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Official Records

President: Mr. Bozkir (Turkey)

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

Agenda item 184

Appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Letter dated 8 June 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/75/912)

Draft resolution (A/75/L.100)

The President: Members will recall that, in 2015, the Assembly established, in its resolution 69/321, of 11 September 2015, a new, transparent and inclusive process for the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General. That process culminated on 13 October 2016 (see A/71/PV.27) in the appointment of Mr. António Guterres for a five-year term concluding on 31 December 2021. With the term of Mr. Guterres coming to an end this year, the process of selecting and appointing the Secretary-General was set in motion by a joint letter of the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council on 5 February 2021 (A/75/780), in line with resolution 69/321.

On 24 February, a letter from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations (A/75/789), presenting the incumbent Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, as a candidate for reappointment, was received and jointly circulated to Member States. No other Member State presented candidates. On 7 May, again in line with resolution 69/321, the General Assembly held an informal

interactive dialogue with Mr. Guterres, where the incumbent candidate responded to questions from Member States and other stakeholders, including civil society, on his vision for a second term of office.

I now call on His Excellency Mr. Sven Jürgenson, President of the Security Council and Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, who will report to the Assembly on the work undertaken by the Council on the appointment of the Secretary-General and the recommendation contained in document A/75/912.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): It is an honour for me, in my capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of June, to address the General Assembly in order to convey the recommendation of the Security Council for the appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

At its 8789th meeting (see S/PV.8789), held in private on 8 June, the Security Council adopted resolution 2580 (2021) concerning the recommendation for the appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The resolution reads as follows:

“The Security Council,

“Having considered the question of the recommendation for the appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations,

“Recommends to the General Assembly that Mr. António Guterres be appointed Secretary-General of the United Nations for a second term of office from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2026.”

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Following the adoption, this information was conveyed to the President of the General Assembly in my letter dated 8 June 2021, found in document A/75/912. In the joint letter of the President of the Security Council and the President of the General Assembly dated 5 February 2021 (A/75/780), the Council pledged to conclude its part in the selection process in a timely manner, so that the appointment by the Assembly would allow the appointed Secretary-General sufficient time to prepare for the term in office. The Council is pleased that by adopting its recommendation for the appointment on 8 June, it met that objective.

A communication was received by the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council from the Permanent Mission of Portugal, dated 24 February (A/75/789), presenting the candidature of Mr. António Guterres for a second term as Secretary-General of the United Nations. Mr. Guterres was the only candidate presented by a State Member of the United Nations. An informal dialogue with Mr. Guterres and the members of the Security Council took place on 18 May, and the members of the Security Council found the dialogue meaningful and productive.

The Security Council adopted resolution 2580 (2021) by acclamation. Accordingly, the members of the Council expressed their unconditional support for Mr. António Guterres. In the Council's view, the work of Mr. António Guterres meets the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, and he has a firm commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

On behalf of the Security Council, I would like to thank the President for his close cooperation during this important process, which is guided by the Charter, resolution 69/321, and subsequent related Assembly resolutions. The Council approached this process guided by the principles of transparency and inclusivity. I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting expeditiously following the recommendation made to the General Assembly by the Security Council.

The President: I thank the President of the Security Council for his statement, as well as for the collaborative manner in which he and his predecessors have worked with me on the process of the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General since February.

The General Assembly will now turn to draft resolution A/75/L.100.

The draft was prepared on the basis of resolution 71/4 of 13 October 2016. It reflects the historic advances in the process of the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General, in line with resolution 69/321 and subsequent relevant resolutions, guided by the principles of transparency and inclusivity. It recognizes that for the first time, an incumbent Secretary-General was subject to the new process, including the holding of an informal interactive dialogue. The draft also draws on previous resolutions regarding the reappointment of a Secretary-General in recognizing Mr. Guterres's service to the United Nations during his first term.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/75/L.100 by acclamation?

Draft resolution A/75/L.100 was adopted by acclamation (resolution 75/286).

The President: I have the honour to announce that His Excellency Mr. António Guterres has been appointed by acclamation Secretary-General of the United Nations for a second term of office beginning on 1 January 2022 and ending on 31 December 2026.

I now request the Chief of Protocol to escort the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, into the General Assembly Hall.

The Chief of Protocol escorted the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, to the platform.

The President: The General Assembly has just appointed by acclamation His Excellency Mr. António Guterres as Secretary-General of the United Nations for a term of office beginning on 1 January 2022 and ending on 31 December 2026.

I ask Mr. Guterres to repeat after me the oath of office.

The Secretary-General: I, António Guterres, solemnly swear to exercise in all loyalty, discretion and conscience the functions entrusted to me as Secretary-General of the United Nations, to discharge these functions and regulate my conduct with the interests of the United Nations only in view and, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, not to seek or accept any instructions in regard to the performance of my duties from any Government or other authority external to the Organization.

The President: The General Assembly has just appointed His Excellency Mr. António Guterres

Secretary-General of the United Nations for a term of office beginning on 1 January 2022 and ending on 31 December 2026. I now invite him to make a statement.

The Secretary-General: This is a solemn moment. I find myself experiencing a whirlwind of emotions and thoughts. I am deeply honoured and grateful for the trust placed in me to serve as the Secretary-General of the United Nations for a second term. Serving the United Nations is an immense privilege and a most noble duty. I am also very grateful to Portugal for nominating me again. I am a committed multilateralist, but I am also a proud Portuguese. All I have learned and become has been forged by working together with the people of my country. It is a great honour for me to have with us today the President of Portugal.

I am acutely aware of the immense responsibilities that I am being entrusted with at such a critical moment in history — dare I say, at the cusp of a new era. We are truly at a crossroads, with consequential choices before us. Paradigms are shifting. Old orthodoxies are being flipped. We are writing our own history with the choices we make right now. It can go either way — breakdown and perpetual crisis, or breakthrough and the prospect of a greener, safer and better future for all. There are reasons to be hopeful. The pandemic has revealed our shared vulnerability, our interconnectedness and the absolute need for collective action. We feel a new momentum everywhere for an unequivocal commitment to coming together to chart a course towards a better future. I pledge that I will do everything in my power during my second term in office to contribute to the positive, breakthrough scenario.

(spoke in French)

The past 18 months have been unique in the history of the United Nations. We have been through the coronavirus disease pandemic, which continues to cause great suffering. Millions of families have lost loved ones. The world has faced one of the greatest threats since the creation of the United Nations. We have seen how the pandemic has revealed the fragilities and cracks in our societies. To give just a few striking examples, it is estimated that 114 million jobs have been lost, more than 55 per cent of the world's population has no form of social protection and for the first time in 20 years, poverty is likely to increase, with between 119 million and 124 million people falling into extreme poverty in 2020. We know how much women in particular have been affected, and how fragile, low-income countries

are suffering as a result of the enormous inequalities in our international system.

The fact that we are only now beginning to unite to make vaccines the top global priority speaks volumes. It is crucial to ensure that both our emergence from the crisis and our socioeconomic recovery are much more equitable. Then, of course, we have all the other global challenges — which we all know only too well — such as climate change, the loss of biodiversity, environmental pollution, growing inequalities, including gender inequality, human rights, the lack of regulation in cyberspace, a growing digital divide, the changing nature of conflicts, the likelihood of future pandemics and other global existential risks. And in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, our common road map for a better world, we have seen setbacks in the progress made, from poverty reduction to hunger eradication to access to quality education and gender equality.

Our biggest challenge, which at the same time is our biggest opportunity, is to use this crisis to turn the tide and pivot towards a world that learns lessons, promotes a just, green and sustainable recovery and shows the way via greater, more effective international cooperation to address global issues. It is important to recognize that we have already started to do some things differently since the start of the pandemic. At the United Nations, we wasted no time in moving our operations and our work online, while continuing to support people around the world. Many others have done the same. We could not have done that if the pandemic had happened 10 years ago.

So, despite all the negatives, it is also important to recognize and build on the positives that we have encountered. Taking this step will require real efforts to strengthen what works as well as courage to learn from what does not. That requires us to make prevention and preparedness, in the broadest sense, a top priority of the international system. The strategic vision I have presented shows in detail what I expect to focus on during my second term.

(spoke in English)

There is no question that the tasks ahead of us are colossal, but I am confident that we can rise to the challenges we face, for three reasons. First, I have witnessed time and again the incredible commitment of United Nations colleagues serving tirelessly around the world, ensuring seamless business continuity during

the challenging circumstances of the pandemic. I know that has not been easy for most of our colleagues. Let me start by paying wholehearted tribute to them and their hard work, often in dangerous or stressful situations and often away from their families and loved ones. Their sacrifice for the common cause is remarkable. Let me also especially remember and honour the United Nations personnel, women and men, who lost their lives in the line of duty. My colleagues are indeed the greatest asset we have, and we need to cherish and recognize them with deep gratitude and appreciation. We are in this together, with unity of purpose and solidarity.

Secondly, despite all the differences and divides, we have shown that we can come together to agree on shared goals and solve common problems. We have managed together to embark on an important reform process in the development, management and peace-and-security areas of the United Nations. The reform efforts have left us better equipped to tackle the current crisis. Yet it is also clear that continuing improvement must be the norm. If we are to be able to deliver to the world, we need to consolidate the current reforms, build on their results and continue to develop new methods of work. I have talked about a United Nations 2.0, and it is clear to me that we need to accelerate transformation through a quintet of changes in the years ahead — better data, analysis and communications; innovation and digital transformation; strategic foresight; a stronger performance and results orientation; and a work culture that reduces unnecessary bureaucracy and simplifies and fosters the work of collaboration.

Equally, we need to strive for a much more aligned and integrated United Nations that works seamlessly across the various pillars of the Organization, a United Nations that is transparent and accountable and that is more effective in making available its remarkable data set, analytical capacity, policy and normative developments, as well as its operational engagement, in a spirit of creativity and openness. I count on the full support of Member States for this much-needed next iteration of the United Nations.

Thirdly, in the Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 75/1), Member States gave me a mandate to report back to them on how to advance our common agenda to respond better to current and future challenges, in the realization that something fundamental has to change. And I do indeed sense there is momentum for some of the most profound transformations to

take place. Let us seize it together. In a world that has changed so much, the promise, principles and values of the Charter of the United Nations endure, but we also have to work together in entirely new ways to keep its promises alive. The United Nations is an intergovernmental organization, and it harnesses the unique collective power of States in a world where they remain the publicly accountable actors with the responsibility to shape our policy options.

However, in a world where the levers of change lie in many hands, the United Nations, and the States and people it serves, can only benefit from bringing others to the table. Civil society, cities, the private sector and young people, to name just a few, are critical voices that must be heard in a context of true gender equality. They have essential capabilities and insights that we have to tap into if we are to forge a path towards a more peaceful and prosperous future. At its heart, this is about a growing number and diversity of actors working together to deliver global public goods, with the United Nations at the centre playing a catalytic and convening role to initiate more innovation, inclusion, cooperation and foresight. This is an incremental, organic process, one that repurposes and innovates the old structures and institutions while being open to and embracing new forms of collaboration.

(spoke in Spanish)

Ultimately, that transformation has to do with solidarity and equality. There must be a renewal of solidarity, a reinvention of the social contract at the national level and a more inclusive, interconnected and effective multilateralism at the global level. And the latter two must be expanded so that they can accommodate future generations. My Call to Action for Human Rights will continue to be an important guide in this area. Equality is about gaining a better understanding of global public goods, as well as improving the management of the growing number of shared concerns that our well-being as a human race depends on and that we must address collectively with improved governance arrangements. I hope that my forthcoming report on Our Common Agenda will make a positive contribution in that regard.

(spoke in English)

But equity must start now. Vaccines need to be available for everyone, everywhere, sooner rather than later, and we must create the conditions for sustainable and inclusive recovery in both the developed and

developing worlds. And there is still a long way to go. All of that will only be possible, however, if we can manage to overcome the current deficit of trust, which has a corrosive effect on societies and between countries. In particular, we need to do everything we can to overcome the current geostrategic divides and dysfunctional power relations. There are too many asymmetries and paradoxes. They need to be addressed head-on.

We must also be aware of how power plays out in today's world when it comes to the distribution of resources and technology. Sophocles is famously credited with saying that trust dies but mistrust blossoms. We have the power to turn that idea around, resurrecting trust and combating mistrust. What we are living through today in terms of mistrust is, I hope, an aberration. It cannot become the norm. The norm is, and will continue to be, the foundation on which the Charter of the United Nations was built, an ultimate belief in multilateralism, and the aspirations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Norms that preserve human dignity must prevail, for our survival and development. They are about human life, not just about words. Based in the rule of law and rooted in respect for humanity, they provide a vanguard against chaos and anarchy and a check on unhealthy power dynamics.

I will give it my all to ensure the blossoming of trust between and among nations, large and small, to build bridges and engage relentlessly in confidence-building. I will also seek to inspire hope that we can turn things around, that the impossible may be possible. The attitude is one of never giving up. That is not idealistic or utopian but grounded in a knowledge of times in history when big transformations have occurred. Moreover, it is guided by the fundamental belief that people are inherently good and that breakthroughs are possible, against all odds and when we least expect them. That is my unwavering commitment.

As regards my own role, throughout my whole life I have always seen public office, first and foremost, as a service, and I mean that in its most original form, of serving people and the planet. Let me repeat what I have said on previous occasions. I must be at the service of all Member States equally and with no agenda other than that which is anchored in the Charter of the United Nations. We can only meet today's complex challenges successfully with a humble approach, one in which the Secretary-General alone neither has all

the answers nor seeks to impose his views; in which the Secretary-General supports Member States and relevant stakeholders in taking the lead on the necessary changes and makes his good offices available, engaging tirelessly, making full use of the unique convening role of the United Nations and working as a mediator, an honest broker and a builder of bridges and trust to help find solutions that benefit everyone involved.

The Secretary-General must feel every day the acute responsibilities of the office, guided by the Charter and making human dignity and peace with nature, including for future generations, the core of our common work and endeavour. It is my intention to serve with humility, and as I said in my vision statement, in the spirit of building trust and inspiring hope. That is our common mission. It is in that spirit that I look forward to continued close cooperation with all Member States in the years ahead. The preservation of human dignity calls on us to draw on our diversity and richness to imagine larger freedoms that can be secured only through common action.

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

Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President: I congratulate the Secretary-General on his reappointment to the pre-eminent position of the United Nations. The Secretary-General is the chief administrative officer of the United Nations.

As the world's top diplomat and advocate, he has led — and will surely continue to lead — the United Nations with sincerity and integrity. I would like to highlight his work in prioritizing gender parity at the United Nations as a particular example of his efforts to ensure that this Organization is fit for purpose and reflective of its ideals. I would be remiss if I did not thank him for providing support to my Office during this session. He has led the Organization through a challenging but interesting period in the history of the United Nations. To his credit, he has sought to bring it closer to the peoples it serves and their needs. Last year he launched a global conversation on building a better future for all. He gathered the voices and opinions of a diverse range of people on future priorities and obstacles and the role of international cooperation. More than 1.5 million people from all countries and all walks of life were asked about their priorities for the future. And in September he will present his recommendations on

the response of the United Nations to current and future challenges, which we look forward to.

It is clear that his work is shaping this Organization to make it fit for purpose and able to meet the needs of the people it serves. Among many other global challenges, a key test of our generation is surely that of climate. Without action today, the world as we know it will cease to exist. The Secretary-General has woven ambition on the climate issue into the United Nations system. He has listened to the people of the world who are demanding urgent action. He has encouraged Member States to work together using the multilateral system to take collective action to tackle this communal threat. I am encouraged by the progress that has been made so far and urge him to maintain the momentum of this issue. Our actions on it will determine the success of the multilateral system.

Fittingly, when he set out his vision for his second term as Secretary-General, recovery from the pandemic was first on the list. Member States gave us a clear message during the Assembly's high-level week. In the Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 75/1), they reaffirmed the necessity of multilateralism as we build back better for a more equal, resilient and sustainable world. Those efforts have only just begun. As the world begins to turn a corner towards recovery, I have no doubt that the Secretary-General will ensure that the United Nations is positioned to foster connections and collaboration for strengthening our weakest links and leaving no one behind. When the pandemic hit, he ensured that the United Nations continued to deliver for those we serve despite the additional challenges, inspiring staff around the world. While the pandemic has affected us all, it has hit the most vulnerable the hardest. His efforts to ensure that human dignity is at the core of our work are now more crucial than ever. Dignity must be at the core of our efforts to achieve sustainable development and peace and security.

As the interconnectivity between people and countries continues to increase, the need is growing for a multilateral system that is fit for purpose. I welcome Member States' strong universal support for the reappointment of the Secretary-General and urge all Member States to continue to empower him to steer our Organization to meet the needs of those we serve. Once again, I congratulate the Secretary-General and look forward to working with him until the end of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly.

I now give the floor to the representative of Eritrea, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Ms. Tesfamariam (Eritrea): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of African States on this important occasion of the re-election of Mr. António Guterres as the United Nations Secretary-General. The African Group extends its heartfelt congratulations to Mr. António Guterres on his determination and commitment to continuing to lead the United Nations in discharging its mandates to bring peace and development to the people of the world, most particularly in these trying times brought about by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

The African Group particularly welcomes the United Nations, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, for its commitment to working closely with the African countries on the vaccine rollout through the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access arrangement. The uneven and unfair distribution of vaccines globally is egregious. The fair and equitable distribution of vaccines, one that prioritizes people over profit, is the only way out from this pandemic. We applaud the Secretary-General for his vocal support for patent suspension and technology transfer on COVID-19 vaccines. We call on the United Nations to invest more efforts in easing the economic and social fallout of the pandemic by seeking debt relief for African countries, more liquidity through a new allocation of special drawing rights and a reallocation of unused special drawing rights, as well as an increase in resources from the international financial institutions in support of developing countries, particularly in Africa.

In the area of climate change, despite Africa's limited contribution to global emissions, the continent continues to pay a high price for climate change. Here we welcome the commitment that the Secretary-General has shown in his call to donors to increase the share allocated to adaptation and resilience to at least 50 per cent of climate finance. However, we urge that those funds be easily accessible and channelled to our continent in order to address targeted needs and projected impacts.

Considering that the Secretary-General has achieved tremendous strides in enhancing the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union, we urge him to dedicate his tenure to working with the African Union in aligning the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the African

Union's Agenda 2063. We call for more cooperation and collaboration with the African Union, the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms to advance peace and sustainable development on our continent.

Lastly, let me take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his support to the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa. In that regard, we note that more support is needed to enable the Office of the Special Adviser to play an effective role in advocating for and coordinating the provision of effective and sustained support for Africa's transformative efforts for inclusive sustainable development. We also welcome the Secretary-General's commitment to making the Secretariat more diverse and representative and encourage him to continue working to improve the percentage of Africans in senior and other positions.

We are confident that the Secretary General will continue to stress the need to redress the past and ongoing injustices that are hindering Africa's effective contribution — international systemic racism and unfair and exploitive financial and trade practices. We cannot achieve a strong United Nations capable of tackling the multifaceted challenges of the twenty-first century without Africa's meaningful participation in its decision-making. I would like to assure the Secretary-General of the support of the African Group as he assumes the mantle of leadership.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Kiribati, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States.

Mr. Tito (Kiribati): I am honoured to make this statement on behalf of the members of the Group of Asia-Pacific States. At the outset, let me thank you, Mr. President, for convening this plenary session of the General Assembly to consider agenda item 184, on the appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, following the recommendation of the Security Council that the incumbent Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, be reappointed for another five-year term, with effect from 1 January 2022.

This is a very important matter not only for the United Nations as an Organization but even more so for the 193 member countries and the 7.8 billion people who call planet Earth home for themselves, their children and future generations. The task of appointing

one person to take charge of all matters concerning the world and humankind is indeed a serious and daunting task. It needs the whole world to come together as one human family to discuss the global issues facing us before deciding on the candidate who can best meet or match the demands of such global issues.

I thank you, Mr. President, for providing this opportunity for the Governments and the peoples we represent to renew their sense of belonging to and ownership of this global body as we discharge our duties on their behalf by deliberating on the recommendation of the Security Council before us, as expressed in resolution 2580 (2021). We are grateful that our task has been made simple by the fact that the application of the incumbent Secretary-General for a renewal of contract, endorsed by his own country, Portugal, is the only sponsored application that has been submitted to date. That is a clear indication that the incumbent Secretary-General has the full trust and confidence of the whole United Nations membership in carrying on with his excellent leadership and stewardship of the Organization, as well as the firm commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations that he has superbly demonstrated during the past five years.

In the light of this, I have the greatest pleasure and honour to welcome and join the applause for the Security Council's recommendation that the incumbent Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres, be reappointed for a further five-year term. The Asia-Pacific Group congratulates the Secretary-General and wishes him the very best as he continues his leadership of the executive branch of the United Nations, especially during these unprecedentedly difficult and challenging times. We assure him of the full support of all the Member States of our Asia-Pacific family.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Mlynár (Slovakia): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

It is my great pleasure to congratulate the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, on his reappointment for a second term. We commend the President of the General Assembly, as well as the Presidents of the Security Council for the months of

February, March, April, May and June, for conducting a transparent and inclusive selection process of the Secretary-General, as provided for in resolutions 69/321 and 73/341, on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. We remain committed to exploring ways to further enhance the selection and appointment process, including by promoting gender equality and equitable geographical representation.

During the past four and half years, Mr. Guterres has clearly demonstrated his commitment to the values and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. He has led the international community with great dedication in overcoming challenges created by conflicts and natural disasters as well as climate, economic, food, social and health crises. We praise his personal engagement in the prevention of conflicts and the mitigation of their effects, focusing on diplomacy for peace. His leadership on climate action and sustainable development has translated into the Decade of Action for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. We also welcome his valuable role in the promotion and protection of human rights and have noted his Call to Action for Human Rights, the strategy on gender parity throughout the United Nations system and strategies to counter hate speech and safeguard religious sites. The inclusion of relevant stakeholders has made the United Nations more open and inclusive than ever before. All of that has been underscored by comprehensive reforms of the United Nations development system, the peace and security architecture, the management of the Organization and the call to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse.

In the face of the unprecedented challenges caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, and through his calls for a response to its social and economic effects, the Secretary-General has shown the world that multilateralism matters, and that we need effective and inclusive global solutions for serious global challenges. As a leader serving 7 billion people around the globe, he has shown courage and wisdom that we continue to rely on to make an important and lasting contribution to our common agenda.

On behalf of the Eastern European States, we welcome and appreciate the Secretary-General's pledge to work as a convener, a mediator, a bridge builder and an honest broker to help find solutions that benefit everyone involved and overcome challenges. We look forward to further fruitful cooperation with

him in the coming years, and we wish him good health, strength, success and perseverance in his fulfilment of the responsibilities of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Carazo (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean States (GRULAC) in order to congratulate Secretary-General António Guterres on his re-election to a second term as the head of this Organization. Given the successes of the past five years, GRULAC is confident that this second term will bring us even closer to realizing the ideals enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

GRULAC appreciates the strong culture of partnership present within his first term, and looks forward to five more years of reform, innovation, delivery and results. From his steadfast commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to his vocal support for the Paris Agreement on Climate Change; from his call for equitable vaccine distribution and universal health-care coverage to expanded parity in terms of female representation in the Secretariat, the Secretary-General has been indispensable to the crafting of a United Nations prepared for the twenty-first century.

His steady hand as a facilitator and mediator brought clarity and calm through ceasefires. His leadership during the coronavirus disease pandemic brought precision and strategy to the navigation of a looming threat. His careful attention to detail yielded significant outcomes in the realms of peacekeeping and political affairs, the United Nations development system and the management of the Secretariat. GRULAC hails his dedication to a more inclusive, efficient and transparent United Nations.

As he knows better than any of us, the duties of the Secretary-General are challenging ones, combining the roles of advocate, civil servant, chief executive and diplomat. Indeed, our present challenges demand such strong, dexterous leadership. Our ever-evolving climatic, economic, social, environmental, and technological dynamics require a unified United Nations, transparent and bold, harnessing the considerable power of the General Assembly, a United Nations with vision and drive that consistently defends the ideals of the Charter

and does not shy away from our most pressing issues, from climate change to armed conflict.

(spoke in English)

In particular, GRULAC commends the Secretary-General's intellectual and political leadership in forging a new social contract. As he articulated in his statement for Nelson Mandela International Day 2020, we cannot address the plague of the coronavirus disease without addressing the plague of inequality in lockstep. We know that as the leader of the largest and most powerful multilateral diplomatic apparatus in the world, he will pursue the challenges of social inequality and economic disparity with the end goals of human dignity, justice, peace, tolerance and solidarity.

His vision statement outlines a more peaceful, gender-equitable, multilateral order in which civilian security and well-being come first. GRULAC knows that his leadership will harness the broad and unrivalled faculties of the United Nations to confront common challenges, manage shared responsibilities, carry out collective action and strive for a peaceful, inclusive and sustainably developed world; a world in which international law and the dignity of the human being are fully realized. We look forward to concretizing his vision of a more transparent, accountable and unified United Nations 2.0.

I congratulate the Secretary-General on his re-election to a second term. The Group of Latin American and Caribbean States looks forward to continuing to work side by side with him.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): On behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, it is an honour to welcome the appointment of Mr. António Guterres for a second term as Secretary-General. We offer him our warmest congratulations.

The last five years have been framed by three of the biggest challenges to face the global community — rising humanitarian needs, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and climate change — all against the background of a difficult time for international cooperation. Mr. Guterres has risen to the challenge. He has overseen a more seamless United Nations response to the biggest recorded increase in

humanitarian needs, due to a range of factors, including conflict, poverty, natural disasters and climate change. He oversaw a joined-up United Nations response to COVID-19 that delivered health, economic and humanitarian support to millions, particularly the most vulnerable, and he led efforts for a global ceasefire. He made tackling climate change his clarion call, driving us to be bolder and more ambitious and to recognize our responsibilities to those on the front lines.

Those crises reflect a world that is becoming more complex, and complex international problems require a coherent international response. A strong, fit-for-purpose United Nations is needed more than ever, and the United Nations will be best served by a Secretary-General of Mr. Guterres's calibre at the helm for another five years. Throughout his tenure, Mr. Guterres has shown that he is the right person for the job. He has led important progress on gender equality, conflict prevention, sustaining peace and United Nations reform, among other priorities. We pledge to provide him with our full support. We commit to assisting him in upholding the principles and values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. We have the utmost confidence in his skills, ability, vision, commitment and experience. Furthermore, we trust he will promote and integrate the three pillars of the United Nations — peace and security, development and human rights.

We encourage Mr. Guterres to deliver on his vision statement. That means continuing to support United Nations reform and advance his vision for a United Nations 2.0 — reducing duplication, increasing effectiveness, upholding transparency and maximizing the impact of the United Nations with the full involvement of civil society. That means ensuring the centrality of the rule of law and international law, and of respect for individual human rights, regardless of race, gender, religion, belief or nationality. That also means continuing his efforts to deliver a more joined-up United Nations approach to tackling the drivers of conflict, and doing so earlier, in order to prevent insecurity and build peace.

We renew our trust in him — and his Organization — to assist us in building back better from COVID-19, delivering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Decade of Action, and resolving the biggest crises of the day, from brutal conflicts to global challenges such as preventing future health emergencies and taking action on climate change. To that end, we look forward to receiving the Secretary-

General's recommendations to advance our common agenda in September.

In conclusion, we offer our thanks to the President of the General Assembly for steering a transparent and effective process, as laid out in resolution 69/321. Once again, we congratulate Mr. Guterres and look forward to continuing to work with him.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the host country, the United States.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): On behalf of the host country, I offer our heartfelt congratulations to Secretary-General António Guterres on his reappointment. We are pleased that the Security Council chose to recommend, and the General Assembly agreed to appoint, Secretary-General Guterres to serve for an additional five years in this critical post.

The Secretary-General has proved himself to be a capable leader in a demanding role, and we look forward to collaborating with him in the coming years. He has once again been charged with the gravest of responsibilities, taking on the most important global challenges of our time. In the past five years those challenges have included a climate in crisis, human rights in peril, mass hunger, mass migration, increased humanitarian needs and an unprecedented global pandemic, to name a few. His job is as difficult as it is important. We are counting on him to lead, and we are counting on him to use his voice when it matters most. All of us hope that the next five years will be more peaceful, secure and prosperous than the last. But we are under no illusions about the difficulty of achieving that dream. It will require hard work and political will. It will require forging partnerships, especially with the private sector and civil society. It will require a dedication to purpose, accountability and results. And it will require an impassioned, zealous commitment to the human rights of every individual everywhere in the world, especially the most vulnerable. That is the charge of the United Nations, and it therefore continues to be the charge of the Secretary-General.

We congratulate him on his election to a second term and thank the members of the Security Council and the General Assembly for the collective work required to finalize this appointment. May he help us achieve more peace, security and prosperity for all.

Address by Mr. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, President of the Republic of Portugal

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, President of the Republic of Portugal. He is the first President to address the General Assembly in person since the beginning of the pandemic that we have faced in the past year.

His Excellency Mr. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, President of the Republic of Portugal, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

President Rebelo de Sousa: It is a great honour to stand here once again before the General Assembly and to congratulate Mr. António Guterres on his appointment to serve a second term as Secretary-General. Five years ago, Portugal decided to submit his name for the position of Secretary-General of the United Nations for a simple reason, which was the strong conviction that António Guterres is particularly suited to the job. He has lived up to expectations. No one could have foreseen five years ago the exact scale of the challenges that the world and the United Nations would face. We all knew it would be challenging, but we did not know just how much. I dare to say that António Guterres has proved to be the right person at the right time. The trust that Member States have once again placed in him today is solid evidence of that.

Mr. Guterres's undaunted commitment to an effective and efficient multilateralism is complemented by something perhaps rarer and more precious, the fact that he is a compassionate multilateralist. Knowing him for 55 years in shared fights and in opposite positions — as Prime Minister and opposition leader — and in his years as High Commissioner for Refugees and his first term as Secretary-General, as everyone here also does by now, we also know that for Mr. Guterres, putting people at the very centre of his actions is not just a choice but an imperative. He is continuing the tradition of his illustrious predecessors who have embodied the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, which is to lead the United Nations in the service of "we the peoples".

We are facing times of even greater uncertainty today. We all know — we all must know — that we cannot face them alone and we cannot leave anyone behind. Much has been done since 2017. Needed reforms in the areas of sustainable development, peace and security, and management have been implemented.

The representation of women has been advanced through a bold gender-parity strategy that has already yielded results, including at senior levels. Human rights have been further incorporated into the action of the Organization, in line with the Secretary-General's Call for Action. The voice of youth has been empowered. The immense challenge of the pandemic has been tackled head on, and a global ceasefire called for. Mr. Guterres has consistently made a strong call for the vaccination of people in all countries and especially the poorest and most vulnerable. And last but not least, he has been a leading voice in climate action.

We believe that the vision of António Guterres, his persistence, his boldness, his fairness and his spirit of solidarity will also be instrumental in the next five years. Portugal is grateful to all the nations united

here today for their reaffirmation of their trust in the candidate we have put forward. It is one of countless examples of the remarkable work that everyone present here does. It demonstrates that we can come together, we can overcome differences and we can agree and foster consensus. We can unite to serve our peoples.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Portugal for his statement.

We have heard the last speaker for this meeting. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 184?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.