



General Assembly

Seventy-seventh session

Official Records

1st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 13 September 2022, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Körösi (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the session by the President of the General Assembly

The President: It is my pleasure and honour to declare open the seventy-seventh regular session of the General Assembly and call to order its first plenary meeting.

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The President: In accordance with rule 62 of the rules of procedure, I invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

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

Statement by the President

The President: I am deeply honoured to address members of the General Assembly today for the first time as the President of the General Assembly. While taking the oath of office yesterday (see A/76/PV.103), I was reminded of my obligation to discharge my functions in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. I reaffirm to everyone my commitment to the Charter and to upholding its highest ideals.

As we start a new session, I would like to thank President Shahid and congratulate him on his presidency of hope. It was a presidency marked by many

achievements. A particularly joyous moment occurred just days ago when this organ adopted landmark resolution 76/306, creating the United Nations Youth Office. That was one of the successful outcomes of President Shahid's leadership in the follow-up to the report of the Secretary-General entitled *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982).

Much remains to be done so that we can realize the vision of *Our Common Agenda* in order to have a United Nations ready and able to tackle all the interlinked crises affecting our world. I look forward to working with the Secretary-General and Member States to continue bringing this vision to fruition.

As we begin the seventy-seventh session, we do so in a world of widening geopolitical divides and protracted uncertainty. While it has become more manageable, the pandemic continues to wreak havoc across the globe. Acute food insecurity, soaring energy prices and global supply chain disruptions mean even less food for those already in short supply of it, while record inflation threatens to rock our societies.

Conflict is creating humanitarian upheavals not seen since the Second World War and testing the strength of our institutions. The conflict in Ukraine has been a turning point for all of us. Unless we are vigilant, the method called "war", rightly despised and condemned for decades, could reappear more frequently in the toolkit of our international life. We must do our utmost to uphold and protect the values and principles of the Charter. There can be no cherry-picking — certainly not in these most tumultuous and uncertain times. We must adopt a preventative approach and end conflicts

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and crises before they happen. War must be stopped. It kills people. It kills development. It kills nature. And it kills the dreams of millions.

As our planet heats up and natural resources grow scarce, conflicts will worsen. The water crisis is poised to become our next greatest threat. In recent weeks, we have seen record-setting temperatures, raging fires and devastating floods. It looks as if Mother Nature is fighting back, but few of her weapons are as destructive as the ones that we have created ourselves. Never in the past 40 years has the risk of the use of nuclear weapons been greater than it is today. This ominous reality calls on all of us to unite around the issue of disarmament. This also holds true for small arms and light weapons, the proliferation of which is a great obstacle to our development and progress around the world. We must work to stop their illicit trade.

We simply cannot go back to business as usual, as we understood that before the pandemic. We will not be returning to the old normal. The only way to achieve better outcomes is to transform the status quo. The contours of the transformation we need are already known. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and *Our Common Agenda* are all pointing us in the right direction. What remains to be seen is whether we will deliver.

The world is looking to the United Nations for answers. As the Organization's chief deliberative organ, the General Assembly bears a special responsibility. Having begun my term as President, I aim to harness the great talents of this community of Member States in forging the systemic solutions needed to transform our world. In accepting this privilege, I vowed to serve as an agent of multilateralism, multiculturalism and multilingualism. I pledged that impartiality would be the hallmark of our work. My team and I will do our best to push for "solutions through solidarity, sustainability and science" — the motto that I have chosen for my presidency.

It is my intention to stand firm on the principles of the Charter, which brought us together 77 years ago and which holds us together today. Anchored in international law, they provide us with a solid foundation on which to build. From here, I wish to pursue integrated approaches and enhance the role of science in our decision-shaping. I will work to foster measurable progress in the sustainability transformation and cultivate the

solidarity we need to achieve breakthroughs or to avert further crises and disasters.

Taking stock of the Sustainable Development Goals is simply not enough. We need to have more science by our side if we want to realize them by 2030. And we all must put in more effort, because, as Abraham Lincoln said, "You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today".

While humanitarian needs are at an all-time high, the solutions to them are well known. The United Nations is able to provide the resources for delivering life-saving assistance. We must use them to the best of our abilities. We cannot allow geopolitical tensions or distrust ultimately become obstacles to the preservation of human rights and human dignity. Human rights are inherent to all of us. Justice and the rule of law are essential to shaping a world in which respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms will prevail.

Next week's high-level meeting to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities will be an opportunity to embrace human rights and take a holistic approach to them. I invite all Member States to incorporate voluntary pledges in their national statements to jointly advance the implementation of the Declaration and ensure that the meeting will have a positive and forward-looking outcome. In that realm, I look forward to working in partnership with the Human Rights Council and take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Volker Türk on his appointment as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. I will do my utmost to bring our Offices into closer communication.

Throughout my work, I will engage closely with the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and other relevant United Nations bodies. I intend to further the critical revitalization process, as well as pursue the ongoing key reforms led by the Secretary-General, to make the General Assembly and the United Nations, as a whole, fit for purpose. But Governments do not have a monopoly on good ideas. Listening and learning must transcend these walls. As we deliberate, we must meaningfully engage with our civil society partners, academics and the private sector, enabling researchers and practitioners to propose solutions that are rooted in facts, verified information and science.

Civil society holds first-hand knowledge that is critical to the identification and implementation of context-specific solutions. It is vital that we seize

this opportunity to be inclusive, ensuring that civil society feels a sense of ownership over and belonging to multilateralism. We must also reach out actively to young people, engaging them in what we do so that, when they sit in these seats, they can come with better plans and ideas than we have come with. My door will also be open to faith-based organizations. Many of their ideals overlap with those of the United Nations. I am also reaching out to the private sector and key financial institutions. I intend to work closely with them, listen to their concerns and ideas and search for implementable solutions together with them.

This will be the first year since the pandemic that corona virus disease restrictions have been lifted. However, due to the sad event of the passing of a Head of State respected by millions across the globe, the beginning of this year's high-level week might be affected by the coinciding obligations of many leaders. I offer my sincere condolences to the people of the United Kingdom and the member States of the Commonwealth of Nations.

The United Nations was created out of the ashes of war and destruction with the intention of being a well of solutions. Responding to humankind's most pressing challenges demands that we work together and that we reinvigorate inclusive, networked and effective multilateralism and focus on what unites us. It is our mission to come together when there are disagreements and build bridges when there are deep divides. This Hall was created as a place to build trust and bring about peace and security, development and human rights. We owe it to our 8 billion constituents — the people whom we are here to serve — to succeed in our aims.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres.

The Secretary-General: Let me start by warmly congratulating His Excellency Mr. Csaba Körösi, President of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session.

Your acceptance speech, Mr. President, provided an inspiring motto to guide your stewardship of the Assembly: "solutions through solidarity, sustainability and science." All three ingredients are essential as we address shared challenges and develop solutions for a better and more peaceful future. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank once again the outgoing President, His Excellency Mr. Abdullah Shahid, for his excellent stewardship of the Assembly over the past

year. We all appreciate his efforts during what was a truly extraordinary moment in history.

The many challenges that defined the seventy-sixth session are still very much with us as we look to the seventy-seventh. We face a world in peril throughout our work to advance peace, human rights and sustainable development. From conflicts and climate change to a broken global financial system that is failing developing countries, to poverty, inequality and hunger and to divisions and mistrust, addressing common challenges will require continued solidarity as we demonstrate the great promise and potential of the Organization. The United Nations is the home of cooperation, and the General Assembly is the life within that home.

Its members represent the beating heart of global cooperation. The months ahead will continue testing the strength and durability of the multilateral system that the Organization represents. And the world is looking to members of the Assembly to use all the tools at their disposal to negotiate and forge consensus and solutions. The eternal tools of debate, deliberation and diplomacy represent the best pathway to a better and more peaceful world.

The seventy-seventh session must be a moment of transformation for people and planet alike. The time is now. You can count on my full support, Mr. President, for the work of the Assembly in the year ahead.

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

Item 143 of the provisional agenda

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Letter from the Secretary-General (A/77/334)

The President: In keeping with established practice, I should like to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/77/334, which contains a letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, in which he informs the Assembly of Member States in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter. I would like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

"A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions

to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years. The General Assembly may, nevertheless, permit such a Member to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member."

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the information contained in document A/77/334?

It was so decided.

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Credentials of representatives to the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly

(a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee

The President: Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly at the beginning of each session shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members.

Accordingly, it is proposed that, for the seventy-seventh session, the Credentials Committee should consist of the following Member States: Angola, Austria, China, Guyana, Maldives, the Russian Federation, the United States of America, Uruguay and Zambia.

May I take it that the States that I have just mentioned are hereby appointed members of the Credentials Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: Delegations are reminded that credentials should be submitted to the Office of Legal Affairs. Additional details are available in the informational note contained in document A/INF/77/4/Rev.1.

Items 7 and 142 of the provisional agenda

Organization of work of the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly

Pattern of conferences

Letter from the Chair of the Committee on Conferences (A/77/329)

The President: The Assembly will now turn its attention to document A/77/329, which contains a

letter dated 6 September 2022 from the Chair of the Committee on Conferences addressed to the President of the General Assembly.

Members are aware that, pursuant to section 1, paragraph 7 of resolution 40/243, of 18 December 1985, no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly should be permitted to meet at United Nations Headquarters during the main part of a regular session of the Assembly, unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

In that connection, authorization is sought for the following organs or entities: the Committee on Relations with the Host Country; the Independent Audit Advisory Committee; the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations; the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction; the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme, of the United Nations Population Fund and of the United Nations Office for Project Services; the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; and the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole of the General Assembly on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to authorize those organs or entities to meet during the main part of the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly, on the strict understanding that all such meetings would be allocated conference services on an "if available" basis, from within existing resources, in such a way as to ensure that the work of the General Assembly and its Main Committees is not impeded?

It was so decided.

The President: Lastly, before concluding, I would like to inform delegations that the General Committee will meet tomorrow morning, Wednesday, 14 September 2022, at 10 a.m. in the General Assembly Hall, to consider the memorandum of the Secretary-General on the organization of the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly, the adoption of the agenda and the allocation of items, contained in document A/BUR/77/1.

The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.