



# General Assembly

Seventy-eighth session

9<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting

Thursday, 21 September 2023, 3 p.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Francis . . . . . (Trinidad and Tobago)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Gafoor (Singapore), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

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

## Address by Mr. Russ Kun, President and Head of State of the Republic of Nauru

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

*Mr. Russ Kun, President and Head of State of the Republic of Nauru, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Russ Kun, President and Head of State of the Republic of Nauru, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Kun:** On behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Nauru, allow me to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Dennis Francis on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session. It is always a pleasure to see another small island developing State taking up the leadership mantle. Please let me assure the President of my delegation's full cooperation and support as he leads this body in rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity. Allow me to also thank His Excellency Mr. Csaba Kőrösi for his exceptional stewardship during the seventy-seventh session and note the many successful initiatives undertaken during his tenure,

including continuing the President of the General Assembly Fellowship Programme, which promotes and supports youth engagement for the next generation of diplomats.

Allow me also to extend my sincere condolences to the Governments and people of Morocco and Libya for the recent devastating earthquakes and floods, as they seek relief and recovery during this time.

As the new President of Nauru, it is an honour to speak here at an institution built on the ideals of peace, justice, respect, human rights, tolerance and solidarity — an institution in which all countries are deemed equal. As the smallest Member State of this body, those ideals have important resonance. We are all part of an interconnected system that is increasingly growing smaller, and our dependence on each other to weather global challenges increases every day. Will only the strong survive or will we work to ensure that no one is left behind? Will we reform and ensure progress in this institution to reflect the realities of today or continue in the same dated fashion — a fashion that does not reflect our current, lived realities? If we are to lift ourselves and future generations up and ensure that we are on a path to peace, prosperity, progress and sustainability for all, we all need to be dedicated to finding a way forward that reflects the world as it now stands — a world that is currently riddled with inequity.

A critical step in the way forward must be the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While the United Nations community was able to come together to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

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Development in 2015 and celebrated this achievement of multilateralism at the time, we must admit that we are far from on track to achieve them — and by extension to achieve sustainable development for people and planet. Given the resources that have been allocated at the regional and international levels to achieve the SDGs, that is deeply concerning. In our view, such a failure to substantially move the needle in the light of the resources provided is an indication that funding is not being properly allocated or used. In our region, there are too many workshops, too many studies upon studies, too many discussions without enough support for critical on-the-ground projects. It is a small island for goodness' sake. It is like we are trying to launch a rocket to the sun.

Moreover, the realities of what is needed for implementation on the ground in a Pacific small island, with limited capacity and people, is rarely properly accounted for. Issues around small things, which larger economies can discount — for example, access to basic materials — can become insurmountable when a country is trying to build a school or repair a road. If we are serious about meeting the SDGs, we must ensure that needed resources make it to the right places. That includes places like Nauru where, in the face of multiple global crises piled on top of national challenges, our ability to progress has been less than desirable. In order to shift Nauru, and others, back on track to achieve the 2030 Agenda, we need to take bold steps and create and build partnerships that are built on mutual respect among equals.

To build such sustainable partnerships, we will need a more accurate and nuanced system of categorization of vulnerabilities. Based on existing measurements for official development assistance — gross national income (GNI) and gross domestic product (GDP) — Nauru is eligible for neither grants nor loans. However, GNI and GDP alone do not sufficiently capture Nauru's vulnerabilities, and we are therefore unable to access much-needed financing to enable the implementation of national development strategies and activities. The multidimensional vulnerability index provides a practical solution to that issue and will ensure that Nauru is measured as it truly is — a struggling, small island developing State in great need of significant financial aid. Nauru calls for the adoption of the multidimensional vulnerability index by Member States, including the establishment of an interim secretariat that will support its operationalization and implementation by

all stakeholders, including as a criterion for access to low-cost and long-term financing based on this index. Creating this more accurate picture of our national circumstances will be an important foundation upon which real and durable partnerships can be built. And it goes without saying that any categorization for access to aid should be applied in an even-handed and non-politicized way. We have been deeply disappointed to hear that, in some instances, the categorization of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has been manipulated around purely political interests. That cannot be allowed to happen, as it undermines the integrity of the entire system and is nothing shy of blatant manipulation.

Another pathway to accelerating action on the 2030 Agenda will be the recognition and incorporation of the special circumstances of small island developing States (SIDS) into our work at every level. Such an opportunity will present itself when we meet for the SIDS conference in May of next year in Antigua and Barbuda. If we are to make good on the promises for which the United Nations stands, the next SIDS conference must deliver the transformation needed to ensure that SIDS are more resilient to external shocks. That can only be achieved through adopting a more focused, measurable and fully resourced programme of action that is tailored to the circumstances of SIDS and provides practical and operational solutions to accelerate our sustainable development. The support of development partners and the international community, including funding, is critical for the next 10-year programme of action, as we seek to move towards resilient prosperity.

Even if these strides are taken towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, any progress made is at risk if we do not address the threat of climate change. The adverse impacts are no longer a future problem. We have seen ourselves the ever-increasing disasters: fires, typhoons, heat waves and a burning ocean. What kind of legacy are we creating? It is essential that the global community accelerates its efforts to adapt and mitigate climate change and keep a 1.5°C limit to temperature rise within reach. That cannot be said enough, and so I will say it again: it is essential that the global community accelerates its efforts to adapt and mitigate climate change and keep a 1.5°C limit to temperature rise within reach.

We call on all States to take ambitious action in their implementation of the Paris Agreement and decisions

under the Paris Agreement, including the Glasgow Climate Pact and the Sharm El-Sheikh Implementation Plan. And we note our disappointment that the goal of \$100 billion a year has not been reached and that the distribution of funds allocated has not been equitable. And so, we join the call to reform the international financial system to make climate and development finance more affordable and adequate and positioned to combat the scale of climate crises. Nauru looks forward to a meaningful twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in the United Arab Emirates, one that achieves the shared ambition and commitment to deliver progress and keep 1.5°C within reach.

We also continue to call on the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative on climate and security. That could improve the ability of the United Nations to address climate-related security risks, including through regular reporting on the security implications of climate change. Similarly, we see the need to seek additional paths to climate action and hope that the advisory opinions to come from the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the International Court of Justice will jump-start more ambitious climate action.

On that point, Nauru would emphasize that we cannot expect the trajectory of global emissions to slow down and be reduced if viable energy alternatives are not provided. Deep seabed minerals hold the answer, with polymetallic nodules providing the alternative for big emitters to make a just energy transition away from fossil fuels and towards much cleaner and renewable energy technologies. In that regard, Nauru calls on the members of the International Seabed Authority to fulfil their obligation and finalize the exploitation regulations that ensure that the collection of seafloor minerals are conducted with utmost responsibility and respect for our marine ecosystem while providing benefits for all humankind.

As a big ocean State, a healthy, productive and resilient ocean is a pillar upon which our future rests. We are proud to have been actively engaged in the negotiations and successful conclusion of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction. Nauru welcomes the adoption of the Agreement earlier this year and calls for international support to build our capacity to ratify and implement

the provisions of the legally binding agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction including the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

Finally, as we have done before, we raise the critical importance of ensuring sustainable fisheries. That includes ensuring that overfishing is not taking place, that fair prices are paid to small islands for fish taken from our water and that we eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Nauru's long-term national vision, as articulated in its national sustainable development strategy, outlines a future in which individual, community, business and Government partnerships contribute to a sustainable quality of life for all Nauruans. The central message of that strategy is partnership for quality of life. A key pillar will be ensuring the health of our people.

To achieve that, Nauru remains committed to a health strategy centred on prevention. During the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), Nauru followed a stringent "capture and contain" strategy, which required all visitors to Nauru to undergo testing and quarantine at the border. That strategy protected Nauru during most of the pandemic, giving the health system valuable time to establish an acute-care ward to treat and isolate potential COVID-19 patients, streamline testing regimes and treatment protocols and vaccinate vulnerable members of the community. The systems that were developed for COVID-19 are now available for future pandemic responses, should they be required. We acknowledge and thank our partners for their support in that regard.

However, Nauru remains vulnerable to communicable-disease outbreaks. The pandemic proved the urgent need for extensive investment towards strengthening the institutional and infrastructure needs of Nauru's fragile health system. In a post-pandemic reality, we must ensure that rebuilding efforts are centred on building resilience. We must remain vigilant in ensuring that our vaccination rates remain high and are not undermined by the spread of misinformation and fearmongering through mainstream and social media. Nauru needs support and technical expertise to develop innovative solutions, such as e-medicine and development and use of digital technologies for

outpatient referrals and patient records, in order to address viral risks.

In that regard, we would like to thank our friends from Cuba. There is still much to be learned from their innovation in the field of health. Cuba developed their own COVID-19 vaccines. Moreover, they help others by deploying their medical brigade worldwide. As a staunch friend of Cuba, we call for an end to the embargo imposed by the United States.

We must also recognize and thank the Republic of China (Taiwan) for its help and support with regard to our health system. They continue to be a leader in the application of good practices in containing and responding to disease. We call for its recognition and its right to participate and engage with us all in this global forum on this issue and in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, leaving no one behind.

Another crucial element for accelerating action on the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals towards peace, prosperity, progress and sustainability for all is education. Nauru continues to prioritize and invest in strengthening and developing its education sector given its pivotal role as a key driver of sustainable development. On a national scale, Nauru aims to improve the quality and broaden the scope and reach of education.

In a post-pandemic reality, the immediate concern, globally and domestically, is to address the education gap. Innovation and increased and improved investment are urgently needed in order to improve access to, and the quality of, education. We are also prioritizing quality infrastructure, tailored to the unique needs of Nauru. That will need to be matched with relevant curricula and effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks, such as benchmarking.

None of that can happen without our teachers. Teacher attraction and retention continue to be an issue —not just in Nauru, but worldwide. The demands of, and lack of support for, the teaching profession is being manifested in a lack of qualified teachers on our island. We need to do more and better on that front, including by reviewing education-delivery models through increased involvement of homes and the development of inexpensive, alternate models of delivery via communication technologies and through improved information and communication technologies

infrastructure in schools in order to enhance programme delivery.

We must uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and we must work together to uphold the rules-based multilateral system in order to secure international peace, security and prosperity for a safe and just world for all, leaving no country behind. For that to happen, the United Nations must be, nimble on the ground and must meet the global challenges we face today.

I would like to share what time has taught me. Our community — Nauru, the Pacific, the small islands, the international community — is more robust when we stand united. That becomes even more imperative for matters of common interest that have the potential to benefit our peoples in future generations. But we must stand united for the right things, the important things and the hard things.

In a nutshell, I echo the opening remarks of Secretary-General Guterres, we need to renew the United Nations multilateral system, reform the Security Council and redesign the international financial architecture because it is simply not working anymore and is an outdated system that has been in place for too long. In Nauru's case, like that of other small island developing States, we become victims within the global architecture and compromise our freedom and voice as a sovereign State.

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

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

*Mr. Russ Kun, President and Head of State of the Republic of Nauru, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

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

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

*Mr. Úmaro Sissoco Embaló, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*



**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Úmaro Sissoco Embaló, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Embaló** (*spoke in Portuguese; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): From this rostrum at the United Nations, I would like, first, to offer our most heartfelt condolences to the Governments of the Kingdom of Morocco and Libya, and to express our feelings of fraternal solidarity with the peoples of those two friendly countries.

I would like to congratulate Mr. Dennis Francis, from Trinidad and Tobago, for his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session. I wish him much success during his term. I would also like to congratulate his predecessor, Mr. Csaba Kőrösi of Hungary, for the results achieved during his presidency. I also congratulate Secretary-General António Guterres on his achievements in promoting peace and development in the world.

The speakers who preceded me at this rostrum presented important analyses and observations on current challenges and the international scenario. Therefore, I will focus on concrete actions that, in my view, are expected from us — the United Nations.

For Guinea-Bissau, the best response to the challenges that confront the international community includes strengthening multilateralism and international cooperation. In our view, multilateralism is an indispensable instrument and a moral imperative if we wish to build, together, a world of solidarity and well-being for all. To that end, we welcome the choice and significance of the theme for this session of the General Assembly, which stresses the importance of global trust and solidarity, prosperity, progress and sustainability for all.

We are expected to take coordinated actions to implement our decisions, such as the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, to ensure development financing and to collectively protect and improve our planet. To that end, we must comply with the Paris Agreement and the agreement reached at the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change agreements, including the loss and damage fund for

vulnerable countries, particularly island nations such as my country, Guinea-Bissau.

We must introduce the changes required in the international peace and security architecture and in the world financial system to enable them to respond to the current international scenario. Security Council reform, which has long been deemed as necessary, must consider the position of the African Union in order to ensure a realistic and fairer representation consistent with the increasingly preponderant role of Africa in building and maintaining balance in the world.

Since I became President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau in 2020, we have focused on dialogue, peacebuilding and political stability, as well as social and economic development in our country and in the West Africa subregion and beyond. Those principles also guided us during our term as Chairman of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States, which we accepted with determination and a heightened sense of responsibility, and which ended last July. To that end, we wish to reiterate our great concern about the recurrence of coup d'états and reversals in democracy and the rule of law in some countries in our subregion, in flagrant violation of the populations' freedom of choice as expressed through ballot boxes.

Despite the harmful effects of the prolonged embargo imposed on the people of Cuba, our sister nation has always supported and continues to support the countries of Africa. We reiterate our appeal for an end to that unjust and irrational embargo, which is an obstacle to the fulfilment of the legitimate aspirations of the Cuban people. The same is true for our brothers and sisters in Venezuela, whom we must also not forget and to whom we must show our solidarity.

As you know, it has been a year since I took office as Chair of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance. As Heads of State and Government, we continue, in Africa, to give priority to the struggle against malaria. As a result of that effort, more than 1.5 billion cases of malaria have been avoided and 10.5 million lives have been saved in Africa since 2000. I call on Africa and the international community to take action. If we wish to achieve our global goals for 2030 of ending malaria epidemics and achieving universal health coverage, we must act now.

This year, the people of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau are celebrating 50 years of existence as an

independent and sovereign State. Thus, as an emissary of the nation of Guinea-Bissau, I am thankful for the extraordinary aid provided by the former Soviet Union, the Republic of Guinea-Conakry, Cuba, Algeria, Morocco, Sweden and other countries to our struggle for liberation, as well as the United Nations in its historic visit to our liberated regions, confirming the existence of effective political, administrative and military control. On this solemn occasion of 50 years of independence, the people of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau will strengthen their determination and energy to consolidate national unity and mobilize even more, as enshrined in the national anthem of Guinea-Bissau, to build peace and progress in our everlasting homeland.

At this historic juncture in the history of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, and before I finish my remarks, I would like to reaffirm, on behalf of our Government and the people of Guinea-Bissau, from this rostrum and before the world, our continuous engagement and availability to continue to work with the United Nations and to cooperate with all friendly Governments and peoples for global peace and development and to protect our planet.

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

*Mr. Úmaro Sissoco Embaló, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

#### **Address by Mr. Bajram Begaj, President of the Republic of Albania**

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

*Mr. Bajram Begaj, President of the Republic of Albania, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

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

**President Begaj:** I am honoured to speak before the General Assembly today, and I express my deep appreciation for the General Assembly. The Assembly serves as a unique platform for global cooperation and offers hope for a better world.

I want to express my sincere congratulations to President Francis on his election and convey my best wishes for his continued success in leading the Assembly. I would also like to extend my warmest regard to Secretary-General Guterres for his continuous efforts to achieve peace in the world and for standing firm in defence of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and human rights in the face of the great adversity of our times. His leadership fosters trust in the United Nations. Rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity are more necessary than ever for reconciliation, good understanding and more cooperation — they are the only way we can face today's common and global challenges that not only affect the present but also risking the future of the next generations. It should all begin by assessing regions and countries on the basis of their contribution rather than their failures.

Since 1955, when Albania became a State Member of the United Nations, a great deal has changed. Once a self-isolated country, Albania now proudly stands as a NATO member and has initiated accession negotiations with the European Union. Currently, Albania is concluding its first term as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, and this month, we are productively presiding over that United Nations body for the second time. As part of the western Balkans, Albania continues to make an unwavering contribution to peace and stability in the region. Albanians play a crucial role in south-eastern Europe. We constitute the large majority in two independent republics, Albania and Kosova. We form a constitutive minority in North Macedonia and Montenegro and a significant minority in the southern part of Serbia.

Throughout our history, Albania has adhered to a policy of friendship and good-neighbourly relations. We remain deeply concerned by the crises that recur from time to time in relations among its neighbours. Both Albania and Kosova have consistently championed peace over tension and conflicts, and we remain committed to that path. We hope to be recognized for our contribution and not to allow our endeavours to be overshadowed by opposing narratives. In that context, Albania supports the difficult yet not ongoing dialogue between Kosova and Serbia, facilitated through careful mediation by the European Union and strongly supported by the United States. At the same time, Albania remains sensitive to Kosova's integrity and prosperity.

Kosova has managed to heal many deep wounds from the tragic past. The rise of the Serbs in Kosova reflects European norms and values, and the same should be applied to the Albanian minority in the Preševo Valley in southern Serbia. Unfortunately, we remain concerned about the passivization of their residential addresses and the absence of substantial investments and economic incentives in that region. Kosova has demonstrated that pain need not breed hostility but can translate into understanding and support. However, Kosova still awaits recognition of its independence by many countries. I hope that those countries will soon acknowledge Kosova's contribution to a fairer and more peaceful global community and grant it the recognition it deserves. Recognize Kosova's independence.

Despite being a small nation with a young democracy, Albania has a history marked by wars it did not choose and domination it neither sought nor accepted. While those memories are painful, they have also imparted invaluable lessons. It is precisely because of its history that Albania places great importance on international law as its foremost defence. We firmly embrace the principles underpinning the rules-based international order, where relations among nations are founded on respect, rather than sheer power. That commitment is why we have consistently and unequivocally condemned the military aggression against Ukraine, and we will continue to do so. Despite our size, Albania has been actively engaged on the international stage both regionally and globally in the pursuit of peace and security. However, we recognize that sustainable development is an integral component of achieving international peace and security.

On the other hand, meaningful sustainable development is unattainable without a foundation of genuine peace and security. Sadly, the unprovoked and unjustified Russian act of aggression against its neighbour speaks louder than our words. This absurd and malicious war has directly and indirectly affected various dimensions of sustainable development, not only for Ukraine and the region but also for the entire globe. This senseless war has disrupted trade, caused economic instability, destroyed infrastructure, including transport networks and industrial facilities, and diverted attention and resources away from addressing shared challenges, promoting development and implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The war in Ukraine has strained regional stability and affected cooperation among

countries. It has highlighted geopolitical tensions and strained diplomatic relations, hindering international cooperation on sustainable development initiatives. As we have witnessed, the spillover effects of the war, which include displacement, migration and economic and security concerns, can have global ramifications that impede progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Albania welcomed the SDG Summit called by the Secretary-General and the political declaration adopted therein. It is a milestone in re-energizing our joint efforts and commitments to implementing the 2030 Agenda. We firmly believe that the success of the SDGs lies in our collective efforts to address challenges that hinder sustainable development. Collective efforts mean the urgent need for decisive action to better support developing countries. Albania acknowledges the imperative to introduce reforms and stands ready to work alongside the international community in ensuring and enabling an environment that allows developing countries to actively participate in and benefit from the global economy.

I would like to emphasize that Albania is committed to reducing the levels of domestic poverty and inequality by 2027 and 2030, in line with our nationally determined climate contributions. We recognize the need for comprehensive policy commitments to drive the necessary energy, food, digital and social transitions necessary to achieve those benchmarks. Aligning our national budget with the SDGs, mainstreaming gender equality, revitalizing public sector capacities and strengthening our data and monitoring systems are among the fundamental actions we prioritize. Albania recognizes the significance of this session as a pivotal moment for our world. It is an opportunity to shift from fear to hope and from deepening pessimism to accelerated action. We are committed to playing our part and collaborating with the international community to ensure the successful realization of the 2030 Agenda.

I would also like to bring the Assembly's attention to Albania's position on one of the most debated issues today, that of multilateralism. Today's critical challenges show that universal reason is the only way out. We recognize that peace is indivisible. We cannot secure peace on the backs of people who perish in war. No one can truly have lasting peace until everyone has it. Albania recognizes that human rights are indivisible. We cannot ensure basic rights for all if we select one subset of rights and ignore the rest.

The suffering caused by torture or famine is hard to witness. It is unacceptable and unnecessary suffering that can be eliminated if we embrace all civil, political, socioeconomic and cultural rights.

Albania is a candidate for the Human Rights Council in the upcoming elections next month. If elected, we will be a champion of human rights in their broadest sense. That includes women's rights, children's rights, minority rights and the fundamental right to equal opportunities. We will work with other countries to protect, promote and defend human rights and freedoms as a vital condition for individual and collective development and prosperity.

On the regional front, we eagerly anticipate the upcoming European Union-Western Balkans summit, to be held in Tirana in October. We are committed to transforming our region into an example of trust and partnership that transcends borders and communities. Multilateralism is central to our collective endeavours. It is, above all, a vision of how States should cooperate to achieve better results for everyone. Fundamentally, it is about expectations of acceptable behaviour in the future. Multilateralism is a normative key. It requires us to consider not only whether existing arrangements are effective or efficient, but also whether existing multilateral practices and processes are fair and just.

It is high time that we engage unconditionally, fully and in good faith to achieve meaningful reforms of our Organization, with the Security Council at its core. No State, Government or individual can be above the law. Albania supports the reform of the United Nations and its main bodies, with the aim of strengthening the Organization's ability to address the current emerging challenges and threats to international peace, security and development. The power of the Security Council rests in its capacity to intervene decisively in the service of peace and security. The question nowadays should no longer be whether the Council can interfere in the domestic realm of States or not. Rather, the question should be: how can the Council intervene in an intelligent, reflective and timely manner in the service of the values and mandate for which it was created?

Since gaining independence in 1912, my country has undergone significant territorial transformation. Currently, Albania boasts captivating urban and rural landscapes, which I wholeheartedly encourage everyone here to explore. I have mentioned that not merely to extend the invitation to visit Albania, but

also to underscore the importance of the territorial transformation that lies before us. In the face of climate change, that challenge runs like a red thread through the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. I hope that my country and our nations can effectively address that challenge by safeguarding our natural resources and cultural heritage. Our approach should involve respecting the diversity of those resources and collaborating with communities engaged in both environmental causes and cultural preservation efforts. I firmly believe that that approach reinforces democracy — a political system uniquely capable of ensuring sustainable and fair development. It is in such a world that our younger generations can find joy and prosperity. Our collective efforts can pave the way for them to tell a story of successful collaboration — one that centres around us and this Organization.

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

*Mr. Bajram Begaj, President of the Republic of Albania, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by First Lieutenant General Abdel-Fattah Al-Burhan Abdelrahman Al-Burhan, President of the Transitional Sovereign Council of the Republic of the Sudan**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Transitional Sovereign Council of the Republic of the Sudan.

*First Lieutenant General Abdel-Fattah Al-Burhan Abdelrahman Al-Burhan, President of the Transitional Sovereign Council of the Republic of the Sudan, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency First Lieutenant General Abdel-Fattah Al-Burhan Abdelrahman Al-Burhan, President of the Transitional Sovereign Council of the Republic of the Sudan, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Al-Burhan** (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the people and the Government of the Sudan, I would like to congratulate the President on assuming the presidency of General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session. I also thank the President of the Assembly at



its seventy-seventh session and the Secretary-General for their efforts in confronting the challenges that have faced the world over the past year.

*Mr. Dibba (Gambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Since 15 April, the Sudanese people have been facing a devastating war launched by the rebel Rapid Support Forces, which have been allied with tribal, regional and international militias, bringing in mercenaries from various parts of the world to perpetrate the most heinous crimes against the Sudanese people. Those rebel groups have committed murder, looting, theft and rape and have seized citizens' homes and property. They have destroyed civilian objects, including public facilities, hospitals and State and government buildings. They have attempted to obliterate the history and identity of the Sudanese people by attacking museums and archaeological sites and destroying land records, civil registries and court registries. They have plundered banks and private and public corporations. They have released prisoners and detainees, including those wanted by international justice mechanisms, and terrorists.

Those rebel groups have committed crimes against humanity and war crimes in most parts of the Sudan. They have carried out ethnic cleansing, forced displacements, sexual violence, race-based killings, torture and many other acts that amount to war crimes, in Darfur and Khartoum. What happened in West Darfur in El Geneina was a shock to the global conscience, as was what happened in Tawila, Mornei, Menawashei and even Khartoum. It was a testimony of the acts of those forces and their allied groups. We call on the President and the international community to designate those forces and the groups allied with them as terrorist groups that must be countered by all and must be fought to protect the Sudanese people, the region and the entire world. They are responsible for the killing of thousands of people and the displacement of millions.

Despite what has been committed by those groups, since their attack against the State, we have done our utmost to put an end to this war. We have responded to each and every initiative of our brothers and friends. We attended a meeting in Jeddah at the invitation of our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and of the United States of America. We would have made considerable progress if it were not for the intransigence

of the rebels who refused to withdraw from inhabited neighbourhoods. We also accepted the initiative of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and that of neighbouring countries held in Egypt. To this day, we continue to extend a hand of peace to put an end to this war and to alleviate the suffering of our people. We have also accepted the initiative of our brothers in Türkiye and South Sudan, as well as Uganda, aimed at finding solutions. However, they were all confronted by the rebels' refusal to seek a peaceful solution and their insistence on destroying the State and committing genocide against the people.

Some characterize this war as an internal war between two armed parties. However, the aggression was not against only the armed forces rather it extended to all parts of the State. Innocent citizens are not part of the armed forces. The people in West Darfur are not part of the armed forces. Our citizens' homes are not part of the armed forces. Therefore, this war cannot be characterized as a war between the armed forces and the Rapid Support Forces. Instead, it extends to all constituents of the State.

Nevertheless, I would like to confirm that the war is now a threat to regional and international peace and security, as those rebels have sought the support of outlaws and terrorist groups from different countries in the region and the world. That is like a spark of war, a war that will spill over to other countries in the region. The regional and international interference in support of those groups is crystal clear by now. In other words, that is the spark that will ignite the region and will have a direct impact on international peace and security.

I would like to express my thanks for the efforts of the United Nations and the Secretary-General aimed at supporting the humanitarian situation in the Sudan. We also appreciate all efforts made by the various United Nations agencies and other regional and international agencies, along with the efforts of the sisterly and friendly countries that have provided humanitarian assistance to the Sudan. They have stood by the Sudanese people to alleviate the repercussions of this criminal war.

For its part, the Government of the Sudan has opened airports and seaports and facilitated the movement and transit of convoys. It has attempted to remove all obstacles to humanitarian action. We have coordinated all efforts so that assistance can reach all those in need and affected. In that regard, we call on

all agencies and countries to meet their pledges to fill the huge gap in food, medicine and shelter which has affected huge segments of our population, those who have been affected by this war launched by the rebels of the Rapid Support Forces under the command of Abdelrahim Hamdan Dagalo.

*The President took the Chair.*

We remain committed to our previous pledges to transfer power to the people of the Sudan with broad national consensus and consent. In that regard, the armed forces will leave politics once and for all and the transfer of power will then be the result of a peaceful and legitimate process of elections. However, we see a short transitional period in which the country will be governed by a civil Government consisting of independents. During that period, they can address security, humanitarian and economic matters and reconstruction. Then, general elections will be held so that the Sudanese people can choose their leaders.

We stress that the State is committed to continuing dialogue with all those who have abstained in the dialogue, our brothers Abdelaziz Al-Hilu and Abdel Wahid Al-Nur, so that they can join the march towards national statehood. We are fully committed to the Juba Peace Agreement, signed in Juba in 2020. We have made great strides in bringing about peace and addressing the many obstacles facing the Sudanese statehood.

I would like to reiterate the Sudan's commitment to supporting women and children and vulnerable segments of our society, so that they can enjoy all their rights, and to protecting them in the light of the ongoing disputes.

We reiterate the commitment of the Sudanese Government to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, the halting or freezing of international and humanitarian assistance over the past period negatively affected the implementation of those Goals. It had a direct impact on widening the gap in social protection and countering climate change and the food crisis. It has exacerbated the situation of refugees and displaced persons. We therefore call on donors and various relief agencies to continue supporting and addressing the humanitarian situation in the Sudan by providing assistance to those in need, especially refugees and displaced persons.

Before I conclude, I would like to reiterate our demand to designate the rebel Rapid Support Forces

and their allied militias as terrorist groups, for they have committed all sorts of crimes that provide grounds for such designation. There is a need to firmly respond to their sponsors who have supported acts of killing, burning, rape, forced displacement, looting, stealing and torture; arms and drug trafficking; the use of mercenaries and the recruitment of children, all crimes that demand accountability and punishment. I would also like to reiterate that legitimate State institutions — be they the Government, the armed forces or other bodies — will never allow any violation of the State's sovereignty or the humiliation of the Sudanese people at any cost.

I have to recall the need for our regional organizations to free themselves from guardianship and support the interests of the African peoples so that they can regain the trust of Africans. We will not allow others to find solutions to our problems according to their own interests.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and thank His Excellency the Secretary-General for understanding our domestic issues, for standing by the people of the Sudan and for their continued support to them. I would also like to thank our neighbouring countries and our brothers and friends who have stood beside us. We would also like to thank the regional organizations. The people of the Sudan thank them all for their support in surmounting this crisis and the barbaric attack launched by the criminals of the rebel Rapid Support Forces.

I would like to seize this opportunity to express the solidarity of the Sudanese people with our brothers in Morocco and Libya following the disasters they have faced recently. I would also like to thank all the people of the Sudan who have stood by us, supported us and borne with us over the past few months all the sacrifices in order to eradicate the rebel terrorist groups.

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

*First Lieutenant General Abdel-Fattah Al-Burhan Abdelrahman Al-Burhan, President of the Transitional Sovereign Council of the Republic of the Sudan, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Agenda item 8 (continued)****General debate****Address by His Excellency Mr. Han Zheng,  
Vice-President of the People's Republic of  
China**

**The President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Vice-President of the People's Republic of China.

*Mr. Han Zheng, Vice-President of the People's Republic of China, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Han Zheng, Vice-President of the People's Republic of China, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Han Zheng (China)** (*spoke in Chinese*): At present, the international security situation is grim, economic recovery lacks momentum and the development gap is widening. Natural disasters and extreme weather patterns are increasing. The global order faces multiple challenges. Facing profound changes in the world, in our times and in history, Chinese President Xi Jinping made a major call of building a community with a shared future for mankind, and he called on the international community to jointly build a world with lasting peace, universal security and common prosperity, a world that is open, inclusive, clean and beautiful. Since then, President Xi Jinping has proposed the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative. Those Initiatives have enriched the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind and set out a pathway towards realizing this goal. More and more countries have realized that they all share a huge stake in common survival and that unity and cooperation is the right path.

The historical trend of peace, development and win-win cooperation is unstoppable. With that in mind, I call for taking steps in four areas.

First, we should uphold equity and justice and safeguard peace and security. The security of all countries is interconnected. Indeed, the security of one country has an impact on that of other countries. It is important to follow the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security and embark on a path to security featuring dialogue

over confrontation, partnership over alliance and win-win outcomes over a zero-sum game.

We should address the legitimate security concerns of all countries and resolve differences and disputes in a peaceful way through dialogue and consultation. Communication and dialogue is an important way to achieve international security cooperation, and parties to a conflict or confrontation should never forget that. The cessation of hostilities and resumption of peace talks is the only way to settle the Ukraine crisis. China supports all efforts that are conducive to the peaceful resolution of the Ukraine crisis and stands ready to continue playing a constructive role for the early attainment of peace.

The Palestinian issue is at the core of the Middle East issue. The fundamental way out lies in the two-State solution. China will continue to support the Palestinian people in pursuing the just cause of restoring their lawful national rights.

We should respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries and observe the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. China opposes hegemonism, power politics, unilateralism and Cold War mentality. A small number of countries have arbitrarily imposed illegal and unilateral sanctions, severely undermining the harmony and stability of international relations. The international community should jointly resist such acts. China firmly supports the Cuban people in their just struggle to defend their sovereignty and oppose external interference and blockade. We appreciate Cuba's efforts to fight terrorism.

We should maintain security in both traditional and non-traditional domains. Nuclear war must not be fought, and nuclear weapons must not be used. China is the only country among the five permanent members of the Security Council that has pledged no-first-use of nuclear weapons. China attaches great importance to conventional arms control and will soon complete its ratification of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. China will collaborate with the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in demining efforts, over the next three years, so as to help them eliminate mines at an early date. China supports the United Nations in serving as

the main channel to create a widely accepted artificial intelligence governance framework, standards and norms, on the basis of full respect for the governance principles and practices of all countries.

Secondly, we should pursue mutual benefit, deliver win-win outcomes and achieve development for all. Development should be placed at the centre of the international agenda, and development benefits should reach every country and individual in a fairer way. China will continue to contribute to building a global community of development.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative put forward by China. More than 3,000 cooperation projects have been launched under the framework of this initiative. The China-Europe Railway Express had 16,000 freight services in 2022, which fully demonstrates the vitality of the Belt and Road Initiative. Next month, China will host the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. We will further advance both Belt and Road cooperation and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We should fully and effectively implement the Paris Agreement. Developed countries should do more to reduce emissions and provide developing countries with financing, technology and capacity-building support. China will continue to pursue ecological conservation on a priority basis, advance green and low-carbon development, stop building new coal-fired power projects abroad, vigorously support other developing countries in developing green and low-carbon energy and help them build more green energy projects. China will continue to actively respond to climate change.

Thirdly, we should stay open and inclusive and advance human civilization. Diversity of civilizations is an invaluable asset for human development; indeed, diversity is a defining feature of human civilization. Different countries and civilizations should prosper together by respecting each other, advance together by drawing on each other's strengths and seek win-win outcomes by pursuing common ground, while setting aside differences.

Promoting and protecting human rights is a cause pursued by all countries, and ensuring a good life for people is the ultimate human right. As countries have different histories, traditions and conditions, we must and can only explore a path of human rights development suited to our national conditions in response to the needs of our people. We should advance the international human rights cause through dialogue

and cooperation and oppose politicization and double standards, in particular through the use of human rights and democracy as a political tool to interfere in the affairs of other countries.

Fourthly, we should stay true to multilateralism and improve global governance. China is firm in supporting the international system, with the United Nations at its core. The United Nations should make advances in all the three pillar areas of security, development and human rights, in a balanced manner, and see that all countries jointly safeguard universal security, share development achievements and chart the course for the future of the world. Major countries should lead by example and deliver on their commitment to multilateralism.

Next year, the United Nations will hold the Summit of the Future. The international community should follow the direction of a multipolar world and democracy in international relations, use this occasion to promote reform in such areas as peace and security, economy, finance and trade in a coordinated manner, increase the representation and say of developing countries and make global governance more just and equitable.

In October, the Communist Party of China convened its Twentieth National Congress, at which an inspiring blueprint to achieve great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts by pursuing Chinese modernization was presented. Chinese modernization involves a huge population. It aims to deliver prosperity for all the Chinese people, promote ethical, material and cultural advancement, and achieve harmony between humankind and nature and a peaceful development. By pursuing Chinese modernization, we will promote world peace and development and make new and greater contributions to the advancement of human civilization.

China remains committed to more fully opening itself to the world. Today the Chinese economy is already an integral part of the global economy. We will continue to expand that by opening up in a systematic way in order to promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, open the market further to foreign investment and protect the lawful rights and interests of foreign investors. We will continue to add new momentum to global economic development, and we welcome all countries to share in the opportunities and benefits created by China's development.

China remains committed to an independent foreign policy. Independence is the defining feature of China's diplomacy and defiance of hegemony is a distinctive feature of China's diplomacy. No matter what stage



of development it reaches, China will never practice hegemony and expansion. China will uphold the common values of humankind — peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom — and will continue to advance a peaceful, open, cooperative and common development.

China remains committed to safeguarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity. There is only one China in the world. The Government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal Government representing the whole of China, and Taiwan has been an inalienable part of China's territory since ancient times. No one and no force should ever underestimate the firm resolve, the strong will and the power of the Chinese people to safeguard their sovereignty and territorial integrity. Realizing China's complete reunification is a shared aspiration of all the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation. We will continue to strive for peaceful reunification with the greatest sincerity and the utmost effort.

China will remain a member of the large family of developing countries. As the largest developing country, China is a natural member of the global South. It breathes the same air as other developing countries and shares the same future with them. China is firm in upholding the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries. It supports and respects their efforts to independently decide on their development paths, in keeping with their national conditions.

China will work unrelentingly to promote the building of a community with a shared future for humankind, with a view to fulfilling the mission of a major country and responsibility for the future of humankind. China will work with all other peace-loving countries committed to development in order to deliver a brighter future for the world.

**The President:** On behalf of the Assembly, I wish to thank the Vice-President of the People's Republic of China for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Han Zheng, Vice-President of the People's Republic of China, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Tiemoko Meyliet Koné,  
Vice-President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire**

**The President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Vice-President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

*Mr. Tiemoko Meyliet Koné, Vice-President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming Mr. Tiemoko Meyliet Koné, Vice-President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Koné (Côte d'Ivoire) (spoke in French):** From this rostrum and in my capacity as representative of the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, His Excellency Mr. Alassane Ouattara, I would like to express, on his behalf as well as my own, warm and cordial greetings. I would also like, on behalf of President Alassane Ouattara, to warmly congratulate the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session, not only for his election but also for the effective conduct of his work. I also wish to extend once again to the Secretary-General the gratitude of Côte d'Ivoire and the full support of the Ivorian Government for his various initiatives aimed at ensuring that the United Nations is, more than ever, a "centre for harmonizing the actions of nations".

*Mr. Dibba (Gambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Our session is being held in a context of great uncertainty for our planet and for our States, which are faced with large-scale crises. That situation significantly hinders the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and limits our ability to collectively address those challenges. When it comes time to take stock, we must face the fact that the resources expected to finance that important Agenda are still not forthcoming, particularly for developing countries. Faced with that observation, we must act quickly and demonstrate solidarity to ensure the sustainability and predictability of financing for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The noble ambition of the 2030 Agenda cannot remain dependent on security spending that increases year after year across the world. That is why my delegation welcomes the relevant theme of the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly, which invites us to make greater commitments and undertake greater efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. To do that, we must immediately reduce the cost of conflicts that undermine the development of our countries by prioritizing conflict prevention and mechanisms for their peaceful resolution. At the same time, our Governments must strengthen the resilience of our economies so that they

may contribute to financing the SDGs. In that context, Côte d'Ivoire welcomes with particular interest the Secretary-General's proposal for a New Agenda for Peace, which asks us to rethink our priorities in terms of preserving and consolidating our collective security.

It is time for the international community to mobilize and act so that the parties to the conflict in Ukraine and all their external partners commit to a political settlement of that war. Beyond the risk of escalating violence and human rights abuses, the conflict is fuelling global inflation, creating shortages of essential foodstuffs and threatening to plunge millions of people into famine. In view of its scope and repercussions and the financial flows it is diverting, the war in Ukraine is dealing a death blow to funding for the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

My country also calls on the international community to stand together with Africa in the fight against the armed terrorist groups that are destabilizing entire swathes of the continent, from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa. Combating terrorism entails a high financial cost for African countries, particularly Côte d'Ivoire, which is also host to thousands of refugees from neighbouring countries in crisis. The substantial financial resources dedicated to the latter will surely be in short supply for priority funding to achieve the SDGs. Wherever they operate, armed terrorist groups are reversing decades of progress in the key sectors of education, health, culture and labour. Moreover, they are depriving women and minorities of their fundamental rights and reject all notions of freedom and democracy. In that regard, my country calls on the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to explore ways of financing the priority counter-terrorism plan of action adopted by ECOWAS in 2019, the implementation of which has been slow. For its part, Côte d'Ivoire is ensuring the effective operation of the Jacqueline International Counter-Terrorism Academy, which was established in cooperation with and with the support of bilateral and multilateral partners and already enjoys an excellent reputation.

Climate change remains a major issue and is having a major impact on our economies and ability to overcome the challenge of financing for development. Developing countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire, which are only marginally responsible for climate change, are disproportionately affected and are suffering the most from its consequences. As an agricultural

producer, my country is committed to strengthening efforts to combat the effects of climate change in order to improve people's resilience, which involves, first, ramping up the sustainable management of natural resources and biodiversity, and secondly, encouraging people to develop civic awareness regarding environmental preservation and the promotion of sustainable development. To that end, we urge partners that pledged their support at the fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, held in Abidjan in May 2022, to continue their support for the implementation of the Abidjan Initiative, also known as the Abidjan Legacy Programme. That benchmark initiative, which is aimed at land restoration, biodiversity preservation and the development of responsible agriculture, represents an opportunity that we must take advantage of for the benefit of current and future generations.

Faced with the challenges of today, bilateral and multilateral partners must meet their financial commitments under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and also facilitate the entry into force of the loss and damage fund agreed at the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 27), held in Egypt. Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the success of the African Climate Summit, held in Nairobi on 5 and 6 September 2023, and the outstanding work of the continent to ensure that its voice will be heard at COP 28, to be held in Dubai.

I take this opportunity to call on the international community to support the recommendations made in the Nairobi declaration on climate change, in particular with regard to increasing the continent's renewable energy production capacity. The proliferation and consequences of extreme weather events caused by climate change in recent years have resulted in widespread material destruction and the tragic loss of human life. Such devastation — the cost of our inaction on climate change — is erasing the progress made towards achieving the SDGs, especially for the countries that are most vulnerable to the effects of global warming. That demonstrates how much more solidarity and resources dedicated to financing the SDGs will be required to combat global warming and adapt our economies and societies.

The coronavirus pandemic revealed the precariousness of our health-care systems and, among other impacts, slowed the pace of economic growth on

the African continent. Above all, it served as a reminder of the importance of building genuine international solidarity to face the multifaceted threats to which humankind remains vulnerable. The consequences of the pandemic continue to weigh down our economies and our ability to meet urgent social needs. We must draw on all the lessons learned from a scourge that could once again threaten the entire world. That is why my delegation welcomes the holding of the current session's high-level meetings on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response; the fight against tuberculosis; and universal health coverage. With regard to universal health coverage, I would like to recall that my country has established a universal health coverage programme, which has been operational since October 2019. I hope that the sharing of experiences at the current session will provide opportunities to strengthen our health-care systems.

Under the leadership of its President, Côte d'Ivoire is consolidating its democratic progress, to which the recent municipal and regional elections and senatorial elections held on 2 and 16 September, respectively, attest. The elections enjoyed the participation of all the country's major political groupings and were held in a transparent and peaceful environment, thereby demonstrating the political maturity of the Ivorian people. The stability, peace and democracy that reign in Côte d'Ivoire are allowing President Alassane Ouattara to pursue his project aimed at transforming and modernizing his country.

The outstanding progress made by Côte d'Ivoire in all sectors has fostered significant advances in the implementation of the SDGs. The strength of the Ivorian economy has led to a significant drop in the poverty rate, which is currently at approximately 36.5 per cent, down from 56 per cent in 2011, and is set to fall further to 20 per cent by 2030. At the same time, and since 2015, an ambitious productive social safety net project has enabled the provision of assistance to the households most in need. Similarly, the Government has adopted an ambitious social support project, called PSGouv, to combat social vulnerability. The Government's policy and successive development national development plans have helped to improve progress towards the SDGs in Côte d'Ivoire. However, social progress has been severely undermined by large refugee flows from neighbouring countries stricken by terrorism.

We have all reached the same conclusion. Our States are far from being in a position to achieve the

SDGs by 2030. The financing of our development agenda reflects the urgent need for a multilateral approach to address the current global challenges. That also forces us to consider the need for a reform of global governance at all levels and to restore the meaning of solidarity among nations — a principle dear to President Alassane Ouattara and which Secretary-General António Guterres, in his opening statement for the current session, also encouraged us to embrace.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Vice-President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Tiémoko Meyliet Koné, Vice-President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Ms. Jessica Alupo, Vice-President of the Republic of Uganda**

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

*Ms. Jessica Alupo, Vice-President of the Republic of Uganda, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming Her Excellency Ms. Jessica Alupo, Vice-President of the Republic of Uganda, and inviting her to address the Assembly.

**Ms. Alupo (Uganda):** I congratulate the President on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session and assure him of Uganda's full support. I would like to thank Mr. Csaba Kőrösi for his stewardship of the seventy-seventh session. I pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for his leadership and commitment to the work of the United Nations.

As we mark 78 years of the existence of the United Nations, we yearn for a revitalized Organization that is capable of addressing current and emerging global challenges. We believe that multilateralism remains a fundamental and crucial mechanism for addressing our common challenges together as nations in solidarity. We pledge to work together with the entire membership of the United Nations to make our Organization fit for purpose and relevant for our times. In that regard, Uganda remains committed to the reform of the Security Council to make it more representative and to

address the historical injustices committed against the people of Africa, as spelled out by the Common African Position and enshrined in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

Uganda acknowledges that the timely and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is crucial for the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In that regard, the Government has continued to take bold actions to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda nationally. Notable actions include the operationalization of voluntary local reviews and the institution of a national sustainable development goals conference, which is held annually with the participation of all stakeholders, to discuss the progress achieved to date and agree on actions to ensure full compliance. Nationally, we continue to register steady progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the progress of which will be documented in the third voluntary national review report to be submitted to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which will be convened by the Economic and Social Council in July 2024.

Peace and security are fundamental and crucial for achieving sustainable development. Therefore, we need to reflect on the original purposes of the United Nations and work to resolve human-made conflicts and global insecurity through cooperation, diplomacy and peaceful means. In that regard, Uganda has continued to work with partners to support and advance peace, stability and security initiatives in the region and beyond so as to eliminate terrorism, mistrust and other conditions that undermine development.

We remain actively involved in regional initiatives, particularly those under the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the East African Community and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. Our involvement is based on the fundamental values of multilateralism. As the international community, we must be steadfast in our resolve to support dialogue and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, wherever they occur around us and anywhere else in the world.

Uganda has been at the forefront of receiving large numbers of refugees from within the region and ranks as one of the top refugee-hosting countries. Uganda extends its gratitude to the States Members of the United Nations and other development partners for

the support and assistance rendered to the country and refugees, respectively. We are working closely with the United Nations and partners to address the root causes of displacement. Uganda remains committed to shouldering its responsibilities and obligations in addressing the plight of refugees, as a pioneer of the progressive refugee policy outlined in the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. As one of the co-conveners of the Global Refugee Forum, we commend all States and other actors for their sustained commitment over the past three years, and we call upon Member States and stakeholders to continue their commitment to pledging towards initiatives that advance the principle of burden- and responsibility-sharing, which is central to the Global Compact on Refugees, at the forthcoming Global Refugee Forum.

The Constitution of Uganda provides for the protection of the rights and freedoms of all Ugandans, as well as for the promotion of culture. Uganda has institutional safeguards that address grievances of human rights abuses. Objective XXIV of the Constitution states that cultural and customary values are consistent with fundamental human rights and freedoms, human dignity and democracy. Our approach to human rights is to respect other people's values, and we expect others to respect our values, which are deeply rooted in our culture. We therefore call for mutual respect of sovereignty. We believe that human rights considerations, especially in the face of varying cultural values, should not become the moderating factor in our long-term relationship with our development partners, with which we will continue to engage in a proactive manner.

With regard to gender equality, more than 34.9 per cent of the parliamentary and executive seats in Uganda are held by women. In order to promote economic empowerment, Uganda has embarked on poverty alleviation programmes, which target the participation of women and young people in the economy. We are currently promoting value addition, value chain and public procurement from Uganda's various women's entrepreneurship programmes. With the creation of the African Continental Free Trade Area, women will participate in cross-border trade within the Area. However, work still needs to be done in Uganda to achieve full gender equality.

Climate change continues to undermine the ability of all nations to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Globally, we continue to witness climate and



weather extremes, which are causing considerable loss of life and property. We remain concerned that countries that have contributed less to the global emission of greenhouse gases continue to be disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change. In that connection, my country extends its sincere condolences to the people of Morocco following the devastating 6.8 magnitude earthquake that claimed more than 800 lives, and to the people of Libya in the aftermath of Storm Daniel, which resulted in unprecedented flooding and loss of life.

To address the adverse impacts of climate change, Uganda continues to take bold climate adaptation and mitigation measures in line with our ambitious updated nationally determined contributions, including by increasing access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern forms of energy to enhance production and value addition; increasing forest and wetland cover; and championing the operationalization of climate-smart agriculture. However, we note that the lack of sufficient means of implementation continues to undermine our efforts to adequately address the impacts of climate change. We therefore reiterate our call on developed country parties to fulfil their commitment, in line with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, to provide \$100 billion annually to developing country parties through 2025 to assist them with mitigation and adaptation.

We remain deeply concerned by the increasing trend of biodiversity loss. We believe that the full and timely implementation of the decisions adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity is fundamental to effectively address biodiversity loss. In that context, the Government of Uganda has continued to take bold actions to address biodiversity loss, including the complete restoration of all degraded wetlands, reforestation and the prosecution of those involved in illegal activities that undermine the preservation of flora and fauna. Our view is that the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity remains a commitment for all nations and humankind. We therefore urge the international community to provide developing countries with sufficient means of implementation, in terms of financing, capacity-building and technology transfer, to support their efforts to address the challenges of biodiversity loss.

Developing countries continue to face unprecedented financing challenges that undermine

their ability to achieve sustainable development. We believe that the urgent need to reform the international financial architecture is fundamental and crucial in addressing those challenges. Those reforms must be substantial in order to ensure that developing countries are well represented and can effectively and efficiently participate in the decision-making processes of those international financial institutions. Our view is that those international financial institutions should support developing countries in their development efforts, in accordance with their national policies and legal frameworks.

The coronavirus disease pandemic presented a multitude of challenges to global health systems and essential health services. The crisis not only reversed hard-fought health gains but has also inflicted severe economic hardships, especially in developing countries such as Uganda. We have witnessed widespread job losses, disruptions in supply chains, reduced foreign investments and increased poverty rates. Those economic setbacks further exacerbate the existing challenges of implementing the 2030 Agenda. In Uganda, for instance, despite earlier progress, access to universal health care today stands at 65 per cent, which is well short of the SDG target of 100 per cent.

The crisis, while daunting, also presents opportunities for us to rethink and reinforce our commitment to health care and the Sustainable Development Goals. Despite the challenges, I am happy to report that Uganda has registered positive achievements in some effective disease control measures, as demonstrated by its swift and successful response to the Ebola outbreak. Through diligent efforts and the collaboration of health-care professionals and the Government, Uganda declared the end of the Ebola outbreak caused by the Sudan ebolavirus on 11 January 2023, just four months after the first case was confirmed in September 2022. That accomplishment underscores the importance of surveillance, contact tracing and infection prevention and control in swiftly mitigating public health crises. By working together and capitalizing on the expertise and infrastructure developed in those areas, we can collectively contribute to a healthier, more resilient world.

The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) remains a key player in handling current and emerging global challenges at the United Nations. The Movement remains relevant in serving the interests of its member States, in line with its founding principles and purposes.

In that regard, Uganda, as the incoming Chair of NAM, will work closely with other NAM countries to further strengthen the tenets and values of the Organization and the important role that the Movement plays at the United Nations and other international forums. As host of the nineteenth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, we look forward to welcoming the NAM Heads of State and Government to Kampala from 19 to 20 January 2024.

Finally, South-South cooperation remains a strong element of international cooperation among the countries of the global South; such cooperation must be enhanced. We continue to witness the solidarity exhibited by countries in the global South in extending support to their global counterparts to address multiple challenges. We therefore commend those countries for their solidarity. Uganda will continue to support the strengthening of South-South, triangular and North-South cooperation at the United Nations. As host country of the third South Summit, to be held in Kampala from 21 to 23 January 2024, we look forward to welcoming the leaders of the Group of 77 and China.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Vice-President of the Republic of Uganda for the statement she has just made.

*Ms. Jessica Alupo, Vice-President of the Republic of Uganda, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Mohammed Jallow,  
Vice-President of the Republic of the Gambia**

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

*Mr. Mohammed Jallow, Vice-President of the Republic of the Gambia, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mohammed Jallow, Vice-President of the Republic of the Gambia, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Jallow (Gambia):** I bring the General Assembly warm greetings and a goodwill message of peace, progress and stability from President Adama Barrow and the Government and the people of the Gambia — Africa's smiling coast.

We congratulate the President on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth

session and thank his predecessor, Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, for his sterling leadership during the seventy-seventh session. We also express our gratitude to the Secretary-General of our Organization, Mr. António Guterres, for his hands-on leadership during these heady and turbulent times being felt throughout the world.

The world is facing numerous crises and a multitude of daunting challenges that raise serious questions about the readiness and viability of our multilateral institutions and arrangements in the event of another crisis or pandemic. The priorities of our times urgently warrant our collective attention and action. We must therefore undertake major reforms and organize our institutions better to make them fit for purpose. Achieving that has to begin with renewing our faith in both the Charter of the United Nations and inclusive multilateralism.

For those reasons, we believe that the theme for the current session, "Rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity: accelerating action on the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals towards peace, prosperity, progress and sustainability for all", mirrors the Gambia's national ethos of peace, progress and prosperity. Our world direly needs to rebuild that lost trust, and we must work within our multilateral institutions to help to regain it, first and foremost by reforming and retooling ourselves. From underdevelopment to climate change, from unsustainable debts to cost-of-living crises, from conflicts to marginalization — we need to cooperate better and share the burden of solutions equitably through greater partnerships and solidarity.

We have seven more years before the Decade of Action ends, yet the story of our global attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is not very positive. It is a story of unfulfilled commitments, weak international cooperation and a lack of genuine global solidarity. It is a story that is all too common when it comes to implementing global commitments. Consequently, we must recognize those global challenges and redouble our efforts by recommitting ourselves to the attainment of the SDGs in the global South. If we remain on our current trajectory without effecting corrective action, the world's most vulnerable peoples will be left behind much further than we can even fathom. As a least developed country (LDC), we call for the steadfast implementation of the new Doha Programme of Action to ensure that it does not become another lost decade of unfulfilled commitments.

In view of the current harsh economic realities across the global South, many developing countries are contending with unsustainable debt burdens that are compromising their ability to dig themselves out of poverty. In the quest for post-pandemic recovery, debt servicing is severely shrinking our economies, especially in the least developed countries. It is essential to find ways to address that burden urgently, as most of our countries run the risk of being left behind. Our goal is to recover by building back our economies much better and faster and to create the policy space that would generate growth once again. The international community should with a deep sense urgency step up its efforts through new and existing initiatives towards finding durable solutions to the debt problem. In sum, we must get back on track to attaining the SDGs.

The issue of debt relief for LDCs is linked to the necessity for greater reform of the international financial institutions and their decision-making mechanisms, particularly those relating to development finance and debt. We join other developing countries in calling for reforms that would ensure our greater participation and a stronger voice in decision-making. We would also like to see mechanisms developed that adequately mainstream our concerns and interests in decisions that affect us. In that context, we strongly welcome the recent designation of a permanent seat for the African Union in the Group of 20. That will immensely amplify Africa's voice and participation in the discussion of global geopolitical and development issues that concern the well-being of its people.

One of the important global issues negatively affecting Africa in disproportionate ways is climate change. Africa is paying a very heavy price for global warming, even though it contributes the least to climate change. The cataclysmic weather events currently affecting our world clearly make it imperative and urgent to undertake collective action to tackle climate change for a more liveable world. The world lacks neither the climate action commitments nor the financial resources to match our ambitions, but we are short of the genuine political will to act decisively. When will we meet the \$100 billion annual commitment to combat this phenomenon? Will we ever agree on the modalities for the loss-and-damage fund at the twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change? Those are important questions to ask, considering the prevailing mistrust that continues to characterize the

global dialogue on climate change and climate action. We have to act without delay and rebuild trust in our collective fight against global warming.

In the Gambia, through our nationally determined contribution under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, we are acting through various initiatives and projects to combat climate change. We call on Member States and the international community to fulfil their commitments to Mother Earth with a greater sense of urgency.

On behalf of the people of the Gambia, I extend our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to the States of Türkiye and Morocco in the wake of the recent earthquakes that struck their nations. Our thoughts are with the affected communities as they recover from those tragic events. In addition, we sympathize with all countries that have recently endured the devastating consequences of deadly floods, wildfires and other natural disasters exacerbated by the effects of climate change. Those events serve as a stark reminder of the urgent need for collective action to address the challenges posed by our changing climate. The Gambia reaffirms its commitment to working together with the international community to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Our world also faces several challenges relating to the maintenance of international peace and security. In Africa, we continue to face the threats of terrorism, piracy and the re-emergence of unconstitutional changes of Government, civil strife and armed conflicts across the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. The scenario is similar across parts of the Middle East. The ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict is another matter of serious geopolitical concern in view of its wider global impact. The institutional failures, human suffering and huge number of lives lost should serve as a wake-up call for all Member States. To say that the institutions, mechanisms and processes we created in the aftermath of Second World War are inadequate in terms of preventing the scourge of war would be an understatement. There is therefore a pressing need to revisit our responses to conflicts and devise new and effective arrangements for conflict resolution and conflict management.

Today we are hamstrung by the weaknesses of our institutions and arrangements, a situation that is greatly exacerbated by mistrust and a lack of genuine international solidarity. In the face of the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, we call on the

warring parties to give peace a chance. We further call on them to respect the sanctity of human life. It is only through negotiation and political dialogue that such conflicts can end. We also call on our brothers and sisters in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa to choose peace over armed conflict.

Since our political transition in 2017, The Gambia has committed itself to the consolidation of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Good governance, accountability and institutional reforms are progressively taking root in our society. Sustaining and building the peace that we have so heavily invested in will remain a priority for the Government. We have also instituted transitional justice mechanisms that have yielded substantial results, and we are fully committed to implementing the recommendations of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission set up in 2018.

West Africa is facing serious challenges in connection with development, democratic governance, the rule of law, peace and security. As we grapple with those regional challenges, let me assure the Assembly that, in The Gambia, we are truly committed to nurturing our young democracy, institution-building, protecting and promoting fundamental rights and freedoms, as well as women and youth empowerment. We are now enjoying the dividends of democracy, and we believe it is the best form of governance for our people.

Furthermore, in our quest to inclusively deliver the dividends of democracy and build a more secure and prosperous Gambia, the Government recently developed a new Green Recovery-Focused National Development Plan 2023-2027 as a successor to the 2018-2021 National Development Plan. While it appreciates the support and partnership received during the implementation of the National Development Plan, The Gambia solicits the continuous support and partnership of all its friends, partners and the international community to successfully implement its new development master plan.

The pursuit of peace around the world is one of the central pillars of the United Nations work. The adaptability of the Organization to resolve ongoing, new or emerging peace and security challenges is worthy of sober reflection. Peacekeeping missions in situations in which terrorism, violent extremism or gang violence is endemic demand serious dialogue within the Organization. No society should be held

hostage because our institutional arrangements are ineffectively suited for action in such situations. Traditional peacekeeping has worked in a lot of situations, but it has come under enormous pressure in recent times. Such difficult experiences, as exemplified in some peacekeeping missions in Africa, flag the need for wisdom for reform.

As a demonstration of our commitment to peacekeeping undertakings, in support of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping, we have agreed with Bangladesh, with the support of the Secretariat, to jointly deploy a battalion in a suitable peacekeeping mission. That is an innovative arrangement where our two countries will collaborate to advance peace.

Allow me to share some thoughts on topical international political developments and situations that require our attention. The maltreatment of migrants across the world is a matter of serious concern to my delegation. Migrants are human beings with human rights, and they deserve to be treated humanely. We are appalled by the cruel and degrading treatment meted out to migrants at certain borders in Africa and beyond. We call on the United Nations to investigate those incidents and crimes committed against migrants, with a view to protecting them and their families. Criminalizing migration or treating migrants as criminals is unacceptable. Let us open legal pathways for migration and the regularization of the status of migrants in line with our international commitments, including those under the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been going on for too long. The conflict requires a lasting solution. Settlement activities need to stop. We express serious concern over the ongoing loss of life and injuries suffered by Palestinians in the region.

Allow me to commend the Kingdom of Morocco once again for the efforts it continues to undertake towards the resolution of the dispute in the Moroccan Sahara. The Gambia reaffirms its strong support for the Moroccan autonomy initiative, which it believes serves as a serious, credible, realistic compromise solution that could resolve the dispute as affirmed in relevant United Nations resolutions.

Our bilateral relationship with the Peoples Republic of China is founded on the principles of peaceful coexistence, mutual respect and a commitment to



mutually beneficial development. We therefore strongly endorse the one-China policy.

Allow me to highlight that reform of the United Nations, especially that of the Security Council, is long overdue. Africa's marginalization and underrepresentation in the membership of the Council calls for corrective measures. After more than 75 years of existence, that body deserves urgent reforms to regain the world's trust. In furtherance of that call, my delegation strongly supports the common African position on that important issue.

In conclusion, rebuilding trust across the wide spectrum of issues that I have raised is a matter of utmost priority. The urgency of rebuilding trust in our multilateral institutions across the globe is glaringly evident.

To avoid exclusion of the most vulnerable members in this decade of action, The Gambia calls for greater international cooperation and renewed solidarity. We can all make a huge difference if we commit to rekindling global solidarity during these critical times. Concerted global action, sustained international solidarity and increased partnerships are the antidote for our current global challenges.

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

*Mr. Mohammed Jallow, Vice-President of Republic of The Gambia, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, Vice-President in charge of National Defense and Security of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Vice-President in charge of National Defense and Security of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

*Mr. Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, Vice-President in charge of National Defense and Security of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, Vice-President in charge of National

Defense and Security of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Obiang Mangue** (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of His Excellency Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, I would like to begin by congratulating His Excellency Mr. Dennis Francis on his unanimous election as President of the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly, and I extend those congratulations to the other members of the General Committee. We assure him with absolute certainty and confidence that he can count on the support and cooperation of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea during his presidency.

We would like to convey the utmost expression of our heartfelt solidarity to the Kingdom of Morocco and to the State of Libya following the tragedies that those two fraternal countries recently experienced, which have led to great loss of life and to massive destruction of infrastructure.

The theme of the seventy-eighth regular session of the General Assembly is "Rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity: accelerating action on the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals towards peace, prosperity, progress and sustainability for all".

Indeed, we welcome the relevance of this theme, as it fits perfectly into the current context of the most burning problems that the world is currently facing, including war, the increase in armed groups, the real threat of terrorism and mercenaryism, climate change, the prospect of new health crises, the economic and financial crisis, as well as the food crisis, which is likely to result in famine in various countries. The moment is so decisive that it requires world leaders to seek lasting, consensual, transformative and sustainable solutions as intertwined challenges that have a cross-cutting and negative impact on all continents.

Once again we are here to denounce and condemn the interference of certain countries and the exploitation of our natural resources, which continue to be a determining factor is promoting underdevelopment, conflicts and instability, as well as the very worrisome and increasingly serious situation that the countries of the Sahel and other regions of the African continent are going through, with very negative implications for their development.

Africa deserves priority attention from support and assistance initiatives, with a decisive materialization of the financing commitments to sustainable development for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — leaving no one behind to overcome all the phenomena that hinder Africa's development.

We express our grave concern about the chronic crises that Haiti has been suffering. Haiti is currently besieged by a gang of criminals inflicting enormous damage to the population. Equatorial Guinea therefore proposes the holding of a United Nations conference for Haiti, in order to conduct an in-depth analysis and find a sustainable and lasting solution.

Equatorial Guinea insistently reiterates the need to reform the United Nations system, including the Security Council, which is currently one of the greatest injustices and constitutes a serious failure in the application of international law. The African continent continues to suffer from the historical injustice of being the only continent without permanent representation in the Security Council, despite the fact that a large part of the issues on the agenda of that decision-making organ are matters of concern to Africa.

In this increasingly interdependent world, where no one can walk alone, we strongly reject the unilateral imposition of coercive measures that run counter to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. We urge States to refrain from enacting and applying them, as they severely hinder State development, especially in developing countries.

We once again raise our voice for the immediate lifting of the trade, economic and financial embargo imposed against the Republic of Cuba several decades ago. This brotherly country deserves the opportunity to integrate into the global context as a sovereign country.

Before concluding, I would like to inform the Assembly that the Government of Equatorial Guinea has conceived the 2035 strategic plan for economic diversification, and we would like our partners to join us in the implementation of that plan. To that end, we extend an invitation to businessmen from all friendly and brotherly countries to come and invest in the attractive national market.

We live in a globalized world. We are therefore expected to forge supportive partnerships of

collaboration and solidarity through frank and inclusive dialogue in order to peacefully resolve current conflicts and inequalities, as well as our differences. We call for the need and importance of giving greater priority to multilateralism and international cooperation, both so necessary to addressing the global challenges currently facing humankind as a whole. Our determination to address pressing issues — from climate change to peace, security and development — is strong. I have no doubt that, with a true spirit of solidarity, there will be no difficulty that we cannot overcome for the good of our planet and its people.

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

*Mr. Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, Vice-President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Philip Isdor Mpango, Vice-President of the United Republic of Tanzania**

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

*Mr. Philip Isdor Mpango, Vice-President of the United Republic of Tanzania, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Philip Isdor Mpango, Vice-President of the United Republic of Tanzania, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Mpango** (United Republic of Tanzania): Please allow me to start by conveying to the General Assembly fraternal greetings from Ms. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, who could not attend this current important session due to pressing national commitments. It is a great honour and privilege to address the Assembly on her behalf and for the people of my country.

I also wish to join those who spoke before me in congratulating the President of the General Assembly on his election to preside over the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session. I pledge Tanzania's full support to his presidency. Similarly, I wish to pay tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Csaba Kőrösi,

who successfully steered the Assembly during the seventy-seventh session. In the same way, I commend the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for their dedicated service to humankind in the face of many daunting global challenges.

This year, the Assembly is meeting specifically with a view to rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity. However, for decades now, the persistent voice of the global South calling in the wilderness to make straight the way towards peace, prosperity, progress and sustainability for all has fallen on deaf ears. The hitherto strong historical solidarity, fraternity and commitment to the principles of non-interference, equality among nations and mutual benefit, which was bequeathed to us by the founding fathers of the United Nations, is withering away. As a result of that paralysis in multilateralism, we have now begun to witness shifting geopolitical tectonic plates and the creation of new blocs seeking to replace the now obviously dysfunctional world order. Trust among States has worn away, and there is erosion of the rule of law and a reversion to unilateralism. The effectiveness of the United Nations system and multilateral financial institutions is being questioned more than ever before, calling for their immediate reform. All this is happening at a time when the world is reeling from the aftershocks of the coronavirus disease pandemic, the relentless wrath of climate change, horrendous armed conflicts, global food insecurity, the looming energy and debt crisis, persistent poverty and growing inequality.

*The President returned to the Chair.*

Furthermore, the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has been disappointing, mainly as a result of the global North's unfulfilled promises of financing and technology and the limited fiscal space in most African countries. In order to rebuild trust, it is imperative that the global North walk the talk on its promises and listen to the voices of the global South. Analogously, the global South must re-engineer its domestic revenue-mobilization efforts, including by putting an end to the haemorrhage of its natural resource wealth and the illicit capital outflows.

Peace is undeniably a prerequisite for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Ironically, some nations are still firing guns and missiles at each other even in the twenty-first century. However, the fact is that the massive production of weapons and the skyrocketing military spending on armed conflicts

are compromising the promises we all made to the most vulnerable among us — children, young people, women and the poor — to build a better, prosperous world and create opportunities for all, leaving no one behind. In that regard, Tanzania highly commends the United Nations for its tireless efforts in maintaining international peace and security. We applaud the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace, unveiled on 20 July, which provides a great vision for multilateral efforts to establish peace and security on the basis of international law. I therefore implore each one of us in the Assembly to give due consideration to the priorities stipulated therein, for they resonate very well with the spirit and essence of the theme of the Assembly's current session.

Tanzania remains fully committed and ready to work with the United Nations family in maintaining global peace and security to make the world a safer place in which to live, not only for us but, more importantly, for the generations to come. Tanzania firmly believes that the world needs to invest more in dialogue and diplomacy to prevent and resolve armed conflicts. Wars and confrontation must be avoided at all costs, because in war everyone loses, including the non-warring parties. In that regard, Tanzania has and will continue to contribute to peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts in Africa and elsewhere in the world. As of March, Tanzania stood as the twelfth-largest contributor among the 125 countries that contribute to United Nations peacekeeping missions. Tanzania urges the international community to increase its support for regional initiatives to bring peace to war-torn parts of the African continent. Those who participate in fuelling conflicts in Africa, either for the purpose of profiting from arms trade or gaining access to blood mineral wealth, should be tracked and condemned openly by the United Nations. With regard to combating terrorism, Tanzania has strengthened its capacity to deal with cross-border terrorism by working with our neighbours and international partners, especially through the sharing of information and strategies.

Three days ago, we gathered in this Hall for a second review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the implementation of the 17 SDGs. It is discouraging to note that, at the half-way point, we are off-track to meet most of the Goals. The progress report of the Secretary-General reveals that progress towards a mere 15 per cent of the 140 targets is on track, while progress towards a staggering 37 per cent

of the targets has either stagnated or even regressed from the 2015 baseline. That underperformance calls for supercharged implementation and partnership, especially the prioritizing of scaled-up investment in people.

Tanzania is fully committed to implementing the SDGs as envisaged. In July, it submitted its second voluntary national report, which shows that there has been significant progress overall with respect to SDGs 2 to 7, as indicated by an increase in the food sufficiency ratio, the availability of essential medicines, the decline in the under-5 mortality rate, the increase in pre-primary and primary education gross enrolment rates, the significant milestones achieved in pioneering gender equality, the improved water supply coverage in urban and rural areas and the proportion of the population with access to electricity. However, only moderate progress has been recorded under SDGs 1, 8 and 10. To ensure successful implementation of the SDGs, Tanzania is determined to take actions to improve further the domestic revenue effort, while capitalizing on public-private partnerships. We are also prioritizing investments in the social-service sectors, agriculture, agribusiness, value addition and infrastructure, as well as in developing skills for young people. In addition, harnessing science, technology and innovation is key to hastening the implementation of the SDGs.

Climate change has become the world's greatest threat. Recent natural calamities that have devastated areas of a number of countries around the world have amplified the horrible effects of climate change. On that note, Tanzania offers its deepest condolences to the Governments and the peoples of Libya and Morocco for the loss of life and property caused by floods and earthquakes in their countries. Beyond that, the recently released sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change sounded the alarm about the reality that the world is not on track to succeed in remaining below the 1.5°C limit on the overall temperature increase agreed in Paris. Disturbingly, the report also indicates that Africa is warming at an accelerated pace that is outstripping the global rate. As a result, climate change has continued to adversely affect Africa and hamper its progress, and will continue to do so. Tanzania therefore reiterates its call for urgent and concerted action on the part of all nations to cut greenhouse-gas emissions and strengthen mitigation and adaptation measures. Together we must create an enabling environment and facilitate the

investments needed to unlock the resources for scaling up the implementation of our climate commitments and the decarbonization of the global economy. We, the global community, must act with urgency. Tanzania also reiterates its call for a fair and just clean-energy transition for Africa.

Unilateral coercive measures have serious adverse effects on the economies and innocent lives they target, especially those of women and children, the very people whom we have committed to not leaving behind. Tanzania remains steadfast in its opposition to injustice, wherever and by whomever it is committed. We stand against the imposition of unjust economic sanctions and other unilateral coercive measures that undermine sovereignty and prosperity for all. We also continue to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters who continue to be denied their rights to self-determination or are living under occupation or domination. We call for the lifting of unjust sanctions and an end to occupation and subjugation. Tanzania also advocates for the peaceful resolution of all territorial disputes in accordance with the principles set out in the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm Tanzania's unwavering commitment to supporting the United Nations and its Member States in implementing our common global agenda. We call on warring parties around the world to silence their guns and missiles and prioritize peace. Let us act towards one another with humility, not arrogance. Let us abide by the traditional wisdom that tells us that an eye for an eye leaves everybody blind. Let us act together to address the climate crisis and hasten the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Our humble plea is for the voices, promises and solutions made and proposed at this rostrum to bring hope to the hopeless, dignity to the humiliated and justice to all.

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

*Mr. Philip Isdor Mpango, Vice-President of the United Republic of Tanzania, was escorted from the rostrum.*



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

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

*Mr. Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Rowley (Trinidad and Tobago):** It is an honour to address this gathering of States in the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session. I stand before the Assembly to speak on behalf of a proud nation that is celebrating the leadership of the General Assembly for the next year by a son of the soil of Trinidad and Tobago. We are proud of you, Mr. President. I once again extend my warm congratulations to you on behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and assure you of our full support. I would also like to express our deep gratitude to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, for ably guiding our work during the seventy-seventh session.

Let me express our deepest condolences to the Governments and the peoples of Morocco and Libya and our solidarity with them in the wake of the recent tragedies in their countries, which have resulted in significant losses of lives and livelihoods and the destruction of property.

At the midpoint of the journey towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, sober reflection will leave many observers with a pessimistic feeling that the world is in peril and that we are at risk of significantly falling short in ensuring that no one is left behind. We have seen an array of cascading crises in many parts of the world. The Secretary-General recently sounded the alarm, saying that the period of global warming had ended and one of global boiling had arrived. Investments in instruments of war have far surpassed investments in instruments of peace and peacebuilding. Some protracted conflicts are continuing with little sign of a ceasefire, and others continue to erupt and escalate, with disturbing consequences. All of that contributes to the waning spirit of multilateralism in our United Nations, the

very purpose for which the Organization was built. We have seen glimmers of hope extinguished by the darkness of despair, where the most vulnerable of the global population are made to pay the highest price. The cards of the international financial system remain heavily stacked against the global South, inhibiting the prospects for those countries to achieve economic growth and sustainable development. Against that backdrop, I ask, is that the legacy that we want to leave to future generations?

Trinidad and Tobago, as a responsible member of our Organization, is committed to doing its part to achieve sustainable development and international peace and security for all. However, our ability to safely navigate our destiny into the harbour of sustainable development by 2030 has been stymied by challenges and threats, some of which are existential. One such threat is the proliferation and use in our society of illegal firearms, which, just as they do in other jurisdictions, bring untold suffering to many families and communities and the nation as a whole. Only today we experienced the loss of five members of one family, killed by an assailant with an assault weapon.

The situation has worsened largely because of the accelerated commercial availability of such weapons, coupled with illegal trafficking from countries of manufacture into the almost defenceless territories of the Caribbean. With a population of 1.4 million people, Trinidad and Tobago experienced more than 600 murders last year, 90 per cent of which involved handguns or, increasingly, assault weapons. Despite making our best efforts and huge inroads into our already scarce resources, we have already seen more than 400 violent firearms-driven killings this year. This is a crisis shared by almost all the territories in the Caribbean and must be added to the challenges that stand in the way of successfully tackling any of the Sustainable Development Goals that have already been identified. Trinidad and Tobago, both individually and as part of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), has attempted to devise solutions and interventions to address those challenges meaningfully and holistically. For that reason, earlier this year we hosted a CARICOM Regional Symposium addressing crime and violence as a public health issue, as we felt it was incumbent on us to promote and encourage dialogue aimed at reducing violence and preventing crime in our society. In that context, we are cognizant of the need for cooperation at all levels.

Accordingly, Trinidad and Tobago remains fully committed to the Arms Trade Treaty and its stated objectives. We also look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with our regional and international partners, especially the United States, to urgently reduce the illicit trade in illegal firearms, most of which are produced by gun manufacturers and promoters based here in this country. We acknowledge and appreciate the recent and ongoing support of the United States in joining with Trinidad and Tobago and CARICOM more generally in confronting that metastasizing scourge, which is not only disturbing our safety but threatening our sense of security and even our democratic States themselves.

We acknowledge that the proliferation of violent crime, concomitant with other escalating crises, provides fertile conditions for destabilizing any country. It is in that context that Trinidad and Tobago supports CARICOM's position that all nations should respect the Caribbean Sea as a zone of peace. Consequently, as we fight our own battle in this area, we remain deeply concerned about the developments in our fellow CARICOM country, Haiti, that are having unimaginably terrible humanitarian, socioeconomic and security consequences. We applaud the decision of the Government of Kenya to offer to help lead a multinational unit in Haiti and welcome the decision of the Governments of the Bahamas and Jamaica to contribute personnel to it. Rwanda's offer to help is also significant and commendable.

We urge the international community to collaborate with Haiti with a view to arriving at a credible solution to its current crisis that can guarantee that the country and its people are not left behind. I would like to remind everyone of the exhortation by Trinidad and Tobago's iconic calypsonian David Rudder in his timeless classic song "Haiti", in which he says, "Haiti, I'm sorry". In his words,

"I refuse to believe that we good people / Will forever turn our hearts and eyes away / Haiti, I'm sorry / We misunderstood you / One day we'll turn our heads / And look inside you".

That day has come. That day is now. We, the United Nations gathered here must prioritize authorizing the external help that Haiti desperately needs. Just like anywhere else in the world, Haiti deserves peace. Haiti deserves prosperity. Haiti deserves progress and Haiti deserves sustainability. Haiti requires the intervention

of the United Nations now. I want to assure the Assembly that Trinidad and Tobago, as an honest broker, remains fully committed to working with the Government of Haiti and all other stakeholders to arrive at an indigenous solution that can comprehensively address the crisis in that country.

Trinidad and Tobago is of the view that in order to rebuild trust and reignite global solidarity, there must be universal adherence to the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States must be paramount and permanent. It is in that connection that we continue to register our dismay and disappointment at the ongoing hostilities following the military action against Ukraine. Although we are geographically far removed from the threat of the conflict, we are not unaffected. It is indeed disappointing that the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which helped stabilize global food prices and potentially protected millions from the threat of famine and starvation, has been terminated. We noted with great anxiety that global food prices rose in July for the first time in months. That situation is of major concern to CARICOM as we acknowledge that food security remains a crucial issue for our region and is a vital component in our quest to implement the 2030 Agenda.

It is also regrettable that after all this time, a credible solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains elusive. In that regard, Trinidad and Tobago reiterates its strong support for a two-State solution based on mutual understanding, tolerance and respect, which would serve as a foundation for Israel and Palestine to live as peaceful, responsible neighbours. We continue to urge both sides to recommit to a just, lasting and comprehensive solution that can ensure peace, prosperity, progress and sustainability for all.

The year 2023 marks two very important milestones for the international community, as we commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute. As a country that has been a long-standing advocate for the International Criminal Court, Trinidad and Tobago congratulates the Court on its achievement. In recognizing that milestone, we want to remember and pay tribute to an outstanding pioneer of the Court, the late Arthur N. R. Robinson, former Prime Minister and President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. We have seen sufficient evidence to be convinced that

his efforts, which resulted in part in the creation of the International Criminal Court, were not in vain. For that reason, Trinidad and Tobago remains steadfast in its support to the work and mandate of the Court, as we believe that access to justice is a critical element in achieving sustainable peace. We therefore continue to urge those countries that have not done so to submit to its jurisdiction so that it can comprehensively fulfil its mandate as a truly universal Court.

While we acknowledge that the International Criminal Court provides a beacon of hope for access to justice, we also recognize that it is an absolute injustice that 75 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, discrimination and a lack of tolerance for fundamental human rights still exist. We remain concerned about the fact that in some quarters, women and girls continue to be denied the kinds of opportunities that are offered to men and boys, which stymies our collective pursuit of building peaceful and sustainable societies. It is quite paradoxical that we are attempting to implement the 2030 Agenda while leaving substantial segments of communities behind. All of us must be allowed to live a life free of fear and free from all forms of violence, a life in which we are respected and our dignity and liberty are not compromised. Those ideals must also shape the way forward for reconciliation, truth and justice.

The persistent underdevelopment of Caribbean nations and so many others is directly attributable to the unpaid debt created by centuries of enslavement and economic exploitation of Africans by Europeans. The descendants of those people populate the Caribbean islands, where they struggle manfully against the residual rigours of those historic crimes, even as they are visited by the worst effects of climate change and a constant threat of exclusion from the world's mainstream financial systems. In that regard, Trinidad and Tobago continues to call for bold and decisive action to ensure reparatory justice for the untold suffering of millions in the developing world, and we would welcome Africa's support in that quest for justice.

It is undeniable that climate change is an existential threat to all of us and does not recognize geographic boundaries. We also acknowledge that our people, the people of the small island developing States, those who are least culpable for the climate crisis, are the ones who continue to be most disproportionately affected. The experts have told us that this past July was the hottest month on record and that global ocean temperatures also

reached record levels. Most disconcertingly, we have noted with justifiable alarm the recent dire warning from scientists that without ambitious climate action, we will exceed the critical 1.5°C temperature threshold. However, recent developments have shown that overly ambitious net-zero targets should not be forced on small island nations.

We are called on to be game-changers on this issue. We have a responsibility for the survival and continued existence of life on this planet that no other generation of leaders has had. A global stocktaking at the twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will be crucial, and it must produce a road map that brings the world closer to being on track by ensuring that nationally determined contributions are aligned with the 1.5°C goal. Nationally determined contributions must become nationally implemented contributions. Trinidad and Tobago is in the process of implementing its commitment to installing some infrastructure for supplying sustainable energy. We urge developed countries to increase their support for the second replenishment of the Green Climate Fund. If those commitments are honoured in full sooner rather than later, they will go a long way to rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity, particularly for the global South.

The global economic crisis has landed heavily on the developing world, with small island developing States such as Trinidad and Tobago and its Caribbean neighbours facing the harshest impacts of the socioeconomic fallout. For that reason, the next 10-year programme of action will be crucial to ensuring that no one is left behind. We call on the international community to lend its support to the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States, and to reach an ambitious and transformative global blueprint that will drive the sustainable-development ambitions of small island developing nations towards long-term, resilient prosperity. We will also continue to advocate for sensitivity on the part of international financial institutions to the specific circumstances of developing countries and the challenges they face. Trinidad and Tobago therefore reiterates its support for the development of a multidimensional vulnerability index, the Bridgetown Initiative and any other effort that addresses the most pressing needs of developing countries, including those encountering liquidity challenges and debt distress.

Earlier this year, Trinidad and Tobago welcomed the landmark adoption of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. Along with its CARICOM partners, Trinidad and Tobago participated actively in the negotiations. We are fully confident that when that treaty enters into force, the benefits will redound to all of humankind.

The 2030 Agenda envisions a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity. However, it will be impossible for our sisters and brothers in Cuba to achieve those goals if the anachronistic economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on that country remains in place. For more than six decades, the people of Cuba have been grappling with significantly diminished prospects for charting a course towards prosperity, meaningful progress and sustainable development. Trinidad and Tobago therefore reiterates its call for the unconditional lifting of the economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba, and certainly for Cuba's removal from any unjustified listing as an alleged State sponsor of terrorism.

Despite our challenges, 2023 has been a momentous year for us in CARICOM. In addition to your election as President of the General Assembly, Sir, in Port of Spain we recently celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Caribbean Community under the theme "50 Years Strong: A Solid Foundation to Build On". It was indeed a confluence of celebratory events, as we all rejoiced over the election of CARICOM members to major United Nations bodies. In that regard, we congratulate Guyana on its election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, and Haiti and Suriname on their election to the Economic and Social Council.

Guided by our Charter and the spirit of multilateralism, there is a popular aphorism that we can use as inspiration. "Coming together is the beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success". If we can apply that maxim, I have no doubt that we can achieve peace, prosperity, progress and sustainability for all. Trinidad and Tobago will be doing its part. We continue to stand on our principles, to deploy our diplomacy and leadership in the service of the common good, to uphold international law and to work with Member States in our commitment to leaving this world safer, healthier and better.

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis, Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic**

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

*Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis, Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis, Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Mitsotakis (Greece):** The theme of this year's General Assembly asks us to accelerate action towards peace, prosperity, progress and sustainability for all. I would argue that it is a laudable goal and one that now matters more than ever before. But I must also ask if it is anywhere near enough. I pose that question not because I wish to test the patience of the Assembly, but rather because even though collective multilateral solutions can and often do make a difference, it seems to me that too many of those solutions fall short of our ambitions. Our words are never quite matched by our actions, and our achievements never quite meet our expectations. It is as if the nations in the United Nations are not quite united enough.

Nowhere is that clearer to me than in two core areas — tackling climate change and managing migration, both of which will be at the heart of Greece's Security Council candidacy for the 2025–2026 term. If elected, Greece will make climate and migration central tenets of its time on the Council, in addition to focusing on international law and maritime security. That is because, at least in part, the global community's current collective approach to climate and migration speaks to a failure to match its rhetoric to its delivery on policy. Given the fact that we just experienced the hottest summer on record and that we talk rather than act when it comes to tackling the main drivers of irregular migration or even the implementation of the existing transnational agreements, we are in fact failing.

We must work harder collectively to change that. Twelve months ago from this very rostrum, I warned



that without multilateral cooperation, the devastating effects of climate change would soon be the norm rather than the exception (see A/77/PV.10). Twelve months later, that new norm has unfortunately already arrived. This summer, floods, fires, heatwaves and landslides have gripped Southern Europe, North Africa and the Mediterranean, bringing unprecedented destruction to the region, from Slovenia to Libya and from Italy to Greece. Nowhere was that more apparent for Greeks than across Evros, in the north-east of my country, where the largest blaze ever recorded in the European Union (EU) burned continuously for almost two weeks. In all, 20 people were killed, hundreds lost their homes and livelihoods and an area greater in size than New York City was razed to ashes. Some 700 firefighters from across Europe fought valiantly to contain that devastating megafire, but they could not tame it.

As if that was not enough, 10 days later Greece was struck by Storm Daniel. The region of Thessaly, in the centre of our country, saw twice as much rainfall in one day as falls in London in an entire year. It was the worst storm to hit Greece in more than a century. Daniel carved its destructive path not only through my country but Libya, too, landing on the coastal city of Derna, where the death toll now stands in the tens of thousands. The impact of those events across the Mediterranean is unprecedented, with lives lost, businesses destroyed, communities upended, social cohesion undermined and the fragile ecology of our most precious natural habitats severely compromised. Of course, I accept that the climate crisis is not an alibi for everything, but the science is clear. Unprecedented temperatures, fuelled by global warming, are creating the conditions that drive those catastrophic events. This is no longer a crisis of the poorest or of the global South. Our own very unequal battle with nature is now being fought out across Southern Europe and the Mediterranean in particular.

That is the new reality of climate change. Greece and many of our friends and neighbours around the Mediterranean now face challenges similar to those of the countries that have preceded us at the sharp end of the climate crisis. And like those countries, we need a much more coordinated response. In Greece, we have pumped hundreds of millions into mitigation. We introduced our first ever climate law, and we are driving ambitious proposals with a view to decarbonizing our islands. We are partnering with multinationals in the pursuit of new green technology. We are investing

heavily in renewables, because given our natural assets of wind, sun and sea, the potential is huge. Yet while we are acting decisively on long-term mitigation, we are collectively guilty of not placing enough emphasis on short-term adaptation, even though the task of becoming more resilient is about making changes today, not tomorrow. After all, the crisis is already here. It is affecting our lives today, and it is already having a significant impact on our economies.

For the European Union, that represents a failure of financial resourcing as well as of policy. We are spending peanuts on adaptation and emergency relief. We have two funds that are completely depleted, and that must change. That is why, earlier this week, I wrote to the leaders of Croatia, Cyprus, France, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain, which, along with Greece, make up the group of nine Mediterranean and southern European Union countries known as the EUMed 9. In my letter I suggested two solutions to the short-term adaptation issue. The first was that we should recognize that circumstances now demand that we act outside the EU's long-term budget framework and State subsidy rules. The second was that we should lead EU-wide efforts to define and implement a comprehensive, properly resourced strategic plan that addresses the new challenges we are now facing.

But this is not just about Europe. After all, the problems facing Southern Europe and North Africa are no different from the issues faced by Canada this summer, or indeed by Pakistan last summer, when that country also suffered from catastrophic floods. That is why I am calling for the creation of a global adaptation alliance — a forum through which we can deliver new collective thinking, renewed cooperation and access to new finance to drive short-term adaptation before it is too late. It could enable us to invest more, for example, in sharing new technology for advanced forecasting and modelling, so that we can predict with greater clarity and accuracy how climate phenomena are going to behave. It could inform us about where the floods are coming from and where the fires are going. We will therefore push for the inclusion of an adaptation alliance at the upcoming twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in the United Arab Emirates. Because only by working together can we make a real difference, not just by learning lessons from one another but by sharing best practices and solutions.

Take Greece's early-warning emergency number, 112. During the devastating wildfires in my country five years ago, it did not exist. An entire seaside town was razed to the ground and more than 100 people perished. We learned from that mistake — we put it right — and this summer the 112 number played a huge part in minimizing the loss of life. What difference, I wonder, would such an emergency number have made in Maui during the devastating Hawaiian fires — or in Libya, for example? It is exactly those sorts of relatively cost-effective solutions that represent the type of technological adaptation that we need globally going forward, through simple yet life-saving ideas. All of this is critical because at the end of the day our number one obligation is the protection of human life.

Let me turn to the second great challenge of our time, migration. My country is at the forefront of the global migration crisis. Greece has, over the past decade, provided shelter and protection to hundreds of thousands of refugees and asylum seekers. Our coastguard has gone above and beyond to save tens of thousands of lives at sea. Let me be clear: Greece will always be an open and welcoming country for those fleeing persecution and violence, as well as those economic migrants who however seek a new future by accessing legal pathways. After all, our economy is growing again, we are attracting significant foreign investment, and there are many job opportunities in my country. But we also need to fill those vacancies on our own terms, not those set by the criminal gangs. That is why it is critical that the international community work together to establish a far more comprehensive and coordinated approach — one that addresses the root causes of migration, one that more effectively counters human trafficking and migrant smuggling and fosters legal pathways to mobility.

With regard to managing the root causes of migration, we must challenge the negative political, socioeconomic and climate trends at source, in the countries of origin, but also the countries of transit. That means more tailor-made, innovative, multi-stakeholder partnerships to drive forward sustainable development and strengthen resilience, creating jobs and opportunities in the places of origin. No one wants to leave their homes and risk their lives finding work thousands of miles away. In real terms, that is about investing in infrastructure, in education, in health care and in the green and digital transition, all of which can reduce poverty, unemployment and inequality.

And it is about creating incentives for private-sector development. It is about supporting entrepreneurship and small businesses, while always promoting good governance and women's empowerment.

*Mrs. Mbaye Thioune (Senegal), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

When it comes to migration, Greece's policy is tough but fair. We are focused on preventing irregular migration and improving the effectiveness of return systems. But we are also focused on facilitating safe, orderly and legal migration, while processing asylum claims expeditiously. This issue is not going away. Indeed, in recent weeks there is evidence across the Mediterranean that the pressure on our borders is, unfortunately, growing again. That is why preventing departures must be the starting point. We must break the business model of the traffickers and their networks if we are to stop people from embarking on such dangerous journeys. Working together, bilaterally and multilaterally, we must strengthen border controls and surveillance mechanisms to detect and intercept smugglers and their activities. And we can do that, through the use of advanced technology, intelligence-sharing and cooperation among border control agencies. And we must enhance the capacity of law enforcement to investigate and prosecute those responsible for profiting from human despair, as well as disrupt the money networks through the strengthening of tools to identify and freeze traffickers' assets.

We need a whole-of-route approach, raising public awareness of the dangers posed by the smuggling routes. At the same time, as I said, we must provide legal pathways through family reunification, humanitarian visas but also labour mobility, something Greece has done with new bilateral agreements with countries such as Egypt and Bangladesh. But above all, if we want to solve the problem in the Mediterranean, we must work together with our partner countries — Türkiye, of course, but also our North African neighbours.

Let me turn to Greece's relations with its eastern neighbour, Türkiye, but let me do so in the spirit of openness. Rather than looking at the past, I want today to look to the future. Undoubtedly, long-standing geopolitical tensions between Greece and Türkiye remain. Our two greatest shared challenges, however, climate change and migration, are of the present and of the future. I told President Erdoğan just that when we met yesterday. Do not get me wrong — our main

difference over the delimitation of our maritime zones in the Aegean and the eastern Mediterranean is and remains extremely important, but it can be resolved in accordance with international law, and in particular the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and in the spirit of good neighbourly relations. We have made good progress over the past months in terms of normalizing our relationship, and it is in our mutual interest to continue down that path.

Turning to Cyprus, that remains, unfortunately, at its core, an issue of an illegal invasion and occupation, in violation of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Our commitment to Cyprus' sovereignty, territorial integrity and the solution of one State based on a bizonal, bicomunal federation is steadfast. It is a matter of credibility and determination to defend the core values and principles upon which the United Nations is based. Finding a fair, viable and mutually acceptable solution to the Cyprus issue remains a top priority for Greece. And we will continue to fully support the United Nations-led efforts to facilitate the resumption of negotiations, always on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

I have addressed two of the three most important concerns we share today as a global community. Let me end by quickly addressing the third.

Last year in this very Hall most of us condemned Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine — an act of blatant aggression that has shattered the inviolability of a sovereign border and has cost so many innocent lives. Overall, the international community has stood firm against Putin's provocation and disastrous attempt to rewrite history. Today, however, the assertion on Russia's part is that NATO, the EU and the other partners that support Ukraine will eventually lose the stomach to continue that fight. Let me be clear: that should not happen and that will not happen. We will never walk away from Ukraine, because to do so would be to abandon the very principles of peace, democracy and adherence to international law that so many in this Hall hold dear. That message was sent out loud and clear by the leaders of the whole Balkans region, on 21 August, in Athens, at the regional summit we hosted together with President Zelenskyy.

In conclusion, whether the issue is addressing climate change, managing migration or fighting the threat to our democratic way of life, all the challenges we face are daunting. We have said many times, failure

is not an option. True leadership will be required by all of us. We cannot just sit idle and hope for a miracle. I have the privilege of leading a mid-sized country that is trying to do its best to address issues of massive complexity, but it is time for the really big players to step up to the plate and deliver.

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

*Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis, Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Prime Minister of Nepal**

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

*Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Prime Minister of Nepal, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Prime Minister of Nepal, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Dahal** (Nepal): I congratulate the President and the members of the Bureau on their respective elections.

I also express my deep appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for his unrelenting efforts to strengthen the United Nations and promote the cause of multilateralism. There could be no better time to deliberate on the theme of rebuilding trust reigniting global solidarity, particularly when trust and cooperation are in short supply and crises of confidence rule the world.

Today, due to the resurgence of geopolitical competition, power polarization and economic nationalism, the maintenance of world peace and security, the foremost goal of the Charter of the United Nations, has come under serious strain. Spending on arms is on the rise, but resources for the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have become scarce.

We must correct that course and focus on our common goals of peace, prosperity and progress. It is time to build trust, promote partnership and

collaboration and work in solidarity as the world faces challenges of an unprecedented scale and nature.

I have fond memories of addressing this Assembly back in 2008 (see A/63/PV.11) as the Prime Minister of a country that had just made a transformation of historic proportions — one from armed conflict to an inclusive and nationally owned peace process; from centuries-old feudal monarchical rule to a democratic republican order; and from a multiparty democratic polity where participation of all sections of our society is ensured.

Fifteen years on, we have come a long way. We successfully transitioned through a nationally led peace process. In 2015, an elected constituent assembly promulgated a democratic Constitution, which consolidated the universally recognized values of human rights, participatory democracy, periodic elections, inclusive proportional representation, full freedom of the press, an independent judiciary and the rule of law.

The successive two cycles of federal, provincial and local elections have resulted in the increased participation of women, Dalits, youths and underrepresented communities at all levels of governance. We have been able to ensure a 41 per cent representation of women in local assemblies, whereas a minimum 33 per cent is constitutionally guaranteed in the provincial assemblies and Federal Parliament.

We have firmly established that our sovereignty lies in Nepali people, who are the real source of State power. We are now closer to logically concluding our unique, nationally owned and homegrown peace process. Completing the remaining task of transitional justice is top on my political agenda. As Prime Minister and a co-signatory of the Comprehensive Peace Accord, I have been making serious efforts to bridge the gaps and build consensus among the key stakeholders.

An amendment bill related to transitional justice has been submitted in the Federal Parliament to address the concerns of the victims, strike a right balance between peace, justice and reparation and ensure that the transitional justice process is broadly owned by our society. The proposed bill, evolved through a wider consultative process, takes a victim-centred approach and recognizes reparation as a victim's right. In the process, there will be no blanket amnesty for serious violation of human rights. The ultimate objective is to establish enduring peace in the country

and foster harmony in society through peace, justice and reconciliation.

I appeal to the international community for their goodwill and support of the conclusion of the final leg of our peace process and call on them to duly recognize this rare example of successful conflict transformation. As Nepal's political course has taken a stable shape, our focus is now on the agenda of economic transformation. We are aware that political achievements can be sustained only by socioeconomic growth and development. It is not least in this light that the central focus of the current Government is on mobilizing all its energy and resources to accelerate development works and ensure good governance.

We are graduating from the least developed countries (LDCs) status by 2026; and we are committed to making our graduation smooth, sustainable and irreversible. We are currently in the process of finalizing the smooth transition strategy of graduation. We have put Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the centre of our development vision and priorities. However, crises such as the coronavirus disease pandemic, climate change and heightened geopolitical competition have threatened our hard-earned progress in achieving the SDGs.

We therefore call for an enhanced level of international support in the form of development assistance, foreign direct investment, export promotion, special drawing rights allocation, technology transfer and technical assistance. Nepal welcomes the Secretary-General's call for an increase in SDG financing by \$500 billion per year.

As the current Chair of the Global Coordination Bureau of the LDCs, we remain actively engaged in collaboration with our fellow LDCs in all relevant forums, including in the United Nations system, to protect and promote our collective interests. We stress the need to mainstream the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries into all important United Nations processes and development systems and the development cooperation frameworks of our partners. We call for a fair and equitable international trading regime that benefits the LDCs. Coordinated policies aimed at debt relief, debt restructuring and debt swap, as envisaged by the Doha Programme of Action, must be translated into reality.

Climate change has assumed a crisis proportion, and the clock is ticking. Our inaction or little action will



surely invite disastrous consequences for humankind. We must therefore set higher ambitions and commit to achieving those ambitions in a time-bound manner.

Climate vulnerable mountainous countries like Nepal have been bearing the severe brunt of climate change. The Himalayas are the source of fresh water for over 2 billion people. Global warming has induced the rapid receding of ice in our Himalayas. It has not only eroded the health of our mountains but also endangered the lives and livelihoods of millions of people living downstream. The human and financial toll due to floods, droughts and other extreme climate-induced events is terrifying.

On our part, we remain fully committed to the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement and achieving its goals. Nepal has set an ambitious target of reaching a net-zero scenario by 2045. We have already submitted our updated nationally determined contribution and aligned our national policies and plans with it. Our priorities include conserving and sustainably managing land, forest and water resources, undertaking effective adaptation and mitigation measures and promoting a green and resilient economy. To that end, we are working to ensure access to clean energy for all citizens. Easy access to climate finance will be the key to low-carbon and climate-resilient development pathways. The early operationalization of the loss and damage fund is equally crucial, as well as fulfilling the target of the \$100 billion commitment and doubling adaptation climate finance. It is an irony that my country, Nepal — 45 per cent of whose area is richly biodiverse forest and 15 per cent high mountains — releases far less in terms of greenhouse-gas emissions while contributing significantly to ecological preservation, and yet has suffered unfairly from the climate crisis. That kind of mismatch must be addressed through a compensation mechanism to the countries that make a positive contribution to the greening of the planet.

It is distressing that conflicts within and between countries are increasing. Nepal opposes any use or threat of use of force against the territorial integrity, political independence and sovereignty of any country. The people of Libya, Syria and Yemen continue to bear the brunt of protracted conflicts, and their suffering must end. We believe that the United Nations-brokered truce in Yemen must be allowed to transition to a sustained peace. The protracted stalemate in Libya must give way to peace and reconciliation. The Palestinian people deserve peace and an end to their prolonged conflict.

Nepal reiterates its support for a two-State solution with Israel and Palestine, living peacefully side by side, within internationally recognized borders based on the relevant United Nations resolutions. We continue to support nationally owned, peaceful, just and lasting solutions to conflicts around the world. Peace founded on inclusion, empowerment, economic prosperity and justice has a much better chance of lasting longer.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continues to threaten peace and security in the world. The continuing stockpiling of nuclear arsenals, a growing arms race and ever-increasing military expenditure are worrisome. Nepal reiterates its call for the total and time-bound disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction, including biological, chemical, nuclear and radiological weapons. As the host country to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Nepal believes that regional processes, including the Kathmandu process, reinforce the global disarmament regime.

The vacuum in international governance on cyberspace and artificial intelligence demands multilateral regulation. The potential dual uses of artificial intelligence call for urgent, informed deliberations on preventing its potential misuse and strengthening international cooperation. Nepal also condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and we call for the conclusion of a comprehensive global treaty against terrorism as soon as possible.

Nepal's commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights is total and unflinching. We believe in an integrated approach to democracy, development and human rights. Nepal attaches great importance to ensuring the safety, security, dignity and well-being of migrant workers, and we call for effectively implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in order to ensure that migration works for all.

The Panchsheel principles, non-alignment, the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the norms of world peace continue to guide Nepal's foreign policy. Amity, cordiality and fraternity make up the underlying ethos of our international engagements. We want to promote relations with our neighbours and all other friendly countries on a basis of sovereign equality, non-interference and mutual respect. We remain steadfast in our commitment to multilateralism, with the United Nations at its centre. True to its

commitment, Nepal has continued to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security through its consistent participation in United Nations-mandated peacekeeping operations for the past 65 years. As what is currently the world's second-largest troop- and police-contributing country, we have always deployed our peacekeepers in response to every call and without any caveats, even in the most challenging situations. Our peacekeepers have earned a particular reputation for dedication, professionalism and competence, which has been widely acknowledged by the United Nations and host Governments and societies alike. We reiterate our call for ensuring a fair share of leadership positions at Headquarters and in the field for the troop- and police-contributing countries.

We know that today's global governance architecture largely reflects yesterday's world. Timely reform is essential if our multilateral institutions are to remain relevant and reflect today's realities. Nepal supports reforming the Security Council with a view to making it more broadly representative, democratic, transparent and accountable. We call for revitalizing the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in a way that expands the roles of those two vital organs. We need an inclusive and effective multilateralism that can better respond to and deliver on the needs of the people and the planet. Structural reform of the international financial architecture is long overdue. The voices of countries in special situations, including least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, must be heard and their meaningful representation ensured. Only a more democratic, inclusive, fair and representative international financial architecture can be an antidote to our deep-rooted inequities and gaps.

In conclusion, it is our collective responsibility to establish peace and prosperity for everyone, everywhere, and to ensure that no one is left behind.

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

*Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Prime Minister of Nepal, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait**

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

*His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour of welcoming His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Sheikh Al-Sabah** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, the State of Kuwait would like to convey its deepest condolences and sincere sympathy to our sister State the Kingdom of Morocco on the victims of the recent earthquake there, which killed and injured thousands of people. I would also like to express our condolences and sympathy to our brothers in the State of Libya on the losses they have suffered thanks to the recent devastating storms and floods, which have also resulted in many deaths and injuries. We pray to God to have mercy on the victims' souls and to alleviate the suffering of their families, and we wish a speedy recovery to all the injured.

It is a pleasure for me to congratulate Mr. Dennis Francis and his friendly country on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session. We are confident that his rich experience in international affairs will help him guide our work wisely and ably. I would also like to commend the efforts of his predecessor, Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, throughout his presidency of the previous session. Furthermore, I want to express our appreciation for the constructive efforts and outstanding leadership of the Secretary-General, including his efforts to realize the lofty mission of our Organization, based on the Charter of the United Nations, to maintain international peace and security.

I am once again addressing the international community from this rostrum with regard to the challenges and obstacles that multilateralism is facing on the international stage, challenges that are testing our ability to survive and move forward or else confront a stalemate. The current dangers and threats in the world — including conflicts among States, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, increasing

terrorism and high levels of poverty, in addition to threats posed by natural disasters and climate change as well as challenges related to food insecurity, not to mention emerging threats to cybersecurity — demand that we seek international cooperation based on partnership and responsibility. In that regard, we want to underscore the importance of the Secretary-General's initiative *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), which diagnoses the challenges facing the international community that require concerted efforts to address them at the national, regional and international levels. Its goal is to make use of our Organization's legacy and its various tools and mechanisms.

The State of Kuwait has remained steadfast in its belief in the principle of good neighbourliness and has continued for nearly 20 years to help its sister State of Iraq return to its rightful place, regionally and internationally, with a view to realizing the hopes and aspirations of its brotherly people. However, we were surprised by the ruling of Iraq's Federal Supreme Court on the unconstitutionality of the law ratifying the Convention on the Regulation of Navigation in Khor Abdullah, which was concluded between Kuwait and Iraq in 2012 and ratified and deposited at the United Nations in 2013. The ruling features several historical fallacies concerning the State of Kuwait. We were also surprised by the decision of the Iraqi Government a few days ago to rescind the shared security protocol signed between the Kuwaiti and Iraqi naval forces in 2008, a move that will have negative consequences for maritime security and navigation in Khor Abdullah.

In that regard, the State of Kuwait considers that the agreement on maritime navigation in Khor Abdullah and the security protocol should remain valid, given their importance vis-à-vis maintaining security and maritime safety. They can help avert chaos, infringements of borders and the possibility of arms and narcotics trafficking, which is a source of revenue for various terrorist militias. From this rostrum, a symbol of the multilateral diplomacy that helps to maintain international peace and security, Kuwait affirms the need for the Iraqi Government to take tangible, decisive and urgent measures to address the consequences of its ruling on the security protocol and its historical fallacies in order to preserve good-neighbourly relations.

At the same time, my country emphasizes the importance of ensuring the security, independence and the territorial integrity of both countries, as well

as compliance with agreements they have concluded and the relevant international resolutions, especially Security Council resolution 833 (1993), which outlines the demarcation of the land and maritime border between the two countries up to maritime boundary point 162. We further call on our brother country of Iraq to act in good faith and continue participating in the meetings of the technical teams responsible for border delimitation beyond boundary point 162, in compliance with relevant international laws and conventions. The State of Kuwait reserves the right to take the appropriate legal and international measures to defend its legitimate and legal rights, pursuant to international resolutions and the norms of international law, which we have always respected and applied in our relations with all States.

The free and brotherly Palestinian people have been suffering for 75 years owing to the failure of the international community to implement resolutions of international legitimacy. They suffer from the practices of the Israeli occupation, which violate all international norms and conventions. In that regard, we underscore the centrality of the Palestinian question in the Arab and Muslim worlds. With respect to the implementation of General Assembly resolutions, my country submitted a written memorandum to the International Court of Justice on the consequences of the Israeli occupation and its continued violation of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. We stress our firm and principled position in support of the rights of the Palestinian people, based on resolutions of international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative, until an independent Palestinian State is established, with East Jerusalem as its capital, within the borders of 4 June 1967.

The brotherly country of the Sudan is experiencing tragic events due to an armed conflict, which is a source of deep concern. We urge all parties involved to immediately end hostilities and return to dialogue and a peaceful political process in order to protect the security, stability and territorial integrity of the Sudan. We reiterate our support to all regional and international initiatives to that end, including the initiative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States.

With regard to the situation in the brotherly country of Yemen, we reiterate our support for the efforts of the United Nations, through the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, to resume the political process and reach a comprehensive solution, based on

the three agreed terms of reference, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference and relevant Security Council resolutions, notably resolution 2216 (2015), in order to ensure the security, stability and territorial integrity of Yemen.

Concerning Syria, we would like to reaffirm the importance of intensifying efforts to reach a Syrian-owned political solution pursuant to relevant Security Council resolutions, specifically resolution 2254 (2015).

On the regional front, to strengthen the principle of good neighbourliness, stipulated by the Charter of the United Nations, we would like to reiterate our call on the Islamic Republic of Iran to take serious measures to rebuild trust, start a dialogue based on respect for States and non-interference in their internal affairs, and maintain the safety and freedom of international navigation. My country would also like to underscore that the ownership of natural resources in the area adjacent to the divided Kuwaiti-Saudi zone, including the entire Durra field, is exclusively shared by the State of Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The two countries alone have the full right to exploit those natural resources. The State of Kuwait also reiterates its categorical rejection of any rights claimed by other parties concerning that field or the submerged zone adjacent to the divided zone between the State of Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

We hope to strengthen international dialogue with a view to expanding a culture of coexistence, tolerance and peace at all levels. However, the followers of Islam continue to face provocative and irresponsible attacks from extremists who have burned copies of the Holy Qur'an in the capitals and cities of some States, under the fictitious pretext of freedom of expression and opinion. International efforts must be made to take strong measures to end hate speech and media misinformation that target Muslims.

As part of its vision of development, under the slogan "A new Kuwait", the State of Kuwait is monitoring all international economic and financial indicators to turn Kuwait into a financial, commercial and cultural hub that can engage at the regional and international levels. In that way, foreign policy would be part of an expanded development process, based on diplomacy and underpinned by initiatives drawn from the human and cultural heritage bequeathed to us by our founding fathers.

Given the environmental degradation faced by our world, my country has voluntarily and thoughtfully made clear progress in fulfilling its commitments according to available capabilities, especially in the industrial, transportation and oil sectors, to limit pollution, diversify energy sources and improve their efficiency, and use alternative and renewable energy. We have also committed to ensuring carbon neutrality in the oil sector by 2050. The member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council have always been pioneers in supporting the international multilateral community, based on their conviction of the importance of working together to address common challenges.

We hope that the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which will take place in Dubai, the sisterly United Arab Emirates, will be successful. We are counting on the necessary support by the international community for the relevant guidelines to implement the various elements of the Paris Agreement. My country appreciates and welcomes the declaration by the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia regarding the establishment of a global water organization, which will be based in Riyadh, to ensure complementarity in the efforts of countries and organizations to inclusively address the challenges faced in the area of water resource management so as to ensure the sustainability of water resources. I would also like to express my country's appreciation to the sisterly State of Qatar, which will host a horticultural exposition under the theme "Green Desert, Better Environment" seeking to promote innovative solutions for the sustainability of desert areas.

In conclusion, as the State of Kuwait firmly believes in equality, justice and human rights, we look forward to receiving support from the Member States of the United Nations in the elections to be held next October for the State of Kuwait to be a member of the Human Rights Council for the period 2024–2026. Throughout our membership, we will strive to realize the aspirations of the developing world by building cooperation bridges leading to inclusive and equitable solutions to human rights issues based on the provisions of international law, international humanitarian law, international human rights law and resolutions of international legitimacy. We will do so without practicing selectivity or double standards and without any imposition of a fait accompli.



We reiterate our commitment to multilateralism as well as to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in order to ensure better international governance so that our Organization may fulfil its noble mission of maintaining international peace and security in the service of all humankind.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait for the statement just made.

*His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Alexander Schallenberg, Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria.

**Mr. Schallenberg** (Austria): We are meeting in this Hall today at a time that is undeniably one of the most challenging in recent history. One look at the news, and we see the highest number of violent conflicts since the Second World War, including a full-scale war of aggression by Russia against Ukraine, an intensifying global climate crisis with extreme weather events causing devastation around the world, rising poverty, social divisions and a backsliding of human rights and development gains that were hard-earned over the past decades. The world seems to be in a sad state of affairs, and one wonders whether the worst is yet to come.

We are indeed living in a time of uncertainty — in a time between times, so to speak. The old order is fading and a new one is yet to emerge. Sometimes I compare our current situation to an earthquake: the entire Earth is still shaking, the tectonic plates are still moving, and we do not know yet where they will come to rest. But we instinctively feel that the fault lines will be deeper and wider in the end. We are already seeing shifts and cracks in our trade systems, security systems and multilateral systems — no wonder that has led to a sense of insecurity and unease and to the feeling of living in a permanent state of emergency.

In this era of transformation, our citizens are rightly expecting answers. I deeply believe that, as politicians, it is our responsibility to formulate hopeful yet realistic visions. That means we must look at the world as it is, lucid and clear-headed, without rose-tinted glasses. It also means that we have to be on our guard against those polarizing populists who spread fake news and

offer seemingly easy answers to complex questions, who want us to believe that we can solve problems by simply negating them, by pulling up the drawbridge and decoupling from reality, be it on climate change, disruptive technologies like artificial intelligence, mutual political and economic dependencies or the growing multipolarity in geopolitics.

We cannot close our eyes to the complex realities of our modern world. There are simply no silver bullets or quick fixes. That would be another and very dangerous form of wishful thinking. After all, we should know — and especially, I would claim, in Europe — that wishful thinking is never a solid basis for policy. That was painfully proven to us on 24 February 2022, when Russia brutally invaded Ukraine.

*Mr. Ayebare (Uganda), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

For a country like Austria — militarily neutral, export-oriented and at the heart of the European continent — the answer clearly lies in cooperation. We understand that, in order to deliver for our own citizens — to make their lives more secure, create economic opportunities and tackle global challenges — we need to work in partnership with others. That is why we are so deeply invested in multilateralism. It is part of Austria's DNA, in fact — not least because Vienna is the proud home of one of the United Nations headquarters and over 50 international organizations.

We know that the rules-based international order is our only protective shield against a world where might makes right and where unilateralism and the use of force rule. Frankly, I believe that no one in this Hall can deny that the rules-based international order — with all its imperfections, I agree — has served us all pretty well over the past eight decades: through a free and open global economy; through preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping, which have brought stability to our neighbourhoods, an effort which Austrian Blue Helmets have been supporting since 1960; through a web of international treaties and agreements addressing such diverse issues as disarmament and climate change; and through a system of human rights established 75 years ago in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and confirmed 30 years ago in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

However, we must ask ourselves honestly: is the multilateral system still fit for purpose? Can it last for another 80 years? The answer is simple and sobering:

no, it cannot, and it will not. We need to reform it in order to preserve it. Because what we are seeing, and what I am hearing loudly in this very Hall, is that the rules-based international order is not inclusive enough. The Security Council no longer reflects today's world. It needs to offer a seat to more of the countries left out at the time of its establishment, including from Africa. I can assure members that Austria will continue to push for reform, including in our candidature for a non-permanent seat on the Council in 2026.

The multilateral system is not proactive or effective enough. It has made little impact in places like Afghanistan, where women are systematically denied their most basic rights to education and to participate in public life, and in the Sahel region, where a series of coups d'état serve only the generals, not the citizens. It has not been able to stop Russia, one of the Council's five permanent members, from invading its sovereign neighbour Ukraine in a fit of neo-imperialist aggression.

What I am talking about is enlightened self-interest. I stand here today as a representative of a smaller country with a great history. After the First World War, my country shrank from an empire with over 50 million inhabitants to a State of fewer than 10 million people today and a fraction of its former territory. Yet where do we stand today in Austria? Today Austria is a successful and flourishing country, with a high degree of social stability, economic prosperity and environmental protection. Its capital city, Vienna, has been voted again and again as the world's most liveable city.

I believe that there is a message there for those countries and leaders who want to turn back the clock and who abuse history as a pretext to justify their violence today. They are on the wrong track. We cannot build a future while being stuck in the past.

We Austrians have learned from our history. It is precisely those experiences of the past that make us care so strongly about multilateralism. There is simply no better alternative for safeguarding our prosperity and security and for tackling global challenges. That is why we are deeply invested in our partnerships with our friends and neighbours in Europe and within the European Union, with organizations such as the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, with our strategic partners around the globe and with engaged civil society organizations and the private sector. We have also increased our outreach to the Asia-Pacific region, and we

are engaging with African partners, very importantly, in the spirit of mutual respect and common interests.

In the beginning, I said that we should look at the world as it is. The bitter truth is that we are more divided than ever. All too often, even in this Hall, we talk at, rather than with, each other. We speak instead of listening. Therefore, today I would like us all to remember why this Hall was built in the first place — as a space for real dialogue, not an echo chamber or a club for like-minded countries, a place where we advocate for our principles and values, without denying other points of view. Yes, it is where we have heated debates and difficult negotiations, but in the end, it is where we can always reach a compromise.

Let me be very clear: I am not championing nihilism nor moral reductionism. We know exactly where we stand. Austria will always speak out for the values and principles that we hold dear, proudly and resolutely. I am deeply convinced that our societies based on freedom, pluralism and individual rights are the best guarantee for our citizens' security and prosperity. At the same time, I clearly reject the notion of being "either with us or against us", the idea of cancelling entire societies and cultures and reverting to moralizing, finger-pointing or self-righteousness. That is a lesson that we Europeans also have to learn, and quickly.

Let us not kid ourselves: the world is simply not black and white. It is simply not that easy. To me, that would not be responsible statecraft. It might play well with the social media bubble, but it does not reflect reality. It will only strengthen the fringes of our societies, not the centre. That is why Austria will continue to be a champion of sensible and pragmatic multilateralism as we adapt, innovate and recalibrate our international cooperation. All of that is difficult and requires endurance, strategic patience, a lot of explaining and a healthy dose of realism, but if we succeed, all of us will be better off. We will emerge from this era of transformation stronger, more prosperous and more resilient.

**The Acting President:** I now call on His Excellency Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Chadians Abroad and International Cooperation of the Republic of Chad.

**Mr. Annadif (Chad) (*spoke in French*):** It is a pleasure and an honour for me to take the floor today, on the anniversary of my country's accession to the United Nations, to share Chad's perspectives with the

United Nations General Assembly — the forum par excellence in which the challenges of our common future are discussed.

Before going any further, allow me to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Dennis Francis, Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago, on his election as President of the General Assembly at its present session and to wish him every success in his mission, during which we guarantee him our full support. I would also like to congratulate and thank His Excellency Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, outgoing President of the Assembly, following his brilliant term of office.

It would be remiss of me not to pay well-deserved tribute to Mr. António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General, for his commitment and able leadership in guiding the destiny of our Organization, which is facing ever greater and more complex challenges.

Our common dream of building a stable and peaceful world in which current and future generations can flourish has crumbling over the years. The better and more fulfilled life that we have all hoped for is increasingly giving way to anxiety and uncertainty. Armed conflict, terrorism, climate change, large-scale migration, underdevelopment, poverty and political, economic and financial crises are taking on unprecedented proportions. Every day, we witness atrocities and traumatic scenes that shock our human sensibilities. Thousands of refugees and displaced people, fleeing conflicts or natural disasters, must brave the cold or heat with slim hope of finding a safe haven.

At this moment, the people of Chad send their thoughts and prayers to their brothers and sisters in Morocco and Libya, victims of the latest tragedies. They offer their deepest condolences.

That is why we welcome the relevance of the theme of the seventy-eighth regular session of the General Assembly, namely, “Rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity: accelerating action on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals towards peace, prosperity, progress and sustainability for all”. Yes, that principal theme is highly expressive. The words chosen are symbolic as well as significant. Yes, it is time to rebuild trust and reignite solidarity, because the United Nations is increasingly showing its limits when it comes to embodying those strong values that nonetheless constitute its very essence. Yes, trust is

urgently needed in our world, as our world has lost its bearings and its benchmarks, in particular due to the practice of double standards. Yes, solidarity is a top priority, as such a dear and precious value for humankind has been greatly eroded.

It is more necessary today than yesterday that nations combine their strengths and pool their energies to accelerate the implementation of projects and programmes linked to the Sustainable Development Goals. Peace, prosperity, progress and sustainability for all require solid investments from all of our nations, particularly those that are most developed. That course of action, which is highly recommended, should be followed without exclusion or prejudice, so that such sought-after trust becomes a tangible reality.

Allow me now to briefly share how the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is materializing in my country, Chad. Indeed, since the 2030 Agenda was adopted in September 2015 (resolution 70/1), the Government of Chad has committed to operationalizing its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). That commitment is reinforced by the relevance of the SDGs in view of the context and development challenges Chad faces, particularly in target areas such as the development of human capital, the reduction of poverty and the improvement of the population’s living conditions, the sustainable management of the environment and the consolidation of peace and stability.

With that in mind, the Government includes the SDGs among its long-term priorities in its Vision 2030: The Chad We Want and in its national development plan for the period 2017–2021, which has been extended until December 2023, as well as the new national development plan to be adopted for the 2024–2028 period.

The implementation of the SDGs in Chad is unfortunately taking place against a backdrop marked by, among other things, a fall in the prices of raw materials on the world markets; repeated attacks by the Boko Haram sect; the health crisis due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic; climate change; and intercommunal conflicts in neighbouring countries with a direct impact on our population; and the political and military conflict.

The situation has now been worsened by the ongoing war in the neighbouring Sudan. To date, we have counted more than 400,000 new refugees in addition to the 600,000 refugees who had already

been settled in Chad for several years. In addition, refugees are coming to Chad from our immediate neighbourhood and elsewhere. Therefore, out of a total population of 17 million Chadians, nearly 2 million are refugees. That is a very heavy burden for Chad to bear. My country calls for rapid, concerted and global action by the entire international community to confront that humanitarian catastrophe, which is likely the worst occurring in our world.

Furthermore, Chad welcomes the organization of two summits on the sidelines of the General Assembly: one on climate change; the other on universal health coverage.

On climate change, Chad, like other United Nations Member States, hopes that the dynamic initiated by the Secretary-General on the need for global action against climate change will enable the mobilization of the necessary resources for the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the resulting directives.

With regard to universal health coverage, to which many of our countries have been committed for a long time, it ultimately remains the most appropriate solution to meet the needs of quality health care that is accessible by all at a lower cost, as well as to strengthen our health systems already weakened by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chadian Government is giving the matter the attention it requires.

As members know, since the sudden and tragic death of President Idriss Déby Itno — may he rest in peace — Chad has been engaged in an inclusive and transparent political transition process. The first milestones of the transition were the conclusion of the Doha agreement between the Government and the political and military movements in the country in August 2022. That agreement allowed many exiled or refugee Chadians to return to the country. The manifest political will to give our country a new start and enable its refoundation resulted in the holding of an inclusive and sovereign national dialogue, which brought together the overwhelming majority of the nation's active forces for 45 days.

Today the Government of National Unity that emerged from those meetings is working hard to hold a constitutional referendum, which will determine the form of the State. The adoption of the new basic law by the sovereign people will pave the way for the gradual restoration of constitutional order by the deadline set by the inclusive and sovereign national dialogue.

At the instigation of the Head of State, President of the transition, bold administrative, judicial, security and military reforms have been implemented; others are under way. In the meantime, strong gestures of appeasement, ranging from the opening up of the political space to the presidential pardon, have helped to ease the climate within the political class. That dynamic of participatory dialogue has also led to the establishment of a framework for consultation among diverse political parties.

*(spoke in Arabic)*

With regard to the crisis in the Sudan, Chad reiterates its call for a lasting ceasefire. Chad believes that there is no military solution to the crisis taking place in that brotherly neighbouring country. Chad calls on all Sudanese to launch an inclusive national political dialogue.

*(spoke in French)*

Two days ago, more precisely on 19 September, at the opening of the General Assembly, Secretary-General António Guterres questioned the global governance symbolized by the Security Council and the Bretton Woods system in strong terms:

“the alternative to reform is not the status quo, but further fragmentation. It is reform or rupture.”  
(A/78/PV.4, p. 2)

Who can say more given the current upsurge in geopolitical rivalries, with the risk of a new Cold War damaging world peace at a time when multilateralism is facing a serious crisis. Given that harsh reality, Chad endorses the call for reform of the Security Council, as reflected in the Common African Position, set out in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

Finally, in the name of the founding principles of the United Nations, Chad supports the approach of a solution based on the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State, living in security alongside the State of Israel. Likewise, in the name of the same principle, Chad reiterates its call for the lifting of the embargo imposed on Cuba, which is detrimental to the Cuban people.

**The Acting President:** I now call on His Excellency Mr. Robert Dussey, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and Togolese Abroad of the Togolese Republic.



**Mr. Dussey** (Togo) (*spoke in French*): On the occasion of the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly of our common institution, on behalf of my country, Togo, and His Excellency President Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, allow me first of all to offer my warm congratulations to Mr. Dennis Francis of Trinidad and Tobago on his election and his skill in conducting the work of this session.

(*spoke in English*)

My warm congratulations also go not only to his predecessor, Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, who presided over our work last year, but also, and above all, to Secretary-General António Guterres, who is doing the best that he can to restore the image of the United Nations as a modern institution despite the procrastination and complexity of the path of the reform.

(*spoke in French*)

I would also like to convey the condolences and support of the President of the Togolese Republic, Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, and the Togolese people to the brotherly peoples and Governments of the Kingdom of Morocco and Libya following the earthquake and the floods in each of their countries, respectively.

As we meet here today, it is clear that our world is not in particularly good shape. It is deeply sick, and its pathology calls on us to assume as high a level of responsibility as the United Nations.

(*spoke in English*)

Do our commitments match the scale of the challenges? That is the question of which we cannot lose sight if our ambition at the United Nations is truly to improve the state of the world in order to grant our peoples and our various countries greater opportunity, safety, security and assurance. Our world is increasingly less secure. Trust and solidarity among nations are almost at half-mast, and we have the high responsibility to work to repair it by rediscovering the meaning of our noblest commitments.

The choice and relevance of the theme that guides the general debate of this seventh-eighth session of the General Assembly, namely, “Rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity: accelerating action on the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals towards peace, prosperity, progress and sustainability for all”, clearly and unmistakably conveys not only

the unsustainable, disrupted and unstable state of the world, but also our determination at a higher level to do things for the better. The emergence of new sources of tension in the world must concern us.

(*spoke in French*)

I come from a country, Togo, and from a continent that is currently under great strain. Africa, oh, our Africa, the Africa of freedoms, the Africa of our fathers, oh, the Africa of our mothers, is wounded and bruised. Our continent, Africa, is facing multisectoral vulnerability — vulnerability due to our weak revenue and low levels of development, vulnerability due to major health crises, vulnerability due to the effects of climate change and vulnerability due to the disruption of global food supply chains. It is a vulnerability due to the encroachment of African cyberspace by cybercriminals and disinformation, vulnerability due to the recurrence of armed conflicts and the prevalence of war, and vulnerability due to the spread on the continent of international terrorism, threatening international peace and stability.

In recent years, terrorism has developed at an alarming rate on our continent in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa region and Southern Africa. Africa risks becoming a safe haven for international terrorism and remaining the weakest link in the global security system. Our coastal countries on the Gulf of Guinea, long spared, have begun to pay a heavy toll due to terrorism.

To respond effectively to the terrorist threat, Togo has therefore taken innovative multisectoral measures, as set out in its strategy document to combat violent extremism, adopted on 5 July 2022. That strategy makes it possible to balance security and development approaches by combining operational and legal measures with more flexible endogenous measures. It includes the emergency programme for the Savannah region, with an overall budget estimated at more than \$324 million for the implementation of various projects in the water, energy, health, infrastructure, education and agriculture sectors by 2025. I would like to take this opportunity to express the Togolese Government’s gratitude to all our partners in the fight against terrorism, and we hope that the various partnerships will be steadily strengthened in order to put an end to that terrorist maelstrom.

Given the many situations of vulnerability and crisis in Africa, and which basically spare no country

on the continent, the Togolese Government is working at the national level to advance the development agenda through an ambitious road map 2020–2025. Togo has implemented a series of priority projects with economic, social and structural benefits for our people. Health, through the introduction of universal health coverage, food security, socioeconomic inclusion, decent work for the advancement of all and shared prosperity remain priority areas for Government action.

The Government's efforts to make Togo a country open to the world continue. We are committed to strengthening economic, social and democratic stability, which helps to attract investors and guarantee Togo's place as a preferred destination.

The multifaceted actions that we are taking are in line with the United Nations and African commitments of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, and they are in line with the quest for sustainable development shared by all Members of the United Nations. That programme gives pride of place to environmental protection and preservation. It is the practical expression of Togo's determination to join the international effort to combat the harmful effects of climate change.

To ensure the sustainable management and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems, the Togolese Government has therefore focused its priorities, on the one hand, on the sustainable management and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems, the regulation of fishing, the reduction of the vulnerability of people and property to extreme climatic phenomena and, on the other hand, on the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and the promotion of the blue economy.

In terms of the sustainable protection of the marine and coastal environment, Togo has set up a regional programme for integrated coastal management and combating coastal erosion. Togo aims to protect 90 per cent of its coastline by 2025.

Finally, in the context of preserving and restoring ecosystems and combating desertification, Togo has launched a major national reforestation programme to plant 1 billion trees by 2030, banned the import, marketing and use of glyphosate, and all products containing it, and promoted the use of biopesticides and biofertilizers in our country.

In the area of renewable energies, strategic and diversified partnerships have been forged to provide reliable, modern and low-cost services in rural areas. A fund for access to electricity for all, called the Tinga Fund, was therefore established in order to enable Togo to ensure universal access to reliable, sustainable, modern and affordable energy services by 2030.

Through the Cizo project, solar energy kits are supplied to vulnerable rural populations throughout the country, while the Government tirelessly continues to install photovoltaic power plants and miniature solar power plants, thereby helping to boost the contribution of renewable energy to Togo's energy management policy.

Accordingly, we welcome the commitments and announcements made at the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27), in particular the establishment of a specific fund to finance loss and damage to vulnerable countries hit hard by climate-related disasters. That is a major step towards the climate justice for which developing countries have been calling.

However, much remains to be done to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions and the use of fossil fuels, among other things. In that regard, we hope that COP28, to be held in Dubai in November this year, will enable us to see significant progress in the implementation of the commitments that we made.

The Climate Ambition Summit, held here on 20 September, was an opportune moment to demonstrate the existence of genuine will to expedite the implementation of a just transition towards a world that is equitable and more resilient to climate change.

In the continent's challenging environment, characterized by the spread of international terrorism and the emergence of new areas of tension, Africa is seeking its way forward, and Togo supports peace efforts in Africa. Terrorism and instability in Africa are issues of international security and must be treated as such by the United Nations. Our West African region, where several States are in transition in a volatile security context, must be supported in a spirit of active solidarity.

We must invest more in peace than we do in war. If the protagonists of the world's various conflicts are listening to us, I would like to tell them that war is a denial of human dignity. Immanuel Kant, that great

philosopher of the Enlightenment, said that if the decision-makers in war could send their own children to the front, there would never be a war. Togo is a country of peace, and Togo opposes war for any reason. Since our independence on 27 April 1960, Togo has never waged war on its neighbours. Togo has never attacked its neighbours or any other country. Togo has never served as a rear base for any form of aggression against a brother country.

Togo is a country of peace. Peace is in the DNA of the Togolese people. Togo has always been a country of mediation that favours dialogue, negotiation and understanding among peoples and Governments. On 6 January, 49 Ivorian soldiers were released thanks to the mediation of the President of the Togolese Republic, President Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, putting an end to the tension between the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Mali. Togo hosted various peace talks on its territory. We can cite them. There was Chad in 1982, Sierra Leone in 1991, the Liberian war in 1991, Côte d'Ivoire in 2000, et cetera, et cetera.

We call for the de-escalation and cessation of hostilities in the various hotbeds of tension in the world, in particular in West Africa. Africa has suffered too much from war, and a minimum sense of responsibility must convince us to invest in the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts. The bad thing about war, said our writer Immanuel Kant, is that it makes more villains than it can take away.

External interference causes conflict and crisis in Africa. It generally complicates the search for solutions to our crises and undermines African initiatives to find solutions to African crises. It is no longer welcome in an Africa that is aware of its own responsibilities in resolving the problems of peace, security and development. Africa no longer wants external interference. Africa wants to remain itself and the master of its destiny.

On the African continent for the past few months, the Sudan, a brother country, has been affected by an armed conflict that is causing a great deal of concern. Aware of the importance of peace and security for sustainable and inclusive development, Togo, which has made those one of the main axes of its development policy, hosted, under the aegis of the President of the Republic, President Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, a consultative and cooperative dialogue among the political and military leaders of Darfur in Lomé in

July, with a view to contributing to the resolution of the Sudanese conflict.

Those consultations led to a compromise to put an end to the violence and create a humanitarian corridor. In order to achieve the full implementation of the commitments made in Lomé, and thereby relieve the suffering of the civilian population, we urge the Sudanese parties to the conflict to favour the path of dialogue and consultation for a rapid settlement of the differences in the best interests of the Sudan. We hope that the Togolese approach, which supports other initiatives, will help to put an end to the conflict, which, strangely, is not receiving the attention that it should from the international community.

In West Africa and the Sahel, the recent years have also been marked by unconstitutional devolutions of power, with the setting up of transitional regimes, whose reappearance, beyond the issues that they raise, oblige us to rethink our systems of governance.

*(spoke in English)*

Those and many other issues will be examined at the Lomé Peace and Security Forum, the first of which is scheduled for 21 and 22 October, under the theme of strengthening transitions to democratic governance in Africa. The aim is to examine how to develop strategies to meet the challenges of political transition in a coordinated, relevant and effective manner.

With the political and security crises that are transforming Africa, it is even more necessary to adopt a posture of adaptation. Thus, Togo and several other countries decided in Lomé in May to create the African Political Alliance, which is intended to be a framework for consultation, political dialogue and joint action, based on the historical ties of fraternity and the principles of the sovereign equality of States, dependence and unity of action.

*(spoke in French)*

As far as the reform of the Security Council is concerned, we do not want to go back over it again. We have already said that Africa can no longer remain on the sidelines of the organ responsible for ensuring international peace and security. The Security Council can no longer remain merely the preserve of the victors and their allies of the Second World War. Nothing can justify maintaining the status quo. The ideological and institutional architecture of the post-war world is now obsolete. The status quo cannot continue.

We are in a new era in Africa's and the global South's relations with the world, and in the new dynamic Africa no longer intends to remain in the shadow of any great Power. The time is past when other entities claimed to speak on behalf of an Africa that they do not even listen to here at the United Nations and on the international stage. Africa's partners, new and old, which are still reluctant to accept the new direction taken by Africa in the process of historical evolution, must change their attitude and approach to an Africa that has changed profoundly.

Over the past few decades, our world has undergone great silent revolutions, the profound significance of which lies in the qualitative renewal that they bring about in relations among nations, and which accompanies them throughout their own history. The reality of the world is that there are no longer monopolistic centres of gravity. The centre of the world now is here and nowhere else. No one is the centre of the world. In any case, what is clear and what I would like to recall here is that Africa now looks at its relations with the great Powers in terms of its own interests.

*(spoke in English)*

Last year, at this same platform, I told the Assembly that Africa no longer wanted to align itself with the great Powers, whichever they may be (see A/77/PV.11). The role assigned to Africa in the twenty-first century is evocative of the image that certain Powers of our continent still have: their zone of influence. We must be concerned about the place that Africa occupies on the world stage. Today Africa does not occupy the place that it should hold on the international scene. The great Powers want to reduce Africa to a purely instrumental entity in the service of their causes, and they obviously do not want the continent to be able to play an important role.

The fractures of the colonial era among a so-called French-, Spanish-, Portuguese-, Arabic- and English-speaking Africa have diminished, as have the post-Cold War ideologies that dominated the entire second part of the twentieth century. Today Africa wants to be itself. We say today, as we said last year, we prefer Africanophone.

Africa expects more equality, respect, equity and justice in its relations and partnerships with the rest of the world and with the major Powers, whichever they may be. Today Africans want to be true partners. Africa certainly does not have the same megaphones as a great

Power of the world, but the voice of Africa counts, and it must count if we want to have Africa as a partner on major international issues.

*(spoke in French)*

The issue of the reform of the global multilateral architecture is of such concern to Africa that it will be at the heart of the 2024 ninth Pan-African Congress, to be held in Lomé. For those who do not know, now is the time for an African, a pan-African, awakening. As part of the pan-African impetus, and in line with the noble objectives of the fathers of African independence, Africa and Africans are calling for, and expect, their own voices to be heard on the international stage in a sovereign, free and independent manner.

Africa knows what it wants. The peoples of Africa and the global South are frustrated because they feel insulted and dehumanized. Sometimes they ask themselves: who are you to scorn our humanity in that way? Who are you to scorn us like that? Who are you to humiliate us like that? Our continental organization, the African Union, is working to best convey the hope and voice of a healthy Africa that wishes to be sovereign, free and independent on the international stage. We are also working to that end as part of the African Political Alliance, launched in Lomé.

The rivalry among the great Powers need not primarily be African rivalries. The challenge for us, as African nations, is to avoid taking part in rivalries that are not our own. We must fight our own battles, which include the struggle against neo-colonialism, the struggle against poverty, the industrialization of the continent, economic prosperity, the fight for peace, the struggle against the de-Africanization of Africa and for an African renaissance and dignity, the struggle to free ourselves once and for all from foreign subordination and the commitment to ensuring a better representation of our continent in the concert of nations and continents. Our struggles are neither those of the West nor those of the East, still less those of any one side or part of the world. We must focus on our current and future struggles.

International politics cannot be reduced to a captive field, where we are obliged to take a position in favour of one side against another. We want a reformed international system, based on values and principles that are respected by all and that are respectful of the right of peoples to freely position themselves as they see fit on the international stage. The right of peoples



to self-determination implies the right of each State to behave as it wishes on the international stage within the limits of respect for its international commitments.

On the major transnational challenges of our century, such as climate change and the fight against international terrorism, our views may intersect with those of others, but they must remain our deeply considered views, decided in accordance with our own agendas. There is no longer any question of the Africa that we want and wishing to play a secondary role in the dynamics of global change. The Africa about which I am talking is no longer prepared to accept the tendency of certain countries to make their geostrategic agendas the concerns of Africans.

The challenges facing our world are indeed great, and Africa's new directions in terms of foreign relations are driven by the dynamics of renewal and a paradigm shift. The time has come for an African and pan-African awakening, where our continent has regained an awareness of itself and of its responsibilities, both internally and towards the rest of the world. Africa needs a partnership that respects the full dignity of every individual. We want to be partners, not subjects. We want to serve our peoples, not foreign interests.

As we repeatedly say, that new dynamic is not directed against anyone. It is the expression of a new Africa, an African Africa, an African-speaking Africa that wants to be free, sovereign, independent and in control of itself. In short, it is clear to Africa's youth. Those words are clear. It is this. It is that we are tired of paternalism. We are tired of contempt for our people's views, for our people and our leaders. We are tired of the condescension. We are tired of the arrogance. We are tired, we are tired, we are tired.

**The Acting President:** I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Dominique Hasler, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Education and Sport of the Principality of Liechtenstein.

**Ms. Hasler** (Liechtenstein): We gather this year under ever-more daunting challenges. Our window to address climate change is rapidly narrowing. Progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is stagnating; in part, it is even being reversed. There have never been more conflicts since the establishment of the United Nations. The number of displaced persons is at record levels, and food insecurity has doubled since 2020. Children are subject to more suffering than ever, and the urgently needed political consensus on key agendas is becoming more challenging.

The ability of the United Nations to function as the peace organization for our world is increasingly paralysed. It is our joint responsibility to safeguard the international order for future generations. In doing so, we have an opportunity to make the United Nations stronger, more equitable and more resilient. Together with Member States, we are ready to tackle that task, with a sense of deep responsibility, as well as with courage and confidence in our ability to succeed.

There is a common thread to the various challenges that we are facing — the rule of law, which means that relations among States are governed by the law, that such law is the result of international agreements, that it applies to everyone and that there are consequences if it is violated. That was the spirit that guided those who gathered in San Francisco in 1945 to agree on the Charter of the United Nations — the most successful and most impactful treaty ever adopted.

At its very heart, the United Nations is a peace organization. It has risen from the ashes of two devastating world wars, and it makes a powerful promise to future generations that the United Nations Charter addresses: that we, gathered in this Assembly, will not allow unlawful war-making to bring devastation, human suffering and instability to the peoples that we represent.

As leaders, we have to ask self-critically: are we trying hard enough to put those promises into action? Illegal warfare is the biggest challenge to this Organization. There is no doubt that the unprovoked and, at its core, colonizing war that Russia has been waging against its neighbour, Ukraine, a founding Member of the United Nations, is the most egregious, blatant and manifest violation of the prohibition of the illegal use of force since the creation of the United Nations. For us to stand up together against that act of aggression means, most importantly, standing up for the international order. That order is certainly the only security guarantee, especially for us, a small State, but also for the international community.

This Assembly is the bedrock of genuine multilateralism, based on the principle of sovereign equality. As such, it has admirably lived up to the challenge that it was handed by the Security Council, paralysed by the use of the veto. Together, we have called for the complete withdrawal of all Russian troops from Ukrainian territory. Together, we defined the parameters for a just peace that we all want to

see as soon as possible and, together, we made the legal determination that the actions by Russia against Ukraine amount to an act of aggression. We have yet to take the next obvious step together: to ensure criminal accountability for that act of aggression for the individuals who ordered it, in line with international law. We will continue our conversations with all present to enable us to achieve that. That serves the goal of a just peace for Ukraine in accordance with the terms defined by us in this Assembly, but it will also have a catalytic effect of a far wider reach.

In ensuring criminal accountability for the most manifest violations of the United Nations Charter, we will also protect ourselves, in particular the small States among us, and our own sovereignty and territorial integrity. Our international order is founded on the prohibition of the illegal use of force. For that prohibition to be effective, it must be backed up by accountability and by the rule of law. That, of course, is the task of the International Criminal Court, established 25 years ago, with competence over the most serious crimes under international law, the crime of aggression among them. We must give the Court the competence to exercise full jurisdiction as quickly as possible so that it can fulfil its task with respect to the illegal use of force.

Aggression is a fundamental challenge to all of us who signed up to the United Nations Charter. At its core, the United Nations is, and must continue to be, a peace organization. For billions of individuals, this building embodies the promise that we will respond collectively to those that openly undermine peace and security. That is why Liechtenstein joined this Organization more than three decades ago. That is the pledge made to future generations in San Francisco, and it is the expectation that our people have. The United Nations has evolved tremendously since its creation. It has been the crucial force in advancing international law. Its role as a provider of humanitarian assistance has become irreplaceable. Its agencies and programmes carry out functions of enormous importance to individuals around the globe. Yet its core mission is, and remains, the maintenance of peace and security, and that is the role that we are challenged to safeguard.

It is a difficult task. It is a fact that the Security Council is often unable to act. The deep political divisions among the permanent members are likely a reality for years to come. The pernicious effects of the veto are being mitigated, but they persist, often with a devastating effect for the people affected. Next year's

Summit of the Future is an essential collective test for all of us. We must demonstrate our ability to find ways to ensure collective action when the Security Council fails in its tasks. This Assembly will therefore have to play a central role in a new agenda for peace. We can do more to bring the Security Council's practice into line with the law to which we all subscribed when joining the United Nations.

We are proud to have presented to this Assembly the veto initiative, which ensures accountability and an institutional balance. We should now focus on ensuring that those that are parties to a dispute do not participate in the decision-making on those disputes. That is simply the law set out in the United Nations Charter, and its application has been neglected so far.

In recent years, climate change has occupied an increasingly central place in our discussions. This Hall has seen summit meeting after summit meeting on that issue. This year again, we are urgently reminded of the limited window that we have to address the climate crisis. From weather extremes to sea level rise, all regions of the world are affected by climate change. But those that have done the least to cause the crisis in the first place are the ones most affected. We certainly are in the fight of our lives, as Secretary-General Guterres has said. However, as we gather here, we are not on track to win that fight. We hope to see significant progress at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change meeting, to be held in Abu Dhabi later this year. But that alone will not be enough. For climate change as well, the law must guide us. That is why we have strongly supported the request for an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the question of climate change. We are confident that the Court will help us to have clarity regarding the complex legal questions concerning climate change, and thus assist in our common fight against that most existential threat.

That initiative, led by Vanuatu, was yet another example of leadership by small States, a testament to genuine and effective multilateralism. Small States like ourselves — and we are indeed a majority in this Assembly — need the United Nations. But the United Nations also needs us, and now more so than ever. It is we small States that automatically look beyond our national interests. We understand that our success does not have to come at the cost of someone else's loss. We look for partnerships as a matter of course and as a way

to success, and we work for the rule of law as a matter of enlightened self-interest. At a time of competitive alliance-building, our ability and willingness to forge common ground are indispensable to the future success of the United Nations. We can, and we will, play an important role in shaping the Summit of the Future.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development remains one of the most successful expressions of common ground from the past decade. It plays an ever-more important role in shaping Government policies, and it is deeply embedded in the consciousness of our people. The SDGs may well be the most widely known agreement that the United Nations has reached in the past decades. And yet, halfway through the implementation process, the picture is rather bleak. The number of people living in extreme poverty is higher than before the coronavirus disease pandemic. Hunger levels are back to those of 15 years ago. At the current pace, full gender equality is not just decades away, but in fact centuries. The lack of progress across our countries is mirrored in the difficulty to find political consensus on the way forward. That negative trend needs to be reversed now. The 2030 Agenda is the only global road map that we have to overcome the multiple crises that we face today.

Liechtenstein's strong commitment to the SDGs is also reflected in its second voluntary national review, which I was honoured to present earlier this year. Our official development assistance spending has been increased by 22 per cent in comparison to that of 2018. That is meant to help to reverse the negative trends in the fields of poverty reduction, food security and access to education, as well as climate protection. All Government bills are now evaluated against the Sustainable Development Goals. Our commitment to the 2030 Agenda is a genuine expression of multilateralism, of which we need to see more.

Gender equality is a central part of that agenda. We will not forget the countless women who suffer from violence and oppression worldwide. We will continue to call out situations of systematic gender persecution, from Afghanistan to Iran. We will continue to call for the empowerment of women and to support the bravery of women who stand up to demand political change, from Belarus to Myanmar. We need women's voices and active role in our national politics and in international leadership positions, in particular in peace operations.

The international community faces major challenges that will shape the future of us all. As highlighted at the beginning, by signing the United Nations Charter, we have given future generations the promise that they will all have a prosperous future. We can no longer afford to remain inactive and divided on key issues. Therefore, we have to face difficult questions and different interests. Even if solving such problems is not easy, we must never lose sight of the very main purpose of the United Nations, which is to ensure global peace. That requires the contribution of all States, large and small. The rule of law, democracy, social justice, tolerance and the ability to engage in dialogue are fundamental conditions for peace. In the spirit of San Francisco, Liechtenstein will continue to advocate strongly for those values within the international community.

**The Acting President:** I now call on Her Excellency Mrs. Catherine Colonna, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the French Republic.

**Mrs. Colonna (France)** (*spoke in French*): It is an honour for me to speak before the General Assembly on behalf of France.

I do so knowing how important our common Assembly is, this Assembly of all our nations, which have decided to freely unite their destinies and act for the common good. It is in that spirit that I speak before Member States — the spirit of those who, nearly eight decades ago, wanted from the rubble of the world to usher in a new era in relations among States; an era in which everyone understands that defending their own interests requires respect for common principles; and an era in which everyone understands that today's strong can be tomorrow's weak, where yesterday's enemies can be today's friends. That is the path that France and Germany have taken. It is an era in which power is framed by law, an era in which the common challenges of humankind are finally tackled together, rather than every man for himself.

That is what we have learned to do by overcoming in Europe centuries of conflict through cooperation and trust. It is that quest for the common good, that spirit of the United Nations, that drives France's international action. It is the spirit of a Power confident in its principles, united and always ready to act collectively for the common good.

What are our principles? They are those that this Assembly reaffirmed by overwhelming majorities when it condemned Russian aggression against Ukraine

on three previous occasions. Nothing, neither morally nor legally, can ever justify invading one's neighbour, attempting annexations through unworthy manoeuvres and martyring the population. France defends the simple principles of equality among States and respect for their territorial integrity and sovereignty, principles with which no one can compromise.

France also defends the principle of food security. Despite the confusion and propaganda that some people spread at every turn, who can believe that someone who destroys cereals and grain silos has the slightest interest in global food security, when, in fact, they are its enemy? What we are seeing is the expression of pure brutality, capable of using any weapon, and even hunger, in an attempt to revive an imperialist dream.

In that context, other countries, like France, are taking tangible action by financing the deliveries of the World Food Programme to the most fragile States, facilitating the export of Ukrainian grain through the European Union's solidarity lanes and funding ambitious programmes around the world to develop local agriculture and to support school canteens.

France also defends the principle of the inviolability of nations' historic heritage — the legacy of humankind's cultures. In Mosul and Timbuktu yesterday, in Odesa and Lviv today, everywhere, France supports the efforts of those that defend the historic treasures that hatred threatens to destroy.

Lastly, France clearly supports the principle of combating impunity. Our support for the International Criminal Court can be seen everywhere — in the Sahel in order to try jihadists whom France pushed back yesterday and who again threaten a whole region; and, of course, in Ukraine, where war crimes and crimes against humanity are committed daily against the population.

What is happening in Ukraine concerns us all. If we allow our common principles to be transgressed there, they will be transgressed everywhere. If we allow an aggression to be rewarded, there will be more aggressions, there or elsewhere.

Russia's war of aggression is also a blow to the most vulnerable countries. It means that we all have a duty of solidarity today. In 2022, France became the fourth actor in that solidarity by joining three friendly Powers — the United States, Japan and Germany. That

is the result of a patient investment that I am proud to present.

France stands in solidarity with those threatened by hunger. The appeal made a few days ago to preserve agricultural infrastructure; the massive increase in our food aid to almost €1 billion now, which benefits 67 countries, including this week Nigeria and the Sudan; the hosting of the upcoming meeting of the School Meals Coalition in Paris on 18 and 19 October; and the replenishment consultation of the International Fund for Agricultural Development in December, which aims to bring about a replenishment of \$2 billion, are all illustrations of that solidarity.

Our cooperation efforts also seek to enable access for all to the funding needed to fight poverty and to bring about energy transitions, in line with the ambitious United Nations agenda to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The French President therefore took the initiative of organizing the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact in Paris on 22 and 23 June, which charted a course to increase public and private funding to address the challenge of international cooperation. The Summit produced immediate positive results, such as the signing of a Just Energy Transition Partnership in Senegal and the agreement reached on Zambia's debt.

Commitments that France has been working for years to fulfil have also been met, such as the reallocation of \$100 billion special drawing rights. The Paris Agenda for Peoples and the Planet, which emerged from the June Summit, sets out clear principles to address both the challenges of poverty and of climate change and biodiversity loss so as to ensure that no country need choose between those goals. I call on all States that have not yet done so to endorse the Paris Agenda.

Our cooperation effort is also that of a country that has surpassed its climate financing promises by more than €1 billion, bringing it now to €7.6 billion as of 2022. It is that of a country that will continue to work tirelessly to protect the planet's lungs. In June 2025, France will therefore host the United Nations Ocean Conference, which it is co-organizing with Costa Rica, in order to strengthen as far as possible the protection of an essential carbon sink — the oceans. I am counting on the support and the commitment of Member States to protecting forests and building partnerships for their conservation.



Our cooperation effort is that of a country that will always be committed to the promotion and defence of human rights. We will celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Paris and Geneva this December. It will be an opportunity to pay tribute to those who fight to defend rights and freedoms and to safeguard human dignity. Those are rights to which we all aspire across the globe. I am thinking of women's rights, particularly in Afghanistan, where women are repressed for being who they are by a Taliban regime that has tragically made a policy of segregation and violence against women a central tenet of its political identity.

Our solidarity is also with those who fight for others, sometimes risking their lives. I am thinking of the United Nations peacekeepers, as well as the 116 humanitarian workers who were killed and those who were injured or kidnapped in 2022. We must protect them better, and France will remain fully engaged at their side, as we did this week with our humanitarian partners here at the United Nations.

Based on those principles, France will always be ready to carry out collective action to serve the common good.

In terms of the climate, today we can see how a lack of ambition can result in disasters. Extreme weather events, fires and flooding have marked this year, all around the world, and resulted in tens of thousands of victims. The latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the summary produced ahead of the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change should alarm us. We cannot look away. On the contrary, we must take action fast and collectively to tackle those common challenges, which no nation on this planet can escape. It is urgent, but possible.

To do that, we have a tested method, which helped us to achieve results in the past. It is that of the Montreal Protocol, which enabled humankind to resolve the ozone layer problem. It is the method that we used to together reach the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2015. It is also that method that should enable the international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction to enter into force as soon as possible to protect marine areas; and it is the method that will help us to fulfil the ambitious aims of

the Kunming-Montreal agreement on biodiversity and adopt — we hope, as it is necessary — a legally binding agreement to eliminate plastic pollution.

That method, which is the only viable way to go beyond awareness-raising and act with determination, commitment and responsibility, is multilateralism. Given the climate destruction, the demolition of our natural environment and the widespread loss of our biodiversity, Member States can count on France to continue to take the initiative.

The multilateral method is also the one that enables us to resolve the increasing number of international crises. In Nagorno-Karabakh, the international community must ensure that a population subjected to nine months of a relentless blockade and a recent campaign of bombing and destruction, at last has its rights and security guaranteed. A diktat imposed on a besieged civilian population cannot be a solution, while the threats made against Armenia itself and the attacks against its territory that have already been observed must cease.

In Africa, we believe in African solutions to African crises, and we support the African regional organizations whenever they ask for support from their partners. We are doing that in the Niger, where France supports the Economic Community of West African States in its efforts to restore constitutional order, undermined by force as the democratically elected President Mohamed Bazoum faces an attempted coup d'état.

In the Sudan, a murderous war has been raging for more than five months. Civilians are the primary victims of an atrocious conflict. It is therefore the international community's duty to continue to work tirelessly to find solutions to achieve peace. We once again ask the warring parties to cease the fighting and spare civilians, allow a humanitarian truce and bring about an inclusive political solution.

Neither can we become accustomed to the conflict in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has for so long been driven by the same motivations and hurt the same people. There, too, France is providing support to regional conflict-resolution mechanisms to facilitate a negotiated, peaceful solution. France is, and will remain, a reliable, consistent ally to African regional organizations in their fight for peace, development, democracy and the security of the continent.

In a changing Middle East, France is also playing its part, tirelessly supporting dialogue and cooperation. We will continue to participate, at the invitation of our Iraqi partner, in the so-called Baghdad process, an unprecedented format of dialogue among all countries of the region, which will soon meet again to work this time on tangible projects to respond to the clear need for cooperation among such countries.

Between Israelis and Palestinians, we will also continue our efforts for peace that guarantees both peoples a State and secure and recognized borders based on the 1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the capital. The two-State solution is the only path to just and lasting peace.

In a changing environment, the United Nations must also adapt. France supports the Secretary-General's ambitious reform agenda and actively contributes to the preparations ahead of the 2024 Summit of the Future. We must also regain the momentum for Security Council reform. I am of course thinking of the expansion of the Council, in which we have long supported greater African representation, including among the permanent members, and the candidacy for the Group of Four. I am also thinking of the framework for the right to veto in the event of mass atrocities, which paves the way for the renewed effectiveness of the Security Council.

True to its tradition, France will be present so that we, together, as our United Nations, can tackle global challenges, threats to international peace and security and attacks on our shared principles. To do that, the Secretary-General, António Guterres, can count on the unwavering support of France. Now is the time to act, together, for the good of all.

**The Acting President:** I now call on Mr. Dan Jørgensen, Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy of Denmark.

**Mr. Jørgensen (Denmark):** The world is off track. That is the uncomfortable truth. Eight years ago, we adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Denmark had just assumed the presidency of the General Assembly. The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was a proud moment, not just for Denmark, but for all of us — a historic moment at which we, the United Nations, launched a transformational agenda.

Today we urgently need transformational action on a massive scale. We need to get the SDGs back on

track. We need to fast-track the green transition and accelerate climate adaptation, and we need to revitalize multilateralism and bring the United Nations and other institutions of global governance firmly into the twenty-first century.

Those are immense tasks, but they are neither impossible nor optional. It is the duty of our generation to get the world back on track, to break the vicious circle of distrust and division that is undermining our ability to act collectively and to replace that vicious circle with trust and solidarity, as highlighted in the overarching theme for this year's General Assembly. Trust is not built on the promises that we give. It is built on the promises that we keep.

Halfway to 2030, only 15 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goals are on track to being realized. The rest are only progressing slowly, or even moving in the wrong direction. This year we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and today it is as relevant as ever. The SDGs seek to realize the human rights of all. Yet human rights are under pressure around the globe. That is not least true for women and girls — more than half of the world's population.

For the first time in a generation, extreme poverty is increasing. Hunger levels are surpassing those of a decade ago, while climate shocks are hitting those most vulnerable at an accelerating speed. More than 360 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance worldwide.

All Governments have a responsibility to prioritize the SDGs at home. But, for some countries, that is easier said than done. According to the Secretary-General, developing countries need a staggering \$3.9 trillion between now and 2030 in order to achieve the Goals. To bridge that gap it is necessary for others to help. It is our shared responsibility.

For more than 40 years, Denmark has met the United Nations target of providing at least 0.7 per cent of gross national income for development assistance, and we continually encourage other rich countries to also prioritize that target. But, even if we all lived up to the 0.7 per cent United Nations target, it would still cover only 10 per cent of the financing gap. It is simply not enough. We need to find new, innovative ways to finance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to realize the goals of the Paris Agreement on

Climate Change by mobilizing domestic as well as international resources, including private capital.

This year, Denmark is increasing its grant-based climate financing to the highest-ever level — \$745 million, of which approximately 60 per cent will be allocated for adaptation. Next year, we will double our contribution to the Green Climate Fund to approximately \$234 million. We are also increasing our support to the Danish Development Finance Institution, enabling it to triple its annual contribution to climate financing in developing countries, from \$300 million today to approximately \$900 million towards 2030. This year, Denmark, a country with a population of just below 6 million people, expects to contribute more than 1 per cent of the \$100 billion target. We expect our share to be even higher next year. For Denmark, delivering on our promises is a matter of assuming global responsibility, as well as showing international solidarity.

To mobilize financing for development and climate action, we also need to better leverage the enormous potential of the international financial institutions. The development banks, including the World Bank, must raise not billions, but trillions of dollars for climate action and the SDGs.

Growing burdens of debt are keeping struggling economies at a deadlock. A new creditor landscape is challenging existing mechanisms for debt treatment. That is a challenge that we need to tackle together as a global community and with the constructive engagement of all creditors. Denmark is deeply engaged in those efforts. We will be pushing for the highest ambitions at the upcoming annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in Marrakesh, as well as at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28).

The international financial architecture must be revisited. Who decides? Who benefits? Is it fair? Is it working? That is a conversation that we need to have. The international financial architecture must reflect the world of today, rather than the world of yesterday.

The climate emergency is worsening. The year 2023 is on track to become the warmest year ever recorded. Unless we do something dramatic, the extremes of today will soon become the new normal. Denmark is urging the world's biggest emitters to reduce their carbon emissions, phase out fossil fuels and commit to renewable energy.

At the same time, we need to significantly scale up our efforts to adapt to climate change and address climate-induced loss and damages. Despite having contributed the least to climate change, it is the poorest and most vulnerable parts of the world that suffer the most devastating consequences.

We need to make COP28 the turning point in overcoming that global injustice. As stated in the African leaders' Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action, no country should ever have to choose between development aspirations and climate action. We agree. The fact is that it no longer makes sense to talk about sustainable development without factoring in climate change. We are wasting valuable time and limited resources if we do not integrate our efforts for sustainable development and climate action.

We are off track and, to get back on track, we also need to look at the core institutions of our multilateral system and bring them into our time. The world deserves a more representative, transparent and accountable Security Council, one that is better equipped to address global challenges. The Security Council needs to better reflect the global realities, as well as the desires, needs and concerns of people all over the world. That includes limiting the use of the veto, also through voluntary restraint and enhanced accountability vis-à-vis the General Assembly. Denmark has been, and will continue to be, actively engaged in that discussion.

To improve and strengthen our collective ability to prevent conflict and sustain peace, we need a new approach. The Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace is a timely contribution to that debate. Denmark welcomes its call for a renewed focus on conflict prevention and peacebuilding. As a current member of the Peacebuilding Commission and a major donor to the Peacebuilding Fund, we know that it is one of the most valuable and efficient tools in the United Nations tool box. Next year's Summit of the Future — and the process leading up to it — is a timely opportunity to move the discussions on that and other reform issues forward, based on the Secretary General's proposal in *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982).

Trust in multilateral cooperation is based on universal respect for the rules that underpin it and on accountability for violations of those rules. Russia's blatant disrespect of the most fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including the principle of territorial sovereignty, is a tragedy for

the United Nations. It is a look into a brutal world in which international law has lost respect among nations and might is right. The war is not just an unspeakable tragedy for the people of Ukraine. It has devastating effects for the people around the world suffering under food shortages and other global consequences of that senseless war.

Denmark supports all meaningful efforts to stop Russia's aggression against Ukraine. We stand firmly with Ukraine and its Charter-based right to defend its territory, and we support President Zelenskyy's peace formula for a just peace. We encourage all countries to do the same. Denmark seeks full accountability for Russia's unlawful war of aggression against Ukraine. That includes responsibility for crimes under international law, as well as reparations. Ensuring that Russia and its representatives are held to account is the shared responsibility of us all, as members of the United Nations.

We take hope in the fact that, following Russia's attack against Ukraine and against the United Nations Charter, we have seen overwhelming support for the Charter among States Members of the United Nations. We must build on that. We have no choice. The major problems of our time are interlinked, and their solutions

are interlinked as well. We can solve the problems of our time only through international cooperation. We must not allow the irresponsible behaviour of one Member State to derail and destroy our collective efforts to find common solutions to shared problems.

Yesterday Denmark was proud to sign the landmark High Seas Treaty that we adopted earlier this year. The Treaty provides legally binding instruments for protecting and safeguarding the health of our oceans — a task that is vital to advancing SDG 14. It also holds tremendous symbolic value. It shows that, despite growing tensions and divisions, we can still come together and find common ground.

At a time when positive news is hard to come by, that is very encouraging. Keeping that in mind, Denmark will do its part to create tangible results, compromises and solutions at the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly that stands before us. That is the spirit of cooperation that we want to bring to the United Nations and that we hope to bring to the Security Council in 2025 and 2026. We believe that such a spirit of cooperation will bring the world back on track.

*The meeting rose at 9.05 p.m.*