We are united for them. I ask them to stay strong. There are brighter days ahead.

Before proceeding further, I would like to invite members to stand and observe a minute of silence for all the victims of the coronavirus disease pandemic, including those in our United Nations family.

*The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.*

**The President:** I now invite His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres to make a statement, including in his role as Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

**The Secretary-General:** It is an honour to address the General Assembly special session in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Nearly a year into the pandemic, we face a human tragedy and a public health, humanitarian and development emergency. For the first time since 1945, the entire world is confronted by a common threat, regardless of nationality, ethnicity or face. But while COVID-19 does not discriminate, our efforts to prevent and contain it do. For that reason, the pandemic has hit the poorest and most vulnerable in our societies hardest. It has a devastating impact on older people, women and girls, low-income communities, the marginalized and isolated. It presents new threats to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable

Development Goals. From the start, the World Health Organization provided factual information and scientific guidance that should have been the basis for a coordinated global response. Unfortunately, many of those recommendations were not followed and, in some situations, there was a rejection of facts and the guidance was ignored. And when countries go in their own direction, the virus goes in every direction.

The social and economic impact of the pandemic is enormous and growing. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of scientists and researchers from around the world, including those who are with us today, vaccines may become available within the next weeks and months. But let us not fool ourselves. A vaccine cannot undo the damage that will stretch across years, even decades to come. Extreme poverty is rising. The threat of famine looms. We face the biggest threat of global recession in eight decades and those intergenerational impacts are not due to COVID-19 alone. They are the result of long-term fragilities, inequalities and injustices that have been exposed by the pandemic. It is time to reset. As we build a strong recovery, we must seize the opportunity for change.

Since March, the United Nations system has focused its efforts on helping countries avoid the worst impact of the pandemic, while working for a strong recovery. We have mobilized our procurement and logistics operations to deliver medical equipment and supplies to 172 countries. A large-scale coordinated and comprehensive health response, guided by the World Health Organization, aims to suppress the transmission of the virus, reduce mortality and develop vaccines, diagnostics and treatments that must be available to all.

I have repeatedly called for the COVID-19 vaccine to be a global public good, available to everyone everywhere. The COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator and its COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility are the tools to get us there. But there is still a finance gap of \$28 billion, including \$4.3 billion urgently needed for the next two months. I thank those who have contributed and urge all to show their strong support.

Beyond health, I appealed in March for a global ceasefire so that countries can focus on fighting the virus. I echoed that call in my speech to the General Assembly in September and urged new efforts and commitments to silence the guns by the end of the year (see A/75/PV.4). I am encouraged by the support the call has received from Member States, regional

organizations, armed movements and civil society organizations. I am also encouraged by the response to my call for peace in homes around the world and an end to violence against women and girls. As we mark the 16 Days of Action against Gender-Based Violence, I urge Governments to take concrete steps to make good on the commitments that were made.

The United Nations is also strongly engaged in combating misinformation online. Our verified campaign provides compelling, trusted information, while offering people tools to identify false content.

The United Nations system is mobilized to support countries in addressing the devastating socioeconomic, humanitarian and human rights aspects of the crisis. We have extended lifesaving assistance to 63 of the most vulnerable countries, through our COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan. From the start, we have called for a stimulus package worth at least 10 per cent of global gross domestic product and for debt relief for all countries that need it. I welcome the steps that have been taken to help developing countries but they are totally insufficient for the scale of this crisis. Many low- and middle-income developing countries need immediate support to avert a liquidity crisis. They are being forced to choose between providing basic services for their people or servicing their debts.

The initiative we launched with the Governments of Canada and Jamaica has developed policy options for financing the response to COVID-19 and putting us back on course to achieving the SDGs. And that includes increasing resources available to the International Monetary Fund, through a new allocation of special drawing rights to the benefit of developing countries and the voluntary reallocation of unused special drawing rights. I hope that the Group of 20 (G-20) debt initiatives will be broadened so that all vulnerable developing countries are eligible, including middle-income countries, that need debt relief. In the longer term, we need a reformed global architecture to enhance debt transparency and sustainability. I press for those policies in all my global engagements, most recently at the G-20. On the ground, our reformed United Nations country teams, led by a new generation of Resident Coordinators and largely thanks to the impact of the reform, are now able to support Governments in developing national response and recovery plans.

Looking ahead, the recovery from COVID-19 must address the pre-existing conditions it has exposed and

exploited, from gaps in basic services to an overheated planet. Stronger health systems and universal health coverage must be a priority. Since 2007, the World Health Organization has declared six public health emergencies of international concern. COVID-19 will not be the last. We must apply the lessons learned if we are to meet the responsibilities to our children and grandchildren. Social safety nets must work for everyone. Too often, they fail precisely when they are needed most. A new social contract between people, Governments, the private sector, civil society and more can tackle the roots of inequality, with fair taxation on income and wealth and with universal benefits and opportunities for all.

As we launch economies, new investments must lay the groundwork for sustainable development and carbon neutrality, in line with the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We cannot bequeath a broken planet and huge debt to future generations. The money we spend on recovery must go to building a greener, fairer future. There is hopeful news on the climate front. A global coalition is taking shape for net-zero emissions. By early next year, countries representing more than 65 per cent of global carbon dioxide emissions are likely to have committed to carbon neutrality. That sends a clear signal to markets, investors and decision-makers — act now to put a price on carbon, end fossil fuel subsidies, stop constructing new coal power plants and invest in resilient infrastructure.

2021 must be a leap year — the year of a quantum leap towards net-zero emissions of greenhouse gases and every country should enhance their nationally determined contributions well in advance of the twenty-sixth United Nations Climate Change Conference, next November in Glasgow, and in line with the long-term goal of global carbon neutrality by 2050. Adaptation is an essential component of climate action. For the least developed countries and small island developing States, it is an existential issue. I appeal to developed countries to fulfil their long-standing promise to provide \$100 billion annually to support developing countries in reaching our shared climate goals. Early warning systems, climate-resilient infrastructure and agriculture can help avoid future losses, while generating gains for biodiversity and other benefits for humankind.

We cannot separate climate action from global well-being, particularly biodiversity. It is time to end



the suicidal war with our planet. 2021 must be a year to address our planetary emergency. We need a post-2020 biodiversity framework, to be established in Kunming, to halt the extinction crisis and we must seek urgent action to protect and advance the health of the world's seas and oceans. Overfishing must stop. Chemical and solid waste pollution, particularly plastics, must be drastically reduced. We must make peace with our planet if we are to live in balance with its incredible riches.

As this difficult year draws to a close, let us resolve to take the tough, ambitious decisions and actions that will lead to better days ahead. In a global crisis, we must meet the expectations of those we serve with unity, solidarity and coordinated multilateral global action. I call on members to take the opportunity of this special session to confront the COVID-19 pandemic with the urgency it demands to save lives and build a better future together.

**The President:** I thank the Secretary-General for his statement and for taking the time to be with us today. The Secretary-General will be leaving after the opening segment for another engagement.

In accordance with resolution 75/4, I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan and President of the Economic and Social Council.

**Mr. Akram** (Pakistan), President of the Economic and Social Council: I am honoured to be able to speak to the General Assembly's special session in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The crisis triggered by COVID-19 is a health crisis, an economic crisis and, above all, a humanitarian crisis. Global infections have reached 65 million. One and a half million people have died. We have lost one of our own, Ambassador Touré, Chargé d'affaires of Guinea. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest condolences to his family and the Government of Guinea.

The economic statistics are equally devastating. There is a global economic contraction of nearly 5 per cent and more than 60 developing countries need urgent financial help. Five countries have defaulted on debt payments. Twenty countries face acute food security and scarcity. More than 300 million jobs were lost and 100 million people were pushed back into extreme poverty.

Confronted by the monumental crisis, the world's response must be equally bold. We must first ensure that a vaccine against the virus becomes available to everyone, everywhere, rich or poor, man or woman, on an equitable basis. Those who are the most at risk — health workers, the ill and infirm, women and children — must receive priority. Advance purchase agreements must not be allowed to undermine our collective commitment to equity in vaccine distribution. A collective global commitment to the COVAX Facility and the COVID-19 Technology Access Pool is indispensable. Governments must also commit to transparency in all matters related to the production, distribution and fair pricing of the vaccine.

Secondly, each Government should be encouraged to respond to the people's needs. As the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund has advised, countries should spend as much as needed to keep their people alive and their economies afloat. It is evident that developing countries do not have the fiscal space to finance a recovery from the pandemic. I may mention that later in the session the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Imran Khan, will propose an emergency plan for financial support to developing countries. If there is an economic collapse or a humanitarian disaster in the developing countries, it will halt a global economic recovery and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will turn into a chimera.

In deploying resources, Governments and international institutions must put people first. No one should be left behind. To lift millions out of poverty and build resilience in our societies, investments in sustainable infrastructure will be vital. Science and technology must be deployed in building back better. Research and development objectives, the international patent regime and the digitalization of economies should be aligned with the SDGs and climate objectives. I am confident that the special session will contribute significantly to the achievement of those important objectives.

I am also confident that the Economic and Social Council, through its forthcoming Forum on Financing for Development next April, the Forum on Science and Technology and Innovation in May and the high-level political forum in July will complement and advance the deliberations and outcomes of the special session to build resilient structures that can recover from the

COVID-19 crisis, achieve the SDGs and prevent a climate catastrophe.

This is a time for the expression of international solidarity. This is a time for us to turn our nice words into concrete and specific actions.

**The President:** Before proceeding further, I have been informed that there is no statement by the President of the Security Council.

**Statement by Mr. Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev,  
Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned  
Countries**

**The President:** In accordance with resolution 75/4, I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan to introduce the pre-recorded statement of the Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

**Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan):** I have the distinct honour and privilege to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in his capacity as Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

**The President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 1 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The President:** We have heard the last speaker for the opening segment of the Special Session.

Before proceeding to the consideration of agenda item 7, entitled "General debate", in keeping with the established practice, I should like to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/S-31/2/Add.1, concerning Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations. May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in this document?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** In that connection, may I further take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to follow the provisions of resolution 75/2 by which the Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe and Somalia are permitted to vote in the General Assembly until the end of its seventy-fifth session and to also allow those member States to vote at the thirty-first special session.

*It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 7**

**General debate**

**The President:** As members are aware the Assembly, in its resolution 75/4, decided, without setting a precedent for future special sessions of the General Assembly, each member State, observer State and the European Union, as well as representatives from relevant organizations, attending the special session can submit a pre-recorded statement by their Heads of State or Government, head of delegation or other dignitary, which will be played in the General Assembly Hall during the general debate of the special session after introduction by their representative who is physically present in the Assembly Hall. In this regard, I would like to address important organizational matters pertaining to the conduct of the plenary meeting.

The introduction of the pre-recorded statements will be made by representatives from their seats. Due to time constraints, it is expected that introductory remarks will be kept concise. Statements delivered by representatives who are physically present in the Assembly Hall will also be made from their seats. As set out in resolution 75/4, statements in the general debate will be limited to five minutes for individual delegations and seven minutes for statements made on behalf of a group of States. In the case of pre-recorded statements, introductory remarks and the length of the video itself shall be counted in the allocated time limit.

In accordance with resolution 75/4, without setting a precedent for future special sessions of the General Assembly, in addition to the verbatim records, the President of the General Assembly will circulate as a document of the Assembly a compilation document of the statements delivered by Heads of State and Government or other dignitaries by means of pre-recorded statements during the special session and submitted to the President no later than the day on which the pre-recorded statement is played in the Assembly Hall. In that regard, submissions should be sent to [statements@un.org](mailto:statements@un.org).

**Address by Mr. Charles Michel, President of the  
European Council**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union to introduce an address by the President of the European Council.

**Mr. Gonzato** (European Union): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Charles Michel, President of the European Council.

**The President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the European Council.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 2 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi and Minister for Defense**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Malawi to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Malawi and Minister for Defense.

**Ms. Chibwana** (Malawi): It is my distinct honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Lazarus Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 3 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Turkey.

**Mr. Sinirlioğlu** (Turkey): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 4 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Ms. Simonetta Myriam Sommaruga, President of the Swiss Confederation**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland to introduce an address by the President of the Swiss Confederation.

**Mrs. Baeriswyl** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I am pleased to introduce the pre-recorded statement by Ms. Simonetta Sommaruga, President of the Swiss Confederation. It is a special honour to be able to introduce a woman's voice among those of leaders of the world.

**The President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Swiss Confederation.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 5 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado, President of the Republic of Honduras**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Honduras to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Honduras.

**Ms. Flores** (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the distinct honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by Mr. Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado, President of the Republic of Honduras.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 6 and see A/S-31/4).*

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

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

**Mr. Aliyev** (Azerbaijan): It is my great honour and privilege to introduce the pre-recorded message by His Excellency Mr. Ilham Heydar oğlu Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in his national capacity.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 7 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Kaïs Saïed, President of the Republic of Tunisia**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Tunisia to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Tunisia.

**Mr. Ladeb** (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased to introduce the pre-recorded statement by the President of the Republic of Tunisia, Mr. Kaïs Saïed.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 8 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Miguel Díaz Canel Bermúdez,  
President of the Republic of Cuba**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Cuba.

**Mr. Pedroso Cuesta** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by the President of the Republic of Cuba, Mr. Miguel Díaz Canel Bermúdez.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 9 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Francisco Rafael Sagasti  
Hochhausler, President of the Republic of Peru**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Peru to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Peru.

**Mr. Popolizio** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Francisco Rafael Sagasti Hochhausler, President of the Republic of Peru.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 10 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Luis Alberto Arce Catacora,  
Constitutional President of the Plurinational State  
of Bolivia**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Bolivia to introduce an address by the Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

**Mr. Zambrana Torrelío** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Arce Catacora, Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

**The President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 11 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Lenin Moreno Garcés,  
Constitutional President of the Republic of Ecuador**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Ecuador to introduce an address by the Constitutional President of the Republic of Ecuador.

**Mr. Espinosa Cañizares** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by the President of the Republic of Ecuador, Mr. Lenin Moreno Garcés.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 12 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi,  
President of the Republic of Botswana**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Botswana to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Botswana.

**Mr. Kelapile** (Botswana): It is a great honour for me to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi, President of the Republic of Botswana.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 13 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by His Serene Highness Prince Albert II,  
Sovereign Prince of Monaco**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Monaco to introduce an address by the Sovereign Prince of Monaco.



**Ms. Picco** (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded message by His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco.

**The President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Sovereign Prince of Monaco.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 14 and see A/S-31/4).*

#### **Address by Mr. Barham Salih, President of the Republic of Iraq**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Iraq.

**Mr. Bahr Aluloom** (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased to introduce the pre-recorded statement by Mr. Barham Salih, President of the Republic of Iraq to the special session of the General Assembly in response to the coronavirus disease pandemic.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 15 and see A/S-31/4).*

#### **Address by Mr. David Kabua, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of the Marshall Islands to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

**Ms. Kabua** (Marshall Islands): I have the distinct honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by the President of the Marshall Islands, David Kabua.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 16 and see A/S-31/4).*

#### **Address by Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya to introduce an address by the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya.

**Ms. Mwangi** (Kenya): It is now my honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya, to address the General Assembly at its thirty-first special session in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The first part of the video statement is missing. Allow me to fill in the gap.

“Let me take this opportunity, Mr. President, to congratulate you so far on a productive and successful seventy-fifth session, especially in the midst of such an extraordinary and unexpected era in our lives. I assure you of Kenya’s full, as well as constructive, support.

In the past few months, the COVID-19 pandemic has indiscriminately affected all of our societies, disrupted our economies, shut down our schools and rocked our health sectors to the core. COVID-19 exposed our unpreparedness and taught us to be better equipped for the unexpected. It has accelerated efforts to construct more resilient, stronger institutions in an all-out effort to build back better and regain what is lost”.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 17 and see A/S-31/4).*

#### **Address by the Mr. Milorad Dodik, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to introduce an address by the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Mr. Alkalaj** (Bosnia and Herzegovina): It is my distinct honour to introduce the pre-recorded message by His Excellency Mr. Milorad Dodik, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**The President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 18 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço,  
President of the Republic of Angola**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Angola to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Angola.

**Ms. Ferreira** (Angola): It is my honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola, to the General Assembly at its thirty-first special session in response to the coronavirus disease.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 19 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Milo Đukanović, President of  
Montenegro**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Montenegro to introduce an address by the President of Montenegro.

**Ms. Šćepanović** (Montenegro): I have the honour to introduce a pre-recorded video statement by His Excellency Mr. Milo Đukanović, President of Montenegro.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 20 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Mohammad Ashraf Ghani,  
President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan to introduce an address by the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

**Mrs. Raz** (Afghanistan): Today, I have the great honour and the distinct privilege to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 21 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Félix Antoine Tshilombo  
Tshisekedi, President of the Democratic Republic of  
the Congo**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to introduce an address by the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**Mr. Empole** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): I have the distinct honour and privilege to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Félix Antoine Tshilombo Tshisekedi, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to the General Assembly at its thirty-first special session.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 22 and see A/S-31/4).*

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

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Guyana to introduce an address by the President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

**Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett** (Guyana): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

**The President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 23 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa,  
President of the Republic of South Africa**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of South Africa.

**Mr. Mabhongo** (South Africa): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by the President of the Republic of South Africa and Chairperson of the African Union, His Excellency Mr. Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, to the special session of the General Assembly on the coronavirus disease pandemic.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 24 and see A/S-31/4).*

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

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Suriname to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Suriname.

**Ms. Sweeb** (Suriname): It is my distinct honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by the President of the Republic of Suriname, His Excellency Mr. Chandrikapersad Santokhi.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 25 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Iván Duque Márquez, President of the Republic of Colombia**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Colombia.

**Mr. Fernandez De Soto Valderrama** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am pleased to introduce the pre-recorded statement by the President of the Republic of Colombia, Iván Duque Márquez, to the special session of the General Assembly on the coronavirus disease. President Duque has faced the pandemic head-on, demonstrating great leadership at the national and regional levels and reaffirming his trust in multilateralism.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 26 and see A/S-31/4).*

*Ms. Bahous (Jordan), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

**Address by Mr. Stevo Pendarovski, President of the Republic of North Macedonia**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of North Macedonia to introduce

an address by the President of the Republic of North Macedonia.

**Mr. Uzunovski** (North Macedonia): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by Mr. Stevo Pendarovski, President of the Republic of North Macedonia.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 27 and see A/S-31/4).*

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

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Latvia to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Latvia.

**Mr. Pildegovičs** (Latvia): It is my distinct honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Egils Levits, President of the Republic of Latvia.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 28 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mrs. Kersti Kaljulaid, President of the Republic of Estonia**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Estonia to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Estonia.

**Mr. Raun** (Estonia): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by Her Excellency Mrs. Kersti Kaljulaid, President of the Republic of Estonia.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 29 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, President of the Republic of Serbia**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Serbia to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Serbia

**Ms. Ivanovic** (Serbia): I have the honour and privilege to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, President of the Republic of Serbia.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 30 and see A/S-31/4).*

#### **Address by Mr. Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of France to introduce an address by the President of the French Republic.

**Mrs. Broadhurst Estival** (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by the President of the French Republic, Mr. Emmanuel Macron.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 31 and see A/S-31/4).*

#### **Address by Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Venezuela to introduce an address by the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

**Mr. Poveda Brito** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, His Excellency Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, on the occasion of the thirty-first special session of the General Assembly on a comprehensive response to the coronavirus disease pandemic.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 32 and see A/S-31/4).*

#### **Address by Mr. Rodrigo Roa Duterte, President of the Republic of the Philippines**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of the Philippines.

**Mr. Manalo** (Philippines): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Rodrigo Roa Duterte, President of the Republic of the Philippines.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 33 and see A/S-31/4).*

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

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Nauru to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Nauru.

**Mrs. Deiye** (Nauru): It is my great honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Lionel Rouwen Aingimea, President of the Republic of Nauru.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 34 and see A/S-31/4).*

#### **Agenda item 7 (continued)**

##### **General debate**

#### **Address by Ms. Raquel Peña, Vice-President of the Dominican Republic**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of the Dominican Republic to introduce an address by the Vice-President of the Dominican Republic.

**Mr. Blanco Conde** (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for me to introduce, as her first-ever statement to the General Assembly, the pre-recorded statement of Her Excellency Ms. Raquel Peña, Vice-President of the Dominican Republic, on the occasion of the special session on the coronavirus



disease, which is extremely important given the current situation as a result of the dreadful pandemic.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 35 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister, Minister of State, Minister for Communications and Media and Minister for Religious Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Luxembourg to introduce a statement by the Prime Minister, Minister of State, Minister for Communications and Media and Minister for Religious Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

**Mr. Braun** (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement, in English, of the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Mr. Xavier Bettel, on behalf of 63 States of the Group of Friends on Children and the Sustainable Development Goals, followed by a statement, in French, in his national capacity.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister, Minister of State, Minister for Communications and Media and Minister for Religious Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 36 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Kausea Natano, Prime Minister of Tuvalu**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Tuvalu to introduce a statement by the Prime Minister of Tuvalu.

**Mr. Laloni** (Tuvalu): I have the distinct honour to introduce the joint statement of the Pacific Islands Forum by His Excellency Mr. Kausea Natano, Prime Minister of Tuvalu.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of Tuvalu.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 37 and see A/S-31/4).*

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

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Djibouti to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Djibouti and Head of Government.

**Mr. Doualeh** (Djibouti) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to introduce the statement of the President of the Republic of Djibouti, His Excellency Mr. Ismaël Omar Guelleh, on the occasion of the thirty-first session of the General Assembly on the coronavirus disease pandemic.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Djibouti and Head of Government.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 38 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Agenda item 7 (continued)**

**General debate**

**Address by Mr. John Briceño, Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment of Belize**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Belize to introduce a statement by the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment of Belize.

**Mr. Smith** (Belize): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. John Briceño, Prime Minister of Belize, in his capacity as the Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment of Belize.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 39 and see A/S-31/4).*

*Mr. Masuku (Eswatini), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

**Address by Mr. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Canada to introduce a statement by the Prime Minister of Canada.

**Mr. Rae** (Canada): It is my great honour to introduce the pre-recorded message by the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of Canada.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 40 and see A/S-31/4).*

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

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Zimbabwe to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

**Mr. Shava** (Zimbabwe): It is my great pleasure and honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 41 and see A/S-31/4).*

#### **Agenda item 7 (continued)**

##### **General debate**

**Address by Mr. Giuseppe Conte, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Italy to introduce a statement by the President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy.

**Mr. Stefanile** (Italy): I have the honour and the pleasure to introduce the pre-recorded statement of His Excellency Mr. Giuseppe Conte, Prime Minister of Italy.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 42 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Chung Sye-Kyun, Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Korea to introduce a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Cho Hyun** (Republic of Korea): I now have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement of His Excellency Mr. Chung Sye-Kyun, Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 43 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Xavier Espot Zamora, Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Andorra to introduce a statement by the Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra.

**Mrs. Vives Balmaña** (Andorra) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement of His Excellency Mr. Xavier Espot Zamora, Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 44 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Andrej Plenković, Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Croatia to introduce a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia.

**Mr. Šimonović** (Croatia): Let me thank the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, the President of the Economic and Social Council and President of Azerbaijan for their inspiring opening remarks.

Since one of the statements delivered today might have been unclear, let me clarify that there are six legal and equally legitimate successor States to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia — Croatia being one of them.

I now have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by Andrej Plenković, Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 45 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. K. P. Sharma Oli, Prime Minister of Nepal**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Nepal to introduce a statement by the Prime Minister of Nepal.

**Mr. Rai (Nepal):** I have the distinct honour and privilege to introduce the pre-recorded video statement of the Right Honourable K.P. Sharma Oli, Prime Minister of Nepal.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of Nepal.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 46 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Ms. Katrin Jakobsdottir, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iceland**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Iceland to introduce a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Iceland.

**Mr. Valtýsson (Iceland):** I have the honour and pleasure to introduce the pre-recorded statement by Her Excellency Ms. Katrin Jakobsdottir, Prime Minister of Iceland.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Iceland.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 47 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Ms. Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister and Minister for National Security and Intelligence, Child Poverty Reduction and Ministerial Services of New Zealand**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand to introduce a statement by the Prime Minister and Minister for National

Security and Intelligence, Child Poverty Reduction and Ministerial Services of New Zealand.

**Mr. Hawke (New Zealand):** I have the distinct honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by Her Excellency the Right Honourable Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister of New Zealand.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister and Minister for National Security and Intelligence, Child Poverty Reduction and Ministerial Services of New Zealand.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 48 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand to introduce a statement by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand.

**Mr. Srivihok (Thailand):** I have the distinct honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 49 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Imran Khan, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan to introduce a statement by the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

**Mr. Akram (Pakistan):** I have the distinct honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement to the special session by His Excellency Mr. Imran Khan, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 50 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Ms. Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Norway to introduce a statement by the Prime Minister of Norway.

**Mr. Tetzschner** (Norway): I have the honour to introduce a video message by Her Excellency Ms. Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of Norway.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 51 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to introduce a statement by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

**Ms. Fatima** (Bangladesh): I have the distinct honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 52 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Allen Michael Chastanet, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Economic Growth, Job Creation, External Affairs and the Public Service of Saint Lucia**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Saint Lucia to introduce a statement by the Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Economic Growth, Job Creation, External Affairs and the Public Service of Saint Lucia.

**Mr. Richardson** (Saint Lucia): I have the distinct honour and privilege to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency the Honourable Allen Michael Chastanet, Prime Minister of Saint Lucia.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Economic Growth, Job Creation, External Affairs and the Public Service of Saint Lucia.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 53 and see A/S-31/4).*

*Ms. Mudallali (Lebanon), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

**Address by Mr. Alexander de Croo, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium to introduce a statement by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium.

**Mrs. Van Vlierberge** (Belgium): It is my distinct honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement of His Excellency Mr. Alexander de Croo, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 54 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister, Minister for Defense, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands, and Territorial Integrity of the Republic of Mauritius**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Mauritius to introduce a statement by the Prime Minister, Minister for Defense, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands, and Territorial Integrity of the Republic of Mauritius.

**Mr. Koonjul** (Mauritius): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded message by the Honourable Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister of Mauritius.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister, Minister for Defense, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands, and Territorial Integrity of the Republic of Mauritius.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 55 and see A/S-31/4).*



**Address by Ms. Mette Frederiksen, Prime Minister of Denmark**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Denmark to introduce a statement by the Prime Minister of Denmark.

**Mr. Hermann** (Denmark): It is my honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by Her Excellency Ms. Mette Frederiksen, Prime Minister of Denmark.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of Denmark.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 56 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Ms. Sanna Marin, Prime Minister of the Republic of Finland**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Finland to introduce a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Finland.

**Mr. Salovaara** (Finland): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by Her Excellency Ms. Sanna Marin, Prime Minister of Finland.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Finland.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 57 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mrs. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Germany to introduce a statement by the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.

**Mr. Sautter** (Germany): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by Her Excellency Mrs. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 58 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Cambodia to introduce a statement by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

**Mr. Ke** (Cambodia): I have the distinct honour and privilege to introduce the pre-recorded statement by Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 59 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Viet Nam to introduce an address by the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

**Mr. Dang** (Viet Nam): It is my great honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 60 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Stefan Löfven, Prime Minister of Sweden**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden to introduce a statement by the Prime Minister of Sweden.

**Ms. Eneström** (Sweden): I am honoured to introduce the pre-recorded statement by the Prime Minister of Sweden, Mr. Stefan Löfven.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of Sweden.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 61 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Thongloun Sisoulith, Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to introduce an address by the Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

**Mr. Vongnorkeo** (Lao People's Democratic Republic): I have the distinct honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Thongloun Sisoulith, Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 62 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón, President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Spain to introduce an address by the President of the Government of the Kingdom Spain.

**Mr. Santos Maraver** (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce to the Assembly the pre-recorded message by the President of the Government of Spain, Mr. Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 63 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Suga Yoshihide, Prime Minister of Japan**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Japan to introduce an address by the Prime Minister of Japan.

**Mr. Ishikane** (Japan): I have the pleasure and honour to introduce the pre-recorded message by His Excellency Mr. Suga Yoshihide, Prime Minister of Japan.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Japan.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 64 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Kuwait to introduce an address by the Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait.

**Mr. Alotaibi** (Kuwait): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Highness Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of Kuwait.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 65 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Keith Rowley, MP, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Trinidad and Tobago to introduce an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Mr. Barman** (Trinidad and Tobago): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by the Honourable Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 66 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Ion Chicu, Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Moldova to introduce an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova.

**Mr. Nicolenco** (Moldova): I have the distinct honour and privilege to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Ion Chicu, Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 67 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Hassan Diab, President of the Council of Ministers of the Lebanese Republic**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Lebanon to introduce an address by the President of the Council of Ministers of the Lebanese Republic.

**Mr. Jardali (Lebanon):** I have the honour to present the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Hassan Diab, Prime Minister of Lebanon.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 68 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Ralph E. Gonsalves, Prime Minister, Minister for Finance, the Public Service, National Security, Legal Affairs and Grenadines Affairs of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to introduce an address by the Prime Minister, Minister for Finance, the Public Service, National Security, Legal Affairs and Grenadines Affairs of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

**Ms. DeShong (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines):** I have the distinct honour and privilege to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency the Honourable Ralph E. Gonsalves, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, National Security, Legal Affairs and Information of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister, Minister for Finance, the Public Service, National Security, Legal Affairs and Grenadines Affairs of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 69 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister and Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Sugar Industry, and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Fiji**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Fiji to introduce an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Sugar Industry, and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Fiji.

**Mr. Prasad (Fiji):** I am honoured to introduce the pre-recorded message by the Honourable Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister, Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Sugar Industry, and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Fiji.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 70 and see A/S-31/4).*

*Ms. Picco (Monaco), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

**Address by Mr. Edi Rama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania**

**The Acting President (spoke in French):** I now give the floor to the representative of Albania to introduce an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania.

**Ms. Kadare (Albania):** I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement delivered by His Excellency Mr. Edi Rama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 71 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Clément Mouamba, Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo**

**The Acting President (spoke in French):** I now give the floor to the representative of the Congo to introduce an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo.

**Mr. Balé (Congo) (spoke in French):** I have the distinct honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Clément Mouamba, Prime Minister and Head of Government.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 72 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Mr. Abdelaziz Djerad, Prime Minister of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria to introduce an address by the Prime Minister of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

**Mr. Mimouni** (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Abdelaziz Djerad, Prime Minister of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 73 and see A/S-31/4).*

**Address by Ms. Victoire Sidémého Tomegah-Dogbe, Prime Minister and Head of Government of the Togolese Republic**

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Togo to introduce an address by the Prime Minister and Head of Government of the Togolese Republic.

**Mr. Kpayedo** (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour and the privilege to introduce the pre-recorded statement by Her Excellency Ms. Sidémého Tomegah-Dogbe, Prime Minister and Head of Government of the Togolese Republic.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Head of Government of the Togolese Republic.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 74 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of China to introduce an address by the State Councillor, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.

**Mr. Zhang Jun** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Wang Yi, Special Representative of His Excellency Mr. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of China.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the State Councillor, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 75 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Jordan to introduce an address by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

**Ms. Bahous** (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Ayman Safadi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 76 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Malta to introduce an address by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta.

**Mr. Buttigieg** (Malta): It is my honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by the Honourable Christopher Fearne, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Health of the Republic of Malta.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 77 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bulgaria to introduce an address by the Deputy Prime Minister for



Judicial Reform and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria.

**Mrs. Tzerova** (Bulgaria): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by Her Excellency Mrs. Ekaterina Zaharieva, Deputy Prime Minister for Judicial Reform and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Deputy Prime Minister for Judicial Reform and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 78 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Eswatini to introduce an address by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Eswatini.

**Ms. Mbuyisa** (Eswatini): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Themba Masuku, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Eswatini.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Eswatini.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 79 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ethiopia to introduce an address by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

**Mr. Edlie** (Ethiopia): I have the honour and privilege to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Demeke Mekonnen, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 80 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico to introduce

a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Mexican States.

**Mr. De La Fuente Ramirez** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico, His Excellency Mr. Marcelo Ebrard Casaubón, in his capacity as President pro tempore of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Mexican States.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 81 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary to introduce a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Hungary.

**Mrs. Bogyay** (Hungary): Let me introduce the pre-recorded message by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, His Excellency Mr. Péter Szijjártó.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Hungary.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 82 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan to introduce a statement by the Minister of Health Care of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

**Mr. Ilyassov** (Kazakhstan): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded message by His Excellency Mr. Alexey Tsoy, Minister of Health Care of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister of Health Care of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 83 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia to introduce a statement by the Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic.

**Mr. Chatrnúch** (Slovakia): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Ivan Korčok, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 84 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia to introduce a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia.

**Mr. Aidid** (Malaysia): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, Foreign Minister of Malaysia.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 85 and see A/S-31/4).*

*Mr. Arriola Ramírez (Paraguay), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia to introduce a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

**Mr. Mulachela** (Indonesia): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by Her Excellency Mrs. Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 86 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Australia to introduce a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Australia.

**Ms. Feeney** (Australia): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by the Minister

for Foreign Affairs of Australia, Her Excellency Ms. Marise Payne.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Australia.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 87 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Singapore to introduce a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore.

**Ms. Tang** (Singapore): It is my honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 88 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Myanmar to introduce a statement by the Minister for Health and Sports of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

**Mr. Tun** (Myanmar): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Myint Htwe, Minister for Health and Sports of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister for Health and Sports of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 89 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Greece to introduce a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic.

**Mrs. Theofili** (Greece): It is a great honour and privilege to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Nikolaos-Georgios Dendias, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 90 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Czech Republic to introduce a statement by the Minister of Health of the Czech Republic.

**Mrs. Chatardová** (Czech Republic): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Jan Blatný, Minister of Health of the Czech Republic.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister of Health of the Czech Republic.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 91 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Iran to introduce a statement by the Minister of Health of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

**Mr. Al Habib** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Saeed Namaki, Minister of Health and Medical Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister of Health and Medical Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 92 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Maldives to introduce a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives.

**Ms. Hussain** (Maldives): It is my distinct honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by my Minister His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 93 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Turkmenistan to introduce a statement by the Minister of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan.

**Mrs. Ataeva** (Turkmenistan): I have the honour to introduce the video statement by the Minister of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan, His Excellency Mr. Nurmuhamet Amannepesov.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 94 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of San Marino to introduce a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Economic Cooperation and Telecommunications of the Republic of San Marino.

**Mr. Beleffi** (San Marino): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Luca Beccari, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Economic Cooperation and Telecommunications of the Republic of San Marino.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Economic Cooperation and Telecommunications of the Republic of San Marino.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 95 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Oman to introduce a statement by the Minister of Health of the Sultanate of Oman.

**Mr. Al Hassan** (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement from the Sultanate of Oman for the special session, delivered by the Minister of Health of the Sultanate of Oman.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister of Health of the Sultanate of Oman.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 96 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Côte d'Ivoire to introduce a statement by the Minister of Health and Public Hygiene of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

**Mr. Ipo** (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by Mr. Eugène Aka Aouélé, Minister of Health and Public Hygiene of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister of Health and Public Hygiene of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 97 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil to introduce a statement by the Minister for External Relations of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

**Mr. De Almeida Filho** (Brazil): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Ambassador Ernesto Henrique Fraga Araújo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister for External Relations of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 98 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Senegal to introduce a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad of the Republic of Senegal.

**Mr. Barro** (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I have the pleasure to introduce the pre-recorded statement of Ms. Aïssata Tall Sall, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad of Senegal.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad of the Republic of Senegal.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 99 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein to introduce a statement by the Minister for Foreign

Affairs, Justice and Culture of the Principality of Liechtenstein.

**Mr. Sparber** (Liechtenstein): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded video statement by Her Excellency Ms. Katrin Eggenberger, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Justice and Culture of Liechtenstein.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Justice and Culture of the Principality of Liechtenstein.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 100 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

**Mr. Edrees** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by Mr. Sameh Hassan Shokry Selim, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt, on the occasion of the thirty-first special session of the General Assembly, on the coronavirus disease pandemic.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 101 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Rwanda to introduce a statement by the Minister of Health of the Republic of Rwanda.

**Mr. Kankiriho** (Rwanda): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Daniel Ngamije, Minister of Health of the Republic of Rwanda.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister of Health of the Republic of Rwanda.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 102 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Lithuania to



introduce a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania.

**Mrs. Šalkauskienė** (Lithuania): It is my honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, His Excellency Mr. Linas Linkevičius.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 103 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Saudi Arabia to introduce a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

**Mr. Alfayez** (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am honoured to introduce the pre-recorded message by His Highness the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Amir Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 104 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation to introduce a statement by the Minister of Health of the Russian Federation.

**Mr. Chumakov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by the Minister of Health of the Russian Federation, Mr. Mikhail Murashko.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Minister of Health of the Russian Federation.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 105 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Austria to introduce a statement by the Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria.

**Mr. Marschik** (Austria): It is my distinct honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Alexander Schallenberg, Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of Austria.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex 106 and see A/S-31/4).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker for today. Given the late hour, we will suspend today's plenary meeting.

*The meeting was suspended at 9.10 p.m.*

**Annex 1****Statement by Mr. Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev, Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries**

Mr. President,

Distinguished Heads of State and Government,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of 120 Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement.

As we mark the 75th anniversary of the United Nations which remains the central multilateral forum for addressing pressing global issues and challenges, we note with regret the emergence of many new areas of concern. These concerns necessitate the renewal of our collective commitment to the values of multilateralism and international cooperation, which underpin the Charter of the United Nations and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

A good testament to this was overwhelming support by the UN Member States for the initiative to convene the Special Session of the UN General Assembly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic put forward by the Non-Aligned Movement. It constitutes, among others, the remarkable success for the Member States of NAM since this year also marks the 65th anniversary of the adoption of Bandung Declaration which envisaged the promotion of international cooperation for the common prosperity and well-being of all. In this connection, I would like to express on behalf of the Movement our sincere gratitude for the support extended by the UN Member States and the President of the General Assembly.

Throughout 2020, the global community has faced the greatest health crisis in recent history, with almost 60 million reported cases and more than 1 million deaths worldwide as of today, resulting in multifaceted repercussions in health, social, economic and financial spheres, causing disruption to societies and economies, as well as to global commerce and travel, and making a devastating impact on the livelihood of people.

With the aim of contributing to the global efforts in addressing the unprecedented universal impact of the pandemic and to find out possible ways to provide a prompt, adequate and inclusive assistance to the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement, Azerbaijan, as the Chair of the Movement convened the online Summit-level Meeting of the NAM Contact Group in response to COVID-19 under the theme “United against COVID-19” on 4 May 2020. As a practical outcome of this meeting the Member States of the Movement decided to establish the Task Force in response to COVID-19 and to work out a database on the basic humanitarian and medical needs and requirements of NAM Member States in their fight against COVID-19.

We are pleased to know that WHO uses the NAM database as one of its reference points for identifying the existing needs of NAM Member states in addressing the pandemic.

The Non-Aligned Movement praises the activities of the United Nations system in response to the COVID-19. We commend strong leadership of the Secretary-General, who played a central role in spearheading the United Nations global

response to the pandemic, while at the same time ensuring continuity of operations of the UN Secretariat. The Movement fully supports the WHO and its leadership in their critical role in providing guidance, training, equipment and concrete life-saving services, in order to ensure effective response of the international community to the ever-increasing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic has exposed and aggravated vulnerabilities and inequalities in both developing and developed countries, and also among them, deepening poverty and exclusion and pushing the most vulnerable even further behind. It is the poorest and most vulnerable who were hit the hardest by this pandemic and NAM is gravely concerned that the further impact of the crisis will reverse hard-won development gains and hamper progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

We also note with concern that the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated existing fundamental impediments, which most recently were addressed during the 18th NAM Summit in 2019 in Baku, such as impacts of global financial and economic crises, continuing lack of resources and underdevelopment of the majority of the developing world, continuing unequal terms of trade and lack of cooperation from developed countries, the coercive and unilateral measures imposed by some of them, as well as use of force or threats of use of force, in the way towards a just and equitable world order.

NAM stresses the importance of affordable, unhindered and equitable access by all countries to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment, which should constitute an integral part of a coordinated and effective global response to COVID-19.

As many vaccines against COVID-19 are being currently studied, we are all looking forward to the successful outcome of clinical trials and hope that a safe and effective vaccine will soon be available, and that they will be considered as global public goods ensuring their universal distribution at affordable prices for all. We appreciate the coordination efforts of WHO in this process and stress the importance of this Organization in facilitating equitable access of people throughout the globe to such vaccine, once it is available.

Mr. President,

It is through a coordinated and concerted global response based on unity, multilateral cooperation, solidarity and respect for human rights that the international community can craft strategies to mitigate effects of COVID-19 and recover from the pandemic, which currently continues to spread.

This special session will serve broad objectives, such as reaffirming and strengthening commitment to international cooperation and multilateralism, highlighting best practices, as well as challenges of UN Member States in responding to the pandemic, and reflecting on the central position of the United Nations through providing an opportunity for open and transparent discussions among Member States, Observer States, observers, relevant UN agencies and bodies and other stakeholders. We look forward to fruitful deliberations throughout the session.

Thank you.

**Annex 2****Address by Mr. Charles Michel, President of the European Council**

[Original: English and French]

Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly Volkan Bozkır and Secretary-General António Guterres for organizing this extraordinary summit on COVID-19.

The United Nations must be the place where all our positive forces are being brought together. It is therefore the ideal place for us to take on board, all together, the lessons of this ordeal and to draw up plans that allow us to emerge stronger in the future.

I will be very pragmatic here and launch a concrete proposal.

The number of epidemics has increased in recent decades. We knew that the world could potentially be struck by a major pandemic. And, yet, we were caught unprepared. There was therefore a failure of sorts and we need to draw the lessons and consequences.

However, there has also been a monumental achievement: vaccines have been developed in less than a year, rather than the ten years generally needed. What is the key to this success? An unprecedented global cooperation and mobilization involving the scientific community and industry, to which the public authorities have provided the necessary support and funding. The European Union has been at the forefront of this mobilization.

In May, the EU launched a pledging marathon, which raised nearly €16 billion in public (and also private) funds for research to provide universal access to coronavirus treatments, tests and vaccines. The European Union participates in the COVAX Facility. It also intends to play its part in facilitating the equitable distribution of vaccines through donations of part of the doses purchased by our Member States.

The success as regards vaccines is the result of mobilization and of international solidarity. With a view to possible future pandemics, we now need to build on this approach, structuring our collective capacity to anticipate, prepare for and manage such crises.

I propose that we do so through an international treaty on pandemics. Such a treaty should be agreed within the framework of the World Health Organization, which is the cornerstone of international cooperation against pandemics: it would complement and reinforce our action. The other international organizations and agencies concerned should also be involved.

What should the objective of this treaty be? The objective is to do better. To do better in all the areas in which we have observed that we need to reinforce our cooperation. I will mention some of them here.



Monitor the risks more effectively. We need to develop our knowledge and surveillance of the emergence of infectious diseases in animals, of which the transmission to humans is the foremost epidemiological risk.

Better finance and coordinate research. We have seen how the speed of the financial mobilization was crucial in shortening the time required to produce vaccines. The ACT-Accelerator experience should serve as a model for developing a rapid scientific and industrial response capacity.

Alert and share information more effectively. Let us be clear: the COVID-19 pandemic has cruelly exposed the progress we still need to make as regards health risk alerts. A more extensive scale of alert levels may need to be developed. This would increase transparency. More broadly, it is also the essential basis for effective communication.

Improve access to health care. As I said before, the principle of universal access to the new COVID-19 vaccines is fundamental. Our aim must be to guarantee access to vaccines, treatment and tests for future pandemics. This should be laid down in a treaty.

Improve resilience. Health care systems in rich countries have been put under severe strain. Imagine then the situation of countries with fragile health care systems. We need to address the global challenge of strengthening health care systems in the event of a pandemic. We need to reflect on how best to secure the supply chains of medical products and equipment. This is a health issue, but also one that is linked to the functioning of international trade.

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen: these then are some ideas that could serve as pointers in negotiating this international treaty on pandemics. I am launching an appeal. Let us mobilise, pool our experiences, learn the lessons, and take the right decisions so that we help make the world and humanity more just and more resilient.

Thank you.

**Annex 3****Address by Mr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi and Minister for Defense**

Mr. President of the General Assembly

Mr. President of ECOSOC

Mr. Secretary General

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I deeply appreciate the President of the General Assembly for convening this special session on the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we pass through this time of extraordinary multidimensional crises, triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Hundreds of thousands have lost their lives, millions are affected, and billions have lost their livelihoods. Furthermore, the second wave of the pandemic has sent many countries back to lockdown. I note that LDCs have been hit and continue to be hit disproportionately.

Approximately 35 per cent of the population of LDCs were living in poverty before the outbreak of the pandemic, millions of our people have already lost their jobs and subsistence income, significantly raising the number of extreme poor in our countries.

These factors are having serious consequences on the level of poverty, malnutrition, education and health services in LDCs, resulting in loss of gains and reversal of hardearned achievements in SDGs implementation.

Mr. President;

The share of LDCs exports is facing serious downside risks; external indebtedness has become an increasingly serious concern and Governments are facing an intense budget squeeze, as revenues decline while social spending rises. It is increasingly likely that more countries will default on their debt payments.

Urgent, comprehensive, smart and decisive action is needed now more than ever to save the world, especially LDCs, from a looming economic and humanitarian catastrophe. We must make a recovery plan based on synchronized monetary, fiscal, and debt relief policies at both national and global levels if we aim to recover and keep on track for 2030.

Guided by this spirit, the Group of LDCs have issued a Statement proposing an immediate global stimulus package for LDCs. I call upon the global leaders to respond to our call and provide support to implement the Statement.

Mr. President;

In today's special session of the Assembly, let me make the following calls:

First: The immediate highest priority of the world must be saving lives and restoring livelihoods.

We are encouraged to see that some vaccines have reached near completion point for application. We are encouraged by the recent promise of the G-20 leaders to

ensure the fair distribution of vaccines and support poor countries whose economies have been hit by the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Here, let me call upon the global leaders to announce all successful vaccines and therapeutic medicines as “the global public goods and common property of humanity” so that everyone has equitable access to these products. The WHO should play a central role in this regard.

Second: We are encouraged by the recent G-20 agreements on a debt framework to help countries pursue debt restructuring or forgiveness. While we are looking forward to its realization, we reinforce our call to full debt cancellation of all LDCs owed by bilateral and multilateral creditors including private commercial creditors.

Third: We are calling for activating the life-saving finance mechanism of the IMF by issuing Special Drawing Rights (SDRs). We are calling for a special issuance of at \$50 billion SDRs for LDCs. This will assist us to finance an immediate response to the pandemic.

Fourth: Our development partners must fulfil their commitment of 0.15-0.2 per cent ODA to LDCs with immediate effect. International community must also support a robust trading system to serve as a key driver to the post-crisis recovery. In this regard, we are calling for a revitalized global trade framework to maximize the benefits of international trade.

Fifth: As the world is fighting the COVID-19, digital connectivity has proven to be crucial lifeline in maintaining economic and social activities. Advanced economies could easily resort to the online platform for education, office activities and commerce. LDCs need access to modern science, technology and innovation as well as technological goods and services to ensure a rapid recovery and build back better.

Finally: To address the rising global development emergencies, the world must work together for a resilient recovery to reach to a higher equilibrium point. We must focus on investing in preparedness and prevention measures comprehensively. We also need to ensure that our responses are inclusive and consequential for the poor and marginalized of our societies. These are some of the priorities which will serve as key building-blocks of the Fifth United Nations Conference on LDCs to be held in Doha, Qatar, in January 2022.

I thank you all for your kind attention.

## Annex 4

### Address by Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey

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

Mr. President of the General Assembly,

Mr. Secretary General,

Honorable Presidents of the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council,

Distinguished Delegates,

I greet you respectfully on my own behalf and on behalf of my Nation. I wish our meeting to be successful and beneficial for all humanity.

The international community is facing the greatest global challenge of the 21st century.

The key to overcoming this difficult period is international cooperation and global solidarity.

This session is therefore extremely timely and useful.

I would like to thank everyone supporting the organization of this Special Session, especially my Dear Brother President Aliyev, who pioneered this initiative as the Chairperson of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Mr. Bozkır, President of the General Assembly.

Distinguished Delegates,

Since the first days of the outbreak, Turkey has acted in cooperation with the international community.

In addition to the United Nations, we have been at the forefront of the activities at the World Health Organization, the G-20, MIKTA, the Turkic Council, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and other international platforms.

To date, we have provided assistance to 156 countries and 9 international organizations.

We are supporting countries and regions suffering from issues related to food security in pandemic circumstances. We are carrying out special programs in 16 countries for disadvantaged groups such as the elderly, the disabled and orphans.

We are conducting training programs in some developing countries for the production of personal protective equipment using local resources.

We are trying to provide budget support to some countries facing economic difficulties due to the pandemic.

Our private sector also contributes to our efforts in the public sphere.

To date, more than 50 Turkish companies have supported the fight against the pandemic in more than 20 countries in various ways.

The world has pinned its hopes on the news about vaccine production.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate in your presence Prof. Uğur Şahin and Dr. Özlem Türeci, founders of the company BioNTech, who achieved a significant success in vaccine development and are participating online in this session.

We are also very pleased that in one of Turkey's 16 vaccine research studies, 12 of which are on the list of the World Health Organization, the phase of human trials has begun.

Thanks to the efforts spearheaded by Turkey, the year 2021 was declared the "International Year of Health and Care Workers" by the World Health Organization.

In this regard, I would like to express my gratitude to all health and care workers who are working selflessly all around the world.

The World Health Organization's Geographically Dispersed Office for Preparedness for Humanitarian and Health Emergencies was established in Istanbul in September.

This office, as a manifestation of Turkey's support for the work of the World Health Organization, will strengthen the efforts aimed at fighting the pandemic.

Distinguished Delegates,

Turkey's strong agriculture, food and manufacturing sectors, city hospitals, experienced and dedicated health workers and comprehensive social security system are our most significant assets in this process.

There are vulnerable groups all over the world, who are affected much more in this period.

The measures must be inclusive, and attention must be paid to the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

With this in mind, we attach special importance to protecting the rights of women, children, the elderly and the disabled.

3.6 million Syrians under our protection benefit from health services in our country just like our citizens.

We are aware that COVID-19 will be with us for a while.

Indeed, the increase in the number of cases, patients and deaths around the world in recent weeks reminds us all of this fact.

In this process, it is necessary to combat not only the pandemic but also the growing Islamophobia, xenophobia and racism.

We have supported from the beginning the "Debt Relief Initiative" launched by the G-20 platform, of which we are a member.

I would also like to remind you that we must accelerate our efforts, including the development of sustainable supply chains and distribution networks, to ensure the transition to the "New Normal".

Another matter the pandemic reminds us of is that the United Nations system must be reformed according to today's threats and needs.



I believe that the General Assembly must be strengthened to make the United Nations system more effective, democratic, equitable and transparent.

As I conclude my remarks, I hope that this special session will give impetus to the international community's fight against the pandemic.

I would like to thank everyone taking part in the conduct of the program and extend my most heartfelt greetings to all of you once again.

I wish you the best of health.

**Annex 5****Address by Ms. Simonetta Myriam Sommaruga, President of the Swiss Confederation**

[Original: French]

Mr. President of the General Assembly,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It has nearly been a year since our lives were first upended by the COVID-19 pandemic. The invisible enemy has exposed the interdependence and vulnerability of our societies. Switzerland has also been dramatically affected by the virus, which knows no borders.

I would like to underscore today the three following points.

First, as we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (UN), we are more than ever afforded the opportunity to demonstrate the unique role and value of multilateralism. As the host State of the operational heart of the United Nations and the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva, Switzerland is committed to supporting their functioning. The current crisis confirms the extent to which a universal and coordinated approach to health together with a robust WHO is needed to confront global health emergencies.

Secondly, the crisis is exposing the links between economic realities and health care. It is vital that we invest in strengthening our health-care systems to prevent such crises in the future. Investing in prevention costs less than reacting to a crisis.

Thirdly, despite the imminent availability of a vaccine, we cannot afford to return to business as usual before the crisis. We have the opportunity today to move towards a more inclusive, resilient and sustainable model of society in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and various multilateral agreements on the environment, such as the Paris Agreement on Climate.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Protecting the health of all is a shared responsibility. As States, we are duty-bound to comply with and further strengthen international health regulations. Together with its partners, as part of the coalition for establishing a universal health protection architecture, Switzerland is committed to achieving that goal. Switzerland strongly supports the research and development of a safe, effective, accessible and equitably distributed vaccine at the global level by supporting the organizations involved in the ACT-Accelerator pillar. We are committed to making the COVAX mechanism a success for all.

Switzerland is also supporting the global response to the social and economic aspects of the pandemic. It is providing more than \$1 billion to the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust, as well as supporting the initiative of the G-20 and the Paris Club to temporarily suspend the service of debt for the poorest countries. In addition, Switzerland is contributing \$400 million to international initiatives.

The contributions and actions of individual countries are important, but only solidarity, international cooperation and multilateralism will enable us to overcome the pandemic together.

Thanks for your attention.

**Annex 6****Address by Mr. Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado, President of the Republic of Honduras**

[Original: Spanish]

The year 2020 has been an intense and difficult year to forget. The pandemic and two destructive storms have left us in a state of disaster. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has affected all the nations of the world, and its impact has perhaps been more harshly felt by countries with fewer resources, more vulnerable populations and less robust health-care systems. Honduras has faced the pandemic with resolve and took prompt measures that delayed the spread of the virus long enough to allow us to strengthen our health-care system so that the demand for services did not exceed our capacities.

However, the fallout has been glaring, not only in terms of families health, but their ability to generate income and provide food and other basic necessities. Furthermore, our economy has been affected on a grand scale, given the dearth of employment, decent salaries, food, housing and urgently needed goods. Our country is located in a high-risk zone owing to the effects of climate change. In November, we suffered the consequences of two devastating Hurricanes — two hurricanes in the same month.

The most agriculturally and industrially productive part of the country remains flooded. The waters have yet to recede, and families are waiting to be rescued. Thousands are living in shelters and need to be relocated. We continue to lack the precise statistics relating to the destruction left behind by the hurricanes, which is a task we have entrusted to the Economic Commission for Latin America, which is preparing an assessment of the damages and losses for us. However, as of today, we already know that almost 4 million people — nearly 50 per cent of the population of Honduras — have been affected by the devastation of those weather phenomena.

More than 65,000 homes have been affected to the point that making them inhabitable once again will require a great deal of resources and work. It is painful to see how families have lost a lifetime of savings and work. It is painful and unfair, as Honduras is not to blame for climate change. The responsibility lies with the industrialized countries and their emission of greenhouse gases. Countries like Honduras are paying the price for their actions. Its population has been severely affected and the infrastructure it depends on for production devastated. A number of roads, bridges, schools, hospitals and public and private buildings have been destroyed. It represents a setback of many years. If we cannot count on the support of the international community, all the work we have done to rebuild over the past 22 years in the tragic aftermath of Hurricane Mitch, the previous major disaster, will be very difficult, if not impossible. Our country is on the verge of bankruptcy.

Despite the seriousness of the situation, we have lost neither hope or optimism. We are working on a reconstruction plan with the participation of different sectors of Honduran society and the international community. We have worked to address the three serious external crises that have affected us this year — a situation without precedent in the history of Honduras. Dating back to the very beginning of the pandemic, in coordination with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Pan American Health Organization and the National Disaster Risk Management

System, Honduras adopted a contingency plan and has actively participated within the international community in order to access personal protective supplies, medical equipment and medicines to contain the spread of COVID-19.

Honduras has reaffirmed its commitment to the goals of the United Nations in combating COVID-19. We support the Secretary-General's initiative for a global ceasefire, which would allow humanitarian aid to reach people in need, especially the most vulnerable and those in conflict zones. Honduras co-sponsored the first General Assembly resolutions on COVID-19, namely, resolution 74/270 on global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 and resolution 74/274 on international cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19, which were adopted by consensus. On 11 September, Honduras supported the adoption of omnibus resolution 74/306, entitled "Comprehensive and coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic". We are also grateful that the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund has allocated \$1 million to a project focused on strengthening the health-care system and laboratory capacity in Honduras.

Honduras has successfully joined the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, which is co-leading the COVAX mechanism and will enable us to guarantee access to the COVID-19 vaccine for 20 per cent of the population, according to the response we received from Dr. Seth Berkley, Executive Director of the Alliance. The remaining supply of COVID-19 vaccines required by the country will be purchased in bulk together with other Latin American countries through the Revolving Fund of the Pan American Health Organization, which, to date, 32 countries of the region have confirmed.

The Government of Honduras calls on the international community to continue strengthening financing for Gavi and COVAX, which is an important mechanism supported by WHO to guarantee access to COVID-19 vaccines to the most vulnerable countries. We are deeply grateful for that. The Government expresses its deep gratitude to the Governments of friendly countries, the United Nations system and international organizations for their unwavering solidarity with the people of Honduras in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and, more recently, Hurricanes Eta and Iota.

We are thankful for the deployment of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team to help deal with the impact of Eta and Iota, as well as the Central Emergency Response Fund. The sum of \$3.9 million has already been allocated to support those affected. We are making a fresh appeal for \$69.2 million to respond to humanitarian needs in the areas of health, water, sanitation, hygiene, shelter and education.

The United Nations and the international community must take into account the significant vulnerabilities of middle-income countries, such as Honduras, and consequently support ambitious but equitable initiatives to revise the cooperative financing architecture, including new and creative measures by international financial institutions, such as the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, enabling access to reconstruction funds. Honduras reiterates its call for eliminating taxes on remittances sent to families during the current crisis.

Honduras has been considered as one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change in the world for the past 25 years, which has been evidenced by prolonged droughts and the recent passage of not one but two devastating hurricanes that made landfall. We call once again for action to be taken with regard to green climate funds. The issue is urgent and cannot wait. We therefore call for a quick response unburdened by bureaucracy.

Honduras has already fallen victim to the severity of climate change, which shows no sign of improving. On the contrary, it is getting worse, which is why green funds are urgently needed to address disasters in a timely matter in dealing with the humanitarian emergency and providing compensation for damages and losses and, later, mitigation and adaptation measures. Dealing with such emergencies are currently beyond our capacities. As the damage is unparalleled, Honduras is making an SOS call to the whole world.

We ask the international community not to leave us to our own devices. We have been the most affected country in the region — and Central America is one of the most affected regions — by hurricanes, drought and fire. We are appealing for firm international solidarity, immediate assistance and reconstruction. Added to the latter is the economic damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has created a situation that has far surpassed the country's ability to deal with such a crisis. To that end, the solidarity of friends and the whole world will be imperative, as will the assumption of responsibility by those who have signed the agreements on climate change.

Many thanks.



**Annex 7****Address by Mr. Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Distinguished Heads of State and Government,

I wish to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres and the President of the General Assembly Mr. Volkan Bozkir for their efforts in the organization of the Special Session of the General Assembly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I convey my gratitude to all Member States that have supported the initiative to hold the Special Session.

Today, there is a great need for joint efforts of international community to counter COVID-19 pandemic which is the biggest threat to the world.

Azerbaijan, as the Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, demonstrating responsibility at the national and international levels initiated holding of the Summit of the Contact Group of the Non-Aligned Movement in response to coronavirus on 4 May 2020. During the Summit, I suggested the convening of the Special Session of the UN General Assembly in response to coronavirus at the level of the heads of state and government. All 120 Non-Aligned Movement members supported this proposal. It reaffirmed their commitment to “Bandung Principles”, Movement’s values, multilateralism and international solidarity. Overall, more than 150 UN Member States supported this initiative.

Azerbaijan has taken timely and necessary preventive measures to stop the spread of the virus. We have taken adequate actions in response to the emerging situation with regard to COVID-19.

Today, the coronavirus patients are undergoing treatment in 46 state hospitals across the country. We had 6 functional laboratories when pandemic has started. Currently, we have more than 40 operational laboratories.

The Government has released the socio-economic and financial support package worth over \$2.5 billion to counter the negative impact of pandemic. The social support measures cover nearly 5 million people, which is half of country’s population. Funding for the fight against the pandemic was provided only from domestic sources, without any external financial support.

Now, the world faces the new wave of pandemic.

Since the outbreak of pandemic Azerbaijan is in close contact with the World Health Organization. We are grateful for its valuable recommendations and sending its specialists in the early days of pandemic. The World Health Organization named Azerbaijan an example in the fight against the pandemic. We have made two voluntary contributions to the World Health Organization in the amount of \$10 million. In the meantime, to date, Azerbaijan has provided humanitarian and financial assistance to more than 30 countries.

Mr. President,

Azerbaijan supported the initiative of the Secretary-General on a global ceasefire during the pandemic. However, this call remained unheard by Armenia that kept under occupation of Azerbaijani territories for almost 30 years and ignored four UN Security Council resolutions which demanded the withdrawal from all our occupied lands.

During the last 2 years, Armenia deliberately destroyed the negotiation process. The Prime Minister of Armenia made a number of provocative statements like “Karabakh is Armenia”, which put an end to negotiations. The Minister of Defense called for “new war for new territories”.

In July 2020, Armenia perpetrated military provocation along the state border to create a new source of tension in the region, to occupy new territories and damage Azerbaijan’s strategic energy infrastructure projects.

Later, in August Armenian sabotage group attempted to penetrate through the Line of Contact.

In my statement during the General Debate of the General Assembly on 24 September, I warned that Armenia is preparing for the new war.

On 27 September, Armenia launched large-scale military aggression against Azerbaijan. During 44 days, armed forces of Armenia heavily shelled Tartar and other cities of Azerbaijan situated along the frontline. Armenia fired ballistic missile against Ganja, Barda, Mingachevir, Gabala, Siyazan and other cities which are far away from frontline. They used heavy artillery, ballistic missiles, white phosphorus, cluster munitions to cause mass casualties and forced displacement among Azerbaijani civilians. 94 civilians, including 11 children were killed, more than 400 wounded.

The Azerbaijani Army responded adequately and defended its citizens and territory and launched successful counter attack operation which resulted in liberation of large parts of our occupied territories. The military victory of Azerbaijan during the military operations forced aggressor to surrender and led to signing of trilateral statement of the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Russia and Armenia’s Prime Minister on 10 November, which provided liberation of other occupied territories. Since that time the regime of ceasefire is holding for almost a month. Turkey and Russia play an important role in ensuring ceasefire through Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Center.

Thus, Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was resolved by military political means. In the absence of compliance with the international law it was inevitable to ensure the implementation of Security Council resolutions by force. As a result of which, the aggressor state was enforced to peace.

It was not the only destructive attitude of Armenia. Armenia was the only country to oppose the initiative of holding the Special Session of the General Assembly on COVID-19 pandemic. Until the last moment Armenia by all means tried to undermine the preparatory process to hold the Special Session. Armenia objected to this initiative simply because it has been launched by Azerbaijan.

I believe the Special Session will contribute to the global fight against pandemic and will make us more united around our common goal.

Thank you.

**Annex 8****Address by Mr. Kaïs Saïed, President of the Republic of Tunisia**

[Original: Arabic]

Mr President,  
Mr. Secretary-General,  
Your Majesties and Excellencies,  
Your Excellencies,

At the outset, I wish to thank His Excellency the President of the sisterly Republic of Azerbaijan and Chair of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries for his initiative to convene, on behalf of the countries of the Movement, this special session of the General Assembly on the COVID-19 pandemic and its repercussions.

I also wish to express Tunisia's appreciation and support for His Excellency the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, in his endeavours and initiatives to unify international efforts to tackle the pandemic, which poses a grave threat to the health of populations all over the world, as well as to international peace and security.

Mr. President,

Since the outbreak of the epidemic, Tunisia has always stressed the importance of a strengthened concerted and complementary international response, in the spirit of solidarity, in order to confront the pandemic. No country in the world can do that alone and, in that context, Tunisia calls for the adoption of a comprehensive, clear approach that takes into consideration the needs of all countries and peoples.

To translate that call into action, Tunisia, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, took the initiative to submit a draft resolution to the Council, together with France, which was then adopted unanimously by all Council members as resolution 2532 (2020). That resolution represents a milestone in the history of the United Nations due to the fact that it has succeeded in expanding the concept of collective security to include health pandemics as a threat to international peace and security.

The resolution has also enabled the members of the Security Council to embrace a common vision as regards our collective responsibility for establishing an immediate global ceasefire, a humanitarian truce and a halt to military operations in the various conflict areas around the world.

Mr. President,

Tunisia welcomes the efforts of the United Nations and its various agencies in containing the current crisis and mitigating its impact. Nevertheless, Tunisia wishes to underscore the urgency of the need to develop a plan that truly responds to the needs of all peoples of the world in the spirit of global solidarity, including by easing the debt burden and relieving countries of financial or economic pressures. In that connection, we also stress the need to ensure that all countries have equitable access to a vaccine as soon as it becomes available.

We need to redefine our priorities in the area of international cooperation and provide appropriate support that reflects the extraordinary circumstances we are

facing, including by ensuring food security and sustainable means of production and consumption, as well as effective social protection, universal health coverage and equality for all within the framework of the human rights system.

We believe that this special session is an excellent opportunity to consider the concept of collective security in more depth in order to strengthen multilateralism and engage in discussions on improving institutional governance and our working methods. We must develop a system that benefits all peoples and ensures a better future for the generations to come.

Thank you for your kind attention.

May peace and the mercy and blessings of God be upon you.

**Annex 9****Address by Mr. Miguel Díaz Canel Bermúdez, President of the Republic of Cuba**

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

Mr. Secretary General;

Mr. President;

Distinguished Heads of State and Government;

Heads of delegations;

I would like to thank the Republic of Azerbaijan, the current president of the Non-Aligned Movement, for the initiative to convene this Special Session of the General Assembly.

An articulated response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, consistent with the protocols and good practices established by the World Health Organization, can only be promoted at the global scale by this body, which is the most universal and representative of the United Nations system.

It is a sad and undeniable fact that the pandemic has exacerbated the serious problems and colossal challenges that humanity had been already facing before the outbreak of this disease.

We are referring to the wars, including non-conventional wars; the use and threat of use of force and the implementation of unilateral coercive measures, but also about the absence or precarious situation of health services, education and social security under the blind rules of the market and the unequal exchange that has prevailed in the world.

The signs of what some experts have described as the worst economic recession since the Second World War have become dramatically visible today; and no one doubts that the brunt of the crisis will be borne by the countries of the South, which are already affected by the abuse of neoliberal policies that has amplified the ravages caused by poverty.

The foreign debt of developing countries, which has been paid several times before and has grown bigger as a result of the pandemic, thus severing right off the aspirations of economic and social well-being, is unpayable and should be condoned.

Under the present circumstances, the establishment of a just, democratic and equitable international order is an imperative. It is a condition for the survival of the species in an ever more interconnected and paradoxically unequal world.

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the human cost of that inequality and has revealed the urgent need to strengthen national health systems; promote universal and free access to basic medical services and guarantee an equitable distribution of vital resources.

The world watches in shock, for example, how the United States, responsible for 38 per cent of the global military budget, is unable to take responsibility for the more than 11 million infected persons and the more than 238,000 who have died from COVID-19 in that country.



When looking at the harsh situation caused by infections, new outbreaks and the collapse of health services in nations with an enviable prosperity, one question arises: Why is the enormous budget that is currently being dilapidated in the arms race not used instead to confront this and other much older pandemics, such as hunger and poverty?

Mr. President;

Since the emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and in view of the possibility that it might become a pandemic, Cuba designed a National Program aimed at its prevention and control. Its implementation is supported by the strengths of our country's health system —of proven quality standing and universal coverage- and scientific development.

Today, in a spirit of modesty, and also with wholesome pride, we can explain to the world how this was possible.

In Cuba, we have implemented a government management system based on science and innovation, which has furthered up interconnections among such areas as knowledge, production and social services.

This is an inclusive, participatory, systemic, cross-cutting and intersectoral system that crystallizes and achieves its best results in the robust protocols applied in coping with the COVID-19 pandemic and the responsible attitude adopted by our people.

In other words, what we do is to give practical expression to the way in which the social system operates in Cuba and is capable of solving or successfully tackle very complex problems, while human beings are the top priority of the government's work.

The role of science and its articulation with government management has been crucial. The relevant achievements attained by the medical and pharmaceutical industry and biotechnology allow us to be in a better position to cope with the disease. Two Cuban candidate vaccines that are currently going through the clinical trial phase have been included among the 47 registered by the World Health Organization.

Faithful to our humanist vocation, 53 Cuban medical brigades have helped to cope with the disease in 39 countries and territories, which joined those that were already offering their services in 59 nations.

That has been possible even under the heavy burden of the criminal and unjust blockade imposed by the government of the United States — which has been tightened in an unprecedented way- and a cynical disparagement campaign launched against our international medical cooperation.

Here we denounce that aggressive behavior against Cuba and other sovereign nations as well as the announced attempt to re-enact the Monroe Doctrine, which is a violation of International Law and the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace.

Our commitment to the purposes and principles of this Organization remains unaltered. We remain firmly and resolutely committed to continue working in favor of multilateralism, solidarity, human dignity and social justice.

This global emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic sounds like a new call to the world's awareness. This time we should listen to it. Yes, we can. Cuba is an example of that.

Thank you, very much

**Annex 10****Address by Mr. Francisco Rafael Sagasti Hochhausler, President of the Republic of Peru**

[Original: Spanish]

Mr. President,

The unprecedented global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is now witnessing renewed outbreaks and continues to severely impact the lives, health and economy of our societies. That therefore requires us to redouble our efforts to develop effective and timely solutions together.

The pandemic has made inequalities even more evident and, in most countries, has reversed years of progress on our journeys towards the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. For the first time this century, poverty levels are increasing and the global recession will plunge millions of people into extreme poverty.

This year, as the United Nations celebrates 75 years since its founding — thanks to the concerted will of many States, including Peru — we recognize its strength and capacity for collective mobilization, which is once again being put to the test as we face a virus that has claimed more than 1.3 million lives and infected over 59 million people throughout the world.

Mr. President,

In such an unprecedented situation, all countries of the world are facing two crises simultaneously: an accelerated crisis in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has devastated the world in just a few months; and the not-so-slow-motion crisis of climate change, which threatens humankind at the planetary level. The magnitude of the challenges represented by those two crises, however, also offers us an opportunity to implement innovative solutions in all areas and to address the inequalities, deficiencies and lack of social protection that have been ignored for so many years.

In that regard, Peru reiterates its call for the COVID-19 vaccine to be declared a global public good, a proposal that has also been endorsed by the Secretary General. Universal, timely and equitable access to vaccines, medicines, treatments and the necessary equipment will be essential to fulfil the 2030 Agenda's commitment to leave no one behind and to reach the furthest behind first.

Based on that conviction, Peru has joined the COVAX Facility initiative led by the World Health Organization, the GAVI Vaccine Alliance and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) in order to ensure the health and physical integrity of Peruvians during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In order to jointly address the pandemic and climate change crises, allow me to outline a number of initiatives that Peru considers a priority:

First, the crises we face require global responses that are supported by a robust and efficient multilateral system. The multilateral health architecture must be strengthened, starting with the World Health Organization, the governing body for international health action. We must provide it with the necessary financial resources, in particular non-conditional resources, to enable it to carry out its mandates independently and efficiently.

Secondly, we must bridge all social divides and build more just, inclusive and sustainable societies. That requires us to redouble our efforts to achieve universal health coverage, global food security, quality education at all levels, the free flow of food supplies, goods and services, the provision of basic services without discrimination and gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as an ecological transition that favours the creation of green jobs and health-care systems with the capacity to adapt to climate change.

Thirdly, we must close the knowledge gap. The pandemic and climate change crises have made it clear that the capacity to generate and use scientific and technological knowledge is crucial to understand the nature of such crises and to design and implement appropriate responses. However, global inequality in those capabilities is far greater than inequalities in income or wealth, which demands a major multilateral effort to reduce inequalities in the capacity to generate and use knowledge and to provide lower-income countries with the resources to train their people in scientific research, technological development and innovation at the highest level. We call on international financial institutions to promote mechanisms for financing and investment in the development of those capacities.

You can count on Peru's unwavering commitment to tackling all of our collective challenges.

Thank you very much.

**Annex 11****Address by Mr. Luis Alberto Arce Catacora, Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia**

[Original: Spanish]

Mr. Secretary-General, António Guterres,

Mr. President of the General Assembly, Volkan Bozkir,

Distinguished Heads of State and Government of the States Members of the United Nations,

As it is my first time participating in this important forum as Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, I would like to reaffirm my country's commitment to multilateralism and to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

At the same time, I would like to convey to you that, on 8 November 2019, Bolivia restored its democratic institutions and today I have the honour to lead a Government that enjoys the confidence and legitimacy expressed through the vote of the Bolivian people.

Allow me now to turn to the subject that brings us together. We thank Azerbaijan in its capacity as Chair of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries for the initiative to convene this meeting in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Exactly one year ago, COVID-19 was an unknown virus and far from being part of our reality. Many theories are still being debated among the scientific community regarding its emergence and possible cure. However, the fact is that all countries of the world have been hit by this pandemic, with those countries that are most vulnerable or in special situations being most intensely impacted.

That is why this forum is so important, as the health crisis cannot be resolved by States' individual and isolated actions, but only through the joint efforts of all countries and various specialized agencies in the field.

Mr. President,

Bolivia's political crisis of November 2019 and mismanagement on the part of the de facto Government at the time caused the Bolivian economy to deteriorate, which was then aggravated by the pandemic, seriously jeopardizing the major social progress that had been achieved over 14 years under a democratically elected Administration.

According to ECLAC data, Latin America and the Caribbean is expected to see a contraction of economic activity in 2020 to the extent that regional GDP will fall by 9.1 per cent. My country's own GDP is expected to drop by 11.1 per cent, bringing with it an increase in unemployment, poverty and inequality. The situation clearly constitutes a step back with regard to our prior economic performance, given that my country was at the forefront of South America's economic growth between 2006 and 2019.

My Government has now set out to return to the path of stability and economic growth, ensuring the continuity of our economic, social and communitarian



productive model to restore the well-being brutally stripped from the Bolivian people in November 2019.

Therefore, as part of the response to the pandemic and to prevent a resurgence that would knock us further off-course, we are making every effort to acquire safe and effective vaccines and ensure that they are provided, free of charge, to approximately three million Bolivians, including the most vulnerable population groups and health workers. We are aiming to achieve that goal by the first quarter of 2021 and the cooperation of the United Nations, specialized agencies and friendly countries will undoubtedly be fundamental to that end.

Mr. Secretary-General,

Heads of State and Government,

This pandemic has highlighted the great inequalities and vulnerabilities in both developing and developed countries, but the impact has not been the same. Insufficient health-care systems, gaps in social protection, structural inequalities, environmental degradation and, of course, the climate crisis have laid bare the fragility of entire segments of our countries' populations. Indeed, the eradication of poverty and extreme poverty continues to be a major challenge, and one of my Government's top priorities is to work towards sustainable development for the benefit of the most vulnerable.

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals that we set out as an international community in 2015 must be preserved. The effects of the pandemic should lead us to reflect and recommit to bolstering efforts that, through international cooperation, foster the development of less advantaged countries.

Now more than ever, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development demands the fulfilment of international obligations with regard to financing for development, including the funding required in order to combat the consequences of the pandemic and for the transfer of technologies.

In that context, we hope to find due understanding and solidarity in international cooperation, especially in terms of official development assistance. It is imperative to mobilize all of the various sources and instruments of financing and external debt forgiveness.

There is no denying that the pandemic has had a very serious impact on the international economy, leading to an economic recession in most countries, many of which have immediate reaction capacities. Unfortunately, that is not the case for all developing countries.

The current situation calls for solutions with a systemic approach that takes into account the impact of the pandemic on the price of raw materials, the flow of international trade, the stability of supply chains, income from tourism, levels of remittances and employment and tax revenues.

The disruption of all those economic variables, particularly in the case of developing countries, could put many at risk of excessive external and internal debt. In that connection, it is critical that debt relief mechanisms be promoted and put into operation. Multilateral financial organizations must also continue to provide liquidity and debt forgiveness.

Moreover, it is important to emphasize that COVID-19 is a global problem and, as such, requires a collective response, based on solidarity and international cooperation, with a comprehensive approach that addresses the multidimensional impact of the pandemic.

Therefore, given that our countries must tackle an economic contraction in the short- and medium-term, it is essential to guarantee equitable and affordable access to medicines and medical supplies such as laboratory tests, diagnostic reagents and other equipment, as well as safe and effective vaccines.

Mr. President,

Today's challenges require close cooperation among all countries. In a world of interconnected threats, solidarity must be the interest not only of States, but of all international actors. Any solution must be approached collectively, through multilateralism.

Bolivia therefore reaffirms its willingness to work together with the international community, with unfaltering respect for the principles of solidarity, equality among States, the self-determination of peoples, national sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence.

Thank you very much.

**Annex 12****Address by Mr. Lenin Moreno Garcés, Constitutional President of the Republic of Ecuador**

[Original: Spanish]

Mr. President of the General Assembly,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Fellow Heads of State and Government,

Please accept the heartfelt greetings of the Ecuadorian people.

Dear friends,

This meeting and all those we have held in recent months have a common denominator — the understanding that international cooperation has never been as necessary and important as it is now today. If we do not strengthen multilateralism, there will be no way to curb the dramatic effects of the pandemic. We will not have the capacity to provide a comprehensive response to a threat that is not only health-related, but also economic, social and political.

The pandemic has had unprecedented effects. Not all countries have had the capacity to respond effectively to its impacts. That is why we insist so fervently on timely and efficient aid in a spirit of solidarity. To whom? To those less developed economies and low- and middle-income countries. It is essential that donor countries intensify their efforts to fulfil their official development assistance commitments — of course, I refer only to those that have not yet done so, because we are very grateful to those that have already acted.

In crises as acute as this one, the support of international financial organizations means not only saving lives, but also the survival of entire peoples. In Ecuador's case, the support received has allowed us to face the most difficult days of this pandemic. Now that our economic reactivation is in full swing, the loans we have been granted, on excellent conditions, have been fundamental in protecting employment and dollarization. The Ecuadorian people are very grateful to you for that.

My fellow leaders,

In the history of humankind there will be a before and an after COVID-19. Unfortunately, the after will include poverty, unemployment and inequality, just like in post-war situations. If we do not immediately mobilize the technical, technological and economic resources to contain the effects of the pandemic, the road to recovery will be a very long and difficult one.

Certain experts have said it will take three or four years. It is highly likely that we will not be able to meet the Sustainable Development Goals and that we may even regress on some of the elements we have already achieved.

The pandemic has aggravated inequality in various aspects and once again laid bare the economic and technological gaps among the peoples of the world. As is always the case, the pandemic has most gravely affected those who are most vulnerable because, today, technology is the basis for access to telemedicine, tele-education and teleworking.

COVID-19 has also revealed the dual vulnerability of women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, indigenous people and migrants. Unemployment, domestic violence and poverty have all increased during lockdown, thereby dramatically worsening the situation for those vulnerable groups. We must protect them and guarantee their rights, as they need us now more than ever before.

Ecuador supports the work of the World Health Organization and the leadership it has demonstrated during this global emergency. Its coordination will be decisive in accelerating access to all, for all, to vaccines against COVID-19, as well as to patent-free technologies for medicines that can be distributed fairly and equitably.

Colleagues of the world,

The only way to overcome the pandemic and its effects will be to work together in a coordinated and comprehensive manner. Now is not the time for geopolitical battles; rather, it is the time for solidarity and cohesion in order to facilitate the access of humanitarian aid to our peoples. The pandemic should be an additional reason to accelerate disarmament commitments and free up much-needed resources for economic recovery. It is a moral obligation — our moral obligation — to redirect our efforts to confront COVID-19, our common enemy.

The 7.7 billion inhabitants of the world need us to be united as they demand urgent action from us all. This is the time to demonstrate that the reasons for creating the United Nations remain valid and, above all, to demonstrate that this Organization can respond effectively when the world community needs it to.

My friends,

Heads of State and Government,

The pandemic has robbed over 1.3 million people of their lives. Let us not allow that figure to continue to increase. The fate of humankind depends on our response, which must be swift, efficient and accurate. Let us not disappoint our peoples, who have high hopes for us, but, above all, let us not disappoint future generations, whose well-being, as we all know, depends on the action we take today.

Thank you very much.

**Annex 13****Address by Mr. Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi, President of the Republic of Botswana**

Your Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkir, President of the General Assembly,

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate the Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement and President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, His Excellency Mr. Ilham Aliyev, for the wisdom to convene this very important special session of the United Nations General Assembly on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

COVID-19 continues to have devastating and far-reaching effects on our lives and livelihoods. Being part of the global village, my country, Botswana, has not been spared. While we attained a certain level of success at the outset of the pandemic with relatively fewer COVID-19 cases, much like the rest of the world, we are now, , also realizing a surge in local cases. As of 19 November, a cumulative 8,531 Botswana tested positive, with 808 active cases, while 7,692 recovered from the virus. We have also unfortunately recorded so far 51 COVID-19-related deaths.

It was not so long ago that our former President, Mr. Festus Gontebany Mogae, appealed for the assistance of the international community to fight HIV/AIDS. The model response that helped us contain the effects of HIV/AIDS is now needed to ensure that together we defend our nations and peoples against the harsh effects of COVID-19. It has reminded us of the core values upon which the United Nations was founded. The Charter of the United Nations reaffirms: “faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small”.

Mr. President,

The enormity of the COVID-19 scourge has necessitated that we adopt robust public health interventions to enhance our detection, containment and preventive initiatives. My Government has had to introduce measures that, at times, have been severe to minimize the impact of the virus on our still-developing economy. These include, among others, public education and awareness, screening at all points of entry for early detection and diagnosis, isolation of suspected cases and continued emphasis on the key WHO protocols of social distancing, hand hygiene and wearing face masks in public spaces.

We also continue to restrict and advise against any unnecessary travel within and outside the country. Those measures have nonetheless come with multiple negative economic consequences, particularly on small businesses. In an effort to mitigate some of those negative effects, especially on trade and tourism, we opened our borders on 1 December. In addition to enacting policies to support business through tax concessions, guarantees on loans from commercial banks and access to credit, my Government has also established a national COVID-19 relief fund. The fund, which has benefited from our generous partners and Botswana at-large, has been instrumental in bridging the finance gap for the provision of basic necessities, such as food baskets, and ensuring access to water and sanitation.

COVID-19 has further exposed our excessive reliance on imported food and other commodities, including critical oil resources. Being landlocked and heavily reliant on our neighbours for trade, we are a perfect example of international solidarity. Botswana is very fortunate in this regard to have had the solid support of its neighbours in the southern region to ensure the continuity of trade across borders. The leadership shown by the United Nations, especially the World Health Organization, and the support received from friends across nations has also been critical in ensuring technical assistance for our health workers, as well as the procurement of personal protection equipment (PPE) and testing kits. I wish to reiterate the appeal for continued assistance, particularly with regard to ensuring the uninterrupted availability of PPE.

Mr. President,

Despite these measures, the apparent devastating effects of the pandemic, particularly among the most vulnerable, including women and children, cannot be ignored. The higher rates of gender-based violence have exposed societal ills that require our attention. We are therefore grateful for the United Nations Secretary-General's appeal for an immediate ceasefire in all corners of the globe — a step that will go a long way in curbing violence against women and girls, including in their homes. We also fully align ourselves with the declaration adopted by the Non-Aligned Movement at the 4 May Summit, which established, inter alia, a task force to develop a database on the basic humanitarian and medical needs of States members.

My country further supports the call for universal affordable access to COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics and therefore commends The World Health Assembly's adoption of its May resolution calling for universal access to COVID-19 drugs. We also welcome the COVAX facility initiative, which seeks to ensure that developing countries will have immediate access to a vaccine, particularly targeting the most vulnerable.

Mr. President,

The world at large is grappling with the socioeconomic effects of COVID-19 at a time when we are also striving to achieve the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is therefore imperative that we leverage our responsible technologies to provide services and scale-up the implementation of the SDGs.

Mr. President,

As I conclude, I wish to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt sympathies and condolences to all those who have lost loved ones to the pandemic. Equal appreciation goes to the front-line workers who risk their lives during the fight against COVID-19. Their agility and unwavering commitment embody the true spirit of humanity and are a source of our optimism. I am convinced that, if we combine all our efforts, we can overcome the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic and recover as a stronger United Nations.

I thank you for your attention.



**Annex 14****Address by His Serene Highness Prince Albert II, Sovereign Prince of Monaco**

[Original: French]

Mr. President of the General Assembly,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Heads of State and Government,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The unprecedented nature of the crisis we are experiencing has led us to convene this thirty-first special session of the General Assembly, in which I have the honour to participate. Allow me to take this opportunity to warmly thank, once again, the Secretary-General and all the staff of the United Nations and its agencies, who have continued to work tirelessly to confront the pandemic. Through his 22 briefing notes and his global response plan for the United Nations against COVID-19, Mr. Guterres has outlined a collective response adapted to each geographical, economic and social context.

However, the adoption by vote of the omnibus resolution entitled “Comprehensive and coordinated response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic” almost six months after the beginning of the pandemic and the organization of this thirty-first special session almost one year after the emergence of the virus is highly unsatisfactory and must resound as a warning to us all.

Mr. President,

Like many other European countries, the Principality is experiencing a second wave of the pandemic, which has already affected so many people in nations on every continent.

My Government is monitoring the evolution of the spread of the virus in Monaco on a daily basis. We are doing so with a dual objective: to ensure that our health-care systems are not overloaded and to limit the impact of the pandemic on daily life as far as possible.

The pandemic serves to remind us — if we had forgotten — of the fundamental utility of vaccination. We must therefore ensure that vaccination continuity is maintained. At the same time, we must mobilize, in a coordinated and supportive manner, to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for all. That is why I wanted my country to contribute to international efforts in that field, in particular through the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator initiative led by the WHO and its partners.

Moreover, as we know, it is imperative to build stronger health systems and improve our capacity to deal with emergency situations in order to be better prepared for future pandemics. Indeed, the IPBES published an alarming report last October highlighting the link between emerging diseases and the destruction of biodiversity. The report indicates that approximately 60 per cent of infectious human diseases are of animal origin. Environmental health and human health are therefore closely linked hence why those issues must be addressed in parallel.

Furthermore, by strengthening health crisis management systems, it is essential to develop a preventive approach based on environmental preservation. In that connection, I am pleased that many countries have chosen to make environmental protection an important part of their recovery plans. The challenge therefore also lies in reconciling economic recovery with the preservation of health.

That is why, in September, the Prince's Government launched a recovery plan that is pragmatic, progressive and compatible with the health measures currently in force.

Support for companies, businesses and employees will be provided in the form of several funds that take into account all sectors of activity, promoting investment and integrating the challenges posed by the energy transition and digital transformation.

Even before the COVID-19 crisis, the digital transformation was already well under way in Monaco and has been accelerated as a result of lockdown measures put in place. However, the deployment of digital technology should not be limited to Government services and corporations and must include other spheres.

We have witnessed, for example, how the shutdown of the school system highlighted the inequalities in access to digital technology for families and young people. It is obvious that insufficient access to technology or a poor Internet connection constitute obstacles to learning continuity. Not only do school closures pose a disruption to education, but they also raise a food and nutrition issue. In many countries, families rely heavily on the provision of free school meals.

That is why, in order to maintain education continuity and quality for all, the Government of Monaco has strived to keep schools and canteens open, while ensuring that appropriate health and safety measures were put in place.

Finally, even though women throughout the world are already suffering most due to the consequences of the pandemic, the number of victims of domestic violence has also increased, which is completely intolerable. In that regard, Monaco's Committee for the Promotion and Protection of Women's Rights has launched a new campaign that focuses on domestic violence and its consequences on both the victims and the direct witnesses of such violence, in particular children.

Mr. President,

As is evident, the challenges that we must overcome are multiple and only a coordinated response at the global level will allow us to successfully fight against COVID-19 and its consequences.

However, this health crisis is putting the multilateral system that we have spent so many years building to the test. For that reason, since the beginning of the crisis, I have wanted to join my voice to those of other leaders calling for solidarity and cooperation.

By revealing the flaws in our system, COVID-19 is pushing us to take action and provides a unique opportunity for a fresh start on a better basis.

We are being offered an opportunity to build the world of solidarity, security and resilience that we have promised to future generations. Let us not fail to seize it.

Thank you for your attention.

**Annex 15****Address by Mr. Barham Salih, President of the Republic of Iraq**

[Original: Arabic]

Ladies and gentlemen,

May peace and the mercy and blessings of God be upon you.

The meetings of this special session of the United Nations General Assembly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic constitute a very important opportunity for us to continue our efforts virtually to address this unprecedented crisis for the international community. That opportunity reaffirms that we are one family, not only in suffering from the pandemic but also in our common endeavour to defeat COVID-19 and rid our planet of it.

In my statement in the general debate of the General Assembly, I said that, if the pandemic continued to affect even one village or one city in the world, all of humankind would continue to be threatened by the disease, which knows no borders. In that connection, we reiterate that collective suffering requires collective solutions.

This meeting is most timely and offers a chance for us all to renew our commitment to taking a multilateral approach to tackle the pandemic. It is also taking place at a time when the Governments and peoples of all countries of the world are closely following the information provided by companies, laboratories, research institutions and scientists with regard to the imminent availability of several COVID-19 vaccines.

We believe that the equitable access of all countries and all people to vaccines and treatment must be a priority. It is therefore essential to ensure fair distribution and limit restrictions on trade, as well as avoiding political divergence on the issue.

In that context, it is important to take into account the extreme disparity in the economic and financial capacities of countries and adopt the necessary measures to ensure that vaccines can reach the many countries where the required transportation and distribution infrastructure does not exist.

In principle, we are one of the countries where the Government will undertake the purchase of the vaccine and distribute it, free of charge, to its citizens. We are doing so despite the complex and challenging financial and economic situation that is afflicting our country and our people. My country has been waging a costly war against terrorism for more than 17 years and continues to do so today. The previous dictatorship in my country, too, severely damaged our institutions and infrastructure, including hospitals.

During the pandemic, we also saw a drop in the price of oil, the State's main source of income, which has had severe repercussions for our financial system. We hope that we will be able to count on the support of friendly countries in our vaccination efforts and that our circumstances will be taken into consideration and understood so that we can benefit from the aid necessary to tackle the pandemic.

Despite our limited resources, we have succeeded, to some extent, in containing the effects of the pandemic on our society, thanks to the sacrifices made by our doctors and other health-care professionals, as well as our citizens. We have also received support from international institutions and some friendly countries.

While we have been able to somewhat mitigate the impact of the pandemic, it nonetheless remains a constant threat to our people. It is in our best interests to work together to ensure we can make the vaccine accessible to all citizens.

We are convinced of the importance of achieving results in these meetings in order to strengthen international action, including through the relevant organizations and agencies, to guarantee vaccines for everyone that needs them but do not necessarily have the resources to pay for them.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In a spirit of optimism, we would recall that the vaccine is undoubtedly important but it is not enough alone. The international community must adopt rational and resolute policies to preserve the environment and take measures aimed at technological and industrial development to ensure the survival of life on Earth. We need to safeguard and protect our planet, which is the collective responsibility of all humankind — a responsibility that should not be underestimated.

The United Nations can greatly contribute to our work in that regard by providing a suitable environment conducive to dialogue, whereby agreements can be reached on the preservation of the environment and the protection of life on our planet.

Once again, we would like to thank the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General, as well as all those involved in the preparations for this special session.

We wish for the speedy recovery of all those affected by the pandemic, wherever they may be. We hope that some stability will soon be restored to our world and that people will safely be able to work, travel and live in security and prosperity.

May peace and the mercy and blessings of God be upon you.

**Annex 16****Address by Mr. David Kabua, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands**

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies,

It is my honour to bring to you the warm greetings of Yokwe on behalf of the people and government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

I align my statement with that of Belize on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, and of Tuvalu on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands remains one of the very few COVID-free nations in the world. While rigorous border screening has effectively addressed risks as we slowly repatriate those stranded abroad, our national borders remain in near-isolation. We are thankful for our health and security, but to do so, we will continue to pay a very heavy toll. Enforcing our isolation has severely impacted our primary economic engine of fisheries, and placed severe restrictions on imports and a near halt to air travel. Also, our substantial population abroad has been deeply and disproportionately affected by COVID, both in economy and mortality. While as a nation and people we will continue to meet this challenge with all our might and will, our unique situation is incredibly difficult to sustain deep into the future.

Mr, President,

As the world moves with cautious optimism towards building back better, it is vital that all nations use this as an opportunity to pursue — and achieve — enhanced ambition on emissions reductions and to boost resilience to climate impacts. We have a key opportunity to turn commitments to the Paris Agreement and the SDGs into a firm reality.

Our attention — and that of the world — is now closely focused on vaccination, and we are thankful where fully documented and safe candidates have appeared. I welcome the sentiments from the UN General Assembly — recently reaffirmed by the G-20 — regarding the expectation of equitable vaccine distribution. I remain cautiously optimistic that these noble sentiments will turn into action and commitment to truly ensure that no one is left behind. All nations should be particularly guarded of any attempts to trade easy influence or political favor for medical assistance. It is important that the most vulnerable nations — and the most vulnerable populations within those nations — realize open and accountable access to vaccines and medical protection.

Mr. President,

We are particularly pleased that our closest partners in the Pacific have already committed to assisting us with timely delivery of vaccines as they are available early next year, in a manner which protects our entire population. Similar commitments are already underway to assist our neighboring Pacific island countries. On the basis of this commitment, we look forward to moving towards gradually reopening our borders, and scaling back our isolation.

Like many in the world, we are facing the difficult task of rebuilding and restructuring. The international system — and most importantly member states — should search deep for the lessons learned — where multilateral cooperation may have proved weak in the face of national self-interest. The world should not again

face such a common crisis without more effective tools — and the political will to use them.

As a world united by shared challenges, we should all strive to emerge stronger, in health and economy. This will be a vital opportunity to address critical flaws during rebuilding — but only if we all seek to make this opportunity a reality. It is particularly important not only that the most vulnerable are safeguarded, but also that the international system takes the time to carefully understand the unique circumstances and challenges, in particular for small island developing states.

I can only hope that come next September, I will be able to stand shoulder to shoulder with fellow leaders in New York as a truly United Nations.

Thank you and *kommol tata*.



**Annex 17****Address by Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya**

Kenya has, like many other countries in the world been greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our first case of the novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) was reported on 13th March, 2020; and since then this disease has spread to all the 47 counties of the Republic.

To date, Kenya has reported 81,102 confirmed cases; of which 53,526 are recoveries. Regrettably, 1,427 persons have succumbed to the disease. Thirty-one (31) of these were healthcare workers, heroes who paid the ultimate price so that tens of thousands of others would live.

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, my Government moved fast and adopted a multi agency approach. We established the National Emergency Response Committee comprising various state agencies to provide direction on measures to take to contain the COVID-19 outbreak.

Additionally, a Public Health Emergency Operation Centre was put in place to undertake daily disease monitoring, contact tracing, and coordination of the response to the outbreak.

Like in most counties in the world, our health care system was not quite equipped to handle a public health crisis of such a magnitude. In response, at both the National and County Government levels, we instituted a programme of rapid capacity-enhancement.

Health facilities have since been expanded; with increased isolation facilities, testing capacity, ICU beds, and provision of oxygen. Health care workers have been trained; and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) are now being manufactured locally and supplied to health facilities. We also upgraded our capacity to offer both in-hospital and at-home care.

My Government has instituted several containment and mitigation measures to stem the spread of COVID-19 within Kenya. These include maintaining heightened surveillance at all points of entry, health facilities, and within communities across the country. Additionally, we have rolled-out handwashing facilities and sanitisation stations outside and within almost all our public-access buildings.

Furthermore, Physical and Social distancing, temperature monitoring and routine street cleaning have been introduced at all public-access places; including schools, religious centres, shopping malls, banks, etcetera.

We have also introduced a guideline on the proper use of face masks for all persons in public areas; and also restricted gatherings of any nature.

The implementation of these measures has demonstrably reduced the spread of the disease, giving us the time to expand the health system's capacity to manage severe COVID-19 cases.

Kenya like other nations, heeded the World Health Assembly's call for the development of a "One Vaccine for all". In realization of this global endeavour, Kenyan scientists joined with their regional, continental and global colleagues in humanity's quest for an effective vaccine.

We are playing our part through the Kenya Medical Research Institute, who are leading the process of conducting local trials for one of the most advanced COVID-19 vaccines globally,

To ensure our citizens have access to an effective vaccine as and when it becomes available in the market, my Government is engaging the COVID-19 Global Vaccine Access Facility (COVAX Facility).

My Government is in the process of implementing Universal Health Coverage at all levels of care. Going forward, we plan to continue to strengthen decentralization of health care from high-level facilities to the community level, to promptly detect diseases of public health concern and provide adequate referral mechanisms for prompt treatment and care.

In conclusion, I call upon my fellow Heads of State and Heads of Government to increase investment in public health surveillance systems, emergency response mechanisms, and in resilient health systems.

This will ensure that we are all better able to respond to Pandemics such as this in the future. Equally important, countries need to remove barriers to access to diagnosis and care for those who need it, while also addressing the cost of treatment, and ensuring equitable access to healthcare, in the true spirit envisioned by the goal of Universal Health Coverage.

We know health workers locally and globally have endured the most of this disease; not only physically but also mentally and emotionally. Therefore, we need to increase investment in the protection of our health workers, and in providing them with adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies, and all necessary tools for them to discharge their sacred mandate, both effectively and safely.

TOGETHER, WE SHALL OVERCOME AND PREVAIL. I THANK YOU.

**Annex 18****Address by the Mr. Milorad Dodik, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

[Original: Bosnian; English interpretation provided by the delegation ]

Dear Mr. President of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly,

In my capacity as the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia Herzegovina, from the Republika Srpska, I am honoured to address this August Assembly gathered to discuss the most important global topic of today. May I thank you for the initiative and organization of the thirty-first special session of the General Assembly dedicated to the fight against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, with a joint focus on and efforts against this global threat, which requires international solidarity, coordinated global action and the hope of a final victory over this modern-day plague.

The coronavirus pandemic is a global health challenge and, as such, requires a global response.

The health-care systems in Bosnia Herzegovina in both entities of the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia Herzegovina and the Brčko district have managed to appropriately respond to the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic thanks to the programmes and measures introduced by the relevant institutions, the efforts of health-care professionals and the responsible behaviour of our citizens and communities, as a whole.

Furthermore, the response to the COVID-19 pandemic has also benefited from strong international cooperation. A number of the response activities have been carried out with the support of the World Health Organization, the European Commission Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and many donor countries whose cooperation we highly appreciate. Countries need financial resources to fight the pandemic and invest in recovery. In that regard, Bosnia Herzegovina supports the stance of the UN that financial support is the key aspect of solidarity and that the UN family should respond to all aspects of the crisis.

Mr. President,

The economic report of the European Commission for the third quarter of 2020 shows a decline in GDP by 9.3 per cent relative to the previous year, which is explained by the impact of the decline in previously contracted private consumption, investment and exports. The decline in employment, which is difficult to measure, and the unfavorable trade balance have had a detrimental effect on Bosnia Herzegovina, have resulted in the current deficit and have adversely affected lending activity, including lending to households. Primary data have also showed that both female workers and business owners appear to be more adversely affected by the consequences of the pandemic than their male counterparts. In our region, the green corridor system, which introduced designated border-crossing points, has brought about major benefits, and we plan to employ it in our trading with the EU, as well. We are strengthening compression within the sector, while fulfilling the CRM agenda and the green agenda, as adopted at the Western Balkans Summit, held in Sofia on 10 November.

Mr. President,

The crisis caused by the pandemic has brought about major challenges in all walks of life, including security, where the illicit production and trafficking in drugs and illegal migration and smuggling through the territory of Bosnia Herzegovina should be particularly noted. We should emphasize that Bosnia Herzegovina has seen the mass illegal arrival of migrants since the last quarter in 2017. The trend has continued throughout 2018, 2019 and 2020. In that regard, Bosnia Herzegovina would like to emphasize the importance of compliance with and delivering on the commitments under international law governing those issues.

Mr. President,

At the early stages of the pandemic and its impact on the world, rich countries appeared to ignore the small ones, and regional organizations acted as if they had neither the strategy nor the resources to help either their own members or anyone else. In those first weeks, even the European Union dithered and exposed all the weaknesses of a big system unprepared for the scale and depth of the crisis that befell us. It is the legitimate right of every country, especially those with limited resources, to seek help from friends on the international stage and a way out of a crisis that places its most valuable asset in jeopardy, namely, human lives. Never again, in any crisis, should any country feel alone and abandoned by everyone. That should be the task of every one of us. This is in fact the task, purpose and goal of the United Nations. In these uncertain times, humankind needs solidarity and togetherness not only locally, but regionally and globally. The pandemic has clearly demonstrated that no one is safe unless everyone is safe.

Thank you for your attention.

**Annex 19****Address by Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola**

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

YOUR EXCELLENCY MR. ANTÓNIO GUTERRES, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION;

YOUR EXCELLENCY MR. VOLKAN BOZKIR, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY;

YOUR EXCELLENCY MR. TEDROS GHEBREYESUS, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION;

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

In this year of 2020, humanity finds itself confronted with an unexpected threat to its survival, the COVID-19 pandemic, which today constitutes the most serious challenge to the normal functioning of the health, social and economic structures of virtually all countries in the world, in such a way that only collective and collaborative action can overcome such a challenge.

Since the beginning of the year, Angola has reacted and applied strict measures to contain the pandemic, by developing a flexible Multisectoral Contingency Plan that is adapted to the country's epidemiological profile.

Epidemiological surveillance throughout the national territory was strengthened, which included, amongst other measures, the establishment and training of rapid response teams and the health monitoring at international entry points, with the implementation of quarantines and mobility control between the different regions of the country.

We have progressively increased our testing capacity for RT-PCR and serological and antigen testing.

We have built infrastructures exclusively dedicated to the treatment of the COVID-19 existing cases, such as field hospitals, and have adapted all existing hospitals to deal with the cases, and have increased the number of available beds by five thousand, of which more than one thousand is meant for Intensive Care.

At this moment, we only have community transmission in Luanda, the country's capital and the most populous city, while the remaining provinces of the country sustain occasional outbreaks with known source of transmission.

Despite the growing number of positive cases, totaling 14,742, as of 24 November, the transmissibility of the virus from person to person has been decreasing, standing at 0.9 per cent.

The fact that the pandemic has negatively affected the country's economic and financial resources, as well as the economic and social development programs, has not prevented Angola from continuing to make efforts and take actions aimed at reducing the poverty rates, and improve the quality and coverage of basic education and provide universal access to primary health cares, especially to the most vulnerable families.

The Government of Angola has so far employed its own resources in a sum that amounts to \$164,600,000. This amount includes an emergency financing of \$14,400,000 from the World Bank.

Despite this, more assistance will be needed, especially for accessing the vaccines that will prove to be efficacious.

The accelerated development of safe and effective vaccines against the SARS-COV2 virus, with innovative technologies, is an example of what Humanity is capable of doing when threatened.

I therefore would like to welcome the efforts made by the COVAX Facility in mobilizing resources that will ensure, in an equitable manner, the vaccination of at least 20 per cent of the population in the middle and low income countries.

However, I believe that this effective collaborative effort must be increased in order to ensure a global coverage that will curb the transmission of the virus and allow the return to normality, preventing therefore the worsening of disparities among countries.

Angola has a vaccination plan that will initially cover 90 percent of its priority population.

On behalf of Angola, I would like to express our recognition and profound gratitude to the World Health Organization, as well as to the regional institutions, the African Union, and SADC, for the manner how they have spearheaded the coordination of efforts that have enabled each of our countries to face the enormous challenge that COVID-19 represents for the Humanity.

Thank you very much!



**Annex 20****Address by Mr. Milo Đukanović, President of Montenegro**

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

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to greet you all.

It has been a year since the first case of the novel corona virus was detected. Our countries, the international community, organizations and stakeholders on different levels are putting efforts into providing the best possible response to the multiple consequences of the pandemic, primarily for the lives and health of our citizens, and then also for our economies.

The Special Session of the General Assembly is an opportunity for all of us to give a high-quality contribution too.

The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly placed an additional strain on multilateralism, but it did not break it. The fact that we are participating in this session today confirms that we accept reality and understand that working in silos cannot solve global issues. Ignoring a high degree of interdependence, particularly in case of global health threats, entails immeasurable dangers. Efficient and inclusive multilateralism is needed today more than ever. That is why it is encouraging to see that the awareness of this matter is growing and that the efforts pursuing this aim are becoming more visible and more determined.

Problems are enormous, challenges are multiple, and the final consequences cannot be grasped yet. The pandemic brought the global economy to its knees, as well as global politics, science and medicine. Global economy is going through the deepest recession after the World War 2. Economic activities, travels, and supply chains are in collapse. National governments are trying to contain the spread of the infection by restrictive measures, while at the same time, depending on their economic strength, they are using incentives to try to help and sustain economic activity. The most affected are the most vulnerable parts of our societies, while rights and freedoms of our citizens keep being under pressure.

We have repeated several times that without a comprehensive and coordinated response, global leadership, solidarity among the countries, and individual responsibility, we will not be successful in the fight against the most serious challenge in the history of the United Nations.

The health crisis and the ensuing economic crisis can easily lead to destabilization and uncertainty particularly in vulnerable societies with insufficiently developed and weak democratic institutions.

I am deeply convinced that this is an opportunity for all of us to join forces pursuing a better, fairer, more resilient, and more sustainable post-COVID world. The world where the implementation of the 2030 Agenda will be more certain and the highest values of democracy, freedom and human rights will be accepted and respected. Recovery has to be sustainable and inclusive and we have to be more resilient and better prepared for any new pandemic that might affect us. This must be an opportunity for a new start of global cooperation and call for action.

Although the pandemic additionally complicated the already complex path of implementing the 2030 Agenda, I think that Sustainable Development Goals are at this moment the only relevant and globally accepted roadmap for facing numerous challenges like climate change, growing inequality, preservation and protection of biodiversity, and economic uncertainty.

Many of us will talk today about numerous negative phenomena that were particularly visible in the first months after the outbreak — abuse of information, global competition, impossibility to procure basic medical protection equipment, closing into national frameworks and a lack of solidarity. Still, given how serious the situation is, we have to be focused primarily on solving the problems and changing the approach. Effective coordination, investments that rely on science and technology, and timely communication aimed at strengthening trust are of decisive importance. The first confirmation that we are on the right path will be a creation of conditions for the availability and timely distribution of the expected vaccine.

The post-COVID world should be a world of closer cooperation, more solidarity and stronger empathy. As I recently said in the Paris Peace Forum, the pandemic has shown that all of us are vulnerable, regardless of our nation, confession, colour of our skin or wealth. The consequences are devastating for everyone. Let us do our best to ensure that recovery does not become a privilege reserved only for some of us.

**Annex 21****Address by Mr. Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor and for organizing this Special Session of the General Assembly.

I also want to thank the President of Azerbaijan, as the Chair of the Non Aligned Movement, for taking the initiative to organize a Special Session on the COVID-19 pandemic. I welcome the opportunity to share with you what we have learned here in Afghanistan in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and how it has informed us in preparing for the second wave.

I would like to offer my condolences and sympathies to all those who have lost a loved one to COVID-19, and to those who have suffered the most losses from this pandemic, including the United States, Brazil, and India.

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

The COVID-19 pandemic came to Afghanistan at the end of February via Herat province, which shares a border with Iran.

We moved quickly in anticipation that the virus would hit us hard. After analysis and consultation with diverse groups across Afghan society, we planned the response to the pandemic according to five phases of the crisis — acknowledgment, diffusion, adversity, relief and recovery.

The virus peaked in June with an infection rate of 76 per cent, and then went into steady decline, with the infection rate fluctuating daily between 6 per cent and 25 per cent during the Fall.

As a result of our urgent action, we managed to maintain relatively low mortality rates. We managed our response to not jeopardize livelihoods in the long-term or increase already high levels of poverty and food insecurity.

These are the lessons we learned:

First, the vast scale of the disruptive and destructive effects of the COVID-19 pandemic is becoming clearer by the day. We saw the short-term impacts almost immediately — the loss of lives, the loss of jobs, the downturn in the economy. But the medium to long-term impacts, we have not yet fully grasped. So, while we cope with the immediate impact, we need to look ahead and prepare for the long-term effects.

Second, the impact of the pandemic has been global. No country has been left untouched. And yet, the response has been largely national. We have been unable, as an international community, to fully take advantage of the interconnected nature of our work to combat the disease.

The world had an opportunity to respond to the pandemic with an unprecedented level of unity and solidarity. Instead, we have experienced divisions.

A global focal point would have made the response more effective and coordinated, and global resources should have been mobilized on a larger scale. We commend the Secretary-General and the United Nations for their role and tireless work.

Afghanistan is proud to have contributed to the global response as a co coordinator for COVID-19 related initiatives in the General Assembly together with Croatia. The Omnibus resolution facilitated by our Permanent Mission created a common normative framework for the response. It is now up to all of our Governments to implement the resolution and better coordinate our response to the second wave and the socio-economic impacts.

Third, this pandemic has not been a leveler as expected; but instead, it has exacerbated existing gaps and inequalities across developed and developing nations. Countries in special situations have been especially hard hit. For example, we as a poor country, like many others around the globe, were not able to design and implement effective stimulus packages. We also had to be very careful in instituting lockdowns to avoid inflicting serious damage on our economy and peoples' livelihoods, which could have inflicted more suffering than the virus itself.

This will continue to be the case even as a vaccine becomes available, because administering a vaccine requires capabilities and infrastructure that poor countries simply do not have. The role of multilateral organizations in the joint distribution of the vaccine will be critical. Our call for the vaccine to be a global public good must be loud and clear.

Now, the second wave of the pandemic is at our doorstep. We face this wave during the winter season, with very little understanding of how cold weather, particularly under conditions of poverty, will affect the nature of the pandemic.

We now know that women have suffered the most as a result of the pandemic, and experienced higher levels of domestic abuse. Today we must take a strong stand against domestic violence and reaffirm our support for the Secretary General's call for peace at home. Ending the shadow pandemic affecting millions of women and girls is critical for a fair and protected world for all.

I hope that as we enter the second wave, we as an international community will be able to draw from the lessons learned.

For one, a clear, phased approach needs to be designed and replicated nationally, regionally and globally. This approach should be informed not just by the information provided via instant analysis, but more importantly by patterns that emerge in the way the virus has manifested globally.

Secondly, now we are in a better position to plan to ensure food security and basic human security in the face of subsequent waves. We must make sure that supply chains that were disrupted during the first wave are either restored or alternatives put in place to ensure basic needs are met.

The pandemic transformed the way we do business, the way we communicate, the way we live. But it's not all negative. COVID pushed the digitalization of the world at a speed that was inconceivable. And moving into subsequent waves of the pandemic, we need to embrace digital technology to further a global dialogue around policy, accessing and distributing the vaccine. To take advantage of these technologies, more must, however, be done to address the digital divide.

We will not be able to return to our pre-pandemic ways of communicating and governing. The pandemic opened up new possibilities for coordination and cooperation; for example, tele-medicine and distance learning. We need to embrace this change.

Lastly, because the first and second waves have exacerbated structural poverty and increased situational poverty, we must create a common approach to securing livelihoods and ensuring momentum in the economy while also promoting COVID awareness.

Afghanistan is located at the heart of Asia. We have many open or semi-open borders and frontiers. This means we can be either a center for spreading the virus, or containing it. We are trying to be the latter, and we hope we can achieve that if we work together as a global community to act upon the lessons learned from the first wave.

Thank you.

**Annex 22****Address by Mr. Félix Antoine Tshilombo Tshisekedi, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

[Original: French]

Mr. President of the United Nations General Assembly,

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government

Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Democratic Republic of Congo recorded its first case of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on 10 March 2020. The total number of confirmed cases to date is 12,469, including 11,495 patients who have recovered — which is a recovery rate of 92 per cent — and 333 deaths — or a mortality rate of 2.6 per cent. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been felt in the Democratic Republic of Congo in several areas, including the socioeconomic sector in which 79 per cent of the poorest households were affected by the increase in food prices and loss of income.

Thanks to innovative strategies, the Democratic Republic of Congo was able to control the pandemic and minimize its social and economic impact. Those strategies have focused on the following three areas.

First, the highest State-level authorities took ownership of the response, which was reflected in the declaration of a state of health emergency lasting more than six months, followed up by measures, including border closures, isolation among the provinces and strict containment to protect the population from cross-border contamination and domestic spread;

Secondly, a technical secretariat in charge of guiding the public health response at the national level and a presidential task force responsible for assisting me in monitoring, supervising and assessing all prevention and response measures against COVID-19 were established.

Those ad hoc structures implemented all measures intended to control the COVID-19 pandemic, including strengthening strategic communication; containing the epicentre of the epidemic, while, at the same time, strengthening social distancing measures; integrating the fight against COVID-19 into the national health system in a decentralized manner; conducting active research within health-care facilities; screening travelers and migrants at entry points; and ramping up and broadening COVID-19 diagnostic testing throughout the country, while standardizing patients' medical care.

That non-exhaustive list of measures has enabled us to control the COVID-19 pandemic in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and limit its spread in certain provinces of the country.

However, they alone do not explain the current statistics. Rightly or wrongly, some people have argued and continue to argue that other factors are responsible for the pandemic's decreasing destructive trend, including an age pyramid with a preponderance of young people and a low comorbidity factor among the population as a whole.



Nevertheless, it should be noted that, since the end of October, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has recorded an increase in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations within the country's health-care facilities. That situation could be explained by the population's progressive lack of adherence to social distancing measures, as well as the resumption of air travel to countries experiencing outbreaks of the pandemic.

Therefore, in order to face this situation, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo plans to strengthen and revitalize the activities of the fight against this pandemic in order to mitigate as much as possible the negative consequences of a possible second wave on the health and well-being of the Congolese population.

Mr. President,

At the regional level, at the end of the high-level summit held at my initiative in Goma on 7 October, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, together with the other countries of the subregion, decided to develop a cross-border response plan to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I would like to take this opportunity to underscore that my country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is benefiting from the help provided by the international community in combating COVID-19. Such support has enabled my country to effectively implement COVID-19 mitigation measures.

For that reason, on behalf of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, my country, I commend, congratulate and thank all at once the World Health Organization and the other technical and financial partners for their support in the fight against COVID-19.

I thank you.

**Annex 23****Address by Mr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana**

The Co-operative Republic of Guyana welcomes this 31st Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We applaud the efforts which have been made by the United Nations in responding to this pandemic, particularly the UN's humanitarian and socioeconomic response and its ongoing efforts for a Post-COVID-19 Recovery Plan.

The United Nations has demonstrated the efficiency and necessity of global cooperation. It has been in the forefront of efforts to help countries mitigate the effects of this pandemic. The United Nations efforts represent one of history's greatest rescue missions.

This 31st Special Session comes at a time when the world eagerly awaits the authorization of vaccines which have been developed to help in the public health fight against the coronavirus. The United Nations must continue to be in the forefront — as it has been over the past 8 months — in piloting the international rollout of mass immunization for developing countries.

The pandemic has presented difficulties for all segments of our society, particularly our children. Most of them have been out of school for months and their normal childhood routines have been constricted.

Guyana recognizes the impact which the pandemic has had on them. As such, we join in supporting UNICEF's Six-Point Plan which provides a response aimed at ensuring that our children are protected and are catered for in the global recovery efforts which will follow the remission of this pandemic.

Guyana hereby commits to:

- ensuring that our children are able to continue to learn by closing the national digital divide;
- enabling improved primary health care and access to vaccine by children; — eradicating child poverty;
- effecting, where necessary, mental health-support interventions for children and young people;
- enacting greater protections and support-measures for vulnerable children; and — encouraging access to improved water, hygiene and sanitation.

The pandemic has emphasized the need for change in global relations. In this regard, I wish to reiterate my support for the United Nations Secretary General's call for a New Global Deal with a New Social Contract.

As I noted in my intervention to the Meeting of Heads of Government and States on Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond, a New Global Deal will allow for the effective transfer of resources — financial, intellectual and technological — to developing countries, and facilitate also, a fairer sharing of the benefits of globalization.

A New Social Contract will guarantee the more effective use of these resources for sustainable development.

A new era will soon be upon us. The world looks forward to beating this pandemic and hastening international recovery. This process will be made easier by the ushering in of a new era in global relations, one which will herald the magnificence of multilateralism, spearheaded by the United Nations.

I thank you and continue to stay safe. God bless you all.

**Annex 24****Address by Mr. Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa**

Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), Mr. António Guterres,  
President of the UN General Assembly,  
Excellencies,

We meet at this important special session of the UN General Assembly at a time when the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continues to spread in many parts of the world. This pandemic has demonstrated once again how intertwined are the fortunes of the nations of the world. Since the start of the pandemic, there has been coordinated international action to ensure that all countries are able to respond effectively. This collaboration has been of particular benefit to developing economies, which continue to shoulder the burden of poverty, inequality and underdevelopment.

South Africa deeply appreciate the assistance, the advice and the solidarity it has received from the international community. As a result of the decisive measures that we took at the onset of the pandemic, we managed to delay the transmission of the virus. We succeeded in preparing our health facilities, and, by doing so, we have saved many lives. We put in place emergency relief measures to support individual households and companies that were in distress and have now embarked on a reconstruction and recovery plan to return our economy to growth and job creation.

As the African continent, we have given a deliberate targeted and coordinated response to COVID-19. Led by the African Union, we established a COVID-19 response fund to contain the pandemic in member States and enable their economies to recover. The African Union appointed several Special Envoy to solicit concrete support for the continental effort displayed by the G-20, the European Union and international financial institutions.

We also launched the ground-breaking African Medical Supplies Platform to facilitate access for all African countries to critical equipment and supplies. We have also established a COVID-19 African vaccine acquisition task force to ensure that African countries are able to access and distribute affordable and effective vaccines without delay. In addition, an African green stimulus programme is being developed to ensure that our economic recovery takes place in a more sustainable manner.

As African countries, we will continue to need substantial support to recover from the pandemic. We reiterate our call for a comprehensive economic stimulus package for Africa, a suspension of interest payments on Africa's external and public debt and the lifting of all economic sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe and the Sudan to allow them to adequately respond to the pandemic. It is only through multilateral cooperation that we can overcome this global emergency. We must continue to support the World Health Organization as the lead-UN agency mandated to coordinate the global effort. We must continue to drive a holistic response to COVID-19 that recognizes the relationship linking health, social, economic and environmental measures.

The pandemic must not detract from our commitment to both the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We must place gender equality at the centre and forefront of our recovery efforts to

ensure that there is equitable access for all to an effective vaccine. We call on UN Member States to work with the WHO on the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator and the COVAX facility. In the spirit of solidarity and cooperation, let us continue to work together to overcome the crisis and build a better, safer and more equitable peaceful and prosperous world.

I thank you.

**Annex 25****Address by Mr. Chandrikapersad Santokhi, President of the Republic of Suriname**

Your Excellency Volkan Bozkir, President of the General Assembly Your Excellency António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations Excellencies, Colleagues, Ministers and Permanent Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr. President,

My delegation aligns itself with the Statement by H.E. Andrés Manuel López Obrador, President of the United Mexican State on behalf of CELAC and the Statement by H.E. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non -Aligned Movement.

When considering the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our economies, the health and wellbeing of our people and sustainable development, this session is yet another confirmation that multilateralism and international cooperation are indispensable.

As a result of the pandemic's outbreak our public health — social protection and education system, environmental- agricultural — as well as other productions sectors, have undergone tremendous pressure.

The Government has taken several measures to prevent the further spread of the virus, including far reaching ones such as closing of air and maritime borders for regular passenger traffic, except for flights for repatriation, closing of schools, temporary restrictions of the movement of people and awareness raising campaigns to alert the public regarding prevention.

Additional emergency measures have been implemented to address the socio economic effects of the pandemic, while safeguarding health, including mental health, such as the creation of a social protection system and targeted economic measures to support vulnerable groups and businesses in our society.

For Suriname, the implementation of these targeted COVID-19 measures entails committing limited financial means, amplifying our vulnerability, while facing already immense financial, macro-economic imbalances, as well as a heavy debt portfolio.

In this respect, the Government appreciates the solidarity and support it has received thus far from international partners in the field of medical services and technical cooperation to enable all stakeholders to address the COVID-19 situation in Suriname.

Suriname was the first in the region upholding the democratic process of holding free and fair elections during the outbreak of COVID-19.

The Government is continuously monitoring, evaluating and adjusting the measures to find the proper balance between the health of the people and the economy. This, despite the national and international financial constraints, in particular high national debt and the challenges in relation to access to concessional financing.

In this context, steadily and cautious reopening of the economy, is well considered, taking into account the relevant protocols for each sector.



Mr. President,

We welcome the efforts made by the United Nations Secretary-General, the International Financial Institutions and other multilateral entities in response to the pandemic.

At the same time, we note with great concern that Middle-Income Countries are left behind and cannot benefit from many of these initiatives.

We call, therefore, for an integrated response to the pandemic, and in this regard, welcome the initiative of Canada and Jamaica, supported by the United Nations Secretary-General, on Financing for Development in the era of COVID-19 and Beyond.

In addition, we welcome the initiative launched for our region by Costa Rica and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), namely the Fund to Alleviate COVID-19 Economics (FACE), as well as the Caribbean Resilience Fund (CRF), proposed by the Executive Director of ECLAC.

My Government calls for a stronger advocacy role of the UN towards the international community and in particular, the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to design and execute region-specific & country-specific strategies to assist countries to gradually building more resilient financial -, economic -, social -, environmental — and security systems and towards sustainable recovery.

Consideration of specific financing for development opportunities and measures, such as debt relief (suspension and/or writing off of debts), access to concessional financing, special arrangements for grants and soft loans, budgetary support to strengthen our public health infrastructure, could enable us to building resilience in times of crisis.

In this regard we also note the process in the development of vaccines, and underscore the importance of ensuring that vaccines will be equally accessible and affordable for all.

In closing Mr. President,

Let us not forget that the principal aim of multilateralism is to unite, assist in building strong and resilient communities, and to strengthen democracy, the rule of law and good governance through collective action, and inspired by solidarity, respect and understanding.

Building back better strongly depends on the interpretation and implementation that we give to the kind of multilateralism that this pandemic demands from us.

I thank you.

**Annex 26****Address by Mr. Iván Duque Márquez, President of the Republic of Colombia**

[Original: Spanish]

The health, economic and social crisis resulting from the pandemic represents the greatest challenge facing the world since the Second World War. The virus has led to an unprecedented recession for all countries, which is, disproportionately affecting communities and those who are most vulnerable.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Colombia has remained steadfast in its commitment to safeguarding the health of Colombians, while caring for the most vulnerable persons, safeguarding jobs, promoting a responsible, gradual restart of the economy and, at the same time, maintaining the gains we have made in terms of equity.

We have made timely and wise decisions to deal with the pandemic. Colombia was the first country in Latin America with the ability to carry out molecular diagnostic testing at the local level.

Moreover, thanks to the work of the Ministry of Health and the Emergency Management Fund, we have been able to double the number of intensive care units to more than 11,200.

We have also made progress in measures to address the spread of and help contain the pandemic, through epidemiological monitoring and public health measures, such as the Programme for Testing, Tracing and Sustainable Selective Isolation.

With it, we seek to guide public health activities, increase testing capacity, step up detection and above all, trace the epidemiological scope of positive cases.

We have also sought to mitigate the socioeconomic effects of the pandemic through programmes, such as Families in Action, Youth in Action and Greater Colombia. In addition, we founded Solidarity Income, through which were able to reach 3 million people who were not receiving benefits from any State social programme. Thanks to all those initiatives, we have reached more than 10 million households.

In order to safeguard employment, we created the Formal Employment Support Programme, which we use subsidize 40 per cent to 50 per cent of payrolls, and which is already helping more than 3 million workers.

Colombia has been an active member of the WHO Executive Board, which has enabled us to advocate equitable and universal access for all countries to future vaccines and treatments, as we recognize COVID-19 vaccines as a global public good, given the importance of immunization against the disease.

In addition, we signed the formal agreement for the COVAX facility mechanism — a tool which will enable the equitable distribution of vaccines.

As a country, we highlight the tireless work of the World Health Organization and the Pan American Health Organization, which have promoted a global science-based and people-centered response.

I therefore reaffirm the importance of multilateralism as a tool to overcome the crisis and permanently lift barriers so that we can build a more just and equitable world. Accordingly, we reaffirm our commitment to strengthening global governance and promoting sustainable recovery to move towards more resilient societies.

Many thanks.

**Annex 27****Address by Mr. Stevo Pendarovski, President of the Republic of North Macedonia**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your Excellencies,

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continues to pose a major risk to humankind. Families have lost dear members, and communities have been profoundly shattered. The health crisis has spilled over into other sectors of our societies, with our economies suffering an especially heavy setback. With its health, economic, social, humanitarian and security dimension, the pandemic has tested our countries in unprecedented ways. It has reminded us of how interconnected we are.

With the suffering it causes, the pandemic exposes the systemic weaknesses and inequalities in our world. In North Macedonia, the coronavirus has taken its toll in human lives, put pressure on the health-care sector and weakened the economy. In order to alleviate the heavy burden placed on our health workers, our Government recently declared a state of crisis within the entire country for a period of 30 days. That will help us use the capacities of the army and the resources of the private health-care sector in order to control more effectively the spread of the virus and save as many human lives as possible.

This great danger has also provided the opportunity for our countries and peoples to demonstrate unity, solidarity and multilateral cooperation. On behalf of the Macedonian citizens, I would like to thank the United Nations and the World Health Organization for their leadership in coordinating the global response to control and contain the spread of COVID-19. At the same time, we are grateful to all the countries and organizations that have supported us with medical equipment and materials and shared their knowledge and experience.

The pandemic also poses a moral challenge. The economy may suffer, but human lives are infinitely precious. Saving human lives should, therefore, take precedence over everything else. At the same time, our efforts to control the spread of the virus must not be at the expense of fundamental rights and freedoms. Those include health care and economic stimulus to be provided to all those in need. While fighting the coronavirus, we must ensure that we do not tolerate the spread of the viruses of racism, extremism, discrimination and xenophobia. A systemic threat like the pandemic requires a systemic response, including both immediate and long-term actions. We need to continue working together in building resilient, well-governed, responsive, accountable and people-centred health-care systems.

Certified quality treatments should be made available and affordable for all. The major step in the right direction was undeniably the establishment of the global COVAX facility for the procurement of vaccines, which must provide easy and equitable access to vaccines for all the people in the world.

Dear Friends,

Allow me to conclude by emphasizing that many challenges will remain even in the post-COVID-19 period. The road to socioeconomic, and even mental recovery, for many of us will be long and complicated, but there is no alternative. Humankind

has to come together once again in order to rebuild a world in which no human being is left behind.

Thank you for your attention.

**Annex 28****Address by Mr. Egils Levits, President of the Republic of Latvia**

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

In the time of the global pandemic, let me first pay tribute to the global medical community for their dedicated and professional work. I would also like to salute all key workers who keep our basic services running and the scientists who are working to develop an effective vaccine.

More than ever, we need to be united, show solidarity and cooperate closely to address the pandemic and its devastating consequences. We can only succeed through a multilateral approach. This special session of the General Assembly underlies the central role of the United Nations (UN) system in achieving our goals. The World Health Organization is the leading and coordinating authority in addressing global health challenges. We must strengthen it through reforms that increase its effectiveness.

Latvia has financially contributed to the World Health Organization through the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19. It was our response to the global appeal of the UN Secretary-General to act together and show solidarity. Latvian scientists are actively participating in vaccine development. Our Government took quick and decisive action to ensure contact tracing, social distancing and testing availability, as well as the development of digital solutions. It is delicate balance to limit economic losses while safeguarding public health.

The Government, in close cooperation with the private sector, introduced three main digital solutions: an e-Parliament platform so that our national Parliament could continue legislative functions in lockdown mode — the Government also meets online; a television channel, called “Your class”, and other digital tools to enable remote schooling; and the first nationally endorsed contact tracing app, called “Stop COVID”, which is compatible with other European tracing apps. Twenty-five per cent of mobile Internet users have already downloaded this app, which ensures the anonymity essential for respecting the privacy of infected persons.

In terms of economic recovery, Latvia fully supports the UN Secretary-General’s call to build back better. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to return to the previous state of normality in every way. Our production and consumption patterns have been interrupted by the pandemic. While we all work together to revive and save our economies, we also have the opportunity to rethink our approach and introduce more sustainable solutions.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the critical need to counter misinformation during the pandemic and beyond. Access to free, reliable and science-based information through reputable media is essential. The challenge must be recognized and dealt with not only by Governments, but also by international organizations. At the United Nations, Latvia will continue to raise awareness of the need to counter disinformation. Let us all work together to save lives and start sustainable recovery around the globe.

Thank you.



**Annex 29****Address by Mrs. Kersti Kaljulaid, President of the Republic of Estonia**

Dear Secretary-General António Guterres, Dear President of the General Assembly, Members of the United Nations,

As we attend today's Special Session, the world is facing the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and most of our societies are in lockdowns. So far, the focus of our countries has been saving lives and at the same time getting our economies back on track trying to increase the resilience of societies. As we adapt to the fact of living in the COVID-19 world, the focus has rightly shifted to vaccines. Our global priority must be universal and equitable access to the vaccine against COVID-19. Because no one is safe until everyone is safe.

At the same time, we need to be aware that not everyone in our UN family have been fortunate enough to adopt impressive rescue packages. Nor have all of us been fortunate to have necessary digital means to mitigate the crisis. So, our global community needs to have solidarity. This also means global burden sharing. One option is sharing our lessons learned, experiences and best practices in overcoming the pandemic. The best way to do it is through a strengthened multilateral system.

As the world's first digitally transformed nation, Estonia has contributed among other things by digital means. Because technologies can really be great equalisers, they have become an integral part of our everyday lives. And in health as well as the social sector they provide higher precision and better coordination. Data can help us better to detect people in need and make informed policy decisions. We must build a global trust architecture, together with World Health Organisation as its anchor. Estonia recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the World Health Organization in the field of digital health to support the interoperability of certified vaccine and testing centres across the world. And on top of that we have a number of Memorandums of Understanding with countries and regions, notably the African Union, to advance digital cooperation. Not only in digitalisation of healthcare but also in e-governance and e-education. We work together with the International Telecommunication Union.

As the Secretary General's co-chair of the Every Women Every Child movement, I am particularly worried about women, children and adolescents. As the world focuses on the pandemic, the most vulnerable among us continue to suffer from conflicts not only far afield, but also on our own European continent. In this light, I would like to reiterate Estonia's support to the Secretary General Guterres's call for global ceasefire. We call everybody to support it. It is high time for warfare to stop. We must deal with more pressing needs.

Finally, while fighting the pandemic, we must also understand that the other challenges have not gone away. For example, even before COVID-19 vaccines are globally available, we know that the percentage of the world's children who received all the vaccines recommended by the World Health Organisation has dropped to 70 percent — back where it was 25 years ago. We must also understand that there is an impact on our health arising from the climate crisis, from ecological degradation, from pollution and climate instability.

Dear colleagues, brothers and sisters,

We have a collective responsibility. We must ensure that everybody benefits from the recovery but also that progress made so far is not reversed by either conflicts, climate crisis or COVID-19. We should use technologies, digital means. We can really complement our goals and efforts with the new possibilities. Thank you and stay safe!

**Annex 30****Address by Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, President of the Republic of Serbia**

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General.

Your Excellencies,

Dear Director-General of the World Health Organization

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I address this distinguished gathering today in a moment when my country, Serbia, and the whole world face an extraordinary challenge put before our healthcare systems and our economies by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Serbia, as the legal successor of Yugoslavia, is a proud founder of the Organization of the United Nations and as such it is persistently committed to the UN Charter and to the multilateralism as the founding principal of the United Nations.

The virtual format of this address speaks for itself about the situation the world has found itself in at the end of 2020, and in which it still is, and it is a confirmation that we must do everything to preserve and strengthen the United Nations.

The COVID-19 pandemic strongly confirms the need and necessity of existence and strengthening of the role of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and organizations, like the World Health Organization. They have the irreplaceable role in organized response to newly occurred challenges that are not only of a health nature, but they also have social, economic, political and security dimension. That's why the relevance of this forum must never be questioned.

We firmly believe that the answers in facing global challenges such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic can be found only by joint actions, mutual harmonization and respect.

Your Excellencies,

In that regard, the Republic of Serbia cordially welcomes the decisions on organizing such an important Forum.

Great hope for prosperity of the Mankind is given by a fact that 150 member states, without a single vote against, accepted and voted for the necessity and urgency of having this gathering today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since the sustainable development and healthcare go hand in hand, as the candidate country for EU accession, Serbia strongly supports and follows the approach of the European Union that we must continue working together within the UN system in fighting pandemic and its consequences, laying at the same time foundations for inclusive, green and sustainable recovery, in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals.

It is with great dose of optimism that I look forward to the days ahead. Good news related to prevention and treatment of COVID-19 come from all over the world.

Those quick and good results could only be achieved with common global effort and information exchange.

Serbia is absolutely advocating universal and equal approach to vaccines and therapy for treating COVID-19, as a leading global priority.

Global initiative and synergy embodied in COVAX is aimed at ensuring righteous distribution of supplies of future vaccines against COVID-19.

We hope that COVAX will distribute 2 billion doses of safe and efficient vaccines worldwide by the end of 2021, where needed, and guided by humanistic and nonselective principles.

Your Excellencies,

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 as well as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change are key steps in facing some of the biggest challenges of today- global economic instability, global social inequalities and climate change effects.

Devastating consequences of global recession must be removed by mobilizing bigger, faster and more flexible support through international financial institutions.

Serbia pays priority attention to goals related with the following: eradicating poverty, sustainable economic development and employment, building infrastructure and industrialization, providing healthy life at all ages, free and quality elementary and high-school education for everyone, with special focus on gender equality.

I proudly underline that the citizens of Serbia voted for the Parliament where both genders are equally represented. This and such a modern Serbian Parliament supported for the second time the Government led by a woman.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Efficient and productive multilateralism is necessary, but also achievable if readiness for joint engagement in the spirit of dialogue, cooperation and compromise is demonstrated.

We have intensively cooperated with the countries of the entire world, as well as our region, regarding allocation of humanitarian aid, but also regular goods supply during COVID-19 pandemic. Serbia is also facing problems in fighting this communicable disease that caused tectonic changes worldwide and we received assistance of the friendly countries when we needed it the most, and I take this opportunity to thank them once again. Likewise, we showed solidarity and provided assistance to other countries and we will keep helping those who need it most in these difficult times.

I hope that we have all reminded ourselves during this pandemic how important every single life is, and that we must do everything we can to prevent further loss of life and human suffering. Having said that, I want to underline that the Republic of Serbia joins the UN Secretary-General in his call for a global ceasefire.

Your Excellencies,

Throughout its entire existence, Serbia has, above all, appreciated freedom, equality and peace. Not a single one of these traditional criteria of ours is possible without strong United Nations and strict observation of the Founding Charter.

President John Fitzgerald Kennedy said once:

“Let us not seek the Republican answer or the Democratic answer but the right answer. Let us not seek to fix the blame for the past — let us accept our own responsibility for the future.”

We cannot change the past, but from this place we can significantly impact the more quality future of this Planet and Mankind.

Thank you for your attention.

**Annex 31****Address by Mr. Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic**

[Original: English and French]

United Nations Secretary-General,

Heads of State and Government,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed our societies to multiple challenges.

The first is that of international public health cooperation. We can now draw several lessons from the current crisis in this regard.

Firstly, the only effective responses to the pandemic will be global, coordinated and inclusive. That is why I am so pleased with the collective action driven by the ACT-Accelerator initiative, which aims to make tools for fighting pandemics accessible to all countries, and to make them global public goods. A total of \$10 billion has already been raised for the initiative, which is considerable. But we must continue to raise funds from the entire international community.

As I said to the G-20 partner countries at the Summit in Riyadh on 21 November, France proposes a donation mechanism so that a portion of the first doses of vaccines available are used to vaccinate priority groups in developing countries. These doses, whether they come from Europe, China, Russia or the United States, whether they are the fruit of donations from States or pharmaceutical companies, would thus be allocated effectively and fairly, on the basis of WHO recommendations. I invite you to build this mechanism together. I believe it to be the most adapted response.

But we know that vaccines will not be enough. Unless primary health systems are strengthened in the most vulnerable countries, they will not be used. Unless health workers everywhere are trained, our health response will remain sub-optimal: that is why France supports the World Health Organization in establishing a WHO Academy in Lyon, which will train health workers from all over the world. That is also why we invite all the powers of the G-20 and beyond, to strengthen the health portion of their official development assistance, to come to the aid of the primary health systems of the main emerging and developing countries concerned.

Secondly, a lesson from this crisis is that we are not sufficiently prepared to deal with health threats. We need to strengthen the current system of international health security. France has made proposals, particularly with Germany and its other European partners more broadly. We support the strengthening of the World Health Organization, which is the sole universal health organization. That is why we have made an additional €50-million contribution to the WHO for 2020 and 2021.

More specifically, we would like to see an intermediate alert system established so that the WHO can warn sound the alert. We would also like to see more transparency and accountability on the part of States Parties to the International Health Regulations. An international inquiry is under way and we must learn all possible lessons from it. It will most likely be necessary to review the International Health Regulations, in order to become more effective in this respect.



The third lesson is that the public health crisis underlines the interaction between human, animal and environmental health, amid the deterioration of ecosystems.

That is why we support the creation of a One Health Council of high-level experts tasked with collecting and disseminating the scientific information available on the links between human, animal and environmental health, in order to assist public officials in managing future health crises and inform citizens about these issues. I am pleased that the WHO, OIE, FAO and UNEP are working to create this Council, in a spirit of partnership with all the major international organizations in the sectors.

Beyond health issues, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major humanitarian impact. It has increased poverty and inequalities. According to the United Nations, 235 million people will need humanitarian assistance in 2021. The number of people in need of food aid has never been so high.

In this respect, I commend the essential action of all the United Nations agencies and programmes and their staff who work every day alongside the most vulnerable people on the planet, at times risking their lives. I would also like to recall that it is more crucial than ever to ensure humanitarian workers' access to the people they are seeking to help.

The exceptional circumstances generated by the pandemic threaten, in many countries, the achievements of the over-70-year international fight for human rights.

The pandemic must not be used as a pretext for restrictions on civil society, erosion of the rule of law, attacks on the freedom of expression, or the arbitrary detention of opponents. It cannot be used as an excuse to undermine the progress made in fighting violence against women, in access to sexual and reproductive rights and services, and in protecting our children. Because we cannot tolerate such backsliding, we are organizing the Generation Equality Forum in 2021. Please join us so that we can together champion the cause of gender equality.

Lastly, our role is to prevent further excesses in the brutalization of the world during this crisis, which is far more than just a public health crisis.

The Security Council took into account the destabilizing effect of pandemics very early. It was able to do so with HIV in 2000 and again with Ebola in 2014 and 2018. That is why, when the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, we put forward Resolution 2532, with Tunisia, which was unanimously adopted by the Security Council on 1 July 2020, in support of the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire.

I would like to commend, in this regard, the men and women working in United Nations operations who continue, despite the difficulties, to defend peace, and also to combat COVID-19. Here were some of the convictions I wanted to share with you today. I wish you much luck and progress in your work and I hope you will all come out of this pandemic more united and stronger. Thank you.

**Annex 32****Address by Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**

[Original: Spanish]

Mr. President,

Let me express our appreciation for the convening of this important high-level summit under the auspices of our United Nations General Assembly on the global response to address the human crisis triggered by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

I would also like to thank the Non-Aligned Movement for supporting the convening of this special session in the middle of circumstances that are of the utmost urgency for humankind.

I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to the more than 1.3 million souls who, during these unprecedented times, lost the battle against the disease. If we are to honour their memory, we must commit to improving health-care systems to ensure their quality and genuine public accessibility for all men and women.

Likewise, we would like to express our recognition and gratitude to the legions of health professionals, scientists and all personnel who have shown their dedication and sacrifice in this struggle for health and life.

We also take this opportunity to recognize the leadership role of the World Health Organization (WHO).

Mr. President,

Following the many months during which the whole world was upended by the health emergency caused by the pandemic — the worst of its kind in 100 years — which, as we all know, has exposed the major vulnerabilities not only of the developing, but also the richest and most powerful, countries, on the planet, at this stage, multilateralism has shown itself to be the answer. Solidarity and cooperation must regain the role they once played in guiding and marshalling international relations among the countries of the world, which, nevertheless, the isolationism, supremacism and selfishness of powerful minority elites dictating policies from the world's most powerful countries try to ignore.

In Venezuela, our response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been characterized by the selflessness and heroism of thousands of women and men who, under the unified leadership of the institutions of the State and the national Government — albeit in the middle of a criminal aggression and a constant environment of threat against Venezuela — have been able to marshal all the country's human and material resources to serve the people with dedication, discipline, conscience and much love. To date, just over 100,000 positive cases have been confirmed in our country, 95 per cent of which involved successful recoveries, and just under 900 people have lost the battle and died, accounting for a mortality rate of 0.87 per cent — perhaps, one of the lowest in our region and the world.

Thanks to our supportive and humane policy of comprehensive hospital care, we have been able to treat more than 98 per cent of the people infected with

the coronavirus disease. They have been treated free of charge, with all their medicines covered.

Undoubtedly, we are living in a time marked by solidarity. This must be a time of peace, cooperation and human dignity. However, despite the difficult circumstances facing the world, some powerful countries of the North have continued their policy of politicizing the pandemic and have used it as another opportunity to impose their hegemonic interests through economic, commercial and financial aggression. The criminal blockade and economic persecution against Venezuela have frozen more than \$40 billion — the birthright of the Venezuelan people — in banks in the United States and Europe, and we are prevented from accessing accounts to pay for the medicines needed by our people and the raw material to produce medicines, medical equipment and supplies, purchasing fuel and the supplies needed to produce fuel and food, and providing many other basic services. All those sectors are affected by the criminal persecution by the United States against Venezuela. It is time for the great Powers to take action and lift those criminal measures all the more so given their illegality.

Mr. President,

We stress the importance that any coronavirus vaccine or vaccines must be declared as a public good of global benefit by the United Nations and by the World Health Organization. The pandemic will be defeated only through humankind's collective response, based on science. Venezuela has initiated protocols before the World Health Organization to certify the DR-10 molecule, which was recently discovered in our country and has been shown to treat COVID-19. We call on nations to form an alliance aimed at its mass production once it has been approved.

Solidarity is the most powerful weapon against the coronavirus, and it is our responsibility to history and future generations not to waste this opportunity to achieve a better world for all.

Mr. President, many thanks.

**Annex 33****Address by Mr. Rodrigo Roa Duterte, President of the Republic of the Philippines**

Mr. President:

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the fragility of our societies and institutions.

Our immediate responses were necessary, yet have driven our societies apart.

When everyone needs the same limited resources, the compulsion to resort to a “zero-sum” approach is amplified.

Yet, this pandemic demands the opposite response — enhanced cooperation. Our first priority is to strengthen the capacity of health systems.

Without a cure and a vaccine, we can only delay the spread of the disease while we reopen our economies.

Life-saving services and products must be made accessible to the most vulnerable: The most to the least.

The Philippines reiterates the call for universal access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines and technologies.

If any country is excluded by reason of poverty or strategic unimportance, this gross injustice will haunt the world for a long time.

1 It will completely discredit the values upon which the United Nations was founded.

We cannot let this happen. No one is safe unless everyone is safe.

The Philippines strongly supports global medical and scientific initiatives forged at the WHO. These include the ACT-Accelerator, COVAX Facility, and C-TAP.

Together with our brothers in ASEAN and the Non-Aligned Movement, the Philippines supports a global health agenda with adequate resourcing and policy space for the WHO.

The Philippines will do its part. We will contribute in the pooling of global resources and help other countries without preconditions.

Our collective initiatives in the UN and other multilateral frameworks are our best chance to defeat COVID-19.

Mr. President, the challenges posed by the pandemic go beyond health and economy.

In many parts of the world, the pandemic has worsened threats to peace and security.

The lawless weaponize this health crisis. They cripple the state’s ability to respond. They leave COVID-19 to wreak its worst on the population.

This is an inconvenient truth — but one that we must face head on.

The Philippines supports the Secretary General’s report for a global ceasefire. It is most welcome and appreciated.

The Philippines wants to ensure the swift and unimpeded provision of medical care to all Filipinos, especially the most vulnerable.

Yet combatting terrorism is just as urgent now as it was before the pandemic.

In my country, this fight is about protecting life while preserving the democratic values we have restored without violence.

Mr. President, the end to this pandemic is still difficult to see. Yet the broad outlines of the horizon are breaking through.

It is never too early to think of a bounce back strategy.

The Philippines aims for a comprehensive and inclusive recovery with no one left behind. We are using all available socio-economic instruments to protect our hard-won gains in development.

Our recovery plan is built on solid macroeconomic and fiscal fundamentals, with a funding allocation equivalent to 9.1 per cent of GDP.

Let us seize this opportunity to establish a “new normal” using lessons from this crisis.

Lockdowns have forced us to take full advantage of technology and innovation.

It has sped up the adoption of e-commerce, e-learning, videoconferencing, and artificial intelligence.

Inadvertently, this pandemic has opened greener and more resilient pathways to growth and development.

It has also laid bare how interconnected our societies have become.

Now is the time to further strengthen our networks of solidarity and cooperation.

Mr. President, the time is now for greater collective courage and meaningful actions to see the end of this pandemic.

With the path clear, we see how far we can go working with each other and how much we can achieve, when we act — not as separate nations — but as one humanity.

There is simply no other way for our United Nations.

Thank you.

**Annex 34****Address by Mr. Lionel Rouwen Aingimea, President of the Republic of Nauru**

Mr. President,

It is an honour for me to address this special session of the General Assembly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We solemnly acknowledge the recent increase cases around the world and the attendant loss of lives. We stand in solidarity with those countries that continue to suffer from the pandemic. Amidst this global crisis, I am pleased to share with this august body that Nauru still remains free from COVID-19 by the grace of God.

I take this opportunity to share our experiences of why this government has been successful in keeping the virus away from the shores of Nauru, thus ensuring the health and safety of our population; and also share those challenges we continue to face as we grapple with the global pandemic.

If there is a key message from Nauru's experience it is the need for a strong, collective and multilateral response to help pave the way forward to finding solutions towards mitigating the pandemic and its knock-on effects on the economy, the safety and well-being of our people and our environment. We look to a robust United Nations to do this work effectively and we need a United Nations that is fit-for-purpose, responsive and works with the big and the small.

Nauru's historical experience is our key to surviving this pandemic, we heeded the lessons of the past — that an outbreak in one part of the world can produce a catastrophic and devastating effect on our tiny country if we do not act quickly. We are not immune to outbreaks even though we are geographically isolated from other countries.

Nauru had expressed its concerns with WHO's leadership at the outset of the pandemic. We found it slow in declaring the global pandemic, thus delaying needed action. After WHO's declaration, this government declared a State of National Disaster for the Management and Preparedness of COVID-19. And today we still remain under this State of National Disaster.

Mr President

The work of the UN is important to Nauru and we see the relevance of the UN's assistance in complementing our work on the ground. At the same time, we also see the need to improve coordination and engagement with smaller countries like Nauru.

The pandemic has further exposed the weakness of the multi-country office in our region and underlined the disconnect between the ideal of a coordinated regional response and the reality of meeting the needs of smaller and more vulnerable States in our region. We emphasize that in times of crisis access to resources for support in a timely manner is critical to ensure the effectiveness of a response mechanism.

To that end, we look forward to the early establishment of a new multi-country office in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) as a positive step towards a robust coordinated response with targeted support from the UN Development System to the small island developing States (SIDS) in the North Pacific.



Nauru's success in keeping the virus from our shores is our capture and contain policy. This government took proactive steps to enact national laws to support the necessary new policies and measures to deal with the pandemic. We created a national COVID task force 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 having an open and controlled border policy in place.

Our COVID task force is mandated to manage the national quarantine facilities for incoming passengers traveling in our national airline, which has reduced its operations to every two weeks in response to the pandemic and the nationwide travel restrictions in place. We have used the borders of other countries as a bulwark to ensuring we have additional safeguards in place.

The border restrictions in place require passengers coming to Nauru to undertake a mandatory PCR test for COVID-19 72 hours prior to travel and to show proof of a negative test to be able to board.

Incoming passengers are quarantined for five days in a contained and secured location. On the first day of quarantine, the passengers undertake a PCR test done by doctors and will be strictly quarantined in their allocated rooms until the test results are received and hopefully return as negative. On the fifth day, passengers undergo another PCR test and if results are negative they are then released.

Nauru has robust testing equipment in place made available by one of our key partners, the Republic of China (Taiwan). Australia, the U.S, Japan, New Zealand, and India also played a critical role in our efforts to prevent COVID from reaching our shores.

Today we have the capability to carry out COVID tests on our own and in country. This is a key milestone achieved within months of the pandemic.

We have also seen improvement and have benefited from the WHO's advisory role on the nature of the virus. As a SIDS we have little to no means nor the capacity to participate in the research of the virus, but we have remained vigilant to keep up with the WHO's latest information. This has helped shed some understanding on the nature of the virus and has proven useful to the national COVID Taskforce. Science-based policy is critical to ensuring that our capture and contain policy remains effective.

Nauru commends those countries who are working towards a vaccine to combat the virus and we wish you all the success in making it a reality for the global community in the near future. We look to our partners to make this vaccine available to all SIDS.

Mr. President,

This government launched its Desperate Imagination Vision and plans during a pre-COVID world. The vision is one of innovative thinking towards a financially sustainable and resilient Nauru. While we have confidence in our vision and our plans, we cannot access the financial resources to actually implement them.

We call on the need for a global financial system that is responsive to the needs of developing countries like Nauru and to partner with us through this pandemic and beyond to help build a more resilient and sustainable future.

The impact of COVID-19 has further amplified our vulnerabilities and climate change continues to be an existential threat for some and remains the single greatest threat to humanity. We are uncertain of what the future holds for countries like ours, but it is clear that we need a multilateral response to take urgent and bold actions today.

Sustainability of our nations and our people must be front of mind now and always.

In closing, I wish to thank all our donor partners for their valuable support and we look forward to your continued partnership during these difficult times.

*Mwa tubwa kor.* (I thank you).

**Annex 35****Address by Ms. Raquel Peña de Antuña, Vice-President of the Dominican Republic**

[Original: Spanish]

Mr. Volkan Bozkir, President of the General Assembly,

Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General,

His Excellency Mr. Munir Akram, President of ECOSOC.

Distinguished Representative of South Africa, President of the Security Council,

Distinguished Representative of Azerbaijan, Chairperson of the Non-Aligned Movement,

Esteemed Representatives,

Good morning to all of you.

It is an honour for me to address you on behalf of His Excellency President of the Dominican Republic, Mr. Luis Abinader, and in my capacity as constitutional Vice President of my country and Coordinator of the Health Cabinet. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude for being invited to participate in this unprecedented special session of the General Assembly, in the face of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic — an enemy threatening the health of our citizens, the stability of our economies and the development of our peoples.

In the Dominican Republic, we have been working on the mitigation phase of the virus through achieving a decrease in the rate of contagion, positive test results and mortality in addition to encouraging statistics related to hospitalizations. The gains made are closely related to the implementation of the COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan developed by the WHO/PAHO.

In our country, since we began our leadership of the Government, we have paid special attention to pillar 2, “Risk communication and community engagement, and pillar 5, “National laboratories” of the Plan. Through partnerships with community groups and municipalities nationwide, we have carried out nearly 900 days’ worth of education, prevention and diagnostic testing events and have been able to perform approximately 70,000 COVID-19 tests and deliver more than 25,000 treatment and personal protective equipment kits.

Likewise, our National Laboratory has the capacity to process up to 10,000 tests a day, as our Government has provided it with the supplies, equipment and human resources necessary to that end, given the fact that we understand the importance of detection and diagnosis during the mitigation phase.

The economic crisis resulting from the pandemic provides many lessons learned for countries. With regard to trade, it exposes the importance of the interconnectivity of our economies and the importance of understanding the change that our companies have undergone in terms of technological transition, as well as the challenges they are facing in terms of financing and taxes, which is why we have taken incentive measures to support national producers and businesses so as to encourage the local consumption of local products.

It is important to highlight that, while every country's experiences have differed in dealing with a shared problem and that some economies are more resilient than others, integration and cooperation among countries are imperative at this time. That is why we have been in constant communication with other States in our search to collaborate with them. The exchange of technological know-how among nations is useful in seeking scientific progress to improve the living conditions of humankind.

I say to you from the Dominican Republic that we are prioritizing initiatives of this kind, which will promote sustainable development during the health crisis, provide us with tools for our economic recovery, and enable us to achieve our shared goals and build a better world after the pandemic.

Thank you very much, and may God bless you.

## Annex 36

**Address by Mr. Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister, Minister of State, Minister for Communications and Media and Minister for Religious Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg**

[Original: English and French]

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Dear colleagues,

I address you today on behalf of the members<sup>1</sup> of the Group of Friends of Children and the SDGs, a group of Member States committed to advocating for child rights, child well-being and meaningful child participation in UN intergovernmental processes and beyond.

2020 has been a momentous year. As we embark on the Decade of Action, the Group of Friends also celebrates its five-year anniversary. Our Group was formed in 2015 to make sure that the child rights agenda is at the heart of the SDGs. Since then, we have infused this agenda into our work at the United Nations.

2020 has, above all, been marked by the COVID-19 pandemic. If we do not act swiftly and decisively, this crisis risks being compounded by the creation of a lost generation of children. Even before the onset of the pandemic, we were not on track to achieve the SDGs by 2030; programmes to advance child rights — through education, health, nutrition and protection systems — did not reach all children. These realities were both exposed and exacerbated by COVID-19.

Over 91 per cent of children and youth globally — over 1.8 billion young people — were affected by school closures, with 463 million of those unable to access online and remote learning during this time. Over 80 million children will miss out on life-saving vaccinations this year due to disruptions in routine health care and fragile health systems that have been overwhelmed by the COVID-19 response. In addition, children already at risk of violence, exploitation and abuse, find that they are cut off from key support services at the same time as they are suffering the additional physical and mental stress placed on fragile households. This is especially acute for girls.

In April of this year, the Group of Friends partnered with the European Union and the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States to issue a joint statement on protecting the lives and rights of children. This statement received overwhelming support, with 172 alignments from Member States and Permanent Observers.

However, words alone will not protect children's lives, rights and futures. We must take urgent action to ensure that the COVID-19 crisis does not become a child rights crisis. To this end, I would like to highlight three key actions.

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<sup>1</sup> Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Argentina, Armenia, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, India, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Lesotho, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Uganda, United Kingdom, Uruguay, European Union.

First, in our immediate and longer-term COVID-19 response and recovery, we must commit to providing adequate financing to protect and promote child rights and well-being both in domestic budgets and through the mobilization of increased flows of external finance, including international development assistance.

Investing in the services and systems that will keep our children learning, healthy and safe must be an integral feature of the COVID-19 response and recovery worldwide.

Second, it is imperative that we engage with children and youth as stakeholders and solution creators, both at the UN as well as in local and national planning and monitoring processes.

Incorporating children's views and perspectives in the design and delivery of policies, programmes and services adds to their sustainability and, ultimately, the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. It is only by ensuring the meaningful participation of children that proceedings at the United Nations remain inclusive of, and relevant to, future generations, whose lives are most at stake in the achievement of the SDGs.

Third, all of these efforts must be underpinned by our collective recommitment to achieve the SDGs and combat the existential threat posed by climate change and environmental degradation.

Before the onset of this pandemic, the world was already facing the twin crises of climate change and environmental degradation. While COVID-19 may not have been directly caused by climate change, environmental degradation, including habitat and biodiversity loss, is a common underlying risk factor. Humanity has been on a collision course with nature for too long, and the emergence of this pandemic, coupled with our vulnerability to similar risks in the future, will only increase if we do not change course.

Is this the world we want today, for our future and for our children?

Our medical researchers have now developed vaccines that will enable us to ultimately put an end to the COVID-19 pandemic. The effects of this pandemic, however, will likely be felt for years to come by this generation of children, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable among them.

We must come together as an international community to build a more resilient, more equal and more empowered generation of children: a generation that will be best equipped to both face the challenges and harness the opportunities that the future will bring.

Mr. President,

Let me add a few words in my national capacity.

Luxembourg welcomes announcements concerning the development of effective vaccines against the coronavirus. This gives us hope that we will soon be able to overcome the terrible pandemic, which has already cost the lives of 1.5 million human beings.

This ray of hope must encourage us to maintain the momentum of solidarity and multilateral cooperation. In order to succeed, we must be united and work together.

In this spirit, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg has contributed to the UN Central Emergency Response Fund and to the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19. We are supporting our partner countries, particularly in West Africa,

to help them strengthen their health-care systems. We have also stepped up our support for WHO, which remains the best forum for developing global responses to pandemics.

My country has increased its support to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, by 22 per cent. Together with our European Union partners, we are participating in efforts to ensure equitable access to affordable vaccines against the coronavirus throughout the world. In that context, Luxembourg has decided to contribute to the COVAX facility mechanism.

The pandemic, we hope, will soon be contained, but its socioeconomic impact will continue to be felt. Some regions, such as Europe, have been able to take unprecedented measures to relaunch the economy. For other regions, unfortunately, that is not possible. Without taking concerted action related to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we run the risk of seeing the progress of the last few years completely reversed. Luxembourg, for its part, remains committed to that end and continues to devote 1 per cent of its gross national income to official development assistance.

Dear Friends,

The pandemic has also weakened our societies and undermined the human rights situation everywhere. Using COVID-19 as a pretext to reduce civic space and subdue political opposition cannot be tolerated. The pandemic will have suspended many aspects of our daily lives for months, but it cannot suspend the values that are at the heart of the United Nations.

I thank you.



**Annex 37****Address by Mr. Kausea Natano, Prime Minister of Tuvalu**

Mr. President, Excellencies,

I have the honour to address you all on behalf of the 14 Member States of the Pacific Islands Forum with presence at the United Nations.

As Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum and the Blue Pacific Continent which covers one third of our planet's surface, we are determined to overcome old and new challenges that threaten our region. The COVID-19 pandemic presents an immediate and devastating threat to the Pacific and global community. We are deeply concerned about the rapidly worsening health, economic and social effects of COVID-19 across the globe. As a region, we quickly came together to confront this challenge by invoking the Biketawa Declaration 2000 consultative mechanisms, a framework for coordinating responses to regional crises. In our Blue Pacific region, we are now faced with a three pronged crisis: the impact of COVID-19, the devastating effects of climate change and natural disasters, and the fragile economic health of the region as a consequence of SIDS' inherent vulnerabilities. We remain mindful of the interlinkages between these crises and that cross-cutting recovery measures will need to be designed in consideration of and in strong response to the three-pronged crisis.

Our Leaders place the health and well-being of the Pacific peoples and Ocean as our greatest priority. We recognise that COVID-19 has placed significant pressure on national health systems and has the potential to further exacerbate our existing health challenges, especially our ongoing battle against non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Our region has taken bold actions to restrict the spread of the virus by enforcing unprecedented containment measures which have thus far resulted in two-thirds of our Member States remaining COVID-19 free — likely the only countries in the world to do so from the onset of the pandemic. While our measures have saved lives, they severely restricted our links to each other and the world, affecting the timely procurement and distribution of essential medical supplies that would support any consideration of reopening our Pacific borders.

Furthermore, global response measures to COVID-19 have had devastating socio-economic impacts on Pacific economies, affecting key drivers of growth including the private sector, trade, tourism, remittances and fishing license fees to name a few. The Pacific region is now forecast to contract by an unprecedented 6.1 per cent in 2020. The devastating costs of job losses, and their rippling effects, threaten the livelihoods of our people while gender-based disparities, particularly violence against women and girls continue to rise. As the pandemic rages on, existing inequalities are deepening and our vulnerable communities are being further marginalised. These circumstances have drawn our region even closer together to explore innovative, inclusive solutions to addressing COVID-19.

The impacts on our economies differ across the region. Tourism has essentially come to a complete standstill since the border closures in late March. Many Forum island countries are highly dependent on tourism flows for employment, incomes and public and private sector revenues. Countries with high dependency on tourism have lost between 30 per cent to 40 per cent of national incomes with Small to Medium Enterprise tourism businesses disproportionately impacted. However, our regional cooperation has supported the development of operating protocols to mitigate the risk

of COVID-19 transmission during fisheries operations, helping the tuna industry to continue operating safely and making a vital contribution to Pacific island economies.

Employment levels have declined substantially in directly and indirectly affected sectors. Household incomes have also plummeted, while informal sector activity has increased as displaced and newly unemployed families seek other sources of income and livelihood. We acknowledge again the need to address the disproportionate impact on women and girls who, in addition to gender-based violence, are facing increased economic insecurity, additional unpaid care work and reduced access to essential health, education and other social services. We acknowledge the psychological stress that the effects of COVID-19 have imposed on Pacific peoples, both caregivers and dependents, who may have been subjected to stress and abuse. We cannot allow the pandemic to set back our years of progress towards gender equality in our region as we implement the 2012 Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration. Women and girls have been essential to our pandemic response and will be to our recovery.

COVID-19 border closures have also exacerbated ongoing challenges in aviation and shipping. Air services have collapsed, affecting connectivity and the financial viability of our airlines. Economic growth and human development depend on safe, affordable and reliable air connectivity to transport passengers and freight to, from and within the Pacific region.

Pacific countries continue to face structural constraints to accessing affordable development finance and will therefore require continued support from the international community- including from International Financial Institutions- in order to manage the acute fiscal challenges lying ahead.

In the face of waning support for multilateralism among some in the international community, we in the Pacific offer a success story for collective action through our efforts to address COVID-19. The Pacific has a proud history of harnessing regionalism to address common issues and we have continued that legacy by invoking the Biketawa Declaration as one of many mechanisms to address the pandemic. In doing so, and under Tuvalu's leadership, our Foreign Ministers created the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on COVID-19 (Pathway). The Pathway developed five regional protocols to facilitate the transportation of critical medical and humanitarian supplies across the Blue Pacific to assist our people.

Our Foreign and Economic Ministers maintain open dialogue, discussing and sharing approaches to addressing the harsh effects of the pandemic. We recall and reaffirm their statements on COVID-19<sup>2</sup>, and urge the United Nations and development partners to support identified issues and assist with recovery efforts across the Pacific through well-coordinated efforts aligned with national and regional priorities and plans. Now, more than ever, multilateralism is needed and must be the cornerstone of our regional and global efforts to combat COVID-19. We further acknowledge the need to ensure that the region's collective efforts and resources for alleviating the impacts of COVID-19 are targeted towards those most in need and most vulnerable. Pacific countries and development partners must also commit to adhering to regionally-agreed principles of accountability, good leadership, and unity against corruption, the latter as articulated through the Teieniwa Vision.

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2 <https://www.forumsec.org/2020/07/17/pacific-islands-forum-foreign-ministers-joint-statement-on-the-blue-pacific-response-to-covid-19/>; and <https://www.forumsec.org/2020/08/14/2020-forum-economic-ministers-meeting-outcomes-document-and-statement-on-covid-19/3>

As we look towards our recovery, investment in our health infrastructure is of paramount importance to secure our peoples from ongoing and future crises. Our people deserve the highest quality healthcare which is affordable, accessible and available to all. We commend efforts around the globe to develop safe and affordable treatments and vaccines for COVID-19. Our Pacific economies rely heavily on open borders for travel, trade and business. Without treatment and a vaccine our people can trust to mitigate health concerns, devastating disruptions to all our interdependent economies will continue unabated. The Pacific must have timely access to treatment and a vaccine that is safe, affordable and has received stringent regulatory approval, when it is developed. Within that context, we urge global leaders to support the equitable and affordable distribution of safe COVID-19 treatments and vaccines to all peoples of the world.

We make a strong, concerted plea to development partners, including bilateral, multilateral, regional and development agencies, to support the recovery efforts of all Forum Island Countries (FICs), including those that have graduated to higher income classification, by:

- (i) providing debt relief to FICs, in line with the April 2020 G-20 decision;
- (ii) enhancing flexibility in development financing modalities and priority areas of focus, including frontloading existing donor programs and project pipelines, and reprioritising current donor focal areas;
- (iii) International Financial Institutions are requested to reassess grant and loan eligibility and utilise all available instruments, so that FICs can respond effectively to the catastrophic impacts of COVID-19;
- (iv) IMF promptly considering a general allocation of Members' Special Drawing Rights, and enhancing support for Members having difficulties in meeting essential external commitments;
- (v) increasing the use of general budget support (concessional loans and grants) to supplement operating balances of FICs, including exploring innovative development financing mechanisms;
- (vi) continuing and increasing support to strengthen our social protection systems, including addressing gender-based violence while looking at the critical intersections between safety and protection, inclusive economic security and disaster preparedness;
- (vii) capitalization of the Pacific Resilience Facility, when conditions allow, as a funding source that will be regionally available to FICs for building economic resilience and strengthening disaster preparedness; and
- (viii) mobilizing funding support for equitable access to safe, effective and stringently approved COVID-19 testing cartridges and vaccines for FICs.

We remain cognisant that climate change is the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of peoples of the Pacific. Accordingly, we will maintain our collective advocacy, efforts and ambition to combat climate change, despite the deferral of COP 26 to November 2021. We reaffirm the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, that based on the current rate, global warming is likely to reach 1.5° C by as early as 2030, unless urgent action is taken by the international community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and abate the climate change crisis. We demand stronger mitigation action to put us on a 1.5°C

pathway, including investment in low emissions technologies. We recognise 2020 as a milestone year for the Paris Agreement and urge that COVID-19 should not derail the global momentum and ambition required by all parties to deliver on their Paris Agreement commitments. We call on the international community to recommit and urgently accelerate climate change action now, as called for in the Pacific Islands Forum Kainaki II Declaration, and to ensure that all development financing and programming for COVID-19 aligns with the goals of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda.

COVID-19 has highlighted and exacerbated the existing vulnerabilities of our region, which is highly prone to disasters and environmental shocks. This came to the fore when Cyclone Harold wreaked havoc in Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and Tonga in April 2020, just as COVID-19 was spreading. As we prepare for the approaching cyclone season, we call on the international community to support and align recovery efforts within our national COVID-19 response frameworks and the regional Pathway, where appropriate, as effective mechanisms to respond to medium to longer term health, human and economic security needs.

As we reflect on a challenging 2020 thus far, we remain determined in our outlook and encourage a global recovery that is kind to our planet and inclusive and compassionate towards the needs of its peoples. It would be remiss of us as Leaders to not consider the opportunities that will arise from the COVID-19 pandemic, a shared consciousness that inspires our regional efforts to develop a 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

While our Members remain the main drivers of our strategies for recovery, we acknowledge with great appreciation the role and importance of development partners and regional and multilateral entities in supporting us achieve our national and common goals. As we look to the future, we reaffirm our commitment to a Forum Member-led collaboration with all actors to putting an end to COVID-19 and creating a healthy, productive and prosperous future for the people of our Blue Pacific region and great Blue Planet.

I thank you. *Fakafetai*

**Annex 38****Address by Mr. Ismaël Omar Guelleh, President of the Republic of Djibouti and Head of Government**

[Original: French]

Praise be to God. Peace and blessings be upon the Prophet and his family and companions.

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Heads of State and Government,

Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me at the outset, Mr. President, commend you on convening this special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to an in-depth examination of the ways and means to pursue and improve the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is imperative to give new momentum to our Organization's action and draw the relevant conclusions needed to rebuild the world better and leave no one behind.

The pandemic remains an unprecedented challenge confronting the world with an unprecedented global crisis in its health, social and economic aspects. We note with deep concern that COVID-19 continues to have a lasting impact on countries, risks undoing the development gains of recent decades and jeopardizes the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

We are pleased that the implementation of strong global partnership programmes and initiatives by the United Nations has helped countries enjoy the goods and services needed in terms of care, treatment and support in combating the pandemic, as well as overcoming the potentially catastrophic humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences resulting from the virus.

Mr. President,

We appreciate the decisive leadership role played by the World Health Organization in meeting the challenge. We must continue to work to take steps to increase its effectiveness. We also welcome the recent encouraging news from the scientific community on the progress made in therapies and the current clinical trials of promising vaccines. We look forward to the results of the extensive studies currently under way to confirm that they are safe and effective.

We support the COVAX facility initiative — the needed global collaboration, co-led by the World Health Organization, which will ensure global and equitable access to vaccines against the virus — and all initiatives that will contribute to the development of collective tools for combating the virus and their equitable distribution.

We reiterate the initiative of countries calling for waiving certain rules of the World Trade Organization's agreement on intellectual property rights. Their production capacities will undoubtedly contribute to ensuring equitable access to effective vaccines and medicines to counter the virus.

We are pleased that the commitments made within the framework of the ACT Accelerator to accelerate equitable and fair access to tools to fight COVID-19 have been revised upwards to more than \$5 billion. It is our hope that the remaining additional amount will be raised quickly by the end of the month.

Mr. President,

The pandemic will have shown in the Republic of Djibouti, as elsewhere, our ability to come together and formulate a response, despite limited resources.

Accordingly, as soon as the health emergency was declared, the Republic of Djibouti adopted measures based on factual data, the recommendations of the World Health Organization and international health regulations.

At the outset, as its first step in anticipation of multilateral support, the Republic of Djibouti marshalled its own resources.

In addition, the commitment and actions of the entire national community facilitated the establishment of the Solidarity Fund, which was needed for the financing, organization and implementation of the initial response to the pandemic.

The Fund will make free services accessible for all throughout the country without distinction of nationality, including migrant or refugee populations. For the past 16 weeks, no deaths or intensive care hospitalizations have been reported.

Let me, Mr. President, thank the thousands of civilian and military caregivers who in the Republic of Djibouti, as elsewhere in the world, have earned the respect of their community through their dedication and their unwavering commitment.

Mr. President,

In order to prevent future pandemics, it is our humble opinion that we should already be drawing lessons from the current pandemic at the local and global levels.

The fact that services are being provided free of charge in the current circumstances, without any discrimination, is cause for encouragement in reaching our goal of 100 per cent universal health coverage in the Republic of Djibouti. Health insurance which would include funding for health crises is a set goal.

Mr. President,

The pandemic, which, in addition to our nations' health-care systems, is continuously putting to the test our ability to show unity, empathy and resilience, has clearly revealed what the international community is capable of; of who we are; and of our ability to show solidarity for gathering collective momentum for the good of all.

The exceptional nature of the threat posed by the pandemic requires an equally exceptional shared response. The health and economic uncertainty that it represents cannot be resolved by half measures or through hesitation! It demands an effort on the part of all and a global response of exceptional scope.

We must urgently get to work!

I thank you for your kind attention!

**Annex 39****Address by Mr. John Briceño, Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment of Belize**

There are periods in our history that cast long shadows and remain etched in our minds. Already 2020 has become such a point in our history. This COVID-19 Pandemic has engulfed all nations. Lives have been lost, economies upended, and development stalled.

In 2015, the international community adopted a bold 2030 sustainable development agenda, a renewed approach for financing that agenda and a climate agreement on limiting global warming to 1.5° C. For Small Island Developing States (SIDS), we had the wind in our sails, having in 2014 secured international support for the third framework for sustainable development in SIDS. We too were confident in the future.

Then came COVID-19. Immediately, AOSIS joined many of the initiatives and resolutions in the UN on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent calls for unity and solidarity. We did this because we know that a crisis of this magnitude can only be overcome by collective purpose and goodwill.

Today we reiterate our call for solidarity to all nations and people. We again join the Secretary General's call to the G20 nations to waive sanctions imposed on countries, and call upon the international community to adopt urgent and effective measures to eliminate the use of unilateral coercive economic measures.

We also wish to ensure fair, transparent, equitable and timely access to and distribution of essential medical supplies. We call for new diagnostics, drugs and future COVID-19 vaccines, with a view to making them available to all those in need, in particular in developing countries, as stated in resolution 74/274, which was adopted by consensus by the General Assembly,

It is well documented that countries in special situations find themselves in an unimaginable and un-enviable position during this crisis. Despite our best efforts and the exhaustion of all available resources, the COVID-19 global lockdown has forced small island developing States to our knees. Our health systems are struggling. There are no prospects for short term recovery for our economies, leaving our people to face an uncertain future. We need your support and tangible, measurable action but in the present circumstances we need a new compact with SIDS that more effectively addresses our vulnerability and exposure to risk.

As SIDS, it seems that our limited resources are constantly chasing behind building resilient societies and addressing emergency situations. But the times are rare when they can serve both masters. Our development gains are at constant risk of erosion. Before COVID-19, SIDS clamored for better treatment and reiterated time and again that our income levels have disguised our inherent vulnerabilities. COVID-19 didn't place SIDS in a difficult situation, it exposed the situation that exists in SIDS. If anything, the pandemic has made our situation more urgent.

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, our countries amplified our advocacy for access to grants and concessional financing. There was just no way that we could meet the costs of safeguarding our health systems, providing social safety nets for our citizens, and continue to meet our financial obligations. SIDS just didn't have the liquidity needed to meet these competing duties. We did what we could; we



repurposed where possible and borrowed when we could ill afford it. But now, the situation grows more urgent. The existing resources in SIDS are about to dry up and the debtors are waiting by the door.

We therefore continue to call for an overhaul of the international financial system to address our challenges of indebtedness, limited fiscal space and vulnerability to market volatility. To have emerged out of this Pandemic without tangible changes to the international financial system to enable vulnerable countries access to resources they so desperately need would be a complete loss. This is the critical moment to galvanize our commitments to collective action so that the most vulnerable countries can catch our breath as our economies are choked by the socioeconomic impacts of this crisis. In times of multiple crises it would seem that we have already lost the battle. Yet, some continue to belligerently advocate for outdated metrics and archaic systems that not only predates this crisis, but is also detached from the reality on the ground.

SIDS have long been advocates for sustainable development and building resilience. Climate change is an imperative like no other. And, unless, and until, we seriously address it, some of our countries will cease to exist, while others will face overwhelming odds at survival. We can no longer equivocate on a firm collective call for robust urgent action to align COVID recovery, climate action and sustainable development. Moreover, COVID-19 reminds us that human health and planetary health are inextricably linked. This is a human imperative, driven by science, demanded by future generations, and fortified by international law most recently reaffirmed in the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. Rolling over for business as usual, would be a gross dereliction of our collective responsibility to humanity.

There is no question that we would be on the right side of history if we were to operationalize the resounding call for ambitious climate action, through urgent and aggressive mitigation measures, and comprehensive adaptation by enhancing resilience. For SIDS and equally so for all nations, survival is not negotiable. Now, more than ever, all of us have to reaffirm and fully implement our commitments in the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC.

This pandemic met us unprepared, as countries and as a global community of nations. These are undoubtedly trying times, for families, for nations, and for the UN. Of course we hold to the fundamental belief that there is nothing that is as resilient as the human spirit and the desire to overcome adversity. We also know that with bold actions we will overcome.

Thank you.

**Annex 40****Address by Mr. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada**

[Original: English and French]

Hello everyone.

In the past few months, our countries have faced a global pandemic that's threatening the health and safety of our citizens.

This crisis has had an impact on our economies, and has amplified inequalities within and between our countries.

We must learn from it if we want to create a better and fairer world for everyone.

Job one remains defeating COVID-19. And to end this pandemic anywhere, we have to end it everywhere.

We need a united, global effort that ensures that everyone has equitable access to a potential vaccine.

Canada understands this, and it's why we joined many of you in launching and supporting the ACT-Accelerator initiative, as well as providing significant funding for COVAX.

With this assistance, we're making sure that low- and middle-income countries will have access to a vaccine when it's available.

This is a part of Canada's contribution to help others, while we also ensure that we are procuring vaccines for our own citizens.

Of course, our collaboration can't end at distributing a vaccine.

The pandemic has taught us difficult lessons about inequality both at home and between countries.

So far, advanced economies have spent over 20 per cent of their GDP to support their citizens during the pandemic.

Developing economies, though, could only afford 8 per cent in spending, while for the poorest economies, that number was just 2 per cent. These inequities must be addressed.

That's why Canada has been working together with UN Secretary-General Guterres and Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness to find new ways of financing for development.

We stand ready to work with our partners and to help countries deal with unsustainable debt, recover, and rebuild from this global crisis.

We cannot let the most vulnerable be left behind.

The pandemic has widened inequities, and exacerbated humanitarian situations.

Canada is stepping up by increasing our international assistance, and we're making a special effort to respond to humanitarian crises.

We remain committed to working through institutions like the UN Peacebuilding Commission to help prevent conflicts.

I've talked about the need to work together to defeat COVID-19, and how we can create a more just world.

But we can't build a better future without first addressing one of the biggest threats to our collective well-being.

Climate change is jeopardizing our health, our economic future, and our planet.

As we rebuild our economy, we must invest to reduce emissions, build cleaner economies, and create good middle class jobs.

Here in Canada, we are rising to this challenge.

That's why our measures to fight COVID-19 take climate change into consideration. We've also partnered with Argentina to carry out a peer review of fossil fuel subsidies. And last month, we introduced an ambitious new law on net-zero emissions.

These are just a few of the measures we are taking to ensure that we can all live on a healthy planet that is safe for our children.

Right now, we all need to recognise the role we play in building a better global community.

Canada believes that the United Nations can continue to be a driving force in fostering stronger multilateralism within the international community.

Together, we can defeat COVID-19 and tackle climate change.

We can address global inequities and build a better world where no one is left behind. Thank you.

**Annex 41****Address by Mr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe**

Your Excellency, Mr. Volkan Bozkir, President of the 31st Special Session of the General Assembly;

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

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government; Heads of Delegation;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

This Special Session is being convened when the world is going through unprecedented and trying times. However, it is most opportune to strengthen global multilateralism as we step up fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and chart the path to future recovery.

Mr President;

Zimbabwe welcomes the adoption of Resolutions by the General Assembly aimed at addressing various aspects of the pandemic. We particularly commend the Resolution on Comprehensive and Coordinated responses to COVID-19 which strongly urge States to refrain from promulgating and applying unilateral economic, financial or trade measures and sanctions.

In our case, these sanctions are detrimental to the positive strides my Government is making towards our national development aspirations. Furthermore, sanctions hamper the full enjoyment of basic human rights by our people, including the right to health and the right to development.

It is essential that we devote our collective and urgent efforts to intensify international cooperation to contain, mitigate and defeat the pandemic.

The exchange of information, scientific knowledge and best practices remain key. COVID-19 vaccines and remedies, as a global public good must be accessible by all. Our measures to mitigate, respond and recover from the pandemic should equally consider vulnerable groups in our societies.

Your Excellencies;

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided the world the chance to strengthen the global health security mechanisms. The World Health Organization must be supported to address gaps in pandemic preparedness in the context of enhancing multilateralism.

Alive to the requirements of the present “Decade of Action”, there is need to accelerate the alignment of our country plans and investments with the 2030 Agenda in a post COVID -19 world.

I thank you.

**Annex 42****Address by Mr. Giuseppe Conte, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy**

Mr. President of the General Assembly,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Distinguished Delegates,

The year that is about to end, has been the most challenging of our time.

COVID-19 has disrupted our lives and is still provoking unprecedented effects on our social and economic systems.

The health crisis, in its most dramatic moments, has exposed the vulnerabilities of our interconnected world. It has questioned the sustainability of globalization, highlighted economic and social inequalities, given space to the polarization of politics.

We commend the decision to hold this Special Session of the General Assembly. Our voices and collective engagement must be heard now more than ever.

We cannot miss the opportunity to lead the way towards “a new beginning”, based on a more intense international cooperation and on a renewed spirit of solidarity.

Italy strongly believes in multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core.

We have now, all together, the responsibility to improve global governance and make international cooperation truly effective, to serve our people and give hope to all.

Let's go “back to basics”. Let's focus on effective, coordinated strategies on what is truly relevant for the lives of the people.

Let's start by strengthening global health governance and the leading role of the World Health Organization.

Italy was the first western country to be hit by the pandemic. We had to develop a new method of crisis management, putting our citizens' right to health first.

Italy was also among the first to understand the crucial importance of international cooperation, and also to propose a multilateral and multi-dimensional approach to the pandemic.

We promoted the ACT-Accelerator, the most important multilateral platform to ensure universal and equitable access to diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccine. They are common public goods, and they must be available to all.

We must continue to support the Accelerator and urgently close its financial gap.

Italy has also contributed to the Covax Facility: we must support the most vulnerable Countries. We are all connected.

So far, we have achieved notable results in supporting those countries, also by providing relief on the issue of debt. However, we are conscious that there is still a vast amount of efforts to scale up. As G-20 presidency we commit to work with all the involved stakeholders.

The worsening living conditions in many conflict-affected countries are increasing the suffering of the civilian population and fueling social unrest. It is crucial to keep pushing belligerent parties to lay down their arms. Italy renews its support to the UN Secretary-General's Appeal for a Global Ceasefire.

The impact of the pandemic on key value-chains in the agro-food system is another reason of concern. "Food security is a core priority for Italy. We look forward to the 2021 Food Systems Summit as an opportunity to engage each stakeholder on an effective plan to defeat hunger.

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General,

While we continue to combat the virus, and welcome the recent news on vaccine research, we must also look ahead, to our future and to the future of the younger generations.

A sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery must be built on a human rights-based approach.

We must leave no place for discrimination, marginalization and social exclusion. We must strengthen social cohesion, and women must be at the center of our recovery effort.

We must fight poverty and inequality, acting decisively for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Few days ago, Italy has taken from Saudi Arabia the important responsibility of the presidency of G-20. People, planet and prosperity are at the center of our commitment.

We want to promote a holistic approach, based on sustainability, innovation, equity and solidarity. Our goal is to help restore the balance between people and nature and develop a cleaner, more equitable and healthier world.

In the framework of its G-20 presidency, with a broader membership, Italy will host a Global Health Summit together with the European Commission.

In partnership with the United Kingdom, Italy is already working towards a successful COP26, where our youth will be at the core of the debate on the relationship between mankind and environment.

Our approach is clear: we must work together!

This is not the time to let divisions prevail. This is the time to act as one, a global community of intentions, to build back a better future.

Thank you.

**Annex 43****Address by Mr. Chung Sye-Kyun, Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea**

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

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General and Distinguished Delegates,

Our global community has been besieged by a new surge of COVID-19 this winter.

The chance to participate in this Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly finds great meaning at a time when the need for close international cooperation is so urgent.

Over the past year, the rapid spread of the virus across national borders has disrupted everyday life around the world to the point of unprecedented crisis.

At the same time, we have learned the valuable lesson that this global crisis cannot be overcome through the efforts or will of any single country alone.

Peace and prosperity for oneself can only be secured in concert with the safety and welfare of one's neighbours.

Seventy-five years ago, the international community created the UN in order to safeguard the universal values of humanity. Now, once again, we have been called upon to demonstrate the power of solidarity and cooperation in this crucial moment.

The Korean people are working side by side as neighbors to overcome this unprecedented crisis. Each and every citizen has readily assumed the role of an active agent in disease control efforts.

Embracing the three main principles of openness, transparency, and democracy, the Korean government has actively communicated with citizens so as to encourage their voluntary participation.

We have also been swift to introduce such innovative measures as drive-through screening stations, residential treatment centers, and QR code-based entry log systems.

So long as our collective struggle with COVID-19 continues, Korea will do its utmost to share with the rest of the world its experiences in disease control and resulting expertise as the groundwork for global coexistence.

However, the most definite way to break free from the grave threat posed by COVID-19 lies in the development of effective vaccines and treatments.

Now, more than anything else, the whole world must redouble such collaborative efforts to avoid any further loss of even a single life.

To envision a resolution to this crisis that leaves no one behind, we must guarantee equitable access to vaccines and treatments, once available.

Korea is an active participant in the COVAX Facility and has committed to contributing \$10 million towards providing developing countries with vaccines. In addition, Korea has joined global efforts to develop and distribute vaccines through



its support of the International Vaccine Institute (IVI), which is headquartered in the ROK.

We will continue to tirelessly champion international cooperation geared towards the rapid development and equitable distribution of vaccines and treatments as essential public goods, accessible to all in this pandemic era.

The COVID-19 crisis has hit hardest the most vulnerable members of society, including women, children, the elderly, and the disabled. Developing countries have also suffered disproportionately.

To bolster the global COVID-19 response, the Korean government has extended a helping hand to countries in distress, with a focus on providing humanitarian assistance, strengthening public health capacity and healthcare systems, and responding to long-term socio-economic effects.

Such efforts are also crucial in the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to leave no one behind.

Korea will expand official development assistance (ODA) in the public health and medical sector and implement a 'COVID-19 Response ODA Strategy' that adapts the Republic of Korea's model of disease control to the specific needs of respective partner countries. We hope to thereby contribute to both the international community's struggle against the pandemic as well as the achievement of SDGs.<sup>[PSEP]</sup> Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Various nations' responses to the COVID-19 crisis now threaten to turn back humanity's range of perspective to the limited scope of decades past.

The closing of national borders and the contraction of global exchange brought about by disease control measures have exacerbated the impacts of the pandemic. Furthermore, the existing economic system, geared towards quantitative growth, is now widening inequality.

All over the world, voices calling for the transformation of these challenges into opportunities for better recovery are gaining ground.

In a proactive response that views the current crisis as a springboard for progress, the Korean government has presented the 'Korean New Deal,' which is based on the pillars of the Digital, Green, and Regional Balance New Deals.

I hope that Korea's new initiative may serve as an exemplar of post-COVID-19 development strategy. By combining innovative technologies with people-centered values, the hope is to promote an inclusive society of prosperity for all while pursuing the successful transition to an eco-friendly and low-carbon economy.

In particular, Korea will host the 2nd P4G Summit in Seoul next May and share the progress of its Korean New Deal with the international community. As such, Korea hopes to stand at the forefront of efforts to overcome COVID-19 and realize a future of sustainable prosperity.

COVID-19 has also underscored the need for multilateral cooperation at the regional level, which extends beyond the efforts of any single nation alone.

At the UN General Assembly this September, President Moon Jae-in proposed the launch of a 'Northeast Asia Cooperation Initiative for Infectious Disease Control

and Public Health' comprising the nations of the region, including both South and North Korea.

I call on the international community to take heed and provide support for such efforts as these countries come together to safeguard lives and security as they pave the way for peace in Northeast Asia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I look forward to our discussions today serving as a milestone in our quest to surmount this global crisis and foster hope for a bright future.

As a responsible member of the international community, Korea pledges to play its part as the world embarks on a collective journey to build back better.

Thank you.

**Annex 44****Address by Mr. Xavier Espot Zamora, Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra**

[Original: French]

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to begin by thanking His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkir for convening this thirty-first special session of the United Nations General Assembly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, so that we can share our experiences in fighting this epidemic.

We are now experiencing an unprecedented global health crisis, which required a hasty response to the first wave. We had to improvise, draw on our health and economic resources and call on national and international solidarity.

Managing and responding to this health crisis was a major challenge for the Principality of Andorra. Andorran society came together, and the citizens of my country demonstrated empathy, solidarity and responsibility in response to the crisis. However, the second wave of the epidemic is no easier to manage because it has already weakened the economies of countries.

Indeed, we are witnessing an upheaval of our extremely stressed health systems, but also of the global economic, social and humanitarian landscapes. This situation requires a global response.

I would like to laud the various UN initiatives in response to this crisis, including the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan and the Secretary-General's calls for a global ceasefire, humanitarian action and combating violence against women and domestic violence. We also welcome the establishment of the United Nations COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund.

We also fully support the essential role of the World Health Organization, which we would like to see strengthened. Indeed, only a coordinated response will enable us to meet the challenges posed by this pandemic.

To that end, the results of scientific research, advances in prevention protocols, access to medicines, protective materials and, of course, vaccines must be universal. We cannot, under any circumstances, allow only a part of the planet to have access to quality solutions. This is a global challenge we must all face with solidarity and equality. This is a concern at both the international and national levels. We must ensure that within our countries, all segments of the population have access to the best health care, the best prevention protocols and, when the time comes, the vaccine. More than ever, we must leave no one behind, but rather strengthen social cohesion and equality within our States and among our States.

Mr. President,

The Government of Andorra based its response strategy to the pandemic on prevention by quickly establishing prevention protocols and, above all, by mass testing of its population. This strategy was put in place in April and started with

serological IgG and IgM antibody tests, then continued during the summer with the mass TMA testing and screening of individuals in various key sectors, as well as of all students and school staff before the start of the school year. Because of our small population, we were able to test more than 90 per cent of children and adults in schools. In addition, the strict monitoring of individuals who tested positive and all their contacts was put in place. Of course, the small size of our population allows for this extremely strict and efficient system of monitoring, but it is also a major human and economic undertaking for the country.

Our economy depends largely on tourism, a sector that has been hit hard by this epidemic. The economy and the entrepreneurial fabric of Andorra have been particularly affected. For the first time, we have had to extend direct aid to businesses, to cover part of the salaries of workers whose hours have been reduced or whose places of employment closed down because of COVID-19, or set up interest-free loans. Subsidies were created or increased. The Government has therefore revised its road map for the current legislature to preserve social cohesion and prevent the impoverishment of a part of society.

The Government is also working to ensure that conditions during the winter season in Andorra are safe and healthy. Thousands of jobs depend on it and, fortunately, the size of the country will allow tourism to take place in the winter season in safe and adequate sanitary conditions.

In addition, Andorra has also focused its efforts on ensuring that education can continue, either face-to-face, where possible, or via remote learning. Maintaining quality education is a challenge to which the Government is committed. It also provides stability for children who are already under immense psychological stress due to public health restrictions. I believe it is necessary to underline the importance of ensuring that education and schooling can continue, including for children with disabilities and children in more vulnerable environments. Education is, undoubtedly, one of the sectors that the Solidarity Fund should support.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This global crisis is far from over. I would like to reiterate my call for international solidarity. I welcome the initiatives put in place to alleviate the debt of developing countries. The responses to this crisis must be global and sustainable. A more egalitarian and humane model must be urgently built, where respect for the environment will be a key factor. Multilateral cooperation is essential if we are to overcome this crisis and respond to its health, human and economic consequences. It is together that we will succeed.

Thank you for your attention.

**Annex 45****Address by Mr. Andrej Plenković, Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia**

Mr. President,

All protocols observed.

This Special Session of the General Assembly takes place at the pivotal moment in our fight against COVID-19 pandemics.

I am addressing you from home since I was tested positive for COVID-19 on Monday.

The challenge we all face demonstrate the importance of global solidarity and multilateralism.

For that reason, we believe it is crucial to preserve the central role of the World Health Organization as the leading authority and the guardian of global public health.

Croatia firmly believes in the need for global joint approach in combating the pandemic and we were pleased to take an active role as co-coordinators of the resolution “Comprehensive and coordinated response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.”

We also contributed in total 1 million euros to the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund and to the World Health Organization.

Most of the world is still struggling with the pandemic and we are grateful to the medical doctors, nurses and other hospital service for their dedicated work.

Croatia is no exception.

Current rate of infections creates additional pressure on health systems in most of Europe and the northern hemisphere entering winter.

On the positive side, having several vaccines ready to be approved and used gives us reason for optimism.

Research teams and scientists should be highly commended for their tireless work and creativity.

Our next challenge will be how to ensure equitable and timely access to the vaccine globally.

Another priority is to ensure a coordinated and clear communication on the efficacy and safety of the vaccines, thus preventing the spread of false information.

Mr. President,

Our response to this disease should include both helping the people, protecting their health and economic well-being, while at the same time protecting the planet.

Therefor we support the One Health Approach, as the „new standard“ — for overcoming this and preventing future pandemics.

In our national and collective endeavours to “build back better”, the paradigm for action continues to be the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement.

I would like to end my remarks by mentioning Croatian professor Andrija Štampar, one of the founders of the World Health Organization.

He introduced the concept that “national health and work on its advancement should be addressed to leaving no one behind“.

Building on his work, Croatia has established a long tradition of the universal health coverage and public health.

Based on that, we have paid special attention not only to the measures to save lives but to help economic recovery.

To inform our citizens, we set up a dedicated webpage with all relevant information and links.

We also launched a digital platform using artificial intelligence to advise people on the symptoms as well as the “Stop COVID-19” application, fully compliant with the EU regulation related to the privacy.

We will continue fighting COVID-19 together.

Thank you.

**Annex 46****Address by Mr. K. P. Sharma Oli, Prime Minister of Nepal**

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Excellences and Distinguished Representatives,

I thank you, Mr. President, for convening a special session on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which is unprecedented in scope and speed. The pandemic has affected everyone, everywhere. The tragedy is unspeakable, with over 1.3 million lives lost, and almost all societies' economies and nations have severely suffered its consequences. The present pandemic is not just a health emergency. It is a wake-up call to address the widening inequality among and within nations and humankind's failure to live in harmony with nature. Yes, we all are in the same fire storm. Some of us may think that we are well protected, but it is not so. All of us are in danger. The pandemic has taught us a precious lesson. This world is a small boat. We all are its passengers. Whether we like it or not, we share the same fate.

Mr. President,

Like any other country, Nepal was not prepared for a crisis of this scale. However, we have deployed all the political, economic, human and technological resources at our disposal to contain the virus. We are guided primarily by the three objectives of strengthening the health-care system, protecting people's lives and building towards a sustainable and resilient recovery.

Testing and treatment services are provided free of charge to those people in need. The provision of the necessary infrastructure, human and financial resources and medical equipment to the health systems at the federal, provincial and local levels have been ensured. Starting from virtually nothing, we have grown the number of PCR testing facilities to 68 laboratories across the country. More than 70 hospitals have been designated as COVID-19 hospitals. We are moving forward with the target of building hospitals with basic health-care facilities in all 753 localities. We developed a total 48 COVID-19-related protocols and guidelines. Raising public awareness about health protocols, safety and sanitation through social organizations, individuals, mass media, social media and daily briefings by the Health Ministry have been particularly useful.

Mr. President,

Nepal commends the United Nations and in particular the WHO for their global coordination and leadership during the crisis. While we confront the challenges, our robust to global response is required to fend off the crisis. First and foremost, we must give a breath of life to multilateralism.

We need a revitalized multilateralism that is capable of tackling the pressing challenges of our time, from poverty, hunger and rising inequality to climate crisis and the global pandemic. To that end, we must choose a path of cooperation and solidarity, not solitary acts.

Secondly, the pandemic should not be used as a pretext for backtracking in terms of international solidarity and commitments. Countries in special situations stand in need of greater support to stabilize their economies, safeguard fiscal space and tackle debt crises.



Thirdly, while we are encouraged by the good news about vaccines, uncertainty looms large whether they will be available for all. We commend the COVAX facility initiative to ensure access to vaccines to for both rich and poor. The world will not be safe from the pandemic unless universal vaccination is ensured. When the entirety of humankind is in crisis, we strongly believe that lifesaving vaccines cannot be the means of maximizing profit. They must be a truly global public good — affordable and accessible for all countries and people.

Finally, as we look to recover and rebuild better, our efforts must be aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Agreement and the Paris Agreement. We must invest in health-care and social protection systems, invest in infrastructure and create jobs. National endeavours, in this regard, must be complemented by international support measures. The present crisis demands genuine commitment to save lives and global unity to protect societies. Human civilizations have always endured devastating challenges and recovered better. We must not falter. We must act now, as one community, one civilization and one world. We must be reborn better than ever, leaving no one behind.

Thank you.

**Annex 47****Address by Ms. Katrin Jakobsdottir, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iceland**

Mr. President, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me start by extending my gratitude to the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary General for calling us together for these important discussions about the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we deal with the dire health and economic consequences of COVID-19 around the world, I want to draw your attention to another horrific pandemic. A pandemic that has been with us since the beginning of time and, as a consequence of COVID-19, has been escalating these past months; It is the pandemic of gender-based violence and the backlash on gender equality.

It is our duty here today to face this stark reality and the alarming consequences for women and girls around the world. We see domestic violence on the rise worldwide. We've seen an increase in poverty amongst women, the human rights of women and girls are under threat, their sexual and reproductive health and rights are under threat and women are leaving the workplace or setting their careers aside to take on increased domestic burdens.

All of this illustrates that gender equality is being seriously undermined and therefore we must do everything in our power to resist and fight back. We can start by putting in place policies and laws to both safeguard and advance gender equality. We must keep gender equality at the forefront in all our decision makings when we build back better after COVID-19. There is always time for gender equality. In every crisis we must include the notion of equality, now, as much as ever.

The COVID-19 pandemic is certainly not the last pandemic we will face. When we begin the task of rebuilding and reimagining our societies, we must think about how we want to structure our societies towards equality making full use of the Agenda 2030 as the blueprint for progress. In the current pandemic, we have seen the value of good and accessible health care for every single person, and the importance of a robust and comprehensive social system.

When systems and countries go into crisis mode, every important sector, whether it be education, health-care or social services, comes under enormous strain. Crises both test and reveal the strength of our foundations. The services we need to keep our societies safe, healthy and running, must be open and available to every single person, not just to a few privileged groups. The experience of these past months has clearly demonstrated that our nations' safety and health, rests on the health of every individual. There-fore it is absolutely essential to ensure fair and equitable access for all countries to COVID-19 vaccines and potential medical treatments. Rest assured Iceland is fully committed to supporting the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The climate crisis does not disappear just because so much of our immediate focus is on the current pandemic. As we take on the challenge of rebuilding the world after COVID-19, let us turn this into an opportunity for building back better through green recovery, innovation and ambition.

Now is the time to lead by an example towards a cleaner, more sustainable and socially just future. In fact, I believe it is not only our duty to our Paris commitments, but more importantly, to our young people and future generations.

When we make our economic recovery plans after this crisis, we need to prioritize green and family-friendly policies and not only look at economic growth figures. As we recover, we have a huge opportunity to restructure our economies and to do so in an environmentally healthy and sustainable way.

Environmental and social equality issues are deeply intertwined. Getting things right in these two areas is the biggest economic issue we face. When we take good care of our planet and our resources and create conditions for prosperity for all, where all people have the opportunity to flourish and maximize their contributions both socially and economically, we as nations and economies will benefit as a whole.

Thank you and I wish us all insightful talks here today.

**Annex 48****Address by Ms. Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister and Minister for National Security and Intelligence, Child Poverty Reduction and Ministerial Services of New Zealand**

*E nga mana nui o nga whenua o te ao/Tēnā koutou katoa.*

I thank you, Mr. President, for bringing us together for the special session on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic this year, domestic experiences and collective actions. As we meet here today, I acknowledge the ongoing struggle against the virus around the world and send my deepest sympathies to all those who have lost loved ones.

At the outset, I would like to share three key aspects of New Zealand's domestic response to the pandemic. In doing so, I absolutely recognize that our situation as a developed island nation has enabled us to successfully implement such a response — one that would not necessarily be possible elsewhere. Our focus has been particularly on prevention.

First, New Zealand has implemented an elimination strategy to the pandemic. The strategy is not a point-in-time measure, but rather a sustained approach to keep COVID-19 out and stamp it out using extensive testing, contact tracing and quarantine measures.

Secondly, the management of the New Zealand border has been a key line of defence against COVID-19. Many of our Pacific neighbours have also been successful in preventing and controlling the virus through border sealings, and we are mindful that a strong New Zealand border provides an additional layer of protection for the Pacific, given the transit route that New Zealand offers.

Thirdly, New Zealand has taken an all-of-Government approach. While our domestic response is helping, it would not have worked without the involvement of all Government agencies. Keeping economies going and people safe requires all of Government to work together.

While New Zealand has been able to control the virus domestically, we are acutely aware that no one is safe until we all are. The economic impacts of the virus and our interconnected world also respect no borders. COVID-19 serves to highlight our absolute interdependence. The pandemic has demonstrated the critical role of international organizations like the World Health Organization. New Zealand has utilized World Health Organization technical advice and products in its own response to COVID-19. We have also witnessed the excellent support provided to our Pacific neighbours.

In order to prevent future global health emergencies, we must support the central role of international institutions like the World Health Organization. Through its support of the COVAX facility, New Zealand has demonstrated its commitment to ensuring that vulnerable communities everywhere, including in the Pacific, receive the vaccines that they need. We encourage other countries to also support multilateral vaccination and ensure the unimpeded, fair and equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines worldwide. While a vaccine will make us safer, it will take years to recover from the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic. Effective international cooperation matters more than ever. In order to recover and build back better, we must take collective and concrete global action. Where we live in the Pacific, the economic

impacts of the virus are particularly damaging. The closure of international borders and the global economic downturn have amplified existing economic constraints. Many Pacific islands are now in economic crisis. The international community can help small island developing States begin to recover by ensuring that appropriate concessional finances available.

In order to build back better from COVID-19, we must also rethink how our societies can simultaneously focus on the well-being of our people and environment. The threat of climate change is more real in the Pacific than any other region in the world, with sea-level rise posing an extreme threat. The full implementation of the Paris Agreement is absolutely critical, and we must give practical and financial effect to our commitments. The crisis provides an opportunity to achieve a reset towards a greener global economy. New Zealand has committed to cooperate internationally to enhance trade in environmentally friendly goods and services and increase investment in green growth and development. We are also calling for a stop to all environmentally harmful subsidies, including fossil fuel subsidies. These are some of the best investments we can make for the future generations.

Finally, building back better and stronger also gives us the opportunity to rethink how our economies can work for the many, not just the few. COVID-19 has had a disproportionate effect on the world's most vulnerable groups, women, children, particularly girls, indigenous people, minorities and people with disabilities. In New Zealand, we will continue to focus on protecting the most vulnerable in society. In the context of COVID-19, that means protecting older people and those with underlying conditions. It also means actively focusing on mitigating any risk that the situation will further exacerbate the inequalities experienced by Māori and Pacific peoples. As partners with shared values, we must ensure that the response and the recovery respect and promote the human rights and needs of all. Effective international cooperation matters more than ever both to respond to COVID-19 and build a better future.

*No reira, tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.*

**Annex 49****Address by General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand**

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

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Distinguished guests,

I am very honoured to deliver a statement at the United Nations General Assembly for the second time this year and welcome the initiative of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to convene the Special Session so that all Member States and relevant stakeholders can share their experiences and seek further cooperation in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

The emergence of global pandemics over the past 20 years has brought us to the realization that the international community needs to join hands in promoting strong health security systems so as to prepare for future emergency situations. Central to this realization is that the public should be protected under a Universal Health Coverage scheme which will help countries mitigate negative social impacts and economic loss and allow the country and people to recover quickly from a crisis.

Mr. President,

This past November, I welcomed the opportunity to share Thailand's experience in tackling COVID-19 at the closing of the resumed session of the 73rd World Health Assembly. I underlined that the main factors contributing to Thailand's achievement in curbing COVID-19 are the strength of our health system and our dedicated health workers, as well as the close cooperation from all sectors of our society. Today, allow me to expand on my views with the following reflections:

First, it remains critical to promote basic preventive measures against COVID-19 as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), which includes mask-wearing, frequent hand-washing and maintaining physical distance, together with supporting and encouraging the medical and public health personnel, in particular the village health volunteers, who are a vital force in combating this pandemic.

Second, may I underline the importance of cooperation on research and development of vaccines and treatments for COVID-19 and ensuring that these vaccines and medicines are "global public goods" that are equally accessible to all, so that the global community can return safely to their daily lives in a new normal. In this connection, the Royal Thai Government is pleased to do its part and is making a financial contribution to the World Health Organization to support the research, development and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines to ensure their reach to all countries.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize the application of technology and innovation in managing information and analysing the local COVID-19 situation, as well as in servicing patients in remote areas through telemedicine. Thailand has launched the New Normal Healthcare System Project in some provinces and will expand this project for nation-wide implementation within 2021 in order to strengthen further our public health system and to better respond to future crises.

Mr. President,

The COVID-19 pandemic represents a great challenge to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Thailand stands ready to support the efforts of the United Nations in driving forward “the Decade of Action” and ensuring a multi-sectoral approach to achieving all 17 targets for sustainable development by 2030, including the health-related targets, while leaving no one behind.

On this occasion, I wish to underline that a commitment to the multilateral system and the solidarity of the international community are the keys to overcoming this crisis in a sustainable manner. As for Thailand and ASEAN member countries, we have put in place robust mechanisms to fight the COVID-19 pandemic through various initiatives such as the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund, the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework, and the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases. These initiatives will promote health security, support sustainable recovery and enhance the region’s resilience and immunity for the long-term.

Finally, on behalf of the Royal Thai Government and the people of the Kingdom of Thailand, I wish to send a message of encouragement to countries that are facing new waves of the pandemic, and extend my best wish to all of you to stay healthy. I firmly believe that together, we will overcome this current crisis in a resolute and sustainable manner, as we have through other crises before this.

Thank you, and a good afternoon to you all.



**Annex 50****Address by Mr. Imran Khan, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan**

President of the General Assembly, Mr. Volkan Bozkir,

Distinguished Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank His Excellency President Aliyev of Azerbaijan, Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement for proposing this special session.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is the most serious global crisis since the Second World War. The virus has infected nearly 65 million people and killed sadly close to 1.5 million. Hopefully, whenever the vaccine is available, it must be offered to everyone. The pandemic has caused immense human suffering and the deepest global economic contraction since the Great Depression of the 1930s. The poorest countries and the poor in all the countries are suffering the most. Nearly 100 million people in developing countries will fall back into extreme poverty. Rich countries have injected \$13 trillion as fiscal stimulus to revive their economies. On the other hand, developing countries just do not have the resources to afford such a massive economic stimulus. They are struggling to find even a fraction of the \$2 to \$3 trillion that they require to recover from the pandemic.

In Pakistan, we had a successful policy of smart lockdowns. Our efforts were aimed at ensuring not only saving people from the virus, but also preventing them from dying from hunger. We provided a relief package of around \$8 billion, which was almost 3 per cent of our GDP to support the poor and keep the economy afloat at the same time. As I said, so far, our strategy has worked, but now we are confronted with a far more aggressive second wave of the virus. We are currently facing the challenge of maintaining and reviving our economic growth, as well as dealing with the increasing number of cases of patients occupying our hospital beds. The Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) advised countries to spend as much as required to stimulate growth, but, like many developing countries, Pakistan is committed under its IMF programme to reduce the budget deficit. I am sure that other developing countries in our position are facing a similar dilemma. How do you stimulate the economy, yet, at the same time, reduce your budget deficit? The only way we can have the fiscal space to maintain and revive growth is through access to additional liquidity. Last April, I called for a global initiative on debt relief. We are grateful for the debt suspension announced by the G-20 in May and its subsequent extension through June 2021.

We also appreciate the rapid lending facilities activated by the IMF and World Bank. Yet the amounts generated so far are not even close to the needs of the developing countries to recover from the impact of the pandemic. As far as I know, five developing countries have already defaulted on their debt, and it seems that others are about to follow. Several nations faced with large debt repayments and concurrent lost revenues are on the brink of economic collapse. There are disturbing reports from the World Food Programme of possible famines in some parts of the world. The financing for development discussions initiated by the Secretary-General and the Prime Ministers of Canada and Jamaica have identified hundreds of options

to financially support the developing countries. We hope that the process culminates in some concrete action soon. There is a need to reform the international financial architecture, build an inclusive and equitable debt management mechanism, construct a democratic SDG-focused trading system and install a fair international tax regime.

If economic collapse is to be averted in a number of developing countries owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the international community must identify and implement some key priority actions.

I would like to propose a 10-point agenda for urgent action: first, debt suspension until the end of the pandemic for low-income and the most stressed countries; second, the cancellation of debt of the least-developed countries; third, restructuring the public-sector debt of other developing countries under an agreed, inclusive and multilateral framework; fourth, the general allocation of special drawing rights of \$500 billion; fifth, expanded concessional financing to low-income countries through multilateral development banks; sixth, the creation of a new liquidity and sustainability facility, which should provide short-term loans at low cost; seventh, the fulfilment of the .7 per cent official development commitments; eighth, mobilizing the required \$1.5 trillion annual investment in sustainable infrastructure; ninth, the achievement of the agreed target of mobilizing \$100 billion a year for climate action in developing countries; and, lastly, immediate action to stop the massive illicit financial outflows from developing countries to rich countries and offshore tax havens. At the same time, there should be an immediate return of the assets stolen by corrupt politicians and criminals back to those countries. This one action, I assure you, Mr. President, would benefit the poor countries more than all other measures put together.

Excellencies,

Everyone agrees that there has to be a collective response to recover from the COVID-19 crisis and, at the same time, achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and implement the targets set by the Paris Agreement.

Excellencies,

The Charter of the United Nations concept of collective security embraces collective economic security. Without economic security, conflicts and disputes will persist and proliferate across the world. Guided by the principles of the Charter, we must all work collectively for an inclusive, stable and sustainable economic social and political order.

I thank you.

**Annex 51****Address by Ms. Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway**

Secretary-General Guterres,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am here today with two messages. First, we must handle the ongoing crisis and stop the pandemic as soon as we can. We are facing perhaps the darkest hours of the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of deaths has surpassed 1.3 million. Millions of children have to stay away from their schools. There are new lockdowns. The global economy is faced with the loss of more than \$500 billion a month. Unemployment, human suffering, despairing health workers and the collapse of the social systems are happening everywhere. But there are rays of light.

News of efficient vaccines gives us hope. The commitment of countries, civil society and industry to find effective tools is encouraging. However, to actually end the pandemic for all, this is the time to increase our efforts. We need more vaccines. We need more diagnostics and therapeutics and we need to secure fair and global access to efficient distribution on the ground.

To reach the most vulnerable groups, the health connector should also be strengthened. We need increased support for universal health care to deliver efficient health services — including COVID-19 tools, such as vaccines.

The ACT Accelerator was set up to do just that. Norway is proud to co-chair the ACT Accelerator, and we are deeply committed to doing our share. We plan to allocate another \$223 million in 2020, totaling our contribution for global efforts so far to more than \$500 million. More countries need to come forward to contribute their share.

Today's event is important for two reasons. We must reach a shared understanding of the realities we are facing. And we must recognize the possibility of ending the pandemic if we work together. Our commitment to international cooperation has been our strength and strategy in fighting the pandemic. There are no other alternatives but to continue this cooperation.

My second message is that we must prevent future disasters. No matter how soon we manage to end COVID-19, we need to equip ourselves with better tools to prevent and efficiently respond to future pandemics and global disasters. Leaders and stakeholders must develop a master plan together, where responsibilities and future work is clearly outlined and recognized. This must be based on existing and enhanced global commitments to prevent such disasters. In other words, we must strengthen our joint defence.

I support the Secretary-General and the call for a global summit to address this. We must invest in the future by making all societies more robust. We must build back better in order to secure truly sustainable development, including happier and healthier lives for all.

Thank you.

**Annex 52****Address by Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies.

*Assalamu Alaikum* and a very good afternoon.

I thank the current Non-Aligned Movement-NAM Chair Azerbaijan and the UN Secretary General for convening this Special Session in response to COVID-19 pandemic. The session bears paramount importance as the world is still going through a difficult time in facing the deadly virus and dealing with its impacts.

Mr. President,

The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated the health systems and economies across the world. Globally, over 1.4 million people have already died and hundreds more are dying every day. The pandemic has made many people poorer while many others are sliding back to poverty. Malnutrition, discrimination and increasing inequalities are gripping the nations, and education system got disrupted. It caused sharp decline in trade, commerce and tourism impacting people's livelihoods. However, the pandemic offers us an opportunity for a united response to safeguard people's lives and their livelihoods, and learn from the crisis to build back better. Unfortunately, our fight against COVID-19 has not yet ended. Many countries are facing a second or third wave.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh is also badly affected by the pandemic. It has heavily impacted our economy, our lives and livelihoods, our migrant communities and jeopardized our hard-earned development gains. However, we intervened early and effectively, and took bold actions to protect our economy and people from the fallout of the pandemic. My government has announced stimulus packages worth \$14.14 billion, which is equivalent to 4.3 per cent of our GDP, to minimize the impacts on our business, employment, and productivity. We have expanded social safety net coverage providing assistance to more than 25 million people since detection of the virus in early March. Extensive measures are put in place to contain the 2nd wave of the pandemic.

Mr. President,

Yet, there is a need for urgent attention and further collaboration in some priority areas.

Firstly, we need to ensure universal, equitable, timely and affordable access to quality vaccines. The 2030 Development agenda recognized the fundamental role of Universal Health Coverage for achieving the SDGs guided by the principle of equity. In the same spirit, when it comes to the access to vaccines, no one should be left behind. This would help us defeat the pandemic, save lives and accelerate our economic recovery.

Secondly, the world must treat the COVID-19 vaccine as a global public good. The WHO initiative of ACT and COVAX facility can play a vital role in this regard. Developed countries should commit to technology transfer for the local manufacturing

of vaccines in developing countries using IP rights waiver under TRIPS Agreement. Bangladesh has the capacity and is ready to produce vaccines if opportunity given.

Thirdly, the challenges faced by the developing countries in the context of COVID-19, including financial assistance, should be specifically recognized. The UN, IFIs, civil society alongside the national governments must do their share and actively cooperate with each other to combat COVID-19.

Mr. President,

COVID-19 can never be brought under control in one place unless it is brought under control everywhere. Let us also take a renewed pledge to accomplish the 2030 Agenda for a sustainable world where our next generations stay resilient to future pandemics. I hope that this Session will serve to galvanize collective actions, global solidarity and multilateral cooperation to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. Bangladesh stands ready to work with all in this global effort.

I thank you all.

**Annex 53****Address by Mr. Allen Michael Chastanet, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Economic Growth, Job Creation, External Affairs and the Public Service of Saint Lucia**

Mr. President,  
Distinguished Heads of State and Government,  
Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Saint Lucia welcomes the opportunity to address this special session of the United Nations General Assembly on the coronavirus pandemic that continues its unrelenting swath across nearly all our countries causing death, sickness and hardship on a scale none of us have ever witnessed. The widespread belief at the beginning of the year when the pandemic broke out that it would have been over within months, has been proven false.

Mr. President, when I addressed this chamber in September, on the occasion of our historic 75th anniversary, I made the point, as did many other colleagues, that the crisis conferred on us by COVID-19 required decisive and urgent action, especially to assist Small Island Developing States like Saint Lucia that always seem to suffer most from every new negative phenomenon that arises.

At this moment, Mr. President, small states are contending not just with the effects of the pandemic, but also with the lingering and continuously devastating effects of climate change. We need the international community and its institutions to keep pace with, and adapt to, the practical reality faced by SIDS. We are vulnerable countries pursuing our paths of development in a very hostile world. We make small gains all the time, but these are quickly erased when misfortune strikes. When COVID-19 emerged, Saint Lucia was on a comeback trail. In the previous four years, we had brought back economic growth, reduced unemployment and achieved a 59 percent debt to GDP ratio.

Suddenly, through no fault of ours, all these gains have vanished. To compound matters, we now have to find monies to finance the fight against COVID which will have dire economic and social consequences for all countries. For the year 2020, we have had lower revenues, increased expenditures and significant debt redemptions have significantly affected our cash flows.

We remain thankful to the friendly Governments who have come to our aid and we are especially thankful to the Government and People of Taiwan, Cuba, France and the EU, for stepping up in our time of need. As small islands, we continue to boast of our resilience, because it is one of the attributes that gives us the courage to fight on.

Mr. President, we also continue to identify our various vulnerabilities and spell out our needs but it continues to be a conversation that is one-sided. Only a few weeks ago at the annual World Bank/International Monetary Fund gathering in Washington, we again made it clear that: Due to these vulnerabilities and the ensuing catastrophic debt Caribbean countries are now in need of concessional financing and assistance that does not depend on maintaining or achieving the targeted Debt to GDP ratio of 60 per cent.

To attain the desired level of transformation needed to drastically catapult our economies to the next level, it is important that small States be given the opportunity to pursue sound development policy, while also giving due consideration to the inherent vulnerability to climate change that characterizes Caribbean States. It is clear that while climate change is impacting countries at varying degrees, it is an existential threat to the lives and livelihood of many of our citizens. It is on that basis that special considerations should be given to Small Island Developing States within the Development Finance framework.

Also, given the importance of international finance and banking services to economic growth and investment, there needs to be a review of the existing requirements for correspondent banking relationships. Global leaders need to take a proactive approach in addressing the impact of reduced access to international banking and financial services and markets caused by de-risking.

Our countries need to be viewed as partners, as we are not expecting to be the beneficiaries of opportunities which we are not entitled to. As such, we made a strong appeal to the International Financial Institutions to facilitate engagement at the highest levels as we all try to mitigate the current crisis.

Mr. President, it is not my intention today to bore you with the same old song that we all have heard so often in the past. Saint Lucia and the SIDS have consistently advanced our case for a change in the way we are perceived and treated by the international community and its institutions.

Let me take the opportunity to remind everyone, that in order for the world to reach its full potential, the weakest link must be strengthened.

If you won't do it for us, then do it for yourselves.

I look forward to our discussions. Thank you.



**Annex 54****Address by Mr. Alexander de Croo, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium**

[Original: English and French]

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

These are testing and troubled times.

The COVID pandemic has exposed our fundamental vulnerabilities.

Our vulnerability as individuals.

Suddenly, we are limited in contacts with friends and family.

But also our vulnerability as a global community.

The greatest danger now is that we would allow this pandemic to divide us.

That we would allow this health crisis to be turned into a geopolitical issue; a fight between nations, a race to the bottom.

While the only thing that will save us is international cooperation.

There will be light at the end of the tunnel if we work together.

Because despite all the crises in recent decades, despite the rise of nationalism, we must recognize multilateralism stood firm.

It is thanks to organizations such as the United Nations, the WHO, but also the European Union that real progress is made and real solutions are created.

For example, by setting up a common vaccine strategy.

It is thanks to joint investments and joint procurement schemes that we will soon have access to various vaccines. Vaccines that are safe and effective. And with a little bit of luck, the first health care workers will be vaccinated before the end of the year.

This is not the achievement of one country, one man, one government or one company. This is the achievement of international cooperation. Common efforts, transcending borders and national markets.

That is why Belgium wants free and fair access to these vaccines for all countries.

This pandemic is more than a health crisis.

COVID also has a huge socioeconomic impact.

It exacerbates existing problems such as income inequality.

And it puts fundamental rights under pressure, especially those that were already in a bad way before the crisis.

In this area too, joint international actions are needed.

The COVID crisis must become the opportunity to forge a new economy.

Not just a more sustainable and digital economy than the old one.

An economy that would also be fairer.

More inclusive.

A society that would give young girls and women better access to health care, the job market, investment credits, and entrepreneurship.

Because economic independence is also a guarantee for stronger citizens and stronger voices in political debate. So let us not only overcome this pandemic together, but let's use it to strengthen our democracies and to create a more inclusive civic space.

A civic space in which there is room for everyone, regardless of skin color, gender, sexual orientation or religion.

Excellencies,

This special session offers us the opportunity to make a new start.

Despite cautious optimism about the vaccines, global challenges remain immense.

But we have to remember one thing: we're all in this together.

And together, we can and we will overcome every challenge on our way.

Belgium stands ready to do its part.

Thank you.

**Annex 55****Address by Mr. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister, Minister for Defense, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands, and Territorial Integrity of the Republic of Mauritius**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I salute the opportunity provided by this Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly for Members to share best practices in the fight against COVID-19 and explore avenues of mutual collaboration for socio-economic recovery and the road to a global vaccine.

Mauritius has so far successfully managed the COVID-19 pandemic. Acting with foresight in the management of the crisis, a number of early preventive measures were taken as soon as it became clear that the Pandemic was taking undue proportions.

With upgraded sanitary screening at entry ports and enhanced surveillance by the health authorities combined with Rapid Response Teams to transfer suspect cases to a dedicated health facility, we were able to monitor the entry of the virus.

As soon as Mauritius registered its first confirmed cases of COVID-19 on 18 March 2020, we imposed a nationwide confinement and contact tracing was initiated island-wide in order to detect the extent of contamination within the local community.

All our public health institutions remained mobilised during the peak of contamination, when we had some 320 cases.

We also set up COVID-19 testing clinics for suspected cases in all five Regional Hospitals of the island.

On the regulatory side, Mauritius introduced new legislation concerning the mandatory wearing of face masks in all public places and social distancing measures.

Public sensitisation campaign was also intensified.

In fact, it took our country less than five weeks to break the local chain of contamination.

The new normal activities in Mauritius resumed on 15 June 2020 while our airspace is gradually reopening to scheduled flights as from the 1 October. All incoming passengers have to abide by strict sanitary protocols such as quarantine for a period of 14 days upon their arrival and regular PCR testing before being allowed to join the local community.

The quarantine system allows us to track down all imported COVID-19 cases, and keep the local community safe.

I wish to thank the WHO for the support and advice it continues to provide to us. I also express our gratitude to the many countries that provided equipment and protective gears to Mauritius.

On the economic front, Mauritius is facing a 12-14 per cent contraction as a result of the border closure and the 3 month lockdown. While Government set in place a wage assistance scheme to protect jobs in the private sector, the prolonged

consequence of the measures in place is likely to further affect our economy. Hence there is an absolute need for global assistance in terms of debt service relief and debt cancellation along with other financial support measures and increased fiscal space to allow countries like Mauritius to stay on track with the Sustainable Development Goals.

We welcome the announcement of success by several companies engaged in the research for vaccine against the coronavirus. As these go into production line, it is crucial that they become available and accessible to all countries.

This pandemic has taught us an important lesson. No country is immune to it and no country can fight it alone. There is an absolute need for us to work together, share information and take collective decision, not only to eradicate it but also to prepare for any new pandemic. Let us pledge accordingly.

I thank you for your attention.

**Annex 56****Address by Ms. Mette Frederiksen, Prime Minister of Denmark**

Mr. President,

Dear delegates,

As 2020 is coming to an end, we are still in the middle of a global pandemic, threatening the lives of the most vulnerable people and the way we live. We are all facing a setback in the global economy. We see increased pressure on human rights and also on fundamental freedoms, not least for women and girls. This comes on top of the challenges we already had — not least climate change, loss of biodiversity and inequality between and within our societies.

Mr. President,

We must come together in this dark hour to light up hope for cooperation and for multilateralism and for human solidarity. Denmark is, of course, ready to play its part. We are committed to a stronger and reformed World Health Organization. We must improve our global pandemic preparedness, early warning and health system resilience. That is why Denmark plans to double our core funding to WHO. We believe in international solidarity and in our common obligation to protect the most vulnerable.

From early on, Denmark was in front when it came to funding the countries most in need. Today, as we are all looking forward now to a vaccine, our attention is on how to ensure equal global access to safe and affordable vaccines and treatments. Human rights remained as our foundation and Denmark stands with the Secretary-General on his call to action on human rights.

Mr. President,

We insist on using the pandemic as an opportunity to define the future we want. We must build back better and greener, create a new green economy that can address the climate crisis, create new jobs, better and healthier lives and, of course, stronger societies. And we do not think that we need a new blueprint. The Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement show the way to a more sustainable, peaceful and also a more inclusive world. What we do need is political will, higher ambitions, better cooperation, concrete actions.

Mr. President,

For 75 years, the UN has been so important for all of us but we cannot rest only on the past. It is up to us to make sure that the UN is a place where we come together to solve global challenges because we are better and stronger when we act together. And we must act together to overcome this pandemic.

Thank you.

**Annex 57****Address by Ms. Sanna Marin, Prime Minister of the Republic of Finland**

Mr. Secretary-General, Mr. President, Excellencies,

We have the means to stop the global pandemic. How long this will take and how we will recover, depends on our actions now. It is our responsibility to show political leadership. It is possible to balance the need to protect health and the impact of our measures on the society and economy.

We must work together because this is the only way to suppress the pandemic. We need a coordinated, coherent and consistent UN response at every level. The World Health Organisation needs the capabilities and resources to lead our global efforts.

The call for strong international cooperation applies to vaccines too — we must ensure that they are universally available. No one is safe, until everyone is safe.

Also global solidarity is called for. The economic downturn is unfolding at a scale not seen before. Developing countries are being hit the hardest. We must seek solutions that address these inequalities. It is more important than ever to fulfill the principle of the 2030 Agenda: leave no-one behind.

Green, inclusive and sustainable recovery and digital transformation will be central in restoring progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. We also need to focus on the effective and comprehensive prevention of pandemics. Without prevention COVID-19 will only be the opening chapter of more pandemics to come.

The COVID-19 crisis has revealed how investing in global health security, systemic risk management, resilient health systems and readiness are necessary in order to protect the health of people. It simply makes economic sense.

We know what needs to be done — stop climate change, reverse environmental degradation and the loss of biodiversity. This is about taking a One Health approach. Our natural environment is in interplay with our health. This has been already one lesson to be learned from the pandemic.

An effective response comes with an inclusive Whole-of-Society approach. It is important to engage with communities and work with scientists, private sector and civil society.

Building people's trust in public authorities and science is key. An important element of trust is access to reliable and factual information. This is our best weapon against misinformation. Openness, public participation and democratic decision-making make us more resilient.

This pandemic impacts every sphere of life. It affects women and girls particularly. Its economic impact is hard on sectors where women form the majority of the workforce. The availability of services and products needed for sexual and reproductive health and rights has suffered. Gender-based violence is increasing. Our approach must be gender responsive. Gender-equality has not been achieved anywhere yet, but the virus should not be allowed to make our efforts even more difficult.

Resilience and cooperation are needed from us now, and for us to succeed we need a renewed focus on the Sustainable Development Goals — on equality, on building trust and on working together.

Thank you.



**Annex 58****Address by Mrs. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany**

[Original: German; English interpretation provided by the delegation]

Mr. President,  
Secretary-General,  
Excellencies,

The coronavirus pandemic is an extraordinary trial for humankind. It places a great burden on the health-care systems of all countries. It has claimed and continues to claim many lives around the world, and it is exacerbating poverty and hunger and economic and social inequality. It is patently clear that this global and multifaceted crisis can only be surmounted by global action. I therefore welcome this special session of the UN General Assembly.

The pandemic also underscores the importance of the World Health Organization, an institution that needs to be strengthened. It must be put in an even better position to respond to international health threats. This is what Germany has been campaigning for during its presidency of the EU Council, as well as in the G-7 and G-20. But in spite of all the difficulties experienced this year in the course of the pandemic, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

This is in large part due to the ACT-Accelerator. Thanks to this collaboration, there is a global platform for the development and distribution of tests, treatments and vaccines at our disposal. However, this platform needs additional financial support in order to have a greater effect. The investment is worthwhile. This is becoming particularly clear if we look at one of the pillars of the ACT-Accelerator vaccine development.

Progress has recently been made on this front, which gives us reason to hope. However, we must never forget that the pandemic can only be truly beaten — that is, lastingly defeated — when everyone in the world has equitable access to effective vaccines. Lastingly defeated also means doing everything we can to emerge stronger from this pandemic with regard to future challenges and crises. To this end, we need closer international cooperation, also and above all, with strong international organizations. But if we manage this, we can succeed.

Thank you for your attention.

**Annex 59****Address by Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia**

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

Excellency Mr. President;

Excellency Secretary-General of the United Nations;

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

First of all, I would like to extend my appreciation to Azerbaijan for proposing this special session on “Responses to COVID-19 Pandemic”, so as to mobilize joint and global responses from the international communities in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic.

At present, the COVID-19 has spread to every country and claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. In this regard, Cambodia believes that the battle against COVID-19 should not be taken by any country as its own geo political agenda. While lives of millions of people around the world are at risks, no country shall politicize the public health issue and denounce the ability to contain the spread of this infectious disease as it would not add any benefit to the fight against this pandemic. In contrast, the regional and global solidarity and unity are indispensable elements during such a crisis period.

In addition, the fight against this global pandemic requires a joint prudent decision-making, under the framework of multilateralism, by respecting international laws and sovereignty of each individual nation, regardless of its size or wealth, with the United Nations and World Health Organization as the core agencies. I would like to reiterate Cambodia’s support for the roles of the United Nations and the World Health Organization in their global efforts to respond and fight against this pandemic. Moreover,

Cambodia would like to underline the importance and the urgency of the COVID-19 vaccine as a global public good, which its supply and distribution shall be carried out in a humanitarian spirit for all countries, especially the most vulnerable ones.

Though this public health crisis would be over in the near future, all nations must continue addressing these challenges during the period of economic recovery. Indeed, aid could be a small part of recovery process, while the most crucial factors are maintaining multilateralism, globalization, trade liberalism, regional and global supply chain, cross-border trades, investment, international tourism and people mobility. In this sense, Cambodia would like to express its full supports to the initiative of the UN Secretary-General’s COVID-19 Response and Recovery Trust Fund, which was launched earlier this year.

Thank you!

**Annex 60****Address by Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam**

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

Ladies and gentlemen,

I commend the convening of the Special Session in Response to the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic within the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly, as we are less than a month away from the end of 2020. COVID-19 has made this year particularly challenging in many ways for all of us.

To win this battle against COVID-19 for rebounding in the next year, allow me to share some of my thoughts.

First, we need to uphold the central role of the UN, step up policy coordination, take collective action, and champion international cooperation and multilateral efforts in global governance.

As a non-permanent member of the UNSC for the 2020-2021 term, Viet Nam reiterates its support for the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, lifting of unilateral sanctions, and provision of humanitarian assistance in the fight against COVID-19.

Second, the interest of our people should form the core of all policies and actions. Our top priority should be to protect the lives and health of the people and ensure universal and affordable access to vaccines and treatments.

Third, we need to actively adapt to the "new normal" for sustainable development. In addition to pandemic containment, we should simultaneously promote economic recovery, facilitate cross-border trade, investment and travel, and maintain supply chains of essential goods, food and medical equipment.

Countries should not lose sight of commitments with regard to the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 and climate action. In particular, developing countries should receive financial, commercial, and technical assistance in realizing the UN SDGs as needed.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Viet Nam has managed to contain COVID-19, ensured social security, and restored growth. Let me take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the UN and international organizations for the meaningful support and cooperation extended to Viet Nam.

As the 2020 ASEAN Chair, Viet Nam has worked with fellow member states in putting forth initiatives in COVID-19 response such as the ASEAN COVID-19 Response Fund, the Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies, the Strategic Framework for Public Health Emergencies, and the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases. ASEAN has also adopted the Comprehensive Recovery Framework and its Implementation Plan across the 03 Community pillars to support people and businesses in overcoming the impacts of the pandemic and return to normal life.

Viet Nam has proposed a range of ideas and initiatives within the UN framework and engaged in discussions with fellow members to adopt Resolutions and documents for enhancing international cooperation in COVID-19 response.

Guided by the spirit of “sharing and caring”, the Vietnamese Government, organizations, businesses and people have gifted domestically produced medical supplies to many countries hard-hit by the pandemic. We also shared our experience, and made donations to international funds on COVID-19, despite our financial constraints.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we confront the greatest challenge since the birth of the UN, Viet Nam believes that the international community will emerge triumphant by harnessing the will and power of each nation, and strengthening our solidarity and cooperation. Together we can build a brighter future for each and every country and individual.

Viet Nam will contribute all it can to this noble endeavor.

Thank you.

**Annex 61****Address by Mr. Stefan Löfven, Prime Minister of Sweden**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Almost one and a half million people have lost their lives and many more have been affected by the devastating consequences of this pandemic. I would like to express my deep condolences for the lives lost and the devastation caused.

The pandemic has exposed weaknesses in our societies and caused massive indirect effects. Inequality within and between countries has increased; human rights have been threatened; millions of people have been thrown into poverty and millions more are going to bed hungry. But the pandemic has also produced global cooperation and solidarity. As we enter 2021, we must step up our efforts and apply the same commitment to addressing the climate crisis, inequality, conflicts and poverty.

While addressing the current pandemic is our most pressing priority, we must also be better prepared to prevent and address future crises. We must ensure that people not only survive but that they live long and healthy lives. This must be a defining feature of our common future. The Independent Panel, appointed by the WHO, can deliver recommendations towards this vision.

This year, we have been reminded of the power of science. Through unprecedented collaborative scientific efforts, we now have several promising vaccine candidates. It is truly remarkable to witness the determination and excellence of the scientific community. It is our task to work together and ensure that safe, effective and affordable vaccines are made available around the globe. This is the only way to put an end to the devastating effects of the pandemic. Sweden is a proud member of and contributor to the GAVI COVAX facility and we will continue to provide our support towards global access to vaccines.

At its seventy-fifth anniversary, the United Nations is needed more than ever. Faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretary-General has provided excellent leadership and the UN system has acted rapidly and with flexibility -- from the health responses led by the WHO to the humanitarian response of organizations, like the World Food Programme, to the wider socioeconomic response coordinated by UNDP. Sweden remains deeply committed to multilateral cooperation and to the UN system. My Government will continue to allocate 1 per cent of GDP to development assistance and we will stay actively engaged in preventing conflict and maintaining peace, addressing the climate crisis and promoting gender equality, democracy, human rights and global health.

To quote Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus, there is no vaccine for poverty, hunger, climate change or inequality. No, there are no simple solutions. But the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals and the UN75 Declaration provide an agenda and a vision for the twenty-first century. Together, we must lay the foundations for a more sustainable, equitable and gender-equal world. Only together can we come back stronger and build back better, greener and healthier.

Thank you.

**Annex 62****Address by Mr. Thongloun Sisoulith, Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic**

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

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Mr. Chair and the Republic of Azerbaijan, as Chair of Non-Aligned Movement, for its initiative to convene this 31st Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. President,

Currently, the New Coronavirus or COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose significant threats on health and lives of millions of people in every corner of the world. The number of infections have significantly increased day by day, showing no sign of abatement, and claimed lives of more than one million people worldwide. This is the unprecedented global health crisis that brought huge impacts and threats on people's livelihood as well as on socio-economic development and security of countries around the world, both in the immediate and long terms effect.

For the Lao PDR, the Government has early undertaken strict preventive measures against COVID-19, such as the establishment of coordination mechanism for prevention, control and response to COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown the country since March to restrict individuals' entry and exit as well as the movement within the country.

Through the implementation of those preventive measures, we have been able to successfully contain the outbreak at a certain level with the number of infections at the manageable ones and no fatality. Later on, the Government has gradually eased the preventive measures to reduce the impact on the economy, while continuing to retain necessary measures, including 14-day-quarantine requirement for those travelers from abroad to prevent and contain COVID-19 in the Lao PDR. We also continue to apply other strict medical measures with extended support and assistance from friendly countries and international organizations, all of which have led to initial success as mentioned above.

Mr. President,

The COVID-19 pandemic has seriously affected the socioeconomic development objectives of the Lao PDR and worsened the existing vulnerability of the country. It has put greater challenges to the realization of the 2030 Agenda and the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals, and also disrupted and slow downed the progress towards the smooth graduation from the LDC status.

Mr. President,

The Lao PDR has a firm conviction that the development and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines is one of the decisive factors in response to the pandemic. The most important thing, it calls for vaccines as global property and goods that are accessible for all without any discrimination. In this regard, I strongly urge the

international community to promote “vaccine multilateralism” or COVAX, to ensure that COVID-19 vaccine is a global common public goods for all countries.

Mr. President,

I wish to conclude that it is now more important than ever to uphold the multilateral cooperation. In this unprecedented situation, we need to continue working closely, making bold decision and carrying out concerted actions. If we can do so, we will be able to address global challenges and safeguard our future.

The Lao PDR stands ready to cooperate with the international community to find ways to mitigate the economic impacts of the current and post COVID-19 pandemic. Taking this opportunity, I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the development partners, UN system entities, international organizations and INGOs for their continued support and assistance accorded to the Lao PDR in order to overcome this challenge and to build back better.

Thank you

**Annex 63****Address by Mr. Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón, President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain**

[Original: English and Spanish]

In these months in which COVID-19 has shaken the world, we have also been able to move forward and learn while fighting the pandemic.

We have not defeated the virus yet, but I would like to recall three lessons we have learned during this time.

In the first place, we must recognize that united we can do more.

The case of vaccines shows that by acting together we are able to achieve our goals much faster.

We have created the “ACT-Accelerator” in record time, an initiative joined by over 184 countries to ensure that the place of birth does not determine access to a vaccine.

In less than a year, we have developed not one, but multiple vaccines against this new virus, and we continue to receive good news every week.

Spain has just announced its vaccination plan, a process that we hope to start in January, while we continue to work together with the rest of the Member States and the European Union.

This unprecedented level of international collaboration should reinforce our firm and unequivocal commitment to multilateralism.

International institutions will be as strong as we, their members, want them to be. It is therefore up to us to adapt them and make them fit to address the global challenges of our time.

The government of Spain undoubtedly and unambiguously defends the centrality of the United Nations in general, and the World Health Organization in the health response.

For this reason, on November 10, we adopted, together with other countries, Sweden and 10 other countries, the commitment to implement a series of concrete, specific actions that make the objectives expressed in the UN 75th Anniversary Declaration a reality.

Second, if we want to be successful, we must work with a holistic approach.

The profound interrelationship between the health, economic and social aspects of this crisis requires simultaneous responses.

Thus, the pandemic has underlined the relationship between human, animal and environmental health, underlining the principle of “One Global Health”.

In addition to the vaccine, we must concentrate efforts on strengthening health systems and we must do so without neglecting other diseases.

In the socioeconomic sphere, we have to respond to the needs of the workers, while ensuring the viability of businesses.



o Women are suffering disproportionately the impact of the economic, social and health crisis. We cannot allow this situation to jeopardize the progress achieved over the past decades in terms of gender equality.

We must also guarantee the educational inclusion of girls and boys around the world.

A concerted international action will be able to respond to the economic crisis without leaving any country, any territory, or any group behind. We have taken very important steps in this direction in the context of multilateral institutions, but we must go further. It is essential to develop the necessary instruments for each situation, regardless of the income level of the countries.

Third and last, our efforts must be driven by a profound transformational vision.

The consequences of this multidimensional crisis are dramatic for many groups, for many families and also for countries, from the loss of human lives to all those lives that have been radically disrupted.

Faced with this reality, we are taking very important steps to accelerate the most pressing transformations of our time: the ecological transition is a clear example of this, equality between men and women and socioeconomic inclusion, or an inclusive digital transition.

There is only one possible way forward: to continue tackling the pandemic and all its consequences with hope, with ambition and with an enormous amount of solidarity.

Together we can go further.

Thank you.

**Annex 64****Address by Mr. Suga Yoshihide, Prime Minister of Japan**

[Original: Japanese; English interpretation provided by the delegation]

I am Suga Yoshihide, Prime Minister of Japan.

Excellencies,

I wish to express my deep respect and sincere gratitude to the people around the world fighting this pandemic, including front-line health workers for their dedicated efforts. I would also like to show my respect to the United Nations, including the World Health Organization, for its hard work and tireless efforts.

The COVID-19 pandemic has confronted humanity with an unprecedented challenge. Japan will continue to protect people's lives and livelihoods by harnessing the wisdom of the public and private sectors, as well as by preventing the spread of infections.

The crisis has reminded us of the need for global solidarity. To overcome this crisis, we must realize a united world, not a divided world, in the face of this challenge. In particular, the United Nations is a forum where all stakeholders engage constructively and work together with transparency. Japan stands ready to cooperate in the review and reform process of the WHO in order to not only overcome the current crisis, but also to be better prepared for future crises.

This crisis is threatening people's lives, livelihoods and dignity across the globe. It is important to aim at leaving no one's health behind in achieving universal health coverage, guided by the principle of human security. Therefore, Japan has been promptly taking multi-layered efforts — first, to overcome the current crisis of the pandemic; secondly, to strengthen health and medical systems for future crises and, thirdly, to generate an environment that is resilient to infectious diseases.

To overcome the pandemic, multilateral cooperation schemes, such as the ACT-Accelerator, are of critical importance. Japan, as a founding donor of the ACT-Accelerator, responded rapidly to the call for contributions to the COVAX Facility and will promote the supply of therapeutics through the voluntary licensing of patents.

Strengthening health and medical systems is important for preparedness in the face of future health crises. Japan has helped to reinforce community-health systems by establishing core medical facilities, promoting networking among those facilities and training health workers, mainly in Asian and African countries. To generate an environment that is resilient to infectious diseases, Japan supports cross-sectoral activities in such fields as nutrition, water and sanitation, in cooperation with the private sector.

The continued spread of COVID-19 is exacerbating the problem of malnutrition. Japan will host the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit in December 2021 and will commit to strengthening global efforts to improve nutrition, in partnership with the UN Food Systems Summit to be held next autumn.

It is also essential to revive the damaged global economy and realize economic growth in order to create a new society in COVID and post-COVID era. To bolster economic activities in developing countries, Japan is implementing the COVID-19 crisis response emergency support loan of up to 500 billion Japanese yen or \$4.5

billion over the course of two years. Furthermore, Japan is committed to leading efforts towards sustainable development, through our efforts, including digitalization, the realization of a decarbonized society, the expansion of a free and fair economic zone and maintaining and strengthening the multilateral free trade system.

At the UN General Assembly in September this year, I expressed my strong determination to host the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games in the summer of next year, as proof that humanity has defeated the pandemic. I will continue to spare no effort to bring about games that are safe and secure.

Thank you.

**Annex 65****Address by Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait**

[Original: Arabic and English]

The Address of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al Hamad Al Sabah At the 31st Special,

In the holy name of Allah, The Most Gracious, the Most merciful,

Your Excellency Mr.Volkan Bozkir — President of the United Nations General Assembly,

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

Ladies and gentlemen,

*Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.*

At the outset, I am pleased to express our sincere gratitude for the generous efforts made by Azerbaijan and Canada to hold this extraordinary session and steer the negotiations on the draft resolution to ensure the success of this session, which is held under critical and unprecedented global circumstances that have resulted in the innumerable human losses; including deaths and infections and immense economic impact on global economy and trade. In this regard, we extend our sincere condolences to the families of the victims and our best wishes for the speedy recovery of those infected.

Mr. President,

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the State of Kuwait has taken several measures consistent with health guidelines issued by the World Health Organisation ranging from partial and complete suspension of commercial flights, screening all passengers arriving in the State of Kuwait, in addition to performing random checks and imposing partial and full lockdown and the isolation of some areas where infections are on the rise, as well as the suspension of work in the public and private sectors, businesses and places of worship. Kuwait also arranged for the return of tens of thousands of its nationals from abroad according to a well structured plan and strict health measures. Taking into consideration current developments concerning the International community's efforts to provide vaccines, relevant authorities have observed the progress made on that front and have contacted agencies and companies that are developing the vaccine. These authorities have already started to put an implementation plan in place prior to the free vaccination campaign for nationals and residents in line with priorities set by the WHO.

Mr. President,

The efforts exerted at home in light of this crisis did not deter the State of Kuwait from honouring its humanitarian responsibilities and joining the International community in assisting countries that suffered daunting health conditions by making voluntary donations through the World Health Organisation to alleviate the situation that brotherly and friendly countries are grappling with, as well as supporting the International campaign to develop a vaccine by contributing to the conference

organized by the European Commission's coronavirus fundraising conference (Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance) and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), an initiative launched by the WHO to accelerate the development of a vaccine against the coronavirus and to ensure fair distribution and providing it to those who are unable to acquire it. The Kuwait Fund for Economic Development also provided grants and financial assistance to a number of countries around the world to enable them to endure the challenges of the pandemic and support the establishment of a pandemic centre in Africa. The total contributions of the State of Kuwait towards combating the pandemic and dealing with its effects reached 287.4 million US Dollars. The State of Kuwait also responded to the United Nations' request to receive and provide medical care for UN employees infected with the virus while working in Central and Western Asia.

Mr. President,

I would like to pay tribute to the efforts exerted by the United Nations and its specialized agencies in confronting this grave global health crisis through a series of measures, meetings, and decisions in this regard, amongst which were taken in the UN General Assembly, where my country Kuwait contributed to the adoption of a number of important decisions related to confronting the pandemic and limiting its impact. I also value the efforts made by regional organizations in this respect, including the Non-Aligned Movement. My country Kuwait will continue its efforts in cooperation with the International Community to confront the effects of this unprecedented pandemic.

Mr. President,

As we will be bidding farewell to this year and ushering in a new one, I pray to Almighty Allah to lift this burden and hope the new year will be free of challenges

so we may resume our joint work towards achieving our hopes and aspirations so that humanity may return to a normal life and enjoy security and tranquility.

*Wa Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.*

**Annex 66****Address by Mr. Keith Rowley, MP, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago**

Mr. President,

It is an honour to address the General Assembly of the United Nations at this Special Session convened in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

In 2020, the coronavirus spread with alarming speed, and plunged the world into an acute health and economic crisis, the severity of which has not been seen in nearly a century. Exacerbating vulnerabilities and inequalities in both developing and developed countries, the virus has resulted in the deepening and widening of poverty across the globe. The existence of COVID-19 has brought to the fore the depth of global interdependence, but it has also presented an opportunity to harness the benefits of multilateral action.

I want to commend the United Nations system, including the WHO, our World Health Organisation, for responding quickly to health, humanitarian and socio-economic needs around the globe, particularly in places that are home to some of the world's most vulnerable communities. The health systems around the world have been put under immense pressure, with shortages of medical staff, ventilators, personal protective equipment and the capacity to test for the virus stymieing efforts to eliminate its raging effects on our populations.

The pandemic has reaffirmed the need for, and value of, collective action and multilateralism if we are to propel the global community back onto a sustainable path. The global pandemic can only be countered effectively through local, regional and international consultation and cooperation.

Trinidad and Tobago has instituted a comprehensive social, financial and economic support package of measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The multi-dimensional effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated the vulnerabilities of small island developing economies such as ours, resulting in greater challenges in our health, financial and education sectors.

As a result of the unprecedented challenges faced by the global economy in the midst of the pandemic, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago appointed a High-Level Multi-Sectoral Committee to establish a "Roadmap for Trinidad and Tobago — post COVID-19 Pandemic". This committee comprises persons from the public sector, the private sector, labour, civil society and academia. There are three (3) immediate priorities in its post-COVID-19 plan, which are as follows:

- a) Address and mitigate the hardship inflicted by COVID-19;
- b) Restart the economy; and c) Lay the foundation for sustained economic recovery.

To do so, the committee has outlined the following four short-term objectives:

- i. Enhance Social Protection: Leave no one behind;
- ii. Retain and create jobs;
- iii. Boost aggregate demand; and

iv. Minimize and remediate supply disruptions.

In managing the financial crisis in the era of COVID-19 and beyond, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago obtained financing from international lending agencies for specific COVID-19-related activities. The Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago adopted a series of emergency measures aimed at providing stability to the financial system and supporting the flow of credit to the economy. Trinidad and Tobago took almost immediate action to provide liquidity support to its citizens who were negatively impacted by COVID-19 related restrictive measures.

This was conducted through increased government spending on salary support, rental support, the topping up of existing food cards and issuance of new cards, subsidised loans to Small and Micro Enterprises and accelerated income tax and Valued-Added Tax refunds to enhance business sector liquidity. Trinidad and Tobago's resilience is aided by the full use of short-term stimulative policies, in which both fiscal and monetary policies have been activated in support of the economy.

To manage this virus, Trinidad and Tobago had to establish a Parallel Health Care System, dedicated to COVID-19 patients, which minimised the risk of cross-infection with regular patients. The parallel healthcare system represents a proactive, evidence-based approach to providing specialized, pandemic-level care through a complementary system designed specifically to manage persons diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus, while ensuring the continued operations and service delivery of the existing health care system. The parallel system continues to be a proactive and vital approach to managing future waves of this pandemic.

In the absence of an effective COVID-19 vaccine, the World Health Organisation's core global mitigation strategy remains the early identification, isolation and treatment of COVID-19 positive patients. Thus, COVID-19 testing, contact tracing and treatment became the highest strategic priority to combat the virus.

In light of the many potential vaccines for COVID-19 virus, Trinidad and Tobago has signed the final individualized Commitment Agreement with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, to join the COVAX Facility under the Committed Purchase Model. Furthermore, Trinidad and Tobago has requested vaccines to cover 33 per cent of its population in the first instance.

Mr President,

On this occasion, Trinidad and Tobago reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations and looks forward to continued collaborative approaches among UN Member States, UN agencies and external partners that are involved in the global fight against this pandemic.

I thank you.

**Annex 67****Address by Mr. Ion Chicu, Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The global COVID-19 pandemic is one of the most complex tests the world is currently facing. In a world where no one is untouched and no one is immune, it is more than a health crisis. It is a crisis of civilization, which captures our global affiliation — the affiliation to our humanity destiny that has to overcome this pandemic together.

Responding to this common challenge and shared threat is fundamentally about a global partnership that strengthens the way in which the international community works together. Building on guiding principles of a shared responsibility and mutual accountability, acting in solidarity, driven by unity and compassion. Appreciating our highest values. Developing a lasting awareness of the human truths. Trusting one another. Reconnecting to our humanism.

The pandemic crisis revealed just how vulnerable and exposed we all are. In the face of uncertainty and unpredictability. Dealing with fears and limitations. To our freedoms. To our choices. Dramatically shaping our behaviour and profoundly changing our lives. Shifting focuses on current and future priorities at national, regional and global levels.

But more than ever, it has made clear that global challenges require coordinated efforts, global solidarity and global responses. Making the most of it also require strong political commitment and leadership, sustainable partnerships, determined engagement and actions at all levels and by all stakeholders — governments, communities, citizens.

As one of our shared experiences, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought into the picture many fast-moving uncertainties, underlying fragilities, most of which the Governments across the world were not prepared to handle by themselves.

Recognizing the importance to collectively respond to this crisis, the Government of the Republic of Moldova has mobilized all its energy, inspired also by a remarkable global solidarity we are all witnessing. By taking important steps, timely actions and implemented measures, working hand in hand both on the national level guided by the National COVID-19 Response Plan and strongly supported by development partners across the world, we are making every effort to fight this crisis.

The United Nations system large-scale, coordinated and comprehensive health response to COVID-19, led by the World Health Organization and its Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan; the UN socio-economic response and recovery framework and its building back better projects; the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Trust Fund, are significantly helping and strongly contributing to the principle of leaving no one behind in these fragile times.

These important initiatives and long-term assistance have placed the UN at the forefront in supporting our Government's response to the COVID-19, by tackling the health emergency, strengthening our national response to the COVID-19, addressing the social and economic impact of the pandemic, while also protecting jobs and incomes.



The extremely valuable assistance and support, life-saving medications, personal protective equipment, supplies for vulnerable population, specifically tailored regional, subregional and country's guidance and expertise, provided through the UN system, and particularly through the WHO Regional Office for Europe, WHO Country Office in Chisinau, UN Moldova Team, is substantially contributing to continuously improving our integrated approach to facing this common challenge and reducing our country's vulnerability to the pandemic. For which we are profoundly grateful and appreciative.

I would like to take this opportunity to express the Republic of Moldova's strong support to the WHO as global health leader and coordinating authority on international health work and to reiterate our commitment for joining the international call on strengthening the capacity of this organization to continue to live up to new challenges.

In the face of shared fragilities unveiled by the pandemic crisis, the United Nations is redefining its fundamental role — to serve human needs and purposes in response to global challenges. Guided by the vision of a networked, inclusive and effective multilateralism, reinventing and reimagining the world we all share. In a future we all want. With the United Nations we all need.

Acting in the best interests of today and tomorrow as the crisis continues to unfold, accelerating the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals is our common opportunity and a shared commitment.

While we are all now facing constantly increasing long-lasting crises with far-reaching consequences, which are real threats to building a prosperous and peaceful world, we cannot afford to lose any time. We cannot postpone addressing climate and environmental action, global economic imbalances, migration, humanitarian crises and conflicts. The year 2030 is just a decade away. As a call for action by all countries, we need to ensure that national and multilateral goals complement one another. We need to ensure that no one is left behind and that our recovery is guided by the 2030 Agenda in this decade of action.

It is our strong belief that all of us have meaningful roles to play —nationally, regionally and globally.

Now, the world needs the most massive public health effort in human history that recognizes universal access to health as a critical global public good. As health is a human right, it is imperative that everyone has fair and equitable access to a COVID-19 vaccine. We all need a COVID-19 vaccine, diagnostics and treatment affordable, safe, effective and available to everyone, everywhere. And as we speak about global solidarity, it is also about global access to the necessary medicine, vaccines and medical equipment. In a strongly interconnected world, it is not only a moral imperative — it is a practical necessity, where none of us is safe until all of us are safe.

Our human destinies are intertwined. It is our moral responsibility and commitment to stand united. Overcoming, in solidarity and unity, this common challenge and building a better post-COVID-19 world is not negotiable. By getting back the value of our liberties and choices, engaging more actively in creating equal opportunities for all and respecting the dignity, worth and rights of all in a prosperous, secure, inclusive, sustainable and resilient world is our way ahead we can jointly shape.

Thank you.

**Annex 68****Address by Mr. Hassan Diab, President of the Council of Ministers of the Lebanese Republic**

Distinguished Heads of States and Governments,

H.E. The President of The United Nations General Assembly, H.E. The Secretary-General of The United Nations,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me at the outset to express my deep appreciation to the Member States for their decision to convene a special session devoted to the COVID-19 pandemic under agenda item 128, entitled “Strengthening of the United Nations System”. At this critical time, I participate in today’s conference with mixed feelings, heartened on one hand that the International Community is stepping up its global response to COVID-19 yet saddened to see that the pandemic has claimed the lives of more than 1.3 million persons and stalled the world economy.

Lebanon faced many challenges preparing for the emerging pandemic: The COVID-19 outbreak hit at a difficult time whereby the country was grappling with unprecedented existential and concurrent socioeconomic and financial crises, leading to a further worsening of its dire conditions. In addition, the country is densely populated, with 6.9 million residents—87.2 per cent of whom live in urban areas — including 2 million displaced persons and refugees and 500,000 migrant workers, all within 10,452 km<sup>2</sup> with a population density of 667/Km<sup>2</sup>

A Ministerial Crisis Cell was established to oversee the COVID-19 national preparedness and response and take the necessary measures to contain its spread. We initiated a “whole government response” through a public-private partnership that was centered around early aggressive containment to allow for building capacity to respond to COVID-19 cases.

The Lebanese health care sector is fragmented with hospitals of varying capabilities, 84 per cent of which are private and mainly concentrated in large cities. The government’s timely and aggressive measures of closing sectors and going into a nationwide lockdown with only few cases reported has reached a Government Response Stringency Index of 85 at its peak. During the early days of the first wave, a single public hospital was designated as a treatment site, after securing the needed resources in partnership with WHO. This allowed the other hospitals time to build capacity to receive patients. Additionally, this approach limited the exposure of unprepared hospitals, which were sources of community clusters in the initial weeks and proved its effectiveness in keeping Lebanon in containment phase and among the first 15 countries that crushed the first wave of the virus. However, after the unfortunate Beirut port blast on 4 August that resulted in more than 6,000 injured, Lebanon started experiencing alarming exponential growth in the number of cases and the inability of the health-care system to handle this growth, especially that the blast resulted in destroying 3 major hospitals in Beirut. Consequently, the government resorted to a second nationwide lockdown on 14 November 14 through a nationwide curfew from 5 p.m. to 5 a.m., leaving essential businesses operating. As at 29 November, Lebanon recorded around 127,000 COVID-19 cases and 1004 deaths.

The socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 resulting from the lockdowns is massive in a country that is facing its worse economic collapse since its independence with an overall poverty prevalence in 2020 at 60 per cent of its population of which 23 per cent are in extreme poverty (food poverty) and 60 per cent of its workforce are within informal arrangements. COVID-19 presents a crisis within a crisis to the Lebanese public who are forced into making the difficult choice between dying of coronavirus or dying out of poverty.

The government has put together a modest economic package to try to offset the impact of the new shock on the population. However, this package only represents 1 per cent of our GDP and remains well below what other countries are spending to alleviate the COVID-19 impact on its socioeconomic environment. That underlines the extreme necessity of international assistance to reinforce the social safety net in Lebanon. These alarming indicators describe the gravity of the situation which was further aggravated by the calamitous Beirut port blast on 4 August. It was the day when approximately 300,000 of the city's residents lost their homes, 204 persons died and more than 6,500 were injured. Scores of schools, hospitals, health-care facilities were partially or completely destroyed while the hospitals and medical centers, which remained operational, were overwhelmed by patients seeking care for injuries sustained in the blast and for COVID-19 infections.

Indeed, due to the rise in COVID-19 cases, many hospitals are running short of ICU beds and experiencing shortages in medical supplies and in vital medical equipment. Medical personnel are overstretched, particularly in view of the unusual level of emigration of doctors and nurses, in addition to their exposure to infection.

More than any time in its history, Lebanon finds itself with extremely limited international support. While other countries received emergency International Monetary Fund (IMF) lines for COVID-19 response, Lebanon, being in a debt moratorium, didn't have access. External financing has been slow in coming and in very limited amounts.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has derailed and further delayed our efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

To conclude, I wish to extend my gratitude to the United Nations, to the International Organizations and Donors who help Lebanon in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the global fight is not over yet as the entire world is experiencing a resurgence in cases. It is my firm belief that the victory against a "common enemy", as depicted by the United Nations Secretary-General, depends on our solidarity, cooperation and concerted efforts. Therefore, Lebanon welcomes a comprehensive, inclusive, multidimensional and people-centered response under the diligent care of the United Nations to tackle the spread of the pandemic and address its various fallouts. I sincerely hope that special consideration would be given to developing countries including Lebanon, many of whom face the dire prospect of economic and social meltdown as well as deep and debilitating recessions.

Thank you.

**Annex 69****Address by Mr. Ralph E. Gonsalves, Prime Minister, Minister for Finance, the Public Service, National Security, Legal Affairs and Grenadines Affairs of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**

First, let me recognize the important initiative of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), of which Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is a committed member, in requesting this special session of the UN General Assembly on COVID-19. I thank the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Volkan Bozkir, for convening this special session.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused tremendous loss of lives and livelihoods throughout the world and it is only getting worse. Fortunately, in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, we have suffered no deaths from COVID-19, no hospitalisations, no community spread, and we have recorded just over 80 cases, mainly imported or import-related, since the start of the pandemic. We have achieved this with a series of practical measures designed to ensure that our population and our visitors are safe.

However, we have not been spared the disproportionate socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic, as has been the case for developing countries the world over. Small Island Developing States, including those in the Caribbean, have suffered an almost-total elimination of vital tourism-related income and jobs. I take this opportunity to thank the UN Secretary-General for highlighting this issue especially through this Policy Brief on COVID-19 and Transforming Tourism. We hope that his profound reflections in his policy brief can create a better understanding of the critical importance of the tourism sector in Small Island Developing States, and spur international financial institutions and governments into action to reinvigorate this vital industry.

Mr. President,

COVID-19 has only added to the strain of the climate crisis. Inadequate responses to these twin threats will decimate life and living as we know it. The knock-on effects of these borderless challenges, compounded by inaction, are quite predictable; they lend themselves, also, to convenient, irrational, and counter-productive denials. As COVID-19 continues to shrink our modest national budgets, we still have to find the financing to address adverse weather conditions of unprecedented intensity and frequency and their awful consequences. For instance, in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, we have mourned the loss of too many of our people this year due to an upsurge of hemorrhagic dengue fever, spread by the *aedes aegypti* mosquito, the breeding of which has grown exponentially due to warmer temperatures and heavy out-of-season rainfall.

A multilateral system that prioritizes cooperation between sovereign countries, with in-built fair, appropriate and legally-binding considerations for the vulnerable, is the only way to address the life altering challenges we face today. In this vein, it is crucial that every person in this world be able to access a COVID-19 vaccine; and ideally the United Nations General Assembly should play an important norm-setting role in this regard. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) supports and welcomes the COVAX facility promoted by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisations, the World Health Organisation, and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovation. We commend the foresight and human ingenuity behind the creation of, not only the vaccines, but also a system aimed at their fair distribution. Similarly, the

COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) is a welcomed financing instrument to support the procurement of vaccines for low-and middle-income economies. However, the metrics used for selecting countries to participate in this financing instrument, do not sufficiently take into account our inherent vulnerabilities and lack of economic and climate resilience. This has left the majority of CARICOM countries excluded based on the deeply flawed and lazy calculus of Gross National Income per capita. In addition, the inclusion of all CARICOM Member States in this financing instrument would only correspond to less than 0.1 per cent of the population of the 92 countries proposed for coverage under the COVAX AMC. We urge for this situation to be rectified.

Mr. President,

It is no secret that global crises, including health, financial and economic ones, affect those particularly susceptible to shocks more profoundly. We urge all members of this General Assembly to take measures in line with existing commitments to ease the burden on all, such as: Lifting unilateral coercive measures imposed cynically by powerful countries on weaker ones; guarding against any reduction in the already-minuscule and yet-to-be-met Official Development Assistance of 0.7 per cent of GNI; and working seriously to establish and maintain a global ceasefire in keeping with UN Security Council Resolution 2532. Importantly, for the credibility of this General Assembly, we must live up to the ideals outlined in our COVID-19 omnibus resolution for a Comprehensive and Coordinated Response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Let us go even further than to that to which we have committed on paper and be reminded that we have an obligation to lift each other up, and to lift humanity higher!

Thank you.

**Annex 70****Address by Mr. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister and Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Sugar Industry, and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Fiji**

President of the UN General Assembly,  
Your Excellency Mr Volkan Bozkir;  
Secretary-General of the United Nations,  
Excellency António Guterres;  
Heads of State,  
Prime Ministers,  
Ministers;  
Ladies and Gentlemen.  
*Bula Vinaka* from Fiji.

We welcome this Summit as a long-awaited opportunity to break the hold of COVID-induced nationalism which has crippled our global response to this crisis.

It was with a sick sense of irony that in the year the United Nations marked its 75th Anniversary, countries hoarded critical health supplies and equipment, from life-saving drugs, to ventilators, to tests, to PPE, leaving many brave frontline health workers vulnerable. And while Leaders spoke glowingly about our collective faith in multilateralism, Governments allowed the price of desperately needed exports like medicine and medical equipment to rise to levels that should be considered criminal, while others blocked these essential exports altogether.

We cannot continue to let those words, and that commitment to collective action, ring hollow. Here we are today. Together, we must renew our collective determination to defeat COVID-19, rebuild the global economy in a way that preserves the decades of progress the UN has worked so hard to achieve, and set humanity towards a safer and more sustainable future.

To do so, we must recognise that the playing field in a global COVID recovery is wildly uneven. Not all countries have the same level of technical and knowledge that is needed to defeat the virus. Not all can solve the problem of supply chain failures on their own. Not all countries have the financial capital to inject trillions of dollars into our devastated economies. Pacific Islanders — and all Small Island Developing States — are uniquely and intensely disadvantaged in all of these constraints.

It is the smallest, most vulnerable States who need the UN the most to overcome them.

The gap between the international rhetoric on solidarity and action that we can feel on the ground is vast — and as we look to recovery, it risks growing even further.

Despite all the optimism around a viable vaccine, access to that critical medical advancement is still not guaranteed for all people. Australia's assurance to add Pacific Small Island States to its vaccine procurement program is an act of genuine solidarity. It is also a lesson to the world. The COVID vaccine must be a global good, freely available to all humanity and not only to the wealthy.

But a vaccine alone will not erase the damage done to the world's most vulnerable economies. That will take financing.

It is suicidal for SIDS to continue to be shackled by the high cost of borrowing and suppressed by unfairly restricted access to concessional financing. This is why I'm calling for a significant expansion of concessional financing for small developing states. A mere one and a half percent of the total stimulus employed by developed nations is all we need.

If the institutions for economic governance and development, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, are not capable of providing the scale of concessional resources needed, then it is fair to ask whether they remain fit for purpose.

Every day we delay, that debate pushes the SDGs further out of reach for the developing world. For a true global recovery, we need radical reform: Now is the time to democratize the institutions of global governance to not only confront the COVID crisis, but the devastating impacts of the climate emergency.

The sacrifices this year has demanded from healthcare workers far and wide should make all of us consider how well we, as a community of nations, confront collective challenge. Whether it is our recovery from COVID, the campaign to achieve net-zero emissions, or the protection of our oceans, no nation can succeed alone. Let this crisis be our final lesson in the folly of unilateral action, and let us emerge from it not further divided, but more united, than ever before.

*Vinaka vakalevu.* Thank you.

**Annex 71****Address by Mr. Edi Rama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania**

Dear Excellencies,

It is often said that disease knows no borders. It does not care about our political differences and it disregards distinctions about rich and poor economies.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted them all.

This once-in-a-century pandemic has hammered home a critical lesson: when it comes to health, our destinies are intertwined.

In this shared destiny lies maybe the only difference between the novel coronavirus outbreak and the so-called mother of all pandemics, the Spanish Flu of 1917-18.

A century ago, United Nations and its predecessor, League of Nations were still on the drawing board and everybody was left on their own.

Even within a country, different regions had different approaches on how to fight the disease. Each community acted on its own, doing as its elected officials thought best.

This approach increased dramatically the mortality of the Spanish Flu. There are dozens of examples of bordering cities with totally different outcomes.

This time, spearheaded by the World Health Organization and the United Nations, each country has adopted unified protocols of social distancing measures which have saved millions of lives.

In May, the world came together for the first virtual World Health Assembly. 194 Member States passed a landmark resolution, which recognized the leadership role of WHO and the role of the United Nations system in coordinating the comprehensive global response.

It called on Member States to implement a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to ensure a more coherent, fairer, and effective global response.

It called for the fair distribution of vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics.

Now, with the vaccines in sight, we must come together once more to ensure that nobody is left behind and that nobody will distinguish human lives between rich and poor.

And we must come together, once more to plan together the post-pandemic global economic recovery.

Ladies and Gentleman,

There are only a couple of efficient responses against the coronavirus outbreak, but plenty of possible mindsets.

We, in Albania have chosen to think that “there will be a better future”!

While enforcing lockdown measures or building ad-hoc new COVID hospitals, we have continued the vital 2019 earthquake reconstruction process. We are thankful



of the United Nations and UN Agencies for their support and targeted assistance in this endeavor.

Even with a bleeding economy, we decided to not interrupt public investments and to continue improving our infrastructure.

We have pushed even harder in our portfolio of European integration reforms.

We have engaged with all our capacities in the NATO joint support mechanism.

In this regard, we are proud that this humanitarian crisis has not turned into a security crisis.

Cooperation has worked well until now. However, we have now braced ourselves for the most crucial months ahead of us.

During this momentous time, the strength of our cooperation will determine how quickly we will defeat the disease and when our economies will start running again.

Albania fully supports today's resolution because we believe that the best way to combat the pandemic and its consequences is by laying the foundations of an inclusive, green and sustainable recovery, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

We should all mobilize for the universal and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics as a global priority.

To build back better, we must invest in resilient health systems and in pandemic preparedness.

To protect ourselves we need to protect the planet. Protecting, restoring, and sustainably using biodiversity is essential for pandemic prevention.

Together, we should ensure a better access to primary healthcare and education, including better digital accessibility for the children.

As a candidate country for a non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council for the period 2022-2023, we have placed 'gender equality and women's empowerment at the center of our strategic priorities.

Indeed, women and girls have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, but have also shown leadership by being at the forefront of the response.

It is then of utmost importance that gender equality and empowerment must be at the center of recovery strategies.

Finally, digital technologies have been crucial in fighting the coronavirus outbreak. We must focus even more on digital skills and in upscaling digital literacy as an instrument of improving social inclusion and sustainability.

Digital technologies and innovation can accelerate the process of carrying out the 2030 Agenda and must be prominent in the national and regional strategies of 're-building better'. We have put it at the heart of the Common Regional Market Action Plan for the Western Balkans, as a pillar of sustainable development.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a test of global solidarity and leadership!

The virus prospers on division but is thwarted when we unite.

Quoting WHO Director-General, “my hope is that the defining crisis of our age will likewise remind all people that the best way forward — and the only way forward — is together”.

In totally different proportions, the world we live in today is similar to the world in 1945, when the Marshall Plan and subsequently the European Union offered the only hope towards a quick recovery and a thriving future.

We now need a new Marshall plan, a concentrated and united roadmap to defeat the virus and ensure a better tomorrow.

Thank you

**Annex 72****Address by Mr. Clément Mouamba, Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo**

[Original: French]

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

On behalf of the President of the Republic of the Congo, His Excellency Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, I have the great honour to deliver the following address.

“This special session of the United Nations General Assembly on the COVID-19 pandemic, which is being held at the initiative of the Non-Aligned Movement, is timely. Indeed, it challenges world leaders and urges the international community to put an end to this scourge, which is the greatest threat to global security and stability.

“This is indeed the forum for praising this initiative and, above all, for reiterating our full support for the plans and initiatives of the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, whose leadership I commend in this effort. The WHO, with its pivotal role, is the cornerstone, led by its Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. I would like to reiterate Congo’s support for his efforts.

“The virus that led to this global scourge that has claimed the lives of nearly 1.5 million people is a major destructive force in the year 2020. It will have ruined so many efforts, jeopardized so many projects and upended so many certainties.

“The pandemic has invaded all regions of the world, sparing none of our States, with tragic economic, social and human consequences.

“Given the tragic context, in which the international community, as a whole, must face this global challenge, we must, more than ever, reaffirm and strengthen the central role of the United Nations in taking coordinated global action to address the pandemic and its consequences.

“Mr. President,

“My country’s first case was recorded on 14 March 2020. As of 25 November 2020, we had 5,774 confirmed cases, 5,003 recovered cases and 97 deaths — a case fatality rate of 1.6 per cent.

“To prevent a spike in the number of cases, various initiatives have been implemented. They include border closures, nationwide lockdowns, a curfew that remains in effect, quarantine at appropriate sites for those traveling and proof of a negative RT-PCR test within 72 hours prior to departure.

“The health measures taken by my Government have limited the spread of the virus among the various segments of the population. Regrettably, they have had a negative impact on the economy and have lowered the living standard of the poorest segments of the population.

“Mr. President,

“At a time when the prospect of promising vaccines gives us reason to hope that humankind will soon have the means to defeat the tragic reality of the pandemic, the word solidarity, against a backdrop of multilateral cooperation, has never sounded so loud.

“It is here that we should take on board the relevant conclusions of the G-20 summit, held on 21 and 22 November 2020 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. I welcome the commitment of G-20 leaders to mobilizing resources to address urgent financing needs in the global health sector to support the research, development, manufacture and distribution of safe and effective diagnostics, treatments and vaccines to fight COVID-19 and ensure their universal, equitable and affordable access for all.

“I note, in particular, their commitment to supporting the most vulnerable countries, in particular in Africa, in their fight against the pandemic, as well as the G-20 moratorium on debt servicing, which we hope will be extended beyond June 2021.

“Mr. President,

“My country is particularly interested in the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), the GAVI Vaccine Alliance and the World Health Organization, for the implementation of the COVAX Facility, which enables countries eligible for official development assistance to receive a coordinated and efficient supply of a COVAX vaccine as soon as it becomes available.

“Congo is strongly committed to acquiring the COVID-19 vaccine and looks forward to participating in the COVAX Facility, with the support of the GAVI secretariat.

“Regional and subregional cooperation complements global partnership and international cooperation in the fight against the pandemic. It is on that basis that the eighth International Conference of the Great Lakes Region, which I had the honour of chairing, was held on 20 November. Its theme was ‘The COVID-19 pandemic: a political, economic, security, humanitarian and environmental issue and public health emergency for the Great Lakes Region’.

“The Conference led to recommendations that help strengthen regional cooperation in the fight against this scourge. Among other things, the recommendations included strengthening cooperation and partnership in the response to COVID-19 and stepping up advocacy with international financial institutions and partners to mobilize the necessary resources to help the region address the COVID-19 pandemic and move towards stabilization and sustainable development.

“Congo’s commitment to the fight against the pandemic is a priority at the highest level of Government. However, solidarity and international

cooperation remain the keystone of success in this war, which we must continue to wage together, in a coordinated and resolute manner, both within our borders and at the regional and global levels”.

Here ends the statement.

I thank you.

**Annex 73****Address by Mr. Abdelaziz Djerad, Prime Minister of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**

[Original: Arabic]

Mr. President,  
Secretary-General,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to begin by conveying greetings from the President of the Republic, Mr. Abdelmadjid Tebboune. This meeting is being held in unprecedented circumstances marked by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating health, human, economic, financial and social impact. That is why, as I begin my statement, I must commend and thank all health-care workers around the world. These heroes have demonstrated their commitment, made considerable sacrifices and persevered in the face of the crisis.

I would also like to pay tribute to the memory of all the victims of this health crisis and ask Almighty God to heal all those infected with the virus.

I would like to laud the central role played by the World Health Organization in providing support to States in these particularly difficult circumstances. This organization has worked tirelessly to coordinate international efforts to combat the disastrous consequences of the pandemic. The very nature of this global tragedy and its consequences, which have spared no one, demonstrate how important it is for us to unite our efforts and strive for all possible synergies so as to achieve a coordinated and global solution at the earliest, enabling all countries to provide adequate health services for all their citizens.

Mr. President,

We are all aware of the gravity of the situation and the impact of the pandemic on the progress made by our populations. COVID-19 has exacerbated poverty and inequality, making the situation in some already vulnerable countries even more difficult, in particular in Africa. To date, some African States remain without the necessary resources to contain the effects of the pandemic and address pandemic-related challenges. This is yet another burden, in addition to the various crises the world already faces, such as climate change, natural disasters, terrorism, armed conflict, irregular migration and racism. This will all have a negative impact on the progress achieved by some countries on the path towards sustainable development.

The interdependence of our economies and economic policies compels us to pay particular attention to the needs of the most marginalized and vulnerable population groups. We have a collective responsibility. We must take into account the needs and abilities of all groups, without unilateral or selfish approaches, which would only deepen inequalities and lead to hundreds of millions of people caught in a never-ending cycle of conflict, hunger and malnutrition and without access to the health-care services they need. That would all be at variance with the principle of justice.

Mr. President,

From the very first COVID-19 case recorded in our country, Algeria has understood the seriousness of the health threat. Urgent precautions have been taken to address the threat and to protect our citizens. We were among the first countries to undertake measures, such as closing our borders, strengthening our preventive health-care system, adopting a flexible quarantine or isolation system, as well as adopting health protocols that enabled the continuation of educational, social and economic activities. We also allocated considerable human and economic resources to strengthening our health system to combat the pandemic by putting the human dimension at the very centre of this fight and by providing our health-care sector with all the necessary equipment. We enhanced the capacity of our hospitals to enable them to receive more patients and facilitate virus testing and diagnosis.

To address the economic impact of this health crisis, we have taken several measures aimed at stimulating the economy and encouraging businesses to continue to conduct business. One-time compensation measures were provided to assist the businesses most affected. Furthermore, we have supported small businesses and the most vulnerable and poorest groups in our population in these difficult times.

In spite of the economic difficulties that Algeria has experienced due to the impact of the crisis, which has also been compounded by a decrease in revenue due to a drop in the price of fossil fuels, we have fulfilled our commitments in the area of international solidarity. We have taken active part in various initiatives aimed at capacity-building in other countries and at coordinating efforts to combat the pandemic.

Based on this commitment, Algeria has sought to provide a financial contribution to the UN COVID-19 Response Fund, as well as African Union COVID-19 Response Fund. Algeria has also provided considerable humanitarian and medical assistance to several friendly and brotherly countries in support of their efforts in the areas of health care and development. Furthermore, a hospital was set up in Tindouf to assist Sahrawi refugees.

Mr. President,

The seriousness of the current situation and what it means for our people compels us to mobilize and coordinate all our efforts but also to strengthen multilateral action to achieve a veritable strong global partnership to put an end to the pandemic and its impact. Rapid and equitable access by all countries to a vaccine will be the first challenge to be met to put into practice the principle of solidarity. Solidarity is not simply a noble human value. It is needed to combat a collective threat that does not recognize borders and indiscriminately affects humankind.

Thank you for your kind attention.

**Annex 74****Address by Ms. Victoire Sidémého Tomegah-Dogbe, Prime Minister and Head of Government of the Togolese Republic**

[Original: French]

Mr. President,  
President of the General Assembly,  
Secretary-General,  
Heads of State and Government,

Togo, my country, would like to hail the convening of this important meeting, as it allows member States to assess the COVID-19 pandemic response.

Like all countries, Togo, too, faces the current health crisis. It recorded its first case on 5 March 2020. As of 30 November, 2,974 cases had been recorded. Two thousand four hundred and seventy-eight patients had recovered and there were 104 deaths. Therefore, there were fewer than 500 active cases. Three quarters of the deaths recorded occurred among those with prior conditions recognized as comorbidities, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity and cancer.

To contain the risk of virus spread and protect the right to life and health of all people in our country, the Togolese Government has taken emergency health, legal and socioeconomic measures.

With regard to health measures, mechanisms, such as the Crisis Committee, the National Coordination, the Management Committee, the Scientific Committee and sectoral entities, were established. Combating the pandemic brought together all stakeholders and focused on several aspects. We considered the likelihood of a rapid contagion and spread of the disease, coordinated efforts, laboratories, monitoring, prevention and control of the infection, care for those infected, quarantine and quarantine monitoring, communication and research. Health-care infrastructure was built, refurbished and equipped. The wearing of masks is now mandatory in Togo. Furthermore, special attention continues to be paid to the training, as well as the protection, of health-care workers, in particular through COVID-19 insurance, which includes life insurance and disability benefits.

Concerning legal measures, the Togolese Government was authorized by the National Assembly to take, by executive decree, specific measures were a state of public health emergency to be declared. To that end, a special anti-COVID-19 force was established. Measures to contain and protect certain local areas with high infection rates were put in place. When the situation improved in those areas, restrictions were simply lifted or relaxed.

With regard to the impact of these health-care measures on the enjoyment of rights and freedoms, provisions were made to mitigate, as far as possible, the effects of restrictions on rights and freedoms. Business and market access were supervised, but never restricted.

Concerning socioeconomic measures, specific measures were taken to assist vulnerable people. They have been provided with necessary supplies and free access to water and electricity. A universal solidarity income programme, with a



cash-transfer system — Novissi, was implemented. Moreover, specific privileges are given to our social partners and the private sector. In addition, the State has mobilized approximately 10 per cent of GDP, equivalent to 400 million CFA or \$750 million, to mitigate the economic impact of the health crisis.

All was made possible through the establishment of a COVID-19 Support, Solidarity and Response Fund, backed by resources provided by the Togolese State, funding from technical and financial partners, financial support from the private sector and national and international partners, as well as donations and bequests of all kinds.

Mr. President of the General Assembly,

At this juncture, I would like to laud all measures currently under way to facilitate the access of low-income countries to vaccines being developed to combat COVID-19. Togo fully supports the implementation of the ACT Accelerator, designed to facilitate and extend access to tools to combat COVID-19, in particular the vaccines. Togo is committed to using COVAX vaccines for the benefit of its people.

In conclusion, I would like to convey the gratitude of the Togolese Government to all partners that stood with us in the fight against COVID-19, in particular the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, UNICEF and the GAVI Alliance, and are of considerable assistance to us.

Thank you for your kind attention.

**Annex 75****Statement by Mr. Wang Yi, State Councillor, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China**

Mr. President,

China supports the UN General Assembly in convening this special session in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope that all parties will focus on the issue at hand, strengthen solidarity and expand consensus to reinforce cooperation.

The year 2020 is truly extraordinary in human history. Confronted by the sudden onslaught of the novel coronavirus, humanity has shown great fortitude and has come together to tide over the trying time, writing a remarkable chapter in history. As the world is braced for a second wave of infections, what lies ahead is a tenuous and uphill battle.

We need to act decisively to contain the spread of the virus. It is important to fully leverage the support of science and technology to strengthen monitoring and early warning, tracing and testing, treatment and quarantine, and information sharing, and to promote collective response around the world so as to curb the cross-border spread of the virus. As countries take varied approaches with different priorities, what remains central is to respect and protect every life and treat every patient with utmost efforts. Vaccines, a powerful weapon to defeat the virus, should be a global public good and accessible and affordable for developing countries.

We need to enhance solidarity and cooperation. As the virus sweeps across the world, no place is Shangri-La with absolute safety. Defeating the pandemic requires concerted efforts from all countries. The major ones, in particular, must play an exemplary role in promoting collaboration, which is the right way forward. Public health security should be made a priority on the international agenda, accompanied by efforts to improve the governance system for public health security and strengthen emergency response capacity. It is also necessary to channel more support and input to the World Health Organization so that it can play the critical leadership role.

We need to coordinate COVID-19 control and economic and social development. While the virus is likely to stay for quite some time, we must be prepared for a prolonged struggle. It means that we should reopen the economy and at the same time keep the response measures in place. We should bring out the best in both the government and the market to promote employment, ensure people's livelihoods, and enhance the resilience of development. We should make good use of the new business forms and models that took shape during the pandemic to boost emerging industries and pursue a "green recovery". And we should strengthen international coordination on macroeconomic policies to keep global industrial and supply chains stable.

We need to step up support for developing countries. This means continued help to developing countries through anti-epidemic experience sharing, material and technological support, and medicine and vaccine cooperation, as well as providing greater humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable communities. More resources should be devoted to areas such as infectious diseases control, public health capacity-building, and food security. The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and others should offer more concessional terms on financing to lessen the burden of developing countries.

We need to foster an enabling international environment for the fight against COVID-19. Countries in conflict are the weak links in the global campaign against the pandemic. Conflicting parties should actively respond to the appeal for global ceasefire made by Secretary-General António Guterres, disengage on the battleground and focus on fighting the virus. It is important to listen to the calls of the international community and remove all forms of unilateral sanctions and other unilateral coercive measures.

Mr. President,

Under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, China has all along put the people and their lives above everything else in its COVID-19 response. We have taken the most comprehensive, rigorous and thorough measures and established a mechanism to coordinate medium to long-term efforts on epidemic control and economic and social development. We have also launched the largest-ever global humanitarian campaign in the history of the People's Republic of China, engaged in the most intensive virtual exchanges, and stepped up to our responsibility as the largest supplier of anti-epidemic materials.

China will continue to provide support and assistance to countries in need. We are speeding up the phase III clinical trials of our vaccines. Once developed and deployed, we will make them global public goods and provide them to other developing countries as our contribution to building a community of health for all.

Mr. President,

As Winter has arrived, Spring is not far away. Guided by the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind, let us walk hand in hand, determined and undaunted, to get through this difficult time and embrace the dawn of victory.

Thank you, Mr. President.

**Annex 76****Statement by Mr. Ayman Safadi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan**

[Original: Arabic]

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

President of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly,

Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I greet you and may the blessings of God be upon you.

We are here today at the special session of the General Assembly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, whose harmful consequences are being felt by our peoples and States. I convey the greetings of His Majesty King Abdullah II and his gratitude for the joint efforts we undertake. His Majesty wishes to reiterate that the Kingdom will remain a faithful partner in all collective efforts to combat the pandemic and its challenges.

These challenges require an investment by all States so as to create international and regional security networks to meet basic needs, such as food, health care and education. I reiterate that the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is ready and willing to do its utmost, in particular in the areas of nutrition and pharmaceuticals, to become a regional hub for storage and supply. As recently declared by His Majesty King Abdullah II, “it is not enough to return to way it was before the pandemic. We must take this opportunity to build a better and more effective global system”.

Following on from the success of developing a coronavirus vaccine, we must now adopt mechanisms for the fair and large-scale distribution of vaccines and medicines. It is a fair moral imperative, as it is in everyone’s interest. By maximizing the likelihood of eliminating the pandemic more quickly, we will embark on the path to economic recovery.

Jordan welcomes some 3.6 million refugees, 1.3 million of whom are Syrian brothers. The Kingdom assumes this responsibility with every means at its disposal to ensure that refugees can live with dignity. With regard to the fight against the virus, Jordan provides refugees with the same services we offer to our own citizens. However, this burden cannot be borne by host countries alone. This responsibility is a collective one.

We appreciate the support provided by our international partners to help us to meet the needs of refugees. We underscore the need to continue our collective efforts to provide adequate and sustainable assistance to refugees and host societies. In so doing, we will remain able to meet vital needs. To that end, we call upon the international community to heed the call launched by UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to guarantee the financial resources required by both of these entities to ensure access to vital services, in particular given the context of the pandemic.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We face collective challenges. Our abilities to address them increase if we work together. If we work together, our work will be more effective. At the same time, we must adopt practical and tangible programmes. Working together is the way forward to combat the pandemic and its repercussions. In so doing, we will protect our civilians from its bitter and painful consequences.

Thank you. May the peace of God be upon you.

**Annex 77****Statement by Mr. Christopher Fearne, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta**

Secretary-General,

President of the General Assembly,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen

These past months have been an eye opener for us all. I believe that this year will be remembered for the hard lessons learnt, which unfortunately have come at a very high cost. It would be a disservice to all these lives lost and to all those who put so much effort into responding to this pandemic, if we did not use this opportunity for us to grow and to build back better.

We will not be overcome by the fear of the unknown that this pandemic has brought, but rather it will serve us as a lesson in humility and for us all to learn and to discover lessons that we can use for future pandemics.

The COVID pandemic has in fact put a spotlight on the resilience of our health systems. Quoting the UN Secretary-General “we are only as strong as the weakest of our health systems.” For this reason, at the onset of the pandemic, Malta sought to quickly organise its COVID pandemic public health response team and to bolster its healthcare system. This was done in parallel with efforts to reinforce the health workforce. Malta also brought in a system of thorough surveillance, broad testing across the board including screening, as well as a symptom checker app to enable citizens to be empowered in this pandemic. Malta has maintained, in fact, one of the highest testing rates globally; and today the positivity rate for COVID-19 remains at a low 4 per cent, even though we are in a strong and heftier second wave of the Coronavirus.

Months down the line, we realise that we still have a lot to learn from each other, and that this pandemic has shown that international cooperation is extremely important. It is for this reason that to succeed we need to uphold global public good above all else. The limitations in terms of public health and clinical capacity and expertise have been a problem for us all and in a small island state such as Malta they are even more pronounced. This has presented difficulties for us all to undertake COVID related research because we have concentrated so much on the doing, and not the clinical aspect of the disease, however shared experiences across countries, across regions, are therefore important for us to learn from experiences and from scientific evidence that is being accumulated across the globe.

Availability of essential items, and the timely procurement of equipment, consumables, medicines etcetera have also been a challenge, and for Malta as well. We continue to commit to mutual collaboration, solidarity and support which have been critical throughout this pandemic, and of particular significance for small Member States such as us. As pandemic fatigue begins to set in, we need to remain aware of the long road ahead. We look forward to further collaboration and a brighter future as we await the arrival of the much anticipated COVID vaccine. It is extremely important that the vaccine is seen as a global public good and is available to all peoples everywhere.

Your Excellencies,

The term “Building Back Better” has been widely used in the context of recovery. As this pandemic unfolds into an unprecedented global economic crisis, we continue to witness not only damage to people’s health, jobs and well-being, but also severe pressure on business and employment. COVID-19 has tested the way society works. It has provided challenge after challenge for governments, communities and individuals alike.

In this context, swift and strong whole of government action in addressing these challenges is essential and extremely important. Indeed, urgent and difficult decisions based on the best available evidence and taking a long-term perspective, must be taken today. The SDGs in themselves may already serve as a roadmap to guide the recovery from COVID-19, and it is worth noting that they are the closest to a global strategy that 193 governments have already agreed on.

Today, reaching out to the hardest hit, the most fragile and vulnerable populations is crucial. COVID-19 has exacerbated existing socio-economic problems. In this regard, it is vital that the international community invests heavily in building resilience, particularly to those vulnerable communities that need it most. Humanitarian actors must work closer together to strike the right balance between global and local response.

Your Excellencies,

The advent of COVID-19 on Malta’s shores highlighted the need for quick and calculated response, based on science, by all of us. As a small island state, Malta’s decision-makers are not far removed from those most effected by the decisions that we take. This is not to say that it has not been a constant challenge to maintain a balance between public health measures and to bring as little disruption to society and to economy as possible

We look forward to a ‘new normal’ where we continue to place people and families at the centre of our decisions. Although we are all hopeful that we will soon see the beginning of the end of this pandemic, its long-term consequences will be with us for a long time to come. Across countries social and economic systems need to be strategically rebuilt and public confidence restored, particularly amongst those most effected by the crisis. COVID has not spared any of us, and now is the time for solidarity and continued collaboration to emerge from this crisis stronger together — each individual’s health depends on the health of us all.

Thank you so much and good day to all of you.

**Annex 78****Statement by Mrs. Ekaterina Zaharieva, Deputy Prime Minister for Judicial Reform and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria**

Mr. President, Excellencies,

It is an honour to participate in this Special Session. The COVID-19 pandemic should alert nations to unite and cooperate, but we see a chain of new conflicts surged in 2020. Bulgaria was among the countries that endorsed the Secretary General's Call for Global Ceasefire. It is important to observe all UN resolutions related to conflicts.

Countering the pandemic should not be at the expense of democratic and civic space, the rule of law and of international commitments. We call for full implementation of the Secretary General's Call to Action on human rights. The COVID-19 crisis has particularly affected women and girls who have proved their leadership capacity being at the forefront of the response. Gender equality must be at the centre of efforts to rebuild more inclusive, equal and resilient societies.

The consequences of the COVID-19 crisis and the economic decline have particularly affected children. They now face education, food, health and safety hardships, and the risk of poverty.

Protection of the rights of the child is a core priority of our domestic and external policy. On national level, we introduced comprehensive social protection programmes and economic measures aimed at children. We welcome the efforts of UN agencies, including UNICEF's Six Point Plan to Protect our Children, in dealing with the crisis.

Mr. President,

We should be striving for an inclusive, green, and sustainable recovery, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Building back better implies investments in resilient health systems and in pandemic preparedness, acknowledging the leading role of the World Health Organization. To protect ourselves we need to protect the planet, restore biodiversity and use it sustainably. The UN General Assembly Omnibus resolution on COVID-19 called for a broad One Health approach. We view the environmental, human, animal and plant health as one system that requires concrete steps and cooperation within the UN and among all stakeholders.

Mr. President,

The Secretary-General's Roadmap on Digital Cooperation with its three pillars, CONNECT — RESPECT — PROTECT, should accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The use of digital technologies to contain the pandemic should be in full respect of all human rights, including the right to privacy and the freedoms of expression and opinion, whilst reducing misinformation, disinformation and cybercrime.

We welcome the Global Humanitarian Response Plan, launched by the Secretary General in March. Our support should reach the most vulnerable, in particular women and children, older persons, persons with disability, refugees, internally displaced and migrants, and persons earning their livelihoods in the informal economy.



We must step up efforts to ensure unrestricted internal and cross-border movement of humanitarian workers and free flow of health and humanitarian supplies, including vaccines and treatments. We strongly condemn all forms of violence, attacks and threats against health and humanitarian personnel and we call for accountability and full compliance with International Humanitarian Law in such instances. We must support the economic recovery of UN Member States. Bulgaria is part of the adopted EU strategy for green, digital, fair and resilient recovery with debt relief and investment linked to the Sustainable Development Goals. We have redirected around one million EUR to respond to the most urgent needs and the most vulnerable.

We can only succeed if we work together!

Thank you!

**Annex 79****Statement by Mr. Themba Masuku, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Eswatini**

Mr. President,  
Heads of State and Government,  
Secretary-General of the United Nations,  
Distinguished delegates,

May I applaud the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General for the timely conception of this very important gathering. Indeed, this is a strange time in our lives, where the world is grappling with COVID-19, with no certainty of its total eradication. The collective challenges we face globally are well founded but we shall not tire nor waver in packing the best punch and dealing the last blow for its elimination. This session is a clear intention to do just that.

Eswatini is following with keen interest the developing trends around the globe, as we differentially enter the so-called second wave. COVID-19 has left a devastating trail of human loss and economic destruction and altered the way of life as we know it. The anticipation of the second wave, on its own, is taking a mental turn already, particularly as Eswatini has peaked with the loss of 120 lives. Stomaching another prolonged period will, therefore, prove daunting.

Eswatini continues to work tirelessly to save lives by maximizing the resources at our disposal and the interventions that have been widely available throughout the country. The onus is on each Government to perfect those basic tasks of attending the grim possibilities of our future. Of course, our thoughts and worries are always about how our children will turn out and, equally so, if our parents will survive this torrent.

The national economy has not been spared and efforts are under way to resuscitate it by using local regional and continental approaches. For landlocked developing countries, COVID-19 was a tough proposition. Eswatini has also put together a post-COVID-19 economic recovery plan to change the course on the established economic order, salvaging livelihoods through the creation of opportunities in key priority sectors of the economy. This includes disbursing relief packages to laid-off workers. Eswatini has also created a special dispensation to disburse and subsidize the testing cost of cross-border traders, who have found it expensive to afford their frequent movements.

We are grateful that the first global COVID-19 vaccine trial to reach the final efficacy analysis indicates that a high rate of protection against COVID-19 can be achieved very rapidly after the first dose. We pray for the rapid distribution of a vaccine that will cover even the most extreme ends of the Earth.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Eswatini would like to pay tribute to all COVID-19 front-line workers, as they continue to preserve precious lives. In the same vein, we mourn the countless lives that have been lost around the world.

Thank you.

**Annex 80****Statement by Mr. Demeke Mekonnen, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**

Mr. President,

Let me begin by appreciating our leadership in convening this special session of the United Nations General Assembly on the COVID-19 pandemic. I also wish to take this opportunity to commend Azerbaijan, as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, for taking the initiative on the holding of this special session.

COVID-19 is indeed the biggest challenge of our time. It has overwhelmed health systems across the world; shattered the global economy and devastated the lives of millions of people. Without a doubt, this is a global crisis like no other and no country, big or small, is capable of addressing it alone. That is why there is need for global solidarity, more than ever before, to effectively respond to this unprecedented crisis. That is also why we need to reinforce our commitment to international cooperation and multilateralism. In this regard, the fundamental role of the United Nations system in the comprehensive global response to the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be overemphasized. It is in this regard that we very much welcome the convening of this special session and we hope its outcome will help us in charting the way forward in effectively mobilizing our collective and concerted response to this crisis.

We are certainly encouraged by the progress in the development of a COVID vaccine. We fully support the COVAX initiative and subscribe to the growing international consensus that the vaccine should be indeed a global public good — accessible and affordable to everyone, everywhere. We sincerely hope that those with resources will contribute to filling the funding gap to accelerate the development, production and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments and vaccines.

Mr. President,

The virus has already infected more than 2 million people across our continent and claimed the lives of more than 50,000 people. We continue to do everything we can, within our limited means, to contain the spread of this deadly virus and protect the lives of our people.

Let me take this opportunity to pay tribute to our health-care workers and public health officials, sanitation workers, social welfare officers and domestic workers, who are on the front lines of the fight against the pandemic. It is incumbent on us to do everything possible to ensure their health and safety.

More than the health crisis, what has actually been worrying for us in Africa is the devastating socioeconomic impact of the pandemic. Africa is indeed hard hit by the projected medium- to longer-term social and economic impact of the pandemic. It has had enormous implications for the lives and livelihoods, as well as the socioeconomic well-being, of Africans, particularly those vulnerable groups of the society who earn their living from the informal economy. This is undermining the gains made over the past decade in making a dent in poverty and exacerbating already existing socioeconomic difficulties. It is in this context that we, in Africa, need a stimulus package of at least 5 per cent of GDP, either in the form of capital mobilization or in the form of debt relief or restructuring for support for social sectors.

That is why we have been urging G-20 countries to provide an effective economic stimulus package, which includes relief and deferred payments. While we were grateful for the international response in support of Africa, which provides some relief, we believe that much more still needs to be done to mitigate the medium- and long-term impact of the pandemic on our continent.

In this regard, we appreciate the persistent push by the Secretary-General on this issue during the recently held G-20 Riyadh summit. We certainly cannot ensure an inclusive and sustainable recovery without addressing the debt emergency and protecting the most vulnerable.

Mr. President,

We believe our recovery strategy should also be green and resilient. This means it must be aligned with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and other Sustainable Development Goals. We have no other option but to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs as we strive to recover and rebuild better in the post-COVID period. We need to do whatever we can to preserve our development gains, while also making sure that the well-being of the most vulnerable sections of our societies is protected. Furthermore, it is absolutely vital that we pursue bold climate actions, alongside the ongoing concerted global effort to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The assumption of the Nationally Determined Contributions by parties to the Paris Agreement before the end of December 2020 is a critical moment for raising ambition, as well as ensuring a green recovery from COVID.

Finally, Mr. President, we are hopeful that the outcome of this special session will contribute to catalysing and coordinating a global response, based on unity, solidarity and multilateral cooperation, to the multiple impacts of the pandemic and pave the way for an inclusive, sustainable, green and resilient recovery. Let me conclude by reaffirming Ethiopia's unwavering commitment to contributing its part to the achievement of this objective.

I thank you.

**Annex 81****Statement by Mr. Marcelo Ebrard Casaubón, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Mexican States**

[Original: Spanish]

I am very pleased to be here with you. We are thankful for the invitation to attend this special session of the General Assembly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, at which we will reflect on our next steps, first, to overcome it and then to facilitate recovery and prepare for a different world from that of the past. If previously it was urgent to accelerate climate action, now we know that if we want to prevent serious future challenges, we must accelerate climate action. And there are several other things that must be done.

I welcome this special session of the General Assembly. This time I have the honour and the privilege to address you on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States — the entire region. What do we think? We think that we are experiencing a crisis never before seen, at least not in this century. As has been the case to date, the participation of the United Nations will be crucial in coordinating efforts at the global level. Several tensions exist due to economic and political competition but overcoming the pandemic and stimulating economic recovery will call for coordinated efforts at the global level. It will require stronger multilateralism and less of the attitude of every person for themselves. It may seem simple, but it will be challenging, given the public pressure for vaccines and therapeutics, not to think only of ourselves in each of our countries. But the truth is that we will not find a solution if do not unite our efforts. In other words, the less cooperation we have, the less able we will be to meet the expectations and demands of our societies.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, as I already said, it is not merely a public health crisis. It is true that, in essence, it poses a major threat to people's health and lives and to our societies, but it is also true that it has a considerable economic and social impact. And what this means is that we will fall behind — or could fall behind — in our progress towards achieving the Goals of the 2030 Agenda. That is why we must work together.

We will experience a major economic crisis. In Latin America and the Caribbean, there will be an unprecedented 9-point drop in GDP — that is a conservative number; it could be a bit higher. We also believe that, most important, poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean will increase by approximately 37 per cent, or perhaps even 38 per cent, compared with statistics prior to the pandemic.

We must also reflect on its impact on gender. Gender disparities are more acute and inequality in general among sectors is also becoming more pronounced throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. This therefore calls for greater multilateral efforts, which, in essence, means that developed countries, with the majority of financial and trade institutions, must decide to commit to sharing resources so that economic recovery programmes do not serve only the countries that prepared them but can benefit other countries through coordination and cooperation. It has occurred on other occasions, for example with the G-20 — the Group of the 20 largest economies of the world — and with other initiatives. There is, therefore, no reason for us to not take similar steps now.

In other words, if there is no coordination of financial resources and no decision is taken to share resources and reduce risks for countries that are more vulnerable, global economic recovery will be very difficult. The same goes for the pandemic itself and vaccines and treatments currently available today.

We in CELAC believe that an agreement must be reached on existing debts. In other words, above and beyond cutting interest rates and implementing broader measures to reduce the debt burden, which will be even more relevant for the poorest countries, with the least income, we also believe that new financial instruments must be designed, or existing instruments used in another way so that we can reduce the interest rates of middle- and low-income countries in comparison with those of the rest of the world.

In other words, very low rates are available in developed countries but are not extended by financial institutions or banking systems to least developed and developing countries. That is another issue that must be addressed. As I said before and as we in Latin America and the Caribbean believe, high-income countries can establish effective financial cooperation mechanisms. The current cooperation architecture will not be enough.

As I already mentioned, and it is very clear, what we are experiencing today is a far-reaching crisis, with a very different scope. The sooner we act, the better. The same is true regarding the health issue. The sooner we act, the less damage is done and the better the outcome. We must consider what will happen to our senior citizens, people with disabilities, young people with low income, the non-mechanized agricultural sector and at-risk systems. We should consider the disadvantages of the growing gender gap. That is why we believe that something greater is required -- a commitment with other stakeholders. That is the way we, in Latin America and the Caribbean, see it. We will do what we can with the resources we have available.

With regard to treatments and vaccines, as we see now, it is true that there is a multilateral international instrument — COVAX — and we welcome it. Latin America and the Caribbean welcomes access to vaccines through this mechanism. We would like to make it stronger and extend it to therapeutics so that we can reduce the number of lives lost. It has been a very sad year for us all. We have lost relatives and friends. Every country in the world has suffered, as evidenced by the various statistics. Thousands of human lives have been lost this year. That is why we must work together to reduce the lethality of the pandemic.

The World Health Organization has played a major role, which we must continue to support. CELAC thanks the United Nations, and in particular the World Health Organization, for its role and work. We are willing to work on specific measures, some of which have already been mentioned. Our region is prepared to respond to the United Nations call to act as a team so that we can open a space for international solidarity that will enable economic recovery, social well-being and hope for the future. New opportunities will then emerge. We hope that multilateral cooperation and action will continue. Latin America and the Caribbean stands ready play its part.

Thank you very much.

**Annex 82****Statement by Mr. Péter Szijjártó, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary**

Dear Mr President of the General Assembly and Dear Colleagues,

I regret a lot that we cannot come together personally, but I really appreciate our Azerbaijani friends' initiative of this meeting — the agenda of which is unfortunately very timely, as the world is facing multifaceted challenges since the global pandemic puts the health, the lives and the jobs of the people at risk.

This sentence shows that we, the states of the world, do face a dual challenge: the pandemic is a health care crisis and causes an economic crisis as well, and our obligation, the obligation of the governments is to address both of these challenges, simultaneously. On the other hand, we do have to draw the necessary consequences and conclusions as well.

Let me first address the health-care related part of the challenge.

The most important obligation of ours is to avoid that some of our citizens, or even one of our citizens remains without treatment. We have to make sure that everybody is being treated properly, everybody gets the proper treatment — either in hospitals or by doctors at home. Unfortunately, we have seen that this challenge is becoming more and more serious in the largest and the richest countries as well.

In the meantime, we understand that protective equipments are becoming more and more important. And one of the conclusions of the crisis is that the country which is able to establish its own capacities to manufacture these protective equipments — including masks, protective suits for the doctors and the ventilators — that country is becoming less defenseless and is becoming more prepared, taking into consideration the crisis. We remember that during the springtime, the whole world was lining up in China and wanted to buy protective equipments there. We, Hungarians were successful enough to establish an air bridge with the People's Republic of China through which 185 aircrafts have delivered protective equipments to Hungary; but now, we are able to produce a certain amount of masks and ventilators in the meantime.

The second part of the challenge is the economic one.

We understand that a global race has been kicked off, has been launched for the redistribution of the global economic capacities. A new age of global economy has started. We have entered into this race — and we decided not to finance the unemployment, but to finance the fight against unemployment. And in this fight, those companies are our allies who make brave decisions to invest under the current, very complicated circumstances as well, in order to enhance competitiveness, in order to increase the technology level and to avoid any kind of layoffs. More than 1,300 Hungarian companies decided to invest altogether almost 3 billion Euros and to save 270,000 jobs with more than 1 billion Euros of incentive by the Hungarian state. These companies are our allies and we have to help them in order to avoid layoffs through which we can save the jobs of the people — and let us not forget: it is not the aid but jobs which give a long term, predictable environment for our people. And we continue to reduce tax rates, we continue to decrease the tax burden on labor — because this helps.

Unfortunately, we have experienced that it is fake news, double standards and hypocrisy which are spreading even quicker than the virus — and we have to step up against all these, because these might decrease the efficiency of our protective measures.

We all know that the best solution would be the vaccine — but the vaccine must not be a political issue — and we should not allow the economic and business lobbies financed by certain companies to put pressure on politicians, or political parties, or governments in favor or against any certain and concrete vaccine. Our obligation is to ensure the earliest and the safest supply of vaccines for our people.

I think this challenge and this crisis gives a unique opportunity to rebuild cooperation between West and East. This is the right time to do so based on mutual trust, mutual respect and respect towards international law. This is the responsibility and the opportunity of the strongest powers of the world.

We cross fingers that this would also succeed.

Thank you for your kind attention!



**Annex 83****Statement by Mr. Alexey Tsoy, Minister of Health Care of the Republic of Kazakhstan**

[Original: English and Russian]

Dear Mr. Chairman,

Dear Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

Dear delegates,

Let me welcome you to the 31st Special Session of the UN General Assembly dedicated to countering the COVID-19 pandemic on behalf of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan and on my own behalf.

The Head of State Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the 75th session of the UN General Assembly noted that the protection of public health is one of the key priorities, which is given special attention by the country's leadership, and the importance of creating a global health care system with the support of developed countries and UN agencies. This became especially evident against the backdrop of a pandemic that has spread throughout the world, the victory over which is possible through joint and coordinated efforts.

I express my gratitude and appreciation to all countries that have provided humanitarian and practical assistance to the people of Kazakhstan in the fight against COVID-19 and the World Health Organization for the methodological and humanitarian assistance provided during this very difficult period.

The coronavirus epidemic has demonstrated the key importance of international cooperation, collaboration and support in the fight against infection.

Since the first weeks of the pandemic, the Government of Kazakhstan has directed all efforts to develop measures to ensure economic stability and counter the spread of infection:

- There were created the Interdepartmental Commission chaired by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the operational headquarter for COVID-19 issues chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan;

- the republican headquarters of experts on epidemiological situations was created under the Ministry of Health;

- the National Action Plan is being implemented to prevent the emergence and spread of CVI in the Republic of Kazakhstan;

- the powers of the Chief state sanitary doctor have been strengthened;

- the COVID-19 Control Center web application was introduced;

- the sanitary-epidemiological and migration control at the checkpoints across the state border has been strengthened;

- work on ensuring the availability of testing is continuing. To date, more than 3.6 million tests have been carried out, the maximum capacity is more than 71 thousand tests per day.

- in order to prevent the incidence and spread of COVID-19 among schoolchildren, from the beginning of the school year, daily monitoring of the incidence among schoolchildren has been carried out;
- In order to monitor compliance with quarantine measures in all regions, mobile monitoring groups have been created that conduct raids and identify quarantine violations;
- a two-month supply of drugs for COVID-19 was formed;
- a regularly replenished monthly stock of medicines has been formed in all medical organizations of the country in the amount of more than \$50 million;
- free outpatient drug provision for CVI patients with pneumonia was organized
- a reserve for masks and PPE was created;
- a number of measures were taken to equip hospitals — more than 1200 ambulance vehicles were purchased and 100 mobile medical complexes were delivered to the regions;
- advanced training courses were held for all medical personnel on courses in epidemiology, etc;
- 16 infectious complexes for patients with coronavirus were built that meet international standards for infectious safety. Thus, in Kazakhstan, the necessary measures are being taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to ensure the preparedness of the health care system for an increase in the incidence.

More than \$2 billion have been allocated to fight COVID this year.

Kazakh scientists have developed a vaccine against COVID-19, which is included in the WHO list, and is successfully passing clinical trials.

COVID-19 pandemic has clearly shown the need to strengthen work in providing high-quality and affordable medical care to the population at the primary care level. Thus, as part of the 73rd World Health Assembly, 194 WHO Member States endorsed the launch of the Primary Health Care Operational Framework for further promotion of the Astana Declaration on PHC. We ask countries to support and participate on 14 December 2020 in an online event dedicated to the official launch of the Operational Framework.

Dear Mr. Chair, Dear Secretary-General, Excellencies, Dear Delegates,

The fight against COVID-19 is not over yet. I am convinced that through joint efforts, a coordinated response, we will be able to stop the spread of COVID-2019 in our regions.

Thank you for attention!

**Annex 84****Statement by Mr. Ivan Korčok, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic**

Dear Mr. President,

Excellences,

Ladies and gentlemen,

As the number of coronavirus victims and patients increase around the world, I find this special session of the UN General Assembly very useful and timely. It is my belief that international cooperation and sharing of expertise and best practices are key to combating COVID-19.

Therefore, I am pleased to take this opportunity to present Slovakia's views and experience with fighting the global pandemic.

In the face of COVID-19, Slovakia regularly re-evaluates and puts in place all necessary measures — including partial lockdown, compulsory mask-wearing and travel restrictions — in an attempt to slow down the spread of coronavirus and help save lives.

In the recent weeks, Slovakia carried out a nation-wide testing of its population. Over the course of two weekends, two-thirds of the population were tested for coronavirus using antigen tests. It was a tremendous effort on an unprecedented scale. Thousands of medics, law enforcement and armed forces personnel, as well as volunteers, joined hands in an operation called "Joint Responsibility."

It has proved successful. The operation allowed for a better overview of the epidemiological situation in the country, resulting in multiple rounds of testing undergone in the regions worst hit by the pandemic.

The mass testing moreover identified over 50 thousand active cases, on top of the patients identified daily by RT-PCR tests. This approach has proven to be an effective tool to slow down the spread of the virus and reduce the number of active cases, making it a suitable alternative to hard lockdowns.

Furthermore, in comparison to nationwide lockdown, mass testing has shown to be less expensive and less harmful for the economy of our country. I am pleased to note that the positive example of Slovakia's mass testing has inspired one of our neighbouring countries to proceed with testing in a similar way.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Slovakia's dedication to a coordinated international effort to develop, produce and disseminate efficient and affordable diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines. Ensuring equitable access to these health technologies must be the utmost priority of international community facing COVID-19. In order to achieve this goal, synergy between the private and public sectors is crucial. Knowledge and good practice need to be widely accessible and prices need to be fair in order to ensure equitable allocation of vaccines.

I would like to stress that we should leave no one behind when it comes to information sharing. Every country has the right to access information and to share their lessons learnt with international partners. Experts and scientist from all around the world should be invited to meaningfully contribute to the debate and benefit from our shared experience in combatting the virus.

I must also point out that alongside the global COVID-19 pandemic; we have witnessed an unprecedented increase of disinformation and spread of hoaxes. It is essential for all local, national and international actors to fight this dangerous disinformation pandemic together and to promote verified, science-based information accessible to the public.

In my view, multilateral approach to fighting COVID-19 is the only way forward and I am pleased to share that both Slovakia's public and private sectors are actively participating in the development and sharing of health technologies and know-how on international scale.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Slovakia has contributed more than 10 million euros worth of material relief assistance and financial aid. Humanitarian contributions were allocated both bilaterally to our partners and to countries worst hit by the coronavirus, notably through the mechanisms of SlovakAid, but also through international organisations such as World Health Organization, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

COVID-19 is a global challenge that no country can fight alone; the virus knows no borders. Facing this threat requires international cooperation of policy-makers, health professionals, scientific communities, security forces and other actors in an attempt to save lives and health of millions of people.

The pandemic has accentuated the socioeconomic divides and has set back the progress in the implementation of the development goals. But it has also reminded of the importance of international cooperation and solidarity.

Let this be our lesson for the future — we need to work together to address global threats and advance the well-being of all people and the planet.

Thank you for your attention.

**Annex 85****Statement by Mr. Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia**

Mr. President,  
Mr. Secretary-General,  
Distinguished representatives,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

First and foremost, allow me to take this opportunity to thank the Republic of Azerbaijan for initiating today's special session of the General Assembly on COVID-19. I would also like to thank the Republic of Azerbaijan and Canada for their commitment and dedication in co-facilitating the intergovernmental negotiations on the modalities for the organization of this special session.

Your Excellencies,

This is a historic gathering of our General Assembly. Unfortunately, we are gathered not in New York but from our own nations, among our own people, as we face these uncharted waters together. A single virus has claimed the lives of over 1.4 million people worldwide and has plunged us into a global economic recession. It has resulted in a health, economic and social crisis: a potent concoction that, if left unmanaged, could reverse decades of progress we have achieved together in the United Nations.

I speak to you today from Malaysia, as we are also facing the devastating impacts of COVID-19 — undoubtedly the harshest we have seen in recent history — with an uncertain outlook on what the future holds for us. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Malaysia's aims were simple: to deny the virus the destruction it seeks upon us and our lives and, more importantly, our livelihoods. Our action plan has been straightforward: to secure our borders, entrench the new normal in our communities and fortify the economy for our people.

Sadly, over 300 Malaysians have lost their lives to the virus, but, in comparative terms, we have fared better than most and for that we are grateful.

Excellencies,

COVID-19 has become the defining crisis of our generation, and unprecedented times call for unprecedented measures. Our path towards a full recovery will not be linear and, at each step of the way, nations will need to balance public health fears with economic and social concerns, making trade-offs based on our unique national circumstances.

But, Your Excellencies, our national measures must be supported by a concerted global effort. Interdependency and solidarity must be the order of the day in the name of our joint destiny, our shared humanity and the value of our common hope.

The question remains: how do we get out of this? We need a vaccine, but we need a vaccine that is accessible; a vaccine that is equitable; and a vaccine that is affordable. Our stance on the matter is clear: whoever finds it must share it. It is not only a global responsibility, but also a moral responsibility. Malaysia cannot stress

that enough. A vaccine, once developed, must promote international collaboration rather than nationalistic competition.

There have been some positive developments on that front, with several companies yielding positive results, offering us a glimpse of light at the end of the tunnel. But as soon as news of vaccine breakthroughs made headlines around the world, misinformation about forced vaccinations, DNA alterations and fake accounts made the rounds. Global fears have been intensified by the immediacy of round-the-clock news and unending streams of information — both accurate and false — on social media. The chief motive of that campaign is to mislead and undermine trust in medicine when it matters most and ultimately prolong the pandemic.

It is simple: misinformation costs lives, especially as we are preparing national vaccination plans for our people. Public awareness on the need to vaccinate is crucial to prevent a climate of fear and division during the rollout phase. Anti-vaccination propaganda is not new and is merely symptomatic of a larger issue at hand, namely the erosion of trust in authorities and experts and science denialism. Negativity as a result of such propaganda must be addressed head-on. It would be a tragedy, in our eagerness, if dangerous supporters campaigning against the whole concept of vaccination be left to flourish, risking damaging influence on the masses and threatening millions more lives.

As much as COVID-19 presents itself as invincible enemy, the dangers of misinformation are real, presenting a setback to the progress we have made thus far.

Excellencies,

Malaysia remains committed to working together with the United Nations and all its Member States. Multilateralism will continue to deliver for us and all nations. It may not be perfect, and much remains to be done, but in facing humankind's common challenge, working hand-in-hand is essential for us to advance our shared interests. Tragic as the consequences have been — and we may not have seen the worst of it yet — we must remain vigilant in our efforts, determined to do anything in our power to work with each other to overcome the deadly virus. Togetherness, unity and progress. Those are our values. Those are the ties that bind us together to make the right choice for the future, a choice worthy of the people's trust and our times.

I thank you.

**Annex 86****Statement by Mrs. Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia**

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Three months after our leaders addressed the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session, the end of COVID-19 is still nowhere in sight. Global cases of COVID-19 continue to rise at a rate faster than ever before. While recent news on the progress of vaccine development is encouraging, our work is far from over. The next step is to ensure that it can be assessed and fairly distributed to all.

However, developing countries are again at risk of being left behind due to the lack of capacity of their health systems and infrastructure in producing, distributing and administering the vaccine. As an example, a McKinsey report reveals that existing infrastructure can deliver vaccines to only one third of the global population in developing countries, thereby risking denying access to two thirds of the world population to any COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccine discovery is not an end in itself. There is much more ground we need to cover.

On that note, I have three points to convey.

First, we must go beyond political commitment. In the short term, multilateral efforts towards a fair and equal distribution of the vaccine must continue to be supported, for instance, the COVAX Advance Market Commitment and the ACT-Accelerator. Indonesia is pleased to support the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, or CEPI, as part of our commitment to vaccine multilateralism. The next immediate challenge for the United Nations is to help countries in developing capacity, both in terms of infrastructure and human resources, to distribute and administer the vaccine.

My second point refers to the importance of capacity-building for national health systems. During his address at the United Nations General Assembly, the President of Indonesia underlined the importance of resilient national health systems as the bedrock for a resilient global health system. We must work to address the inequalities of health systems around the world so that we can deliver to our people and withstand the threat of future pandemics. In the long run, developed and developing countries must work together to build health industry capacity, which can be done by creating an ecosystem for research and development, the transfer of technology and industry collaboration. We must also encourage a multi-stakeholder approach by connecting medical needs on the ground with research and industries. That way, we will be able to increase health resilience both nationally and globally.

My third point concerns the importance of strengthening global health governance. I remember telling my good friend, Mr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, that “the WHO is not perfect, but it remains our best hope to coordinate action against health crises.” Therefore, we have no other option but to strengthen its capacity. The multilateral mechanisms that we have developed during the pandemic must continue to progress, even when the pandemic is over. The COVID-19 technology access pool, the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator and the COVAX Facility initiative shall be the template for our future resilience.

Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

This fight is far from over, but by joining hands we can continue to weather this crisis and build back better together.

Thank you very much.



**Annex 87****Statement by Ms. Marise Payne, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Australia**

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to profoundly test us all. There has been no more important time for United Nations Member States and partners to share our experiences and enhance our collaboration.

Australia is battling the pandemic with great determination. With a strong economy and public health system, Australia started from a position of strength. As a large, open Federation, we had the challenge of managing multiple borders and coordinating multiple layers of Government. In true Australian spirit, we pulled together. We acted quickly and decisively, driven by expert scientific evidence. Our principles have been focused on three areas: border control and quarantine and contact tracing and testing, as well as proportionate social restrictions, upscaling the integration of health protection, primary care, aged care, mental health, hospitals and research — a systemic shift. Australia has also established a national cabinet led by the Prime Minister and including state and territory leaders.

As a result, Australia has been able to prevent wider spread of the virus and substantially contain the pandemic. It has been Australia's single largest public health undertaking and achievement to date. At this time of need, Australia has stood by and with our neighbours. We have faced the COVID-19 crisis in partnership. Through Australia's COVID-19 development strategy, Partnerships for Recovery, we have transformed our development programme to respond to COVID-19.

For our family in the Pacific, Australia has distributed PPE and critical medical services, bolstered essential services and supported the Pacific humanitarian corridor to keep essential supplies flowing. For our partners in South-East Asia, Australia has supported planning for economic stimulus, remote learning for children and a pathway to economic recovery.

The world is looking with hope to a vaccine as the bedrock of our shared recovery. Our region is no different. Australia has taken a strong role in supporting our region to access safe and effective vaccines. We are the Vice-Chair of GAVI and we have contributed \$80 million to the COVAX Facility Advance Market Commitment. Additionally, and importantly, we will provide a further \$500 million to the region of the Pacific, Timor-Leste and South-East Asia to access and deliver safe and effective vaccines.

We are also working closely with international partners to combat disinformation. Clear and credible information is vital to response efforts.

On the global front, Australia recognizes that our ability to recover and thrive is deeply connected to the success of others. Australia is an open-trading nation full of citizens who love to travel and connect. Our commitment to open markets is as strong as ever, notwithstanding the challenges of COVID-19. We have continued to work with partners to forge a foundation of rules, including the signing of the landmark Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. Australia's commitment to an international rules-based order is clear and consistent.

Whether in the United Nations, the G-20, the East Asia Summit, APEC or the Pacific Islands Forum, countries have come together to tackle the crisis. I acknowledge the importance of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response. I also note the World Health Organization's strong operational response in the Indo-Pacific region. We now have a window of opportunity to learn, to strengthen our collective ability to respond to future health crises and identify the zoonotic source of the virus. The Independent Panel's findings will be critical to that endeavour.

Collectively improving our global institutions and our domestic defences will help to prevent future health crises that undermine social cohesion and damage our economies. The year 2020 has been a difficult one by any measure. By working together, we can get on the road to recovery and stay on it.

**Annex 88****Statement by Mr. Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore**

Mr. Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

COVID-19 has taken more than a million lives globally and many more remain at risk. This pandemic has raised profound doubts about the level of support for the rules-based multilateral system, precisely when we need it most. As each country struggles to manage the challenges thrown up by COVID-19, this special session is particularly timely and relevant.

Despite the recent positive news on several COVID-19 vaccine candidates, the social and economic devastation will take years to reverse. No single country can solve all the complex challenges associated with COVID-19, including vaccine development and distribution. That is precisely why Singapore has championed vaccine multilateralism.

We have been an early supporter of the global COVAX Facility. With Switzerland, Singapore co-Chairs the Friends of the COVAX Facility informal group in support of the Facility's objective of equitable global access to a pool of safe and efficacious COVID-19 vaccines. I am also delighted to announce that Singapore will contribute \$5 million to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment to support, in particular, the participation of low- and middle-income countries in the COVAX Facility.

Singapore is also honoured to represent the members of the Forum of Small States at the Facilitation Council of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator. We will ensure that the perspectives of small States are reflected in the Facilitation Council's deliberations to accelerate the development and production of, and equitable access to, COVID-19 diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines. There is no doubt that small States and especially small island developing States will need help in gaining equitable access to the vaccines.

We must continue to support a diverse portfolio of vaccine candidates. The early vaccine candidates, no matter how efficacious, will not be enough. Even if access can be guaranteed, many will face challenges with the logistical requirements of vaccine distribution. It is therefore important to provide capacity-building and technical assistance to all small and vulnerable countries on issues including cold chain management.

With that in mind, Singapore worked with a group of countries to issue a joint statement on open markets, the flow of essential goods and supply chain connectivity at the United Nations in May, which was co-sponsored by 175 countries. The key message is a simple one: to emphasize the importance of keeping supply chains open and flowing so that all countries can access the essential goods that we need for our people. We must also contribute to upholding global supply chains in order to mitigate the widespread disruption to the global economy. We also need to work together on safe travel protocols to chart out the path to a new normal and we must continue to use all available tools to stop the spread of COVID-19. Whether through testing, tracing, treatment, rules on masks, hygiene or social distancing, we must

each play our part to break the circuits and chains of transmission and work together in solidarity.

Excellencies and colleagues,

COVID-19 has evolved into a broader crisis that has damaged the world economy and the fabric of all our societies. It has set back the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and could potentially derail the 2030 Agenda. We have to work together, share the lessons learned and mobilize international financing to build back better. This crisis exemplifies the need and the opportunity to strengthen our global institutions, including the WHO. We need to learn the right lessons from this pandemic to prepare ourselves for the next one, for there will be a next one. We need strong multilateral institutions to deal with global problems. That is why Singapore welcomes this special session, which we hope will galvanize the international community to unite in action to beat the pandemic and build a better and more sustainable world.

Thank you all very much.

**Annex 89****Statement by Mr. Myint Htwe, Minister for Health and Sports of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar**

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Myanmar is addressing the COVID-19 pandemic using an all-Government, all-societies approach. We have experienced positive as well as negative impacts. We have tried to enhance the positive impacts while trying to reduce the negative ones.

I am going to talk from the perspective of the health domain only.

The present situation is an unprecedented and unexpected scenario, so we cannot carry on with business as usual. We have to use innovative approaches and think outside the box. One important issue is that all decisions are time-sensitive, so we have to act very quickly to prevent the spread of the disease.

We have a national-level central committee on the prevention, control and treatment of the coronavirus disease led by Her Excellency the State Counsellor and composed of her ministers. We formed the committee at the very beginning of the outbreak. We have another high-level committee focused on COVID-19 containment and emergency response led by the Vice-President. Those two committees are crucial in managing the pandemic in real-time phases. We have also established a COVID-19 command centre to coordinate central, state and regional hospitals and public health sites. We have also developed a COVID-19 information system, as it is very important to have synchronized coordination among the various players. It is somewhat like the central nervous system of a human being.

We also hold regular Zoom meetings as well as web-based training programmes on COVID-19 that we conduct regularly. We also issued SOPs and guidelines on various issues that were distributed electronically in order to reach every level of the health-care delivery system. We also developed an information-seeking unit to collect the latest happenings from a clinical, public health and vaccine perspective from the WHO, the CDC, research institutes and government news agencies.

We have implemented certain unique features in order to reduce the negative impacts of COVID-19 in my country. Her Excellency the State Counsellor has held several real-time video conferences with public health-care providers, volunteers, discharged patients, members of Parliament, local authorities, state and regional directors, chief ministers and ministers. Her Excellency the State Counsellor also led a homemade cloth mask competition through social media and national TV to stimulate awareness on the importance of mask use. The State Counsellor herself demonstrated the correct handwashing method, which is aired on national TV channels regularly. We also air the daily COVID-19 situation on national TV, as well as on social media and ethnic language radio programmes, to raise awareness of COVID-19 from various perspectives, which is very important.

We have also established new community-based quarantine centres and facilities, anosmia centres and COVID-19 medical centres. An important detail to mention is all board and lodgings are free of charge. All management and treatment of COVID-19 patients is free of charge. All laboratory testing for COVID-19 is free of charge. The funds for that are supplemented by United Nations agencies, the

global fund known as GAVI, the Access to Health fund, Japan, Korea, China, India, Thailand and Singapore, inter alia, as well as local entrepreneurs and well-wishers in my country.

There was no significant outbreak of COVID-19 after the general election on 8 November. The State Counsellor herself gave specific guidance from a health perspective. We are currently conducting a countrywide mask campaign, distributing masks, face shields, pamphlets and hand-held speakers to increase our health literacy level on COVID-19 in order to successfully cut the transmission chain.

One unique feature of Myanmar's response is that all ministries are involved at various levels throughout the country. In other words, we are taking an all-inclusive approach. However, there are certain challenges that we have yet to overcome. Ensuring that people are abiding by the dos and don'ts of preventing COVID-19 is the biggest challenge we face. We also need to increase our testing capacity.

We must terminate the pandemic as soon as possible to avoid a socioeconomic downturn and the stagnation of the country's overall development. However, we will do our utmost in order to reduce the negative impacts and increase the positive impacts of COVID-19.

Thank you very much.

**Annex 90****Statement by Mr. Nikolaos-Georgios Dendias, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Circumstances dictate, unfortunately, that today we must address such a serious topic as the COVID-19 pandemic through recorded messages. It is almost ironic that our interactions within the framework of the thirty-first special session of the United Nations General Assembly have been limited to a rather impersonal exchange. That is precisely due to the need to protect ourselves and, of course, others from the pandemic. However, even our virtual presence sends a clear message to the international community, as well as to our home countries — a message of unity and a message of truth.

The cross-border transmission of viruses and their dispersion within national borders have brought to the fore a situation that has been always been around. The fact is that, most unfortunately, we were slow to hear the wake-up call of previous pandemics, especially during the past two decades. The health, economic and social repercussions of COVID-19 and even its impact on simple issues of daily life are more than evident, everywhere.

At the same time, we need to underline that ongoing armed conflicts only make efforts to contain the virus more difficult and less effective. In that vein, we once again add our voice to the call of the United Nations Secretary-General for a global ceasefire.

Regrettably, the past century's model was built on the premise of national action, with only a marginal degree of international cooperation. It is clear that such a model does not correspond to the current unprecedented conditions in our interconnected and independent world. There is an undeniable need for States to grasp the new reality and get down to working together and with the relevant entities, especially the World Health Organization. We should concentrate our efforts on assessing the facts and, where necessary, ushering in the reform of the World Health Organization.

It is equally important that we do not miss the big picture, which is best described through the logic of the One Health approach. The notion describes the need for a common understanding of the fact that human health, animal health and plant health form the unbreakable chain of parameters of the same equation. If we wish to solve that equation, we need to take all of those things into account. The World Health Organization, together with the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Organization for Animal Health, are important pieces of that equation going forward. We need to support and strengthen them within the more general framework of the United Nations system.

Safeguarding equitable access to the vaccine as a global public good and unimpeded treatment of COVID-19 should constitute key elements in the foundation of tomorrow's health architecture. Ensuring the necessary funds to allow economies to restart and societies to remain stable is a crucial point in the equation. The pandemic will have helped our international system make a significant leap forward if, by its end, we have all realized and agreed that effective multilateral action is the only answer to the collective challenges of the twenty-first century.

I wish to conclude by paying tribute to doctors and health-care workers all over the world for their selfless offering to humankind.



**Annex 91****Statement by Mr. Jan Blatný, Minister of Health of the Czech Republic**

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to address such an important body as the UN General Assembly in my capacity as Minister of Health of the Czech Republic.

This very difficult year is designated the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife. That is why I want to start by expressing my personal and sincere gratitude to nurses and other healthcare workers around the world for their tireless efforts and hard work day and night when providing care for COVID-19 as well as all the other patients around the world.

After years of paying attention to NCDs, we have been reminded that infectious diseases and epidemics still represent a significant health threat. COVID-19 took the international community by surprise. To avoid similar surprises in the future as much as possible, we need strong multilateral cooperation, compliance with international obligations and sharing of experience, information and best practices.

Building resilience at all levels is a key factor in preventing disease. Protecting and promoting health in everyday life of each community is a key in supporting health systems and fighting against diseases in my country as well as around the world. We are all on board of the same ship!

I want to make an appeal to political representatives and international bodies not to turn away from the principles of solidarity. The international community shall reiterate its commitment included in the Sustainable Development Goals — to leave no one behind. Each and every country in the world has to be provided with the support it needs. We must continue in dialogue with every interested party, and to learn from all those who have the expertise. The motto “No one is safe until everyone is safe” should not be just an empty phrase.

Today, after almost one year spent fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, we know more about preventive measures that should be implemented, we have learnt a lot and the progress made by science is incredible. But despite that, we are still facing the COVID-19 pandemic!

This shows us that we have to work further to raise public awareness about strategies that are necessary to address the pandemic, as well as on fight against the massively spread disinformation. Only awareness-raising campaigns and clear communication, in combination with a strong political commitment at the highest possible level can bring us results and lead to mitigation of COVID-19 pandemic. The fact that every country in the world deals with COVID-19 unites us and provides us with a rare opportunity to team up on this issue.

Moreover, we cannot forget to learn from mistakes made. The pandemic has reminded us how crucial it is to secure key drugs for patients and appropriate protective equipment for health care workers. Thus, we should not accept any restrictions imposed on trade with medicines and other life-saving goods anymore.

This will be, indeed, of the utmost importance once a safe and effective vaccine is available.

Besides the fight against COVID-19 itself, we have realized that the current situation has imposed a real challenge on the whole society and healthcare services. I strongly believe that finding the right balance between responding to the pandemic and ongoing provision of healthcare services is one of the most serious obstacles we are currently facing.

The humankind has never been in a better position to tackle the pandemic than we are now. We are living in the era of big opportunities and great tools that support international cooperation more than ever. International environment provides access to an unprecedented scale of tools such as ACT-A or WHO Partnership Platform that can help us to achieve our common goal — defeat the pandemic and prepare for future challenges. We cannot afford to miss this opportunity.

Thank you very much for your attention.

**Annex 92****Statement by Mr. Saeed Namaki, Minister of Health and Medical Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran**

Honourable Secretary-General Mr. Guterres,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to extend my appreciation to the United Nations for holding this high-level special session in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in order to share our experiences and demonstrate the utmost level of commitment to curbing the disease that has badly impacted the globe over the past 11 months.

Since the beginning of the outbreak in Iran, in accordance with our whole-of-Government, whole-of-society approach, a national committee to manage COVID-19 was established under the chairmanship of President Rouhani, with the full support of the Supreme Leader, to utilize all capacities at the national level to monitor the disease and endorse strict public health measures to curb its spread. Accordingly, our strong PHC Network was not only the core of three rounds of screenings through electronic health records, but we managed to sustain essential health services to ensure that maternal and child care, immunization and tuberculosis and HIV case management were provided and, as a pioneer in NCDs management, to continue health services for chronic patients and mitigating risk factors.

The Government, despite all restrictions due to unlawful and unilateral sanctions, has provided special financial packages for poor and marginalized populations; offered economic support measures, in particular to small businesses; and implemented testing and treatment coverage programmes for 3.5 million legal and illegal African immigrants. We have taken additional environmental health measures at our borders with neighbouring countries in accordance with the IHRs of 2005, which require substantial support from Member States to maintain normal trade.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The COVID-19 pandemic swept severely across the world, providing many lessons to be learned nationally, regionally and globally, which demonstrated the unpreparedness of the global community to deal with a pandemic. Global preparedness and emergency response must be at the forefront of the agenda of governments and international agencies for decades to come. Leadership, solidarity, intersectoral collaboration, evidence-based interventions and coordination between countries are the tools needed to manage the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, we need to strengthen the IT infrastructure to provide more reliable data, telemedicine and tele-education in the new era. I would like to emphasize the vital importance of global solidarity and international cooperation, with full support for the WHO as the unique platform for global health activities.

To overcome this pandemic, timely, cost-effective and equitable access of all nations to diagnostic and medical equipment, medicines and vaccines are crucial, with no discrimination, sanctions or unjustifiable prioritization, as the Secretary-General has rightly pointed out.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The unilateral coercive measures imposed by the Government of the United States have negatively affected the process of combating the pandemic in my country. Unilateral illegal measures hamper the easy access of people to basic medical items and requirements, thereby endangering the health of our Iranian citizens. Medicine supply and health commodities have been targeted through tight restrictions on foreign exchange resources, even for humanitarian issues such as these.

The pandemic reminds us how much we need integrity, solidarity and collaboration at the local, regional and global levels. While we are committed to General Assembly resolutions and political declarations of UHC and NCDs, as well as communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, there is a need to revisit targets, financing and approaches in response to the pandemic, which has hit the health infrastructure, health workforce and our economies hard. I call upon international financial organizations to provide substantial financial support to Member States, regardless of political impediments.

Thank you for your attention.

**Annex 93****Statement by Mr. Abdulla Shahid, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives**

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

Distinguished colleagues,

I would like to thank the Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement for taking the initiative to convene this very important meeting. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for leading the United Nations during this pandemic of unprecedented magnitude.

Multilateralism has been the bedrock of post-war international order. For 75 years, the United Nations has been instrumental in addressing the challenges humankind has faced, from delivering humanitarian aid to responding to global pandemics; from poverty alleviation to conflict mediation and promoting sustainable development.

Today, 75 years later, this Organization is once again being tested by the black swan event of our time, namely the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has left no country untouched, infecting more than 55 million people and claiming over a million lives. None of us anticipated the gravity of this virus, nor were we prepared for a crisis of this scale. The pandemic swept through a world in disarray, leading to catastrophic health consequences, disruption in education and the stalling of economies, pushing millions of families into poverty. The loss has been insurmountable.

Mr. President,

When COVID-19 hit the Maldives in March 2020, our first priority was responding to the immediate health crisis. We acted swiftly to impose several restrictive and physical distancing measures to contain the spread of the virus. We announced a nationwide state of public health emergency, closed all Government offices, schools and universities and eventually imposed a full lockdown. We also took the difficult decision to suspend all on-arrival visas, shutting down the lifeline of our economy — the tourism industry.

Life as we knew it came to a standstill. Never before had we seen our bustling capital city of Malé so eerily quiet and empty, nor our airport without a single tourist experiencing true Maldivian hospitality. As a small island developing State that is heavily dependent on imports, the closing of our borders severely disrupted our supply chains. We therefore began to closely monitor our staple food stocks and stockpiled essential food items. Our empty luxury resorts were converted into quarantine facilities and, across the country, several flu clinics were established. Despite our best efforts, we were powerless to prevent community spread.

Mr. President,

COVID-19 has highlighted what has been abundantly clear. While all of us are affected, not everyone is affected equally. In countries such as the Maldives, where tourism both directly and indirectly accounts for nearly 75 per cent of our GDP, the loss has been incalculable. Our vulnerabilities to external shocks have been laid bare

and our economy is expected to contract by nearly 30 per cent this year alone. That, along with debt burdens, has made our position even more precarious.

We welcome the G-20's announcement of a common framework for debt treatment beyond the debt suspension. Those initiatives will greatly aid us as we embark on a path of resilience and recovery. In the same manner, we must ensure equitable access to the COVID-19 vaccine once it is ready. It is a global problem that requires a global solution. We will not be safe until every single country is free from this pandemic. However, debt relief and vaccines will only take us so far, since countries such as the Maldives need structural change, innovative facilities and greater access to sustainable and concessional financing.

That, Mr. President, must be based on a multidimensional vulnerability index. In order to ensure that our development gains over the past few decades are left intact, President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih established a national task force on resilience and recovery. The work of the task force is rooted in our firm commitment towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and ensuring that no one is left behind. Despite our best efforts, we cannot do it alone.

Mr. President,

During these unprecedented times, we must draw strength from each other and be resolute in overcoming this crisis together. We are extremely grateful to our partners and friends in the international community who have helped us so far. Those examples of international cooperation and solidarity are what will steer us to safety and ensure that we build back better and become more resilient. Indeed, the need for multilateralism has never been greater. I take this opportunity to reiterate the Maldives' call for greater cooperation in the spirit of multilateralism.

Just as the COVID-19 pandemic ignored all borders and unleashed its devastation without any regard for the responsibility or resilience of a nation, so does climate change. While our commitment to overcoming the pandemic is unwavering, combating the adverse effects of climate change, at the same time, will be a mountain that is too steep to climb. Climate change threatens our very existence. Let us ensure that building back better does not only mean fixing our economies, but healing our planet as well. Let us ensure that we build back newer, greener and cleaner.

Mr. President.

Viruses do not respect borders. The only road out of this storm is the path of collective action. We need to heed the lessons that this pandemic has taught us and fix the roof before the next storm hits. We must break the cycle of panicking then forgetting. For all of us, the principles and values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations are even more important to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic. I am confident that we will arise from this storm stronger and more resilient in order to respond more effectively to possible challenges the future may bring us.

I thank you.

**Annex 94****Statement by Mr. Nurmuhammet Amannepesov, Minister of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan**

[Original: Russian]

Mr. President,

Participants,

Allow me to share with you some information about the measures taken in Turkmenistan to respond to COVID-19. Protecting the health of the population and ensuring the safety of our citizens' lives is the main priority of our domestic policy. Under the leadership of His Excellency the President of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, the State health programme is being implemented.

From initial reports on COVID-19, the Government of Turkmenistan shouldered its responsibility by taking a serious approach to combating the novel coronavirus infection, which poses a grave threat to human health and is of great concern to the entire global community, given the balanced and consistent steps taken to counter it.

In view of the emergency caused by the ongoing pandemic in the country, comprehensive preventive measures have been taken to guard against the infection and the spread of COVID-19. There was increased staffing and equipment in the health-care sector. Preventive measures were taken, such as increased epidemiological oversight, infection control, restrictions on international travel via air, rail and road, laboratory oversight, tighter border control at entry points, management and coordination at the national level, enhanced procurement and logistics and increased medical facilities with the necessary drugs, equipment and supplies.

During the pandemic, the Government increased the salaries of health-care workers working in pandemic-related areas by 20 per cent. Together with WHO, measures were developed to strengthen international cooperation to develop coordinated steps to successfully counter the threat of the pandemic. Close cooperation with WHO regional offices and neighbouring countries, undoubtedly, helps ensure regular information-sharing on the current situation and the timely implementation of all comprehensive measures to counter COVID-19.

Turkmenistan has always advocated joint actions by countries to combat modern-day challenges and threats, including those related to COVID-19. Based on our experiences with joint efforts with countries of the region and other neighbouring States to counter the spread of infectious diseases, the President of Turkmenistan put forward several initiatives to address this threat.

At the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, the President of Turkmenistan proposed to use mechanisms for scientific research to combat the pandemic and its consequences and called for close interaction among professionals in this field to share experiences, knowledge and information on methods of treatment and prevention, the use of medicines, equipment, personal protective equipment, the development of vaccines and the establishment of an international council of medical scientists.

The United Nations and WHO play a key coordinating role in this process, which was confirmed during the online conversation with President Gurbanguly

Berdimuhamedov, UN Secretary-General António Guterres, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and WHO Regional Director for Europe Dr. Hans Henri P. Kluge to discuss the COVID-19 pandemic in the region and the measures taken by Turkmenistan to counter it.

Thank you for your attention.



**Annex 95****Statement by Mr. Luca Beccari, Minister for Foreign Affairs,  
International Economic Cooperation and Telecommunications of  
the Republic of San Marino**

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

First of all, I would like to stress my appreciation for convening this special session of the General Assembly, which allows us to express our views in this challenging time. With more than 61 million COVID-19 cases and more than 1.4 million people who have lost their lives, we are living an unprecedented pandemic crisis.

The Republic of San Marino has been experiencing one of the most severe crises of its long history, with a very high number of infections and deaths. The Government of the Republic of San Marino has issued a prompt response to the emergency, granting the right to health for every citizen and assuring adequate treatment for all. We are fighting against this new and invisible enemy through an evidence-based approach and a series of executive measures, and thanks to the tireless efforts of our doctors and medical personnel, with the cooperation of our citizens.

As other countries, San Marino, beyond the health and the human tragedy, has been experiencing negative socioeconomic consequences, due to health expenditure, social security and financial measures and to the slowdown of our economic system. In this unpredictable challenge, we are glad that our Republic found a strong sense of solidarity within the international community. In this regard, the Government of the Republic of San Marino wants to express its deepest gratitude to several countries that have shown their friendship and generosity during this very difficult time.

Mr. President,

COVID-19 knows no borders and has caused suffering and economic crisis everywhere. It has collapsed hospitals, caused the disruption of service, the closure of businesses and a spike in unemployment and has kept hundreds of millions of students out of school. This pandemic has aggravated the weakness of our society and exposed the most vulnerable groups to the hardest consequences, exacerbating inequalities within societies and countries. Furthermore, this crisis is expected to push tens of millions of people back into extreme poverty and hunger, eroding what has been done so far for growth and development.

No country can solve all this by itself. It is necessary to trust and support our multilateral system through a global renewed commitment to solidarity, unity and cooperation. We welcome the United Nations Secretary-General's initiative in coordinating the global response to the pandemic and its impact. The Secretary-General's appeal for an immediate global ceasefire, which San Marino promptly joined, is fundamental. It is indeed time to immediately stop armed conflict and dial up our efforts and energy to fight this common challenge.

I would also like to commend the Secretary-General for launching the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund for low- and middle-income countries. In addition, we are grateful for the United Nations policy brief document that has been guiding us in formulating new measures to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. We

recognize the importance of adopting a policy in favour of the most vulnerable groups in our society, such as women, children, people with disabilities and the elderly. It is critical to adopt a non-discriminatory and people-centric policy, with a gender-responsive approach and in full respect for human rights.

I would also like to emphasize the relevance of promoting accessible, timely and factual information, while strongly fighting disinformation that puts people's lives at risk. Only by working together to enhance the multilateral system will we be able to handle this pandemic. The United Nations and its agencies can play a leading role in fostering a coordinated and coherent response to the devastating health and socioeconomic impact of this crisis. San Marino supports the work done by the World Health Organization and is thankful for its role in coordinating the health response to the epidemic, the strategic preparedness and response plan and access to the COVID-19 tools and ACT Accelerator.

For the first time, the world is being united for a plan to accelerate the development of cheap diagnostics and therapeutics. We therefore need to continue to work together and with the participation of all stakeholders for a response that will guarantee universal access to treatment and vaccines. This pandemic should be an opportunity to strengthen the global health system and commit to achieving universal health coverage.

Mr. President,

This crisis has once more demonstrated our global interdependence. We will be safe only when everybody is safe. We will not mitigate nor overcome the devastating impact of this crisis unless we are united in containing and countering the pandemic through a global response that can guide us in building back better so that we will overcome this crisis and even avoid a future one.

In order to succeed, it is essential to implement our road map. The Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030 will guide the path towards our goal, ensuring that social development and well-being are fully integrated with environmental objectives. Only in this way, will we build back better, leaving no one behind, preserving our planet and creating a more resilient and sustainable future for all.

LIBERTAS

**Annex 96****Statement by Mr. Ahmed Mohammed Obaid Al Saidi, Minister of Health of the Sultanate of Oman**

[Original: Arabic]

Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I convey greetings from the Sultanate of Oman.

Since the beginning of this year, the world has experienced unprecedented circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of confirmed cases in the world has now surpassed 3 million and more than 1.5 million people have died. Our Government has taken all necessary measures to reduce the impact of the pandemic and curb the spread of the virus. We have increased preventive measures and guaranteed access to testing and treatment free of charge. We also provided assistance to the health sector, which allowed for a drop in the death rate compared to other countries.

Because of the continued spread of the pandemic and the attendant economic crisis, non-medical measures, such as lockdowns and the closure of borders and a range of activities, are now major challenges for Governments. That is why future solutions must promote preventive measures in communities and institutions so that we can live with the pandemic until a vaccine has been developed. To ensure that my country, the Sultanate of Oman, has sufficient doses of the vaccine for its population and to guarantee swift delivery of the vaccines, we have embarked on several avenues for negotiations and consultations. For example, we have had talks with the GAVI Vaccine Alliance and with individual manufacturers. We laud the role of the WHO and its efforts, through COVAX, to distribute vaccines to all countries, in particular low-income countries. This goes hand-in-hand with our national policies.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The response to COVID-19 of my country, the Sultanate of Oman, is based on the following. First, we established a committee that brings together all entities and sectors concerned. His Majesty, the Sultan of Oman, has chaired some of the meetings and reaffirmed the importance of respecting preventive measures and precautions. He reiterated the importance of living with the pandemic, while taking the necessary measures to control its spread.

Secondly, we increased the number of intake facilities and enhanced flexibility in the health-care system to enable it to treat COVID-19 cases. Thirdly, we worked with the community and promoted the role of the media at all levels. Fourthly, and lastly, we capitalized on artificial intelligence and digital progress to provide public services by electronic means.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the next phase, we will focus on reducing the direct or indirect burden of the pandemic and the mortality rate. To that end, we will continue to provide prevention and treatment services, while focusing on protecting the health of health-care workers. The vaccine will be distributed first to the most vulnerable.

In conclusion, we reiterate the importance of international cooperation and solidarity to respond to epidemics and international challenges to ensure stability, security and development for all.

Thank you.

**Annex 97****Statement by Mr. Eugène Aka Aouélé, Minister of Health and Public Hygiene of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire**

[Original: French]

Excellency Mr. President of the United Nations General Assembly,

Excellencies Ladies and Gentlemen Ambassadors,

Ladies and gentlemen,

On the occasion of this special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to the COVID-19 pandemic, Côte d'Ivoire informs the distinguished members and participants that the first case of COVID-19 on its territory was identified on 11 March 2020.

Our country has taken this threat very seriously.

Under the leadership of the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, His Excellency Alassane Ouattara, the Ivorian Government quickly developed and implemented a response plan which made it possible to contain the disease.

Indeed, thanks to this response plan based on the test, isolate and treat strategy, the country was able to respond effectively to the increase in positive case in June and July, and, since early September 2020, has obtained a rate of positive cases below 5 per cent. This response plan was financed by the State of Côte d'Ivoire through significant domestic resources, with the support of partners. It was supported by the isolation of greater Abidjan, the closure of land and air borders and the application of barrier measures.

Since September 2020, COVID-19 has remained under control in our country. This is due, on the one hand, to the closures of land borders and the strict control of tests at the departure and arrival of Abidjan airports, and on the other hand to the great mobilization of all human resources, as well as the quality of care and its free access.

As of 26 November 2020, Côte d'Ivoire has had 21,199 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 131 deaths, or 0.6 per cent of confirmed cases. The average age of positive cases is 45, and those over 65 represent 21 per cent. The total number of recoveries is 20,852, or a 98.4 per cent cure rate. The number of cases currently in treatment is 216.

The majority of cases, 97 per cent, are in the health districts of Abidjan, which therefore remains the epicentre of COVID-19.

One of the pillars of this response plan remains the follow-up of contacts. Today, only 100 people are currently followed at home, while the site for contact tracing was closed in September 2020.

In terms of sampling and analysis, some 100 rapid intervention teams (RTAs) have been set up throughout Côte d'Ivoire, half of which are in Abidjan. These RTAs are equipped with vehicles and telephones, with the geolocation of telephone calls to easily access the homes of people suspected of being infected with COVID-19. A call centre capable of recording and handling 10,000 free calls per day has been made available to the population.

Also, 13 reception and screening centres for COVID-19 have been opened in greater Abidjan to facilitate access and bring services closer to the population.

Samples for PCR tests are taken by both RTAs and COVID-19 screening centres.

The rendering of results has improved considerably, with the various applications made available to users. It is now done within 48 hours.

The number of cases of screening has been in marked decrease throughout the month of November.

A network of analytical laboratories has been set up under the technical supervision of the Institut Pasteur de Côte d'Ivoire, allowing PCR tests to be carried out throughout the country. In total, since the start of the pandemic, 214,926 samples have been analyzed.

To cope with an epidemic resumption, the Côte d'Ivoire strictly observes the warning indicators. It should be noted that these indicators have not reached the alert threshold, proving that the disease is currently under control.

Regarding case management, in total, from 11 March to 24 November 2020, 526 patients with COVID-19 were admitted to hospital, including 85 in intensive care within the health services.

It should be noted that the Ivory Coast has put in place national standard operating procedures for screening for SARS-Cov-2 infection in travelers entering or leaving the country. A negative PCR test certificate is issued to all travelers departing from Abidjan FHB airport; more than 80 per cent of people who have been tested since September in the 13 reception and screening centres have been travelers.

Faced with the persistence of the pandemic, Côte d'Ivoire plans to organize a workshop to review the health response to the COVID-19 disease this month of December with a view to integration into the routine health system .

In addition, the Ivorian Government intends to strengthen community awareness campaigns to limit the spread of the virus.

Guidelines are being developed for the use of antigenic tests, as well as the implementation from 2021 of a national SARS-COV2 vaccination plan, in light of current scientific advances.

Your Excellency Mr. President, Honorable participants,

Such is the economy of our intervention in the fight against COVID-19 in Côte d'Ivoire.

Thank you.

**Annex 98****Statement by Mr. Ernesto Henrique Fraga Araújo, Minister for External Relations of the Federative Republic of Brazil**

Your Excellency Ambassador Volkan Bozkir, President of the General Assembly,

Your Excellency Ambassador Yashar Aliyev, Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan,

Colleagues,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we know, COVID-19 has had a severe impact on societies and economies across the globe. It constitutes the most challenging crisis in recent history and we should face it without abandoning the fundamental principles of this Organization, which should be based on the efforts of individual nations acting in a concerted way.

COVID-19 must not be taken as a pretext to advance agendas that extrapolate from the constitutional structure of the United Nations system. Despite its worldwide reach, the pandemic affects individual nations and peoples unevenly. The United Nations should serve as a platform for Member States to share their experiences and practices during and in the aftermath of this crisis.

Brazil reaffirms the primary responsibility of governments to adopt and implement responses to COVID-19 that are specific to national contexts. There is no possible one-size-fits-all solution. While we recognize the mandated role of the WHO in the pandemic, we have also identified critical shortcomings in that organization that must be addressed as soon as possible. COVID-19 must lead to better multilateral institutions, which must be transparent and accountable.

We should not transfer any responsibilities from the national to the international level just to follow the nice-sounding clichés like “The world needs more multilateralism” or “Global problems require global solutions”. Clichés will not help us face the pandemic. Only national work and cooperation among nations, with international organizations serving their indispensable role as loci of coordination and providers of cooperation, will do that job.

The fight against the virus is no less critical than initiatives to mitigate its social and economic effects. We are all confronted with the difficult task of protecting the lives and guaranteeing the livelihoods of our populations, hence it is my hope that today’s debate makes a meaningful contribution in that regard.

Brazil has adopted bold actions to address the challenges raised by the pandemic and to tackle the resulting economic crisis. We are providing emergency assistance to approximately 67 million Brazilians, allowing them to cope with the pandemic and maintain their income, especially those in the informal sector and the unemployed. Our expenses to guarantee the subsistence of the most vulnerable in our population amount to more than 8 per cent of our GDP. That burden falls on Brazilian taxpayers, not on any multilateral institution.

The Brazilian economy remains resilient. Economic growth has resumed, agricultural production has achieved record levels and unemployment remains under control. During the pandemic, we maintained agricultural production, which was

responsible for feeding 1.2 billion people. Again, that was a national effort, not the result of any multilateral institution's efforts. I do not say that to blame anything on multi-lateral institutions, but rather to emphasize that national efforts and national responses, in our case, were fundamental to face the COVID-19 crisis.

Brazil has also been making continuous efforts to provide every citizen with the necessary care and treatment. The public health system ensures access to universal and free health care for all 210 million Brazilians. We believe that strengthening access to medicines, vaccines, diagnostics and other health products is key to defeating the virus and saving lives.

We recognize, of course, the importance of international cooperation. Brazil participates in several inter-national initiatives to promote the development of health technologies to combat COVID-19, such as the ACT-Accelerator, the COVAX Facility and the solidarity call to action. Brazil also signed a memorandum of understanding with the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca for the acquisition and production of vaccines, including the transfer of technology. We are investing in six domestic vaccine projects developed by universities, public laboratories and State technology companies.

The Ministry of Health estimates that Bio-Manguinhos/Fiocruz and the Instituto Butantan, two of the big-gest public research institutions in Brazil, together with domestic pharmaceutical companies that have specific arrangements with foreign laboratories, will be able to produce 600 to 800 million doses by mid-2021. With that level of production, Brazil hopes to be able to actively contribute to immunization efforts in the region and across the world.

Brazil has been working closely with neighbouring countries, especially with our partners, but also with countries from different regions to share best practices and lessons learned from the pandemic. Brazil cooperated with PAHO to train technicians from countries of our region in detection techniques for the new coronavirus at an earlier stage of the global pandemic.

Brazil is deeply concerned by the negative impacts of the pandemic on the physical and mental health of all individuals, including health workers, persons with disabilities, older persons, women, children and youth. Special measures were adopted to protect vulnerable groups, especially our indigenous population. We have adopted and implemented, in a timely fashion, a national strategy aimed at strengthening services and the prevention and control of COVID-19 among the indigenous population, respecting their cultural and geographical specificities.

In the context of the pandemic, we invested in family-oriented policies that take into account the different needs and expectations of families to promote healthy relations within the family. Brazil was a proud member of the Partnership for Families initiative, together with the United States, Poland and Hungary, and will keep championing that agenda abroad, including as a tool in the fight against COVID-19.

As the United Nations celebrates its seventy-fifth anniversary amid the COVID-19 pandemic, it is an opportunity for all nations to renew our commitment to the values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. As President Bolsonaro underscored in his statement at the opening of the general debate in September, Brazil is a founding member of the United Nations and is therefore committed to its



basic principles: peace and security, cooperation among nations, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Fundamental freedoms are not an ideology. Human dignity requires freedom as much as it requires health and economic opportunities. Those who dislike freedom always try to benefit from moments of crisis to preach the curtailing of freedom. Let us not fall for that trap. Totalitarian social control is not the remedy for any crisis. Let us not make democracy and freedom one more victim of COVID-19.

Thank you very much.

**Annex 99****Statement by Ms. Aïssata Tall Sall, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad of the Republic of Senegal**

[Original: French]

Mr. President of the General Assembly,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Heads of State and Government and Heads of Delegation,

Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN),

I would like to begin my remarks by commending, on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal, the initiative taken by Azerbaijan in its capacity as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement to convene this special session of the UN General Assembly on the COVID-19 pandemic.

The magnitude of the health crisis undoubtedly warrants our Assembly's time for solemn dialogue and reflection, as "the infinitesimally small", in the words of President Macky Sall, has dramatically challenged making progress on realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Indeed, the pandemic has already led to the deaths of 1,400,000 people and serious socioeconomic consequences, exacerbating the already-difficult conditions of certain vulnerable segments of society, particularly women and young people. We must devote special attention to them.

The health crisis also requires from us a coordinated, concerted, multilateral and inclusive response. That is what this special session is all about.

I therefore welcome the call by the United Nations Secretary-General for a large-scale multilateral response, representing at least 10 per cent of the world's GDP. The international community shoulders the responsibility to respond commensurately.

In that regard, I welcome the adoption of successive General Assembly resolutions, including on equitable access to vaccines. In adopting them, Member States have demonstrated their ability to stand together in solidarity at a time of universal vulnerability.

We must now ensure that any COVID-19 vaccine will be considered a global public good and made accessible to all.

I also welcome the Debt Service Suspension Initiative launched by the G-20, and the other major initiatives under consideration to restructure the debt of certain poor countries, especially in Africa, while prioritizing the fight against climate change.

Accordingly, I solemnly renew the call by His Excellency President Macky Sall for the cancellation of the debt of developing countries, particularly those in Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our country, Senegal, has suffered the full brunt of the consequences of the pandemic, which has affected all sectors of our national life.

For example, approximately 28 per cent of our formal businesses have temporarily closed, and 85 per cent of our households have undergone a drop in income.

However, our country has shown resilience, in particular thanks to the implementation of its contingency plan, which earned Senegal a second-place ranking in the COVID-19 Global Response Index.

That performance is due to the lessons learned from previous epidemics, including at the subregional level.

The participation of all national sectors also contributed to a great extent. Political actors, civil society, the private sector and religious and traditional leaders, among others, were all involved.

In order to confront and overcome the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Senegal has established the Economic and Social Resiliency Programme in the amount of \$1.64 billion, or 7 per cent of its GDP.

Accordingly, our country has increased the budget of the Priority Action Plan (PAP) 2019-2023 of the Plan for an emerging Senegal, now known as the Adjusted and Accelerated PAP, from 14,098 to 14,712 billion CFA francs in order to strengthen the health-care system, the social resiliency of the population and the macroeconomic and financial stability of our country.

Thanks to the robust response of the Government, a recent International Monetary Fund mission estimated that the economic contraction of 0.7 per cent predicted for 2020 could be avoided, thereby allowing growth to continue in our country into 2021.

However, this outlook will continue to depend on developments in the pandemic and the international situation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to conclude my remarks by highlighting some of the lessons I have learned from the current health crisis.

First, as the challenges of the crisis are global, the responses must also be global and provided in a spirit of solidarity. Accordingly, financing for development, in particular the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action, is urgently needed. Our country's development policies largely depend on it.

We must therefore channel investments into the basic social sectors, in particular education and health.

Secondly, we must energetically combat climate change and protect our environment.

Climate action and nature-based solutions must be reinforced in the recovery plans. In that regard, we urge developed countries to step up efforts to allocate the \$100 billion pledged through the Green Climate Fund.

Thirdly, technology transfer to developing countries, particularly in the area of digital technologies, is imperative. That was the purpose of the second edition of the Digital Forum, hosted by Senegal on 27 and 28 November, on the theme, entitled "Digital at the service of pandemic management and economic recovery".

Lastly, the crisis is a stark reminder that there is no viable alternative to international cooperation and multilateralism. We must therefore ensure that this is the case.

Those are, Ladies and Gentlemen, the thoughts that the major issue of the pandemic brings to mind for me, from which we must draw the best lessons so that we leave no one behind, in line with our commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

I thank you for your attention.

**Annex 100****Statement by Ms. Katrin Eggenberger, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Justice and Culture of the Principality of Liechtenstein**

Mr. President,

The General Assembly convenes today for a Special Session in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hundreds of thousands of people have died, millions suffer from its severe health impacts. Our economies and societies witness deep disruptions. Prosperity, equality and human rights are on the decline. This is a time when the world needs the United Nations and its promise of joint action under the common purposes of the Charter and the rule of law, and States should lend it their full political and financial support. The UN has shown leadership under Secretary General Guterres. The specialized agencies, in particular the World Health Organization, are a force for good, while far from perfect as we well know. But they are delivering and help to mitigate this crisis of unprecedented proportion. Of course, as governments we have the primary responsibility for the health and well-being of our citizens. But unless we coordinate our efforts and work together we cannot be effective. This is the true and proven value of multilateralism — it is more effective than nationalist approaches and the pandemic illustrates that very distinctly. There is no trade-off between targeted domestic policies and international cooperation when fighting a pandemic. They are both essential to succeed in this fight, as is the need for firm scientific knowledge to underpin them. To suggest otherwise is delusional.

Mr. President,

No doubt, there are important lessons-learned when we look at our responses so far. Not all measures have proven to be effective to contain the spread of the virus. Restrictions on our fundamental rights and freedoms are severe for all of us, and in some cases clearly excessive. Hunger and poverty, gender-based violence and systemic racism have increased. School closures and isolation in care facilities have disenfranchised our youngest and oldest. Democracy has come under additional threat by authoritarian tendencies and conspiracy theories. The infodemic has taken a heavy toll on our cohesion and State institutions. But we can also have confidence that our societal and economic systems work. Persistent disinformation has not proven to be a winning strategy, at least in the long run. People are demanding their fundamental rights with renewed energy and purpose all over the world. Free markets, state sponsored and private research have delivered a multitude of promising vaccine candidates in record time. The capacity of free societies and economies to innovate has rarely found a more impactful expression. Now, we need to provide equal and efficient access to the vaccines, as the public goods that they are. Nobody can be safe until everybody is safe — that is a very evident truth in a pandemic.

Mr. President,

We all have a huge task ahead of us to overcome COVID-19 and we all thirst to go back to our normal lives. In doing so, we must seize the opportunities that present themselves to bring our societies and economies in line with our generational promise to achieve a more sustainable, equal and peaceful world by 2030. The pandemic has caused severe set-backs in our progress towards the SDGs, so we must redouble our efforts. It is also evident that these 17 goals are the recipe for the world to prepare better for the next challenges ahead, be it on health, climate or other issues. In overcoming this crisis our aspirations must be broad. We need a new form

of sustainable coexistence between humankind and nature as promoted by the One Health approach and we need to strengthen the trust of the people in their governing institutions. The UN must lead the way to a better future and Liechtenstein will contribute to that effort as best we can.

Thank you, Mr. President.

**Annex 101****Statement by Mr. Sameh Hassan Shokry Selim, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt**

[Original: Arabic]

Excellencies,  
Heads of State and Government,  
Ministers and Heads of Delegation,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to underscore the importance of this special session of the General Assembly on the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic is the most dangerous global health crisis that the world has seen since the United Nations was founded 75 years ago. Its repercussions pose a threat to people's lives, hinder the economy and exacerbate challenges related to peace and security, including in several regions that were already suffering from uncertainty and instability. Such grave repercussions have shed light on the gaps in the international community's ability to address a challenge of such scope. They confirm the need to strengthen global multilateral mechanisms to take action, as well as the importance of pooling efforts and sharing good practices and expertise among peoples and States to respond to the crisis and its human, social and economic consequences.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Egypt has sought to adopt a comprehensive preventive approach to respond to the crisis and mitigate its consequences. We have used the tools and mechanisms available to us across the three health, economic and social pillars. The goal was to safeguard our people's health, as well as continue positive economic growth and address the social challenges posed by the pandemic. In that regard, we must also welcome the efforts and sacrifices made by health-care workers in Egypt and throughout the world, who often work in difficult conditions owing to the pandemic. I also welcome the role played by women in supporting the health-care system, who make up the majority of the members of that sector's workforce.

Given the centrality and importance of international cooperation which is the best way of overcoming the consequences of the pandemic, Egypt, together in cooperation with several partners, is one of the leading countries in supporting the United Nations system in its response to the pandemic. We also have organized several important initiatives underscoring the role of the United Nations in coordinating international efforts to respond to the pandemic and its various consequences.

I would like to also underscore the draft resolution submitted by Egypt to the General Assembly, which was adopted by consensus. The resolution is entitled, "Strengthening national and international rapid response to the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls". The resolution underscores the importance of plans and programmes to protect women and girls against the consequences of the pandemic. It also underscores the importance of the inclusion of women, girls, older people, people with specific needs and those who are vulnerable.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The consequences of the pandemic are affecting all peoples and countries. However, it is of great concern to see that the gravest consequences are severely impacting the weakest economies and the poorest countries, particularly in Africa. It is therefore of the utmost importance to work towards ensuring continued progress on Agenda 2063 of the African Union and funding of the Sustainable Development Goals leading up to 2030 to preserve the gains made in terms of economic growth and the decrease in poverty in Africa and the rest of the world. Egypt therefore renews its call for pooling global efforts to support developing countries and come up with economic recovery plans, including debt relief and marshalling the needed resources for that purpose. It is also important to encourage banks and institutions at the regional and global levels to provide such recovery plans. We must also attach particular importance to the needs of Africa.

Egypt also highlights the need to support the efforts made in Africa to confront the pandemic, including through support for the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and the COVID-19 Action Fund for Africa. As Egypt is aware of the importance of joint African action when faced with continent-wide challenges, it has been doing just that, and we have provided medical equipment and supplies to various African countries, as part of our contribution to the latter fund. Similarly, Egypt underscores the right of developing countries to enjoy access to any COVID-19 vaccine, which is a public good. Overcoming the pandemic does not entail only the need to come up with a vaccine, but the need to ensure that all enjoy the right to access such a vaccine. In that regard, I welcome the efforts made by the World Health Organization and other global partners related to the COVAX facility mechanism, which aims to guarantee early and equal access to COVID-19 tests, treatments and vaccines.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight the long-standing challenges that are also related to COVID-19, including climate change, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, achieving peace and security and combating terrorism. Such challenges are resulting in the deaths of many innocent civilians and exceed States' individual capacities. The pandemic has confirmed the need to work together with a common vision prioritizing the values of solidarity and cooperation and ensuring stability and prosperity for all.

I thank you very much.



**Annex 102****Statement by Mr. Daniel Ngamije, Minister of Health of the Republic of Rwanda**

Your Excellency President of the Republic of Azerbaijan,

Your Excellency President of the UNGA,

Your Excellency UN Secretary-General,

Director General WHO,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to congratulate the President of the General Assembly for his leadership and for convening this global gathering to discuss, in a special session, the responses of countries to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I wish to also thank Governments, partners, and civil society for the global solidarity expressed as we learn and apply measures to stop COVID-19.

The Pandemic has affected all of us, but has also reminded us how much stronger we are together. We have learned that this virus tested our existing health systems, and subsequently, the investments made to strengthen our health sector is a huge gain in the entire economies of our nations.

The Government of Rwanda (GoR) established a National Steering Committee which put in place a multisectoral COVID-19 Joint Task Force (JTF) to coordinate the implementation of the COVID-19 response including:

- A robust surveillance system,
- Robust community engagement activities to raise awareness on preventive measures of the disease,
- Rapid Response Teams established at Central and District level,
- Home-based care system to ensure the treatment and monitoring of asymptomatic COVID-19 cases from their homes.

As a digital-centric nation, Rwanda understands the impact of digital solutions to solve health related challenges. As such, the Government of Rwanda maximized the use of technology in:

- Surveillance and contact tracing,
- Awareness campaigns using drones,
- Home based care using monitoring bracelets,
- Visualization of data in the Command Posts to guide accurate and relevant interventions,
- GPS for tracking truck drivers,
- Robots in treatment centre to reduce contact between medics and patients, — Health Management Information System (HMIS) to communicate lab results to all concerned parties.

Additional measures were put in place, such as:

- Total lockdown at the onset of the pandemic,
- Partial lockdown in targeted districts, sectors, and villages.

For Service Delivery:

- Hospitals conducted outreaches and met patients (close to their homes) at their health centre to provide them with needed drugs to address accessibility and affordability constraints for patients under Home-Based Care or facing limitation of movement due to partial or total lockdowns.

For Health Financing:

- Agreements were negotiated with Service Providers including Health Facilities, Medical Insurances, and local administrations to make sure no one is left untreated, taking in consideration of account patients with limited capacity to pay their medical bills.

- Resource mobilization to different key stakeholders for acquisition of COVID-19 related commodities

- And E-banking or cashless methods to reduce transmission of COVID-19 virus. For Health Workforce

- Volunteers were recruited in different districts to fill the gaps

A successful national response would not have been possible without very strong leadership, a multisectoral approach and the involvement of our communities in the fight against COVID-19. Rwanda remains committed to avail its performing Immunization Program to test the safety, efficacy of a likely COVID-19 vaccine and ensure its large-scale administration. We will continue to ensure access to health services even during pandemic — as it is a basic human right we must all strive for. To conclude, I wish to emphasize the importance of global solidarity and collaboration, partnerships as well as information-sharing to enable Governments and other stakeholders to make informed decisions.

Thank you.

**Annex 103****Statement by Mr. Linas Linkevičius, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania**

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since it started, COVID-19 pandemic has swept through every part of the world, bringing a heavy human and economic cost. This crisis deepened existing problems, became excruciating to those already in vulnerable position or lacking social protection. Its global impact, while devastating, is also a stark reminder of the need for strong and effective multilateralism. The recovery of our nations is dependent on coordinated, strong, and effective multilateral response. All together we rely on international solidarity to make everyone safe.

Excellencies,

In our efforts to address this multidimensional crisis, a few elements are crucial. Firstly, as hope for effective vaccines reaching us in a few months' time is growing, we must ensure their availability and affordability to everyone. While waiting for the vaccine, diagnostics, treatment and the availability of personal protective equipment to all population groups is critically important.

Secondly, I stress the need for trusted, facts-based information. In times of pandemic, fear and uncertainty give rise to disinformation and even conspiracy theories. As we spend less time physically socializing and more time online, disinformation finds new and influential ways to disturb our collective efforts to fight the pandemic. Disinformation creates 'alternative facts' that brings instability and fragmentation in society; in some COVID related cases, disinformation is even harmful for people health and security. Additionally, it contributes to rising level of hate speech, xenophobia and attacks against minorities. We are fighting disinformation with accessible, scientifically verified information, but we need to increase knowledge in societies of how to distinguish trustworthy sources from unreliable ones.

Thirdly, commitments to human dignity and human rights should remain a guiding element in our fight against pandemic, with due consideration of how the pandemic impacts different groups of society. Reports showed that pandemic-related lockdown brought alarming increase in cases of violence against women. At the moment, we are in a midst of this year's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. It is an opportunity to develop new approaches to ensure women and girls safety in their social environment. In this respect, combatting violence against women and children in the pandemic-stressed environments should be an integral part of all relevant recovery efforts.

Excellencies,

The world after crisis will not be the same. Consequences of COVID-19 will be felt long after the virus is contained. We will need to take measures to make our health systems more resilient and responsive to prevent similar instances in the future. Health security and emergency preparedness must become an integral part of sustainable development, security, and protection of human rights. We express our

support for the World Health Organization and its role in building effective global health system.

However, COVID-19 affects not just the health sector. Its impact is felt across all spheres of life in our societies. Given the complexity and extent of the task ahead, implementation of Agenda 2030 and achieving Sustainable Development Goals gains a new importance and is a necessity rather than choice. The underlying principle of leaving no one behind is imperative. After the pandemic is curbed, we will have the momentum to mobilize our efforts for achieving SDGs.

Pandemic forced us to adopt technological solutions rapidly. After this crisis, we will need to develop these skills further — multilateral fora must be prepared to continue working in any circumstances. Lithuania supports Secretary General's Roadmap on Digital Cooperation. Technologies and digital infrastructure need to be developed and accessible around the globe; digital skills need to be improved; digital disparities — decreased.

Excellencies,

Lithuania remains committed to effective multilateralism and the efforts of the international community aimed at overcoming the multidimensional impact of the pandemic. No one can fight this virus alone. With scientific research, political will and international solidarity we can overcome this challenge.

I thank you.

**Annex 104****Statement by Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

[Original: Arabic]

In the name of God Almighty,  
Majesties,  
Excellencies,  
Your Excellency President of the General Assembly,  
Secretary-General of the United Nations,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would first like to thank His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkir, President of the General Assembly, for convening this special session to consolidate efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic at the initiative of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. We commend Mr. Guterres on his work to improve the United Nations coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Your Excellencies,

This has been an exceptional year by any standard. The world has faced a common, unprecedented challenge, namely, the spread of COVID-19. The pandemic has overtaken our world and claimed the lives of 1.5 million people in less than a year and led to 54 million cases, including men, women, the elderly, children and infants.

The pandemic has taken a heavy economic and humanitarian toll, which has disrupted lives and livelihoods and continues to do so. Despite scientific and technological progress and the invention of state-of-the-art destructive weapons in the world, the pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of the world order in the face of a virus invisible to the naked eye with regard to sounding an alarm that would enable us to set our differences aside, coordinate an international concerted response to address the health and humanitarian repercussions of the pandemic, restore economic and financial stability and develop plans to foster robust, sustainable, balanced and comprehensive growth to prevent an economic recession.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Kingdom has presided over the Group of 20 (G-20) this year in very difficult circumstances. We have taken precautionary measures to address to the negative repercussions of the pandemic. We believe in our humanitarian role. We therefore amended the original agenda of the presidency to consider the new facts on the ground. We held an extraordinary summit of G-20 leaders in March, at which we pledged to \$500 million to support the efforts to counter the pandemic and strengthen emergency preparedness. The summit decided on a number of steps, including allocating \$11 trillion to the world economy to safeguard jobs and lives and stimulate economic recovery in addition to \$21 billion to support the international efforts. The G-20 also launched an initiative to suspend the debt of the least-developed countries amounting to \$14 billion in payments due in 2021. Those funds are now being channelled towards strengthening health and social programmes.

The Kingdom, alongside its partners, also launched the initiative to submit the resolution entitled “United response against global health threats: combating COVID-19” to the General Assembly, which was adopted by the overwhelming majority of United Nations membership. The resolution stresses the urgent need to intensify international efforts to face health crises and pandemics, while maintaining economic stability, strengthening the supply chain of medical equipment, diagnostic testing, therapies and vaccines and providing assistance to the most vulnerable, particularly the elderly, women, children, internally displaced persons, persons with disabilities and refugees.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is light at the end of the tunnel as an effective vaccine appears to be attainable. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia therefore would like to stress the following points.

All countries must enjoy fair and affordable access to vaccines without discrimination. Recovery and better preparedness strategies must be devised in the event of future pandemics in order to ensure achieving the Sustainable Development Goals so that no one is left behind. The United Nations system, regional and international organizations and international financial institutions should coordinate efforts to address the economic, humanitarian, financial and social negative repercussions of the pandemic. We should work in the future on addressing the shortcomings exposed by the pandemic.

In conclusion, the world order continues to change. A better world in which security, stability and prosperity prevail will be possible through strengthened international cooperation and solidarity. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia remains committed to taking collective action and multilateralism and to working with the United Nations to address global challenges related to the maintenance of peace, stability and the prosperity of all peoples.

May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon you.

**Annex 105****Statement by Mr. Mikhail Murashko, Minister of Health of the Russian Federation**

[Original: Russian]

Dear Mr. President,

Dear Colleagues,

The COVID-19 pandemic has become an unprecedented endurance test for both individual nations and the entire global community. It is imperative to join efforts to save lives and overcome the crisis caused by the disease. Analysing and sharing national best practices to control the spread of the disease is key to improving national preparedness in responding to the pandemic.

Russia has unique experience in effectively countering the spread of COVID-19, which is reflected in the BRICS and SCO review of best practices in the prevention of COVID-19. A clear system of measures for the detection and prevention of COVID-19 and timely medical care enabled us to avoid an unfortunate situation in which the epidemic would have spread. We were proactive.

We promptly developed and implemented a set of measures to bring under control the health and epidemiological situation and activate the health-care system, including support for medical personnel. In Russia, a number of innovative treatments have been developed and registered, including, most important, two COVID-19 vaccines — Sputnik V and EpiVacCorona. A third vaccine is in the final stages of clinical trials. It is of crucial importance that those domestic vaccines are based on different technologies enabling us to use different production sites simultaneously and produce the needed number of vaccine doses at a faster rate.

I am happy to report that the first registered Sputnik V vaccine has already been released to the public.

I emphasize that our common goal is to create a panoply of effective and safe vaccines and provide reliable protection for the entire world population. In accordance with the resolution on fighting COVID-19 adopted at the seventy-third session of the World Health Assembly and the recent final declaration of the G-20 leaders, the Russian Federation is ready to cooperate actively with countries in order to increase the availability of vaccines for their citizens through local production.

We condemn the desire of a number of States and integration partnerships to politicize the COVID-19 pandemic with regard to a number of issues, including vaccinations. Such decisions, which are antithetical to solidarity, could delay the launch of effective solutions and increase the cost of lifesaving measures.

Russia actively participates in international efforts to combat COVID-19 at all levels. We provide assistance to affected States both bilaterally and within multilateral formats.

We are doing that, first and foremost, while bearing in mind the central coordinating role played by the World Health Organization (WHO). We believe that the capacity of WHO must be strengthened. That work has already begun, and Russia will participate in it with the highest level of interest.

The COVID-19 pandemic has confirmed that people suffering from communicable diseases, such as tuberculosis, and non-communicable diseases, are more vulnerable and severely affected by the coronavirus disease. In that regard, we welcome the work of the WHO Global Tuberculosis Programme and the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases. We will continue to provide them with the necessary assistance.

I would like to conclude by expressing my gratitude to the members of the medical community for their efforts to combat the novel coronavirus disease and the staff of the United Nations system for helping the affected countries overcome the consequences of the pandemic.



**Annex 106****Statement by Mr. Alexander Schallenberg, Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria**

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Last September, most of us would have travelled to New York for the annual General Debate.

We would have come together to discuss in person the most pressing issues the world is facing: climate change as a potential super-crisis, rising geopolitical tensions, arms race and proliferation pressures, as well as escalating conflicts and humanitarian ‘crisis hot spots’.

But, we were stopped in our tracks and large parts of the international diplomacy were grounded to a halt — by an object invisible to the naked eye: the COVID-19 virus.

This has been a truly demanding and difficult year for all of us. And the situation is still uncertain.

As we speak, many countries are being ravaged by a second or even third wave of the pandemic.

And even while we are struggling with the challenges of today such as lockdown measures, travel restrictions and the enormous pressure on our health systems, all of us rightly dread what might lie ahead of us: the lasting social and economic impact of the pandemic.

We have only seen the tip of the iceberg of what’s to come.

The COVID-19 pandemic is more than a health crisis. It is an economic crisis, a humanitarian crisis, a security crisis and a human rights crisis.

COVID-19 has triggered the most severe recession in almost a century.

Nearly 24 million children and young people are dropping out or don’t have access to school due to the pandemic.

What is more, we are witnessing a shadow pandemic with the global increase of domestic violence against women and girls.

And some seem to believe that the pandemic is a “carte blanche” to limit fundamental rights and freedoms.

In short: the alarm bells are ringing.

If this continues, we might not achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

And yet, recent progress on COVID-19 vaccines offer a ray of hope.

But, as the Secretary-General has rightly pointed out: that ray of hope needs to reach everyone.

Ladies and gentlemen,

A month ago in this Hall, I warned against all forms of “vaccine nationalism”.

Developing and distributing a vaccine should not become a new race to the moon.

We know by now that with COVID-19 no one is safe, until everyone is safe.

Therefore, what we need now more than ever is solidarity — within our societies and on international level.

The best way to achieve this is by making early, fair and affordable access to vaccines a global priority.

I am encouraged by initiatives such as the ACT-Accelerator and its COVAX Facility.

Austria has already pledged €31 million to the ACT-Accelerator. And we encourage all others to join in this initiative.

In addition, Austria has shown its solidarity with partner countries by pledging €1 million to the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund and we intend to further increase our contribution to a total of €2.1 million.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With progress on the vaccine front, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

But we should all be aware: having a vaccine that works is not the final step. It is getting people to actually use it.

Let's face it: The pandemic has fast become an infodemic.

We are witnessing a general erosion of trust in experts, governments, science and technology. Not only conspiracy theorists and people at the fringes of the political spectrum are distrustful.

The pandemic has proven that misinformation can spread faster than the virus. It infects at the speed of thought.

As politicians, it is both our task and obligation to build public confidence. In this, we need the World Health Organization as the leading and coordinating authority. We need social media platforms to do their part. And we need every single one of us to take responsibility.

If we don't succeed the health crisis could easily fuel a crisis of confidence.

We need to become immune against COVID-19. But we also need to generate an immune response to misinformation.

Let us act now. Together.

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