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Strengthening of the United Nations system

Letter dated 22 April 2025 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Slovakia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Bratislava Declaration of the Council of Presidents of the United Nations General Assembly, which was adopted at the end of the seventh meeting of the Council (see annex). The meeting was hosted by the Slovak Republic and convened in Bratislava on 8 and 9 April 2025, under the chairmanship of the President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, Han Seung-soo.

I would highly appreciate the circulation of the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 123.

(Signed) Richard Galbavy
Ambassador
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.



**Annex to the letter dated 22 April 2025 from the Chargé d'affaires
a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Slovakia to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General**

**Bratislava Declaration of the Council of Presidents of the
United Nations General Assembly**

Bratislava, Slovakia

9 April 2025

The Council of Presidents of the United Nations General Assembly (UNCPGA) convened a meeting in Bratislava, Slovakia from 8 to 9 April 2025, under the Chairmanship of H.E. Dr. Han Seung-soo, President of the 56th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The Bratislava meeting was the seventh formal gathering since the Council's revival in October 2022.

The meeting was attended by a record number of 14 former Presidents of the United Nations General Assembly. Their distinguished guest, H.E. Mr. Philemon Yang, President of the current 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, delivered the keynote address on his priorities. The Council expresses its full support for his priorities under the theme "Unity in Diversity" with particular attention to the revitalization of the UN General Assembly and strengthening of the Office of the President of the General Assembly.

The Council welcomes the plans of the President of the General Assembly for the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the United Nations and supports the holding of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to this matter at its 80th Session.

The Council considered the grave situation in occupied Palestinian territories and renewed its condemnation of the horrific attacks by Hamas which resulted in over 1,200 Israelis casualties. The Council also condemns the subsequent military operation by the Israeli Government as well as ongoing blockade of Gaza, airstrikes and ground operations that have resulted in a catastrophic humanitarian crisis inclusive of the deaths of over 50,000 innocent Palestinians in Gaza including an estimated 17,000 children. The Council also noted the decades old violations by the Israeli Governments of international and humanitarian law in the occupied Palestinian territories and voices deep concern over the collapse of the January 2025 Gaza ceasefire which is resulting in growing Palestinian civilian casualties from the renewed Israeli military operations. The Council also condemns the killing of numerous UN staff members and humanitarian workers by ongoing Israeli military operations which are further great violations of international humanitarian law and potentially constitute war crimes.

The Council is deeply concerned over the current significant operational challenges faced by UNRWA due to laws by the Israeli Parliament declaring UNRWA illegal and banning UNRWA from carrying out its mandated operations in Gaza and West Bank. The humanitarian crisis in occupied Palestinian territories will only deepen if UNRWA is not allowed to perform its indispensable work. The Council also deeply regrets the action taken by the Israeli Government to declare the UN Secretary-General *Persona Non Grata* and calls on it urgently rescind this decision which is a violation of the UN Charter.

While the Council commends the release of several Israeli hostages in recent ceasefire agreements, it reaffirms the urgent need to release all Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners, immediately and unconditionally, and to implement a

permanent ceasefire agreed by Israel and Hamas on 17 January 2025. The Council welcomes the mediation assistance provided by the United States, Qatar and Egypt in the ongoing negotiations.

The Council also notes with appreciation the reconstruction plan of Gaza that the Arab League approved at its Emergency Summit on 4 March 2025. The Council welcomes the participation of the UN Secretary-General in the Arab League Summit and requests him to continue working with the Arab League and other countries supporting a full reconstruction of Gaza with the Palestinian population staying in their homeland. The Council rejects any forced or voluntary displacement of Palestinians from occupied Palestinian territories as this would constitute grave violation of international law and constitute a potential war crime.

The Council once again recalls that it has recommended the UN Secretary-General to present a comprehensive peace initiative based on a two-state solution in accordance with relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. The two-state solution should stress that a viable Palestinian state should live in peace side by side with Israel firmly secured within its 1967 borders. Recognizing that a two-state solution can work for both Israel and Palestine, the Council welcomes the convening by the General Assembly of an International Conference on the implementation of a two-state solution in June 2025 at UN Headquarters in New York and encourages the UN Secretary-General to work closely with the co-chairs of the Conference, France and Saudi Arabia.

Concerning the war between Russia and Ukraine, the Council welcomes the negotiations for a ceasefire that are taking place between the US, Russia and Ukraine. The Council recommends the following actions that should govern the peace process:

- There is no military solution to the war. It requires an urgent diplomatic solution that leads to a durable peace settlement, starting with the implementation of a comprehensive ceasefire as soon as possible.
- The durable and comprehensive peace settlement must be based on the UN Charter principles.
- Multilateral efforts should support current diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict based on relevant UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.
- The UN should play a central role in the implementation any peace agreement, particularly through peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts acceptable to both parties.
- The Council recommends the UN Secretary-General to put forward proposals to Member States on how best the UN system could be mobilized to support the implementation of a durable and comprehensive peace settlement.

The Council expresses grave concern in regard to the ongoing civil war in Sudan – particularly the grave war crimes and the immense humanitarian catastrophe caused by this civil war. The Council appeals to all regional powers in the MENA Region to stop supporting war in Sudan and collaborate with the ongoing efforts by the United Nations to establish a sustainable ceasefire in the country.

The Council considered the process of the selection of the UN Secretary-General that will take place in 2026. The Council is of the view that this process should support the selection of the best possible candidate for the position of the UN Secretary-General based on the candidate's qualification and experience, leadership skills, personal integrity and candidate's values supporting the purposes, principles and goals of the UN Charter. Increasing attention should also be given to the

principles of democratization of the process particularly through the enhanced engagement of the UN General Assembly as the most inclusive and democratic Principal Organ of the UN. Serious consideration should also be given to maintaining geographical rotation and promoting gender balance, considering that there has never been a woman in the position in the 80 years of history of the United Nations.

The Council encourages the Security Council to submit more than one candidate for the post of the UN Secretary-General for the consideration and subsequent election of the General Assembly. This practice would be in line of the UN Pact of Future's goal of substantially strengthening the role of the General Assembly in the work of the United Nations. The Council also supports the processes introduced in 2014–2015 to make the selection process more transparent and democratic: through the vision statement of the candidates and hearings with the Member States and civil society. In this regard the Council offers to the President of the General Assembly the experience of its members who have previously presided over the election process. The Council also recommends that serious consideration should be given to both the length and number of terms of the Secretary-General in order to make his or her role more effective.

The Council discussed the opportunities and challenges of the phenomenon of rapidly evolving artificial general intelligence (AGI). It welcomes the interim report by UNCPGA's High-level Expert Panel on Artificial General Intelligence appointed by the Chairman of the Council. The interim report provides suggestions on a framework for global governance of artificial general intelligence and roles for the United Nations in this AGI governance. The Council welcomes the ongoing work of the High-Level Panel and asks it to finalize the report in the near future. The report should then be sent to the President of the General Assembly by the Chairman of UNCPGA for consideration and further action.

The Council welcomes the effort currently under way, at the initiative of its Chairman, and with the support of the President of the General Assembly to request an invitation from the Assembly for the Council to participate as Permanent Observer in its activities. The Council further expresses the hope that UNCPGA would be granted Permanent Observer Status during the current 79th Session of the General Assembly.

The Council emphasizes the importance of empowering youth in multilateral decision-making processes. The Council commits to support the High-level meeting to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the World Programme of Action for Youth, as mandated by UN General Assembly Resolution [76/137](#). The Council further encourages Member States to support the Youth

Fellowship Programme of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, through voluntary contributions and technical assistance. The Council expresses grave concern about the prevalence of violence against women in public life, which threatens democratic governance. The Council emphasizes the need to ensure safe, inclusive, and enabling political environments – both online and offline – and calls for stronger protections for women political leaders. The Council further highlights the important role of the General Assembly in advancing these efforts and encourages the continued prioritization of this issue in future UN deliberations.

Recognizing that in mid-2024, the threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius global warming was crossed, the Council calls on Member States to act with urgency to meet the demands of the Paris Climate Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Finally, the Council of Presidents of the United Nations General Assembly expresses its sincere gratitude to the Government of the Slovak Republic and in particular H.E. President of the Republic, Mr. Peter Pellegrini, H.E. Prime Minister

of Slovakia, Dr. Robert Fico and H.E. Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Mr. Juraj Blánár as well to their staff for generously hosting the Council's meeting in Bratislava. The Council expresses great appreciation for the active and valuable role being played by the Slovak Republic at the UN and looks forward to working closely with the officials of the Republic on the implementation of the Bratislava Declaration.
