



# General Assembly

Seventy-sixth session

**11**<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting  
Thursday, 23 September 2021, 3 p.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Shahid ..... (Maldives)

*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

**Address by Mr. David W. Panuelo, President and Head of Government of the Federated States of Micronesia**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of the Federated States of Micronesia to introduce an address by the President and Head of Government of the Federated States of Micronesia.

**Mrs. Chigiya** (Federated States of Micronesia): I have the honour to introduce His Excellency Mr. David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, in his pre-recorded address.

**The President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President and Head of Government of the Federated States of Micronesia.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex I and see A/76/332/Add.6).*

**Address by Mr. Evariste Ndayishimiye, President of the Republic of Burundi**

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

*Mr. Evariste Ndayishimiye, President of the Republic of Burundi, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His

Excellency Mr. Evariste Ndayishimiye, President of the Republic of Burundi, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Ndayishimiye** (*spoke in French*): Praise be to God the Almighty, who has allowed us to meet in the magnificent city of New York to participate in our Organization's current session.

I would like to begin by expressing my warmest congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. Burundi assures you, Sir, of its full and unreserved cooperation and wishes you every success and happiness, both professionally and personally, in the exercise of your mandate. I am also pleased to express my delegation's deep gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Volkan Bozkir, for his outstanding work despite the extremely difficult circumstances owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt appreciation to Secretary-General António Guterres for what has been achieved in an international context marked by various violent crises and a fragile and struggling world economy. I wish him every success and good health in carrying out his duties during his second term.

I would be remiss, moreover, in failing to thank the Government and the people of the United States, especially the people of New York City, for their celebrated welcome and hospitality.

In accordance with decision 75/573, and without setting a precedent for mandated high-level meetings planned for future high-level weeks, the official records of the General Assembly will be supplemented by annexes containing pre-recorded statements submitted by Heads of State or other dignitaries, submitted to the President no later than the day on which such statements are delivered in the Assembly Hall. Submissions in this regard should be made to [estatements@un.org](mailto:estatements@un.org).



The seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly is being held as Burundi prepares to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of its independence and membership within the United Nations family next year. This is therefore the occasion to recall that the United Nations has played a great role in that regard.

From the end of the First World War until its independence, Burundi was administered under the mandate of the League of Nations, and subsequently the United Nations. The mismanagement of the colonial period had negative repercussions for Burundi — immediately following its independence, it experienced social conflicts characterized by repeated massacres that have still not completely healed. In keeping with the central theme of our general debate, we must restore the hope of our citizens.

In Burundi that means restoring hope in the face of not only the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic but also the consequences of the repeated crises that have been inflicted on the country with impunity. This session of the General Assembly therefore comes at an auspicious time for my country, Burundi, providing it a welcome opportunity to share with the Assembly the substantial progress made at the national, regional and international levels.

The restoration of peace, security, stability and social cohesion is today a reality in Burundi. The only enemy that continues to pose a threat to citizens — apart from the COVID-19 pandemic, which is our common enemy — is poverty. Together with every citizen, we are committed to combating poverty in order to achieve our goal: the well-being of the Burundian people. In order to achieve it, we have defined and included a number of priorities in the road map for Burundi's national development plan for the period from 2018 to 2027, which is an ambitious and transformative programme to accelerate the socioeconomic development process that has been under way since 2018.

The first priority concerns good governance and social justice. To that end, combating corruption, financial malfeasance and impunity is one of the priorities of the Government, which has been recognized as being responsible and hard-working. In terms of the fight against impunity and the prevention of social conflicts, Burundi has put in place local justice mechanisms to allow rapid and equal access for all Burundians to justice. Efforts have also been made to ensure the independence and impartiality of

the judiciary by operationalizing the Supreme Council of Magistrates. It should be emphasized that, in the context of addressing the violent crimes of the past, the Government of Burundi is in the process of overseeing the transitional justice process for all victims in Burundi.

Turning to security, we highlight the issue of terrorism, regarding which successful efforts have unquestionably been made. At the same time, however, we must humbly acknowledge that we are far from having developed a shared, adequate and effective strategy to eradicate that scourge. At the strategic level, given the fact that there is no justification for terrorism, I remain convinced that, beyond the necessary military measures, effectively combating terrorism is predicated on countering radicalization, which is rooted in ignorance, poverty, youth unemployment and illiteracy.

The United Nations should therefore undertake measures to fight poverty and impose severe sanctions against terrorist groups and all those who support them. From our perspective, we are concerned about the proliferation of terrorism in the subregion, for which those responsible, including the Allied Democratic Forces and the Résistance pour un État de droit au Burundi, based in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, recruit unemployed youth and indiscriminately kill peaceful and innocent citizens. I continue to believe that those groups pose a threat not only to our region but to all of humankind. In that regard, we must join forces to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

We also believe that the fight must be pursued with greater resolve and solidarity. In that context, since 2007 Burundi has provided the United Nations and the African Union with military and police contingents to contribute to the restoration and maintenance of security and peace in countries in need, such as Somalia and the Central African Republic.

Concerning the issue of human rights, Burundi strongly believes that human rights must be protected by transparent mechanisms, good governance, security and justice for all. Within the framework of monitoring the implementation of human rights protection principles, the international community should adhere to the fundamental principles of universality, transparency, impartiality, non-selectivity, non-politicization, objectivity and the rejection of double standards. In that regard, Burundi believes that the best way to promote and protect human rights is through cooperation,

dialogue, technical assistance and the capacity-building of national human rights mechanisms.

We take this opportunity to ask partners, particularly within the Human Rights Council, to conduct a fair and objective review of the efforts Burundi has made together with other nations and to appreciate their true value. All attempts to single out Burundi as the object of special human rights mechanisms is simply counterproductive. As everyone is aware, Burundi has national mechanisms in place to defend, promote and protect human rights. In addition to the Independent National Commission on Human Rights, which has just regained its "A" status, we have the National Observatory for the prevention and eradication of genocide, war crimes and other crimes against humanity, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Council for National Unity and Reconciliation, the National Commission for Land and Other Properties and the institution of the Ombudsman.

In practice, the Government has focused on the protection of human rights, respect for democratic principles and the freedom of opinion, expression and the press. Much effort has also been made through the establishment of a virtually permanent dialogue among political parties, the media, civil society and the public authorities. That has allowed for the reopening of media sources that had been closed in the wake of the clashes, including the insurgency of 2015, the release of more than 5,000 prisoners through a presidential pardon and the participation of political parties and civil society in overseeing the political and social life of the country.

With regard to socioeconomic issues, like other countries, Burundi will be unable to move towards development without resolving issues related to health, education and attending to the needs of specific groups, such as young people, women and vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

In the health sector, the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been added to the list of virulent diseases such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and others, is of concern to the Government of Burundi. Since the emergence of the first COVID-19 cases, Burundi has taken measures to prevent the spread and respond to the pandemic. All our strategies have made it possible to maintain a positive test rate of less than 4 per cent and avoid a large number of severe cases. The complex nature of the virus, however, calls for all nations of the world to carry out more innovative research to find a

united, collective, sustainable and eventually definitive solution to the pandemic, which afflicts all humankind.

In the same vein, Burundi also calls for international solidarity to save our citizens from other diseases that are preventing them from progress towards economic development. In that regard, the Government of Burundi has implemented a policy of free health care for children under five years of age and women who give birth in public health facilities. In addition, we are committed to providing every commune with at least one hospital so as to ensure local care for the entire Burundian population.

The first priority of our economic development is food security. Our goal is to ensure that every mouth is fed and that every citizen receives an income enabling him or her to meet other basic needs. That is why the State of Burundi has committed itself to supporting local cooperatives in combating poverty in every part of the country, a policy that has made Burundi one of the few countries that do not import foodstuffs.

The other priority is centred on education. Education for all is part and parcel of the United Nations agenda, and my country believes that it is indispensable to the sustainable development programme. At the outset, we ensured free basic education, enabling all children to attend school regardless of their social situation. Similarly, we decided to set up school infrastructure and trade education centres in every census area. We are currently at work on reforming the educational system so that it can provide technical and professional training, which will turn out young people with the technical ability and versatility required in all economic sector activities.

With regard to social protection, at stake are the issues related to the employability of young people and women and the improvement of the living conditions of people in vulnerable situations. To that end, Burundi encourages young people to be imaginative in initiating development projects and launched a large-scale programme to promote their economic empowerment and employment, in addition to the establishment of the Youth Investment Bank and the Investment Bank for Women. Moreover, in order to meet its goals pertaining to job creation and development, the State of Burundi, through the Impulse, Guarantee and Support Fund, offers a portion of guaranteed funding to profitable projects launched and managed by youth and women.

In addition to the priorities I mentioned, Burundi also focuses on the repatriation of refugees and care for retirees. Thanks to the restoration of peace and security, Burundian refugees, including political actors, have returned en masse and have been welcomed with love and dignity. Since July 2020, more than 75,000 refugees returned voluntarily, in addition to the more than 50,000 who returned without going through the specialized United Nations agencies. As for retirees, the overall main objective is to take care of the elderly, while ensuring their medical care and improving their pensions.

In order to renew hope for all citizens, this year the Government launched the National Programme on Peace Capitalization, Social Stability and the Promotion of Economic Growth. The Programme is expected to benefit from the support of all of Burundi's development partners in order to boost socioeconomic development, capitalize on peace and ensure hope for citizens in Burundi in the aftermath of long periods of conflict.

Another priority requiring our efforts in the area of sustainable development — to which Burundi attaches great importance, with its adherence to some 20 related international conventions — is the protection of the environment. In that context, Burundi spares no effort in finding the means to finance projects related to biodiversity, water pollution control, soil protection, the protection of the ozone layer and organic pollutants, through its ambitious reforestation project, *Ewe Burundi Urambaye*, which means, “Burundi covered in its entirety”.

At the diplomatic level and with regard to cooperation, Burundi is committed to normalizing and promoting friendly and cooperative relations with its bilateral and multilateral partners and regaining its rightful place in the concert of nations. Accordingly, my country once again welcomes the historic decision by the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council to remove Burundi from their political agendas in recognition of the return of peace, security and lasting stability in the country. Similarly, Burundi welcomes the progress already made in normalizing friendly and cooperative relations with the European Union and its States members through political dialogue conducted in a constructive and respectful spirit between the two parties.

With regard to relations in the continent, our country is pleased to have ratified the agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, the ultimate goal of which is to eventually integrate all 55 States members of the African Union into a single free-trade bloc — the overarching purpose of which is to meet the Agenda 2063 objective of creating a continental market with the free movement of people, goods and services, which is essential for strengthening economic integration. To that end, Burundi, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of the Congo together are on a better path towards initiating the railroad project that will link the port of Dar es Salaam to Burundi and the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

At the institutional level, Burundi supports the concerted efforts of the Secretary-General to reform the United Nations in order to revitalize our shared Organization and make it more effective, efficient, accountable and closer to the people of the world whom it serves. We enthusiastically welcome his report entitled *Our Common Agenda*, which he believes to be the starting point for our joint efforts. In that context, as the only continent not represented in the permanent membership of the Security Council, and underrepresented in the non-permanent category, Africa continues to suffer the historical injustice of exclusion in that organ, which is extremely important to all of us.

In conclusion, the State of Burundi reiterates its firm commitment to the principles and values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, such as the sovereign equality of States and their territorial integrity, non-aggression, political independence and the settlement of disputes by peaceful means. The State of Burundi also reaffirms its faith in the fundamental human rights, social justice, the dignity and value of the human person and the equal rights of men and women and of nations.

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

*Mr. Evariste Ndayishimiye, President of the Republic of Burundi, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

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

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

*Mr. Luis Alberto Arce Catacora, Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Luis Alberto Arce Catacora, Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Arce Catacora** (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me to hail your election, Sir, as President of the General Assembly, and to congratulate the Secretary-General on his reappointment for another term.

We are gathered in the most important forum created by humankind since the Second World War, which was conceived as a space for debate, reflection and the search for effective solutions to the multiple crises facing our planet. The United Nations was conceived based on the principle of the legal equality of States, to which the principle of political equality would be added, in order to prevent the planet from falling back into armed conflicts among States, which jeopardize the world peace we all yearn for.

Those goals have not been fully achieved — we continue to be exposed to ambitions to control access to natural resources and dominate peoples in the form of direct armed invasions, criminal blockades and indirect military, political, economic and media interventions.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has revealed the fragility of our societies and States through its unprecedented negative repercussions for health, the economy, education and other sectors and has jeopardized the timely achievement of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The health crisis has compounded the multidimensional economic, social, environmental, food, energy and inequality crisis of capitalism.

At the same time, the crisis has highlighted the continuing inequality between the countries that are at the hub of capitalism and those on the periphery, which are euphemistically referred to as “developed”

and “developing” countries. The increase in poverty and extreme poverty and the inequitable distribution of vaccines has been condemned by the World Health Organization. According to available data, to date only 30 per cent of the world population requiring vaccination has received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, and barely 15.5 per cent is fully vaccinated. Meanwhile, only 1.1 per cent of the population in low-income countries has received at least one dose.

Capitalism has commodified all dimensions of social life, and health care has not escaped its reach. Medical science must be at the service of humankind without any kind of geographical, political, social or nationality-based discrimination. Access to vaccines must be considered a human right. We cannot be indifferent, much less profit from providing health care during a pandemic.

We firmly believe that the pandemic can be overcome by the highest level of global vaccination coverage. The World Health Organization has confirmed that, once 70 per cent of that goal is achieved, we will be able to overcome the pandemic. However, access to vaccines, especially for peripheral countries, is limited. In that context, we believe it is important that transnational pharmaceutical manufacturers waive their patents and share their knowledge and technology to produce COVID-19 vaccines, that in working together we guarantee immediate access to everyone in every country in the world and that supranational organizations, such as the United Nations, as well as Governments, work together to prevent the hoarding of vaccines and promote universal, fair, equitable and timely access to vaccines, medicines and medical supplies to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

The current circumstances caused by the pandemic call for solidarity and international cooperation among brotherly peoples to promote life. In the fight against COVID-19 throughout the world, thousands upon thousands of health workers have fulfilled their roles, and today we pay tribute to them and express our gratitude for their work. In Europe, despite their problems, countries have come together in agreement and have allocated billions of dollars to reactivate their economies. The United States has also reached consensus among its politicians to direct billions of dollars to its economy.

In contrast, in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Africa, States and Governments lack organizations

to deal with the struggle to survive. Quite the opposite — organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS) divide us, promote coups d'état and produce destabilization.

The COVID-19 crisis has also exposed the vulnerabilities and inequalities of the financial system and the global economy. In a closely interconnected world, it is important to deepen solidarity and complementarity and respond to the needs of our peoples in the post-pandemic world. To that end, it is imperative to strengthen integration and cooperation so that we can confront the multidimensional impact on the economy and our industries and ability to achieve security with food sovereignty. In that context, we must rebuild our economies with a view towards social protection and health. That means safeguarding and protecting workers, farmers, indigenous peoples, micro-entrepreneurs and small entrepreneurs in the same way that banks, large companies and global corporations are protected.

In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, it is imperative that we confront the threats posed by the pandemic. In that regard, let us examine and propose comprehensive solutions to the vulnerability that debt has led to in periphery countries in relation to central capitalism and financial institutions. Accordingly, it is important to adopt comprehensive measures that the international financial institutions apply with a sustainable vision and that do not entail increased costs or debt levels for beneficiary States.

States must prioritize the eradication of extreme poverty and inequality in all its dimensions and the provision of access to basic services for the population. We must responsibly assume the challenge of building a future based on solidarity, complementarity, sustainability and cooperation among peoples. Little progress will be made, however, in reducing or eliminating those social indicators as long as the current world economic order continues in a way that is unjust by every standard, fosters unfair trade and hinders industrialization.

Moreover, I would be remiss if I did not underscore that, unfortunately, the digital divide persists. The rapid progress in digital technologies and e-commerce has become an instrument that can help in economic recovery. However, the digital divide prevents such benefits from being shared equitably; indeed digital

technologies and e-commerce are being converted into instruments to consolidate the unjust world order.

In that regard, the Plurinational State of Bolivia proposes to move forward on agreements with multilateral financial institutions to refinance, or provide relief from, external debt at the global level and support social policies for populations in vulnerable situations, with a comprehensive and sustainable development approach. Similarly, it is important that the various international financial mechanisms grant concessional loans and design and implement medium- and long-term measures to ensure the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Our planet — shared home and Mother Earth — continues to suffer from the serious consequences of consumerism and the excessive greed for natural resources. We once again reaffirm that the capitalist system is one of the main causes of the climate crisis. According to the worldview of indigenous peoples, human beings and nature are interdependent.

Therefore, as a State we advocate a new model of coexistence for our well-being, which our peoples call, “living well”. It promotes a change in the perspective on life by rejecting greed, irrational competition, excessive consumerism and the insatiable quest to accumulate profit to the detriment of Mother Earth and life on our planet. The civilizing perspective of our indigenous peoples is valid for all the peoples of the world because, if capitalism is jeopardizing anything, it is jeopardizing humankind and nature.

Embarking on the path towards living well means that our public policies and way of life must be in harmony and balance with nature. We must restore our relationship with Mother Earth, because our survival as a species is at stake. The growing threat posed by non-economic risks to financial and macroeconomic stability, such as the climate crisis, has highlighted the need to devise policies that help in transitioning to a new economic model. In line with our approach, we have conceptualized the Bolivian vision for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We propose that all States parties to the Convention attend the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in Glasgow, at which we will propose the following recommendations.

First, the only concrete solution to limit the temperature rise to 1.5°C is through the distribution of the carbon budget among countries, based on climate

justice criteria and according to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Secondly, the countries of central capitalism must assume the climate debt and the historical compensation with the rest of the countries of the world through financial cooperation, technology transfer and capacity-building, thereby complying with the relevant agreements established to date.

Thirdly, it is vital that we return to the knowledge, practices and experiences of indigenous nations and peoples in building societies and ecosystems that are resilient to climate change.

Fourthly, there is an urgent need to strengthen and speed up countries' efforts against the climate crisis, particularly approaches that are not based on carbon markets — efforts that must be effective in reducing domestic greenhouse-gas emissions. We are convinced of the urgent need for a reform of the global architecture that aligns financial, investment, trade, development, environmental and social policies. In the same vein, we welcome the holding of the United Nations Food Systems Summit, as the health and life of humankind itself depend upon them. We must recognize and strengthen the important contribution to the economy and the preservation of nature made by peasant and indigenous producers.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Assembly on the important decision it took to declare the Decade of Indigenous Languages, which begins next year. Languages transmit culture, knowledge, wisdom and the history of peoples, which is why it is important that, throughout these years and the years to come, States promote actions to recover and revitalize indigenous languages, which are part of the wealth of humankind.

The Charter of the Organization is the ultimate point of reference for safeguarding international law, which governs relations among countries. The United Nations therefore has a preponderant role, especially in safeguarding human rights. It is therefore inconceivable that hegemonic countries promote unilateral actions and measures that generate negative effects against the right to life, health, food and education of millions of people — as has been expressed on repeated occasions here at the General Assembly. Coercive measures are taken following unilateral decisions and applied extraterritorially, which is not only immoral but also

goes against international law and the very Charter of the United Nations.

While weakening multilateralism, such measures are even more reprehensible and condemnable when they intentionally and directly affect the exercise and enjoyment of human rights. Human rights are inherent to human beings; there can be no double standards.

Access to vaccines, medicines, medical supplies and essential goods such as food cannot be subordinated to political interests, and neither should the right to life or health be used as a political pressure mechanism to the detriment of the lives of millions of people who depend upon them, much less so in times of pandemics.

We reject any unilateral measure aimed at preventing countries from exercising their right to freely determine their own political, economic and social systems. A clear example of the application of unilateral measures is the inhumane and criminal commercial and financial blockade against Cuba, which puts the lives of more than 11 million citizens at risk in the midst of a pandemic. It is a crime against humanity, but at the same time a regrettable example of how the decisions of the General Assembly are not complied with by certain countries. It is frustrating to admit that, year after year, despite the virtual unanimity worldwide in condemning the blockade, those responsible for this crime ignore the clamour of humankind.

Before concluding this intervention in the General Assembly, allow me to inform Member States that, after a regrettable coup d'état that took place in November 2019, the Plurinational State of Bolivia regained its democracy in October 2020, thanks to the unity, struggle and conscience of the Bolivian people, ratified at the ballot box. We are also regaining our intercultural democracy as well as our political, economic and social stability, which we had worked so hard to build.

The rupture of the constitutional order in my country involved the participation of national actors: politicians who did not have the support of the people at the ballot box, bad actors among the police and the armed forces, civic committees, the Catholic hierarchy and the hegemonic media. But it also counted on the participation of the OAS — through its Secretary General, Luis Almagro — as well as other Governments, such as the previous Argentine Government, which sent weapons and ammunition to the coup plotters, and representatives of the European Union and international non-governmental organizations.

The last report presented by an international group of independent experts found that serious human rights violations, massacres and summary executions were committed in the Plurinational State of Bolivia. Our commitment to the Bolivian people is that justice be done for the 38 lives lost, for the hundreds of wounded and detained, for the persecuted, the asylum seekers and the exiles and for the serious human rights violations that were committed during a de facto Government. For justice is an essential condition for any democracy and for building genuine social peace.

Unfortunately, the right to the presumption of innocence and due process was systematically violated. The persecution, prosecution and imprisonment of innocent people became a normal daily occurrence. Humiliation, repression, desecration of our patriotic symbols, such as the wiphala, and racist and sexist use of force were directed against the population mobilized for their rights, mostly indigenous people, workers, peasants and farmers.

Strong and dignified nations have always been built on learning the great lessons from the tragedies and misfortunes experienced, collectively building social peace through processes of memory, truth and justice. And that is our commitment to the Bolivian people. My Government, democratically elected, in spite of the multiple difficulties, including the COVID-19 pandemic, is making the greatest of efforts to regain stability and economic growth with social justice. With the confidence of more than 55 per cent of the votes cast by the Bolivian people, we have the responsibility to defend our independence and dignity as a free and sovereign State.

In this global forum, the Plurinational State of Bolivia claims its right to secure free, sovereign and useful access to the Pacific Ocean, through dialogue and agreement with the Republic of Chile, as determined by the International Court of Justice in its judgment of 1 October 2018, which urged Chile and Bolivia to continue working towards a meaningful resolution of the problem.

Bolivia takes paragraph 176 of the judgment as an invocation and a clarification in the sense of

“continuing their dialogue and exchanges, in a spirit of good neighbourliness, to address the issues relating to the landlocked situation of Bolivia, the solution to which they have both recognized to be a matter of mutual interest. With willingness on the

part of the Parties, meaningful negotiations can be undertaken”.

The important integration processes that are taking place throughout the world must be based on and involve an effective solution to the major unresolved issues in Latin America. Like the issue of sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, Bolivia’s landlocked situation is still an open wound in our continent. That issue should be resolved with dialogue, diplomacy and understanding among brotherly peoples in this new era.

Here in the Assembly, we reiterate our commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the targets set for the Sustainable Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the elimination of all forms of discrimination and racism. Multilateralism is the right tool for ensuring greater dialogue, cooperation and the quest for solutions to issues that affect humankind. It will enable us to re-establish the primacy of international law, preserve social justice and peace and reconfigure a weakened world order.

*Mr. Manalo (Philippines), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

There is no doubt that the challenges we encounter daily are increasingly complex. If we want a better future for the current and next generations, we must reflect on the path we take to overcome the polarization in the global architecture and, instead, join efforts to promote international cooperation that allows us to stand strong in addressing current issues.

We are at an unprecedented juncture where the future of humankind depends on our decisions. It is our duty to build a more just and more democratic world based on greater solidarity. Let us work to end the climate crisis and build equality so that enjoying life means access to education, health care, food, decent work, comprehensive development and true harmony with Mother Earth. Let us work to ensure the self-determination of peoples and lasting peace.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Luis Alberto Arce Catacora, Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Nayib Armando Bukele, President of the Republic of El Salvador**

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

**Mrs. González López** (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to introduce the pre-recorded statement by the President of the Republic of El Salvador, His Excellency Mr. Nayib Armando Bukele, as his message to the General Assembly during the general debate at its seventy-sixth session.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex II and see A/76/332/Add.6).*

**Address by Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan**

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

**Mr. Hikmat** (Tajikistan): It is my great honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex III and see A/76/332/Add.6).*

**Address by Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda**

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

**Mr. Ayebare** (Uganda): I have the distinct honour of introducing the address by His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Kaguti Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, at the general debate of the seventy-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex IV and see A/76/332/Add.6).*

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

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

**Mr. Bayramov** (Azerbaijan): It is my distinct honour and privilege to introduce a pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, at the general debate of the seventy-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex V and see A/76/332/Add.6).*

*Mr. Salovaara (Finland), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

**Address by Mr. Mohamed Younis Al-Menfi, President of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Unity of the State of Libya**

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

*Mr. Mohamed Younis Al-Menfi, President of the of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Unity of the State of Libya, 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. Mohamed Younis Al-Menfi, President of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Unity of the State of Libya, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Al-Menfi** (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, on behalf of the Libyan people, it is my pleasure to congratulate the President of the General Assembly

at its seventy-sixth session on his election. I wish him every success in his mandate and assure him of my country's readiness to cooperate with him in order to achieve the objectives of this session. I would like to thank his predecessor for his efforts as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session. I would also like to commend the efforts of the Secretary-General to achieve the goals and purposes of the United Nations.

This session is convened in difficult times brought about by the coronavirus disease pandemic and its ongoing effects, which have caused tremendous human losses and enormous economic hardships in different countries. It is therefore incumbent upon us to reaffirm the calls of the United Nations and the World Health Organization, namely, that the only way to address the pandemic is through solidarity and by promoting international cooperation and coordinated efforts. We reiterate the Secretary-General's call for a cessation of military operations and an end to armed conflicts, as well as the provision of resources to address the pandemic.

In my address before the General Assembly today, I will focus on the developments in Libya and the related challenges and concerns, particularly given the upcoming elections, to be held in December.

Libya is at a critical juncture and a defining moment. Either we succeed in the democratization process by means of holding fair, free and transparent elections whose results are accepted by all, and the subsequent move towards lasting stability and prosperity, or we fail and relapse into division and armed conflict.

Against that backdrop and the related difficult situation, there is a need for genuine guarantees to achieve the success aspired to by all Libyans to establish a democratic and civilian State. Despite the achievement in maintaining the ceasefire by preventing any attempt to undermine it and resolving any differences among the parties, and despite working with the Joint Military Commission to open the road linking eastern Libya with the western part, the problem of removing foreign mercenaries and forces from the country remains a real challenge. In that regard, we call on the international community to shoulder its responsibility in supporting the ongoing efforts to create, by tackling one of the major challenges, a climate conducive to holding safe, free, fair and comprehensive elections.

Since assuming office, we have striven to address many important issues and achieve the required objectives by making considerable efforts to ensure the full implementation of the agreed commitments, particularly the road map resulting from the Libyan Political Dialogue, the outcomes of the Berlin track and the relevant Security Council resolutions. However, we are facing serious challenges and rapid developments, which, as a matter of responsibility, compel us to think of more realistic and practical options to prevent an impasse in the political process, which could, in turn, undermine the upcoming elections and bring us back to square one.

In the light of what I have just said, I launch from this rostrum an appeal that includes a number of elements and steps aimed at maintaining the political process and sparing the country further complex crises. Our appeal focuses on holding a meeting of the parties concerned, represented by the leaders of the relevant political and military institutions, to assist in reaching agreement on effective guarantees to maintain the political process and the holding of safe, transparent and fair elections whose results are accepted by all. Working to that end requires, first and foremost, concession from all parties and a spirit of responsibility to prioritize the interests of the country above any other interest.

Over the past years, Libya has been subject to several international initiatives and proposals in an attempt to resolve the crisis. None of those met the necessary conditions for success. Therefore, Libya will host an international conference in October to launch the Stabilization Facility for Libya initiative, which is Libyan-owned and Libyan-led and deals with the political, security, military and economic tracks, based on the previous outcomes on Libya. That initiative seeks to ensure ongoing international support in a unified and consistent manner, in line with the comprehensive national vision. The conference will be attended by the relevant national institutions and bodies, as well as regional and international partners.

There is no doubt that national reconciliation is a key element for the success of the political process and for achieving lasting stability. Since its inception, the Presidency Council has therefore made that objective its top priority by establishing the High Commission for National Reconciliation and launching comprehensive reconciliation on 6 September. Many steps are being taken to restore trust among Libyans, the first of which is the exchange of detainees and the release of a number

of prisoners who have either served their sentences or been found innocent.

We all know that the road to reconciliation is long. In order to get to the end, it is necessary to apply transitional justice, truth, openness, acknowledging past wrongs, reparations, the return of refugees and the displaced and identifying the situation of the missing persons. Only with those steps can we move towards successful, genuine and comprehensive national reconciliation.

On the economic front, the Libyan Presidency Council is actively and resolutely considering the outcomes of the economic track supported by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, with the participation of Libyan experts. We believe that the outcome recommendations serve as a part of the solution to settling the conflict in Libya. Those recommendations range from addressing the current economic bottlenecks to unifying economic institutions and, ultimately, working on strategic economic issues such as wealth-sharing, economic restructuring and reconstruction.

One of the purposes of the United Nations is the coordination of international efforts to address the challenges, crises and threats facing the world. As a State Member of the Organization, my country has always been an active participant in the international efforts of the United Nations system. Libya has always condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, irrespective of its sources, motives and justifications. We have always stressed that terrorism is an international phenomenon that should not be linked to any religion or belief. We suffered one of the world's most ferocious and worst forms of terrorism throughout Libya. We sacrificed our youth to free it from terrorism. The whole world, near and far, witnessed our epic action to uproot the Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham from the pure land of Libya. By doing that, we made a great contribution to the global counter-terrorism efforts at the regional and international levels.

Despite the security and economic difficulties and challenges facing my country over the past years, we have not forgotten to defend and promote human rights as one of our priorities. We strive to fulfil our obligations towards our citizens, first and foremost and our international obligations, as possible. Libya is an active member of the Human Rights Council, and we look forward to increasing our cooperation with

the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) in Libya and benefiting from the technical and advisory support programmes provided by UNHCR.

The phenomenon of migration has always been a great challenge for the international community. Some specific countries have been directly affected by it, including Libya, which is still grappling with its implications and the influx of illegal migrants through my country. That has caused security, economic and social problems. My country has borne a heavy burden and therefore deserves the support of the international community. We believe that this phenomenon can be tackled only through concerted efforts. Transit countries should not carry the burden alone. In that regard, we stress our respect for the humanitarian aspect, the provision of protection and respect for the human rights of that group of migrants.

Peace in the Middle East will not be achieved as long as acts of aggression against the Palestinian people continue. We reiterate our steadfast position in support of the Palestinian people and their right to establish their independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital. Libya will remain a supporter of the Palestinian cause and the struggle of the Palestinian people to attain their aspired goal of establishing an independent State.

Libya is one of the most ancient names in history. More than 10,000 years ago, it was home to the Phoenician, Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Islamic civilizations. It contributed to human thought. It is the country of silent treasures and harmonious races — Arabs, Berbers, Tuareg and Tebu — such a marvellous mosaic, which left its mark on mountain rocks in Acacus and Al-Awaynat, on the Mediterranean coast in Cyrene and Leptis Magna and in the beautiful oases of Germa and Ghadames in the middle of the desert.

In conclusion, I say to the Libyan people that history will attest that they have combated, struggled and fought occupation and colonization. They have proved their ability to overcome challenges and survive crises. They are a strong-willed people who have solid determination. We are confident that, together, we will be able to emerge from this plight stronger and more resilient. With its great people, Libya will remain united, proud, free and dignified.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Presidency

Council of the Government of National Unity of the State of Libya for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Mohamed Younis Al-Menfi, President of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Unity of the State of Libya, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

#### **Address by His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco**

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Monaco to introduce an address by the Sovereign Prince of Monaco.

**Ms. Picco** (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to introduce the address by His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco at the general debate of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex VI and see A/76/332/Add.6).*

#### **Address by Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President and Head of State of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea**

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

**Mr. Ndong Mba** (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a distinct honour for me to introduce a pre-recorded address by His Excellency Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, at the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex VII and see A/76/332/Add.6).*

#### **Address by Mr. Taneti Maamau, President, Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration of the Republic of Kiribati**

**The Acting President**: I now give the floor to the representative of Kiribati to introduce an address by the President, Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration of the Republic of Kiribati.

**Mr. Tito** (Kiribati): I have the honour to present to the General Assembly the pre-recorded video statement of the President, Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration of the Republic of Kiribati, His Excellency Mr. Taneti Maamau, in addressing the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly.

**The Acting President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President, Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration of the Republic of Kiribati.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex VIII and see A/76/332/Add.6).*

#### **Address by Mr. Wavel Ramkalawan, President of the Republic of Seychelles**

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

**Mr. Madeleine** (Seychelles): It is my distinct honour to present the video statement of His Excellency Mr. Wavel Ramkalawan, President of the Republic of Seychelles, to the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex IX and see A/76/332/Add.6).*

#### **Agenda item 8 (continued)**

##### **General debate**

#### **Address by Mr. Moeketsi Majoro, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho**

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

*Mr. Moeketsi Majoro, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Moeketsi Majoro, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Majoro** (Lesotho): On behalf of the Government and the people of Lesotho, I extend our most sincere congratulations to President Shahid on his election to preside over the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session and wish him every success in the discharge of his duties. We are confident that his personal, diplomatic and leadership qualities will guide us through the session. My delegation assures him of our full support and cooperation. Let me also pay a well-deserved tribute and express our thanks and gratitude to his predecessor, His Excellency Volkan Bozkir. We thank him particularly for his statesmanship, sterling guidance and effective organization during the difficult times of the seventy-fifth session.

We are deeply indebted to Secretary-General António Guterres for his continued dynamic leadership and commitment to our Organization and for his relentless efforts to achieve the Organization's goals. We particularly commend him for his tireless efforts during an arduous time, when the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) reared its ugly head and upended our world. We also congratulate him on his reappointment for a second term and assure him of our utmost support.

The convening of the high-level week of the General Assembly is yet another opportunity for world leaders and policymakers to demonstrate their resolve and political will to further advance the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations through concerted multilateral efforts. It is also an opportune moment for United Nations system entities to demonstrate their continued commitment in support of national efforts.

Allow me to thank President Shahid for advancing a very befitting theme for this session of the General Assembly, namely, "Building resilience through hope to recover from COVID-19, rebuild sustainably, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the rights of people, and revitalize the United Nations".

The United Nations was born 76 years ago, when the brutality of war impressed itself on all as far beyond human comprehension and tolerance. The Organization

became a source of hope, founded as it was on the inalienable, interlinked and mutually interdependent pillars of development, human rights and security. The resolve to form the United Nations was propelled by a determination to create a world of peace and prosperity.

In his address to the General Assembly on 28 January 2021, the Secretary-General described a world in danger and warned of the consequences of the failure to work together. He stated that "2020 was a ... year of death, disaster and despair" (A/75/PV.51, p. 2). He called for bold action to overcome the devastation in 2020 resulting from the global COVID-19 pandemic. It gives me great pleasure to pay a deserving tribute to the Secretary-General for galvanizing support and mainstreaming the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic in the work of the United Nations system. His leadership in spearheading the mobilization of resources through international partners in this war is commendable.

This session of the General Assembly comes at a critical time and a momentous juncture in human history; indeed, this is a time when circumstances compel us to reiterate our plea to the international community to adopt an expanded and comprehensive response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Such a response would complement the work of individual countries on concerted efforts to halt the continuing spread of the pandemic.

We recall the COVID-19 omnibus resolution entitled "Comprehensive and coordinated response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic" (resolution 74/306), adopted by the General Assembly last year in September 2020, which underscored the need to tackle health inequities and inequalities within and among countries through political commitment, policies and international cooperation. The World Health Organization recently promulgated an unpleasant warning that unless nations act urgently to slow the spread of the coronavirus, the world could log another 100 million infections in the course of this year.

Apart from posing a significant threat to health, the pandemic is also a serious threat to development. It is disrupting the function of domestic economies, global travel, tourism and trade. Locking down our economies is no longer an option that many countries can exercise. We must therefore come together as the members of this body to guarantee simultaneous access to vaccines by all parties.

In that respect, my delegation fully supports the long-standing and yet-to-be-concluded proposal by South Africa and India for a temporary Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights waiver in the World Trade Organization and call on all Members of the United Nations to recognize that progress in vaccinating everyone means the protection of all people on Earth.

My delegation expresses sincere appreciation for all initiatives recently taken through the Coronavirus Disease Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility to address the needs of developing countries, especially in the development, production and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments and vaccines. I welcome the commitment made by President Biden yesterday to donate 500 million doses of vaccines to the rest of the world and call on others for continued solidarity and timely support.

Exactly six years ago, the General Assembly adopted a comprehensive set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets aimed at ending poverty, protecting the planet and ensuring that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. Now, with nearly nine years remaining, the prospects of the world reaching those forward-looking Goals remain on the distant horizon. What is even more worrisome is the Secretary-General's report covering the period that ended in July, which reveals that by the beginning of the pandemic the world was already off-track to meet the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets.

The situation has now been exacerbated by the devastating impacts of the pandemic on sustainable development, with the most vulnerable countries, particularly the landlocked least developed countries, such as Lesotho, being the hardest hit. Those countries, which expended their financial balance sheets on coping with the pandemic in the past two years, now require a financial stimulus to restart their post-COVID economies and to accelerate progress towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As we head towards the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Doha next year, we remain hopeful as to the consensus adoption of an ambitious new programme of action that should properly focus on the least developed countries and, above all, that will geared towards

ensuring that the severely struggling are not left behind in achieving the SDGs.

Again, as we begin the decade of action and try to build back better, Lesotho remains steadfast in calling on the international community to significantly increase funding for sound health services, increased investment in physical infrastructure, scientific and technological development, and research and agricultural extension services in least developed countries. We believe that such bold steps would help us get back on the trajectory of realizing the full implementation of the SDGs in this tight remaining period.

With concern over climate change, creating a global coalition to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 should be high on the United Nations agenda ahead of the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Glasgow later this year.

The recently published report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reveals that it is now certain that hot extremes have become more frequent and more intense across most regions of the world, while cold extremes have become less frequent and less severe, thereby confirming that human-induced climate change is the main driver of those aberrations. The report further asserts that some recent hot extremes observed over the past decade would have been extremely unlikely to occur without human influence on the climate system. This suggests that this greatest challenge of our time manifests through excessive rainfall, desertification, hurricanes, land degradation and so on, thus diminishing our capability to eradicate poverty and improve livelihoods.

It is equally important to note that biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, just like climate change, are among the top threats facing humankind today. It is therefore clear that now more than ever there is a need to take urgent and bold global actions to combat climate change and its impacts on humankind. Similarly, the onus is on us as leaders of the world to ensure that our Mother Earth does not lose its biodiversity, as that poses a threat to food security and the livelihoods of people across the world.

To ensure conformity with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change protocols over some years now, the Kingdom of Lesotho has joined effort with the rest of the world to increase climate-change resilience and improve the well-being of the Basotho nation through

mainstreaming climate change into our development programmes and implementing concrete measures for adaptation and climate risk reduction, mitigation and low-carbon development to achieve green growth.

Furthermore, several initiatives and programmes have been implemented by the Government of Lesotho to address the impacts of climate change. For instance, Lesotho submitted its nationally determined contributions report to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in June 2018, outlining the initiatives to be undertaken to reduce greenhouse gases and adapt to climate change.

In addition, some of the noteworthy initiatives are the integrated catchment management, the improvement of the early-warning system, the formulation of the national adaptation plan, and improving the adaptive capacity of vulnerable and food-insecure populations in the country. Again, Lesotho intends to unconditionally lower its net greenhouse-gas emissions by 10 per cent by 2030 and to further push for an additional 25 per cent greenhouse-gas emission reduction, provided that external support, including capacity-building, is made available to us to cover the full cost of implementing the adaptation and mitigation actions.

Guided by the principle of leaving no one behind, Lesotho continues to call on the international community and other regional and international organizations to support climate-change adaptation and mitigation efforts and strengthen resilience, particularly for vulnerable countries, thus bringing the attainment of the SDGs within reasonable reach.

It is the obligation of all Member States to promote and protect the rights of all. We are therefore pleased that this important factor has over the years remained on the agenda of every session of the General Assembly. The international human rights instruments provide a clear path and a legal framework for all States to fully advance the status of vulnerable groups in a quest to end inequalities in our communities. My own country, Lesotho, is a long-standing party to international human rights treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to mention just a few.

It remains the responsibility of all Member States to pursue the common goal of ensuring the

effectiveness and enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. It is, however, disturbing that in conflict-stricken regions, particularly in armed conflict, civilians still endure inhumane treatment that is in violation of the laws and regulations established to protect humankind. Lesotho condemns all forms of attacks on civilian populations and urges the parties involved in any form of conflict to cease aggressions and to engage in talks genuinely aimed at achieving a long-lasting solution and promoting human rights for all.

Trafficking in persons continues to be a chronic challenge affecting the globe. Member States are facing challenges on how to translate their international efforts to combat all forms of trafficking in persons into reality. Lesotho fully supports the 2021 Political Declaration on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and therefore calls upon all Member States and all stakeholders to accelerate the implementation of all guiding tools as contained in the outcome document.

This year, we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, which, together with the relevant outcome documents, provides an inclusive United Nations framework and a solid foundation to fight the scourge of racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Lesotho acknowledges the progress achieved in other parts of the world to fight racism; however, it remains a major concern that that plague persists in all parts of the world and that a vast number of human beings continue to be its victims. Lesotho therefore urges all Member States to collectively promote and protect rights for all and restore the dignity of those peoples that have borne the worst brunt of the evils of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The revitalization of the General Assembly merits our attention and should remain high on our agenda, especially at this time, when there is a dire need for solidarity and unwavering commitment to multilateralism and to the United Nations. Lesotho would therefore like to echo other Member States in calling for an inclusive United Nations system that encompasses the equal representation of all regions in all the major organs of the Organization. Strengthening the United Nations organs, particularly the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, would also ensure that all the political and socioeconomic

challenges that humankind is currently facing are tackled collectively in an efficient and effective manner, thus leaving no country behind.

The States Members of the Organization have increasingly yearned for its reform in order to make it more democratic and responsive to the needs of all nations, rich and poor, big and small, strong and weak. We should recall that the most recent reform of the United Nations was in 1963, some five decades ago. We are convinced that this is an opportune time to raise critical issues regarding the reform of this world body to enable it to meet the challenges and threats of the twenty-first century — a daunting task indeed.

We note with regret that some Member States have relegated to the back burner critical issues of development, giving priority instead to security issues. To move in unison, the international community should strive to advance the global development, human rights and security agendas simultaneously. Terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors, the existence of nuclear weapons, and armed conflict top the list of global security issues. On that note, we commend the Secretary-General for convening the Second United Nations High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States in June this year, with the overarching theme “Countering and Preventing Terrorism in the Age of Transformative Technologies: Addressing the Challenges of the New Decade”. The Conference provided a significant and timely opportunity for participants to consider the practical implementation of the relevant aspects of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

The Kingdom of Lesotho considers it the responsibility of the international community, with the United Nations playing the central role, to put in place effective measures aimed at preventing genocide, ethnic cleansing and the atrocities perpetrated against women and children caught up in armed conflict. Consequently, my delegation considers the enhanced role of the major organs of the United Nations, particularly the General Assembly, to be of paramount importance. Lesotho is supportive of any effort that will bring about lasting and sustainable peace in the Middle East, in conflict areas in Africa and in other parts of the world.

In today’s globalized world, it is indefensible and incomprehensible that decisions that bind us all are left in the hands of few Member States. A reform of the

Security Council that takes into account the aspirations of Africa, as espoused in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, cannot be postponed any longer. Transparency, inclusivity and democracy must inform the work of the entire United Nations system. The Ezulwini Consensus provides for the progressive implementation of a fair and prudent reform of the Security Council, which is crucial for the African continent’s representation in this new multilateral world order.

In this twenty-first century, peace, security, the right to self-determination, respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms must be guaranteed as the norm rather than the exception — hence our call for the right to self-determination for the Palestinian people and complete withdrawal from their occupied territories, as well as the independence of the Sahrawi people. We also renew our call for the lifting of the unilateral economic embargo against the people of Cuba. These matters must be addressed and resolved urgently, comprehensively and honestly, without fear or favour and without malice towards anybody.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been going on for far too long. It is about time that individual interests gave way to compassion and reason, so that the people of Palestine can enjoy their inalienable right to self-determination in our lifetime. The road to lasting peace is paved with pain and hardship; difficult concessions will have to be made in order to satisfy the desires of both sides. It is our view that the conflict must be ended through negotiations that are based on the respect of sovereign equality and the recognition of the rights and legitimate concerns of all parties involved.

The people of Western Sahara yearn for peace, freedom and the attainment of the right to determine their own destiny. For many years now, efforts by the United Nations to facilitate the transition to independence have not yielded any concrete results. It is regrettable that the continued denial of the Sahrawi people’s exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination remains unresolved. We look forward to the conclusion of the process in Western Sahara so that the people of that country can freely determine their own future.

Over the past three decades, the General Assembly has consistently voted against unilateral coercive measures through the economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba — to no avail. As a result,

the people of Cuba have been subjected to undue suffering, which was further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. We renew our call for the lifting of that embargo, which has had an adverse impact on Cuba's economy and brought untold sorrow and agony to its people. Similarly, unilateral coercive measures continue to be applied on the people of Zimbabwe, despite repeated resolutions to the contrary by the community of nations. We renew our call for removal of those sanctions.

The real test for the United Nations in this century is how far it is prepared to go in addressing all those challenges and how far it will go to turn promises into reality, thus enabling a large majority of the people of the world to fulfil their potential and realize their aspirations. While we appreciate the magnitude of those challenges, we continue to have faith in the Organization's capacity to solve global problems, its broad universal support and its ability to uphold and reaffirm our shared values of peace, equity, social justice, democracy and human rights.

I wish to conclude by pointing out that we often come here to set lofty goals for Members of the United Nations but fail to walk the talk. History will judge us harshly if we continue to defer the aspirations of people across the world in their quest for equality, freedom, peace and prosperity. Such is the call and challenge staring in the face of the United Nations in the twenty-first century.

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

*Mr. Moeketsi Majoro, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho, was escorted from the rostrum.*

#### **Address by Mr. Mario Draghi, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy**

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

**Mr. Massari (Italy):** I have the honour and pleasure to introduce the pre-recorded statement on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Mario Draghi, Prime Minister of Italy.

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

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex X and see A/76/332/Add.6).*

#### **Agenda item 8 (continued)**

##### **General debate**

**The Acting President:** I now call on His Excellency Mr. Jakub Kulhánek, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

**Mr. Kulhánek (Czech Republic):** Two weeks ago, we commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the horrendous terrorist attacks against the United States. But that barbaric act of terrorism was directed not only against the United States, but also against our shared values. That heinous crime will always serve as a powerful reminder that we must stand united in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism in all their forms.

The threat of international terrorism has unfortunately not diminished. Terrorist and violent extremist groups have demonstrated their ability to adjust to the new circumstances, even during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Our vigilance is therefore needed more than ever. The adoption of the seventh review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (resolution 75/291) in June gives us an opportunity to improve the tools required to effectively address this global scourge.

The turbulent situation in Afghanistan poses a major challenge. It is now important to join forces to avert a humanitarian catastrophe, continue our fight against terrorism and organized crime and prevent forced displacement and illegal migration. At the donor conference held in Geneva, the Czech Republic pledged to increase its humanitarian support for the people in need in Afghanistan. Our contribution will amount to some \$5 million. The United Nations remains a key actor on the ground in Afghanistan. The Taliban must ensure unhindered and safe access to the entire territory of the country for all humanitarian and United Nations staff, including all female staff. The Czech Republic strongly condemns the use of violence and intimidation against protesters, journalists and human rights defenders. We are particularly concerned about Taliban actions directed against women and girls.

Another region in which the population has been badly tested is the Sahel. Together with our international

and African partners, the Czech Republic will continue to take part in joint stabilization activities to bring peace and prosperity to that part of the continent. Africa deserves peace, prosperity and stability. We have been implementing a national programme with an annual budget of more than \$14 million to support African countries coping with forced displacement and irregular migration.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on individuals, societies and economies. It has shown us how intertwined global challenges are. It has also highlighted the importance of international cooperation, information-sharing and communication among all actors, as well as compliance with international obligations. The World Health Organization (WHO) plays a special role in strengthening health systems and preparedness for pandemics. It has a unique mandate in the field of global public health. It must be able to work effectively, efficiently and independently of any political or other influence. The ongoing reform process in WHO should reflect the recommendations of evaluation bodies and feed into the notion of value for money. We must learn our lessons and act in solidarity to leave no one behind.

As part of Team Europe, my country will have donated more than 2 million doses of vaccines by the end of this year, mostly through the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility. We can build back better and greener if we connect our immediate pandemic response with prevention and resilience-building.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change constitute the centrepieces of our joint efforts. The nexus of humanitarian, development and peace activities has proved quite efficient. Earlier this year, my country successfully presented its second voluntary national review at the United Nations. We support our partners in achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda through projects of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and transformation policy.

With regard to global climate change action, the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Glasgow, will be crucial, and our nationally determined contributions need to be ambitious. We also need all major emitters on board. The impacts of climate change on peace and security are becoming

increasingly apparent. Systematic integration of those risks into the Security Council's work is necessary.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated negative trends in the protection of human rights worldwide. More than ever, we need to ensure respect for civic participation, the independent media and civil society. The increasing importance of cyberspace to our everyday lives and our economic resilience cannot be overstated today. Preserving a globally accessible, free and secure cyberspace is essential. However, the pandemic has also exposed deep digital divides. We are appalled by the increase of cyberattacks against critical infrastructure that delivers essential services to our citizens, including hospitals, water-treatment facilities, power plants and even our democratic institutions. Such acts can cause grave suffering to civilians, including the loss of lives.

The deliberate spreading of disinformation has a direct impact on the health and safety of our citizens and their trust in institutions. Using disinformation as a means of aggression against other States is utterly unacceptable. The geopolitics of technology continues to pose an ever-greater challenge to the established norms. We must all work together to ensure that new digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, remain an enabler of human progress, rather than a tool for surveillance, oppression and control.

The protection and promotion of human rights is one of the pillars of Czech foreign policy. We support the mandate and vital work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We echo the Secretary-General's call to action for human rights and we agree that adequate funding of the United Nations human rights pillar from the United Nations regular budget must be secured. Similarly, striving to improve the rights of women and girls must be at the heart of our response to the pandemic. The Czech Republic fully supports the women and peace and security agenda, and we will proceed with the implementation of our second national action plan, along with civil society and academia.

Furthermore, the Czech Republic firmly supports international criminal justice, in particular the International Criminal Court. We would also like to express our support for the start of negotiations on a convention on crimes against humanity.

Let me underscore one strand of hatred that I consider especially despicable: rising anti-Semitism

and Holocaust denial. The Czech Republic is committed to preventing and combating anti-Semitism both offline and online. In 2022, we will host a follow-up international conference to the Terezín Declaration, endorsed by 47 countries. Our ambition is to achieve progress in rectifying property injustices from the time of the Holocaust and to create funds for education about and combating anti-Semitism, xenophobia and hatred.

The Czech Republic is concerned about the continuous massive repression in Belarus, which has created a climate of fear among the general public. We call for the immediate release of all those unlawfully detained for exercising their rights to freedom of expression or peaceful assembly, including journalists, human rights defenders and activists. Independent and transparent investigations into all those violations is essential.

The Czech Republic is a firm supporter of the rules-based international order, with the United Nations at its core — upholding international law and compliance with commitments rooted in the Charter of the United Nations. In that context, let me reiterate the unwavering support of the Czech Republic for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine and Georgia within their internationally recognized borders.

In addition, we deplore any State-sponsored malign activities committed in Europe in recent years as simply unacceptable, illegal and in direct violation of everything that the United Nations stands for. The Czech Republic has experienced it first-hand.

Turing to Myanmar, we strongly condemn the military coup in the country. We support the legitimately elected leaders, and we call for respect of the results of the November 2020 parliamentary elections.

Let me now focus on the situation in the Middle East. Hamas and other terrorist groups in Gaza bear the primary responsibility for the outbreak of violence and the tragic developments in May 2021. Their large-scale rocket attacks targeted Israeli civilians. Let me reiterate that Israel has every right to defend its citizens. The Czech Republic supports any meaningful initiative leading to an end of that cycle of violence and remains firmly committed to the two-State solution. Resuming direct talks between the Israelis and the Palestinians is desirable, as are all confidence-building measures that aim to bring the two sides to the negotiating table.

In the Human Rights Council, the Czech Republic voted against the establishment of an ongoing commission of inquiry with a rather vaguely defined geographical scope. Israel, a democratic country with an independent legal system, has appropriate means to effectively confront and address human rights violations.

Iran's continued escalation of nuclear activities far beyond its commitments, coupled with the suspension of the implementation of transparency measures under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, raises serious concerns. All those actions impede the execution of the verification and monitoring mandate of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We are all committed to ensuring a safer and more stable world for our citizens and a sustainable, inclusive global recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Complex global challenges can be addressed only through effective multilateral governance and rules-based international cooperation.

Such an approach, I believe, can also be useful in reducing simmering geopolitical tensions in the Indo-Pacific region. We observe that worrisome trend with great apprehension.

In order to tackle pressing global issues, the international community needs the United Nations to be fit for purpose. We welcome the Secretary-General's recent report *Our Common Agenda*. Engaging a broad array of stakeholders, including young people, civil society and think tanks, will provide fresh energy for change.

In conclusion, I fully agree with the Secretary-General that humankind has proven time and again that it is capable of achieving great things when we put our differences aside and work together for a common purpose. This is the spirit of our United Nations.

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

**Mr. Schallenberg (Austria):** It is good to be back in New York. It is good to be back in this Hall. Flying here to attend the opening of a new session of the General Assembly once seemed like a routine undertaking, but this past year has made it something very special again: a sign that things are finally moving in the right direction.

We all know that the pandemic is not yet in our rear-view mirror, but the world is slowly finding its footing, one vaccination at a time. And yet, we already know that some things have fundamentally changed. The virus has brutally exposed our fragility — the fragility of our social fabric, of our health systems, of our economies and of our lives.

The virus destroyed our illusion that human progress is a one-way street. Some 124 million people went from being poor to needing to fight for their very survival, while millions more do not even know where their next meal will come from. Over 250 million people lost their jobs and are without a paycheck to support their families. In the blink of an eye, we lost decades of hard-earned development gains, and we will lose even more if we cannot ensure that everyone has access to the vaccine as soon as possible. This is our only exit ticket out of the pandemic.

That is why the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility is probably one of the most important initiatives of our time. It has so far shipped over 300 million vaccine doses to 142 countries. As part of Team Europe, Austria is among the lead contributors to the COVAX facility. We were the first country providing our neighbourhood, the Western Balkans, with much-needed doses through the European Union Vaccine Sharing Mechanism. Austria also donated over 2 million doses bilaterally to our partners from Georgia, Lebanon, Tunisia, Ukraine and Iran. And as host to the United Nations Headquarters in Vienna, we spared no effort in keeping United Nations personnel and their families safe, including through vaccination.

However, an enormous task still lies ahead of us. We have to massively accelerate international vaccine distribution. It is perfectly clear, and we all know it: in this pandemic no one is safe until everyone is safe.

The coronavirus disease COVID-19 added fuel to the fire of existing geopolitical tensions. A ring of crises and conflicts spans the globe: in Yemen and Syria, where many children have known nothing but conflict and deprivation; in Ethiopia and Nagorno-Karabakh, where long-standing fault lines have erupted; or in Belarus, Myanmar or Nicaragua, where some have used the pandemic as a *carte blanche* to ignore human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We have to send to all of them a very clear message that our fight for human rights and our engagement for fundamental freedoms know no lockdown. This

fight — this engagement — was never an easy or straightforward task. It is a continuous battle marked by progress, but also by bitter setbacks.

How demanding and problematic this struggle can be became clear again in Afghanistan. After 20 years of engagement, it seems that we are now back at square one. It seems that much of the social, political and economic progress is slipping through our fingers like sand. We are all faced with the same question: what shall we do now? From my perspective, the answer is clear: we cannot turn our back on the people of Afghanistan.

The consequences would be felt immediately, above all by the millions of women and girls, human rights defenders and minorities who face an uncertain future. We have to remain engaged, and we have to offer urgently needed humanitarian aid. That is why Austria will provide a total of €20 million in humanitarian emergency aid to Afghanistan and the region.

But we also have to spell out very clearly our expectations of the new ruling Power in Kabul. There can be no blank checks for the Taliban. Fundamental rights and freedoms, in particular for women and girls, are simply non-negotiable. We have to do everything to prevent Afghanistan from turning into a black hole with the capacity to destabilize the whole region, and we have to drive home the message to the Taliban that the world's eyes are on them. We do not want Afghanistan to turn into an incubator or a safe haven for international terrorism and extremism

That requires a coordinated international effort and coordinated messaging. I strongly believe that Afghanistan's immediate neighbours, in particular, and other Muslim countries can and should play a central role in this endeavour.

Some gleefully describe Afghanistan as a failure of the so-called West, as proof of the inevitable decline of our democratic system of governance or a breakdown of our values. It is true that Afghanistan holds many bitter lessons that we need to take to heart, but from my perspective one thing is crystal clear: we should not fall into defeatism, self-doubt or despair. Our answer cannot lie in a cynical and inward turning away from our partners and allies.

The days of a moral gunboat policy may be over, but the values that the free world fought and stood for in Afghanistan and for which we stand and fight for in so many other places around the globe continue to be

the right ones. They were and are the ones that give individuals freedom and the capacity to live up to their potential: rationalism, rule of law, equality, human rights and liberal democracy.

In the end, it boils down to one question: how do we want to live? As a strong believer in the democratic system, my answer is clear and simple. I want to live in a world — and I want my children and my future grandchildren to grow up in a world — where the freedoms of expression, religion or belief, the freedom of assembly and the rights of minorities are not just noble sentiments, but an everyday reality.

The pandemic has brought home to us the simple truth of how interconnected and interdependent we all are. We have learned the hard way that we cannot overcome a challenge like this one on our own. Despite forcing us into social distancing, the pandemic brought us closer as a human family. Let us use this lesson to tackle the next crisis that is actually already upon us.

Compared to the COVID-19 pandemic, which burst into our lives like an explosion, this one is like a slow-burning, smouldering fire, creeping up on us. I am obviously talking about climate change. Austria will continue to be at the vanguard, when it comes to ambitious and bold green recovery and climate action.

And there are other tectonic shifts that will fundamentally alter the way we live. New and emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and quantum computing are racing ahead, leaving many of us behind. We have to make sure that our human-centric approach applies online and offline.

New technologies are not a new frontier where human rights do not exist. We need to define clear red lines that we as humankind are not willing or ready to cross. This includes stepping back from creating killing machines — lethal autonomous weapons systems — where an algorithm decides in a split second who lives and who dies. Last week, Austria organized a conference to ensure meaningful human control over these weapons. Together with partner countries and civil society, we hope to establish a process leading to a ban on killer robots.

Further, Austria will continue to be a driving force for disarmament and arms control. We cannot increase our security by increasing our potential to destroy, and, most importantly of all, by hanging on to the myth of nuclear deterrence. We need to eliminate

these horrendous weapons of mass destruction. Their prohibition is a first step, and we in Austria look forward to hosting the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty Prohibiting Nuclear Weapons in Vienna next March.

No nation State can shoulder today's and tomorrow's challenges on its own. We need neighbours, we need partners, we need strong multilateral institutions. Austria therefore strongly supports the vision of the Secretary-General for a United Nations 2.0. Our multilateral system, conceived in the twentieth century, needs to be made fit for the twenty-first century.

Let us not get dragged down by bureaucratic inertia. Let us be bold and daring. As a medium-sized country, Austria knows the value of a strong United Nations. We know that our own security depends on the rule of law and not the law of the jungle. The rule of law will be at the centre of our efforts when elected to the Security Council for the term 2027-2028.

When I met with the President of the General Assembly in Vienna recently, he told me that the guiding light of his presidency is hope. I believe no maxim could be more fitting for our times. It reminded me of something Winston Churchill once said: "All the greatest things are simple, and many can be expressed in a single word". So, as we face the challenges ahead, here are some of the words I would wish to guide us in our work: tolerance, trust, solidarity, truth, justice, compassion, humility and hope.

**The Acting President:** I now call on His Excellency Mr. Marcelo Ebrard Casaubón, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Mexican States.

**Mr. Casaubón (Mexico)** (*spoke in Spanish*): I bring greetings from the President of Mexico, Andrés Manuel López Obrador — and from all Mexicans — to the General Assembly.

Mexico welcomes the fact that the General Assembly has managed to meet, despite the health situation, because it is only through shared collective action that we will be able to address the formidable challenges we face. The pandemic has highlighted the need for a strong and effective multilateral system, and we believe it is unacceptable that the spaces where the most fundamental solidarity among States is found are closed. Instead, we are faced with greater misinformation, denial of scientific evidence and xenophobic withdrawal of entire sectors of our

societies. This unprecedented crisis cannot be overcome by unilateral or isolated actions, but through renewed cooperation and genuine international solidarity.

From the outset, Mexico has raised the need to ensure equitable and universal access to medicines, vaccines and other medical supplies. We do so again with a sense of urgency, because, while 33 per cent of the world's population in high-income countries has already had at least one dose of vaccine, only 1.4 per cent of people in low-income countries has had access to a vaccine. I repeat: 33 per cent of rich countries' population already have been vaccinated, while only 1.4 per cent of poor countries have had access to a vaccine.

We must push for vaccines to be considered as global public goods. This means, first of all, recognizing the competence of the World Health Organization (WHO) as a certifying authority for vaccines. The existing discrimination or differentiation in the recognition of vaccines jeopardizes the economic recovery and effectiveness of mechanisms such as the COVAX facility. For this reason, Mexico presented a proposal in the Group of Twenty (G-20) for the entire international community to recognize vaccines approved by the WHO, without conditions of any kind. Now is the time to give our full support to the highest international health authority. Mexico will contribute to the process of reforming the international health system to prevent and respond in a timely manner to future pandemics and other health emergencies.

In accordance with our capabilities and considering the significant progress of the vaccination programme implemented nationally by the Government of President López Obrador, Mexico has been consistent with the foregoing and donated vaccines to such sister countries in Latin America and the Caribbean as Belize, Bolivia, Guatemala, El Salvador, Jamaica, Honduras and Paraguay. In addition, we are working with Argentina to provide and facilitate the production of vaccines in Latin America to supply vaccines to more than 17 countries.

Global warming is the other great challenge of this time. Mexico submitted its updated nationally determined contribution (NDC) at the end of 2020, reiterating its support for the Paris Climate Agreement, as well as its interest in working in partnership with the international community. Mexico's NDC not only contains mitigation commitments, but it also has

a strong adaptation component that recognizes the country's vulnerability to climate change impacts and the urgency of building resilience to them.

Mexican adaptation measures therefore include both nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches. For example, the "Sowing Life" programme promoted by the Mexican Government is one of the most extensive reforestation programmes in the world. So far, 700 million trees have been planted, which not only combats environmental degradation, but also helps to generate decent employment opportunities and re-establishes the social fabric.

Mexico congratulates Secretary-General António Guterres on his appointment for a second term and on his report "Our Common Agenda" (A/75/982). I wish to place on record Mexico's support for some of the changes suggested in the report that coincide with our vision of how to revitalize the United Nations.

Rebuilding our societies affected by the wide range of crises of the last 20 years depends on the ability to relaunch solidarity among States. This is a new social contract based on the obligations we have undertaken in favour of all human rights. In this context, we support identifying measures complementary to the traditional indicators of gross domestic product to assess a country's degree of development.

With regard to Security Council reform, Mexico will continue to be a constructive actor in making that body more representative, democratic, transparent and efficient. The intended creation of new permanent seats is contrary to the sovereign equality of States and to the essential principles of democracy. A reform that increases only non-permanent seats, with long-term mandates and the possibility of immediate re-election, is feasible and would represent a fundamental change in the functioning of the body entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security.

Given the frequent paralysis of the Security Council in fulfilling its responsibility in conflicts, especially when mass atrocities are committed, Mexico, together with France, has proposed regulating the veto rights of the five permanent members. More than 100 States support us in this initiative, which we will continue to promote.

During our current mandate as a member of the Security Council, Mexico has acted in a manner consistent with its foreign policy principles. We

have promoted, above all, the protection of civilians, humanitarian access without constraints, unrestricted compliance with international humanitarian law and the effective participation of women in peace processes. We have sought to reduce human suffering and put people at the centre of Security Council actions in situations as diverse as Afghanistan, Myanmar, Syria, Tigray and Yemen, to name but a few.

We will continue to draw the international community's attention to the irresponsible arms trade and trafficking and the link to the increase in violence, homicides and the commission of high-impact crimes that affect the security of citizens and limit their possibilities for development. We hope that the Council can take steps to bring about stricter control of small arms and light weapons, as these are the fuel that drive the world's conflicts.

As the President pro tempore of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), Mexico has promoted the unity and solidarity of our region. Two years after we took up this important responsibility, CELAC has demonstrated its relevance in defining joint courses of action. It is a platform for amplifying the voice of Latin America and the Caribbean in multilateral forums. We are honoured to have received in our country last week more than 30 delegations composed of Heads of State, Ministers and other high authorities of the countries that comprise CELAC, demonstrating the strength of our region's most important mechanism for dialogue and political coordination.

Mexico welcomes the launch of the negotiation and dialogue process, facilitated by Norway, between the Government of Venezuela and the Plataforma Unitaria de Venezuela, whose meetings were held in our country. We believe that it is through dialogue and negotiation that a solution for the future of Venezuela will be found by the Venezuelan people themselves.

Similarly, and in view of the severe economic and health crisis at the global level, an end to the economic blockade against Cuba cannot be postponed. Instead of unilateral measures, we must implement measures of solidarity and mutual support to boost economic growth and development.

To date, the economic and social recovery from the crisis generated by the coronavirus disease pandemic has been characterized by inequality. Mexico supports measures for the least developed countries to benefit

from such multilateral support mechanisms for debt relief as the G-20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative. However, it should be noted that middle-income countries also require support mechanisms of this nature. These countries, including Mexico, account for 75 per cent of the world's population and are home to 62 per cent of the world's poor. Accordingly, we call on the international financial institutions, international banks, the private sector and all relevant actors to promote measures that prevent our countries from incurring unsustainable levels of debt and which direct their scarce resources towards socioeconomic recovery from the crisis.

Mexico reaffirms its commitment to the respect, protection and promotion of human rights, including economic, social, cultural and environmental rights, especially for vulnerable groups or those that have been historically discriminated against, with particular attention being given to the gender perspective. My country will continue to combat hate speech, discrimination, xenophobia, racism, other related forms of intolerance, as well as violent extremism in any of its manifestations, including white supremacism.

We are committed to the objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees. Migration is not a noisome phenomenon. On the contrary, all our societies have, at some point in their historical development, benefited from the contribution of migrants. It is everyone's responsibility to respect and uphold the human rights of all people, regardless of their migration status.

In order for there to be safe, orderly and regular migration flows, international cooperation is crucial for communities of origin, transit and destination to develop their capacities without having to resort to emigration. Mexico is a country with a long tradition of solidarity and support for people in need of assistance for humanitarian reasons. That is why we have granted international protection to hundreds of extremely vulnerable people from Afghanistan, particularly women and girls, as well as to more than 18,000 migrants of Haitian origin from Brazil and Chile and more than 70,000 people from Central America and other countries around the world.

The Feminist Foreign Policy adopted by my country in 2020 is in line with our goal of promoting a more equitable, just and egalitarian society. This is why we

have exchanged good practices on the issue with other countries that already have a similar foreign policy, which in turn led to the formation of the Global Partner Network for Feminist Foreign Policy.

The Generation Equality Forum, co-chaired by Mexico and France, with the support of UN-Women and working in alliance with civil society and youth organizations, has provided a great opportunity to motivate all sectors around transformative actions for the full enjoyment of the human rights of women and girls. Peace is possible only if women and girls actively participate. Mexico also co-chairs with Ireland the Security Council's Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security and has promoted the mainstreaming of gender and human rights in the Council's work.

Mexico was at the founding of the United Nations 76 years ago and remains committed to its principles and to the Charter that gave birth to the Organization. It is up to the generation of which we are a part to make the adjustments that these times call for and that our peoples demand.

**The President:** I now call on His Excellency Mr. Péter Szijjártó, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary.

**Mr. Szijjártó (Hungary):** First of all, let me start by congratulating my friend and colleague Abdulla Shahid on assuming the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. I wish him the best of luck. He will be leading the Assembly through tough times, but he can be assured of Hungary's full support.

It is great to meet again in person in the General Assembly and that this general debate is not taking place in a virtual format. This is the essence of diplomacy: we meet each other, we talk to each other, and we do our best to overcome our challenges.

This last year and a half were full of challenges, troubles and problems. The situation has improved a bit, but we do have to be aware that the crisis is not yet over. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has created a very uncertain situation. Nevertheless, I have to commend the fantastic achievement of the global research community, which was able to find the answer within a year and half, the answer to this global challenge being vaccination.

To put it more directly, vaccination is the only and exclusive answer because only vaccination can protect us. We must express our appreciation, gratitude and

respect to all the doctors, researchers and volunteers who have taken part in those projects at the end of which a vaccine was created.

The pandemic is an attack on the entire globe, an attack on all nations and all citizens. Since the attack is global, the defence has to be global as well, which means that we have to enable ourselves to vaccinate — to give vaccine to — everybody. This is a matter of capacity. In order to be able to complete a successful protection action, we have to make sure that vaccine is going to be produced in the greatest number of possible locations around the world, and that the greatest amount of vaccine is produced.

Vaccine is a tool to save the lives of people. It is not an ideological tool. Nor is it a political matter. Saving people's lives must be neither ideological nor political. That is why we urge the regulators and the international, regional and national authorities to carry out purely professional and fact-based procedures when they are approving different types of vaccines. We urge them to leave political aspects completely out of the calculation.

It has also become obvious that the pandemic constitutes not only a health-care crisis, but an economic crisis as well. The pandemic has unfortunately had serious economic consequences. In the last year and a half year, 114 million people have lost their jobs. The global flow of direct investment has decreased by 42 per cent, and there was a 5.3 per cent reversal when it comes to the volume of global trade. All these phenomena resulted in the establishment of a new global economic order.

Today, our most important duty is to save jobs. We must replace as many jobs as possible — at least the jobs that were lost — and we must create new ones. In the meantime, we have to ensure that people make a living from work and not from social assistance. Social assistance has put people in an indefensible position: it makes people vulnerable, and it brings States to the brink of insolvency.

In contrast, work brings dignity and a predictable future. People who work create value and create economic performance. During a year and half of pandemic, we had to think in particular about families with children, because parents in those contexts have had to bear a double burden. They had to go to work in order to keep the country running, but they also had to look after their kids, whose schools and kindergartens were closed. As a result, in Hungary, we made a

decision. Since the growth of our national economy will reach 5.5 per cent at the end of the year, we will fully reimburse the personal income tax paid by families who are raising children throughout 2021.

I would now like to draw the Assembly's attention to another consequence of COVID-19. A large part of our life has been pushed into the digital space. Parents who were not able to go to work had to work from home, and their children had to take part in digital education, resulting in a vulnerable and unexperienced group of users of the digital space. This sort of group is a perfect target for cybercrime. That is why we urge putting together strict international regulations that can protect our children and our families from the spread of extremist ideologies and sexual propaganda on the Internet and from cyberbullying.

We must be aware that if we are not able to tackle the challenge of COVID-19, we will be unable to address even more serious challenges in future. If we cannot ensure vaccination for everybody on the spot and if we cannot tackle economic challenges, then there will be further massive migratory waves.

Together, the pandemic and migration construct a kind of vicious circle. The more serious the health- and economic-related impacts of COVID-19 there are, the more people will take to the road — the more people will migrate and the more they will contribute to migratory flows, further accelerating the spread of the virus.

Nowadays migration constitutes not only already well-known cultural, civilizational and security risks, but it also constitutes very serious health-care risks as well. That is one of the many reasons why we have to speak about Afghanistan in this Hall yet again.

We do have to admit, unfortunately, that, after 20 years in Afghanistan, the international community had a big failure in the country. At some point in future, we will have to analyse — once and for all — the mistakes that were committed and the poor decisions that were made in this regard. But now the main duty is to mitigate the damage. We have to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven for terrorist organizations once again. We have to prevent additional migratory flows coming from Afghanistan, because such flows imply a direct security threat for both Afghanistan's neighbours and the entire European continent.

We have to strengthen the global fight the use of terrorism. In that connection, the United Nations should play an important role, but it will not be able to do so as long as the finances of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism are not part of the regular budget.

In Europe, everyone remembers what happened in 2015. After the irresponsible statements by some political leaders, millions of migrants hit the road towards Europe. The impact and the consequences are clear. Many terrorists have taken advantage of the chance to hide among migrants. Parallel societies have been created in some European countries. Programmes for social integration have failed. Some parts of big European capitals became no-go zones, and wars were launched among gangs. A loud minority started to oppress the silent majority.

It is no wonder that European leaders now say that they do not want to commit the same mistakes that were made back in 2015. However, they are making the same kinds of decisions and the same kinds of statements. When they encourage Afghans to leave their homeland, it leaves the position of neighbouring countries that know the situation best totally out of consideration. What do those neighbouring countries say? They say that the challenges in Afghanistan must be solved in Afghanistan. That approach by neighbouring countries should definitely be followed.

Hungary has already fulfilled its moral duty. We have evacuated all Afghans who helped and assisted our troops during their stay in Afghanistan in the framework of the international mission. About 400 Afghans, including their family members, are now in Hungary, and we will definitely take care of them.

But there is a full stop at the end of the sentence. We will not receive anyone else. We will protect our border. We will withstand the pressure. And we will continue to stick to our own right to make our own decisions on whom we will allow to enter the territory of our country and whom we are ready to live with.

Back in 2015, we rejected the introduction of an obligatory quota for the distribution of migrants, and we will do the same now. We will reject any kind of quota system of distribution in any framework. After 2015, everyone must understand that migratory flows constitute significant risks, and on many occasions are dangerous.

I remember 2018, when we debated the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. There were five countries, including my own, that voted against it. At the time, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration described migration as though it had only positive aspects and broad benefits. Now, three years later, I think everyone can admit that approach has totally failed.

Instead of encouraging people to leave their homes, hit the road, take advantage of the help of smugglers — whose activities can sometimes barely be differentiated from those of so-called non-governmental organizations — and put their lives at risk, we should send help to where it is needed. We have to create circumstances that make it possible for everyone to stay where they were living before.

That approach is reflected in a development programme of the Hungarian Government called Hungary Helps, through which we help Christian communities that suffer from persecution. With the help of \$70 million provided to such programmes, we have ensured that 250,000 Christians in the Middle East, Africa and Asia were able to either return to their homes or stay there. If we had brought them to

Europe, we would have contributed to the fulfilment of the goals of terrorist organizations, one of which is to eliminate those Christian communities. We have rebuilt their churches and their houses, we have covered the operational costs of their hospitals and we have rebuilt their schools, thereby helping them to stay where their communities have been living for centuries.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought a lot of hardship and suffering in the past year and a half, but it also definitely brought about an opportunity. It has shown how interdependent we are. The successful protective measures of one country can help another to be protected as well.

Therefore, the COVID-19 pandemic brought hope for better cooperation among the nations of the world — a world that is unfortunately full of tensions nowadays. We have to do our best to overcome those tensions, but we will not be able to do so without more pragmatic, effective and respect-based cooperation between East and West. Based on historic experience, we Central Europeans are well aware of the significance of that.

*The meeting rose at 9 p.m.*

## Annex I

### **Address by Mr. David W. Panuelo, President and Head of Government of the Federated States of Micronesia**

Mr. President,  
Mr. Secretary-General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I bring you warm greetings from our beautiful islands in the Federated States of Micronesia.

Mr. President,

At the outset, I wish to express that I am particularly pleased that an esteemed leader from a small island developing state (SIDS) has been elected to lead this august body during this crucial 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly. Your country, the Republic of the Maldives, has been instrumental and effective in leading the world community, particularly on issues relating to the environment and Climate Change, to find common ground. I note with genuine enthusiasm that both of our countries have undertaken partnerships with the Blue Prosperity Coalition to protect at least 30 per cent of our ocean, and that both of our countries, like small island developing states across the World, are committed to building back better through tackling Climate Change. I am thankful and heartened by your leadership and your country's willingness to undertake an even greater commitment to lead this Assembly during these challenging times.

I would also like to pay tribute to the outgoing President of the 75th Session, His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkir for his leadership during an unusual and trying time.

As always, we are grateful to our Secretary-General, and my dear friend, Antonio Guterres, who has worked unceasingly to make our United Nations a more effective instrument for the advancement of our common goals. He has the total support of Micronesia and its people, and we congratulate him on his re-election as Secretary-General.

Mr. President,

The theme of this year's session — “Building resilience through hope — to recover from COVID-19, rebuild sustainably, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the right of the people, and revitalize the United Nations” — is both bold and appropriate.

Crucially, the colours of this year's theme are all part of the portrait of where we are today. At its foundation, we must respect ourselves the same as we respect others, for an infringement on the rights of one person is an infringement on the rights of us all. We must respond to the environmental needs of the Planet, for the Planet's needs are our needs. We must recover from COVID-19, and rebuild sustainably, which will ensure humankind's resilience for the remainder of the Decade of Action. And to ensure we have hope, to ensure we have unity, we must revitalize the United Nations.

Mr. President,

Micronesia remains COVID-19 free. We have been able to keep the virus at bay by locking down our borders, and by embracing a very close partnership with both the World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. Thanks to generous support from the United States of America, with whom we share an Enduring Partnership, we have received enough vaccines for our entire population. More than 75 per cent of our adult population has received the first dose of the vaccine, and we are just starting to vaccinate adolescents. Meanwhile, thanks to generous support from the People's Republic of China, with whom we share a Great Friendship, we have established highly functional quarantine sites across our Nation.

Though COVID-19 is not on our shores, the Pandemic has nonetheless effected our people. While I can point out economic data on lost jobs, delays on implementing infrastructure projects, and so forth, perhaps the most meaningful is that by keeping our Nation protected we have also necessarily kept many of our citizens stranded abroad. While repatriation efforts are ongoing, inclusive of pre-quarantine outside Micronesia and in-country quarantine upon arrival, there are still hundreds of families missing their loved ones. To all the Micronesian men and women still stranded abroad, I give you all my word that we will get you home.

Let us build back better health security today to prepare for the next Pandemic tomorrow. Let us all commit to the goals of ending the COVID-19 Pandemic, and creating a stronger health security architecture in 2022. Let us all support the targets for achieving global health security, and let us all elevate global ambition to making shared existential security threats, whether they are the COVID-19 Pandemic or Climate Change, a shared responsibility, that we work together in addressing as nations united for a common purpose.

Mr. President,

Regrettably, the chilling confirmation from the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its recent report is a stark reminder that dark days are ahead if no serious and urgent action is taken to deal with the Climate Change crisis. We can no longer worry about whether we have a developing label or a developed label next to our name. We are all in this together, and we must all do our part. The science is clear that both developing and developed countries are affected.

Micronesia remains committed to doing its part in addressing the Climate Change crisis so we can build back better. With Blue Prosperity Micronesia, we are seeking to protect 30 per cent of our Nation's ocean territory. With the Micronesia Challenge, we are seeking to protect 50 per cent of our coastal and terrestrial territory. With recent legislation, we have banned the importation of most forms of plastic, and we are beginning to shift from relying on fossil fuels to renewable energies like solar.

What Micronesia needs from our friends, allies, and development partners in the global community — and that includes everyone watching me today, because Micronesia is family to the United States and a friend to the People's Republic of China, just as Micronesia is a friend to the Maldives and to the United Kingdom, to the Netherlands and to Spain, to Nicaragua and to Australia, to New Zealand and to South Africa, to Israel and to Norway, to Japan and to Korea — what we need is global action today for our World's prosperity tomorrow.

Mr. President,

We must look past what separates us, and focus on what unites us. The positive step undertaken by the United

States to rejoining the Paris Agreement and sponsoring a Climate Summit is all very encouraging, because the World needs the United States if we are to solve the Climate Change crisis, on the premise that the World needs every country to work together. The World needs the United States, just as the World needs China, as the World needs Japan, as the World needs Australia, to all come together for global survival.

The secret to the threat of Climate Change is the same as the secret to the threat of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The moment we decide that the threat is a specific country or a specific person, then we all lose. The way that we all win is cooperating together. Micronesia is willing to do its part, and is actively doing its part. We ask all of our friends, allies, and development partners to join us today. Today, we encourage all countries to be bold, and submit more ambitious revised Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs).

Mr. President,

While we took encouragement from the international response to the Paris Agreement, the Climate Crisis should also motivate us to ratify and integrate the Kigali Amendment into our national policies to ensure the avoidance of life-threatening damage to our planet. That is why I am urging countries which are major contributors to carbon emissions to ratify the Kigali Amendment, and to phase down the production and consumption of HFCs.

Mr. President,

The presence and utilization of the rule of law is the true barometer for civilization. Micronesia has been taking many steps to strengthen the rule of law in our country. We are seeking to pass legislation on cybercrimes, we will be joining the International Police Organization (INTERPOL), and we have committed to tackling illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing in our waters in cooperation with organizations like the Forum Fisheries Agency and the Micronesian Presidents Summit. We have strengthened maritime surveillance with Australia and Japan, and look forward to the receipt of two new Guardian-class patrol ships, or vessels, from Australia to help us protect our Big Ocean State.

Yet, of all the actions most important for Micronesia's continued capacity to promote and protect the rule of law, it is through our Enduring Partnership with the United States of America, which is codified through the Compact of Free Association. Negotiations over the expiring provisions of the Compact are ongoing, and in light of the recent High-Level Defense Talks this July, Micronesia calls on the United States to help us conclude our negotiations before the current agreements are set to expire at the end of 2023.

Mr. President,

The Federated States of Micronesia accepts the responsibility to continue to speak out, along with similarly committed States, on how the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea ("UNCLOS") applies to maritime zones in situations involving Climate Change-related Sea-Level Rise. Last month, the Pacific

Islands countries endorsed a landmark Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the Face of Climate Change-related Sea-Level Rise, which has been affirmed by both the Pacific Islands Forum and the Micronesian Presidents' Summit. The Declaration is a formal statement of the views of these island countries. As recognized by the Declaration, the threat of Climate Change-related Sea-Level Rise is, and I quote, a "defining issue that imperils the livelihoods and wellbeing of our peoples and undermines the realization of a peaceful, secure, and sustainable future for our region" of the Pacific.

Recent reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change underscore that global sea-level rise associated with Climate Change is likely to be as high as one meter by the end of this century, with the Western Pacific having already experienced three times more sea-level rise than the current global mean. Many of us, like my own country, Micronesia, sit in this region of the Pacific.

In light of these circumstances, and in acknowledgement of the potential legal implications of sea-level rise on maritime zones, such as those of Micronesia, the Declaration proclaims, among other things, that our islands' "maritime zones, once established in accordance with the UNCLOS and notified to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in accordance with UNCLOS, and the rights and entitlements that flow from them, shall continue to apply, notwithstanding any physical changes connected to Climate Change-related Sea-Level Rise."

It will be deeply unjust and inequitable if a small island developing State like Micronesia, being specially affected by Climate Change-related Sea-Level Rise, despite being among the least responsible for the phenomenon, has to surrender any of its maritime rights and entitlements because of such sea-level rise, including its rights and entitlements to rich fishery resources in our Exclusive Economic Zone. Fortunately, the Pacific islands' collective views as expressed in the Declaration are supported by both UNCLOS and the legal principles underpinning it. Micronesia reiterates its endorsement of the Declaration and encourages the international community to favourably consider the Declaration and its overarching objectives.

Mr. President,

As a nation covering over a million square miles of ocean, we attach great importance to the sustainable use and management of marine resources within and adjacent to our territorial waters. Our people have lived in harmony with the Ocean and their natural environment since our ancestors began to navigate these vast seas. We have relied on the traditional knowledge in conserving our land and seas, and will continue to look to it for best practices in preserving the resources that come from the Ocean, and also utilize it to fight Climate Change.

Micronesia will continue to advocate for more effective conservation of our marine and forest resources. Our traditions dictate it, and our survival requires it. Long before the terms "marine sanctuaries" and "marine protected areas" (MPAs) became everyday terms with our people, the concepts have already existed throughout many of our traditional Micronesian societies.

Through these various initiatives Micronesia is currently engaged in, such as the Micronesia Challenge 2030, Blue Prosperity Micronesia, and the Technology for Tuna Transparency (T3) Challenge, we are investing in our future.

With biodiversity around our planet at risk and in serious decline, Micronesia and its partners are taking concrete actions. We must step up collectively and do more to protect and restore our planet's biodiversity. I encourage all who wish to stand with us to do so, as Micronesia will show you peace, friendship, cooperation, and love in our common humanity.

Mr. President,

I commend the Secretary-General for taking the initiative to convene the United Nations Food Systems Summit, which will be held at the end of this General Assembly. The focus on food systems, in all its aspects, from production to processing, and from consumption to waste utilization, recognizes the integral role that food plays in our lives, in our health, our livelihood, our economy, and our environment. In the dialogues leading up to the forthcoming Food Systems Summit, we have been seeing a surge of community-level awareness and commitment to address consumption behaviour to address the ravages of food-related non-communicable diseases. Approximately one third of Micronesians suffer from diabetes and high-blood pressure, largely as a direct result for our recent social preferences for highly processed, and salty, imported foods. Our current food system is unsustainable, and so we are trying to change it, to re-indigenize it, as part of our commitment to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Decade of Action.

Mr. President,

The effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has always been at the top of our agenda. In the North Pacific, we are fully aware that the UN system's commitment and support on the ground is necessary if we are to achieve many of the goals. We, therefore, warmly welcome the imminent opening of the new UN Multi-Country Office for the North Pacific, with Micronesia as its host. The countries of the North Pacific are most grateful to our Secretary-General for his foresight and decision to open this new office. As host, I pledge my country's full support, and we commit to doing our part in ensuring the expedited entry into the country of the international staff of the new MCO.

The reform of the United Nations Development system has shown promising results. Its success remains in the hands of our Organization's membership. It is time to rethink how best we, as members, can provide funding support to the system. We have to ensure that adequate and sustainable financing is available to support the responses from the Resident Coordinators to the needs of the most vulnerable.

Mr. President,

The reform of our United Nations, in particular the reform of the UN Security Council, remains a relevant subject of discussion year after year. We must recommit to completing the unfinished work which has eluded us for decades. It is appropriate that members of this august body that have contributed so much to our Organization, such as Japan, be included as permanent members on a reformed Council.

Mr. President,

I conclude by applauding the United Nations for its continued efforts to unite the nations of our World, and encourage the United Nations to continue to live up to its responsibility in ensuring that no society or people are left behind. Micronesia has faith in the United Nations, and will actively work to ensure that the United Nations is successful.

I further conclude by explicitly calling on all Nations and Peoples who hear me today to know that the People and Government of Micronesia extends to you friendship, and urges you to take action to extend that same friendship and love to your fellow human beings. There are real challenges facing us all today, and we find ourselves wishing we could live in a better world. But a better world is not something we ask for. A better world is something we build. We define a better world through consensus, with a foundation of empathy and love for other human beings. We construct a better world by acknowledging that we are who we choose to be, and then choosing to take responsibility for both ourselves and our communities.

Micronesia chooses to take responsibility for solving the Climate Change crisis and for ending the COVID-19 Pandemic. We cannot do it alone. We need you, all of you, to stand with us, as nations united, to take actions today for our global prosperity tomorrow.

Thank you, Mr. President, and God Bless our United Nations.

## Annex II

### Address by Mr. Nayib Armando Bukele, President of the Republic of El Salvador

[Original: Spanish]

Humankind has endured very challenging times. And it was in these moments that it has had the opportunity to truly evaluate the path that it should take. They are the breaking points where we, as humankind, decided on the path we would take.

Sometimes crises are warnings to change our path, to reflect on whether or not what we are doing is truly what we want to do, and to think about the kind of future in which we want to live.

So it was after the First World War, when, among other things, the predecessor of the United Nations, the League of Nations, was created, and humankind began a period of strong social, cultural, economic and artistic dynamism.

The “Roaring 20s” — a decade in which humankind reflected on the future it wanted and worked to achieve it.

It was born out of a crisis, and fate wanted it to be stopped by another one — the Great Depression. A decade of economic crisis and pessimism. A warning that humankind did not heed, which led to an even greater crisis — the Second World War.

This time, the blow was enough to learn from and make a decision on the path humankind should follow. It led to the founding of the United Nations, whose aim was to maintain international peace, achieve global security and spur economic and social development.

A new momentum was created; a new era of optimism for the future, during which we collectively forged that vision, that image we wanted, and each one of us did our part to achieve it.

It is era I still relive a bit. I recall us thinking about the future and being excited about it, enjoying our moment and, therefore, helping to create it.

So long as we are alive, we must cultivate these moments of optimism. We must maintain them and move them forward as much as we can.

Two years ago, I was at the General Assembly, as the newly elected President of a small country in Central America, El Salvador. That same General Assembly, which, several years ago, had generated such optimism, was on its way to becoming obsolete.

I proved it with a selfie to demonstrate that the world had changed; that it continues to change and that it is our duty to understand it and then harness our potential to take care of it and resolve the issues we can resolve.

And how in El Salvador we were beginning to understand that.

I said it again a year ago, amid a pandemic, which, as with any major crisis, was another warning to us to reflect on the way forward.

I spoke about how in El Salvador, despite it all, we were optimistic when thinking about the future.

This year I am here again, as we did not understand that warning and are heading towards another crisis — one that is perhaps bigger, as was the Second

World War following the Great Depression, risking far more than we believe is possible to lose.

We are in a world that is increasingly accelerated, fragmented, anxious, pessimistic and individualistic. It is a world where almost no one knows where we are headed or, at least, where we would like to go, solving problems just for the time being, jumping from crisis to crisis, until we reach one we cannot resolve.

Society and the world are suffering, and we appear to be increasingly further away from addressing the causes of this suffering.

It is a world that continues to produce more than it needs; yet, there are people who continue to die of hunger and the lack of medicine and drinking water.

It is a world where if people want to do something different, they are attacked instead of being guided and assisted in forging their own path — a path the rest of humankind could follow.

It is a world, still amid a pandemic, where we have seen the worst and the best of our species and whose collective response has only increased anxiety across the world. The pandemic has deepened the crisis that already existed, while bringing us closer than we have been in decades to the collapse of our civilization.

It is a world with crises of all kinds, but primarily one with an identity crisis, and extremely anxious about the path it is taking.

Civilization is fragile; so, too, is the advancement of humankind. And we are failing to advance. One more crisis and we could lose much more, and much faster, than we believe possible.

Let us learn from previous civilizations, from their achievements and their mistakes.

We have a responsibility to history, to all those who came before us, to continue humankind's progress and advance as far as we can, to build on what they built; to build on the shoulders of giants.

On a path that leads to the future, but that respects and values where we come from. Our traditions, our customs, our culture — the things that make us a civilization. But always moving forward and, at the same time, preparing those who will follow us in this relay race that is global development.

We still have time to learn from this crisis and to analyse whether or not we are doing what we should be doing and on the path on which we want to be.

We have all the tools to do so. We live in an interconnected, globalized world with the technology to easily solve all these problems, but without the minimum will to do so.

Everything we do, or do not do now, will define whether or not we will take advantage of this moment.

Even the smallest action.

Doing what really makes us happy. Maintaining our traditions, caring for and valuing our families. Teaching our children what we learned from our parents and our teachers. Valuing what has made us who we are and shaping who we will be.

And at the same time, looking for people who think in a similar way — optimistic about the future and the potential of human beings, while setting an example for others.

That is why, instead of again asking to build a new model of multilateralism, where we come together, as nations, to evaluate and make a decision on the path we will take,

I am announcing the intention of my country, El Salvador, to follow that new path — the path towards our development and God, as an example for other countries in the world.

Designing the future in which we want to live.

A future where people have the discernment and the opportunity to do what they really want to do.

Confucius once said, “Choose a job you love and you will never have to work a day in your life”.

And Goethe said, “The person born with a talent they are meant to use will find their greatest happiness in using it”.

That is the method and the philosophy we use to build that vision.

A future where people do what they love to do, and they do it well. Because they love it, or they love it because they do it well, in addition to developing economically. It is a future where the economy is a means and not an end.

This is what we will do in El Salvador. Attempt to create opportunities, one by one, and cultivate the discernment to use them. With the tools that have been provided to us and hand in hand with a population that is increasingly aware and willing to build its future.

It will not be easy, but we will take advantage of the time God has given us. Moving forward as fast as we can. Conscious of the responsibility we have.

Inviting people from all over the world who also think this way — those who have not yet been consumed with the hyper-communication of the system, who believe in the infinite potential of human imagination and creativity and in the greatness we can achieve and attain as part of that creation.

God has already decided on whether or not we will be successful. That is our destiny, and we will do our best to achieve it.

### Annex III

#### **Address by Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan**

Distinguished Mr. Chairman, Excellency Secretary-General, Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to convey my congratulations to the Chairman of this session of the UN General Assembly, Mr. Abdullah Shahid, on his election to this post.

Dear colleagues,

On September 9, the glorious people of Tajikistan celebrated a very historic and memorable event — the 30th anniversary of Tajikistan's state independence.

In the initial years of our independence, our country was plunged into the tragic events of the imposed civil war, and went through difficult days.

Ending the war, bringing the fighting parties together, ensuring peace and stability, and concurrently restoring diplomatic relations and constructive cooperation with the countries of the world were among our top priorities.

Despite the existing difficulties, thanks to the policy of "open doors" and peace, we have managed to take a deserved position on the world stage and ensure the sustainable development of our country.

Dear colleagues,

The already unstable situation in the current world is further complicated by geopolitical and geoeconomic competition and the growing level of threats and dangers, as well as the unprecedented spread of infectious diseases.

This situation doubles the responsibility of states to pursue a far-sighted and coordinated policy to address the current challenges.

The role of international and regional organizations, especially the United Nations and its specialized agencies, is key to finding effective solutions to the problems of the current world.

Mr Chairman,

Recent developments in Afghanistan, linked to the political and humanitarian crisis and governance, pose a serious threat to regional security and stability.

The crisis situation in Afghanistan, which shares almost 1,400 km of border with Tajikistan, cannot leave the Government and the people of our country indifferent. The rise to power of the Taliban, which is listed as a terrorist group by the United Nations Security Council, has further complicated the region's already complex geopolitical process.

The Taliban's failure to deliver on its earlier promises to form a comprehensive government with the broad participation of Afghan political and ethnic forces is a matter of serious concern.

Tajikistan strongly condemns all forms of lawlessness, murder, looting and oppression against the people of Afghanistan.

Unfortunately, human rights organizations have remained silent on the violation of the rights of other ethnic groups residing in Afghanistan and the freedoms of its citizens, especially women and children, and have not commented on the matter.

As in the case of Panjshir Province in Afghanistan, we are witnessing a tragic violation of international human rights.

The people of Panjshir have no access to food, other basic commodities, as well as humanitarian aid, and even the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross are still unable to enter Panjshir to fulfil their humanitarian obligations.

The current situation is a humanitarian catastrophe.

The growing intensity of fights between the ethnic groups and tribes in Afghanistan is another factor further destabilizing the political and security situation in our neighbouring country.

In view of this, the establishment of a comprehensive dialogue with the participation of all segments of Afghan society is one of the main preconditions for the establishment of lasting peace and stability in that country.

In this regard, along with other ethnic groups of this country, the Tajiks of Afghanistan, who comprise more than 46 per cent of the population of this country, have the right to take their deserved pie in the public affairs.

Mr Chairman,

We will not interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

However, we believe that in order to properly address the political and security problems of the neighbouring country, it is necessary to form a comprehensive government through elections based on the will of the people of this country with the engagement of all political groups and national and ethnic minorities.

Thus, in our view, it is necessary to determine the structure of government in that country through a referendum by taking into account the position of all citizens of the country.

The formation of any government without taking into account the interests of all the people of Afghanistan can lead to catastrophic consequences in this country.

During more than 40 years of war and instability, which the Afghan people are not to blame for, Afghanistan has become a geopolitical platform; and the world is well aware of the consequences of the horrible events of September 2001.

The suffering Afghanistan and its friendly and brotherly nation should not be dragged into the abyss of imposed bloody wars again.

In this regard, the international community should not remain indifferent to the fate of the peoples and nations living in Afghanistan and its neighbours.

Hence, they have a long way to go, full of military and humanitarian problems, which have arisen due to the reckless decision to withdraw foreign troops from this country.

As a close neighbour, we are always in favour of a comprehensive solution to the Afghan problem and the restoration of lasting peace and stability in this country, and we will continue to stand firm in this position.

In this regard, we call on the international community to take immediate and effective measures to stabilize the difficult political and security situation and ensure peace and stability in Afghanistan through peaceful means at the earliest possible.

Tajikistan has called on international organizations, in particular the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross on several occasions, to provide immediate assistance to the Afghan people.

We believe that the United Nations should play a key role in advancing this process.

Dear colleagues,

The peaceful people of Afghanistan are faced with terror today.

We need to understand that this is not the fault of the Afghan people, but that it was organized from the outside and imposed on the Afghan people.

In this case, we are talking about the massacre of civilians, former members of the national security forces and civil servants of Afghanistan.

Various terrorist groups are actively using the unstable military and political situation in Afghanistan to strengthen their position.

We have witnessed the release of thousands of members of ISIS, Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups.

In other words, it is a matter of concern and regret that today Afghanistan is once again on the path to becoming a breeding ground for international terrorism.

Tajikistan, which, due to its geographical location, is at the forefront of countering current threats and challenges, such as terrorism, extremism, radicalization, drug trafficking and other transnational organized crime, will continue its efforts to prevent their further spread and believes that the support of the world community is vital in this process.

Dear colleagues,

Tajikistan is constantly making joint efforts with its partners and international organizations, in particular the relevant institutions of the United Nations, to ensure lasting peace and stability throughout the world.

Successful implementation of the National Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan on Combating Terrorism and Extremism for 2016-2020 has created a favourable basis for the development and adoption of a new Strategy for Combating Terrorism and Extremism in Tajikistan for the next five years.

Countering the illicit trafficking of drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors, the proceeds of which are one of the main sources of funding for international terrorism, requires joint action and coordinated efforts by the international community.

The Republic of Tajikistan, which has gained considerable experience through the implementation of its National Strategy for Combating Drug Trafficking to 2020, also contributes to combating this phenomenon at the regional and international levels.

Taking into account modern methods and approaches to combat these phenomena, and in order to pursue an effective policy in this area, we have adopted our National Drugs Control Strategy for 2021-2030 in the first semester of this year.

Mr Chairman,

We, in Tajikistan, are well aware of the value of peace and the importance of its protection.

We are satisfied with the positive experience in our country's cooperation with the United Nations in this regard.

Hence, Tajikistan has always supported the peacekeeping activities of the United Nations and will continue to make efforts to contribute to the restoration and maintenance of peace and stability in the conflict zones.

We intend to increase the number of our officers to contribute to this process in the future in cooperation with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

Moreover, in order to contribute to the implementation of the goals and objectives of the UN Security Council, to share the rich experience of Tajikistan in countering security threats and restore full peace and stability through negotiations, we decided to nominate our country for non-permanent membership of this Council for 2028-2029.

In this regard, we stand ready for cooperation with all UN Member States and hope that they will support Tajikistan's candidacy.

Dear colleagues,

The COVID-19 disease and its more dangerous waves remain a cause for concern along with the above-mentioned security threats and major problems.

This disease, which originally began as a health crisis, has led to a global economic crisis.

Having recognized the importance of cooperation between countries in overcoming the negative socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic, the Republic of Tajikistan welcomes the UN Comprehensive Response to COVID-19 launched by the Secretary General.

We also welcome the efforts of various organizations, foundations and programs of the United Nations, including the World Health Organization, in providing vaccines against this disease, as well as immediate and long-term assistance to Member States.

Economic and financial performance of countries and the negative consequences of COVID-19 will delay the timely implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in developing and least developed countries.

Therefore, recognizing the important role of the United Nations in the effective and timely implementation of these goals, we are confident that the Decade of Action to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (2020-2030) will facilitate to find effective ways to address global challenges, including climate change, poverty, gender inequality and funding.

Dear colleagues,

Climate change challenges are also a serious obstacle to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in various countries, including Tajikistan.

Tajikistan with 93 percent of its territory covered by mountainous, is concerned, along with other countries in the region, about changes in the hydrological cycle

leading to severe floods and droughts and causing a negative impact on water, energy and food security.

Unfortunately, our country loses hundreds of millions of dollars annually as a result of water-borne disasters, and in many cases, natural disasters cause human losses and destruct the vital infrastructure.

We are today on the eve of the 26th session of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change.

We believe that this meeting will significantly contribute to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and accelerating the efforts of the international community in the fight against climate change.

One of the serious consequences of this process is the melting of glaciers.

As a result of climate change and unprecedented warming, more than 1,000 of the 13,000 glaciers in Tajikistan's mountains have completely melted.

According to the available statistics, the Fedchenko Glacier alone has shrunk to 11 square kilo metres in recent decades in Tajikistan, and lost two cubic kilo metres of ice.

This all is happening despite the fact that up to 60 per cent of Central Asia's water resources originate from Tajikistan's glaciers.

Our country ranks 135th in the world in terms of carbon dioxide emissions and produces 96% of its electricity in hydropower plants.

As the leader of such a country, I have made concrete proposals at international conferences on several occasions to find solutions to the problems associated with climate change.

In this regard, as a member of the founding group of the World Water and Climate Coalition, I proposed at its first high-level meeting to declare the years of 2025 as the International Year for Preservation of Glaciers.

It is my firm belief that this initiative will help to attract more attention of the world community to the water and climate issues and the melting of glaciers.

The establishment of the International Fund for Glacier Preservation under the auspices of the United Nations is another step that could provide a basis for comprehensive research and effective solutions to this global problem.

Mr Chairman,

Tajikistan is recognized as an initiator and lead country and contributes to the process of promoting water and climate issues in the Global Development Agenda and submitting relevant UN resolutions on these issues.

The International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028, initiated by Tajikistan and declared by the United Nations, is under implementation currently.

The international community is looking forward to the United Nations Conference on the Comprehensive Medium-Term Review of this Decade, to be held in New York City in 2023.

Because in almost 50 years, this will be the second Special Conference of the United Nations on Water, which will once again prove the key role of water

issues in the global development agenda and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

We are proud that Tajikistan, together with the Kingdom of the Netherlands are elected as co-chair of this important international forum.

In this regard, we have already begun preparations with our partners, including the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs, and are taking steps to organize a comprehensive and high-level conference.

We would like to encourage all stakeholders to cooperate extensively in this process.

Let me recall that in 2022, our country will host the International High-Level Conference on the Review of the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”.

We believe that this forum will play an important role in the preparations for the 2023 Water Conference.

Taking this opportunity, I reaffirm my country’s readiness to advance water and climate issues at all levels, especially in cooperation with the United Nations. I thank you for your attention.

## Annex IV

### **Address by Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda**

President of the UN General Assembly; Excellencies, Heads of State and Government;

Secretary-General of United Nations; Distinguished delegates; Ladies and Gentlemen.

Mr. President,

I congratulate you on your election as President of the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly and assure you of Uganda's unwavering support. I commend H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir for his transformational leadership of the 75th Session, especially during such challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I would also like to congratulate the Secretary-General, H.E. António Guterres, upon his re-appointment for the second term and thank him for his devotion to the work of the United Nations. Your re-election is a demonstration of the confidence that member states have in your leadership. I commiserate with all countries on the enormous lives lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Uganda welcomes the theme of the 76th Session of the General Assembly. The United Nations is the appropriate forum to speak with a common voice on sustainable, resilient and inclusive recovery from the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This Session is a timely reminder of the urgent need for effective multilateral action to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to realize our vision, shared principles and commitments, to end poverty in all its dimensions and ensure "no one is left behind." As we celebrate the 76th anniversary of the United Nations, it requires a revitalized United Nations that is fit for addressing global challenges that face us today. In this regard, Uganda reiterates its commitment to multilateralism. We believe that by working together, we can better respond to global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change and their consequences.

Mr. President,

Uganda, like other countries, has had to respond to the unprecedented and multi-faceted effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Uganda's approach has been to prioritize the protection of human life. To ensure a sustainable, resilient and inclusive recovery, the Government has taken deliberate and targeted decisions to continue strengthening the capacities of the national health system and other key sectors of the economy to respond to the impacts of the COVID19 pandemic adequately.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences can only be effectively responded to if we act collectively. In this regard, we appreciate the efforts of some individual states, various international and regional organisations, particularly the United Nations, African Union, European Union, G20, World Health Organisation, International Monetary Fund, World Bank Group and others, in supporting Countries to respond to the pandemic. We see vaccination of all as the best way to address the pandemic. We now know that restricting the ability to get vaccines affects the ability to control the pandemic and prevents new variants from emerging.

Therefore, we call for more action to ensure that at the centre of a global recovery, equitable, affordable access for all to safe, quality, efficacious, effective, accessible and affordable COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics. We commend the Secretary General's efforts for his continued advocacy and active engagement on equitable access to vaccines.

On the other side, we find that the actions by some to hold vaccines at the expense of poor Countries, also referred to as vaccine nationalism, is wrong, but a good lesson for developing Countries that don't want to innovate. It is good because it wakes up those that are asleep, waiting to be saved by others.

Uganda is progressing in searching for cures and vaccines, which will be achieved in a few years. We are developing a vaccine with our own funding and the help that we need is for raw materials for the vaccines. Therefore, we invite interested partners to support us with the raw materials.

Mr. President,

Uganda reaffirms her commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in its entirety and to achieving 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as we commence the decade of action and delivery of Sustainable Development. We have realized now more than ever, the urgent need to accelerate our progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as a pillar in our national response to the multifaceted impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as we build back better and strive to achieve the overarching 2030 Agenda goal of eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions.

The COVID-19 reinforces the pre-existing obstacles to realizing the Goals, structural inequalities, gaps, systematic challenges and risks. We firmly believe that the successful implementation of our Third National Development Plan (NDP III) under the theme "Sustainable industrialization for inclusive growth, employment and wealth creation" is critical in achieving 17 SDGs.

Uganda has implemented an inclusive process to ensure that the people own the SDG agenda, starting with the national coordination arrangements. As a result, the Government fully mainstreamed the SDGs, identifying key accelerators, for instance, Industry, Governance and Environment, based on their relative return on investment.

As Uganda advances the implementation of its plans, it is committed to ensuring no one is left behind. The Government has put in place laws and policies to support the inclusion of vulnerable persons. For instance, the Public Finance Management Act (2017) ensures gender and equity responsive budgeting. In addition, the Government increased funding to livelihood and special grants for youth and women. Now with the new Parish Development Model, which started in the financial year 2020/21, the SDGs will be much more localized, monitored and reported on up to the lowest level, thus "Leaving No One Behind." The Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment program has also improved social security and reduced vulnerabilities for older persons aged 65 years.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted Uganda's progress in some sectors but has also given impetus to the Country's industrialization drive. The toll that the pandemic has had on jobs, hitherto promising sectors could significantly impact efforts to reduce poverty, vulnerability and inequality. However, it has awakened the

discourse on how Uganda builds its systems to generate the required resilience to withstand such shocks.

As the Government fast-tracks progress on the 2030 Agenda, it has embraced the global wave of digital transformation, which presents significant opportunities. However, whereas the 2030 Agenda is strongly anchored on environmental integrity and sustainability, there are increasing effects of climate change reducing Uganda's natural capital. Therefore, the 3rd National development Plan sets out ambitious climate actions through the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

Mr. President,

Setting our path towards the full realization of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement requires that we urgently address climate change, one of the greatest challenges to humanity. We continue to witness the enormous loss of lives and property due to climate change-related disasters globally. All of us are susceptible to these climate change disasters. We, therefore, stress the need to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty through bold multilateral actions by all. Uganda continues to experience prolonged droughts, melting of ice caps at its highest mountain, Mt. Ruwenzori, floods, erratic rainfall and landslides.

Recently, Uganda experienced impacts of intensive and prolonged droughts and rainfall, severely impacting lives and livelihoods. We share Lake Victoria, The second largest freshwater lake, with the brotherly Countries of Kenya and Tanzania. The lake's water level in Uganda is measured at a place in the city of Jinja and the lowest level of water ever recorded was in 1923, when it was 10.28 metres. Before that, the highest level recorded had been on January 1 in 1918; the record showed 11.89metres and the subsequent high-level record was on May 16, 1964, when the water level reached 13.41 metres.

However, since last year, the water level in the lake has been going up. On May 19, 2020, the water level reached the new record level of 13.49metres. Since that time, the water level has remained above 13 meters. Therefore, we have asked the people who settled too close to the Lakeshores to move away from the Lake Shores. Staying 200 meters from the Lakeshore is the wise, correct and useful thing to do.

Uganda, despite being a less contributor to climate change, is taking deliberate and targeted actions to address climate change through investments in climate adaptation and mitigation measures such as increasing access and consumption of clean energy to enhance production, and increasing forest and wetland cover, among others in line with our ambitious Nationally, Determined Contributions. However, mobilization of means of implementation for climate change remains crucial as urgent action is required to significantly reduce emissions, adapt to the adverse effects and reduce the impacts of climate change.

We commend the Green Climate Fund for its commitment to a 50:50 balance between mitigation and adaptation in its portfolio and ensure that at least 50 per cent of adaptation funding goes to particularly vulnerable countries, including LDCs, SIDS (Small Island Developing States) and African States. In this context, Uganda reiterates its commitment to support bold action proposals at the 26th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change scheduled in the United Kingdom from November 12, 2021, in the areas of mitigation, adaptation and finance. We, therefore, call on the developed Countries to fulfil their

financial commitment in line with the Paris Agreement to provide 100 billion US Dollars annually by 2020 to assist developing Country Parties with respect to both mitigation and adaptation with a concrete roadmap.

As we concluded the UN Decade on Biodiversity 2011-2020, the assessment on the progress towards the global biodiversity targets indicated insufficient results. Uganda, just like most Countries, continues to experience biodiversity loss to the extent that some wildlife and other living species are now in danger of extinction. Cognizant of this urgency, Uganda with support of the international community, has taken specific bold action measures that include inter alia: mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation and restoration in our national development policies and priorities as highlighted in our National Development Plan 111 for Financial Years 2020/2021/2024/2025 and Vision 2040; restoration of 64,000 hectares of degraded wetlands to benefit 4 million farmers with a target regaining our 1994 of 15.6 per cent wetland coverage by 2030; re-afforestation and afforestation of over 200,000 hectares and we have prioritized more tree planting to ensure that Uganda's forest coverage increases from 12.4 per cent in 2015 to 24 per cent by 2030; strengthening the public-private sector and non-state actors' engagement; demarcation of boundaries of critical wetlands and central forest reserves to prevent encroachment; strengthening the legal and institutional framework to address the challenge of illegal wildlife trade and poaching such as repealing the Wild life Act Chapter. 200 in 2019 with the Uganda Wildlife Act, 2019, that provides for the conservation and sustainable management of wildlife and; enforcement of fishing regulations to address the challenge of illegal and unregulated fishing. Uganda has acted decisively to fulfil the commitment made during the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations in September, 2015 to protect the planet from degradation.

Mr. President,

Countries in the global south have continued to stand in solidarity with their global counterparts even during the COVID19 pandemic by offering appropriate support to enable them adequately respond to the pandemic. Their actions are in line with the principles of South-South Cooperation and support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, Uganda will continue to strengthen South-South and Triangular Cooperation within the United Nations. As the Third South Summit host, I reiterate Uganda's commitment to host the Summit and look forward to welcoming my fellow G77/China leaders to Kampala, Uganda, on suitable dates in 2022/3.

Mr. President,

The predicament of Countries in special situations particularly, the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), continues to-date. The evidence from the Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs (IPoA) implementation overall assessment indicates insufficient progress towards achieving its overarching goal of half of the LDCs graduating by 2020. Uganda, like other Least Developed Countries, has continued to face numerous challenges during IPoA implementation that include, among other things: limited productive capacities, limited funding, insufficient physical infrastructure, commodity price volatility, climate change, biodiversity loss and disasters. Notwithstanding the structural constraints to development faced by LDCs, Uganda has registered progress in implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action, in particular, national paved road network increased; accessibility to electricity and innovations as well as the use of mobile technology for financial transactions

increased. In addition, primary school enrolment (including gender parity in primary education) increased; maternal and infant mortality rates decreased and prevalence and incidence rates of HIV/AIDS reduced.

We should, therefore, during the Fifth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries, agree on the next Programme of Action that calls for a more enhanced, renewed and strengthened global partnership to support graduation and smooth transition of LDCs as agreed upon at major UN Conferences and Summits. In our view, this Programme should contain robust means of implementation to support the LDCs inadequately addressing the existing structural constraints, particularly limited productive capacities, inadequate funding, high debt level, commodity price volatility, as well as emerging challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss and disasters. In addition, the Programme should contain a robust follow-up and monitoring framework at all levels to track its timely and full implementation.

Mr. President,

Terrorism continues to constitute one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. Terrorism and violent extremism continue to bring death and suffering to innocent people. Terrorist groups such as Daesh, Al-Qaida, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) continue to inflict death and devastation. The international community must adapt to this changing landscape. We must be unwavering in our resolve to combat terrorism and Uganda, will continue to support and actively participate in global and regional counter-terrorism efforts.

Mr. President,

Our development and transformation cannot take place without peace and security — these are prerequisites for socio-economic transformation. We should continue to give attention to supporting a peaceful environment, thus enabling us to concentrate on our growth and development. The UN should continue to support conflict prevention and resolution initiatives undertaken by regional and sub-regional organizations like the African Union (AU) and Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). This partnership should be based on the division of labour and burden sharing, complementarity and mutual respect. We should continue to encourage and strengthen this partnership.

We continue to face serious challenges to peace and security in our region; Uganda continues to support and advance peace and security efforts in the region. We remain actively involved in regional initiatives such as those of the AU, IGAD, EAC, ICGLR and are encouraged by the progress that we continue to make. Uganda is committed to continuing working with our international partners in supporting the counter-terrorism and stabilization efforts in Somalia, the political transition in Sudan, implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement in South Sudan and the elimination of terrorist and other negative forces in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. President,

This Assembly made a historic pledge during the World Summit held in 2005. A commitment to strengthening the United Nations with a view to enhancing its authority and efficiency. This cannot happen without the reform of the UN Security Council. The need to reform the UN Security Council is now more urgent and imperative than ever before. Uganda supports the comprehensive reform of the UN Security Council.

The present geopolitical realities are compelling for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council to make way for equitable representation.

Africa, with more than one billion citizens and over seventy percent of issues on the agenda of the Council, continues to suffer the historical injustice of having no representation at all in the Permanent category of the Security Council and being underrepresented in the non-Permanent category. It is time that we address this long-standing injustice and imbalance perpetuated in the present configuration of the Security Council without any further delay.

The Common African Position on the reform of the UN Security Council, as enunciated in the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration, continues to garner wide support of the UN membership. Therefore, it is imperative that Member states expeditiously work towards achieving progress in the negotiations on reform in the context of the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) so that Africa can assume its rightful place in the Security Council.

Mr. President,

All countries are duty-bound to promote and protect human rights under international law and the United Nations Charter. Therefore, we must continue to address the promotion and protection of human rights without politicizing the issue of human rights. Uganda remains committed to fulfilling its human rights obligation in accordance with its constitution and international law. Our commitment is from the firm belief that it is suitable for our people, drawn from the bad experience and lessons from our history of dictatorship. In this context, Uganda will be voluntarily reviewed during the 40th Session of the Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, scheduled from January to February 2022.

Mr. President,

The predicament of refugees continues to this day. Uganda has maintained its open-door policy on refugees and currently, the country hosts over 1.4 million refugees, the largest number in Africa. It is in line with this spirit, that recently we took another deliberate step to assist those in distress from Afghanistan. Our approach to refugees is anchored in our belief that no one chooses to flee their country or be a refugee and if they do, they must be treated with dignity and kindness in their times of need.

However, the circumstances of the refugees and host communities pose enormous challenges for the national authorities, which need to be addressed as part of international solidarity. We, therefore, continue to call for more equitable sharing of the burden and responsibility for hosting and supporting the world's refugees consistent with international commitments.

I thank you for your attention.

## Annex V

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

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Distinguished Heads of State and Government,

I congratulate Mr. Abdulla Shahid on his election as the President of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly and wish him every success in fulfilling his duty. I also express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to Mr. Volkan Bozkir from brotherly Turkey for his leadership as the President of the 75th session of the General Assembly.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues posing serious challenges for the whole world. From the very beginning, our government has been taking robust and practical measures to protect the population and to minimize negative impact of the pandemic.

Azerbaijan has launched immunization campaign since mid-January this year. Vaccine doses used per 100 people makes more than 80 percent.

The socioeconomic stimulus package worth almost \$2.7 billion has been released to support COVID-affected people and business.

As a result of well-planned measures, the situation with pandemic has been kept under control and the quarantine regime has been gradually eased in our country. Azerbaijan's extensive efforts against the pandemic have been internationally recognized. In 2020, the World Health Organization hailed Azerbaijan as an exemplary country in fighting the pandemic.

Azerbaijan carried out all these activities with its own financial resources. We have also made voluntary financial contributions to the World Health Organization in the amount of \$10 million and provided financial and humanitarian assistance to more than 30 countries to support their fight against the coronavirus. Furthermore, we have provided more than 150 000 vaccine doses to 4 countries, free of charge.

Azerbaijan is advocating for a stronger global solidarity to overcome the pandemic. In its capacity as the chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, Azerbaijan has put forward a number of global initiatives. In May 2020, Azerbaijan held Summit-level Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement's Contact Group in response to COVID-19. During the Summit, I suggested, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the convening of the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in response to coronavirus at the level of the heads of state and government. This initiative was supported by more than 150 UN Member States and the Special Session took place on 3-4 December 2020. I express my gratitude to the Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres and all States supporting our initiatives.

On numerous occasions, Azerbaijan has publicly expressed its discontent with stockpiling of vaccines by some wealthy countries. We reiterate our dismay on the persistent "vaccine nationalism" and deepening inequality in access to vaccines between developing and developed countries. Such actions prevent developing countries from protecting their populations. According to international reports, so far, more than 75 per cent of the world's vaccine doses have been purchased by

10 wealthy countries, while vaccine coverage of low-income countries is less than 2 per cent.

To call international attention to this challenge, Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, initiated a resolution on ensuring equitable and universal access for all countries to vaccines in the UN Human Rights Council, which was unanimously adopted this March.

Azerbaijan plans to initiate a resolution at the UN General Assembly on the same topic during this session.

We believe that there is a need to take strong, cohesive and targeted global actions to recover better from the COVID-19. In this regard, we suggest establishing a UN High-Level Panel on Global Recovery from the COVID-19, which could prepare recommendations on global measures for post-pandemic period.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement. With a unanimous decision of 120 NAM Member States, Azerbaijan undertook the responsibility to chair the Movement for three years at its 18th Summit of the Heads of State and Government held in Baku in October 2019. Azerbaijan is strongly advocating for upholding international justice, norms of international law and defending legitimate interests of Member States of the Movement. This year, the Member States of the Movement unanimously decided to extend Azerbaijan's chairmanship for one more year until late 2023. It is a sign of recognition and appreciation of Azerbaijan's successful and effective steering of the Movement in this challenging time for the whole world.

The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals is of particular importance for Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan is among 12 countries around the globe and is the first in our region that has submitted its third Voluntary National Review Report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Scoring 72.4 out of 100 points possible on the SDG achievement index, Azerbaijan ranks 55th out of 165 countries in the 2021 Sustainable Development Report with the best result in the region. The report highlights Azerbaijan's progress in areas such as poverty reduction, healthcare, nutrition, women's labour force participation, clean water and sanitation, access to energy, internet usage, threatened species survival, as well as improving population welfare and sustainable development of cities and communities.

Azerbaijan actively participates in building regional connectivity projects, such as East-West, North-South, North-West transportation corridors, thus becoming one of Eurasia's primary and reliable transport and logistics hubs. We have put into operation the Baku International Trade Seaport with cargo handling capacity of 15 million tons per year, which can be increased up to 25 million tons per year depending on the needs.

Azerbaijan ratified the Paris Climate Agreement, with a voluntary commitment to achieve a 35 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to the base year 1990. Furthermore, we are exploring the possibilities for setting conditional targets for 2050 under the Paris Agreement.

Currently the share of the renewables in the total energy capacity of our country is 17 per cent. The target is to increase this number to 30 percent by 2030. Agreements have been signed with three major international energy companies to

invest in the construction of three wind and solar power plants with total capacity of over 700 megawatts in the coming 3-4 years. One of these projects will be implemented in the Eastern Zangazur region liberated from Armenian occupation during the 44-day Patriotic War. This 240-megawatt solar power plant will be so far the major foreign direct investment project in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan. I invite other international energy companies to come and invest in green energy in the liberated Azerbaijani territories.

I announced the recently liberated Karabakh and Eastern Zangazur as Green Energy Zone. The liberated territories of Azerbaijan have the proven potential of 7200 megawatts of solar energy and 2000 megawatts of wind energy.

Azerbaijan, along with crude oil and natural gas, recently became an exporter of electric energy. Today, we export electric energy to 4 neighbouring countries. Meantime, domestic electricity consumption is rising due to population growth and economic development. During 8 months of this year non-oil industry of Azerbaijan grew 18.4 per cent.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Azerbaijani people is strongly connected to its roots, history, language and traditions. I have declared this year as a “Year of Nizami Ganjavi” on the occasion of the 880th anniversary of the great Azerbaijani poet. In XII century, Nizami Ganjavi propagated in his poetry the ideals and values such as peace, justice, humanism, freedom and equality which coincide with principles promoted and protected by the United Nations.

In Azerbaijan, we cherish and support multiculturalism as a way of life. Azerbaijan is considered as an example of tolerance and peaceful coexistence of representatives of various religious and ethnic groups living in our country.

The UN strongly supports the “Baku Process,” which was initiated by Azerbaijan in 2008 to strengthen dialogue and cooperation between the Muslim world and Europe. The UN General Assembly’s resolutions have recognized the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue held in Azerbaijan regularly, as a “key global platform for promoting intercultural dialogue”.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last September, addressing the UN General Assembly I drew your attention to continuing occupation of territories of Azerbaijan by Armenia and aggressive statements and actions of the Armenian government. Today, a year later, I proudly say that Armenia was defeated on the battlefield and Azerbaijan put an end to the occupation.

Armenia, for about 30 years, kept under occupation almost 20 percent of the territory of our country. The occupation was accompanied with notorious war crimes and crimes against humanity. Armenia committed Khojaly genocide in February 1992, killing hundreds of civilians including 106 women and 63 children. 1275 Azerbaijanis were taken hostage, out of which 150 are still missing. Khojaly genocide has been recognized by 13 countries. Ethnic cleansing carried out by Armenia resulted in more than one million Azerbaijanis becoming refugees and internally displaced persons.

The UN Security Council adopted four resolutions in 1993 demanding immediate, complete, and unconditional withdrawal of armed forces of Armenia from Azerbaijan's occupied territories. However, these and all other similar decisions adopted by relevant international organizations, including the UN General Assembly, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Non-Aligned Movement, OSCE, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and European Parliament were ignored by Armenia.

While some resolutions of the Security Council are implemented within days, in our case they remained unfulfilled for 27 years, which is a clear manifestation of double standards. There is a need to join efforts to elaborate mechanism of implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions in order to avoid selective approach.

The OSCE Minsk Group was established in 1992 with the aim to find resolution to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. It could be possible for the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs to accomplish their task if they would take resolute actions for compelling Armenia to end its military aggression against Azerbaijan. Throughout the conflict, Armenia with its attitude and actions demonstrated that its sole aim was to maintain the status-quo and consolidate the occupation. On many occasions I raised the necessity of imposing sanctions on Armenia. Regretfully, there was no international sanction imposed on Armenia to enforce the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions.

In 2018, the Kocharyan-Sarkisyan regime of war criminals was overthrown in Armenia. We had some hopes that the new government of Armenia would seriously engage in negotiations. We were ready to reciprocate any positive signal coming from Armenia. 2018-2019, it was one of the calmest periods in the former line of contact. However, the regime replacement in Armenia was not followed by real changes on the ground in spite of Azerbaijan's positive actions. The new government of Armenia also opted for the continuation of occupation instead of peaceful neighbourhood with Azerbaijan.

During the last 2 years of the conflict, Armenia deliberately destroyed the negotiation process. The Government of Armenia made a number of provocative statements and actions like saying "Karabakh is Armenia, and period" and "Not an inch of occupied land back". The then defence minister of Armenia openly threatened Azerbaijan with new aggression and occupation of new territories. Armenia put forward unacceptable and groundless so-called seven conditions and demanded to change the negotiations format, to start from the "zero point" and to involve the puppet regime established by Armenia in the occupied territories in negotiation process. Attempt by Armenian government to change the format and substance of negotiations was unpleasant surprise for the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, whose efforts were paralyzed by irresponsible and dangerous actions of Armenia.

Furthermore, in gross violation of international law, including Geneva Conventions, Armenia was blatantly implementing the policy of illegal settlement of people mainly from Middle East with Armenian origin in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Encouraged by the long-lasting sense of impunity, Armenia was also announcing construction of new roads from Armenia to occupied territories to further consolidate the result of its aggression and speed up the illegal settlement.

In July 2020, Armenia perpetrated military provocation along the state border with Azerbaijan.

As a result of the artillery strike inflicted on Azerbaijan's Tovuz district, 13 military servicemen and civilians were killed.

Later in August last year, Armenian sabotage group attempted to penetrate through the former line of contact to commit terror acts against Azerbaijani military servicemen and civilians but it was successfully neutralized.

In my statement at the General Debate of the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly on 24 September last year, I had warned that, "hostile, Azerbaijanophobic statements and provocations of Armenian leadership demonstrate that Armenia is preparing for a new aggression against Azerbaijan."

Three days later on the 27th September last year, Armenia launched a large-scale attack against military positions and civilians of Azerbaijan. In response, Azerbaijan, using its inherent right of self-defence as enshrined in the article 51 of the UN Charter, started a counter-attack on its own territories against Armenia.

During 44 days, armed forces of Armenia heavily shelled cities situated along the frontline, namely Agdam, Aghjabedi, Beylagan, Dashkesen, Fuzuli, Goranboy, Tartar. Armenia also fired at Ganja, Barda, Mingachevir, Gabala, Siyazan, Khizi and other cities situated far away from the former frontline. One of missiles was intercepted by Azerbaijani Air Defense Forces in Khizi, close to Baku, which shows that the capital city Baku was also target of Armenian missile attack. Armenia was using ballistic missiles, like Scud and Iskander-M, as well as forbidden white phosphorus and cluster munitions. These war crimes of Armenia resulted in more than 100 civilians, including 11 children being killed, more than 450 wounded. More than 12 000 civilian infrastructures, including private houses in Azerbaijan have been destroyed or severely damaged.

Abided by the fundamental principle of international humanitarian law on the distinction between combatants and civilians, Azerbaijan never reciprocated Armenia's vicious war crimes by targeting civilians.

Armenia also recruited mercenaries and foreign fighters from abroad and deployed them against Azerbaijan.

During 44-day war Azerbaijan liberated a large part of occupied territories, including cities of Jabrayil, Hadrut, Fuzuli, Zangilan, Gubadly and Shusha. In total more than 300 cities and villages were liberated on the battlefield. Armenia had to sign an act of capitulation on 10 November 2020. Accordingly, Armenia was obliged to withdraw its troops from the remaining part of Azerbaijan's territories, namely Agdam, Lachin and Kalbajar regions. Azerbaijan, itself, enforced the implementation of the abovementioned UN Security Council resolutions, probably, it was the first case in the world since the establishment of the UN.

Azerbaijan resolved the 30-year-long conflict and restored its territorial integrity and historical justice by military-political means. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was left in the past. There is no administrative territorial unit called Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan. We have created Karabakh and Eastern Zangazur economic zones by the Presidential decree signed on 7 July this year. Using this occasion, I would like to call on all the UN Member States and the UN Secretariat to avoid using legally non-existing, politically biased and manipulative names while referring to our territories.

The building of multi-layered defence lines and fortifications with long trenches, tunnels and bunkers by Armenia for years in the formerly occupied territories of Azerbaijan proves that Armenia did not intent to return those territories by any means.

During almost 30-year-long occupation Armenia has deliberately destroyed cities and villages, looted and plundered all cultural and religious sites of Azerbaijan turning them into textbook example of uricide and culturicide. After the Second World War, probably, annihilation of cities in such a magnitude has not happened anywhere else in the world. 9 Azerbaijani cities and hundreds of villages have been barbarically wiped out by Armenia.

Armenia attempted to erase the traces of Azerbaijani people living in these territories for centuries. Agdam city was destroyed to such an extent that it was called as “Hiroshima of Caucasus”. After the liberation, our Army could not find a single safe building in Fuzuli city to raise the Azerbaijani flag.

Out of 67 mosques in the territories which were under Armenian occupation, 65 have been razed to the ground and the remaining 2 have been severely damaged and desecrated, including by being used as stables for pigs and cows in total disrespect to all Muslims of the world. Even the graveyards were desecrated, destroyed, and looted.

During visits to liberated territories, foreign diplomats, representatives of international organizations and international journalists have witnessed the barbarism committed by Armenia. The facts of the full destruction of cities and villages, including the cultural and religious heritage sites of Azerbaijani people has been widely documented and broadcasted by international media and independent experts.

Each delegation in the United Nations has been provided with an illustrative book which contains brief information and photos of our towns and villages before and after the occupation. It reflects the total destruction of religious and historic monuments of Azerbaijan.

Armenia has committed severe ecocide in the formerly occupied territories of Azerbaijan. 60,000 hectares of our forests have been destroyed, cut down and taken away, soil and rivers have been polluted and contaminated.

Armenia used water reserves to create an artificial environmental crisis on the formerly occupied territories. In 2016, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted resolution entitled “Inhabitants of frontier regions of Azerbaijan are deliberately deprived of water” demanding the Armenian authorities to cease using water reservoirs as tools of political influence or an instrument of pressure. This resolution was totally ignored by Armenia, which continued to use the Sarsang water reservoir as a tool of humanitarian and environmental terrorism. Armenia was intentionally opening the floodgates during the winter months to cause flooding in the surrounding areas and closing them in summer to deprive people and farms from water in the former frontline region.

Armenia has been severely polluting transboundary river called Okhchuchay causing irreversible degradation of ecosystem of the area along the river in Azerbaijan. Regrettably, some foreign companies are also participating in this environmental crime.

Armenia illegally exploited natural resources, including gold and other precious metals and minerals of the formerly occupied lands and exported it to the

international markets. Based on solid facts, we have identified companies from different countries illegally exploiting Azerbaijan's natural resources and conducting other illegal activities in the formerly occupied territories. We have already started taking legal actions against those companies. They will be held accountable for illegally exploiting our natural resources in the formerly occupied lands.

We have around 4 000 citizens registered as missing persons from the first Karabakh War. Armenia must provide us with information about their fate. We have solid proofs that almost all of them have been tortured and killed, and buried in mass graves by Armenian military in violation of international humanitarian law. In April 2021, remains of 12 civilians killed by Armenian war criminals have been identified in liberated Bashlibel village of Kalbajar district in a mass grave.

Armenia must bear state responsibility for military aggression and other grave crimes committed against Azerbaijan under international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

The despotic warlords, who came to power in Armenia as a result of coup d'état and ruled for 20 years from 1998 to 2018, were completely doomed to failure in achieving their nefarious dreams and goals during the three-decade-long occupation of Azerbaijan's territories. On the contrary, Armenia has become a failed state, as I had emphasized in my statement at the UN General Assembly in 2017. The country has been weakened to the extent that it cannot even guard its own borders by itself.

"Azerbaijanophobia" promoted by the government is on the rise in Armenia. Racist ideology cultivated in Armenian society based on ethnic hatred and demonization is the root cause of ethnic cleansing and unprecedented vandalism in the formerly occupied lands of Azerbaijan by Armenia.

Despite the regime change in Armenia, the fascist ideology continues to dominate in the country. Successive Armenian governments have glorified Nazism in the person of Nazi general Garegin Nzhdeh who has been turned into "national hero" in Armenia. While the progressive world is fighting against the rise of neo-fascism, the then president of Armenia inaugurated the monument of Garegin Nzhdeh in capital Irevan in 2016. Azerbaijan defeated not only Armenian occupying forces, but also Armenian fascism. If we see again any danger to our sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of our people we will exercise our legitimate right to self-defence without any hesitation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we have left the conflict behind, large-scale construction work is carried out in the liberated territories. Azerbaijan is building new cities and towns from the scratch by applying the modern urban planning and utilizing the concepts of "smart city" and "smart village".

All this work is being conducted with Azerbaijan's own financial resources. To that end, \$1.3 billion has been allocated from the state budget only this year.

However, the main challenge is the vast presence of landmines planted by Armenia in the liberated territories. Since the signing of the capitulation act by Armenia on 10 November 2020, around 30 Azerbaijani citizens, including 2 journalists were killed and around 130 citizens were wounded. Azerbaijan is among the most heavily mined countries in the world. It slows down the reconstruction process in the liberated territories and return of internally displaced persons to their homes.

Armenia refuses to release accurate maps of minefields. The accuracy level of the maps for three regions which Armenia had to provide is only 25 percent. The international community must force Armenia to provide us with accurate mine maps of all liberated territories.

As the conflict is over, Azerbaijan has already announced its readiness to embark upon the border delimitation and demarcation between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and to start negotiations on peace agreement with Armenia, based on mutual recognition of sovereignty and territorial integrity of each other. Such an agreement would turn our region into the region of peace and cooperation. However, we have not yet seen any positive reaction from Armenia regarding our proposal.

One of the areas that can serve as the cause of peace and cooperation is transportation projects. In this context, the Zangazur corridor connecting mainland Azerbaijan with its inseparable part Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and Turkey will create new opportunities for our region.

Azerbaijan has created a new reality in the Southern Caucasus region which has to be taken into account by all. Armenia has to make a choice between regional cooperation and illegal and baseless territorial claims against its neighbours. The international community should also play its positive role in this regard and urge Armenia to realize that peace has no alternative. Any acts directly or indirectly supporting revanchism and militarization in Armenia must be ceased.

We hope that long-awaited peace, security and stability will prevail in the Southern Caucasus, at last. Azerbaijan will continue its consistent efforts to contribute and to strengthen regional peace and development.

Thank you.

**Annex VI****Address by His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco**

[Original: French]

Mr. President of the General Assembly,  
Mr. Secretary-General,  
Ladies and Gentlemen Heads of State and Government,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

For the second year in a row, we are forced to hold this meeting in exceptional circumstances, but developments in the situation will allow us all, I hope, to meet in New York next year.

President Abdulla Shahid, allow me to congratulate you on your election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. I am delighted that, through you, the voice of small island developing States has assumed such a level of responsibility. The presidency of hope, which has guided your campaign, represents the positive message that our peoples need. I would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkir, for enabling the General Assembly to fulfil its role in this difficult context.

Mr. Secretary-General, your reappointment represents the recognition by Member States of your leadership and dedication to the great causes of humankind. Please rest assured, Mr. President and Mr. Secretary-General, of my country's full support. We are currently living at pivotal time. Geopolitical tensions are high, people's distrust of their Governments is on the rise and the impact of the pandemic on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is obvious. The post-COVID-19 world that we are working to build must be more resilient and sustainable. It demands that we rethink our modes of production and consumption.

The robust management of the crisis and consistent support for Monaco's population and businesses has enabled the Principality to weather this unprecedented storm. Public action has demonstrated that it remains key to resolving global challenges. Nevertheless, our response has remained fragmented and must be improved. The solution can come only from determined collective action, the keystone of which is multilateralism. Multilateralism is not an option; it is a necessity. We must choose balanced cooperation, which welcomes discussions, disagreements and mediation to find common solutions, guided by the principles and ideals of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. President, tomorrow's world will be an increasingly connected world. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the extent to which technology can be indispensable. It has changed business strategies, consumer habits and access to public services, such as health care and education. Narrowing the digital divide is therefore a priority, as 3 billion people lack access to the Internet. Mr. Secretary General, your Roadmap for digital cooperation outlines the key challenges that need to be met in the area.

Three years ago, I launched the Extended Monaco digital programme to build a more ecological and connected Monaco for tomorrow. I was not expecting to see my decision justified so soon. In being more prepared, the Principality has been able to maintain its economic activity and its social, educational and cultural services, and was able to do so even at the peak of the crisis. In order to achieve those goals, we have put in place a suitable legislative framework, efficient infrastructure and a high level of data protection. But cyberspace calls for everyone's vigilance. With the health crisis, cyberattacks against civilian infrastructure have multiplied in flagrant violation of the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law.

Social networks have also been the scene of disinformation campaigns. A delicate balance remains to be found between, on the one hand, disinformation, hate speech and conspiracy theories and, on the other, respect for fundamental freedoms. We must also consider the environmental impact of these new technologies, which consume great amounts of energy.

Mr. President, the measures taken to curb the epidemic have also had serious consequences on the mental health and well-being of populations. That dimension has likely been underestimated, and it is imperative for everyone to be able to return to a normal life. For many of us, personal fulfilment is also expressed through practicing sports. As a member of the International Olympic Committee, I would like to congratulate and thank Japan for hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo. I would also like to pay tribute to the leadership shown by the President of the International Olympic Committee, and I could not agree with him more when he says that, "We are always stronger together". The values imbued by sports and their practice are of vital importance to developing human relations, which is why they play a role in achieving the SDGs.

Mr. President, let us not allow the pandemic to delay meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. My country is firmly committed to the achievement of SDG 2, as well as the decade of action on nutrition and the decade of family farming. The pandemic has highlighted the inequalities inherent in agri-food systems. By convening the United Nations Food Systems Summit and the high-level dialogue on energy, you are giving these issues their just due by placing them on the political agenda, while balancing the fight against climate change with meeting the future needs of 10 billion people in 2050.

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Monaco is pursuing its energy transition in order to meet the goal I set on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement, namely a 55 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050. But this effort must be global, as neither the Principality's commitments nor those of any other country alone will be able to prevent the temperature from rising beyond 1.5°C by the end of the century.

I therefore call on all States to be as ambitious as possible, as they review their nationally determined contributions to the fight against climate change, and adopt robust measures at the upcoming COP-26 to be held in Glasgow. Post-COVID-19 reconstruction must be green and sustainable and, I would go so far to say, based on nature. The pandemic has reminded us how costly and dangerous the destruction of ecosystems can be for human beings. Monaco advocates the implementation of

concrete measures to protect the environment. In that regard, COP-15 of the CBD will provide us a with singular opportunity to adopt an ambitious global framework for the preservation of biodiversity.

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

I would also like to talk more specifically about the protection of the oceans. In personal terms, the cause belongs to a long family tradition, as the Princes of Monaco have shown a strong personal commitment to our seas and oceans. My great-great grandfather, Prince Albert I, dedicated his life to them. In 2022, 100 years after his death, we will commemorate the visionary Prince and his valuable contribution to science. The United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development is providing us with an opportunity to take collective action to combat ocean degradation and threats posed by human activity.

Mr. President, placing the most vulnerable at the top of the agenda of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals means recognizing that fundamental rights concern both men and women. However, 26 years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the recent Generation Equality Forum, sponsored by France and Mexico, was able to take note only of the fragility of women's rights and even their reconsideration. Within the framework of Sustainable Development Goal 5, dedicated to gender equality, Monaco is focusing on combating all forms of discrimination against women at the international level.

In that regard, I am pleased by the fact that the Principality has been elected to the Executive Board of UN-Women and that it has joined the Group of Friends for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls. My country will also pursue its cooperative efforts to promote health-care programmes, inclusive education and the economic empowerment of women. Finally, Monaco hails the recent appointment of the new Global Advocate of Every Woman Every Child, Mrs. Kersti Kaljulaid, President of the Republic of Estonia, whose noble mission will be to galvanize our efforts to meet the health needs of women and children.

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

The current crisis we are undergoing has demonstrated the importance of science, technology and innovation and has led to an accelerated increase in scientific discoveries and collaborative efforts. Such achievements offer hope for a solution to the crisis. We nevertheless made the commitment 10 years ago to leave no one behind. Our collective promise to build a better and sustainable world is our shared responsibility. Our failure would therefore be a collective failure with dramatic consequences. The Earth will survive this climate crisis, as it has so many times in the past. Will humankind be able to say the same?

We now know with certainty that the point of no return is extremely near. For too long, we have prioritized material and political matters. Faced with an existential risk, we can no longer procrastinate. It is up to us to restore multilateralism at the core of our work, use every tool at our disposal to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and respond to the needs of our peoples and the planet before our excesses become irreversible.

## Annex VII

### **Address by Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President and Head of State of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea**

[Original: Spanish]

His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, President of the United Nations General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session;

His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations;

Excellencies, Heads of State and Government;

Distinguished delegates;

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to begin by congratulating His Excellency Mr. Abdullah Shahid of the Republic of the Maldives on his election as President of the United Nations General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. He can count on Equatorial Guinea's support. I would also like to thank his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkir of the Republic of Turkey, for the magnificent work he has done. I would also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his work at the helm of our Organization, on his reappointment to the post and for his efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am pleased to participate once again in this high forum of the United Nations, which provides us each year with the unique opportunity to address and seek solutions to the major problems and challenges that affect us both individually and collectively.

For almost two years now, humankind has been facing the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had devastating effects unprecedented in recent history, affecting more than 200 million people and killing nearly 5 million. Those statistics are significant enough for all of us to continue coming together to seek lasting solutions to the crisis and draw the appropriate conclusions. Time and experience have shown us that common problems are best tackled through unity, and we already have the tools and knowledge to overcome such a test and succeed.

Now that we know the origins of and the devastation caused by the pandemic, we must focus on how to deal with the post-COVID situation or how to live with the pandemic. The world is at an unprecedented crossroads as COVID-19 has affected every part of our societies. The severity of the health and humanitarian crisis has taken its toll on our economic, financial and social structures.

As the theme of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly indicates, we must build resilience to recover from COVID-19 and do so in a sustainable manner, responding to the needs of the planet while respecting the rights of all people and revitalizing the United Nations. In that regard, the international community must profoundly analyse what happened and examine its causes in order to confront and prevent similar situations from recurring in the future, or at least to be better prepared to mitigate the impacts.

We must design economic and social recovery programmes and ensure that no country is left behind. Respect for human rights must be at the heart of this process,

which must benefit our peoples. The United Nations must play a leading role in humankind's efforts to recover from the pandemic and its collateral effects.

In that connection, I would like to propose the possibility of holding a comprehensive international conference to address the causes of the pandemic, its consequences and how weaker countries can be helped, since the effects of the pandemic have exacerbated many endemic problems and challenges that our countries have already been facing, including conflict, extreme poverty and migration, *inter alia*.

Indeed, the pandemic has exacerbated the economic crisis caused by the fall in hydrocarbon prices on international markets. In the particular case of Equatorial Guinea, we have programmed and implemented policies that favour the diversification of our economy by trying to revitalize other sectors that are not as vulnerable and subject to fluctuation as hydrocarbons.

Those efforts suffered a major setback with the accidental explosions that occurred in Bata on 7 March, whereby more than 100 human lives were lost in addition to numerous injuries and substantial material damage that had a very negative impact on the country's economy. That situation forced us to review our priorities and economic prospects, which entailed a serious economic outlay that was not initially foreseen. In that regard, I must highlight the solidarity and humanitarian behaviour demonstrated by the people of Equatorial Guinea, which was a source of pride and was supported by international assistance efforts. I wish to take this opportunity to thank all the countries and international organizations that came to our aid.

I must extend a special mention to the International Monetary Fund, which has just granted us emergency assistance to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic and the 7 March explosions. Equatorial Guinea intends to continue making headway in the financial programme agreed with the abovementioned institution.

Mr. President,

Security and stability are fundamental to achieving progress and making the world a more just and prosperous place. It is therefore very important that the international community join forces to rid the world of conflicts and their root causes and unite in the search for solutions that are of common benefit to humankind. In that regard, I take this opportunity to congratulate the Governments and political actors of Libya, Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic for their efforts to restore peace and stability to their countries.

Equatorial Guinea is a sovereign State that does not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries and expects that respect for its national sovereignty and non-interference in its internal affairs in return. Equatorial Guinea promotes international cooperation on the basis of mutual respect, peer-to-peer and mutually beneficial relations. We believe in the centrality of the United Nations and in the architecture of the search for solutions to the problems that affect us collectively. We are also firm defenders of the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

However, the United Nations must be reformed, not only to guarantee its own existence and validate its utility, legitimacy and acceptance, but also to represent a much more effective instrument of coordination and collaboration in the promotion

and strengthening of cooperation with regional organizations, including, in our case in particular, the African Union.

In that vein, the reform of the Security Council cannot be postponed, even if the process faces incomprehensible opposition from those countries that benefit from the current status quo. Under the current conditions, Africa cannot renounce the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, which reflect Africa's legitimate aspirations and common position. As a member of the African Union C-10, Equatorial Guinea will continue to stand up for what it believes is right.

We note with great concern the dangerous tendency of some countries to impose foreign values on other countries without taking into account their history, culture, traditions and priorities. Democracy is a good form of governance, but it should not be imposed without taking into consideration the idiosyncrasies, history and traditions of peoples. Mutual respect for diversity is the cornerstone for the peaceful coexistence of peoples.

In almost all of the addresses I have given before the General Assembly, I have made various appeals and tried to draw attention to the situation of growing instability and insecurity in our subregion of Central Africa, where transnational organized crime constitutes a major threat and manifests itself in the form of piracy. The Gulf of Guinea has become an unstable area that threatens the existence of its coastal countries and international maritime traffic, thereby exacerbating the economic crisis that our countries are experiencing. The issue deserves the global attention that was given to the case of the Gulf of Aden in its day, given that the interests of the international economy are at stake. An international event to address the situation in depth is desperately needed. Terrorist and mercenary activity continues to pose a serious challenge to our countries.

As in previous years and with greater persistence due to the delicate health situation affecting the world in general and the Republic of Cuba in particular, Equatorial Guinea calls for the lifting of the economic, financial and commercial blockade burdening that sister country and causing enormous harm to its noble people.

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Ensuring peace and security on our planet aligns with achievement of our objectives for overall development within a framework of unity, solidarity, harmony and strengthened cooperation. It is in that spirit that I hope for great success in our deliberations, which are aimed at making the world a better place for present and future populations.

I thank you for your kind attention.

## Annex VIII

### **Address by Mr. Taneti Maamau, President, Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration of the Republic of Kiribati**

Mr. President

UN Secretary General

Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

At the very outset allow me to share warm greetings from the Government and the people of the Republic of Kiribati. In the name of the Almighty God, I begin by sharing his peace and blessings. Kam na bane n Mauri!

#### Acknowledgement

Mr. President,

I join previous speakers in congratulating you, on your election to the Presidency of the 76th Session of the United Nations. I wish you every success as you chart a new course for a re-vitalized United Nations capable of energizing and supporting the efforts of all nations and people, particularly those lagging behind due to the many challenges that are far beyond their economic power and means.

I also join SIDS leaders to congratulate the Government of the Republic of Maldives for inspiring our SIDS family that a small developing member state is as equally qualified as a large developed state, to lead and serve this global family.

On this note, I wish to assure you of Kiribati's full support, as you discharge your duties for the Assembly, and avail my Government's commitment for initiatives that seek to transform our shared planet earth, into a wealthier, healthier, and safer home. This is the core of Kiribati's Vision for 20 Years (KV20) which is aligned with our agreed 2030 Agenda.

#### Contextualizing the Theme

The theme is a powerful wake up call to continue to place our trust and faith in this body created 75 years ago with promises of a peaceful and secure home for our peoples and all living and non-living re-sources. Much focus leading up to the 76th UNGA has been generated on accelerating progress on UN 2030 sustainable development agenda. Yet in the onset of unprecedented challenges, a renewed focus on achieving the SDGs has been centred around recovery and building resilience, as reflected in our theme this year.

Mr. President,

In Kiribati, the concept of resilience is well understood. It has been the foundation of our survival, from the times of our ancestors, to this day. To build resilience, my ancestors navigated the vast Pacific Ocean, to create a wealthy, healthy and peaceful home in the 33 beautiful islands that have now become the sovereign Republic of Kiribati. Through challenging times, the people of Kiribati endured

and remained resilient, living in peace and harmony with their environment and our friendly neighbours.

Mr. President,

Some may wonder, how the people of Kiribati managed to survive in these remote islands surrounded by a precarious and unforgiving ocean. Like our brothers and sisters across the Pacific and across our SIDS region, the people of Kiribati are people of the ocean. We have lived, thrived, and survived by caring and respecting one another, and sustainably managing the bountiful resources of our ocean.

Mr. President,

Building resilience remains a core foundation of my government's Vision for 20 Years to create a wealthier, healthier and more peaceful nation, for the people of Kiribati. We must nurture our people, to create healthier and more peaceful communities and societies. Accordingly, my government has aligned our KV20 with the development frameworks guiding our United Nations, including the 2030 Agenda, the SAMOA Pathway, and other related agreements, in a manner that prioritizes our people.

Therefore, as we embark on this 76th Session of our General Assembly, I must indulge you, Mr. President, to recall our commitments under our UN Charter, to build a safe, peaceful and secure home for our peoples, today and in the future. To recall the hope bestowed upon us as governments, to respond to the needs of our peoples, and to respect our mother earth. Equally important is our commitment to maximise benefits to our people, to uplift our communities, and create a wealthier, healthier and more peaceful United Nations.

Human Rights

Mr. President,

To ensure that sustainable development in Kiribati, is inclusive, transformative, and endures to "leave no one behind", my Government is working tirelessly to reduce inequalities and mobilize targeted support to marginalized communities. As a party to a number of core Human Rights Treaties, Kiribati continues to commit to obligations to report to the Human Rights Council. I was pleased to note that Kiribati's universal periodic review report was adopted at the 45th Session of the Human Rights Council in 2020. We appreciate and commend the very positive and engaging and mutually enforcing approach adopted by the universal periodic review process that fully respects the sovereignty of a member state under review and encourages it to progress its human rights obligations at its own pace and in harmony with its traditional values and systems that are also based on the dignity and sanctity of human life.

Trade

Mr. President,

Mitigating the adverse impacts of the pandemic continues to be a challenge for Kiribati due to our reliance on imported goods, including health goods and services to meet our essential needs. Kiribati recognizes that trade policy needs to be holistic and synergized with our broader development priorities. The Government prioritizes the improvement of our digital connectivity, as digital trade holds great potential for inclusive growth and socioeconomic development.

## Responding to COVID-19 and adjusting to the new normal

Mr. President,

I acknowledge the support received from the United Nations and its agencies and from our development partners during this pandemic which have been truly instrumental in providing vital necessities in terms of medication, food and health equipment to name but a few. I am pleased to inform that Kiribati is on the trajectory to having more than 50 per cent of its population vaccinated. I am also pleased to share that more than 70 per cent abroad have been safely reunited with their families. But since the discovery and outbreak of the Delta variant, our remaining nationals especially our seafarers have again been left stranded.

We will continue to work tirelessly to repatriate our stranded nationals, following the protocols and procedures of the countries that our nationals remain, and in line with our own national protocols.

## Fisheries & Ocean

Mr. President,

Kiribati is blessed with a vast ocean that provides us with abundant resources to support our economies, and sustain our lives, our culture, and our future. Of vital importance is securing the limits of our maritime boundaries against the threats of sea-level rise and climate change. Kiribati believes that once delimitation of our maritime boundary is completed and submitted to the UN Secretary-General in accordance with UNCLOS, maritime boundaries would remain permanent and shall not be affected by climate change and sea-level rise.

In recognition of our commitments on biodiversity and sustainable fisheries, Kiribati was appointed the 2019 Commonwealth Blue Charter champion for sustainable coastal fisheries. As Champion, Kiribati will lead efforts promoting collaborative research, workshops and seminars, exchange good/best practices in the practicalities of sustainable coastal fisheries, and showcase success case studies amongst Commonwealth countries.

## Climate Change and Biodiversity

Mr. President,

Recognizing that Kiribati remains vulnerable to Climate Change, I wish to highlight that my Government is committed to continue to build national resilience and enhance actions aligned with climate-resilient sustainable development.

Climate change and its current impacts are on-going and will continue to impact our people, in particular the most vulnerable. Our resilience as a global community is being tested, and moving on from this, we as global citizens hold the ball to strengthen the resilience of our mother earth subject to the enhanced actions that we take to ensure its sustainability and prosperous future. We need to recommit ourselves to our obligations under the Paris Agreement, by putting the needs of our peoples first, and remain guided by what is best for our people.

Global issues of biodiversity and climate change are closely linked, and we cannot address one without the other. Kiribati is committed to raising ambitions for the post-2020 global biodiversity and climate change targets and I call upon leaders to join Kiribati to enhance collective efforts on this important global issue.

## Food Security

Mr. President,

Food Security is indeed a shared priority across all SIDS, and remains a priority under the SAMOA Pathway, as well as the Kiribati Vision for 20 Years Plan.

Kiribati remains committed to sustainable development through food security and is very pleased to respond to the call by the UN Secretary-General, for the convening of a Food Systems Summit. The Summit dialogue can trigger the creation of robust food systems in-country and on this note I encourage fellow leaders to support this important Summit and join Kiribati and others when the Food Systems Summit officially convenes.

## Conclusion

Mr. President,

In conclusion, my government looks forward to work with you, as we embark on this renewed journey of hope and faith for a wealthier, healthier and more peaceful future for all our peoples. My government offers its full support to you as you lead our collective efforts to recover, rebuild sustainably, respond to the needs of our planet, and most importantly, respect the rights of the people of our United Nations.

Finally, let me close by sharing with us all our traditional blessings always of Te Mauri, Te Raoi ao Te Tabomoa (Health, Peace, and Prosperity).

Thank you.

## Annex IX

### **Address by Mr. Wavel Ramkalawan, President of the Republic of Seychelles**

Mr President of the United Nations General Assembly,

Mr Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Heads of State and Government,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I congratulate you on your election as President of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly and convey our deep appreciation to your predecessor for his able leadership during the preceding session.

I wish also to congratulate Mr António Guterres, on his reappointment for a second term and for his leadership of the United Nations during these unprecedented times.

As we approach the two-year mark since the first case of the COVID-19 virus was recorded, the world continues to struggle with the painful impact of this pandemic.

The pandemic has claimed millions of lives, depleting economies, and shattering communities while disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable.

The past two years have been a stark reminder that the global community has failed to adequately address some of the most pressing issues of our time: effective and equitable access to health-care, glaring inequalities, climate change and environmental degradation, the arms race, endless conflicts, the plight of refugees ... to name but a few.

And here we are, the leaders of the world, standing on this platform today to reflect on how to build back better, stronger and greener.

As we enter the second year of the UN decade of action, it is imperative that we, as a community of nations, take deliberate, collaborative and decisive actions to guarantee a future that leaves no one behind.

In recalling our commitments to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related treaties, let us remind ourselves that the most vulnerable people — those living in dire conditions and facing seemingly insurmountable crises — require special attention and help.

Indeed, while the pandemic has brought about untold suffering, devastated global health systems, severely impacted the world economy and impoverished entire communities, the crisis at hand presents an opportunity to reinvigorate our collective will to bring about positive changes, with emphasis on equitable, sustainable, and inclusive governance.

Our recovery depends on it.

Central to global recovery is the availability and distribution of vaccines. Central to the health and well-being of every human being is solidarity. Statements, good intentions and pledges are woefully inadequate. The facts speak for themselves.

Of 554 million doses pledged by the world's richest nations, only 91 million, or 16 per cent, have been delivered.

In Africa, less than 3.5 per cent of people across the continent have been vaccinated against Covid-19.

The figure is far short of the African CDC's official target of 60 per cent of Africans.

It is a disgrace! And it points to a sobering fact. There is a virus far more terrible, far more harrowing than COVID19.

It is the virus of inequality! And while the pandemic rages on and the debate continues unabated, and travel advisories of all shades and hues are being issued, humanity is the first casualty.

Especially Africa and many other less developed parts of the world. It is true that no one is safe until we are all safe. COVAX, striving as it is against all odds, can fulfil its mandate only if pledges and commitments made by the richest nations are honoured and not used as short-term leverage in one form and another.

Mr President,

The world's resilience to this pandemic, or to potential future ones, goes beyond the health of our people.

Our efforts should also tackle economic imbalances and inequalities. In this regard, Seychelles urges the international community to assist the world's most vulnerable economies in enhancing their resilience to future shocks.

Seychelles' economy, like that of many other Small Island Developing States (SIDS), was brought to its knees just a few months after the pandemic hit, as we witnessed the near total collapse of our tourism industry. For us, this meant forgoing some of our hard-earned economic gains in order to implement contingency plans, focused on protecting our population.

The devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the inadequacies in responding to it, underscore the urgent need for stronger collective measures among member states of the United Nations.

It is imperative that we work together to build consensus and cohesion in respect of the plight of those facing threats of an existential nature, most notably SIDS.

Our vulnerabilities are well known and they need not be expounded on here. What needs to be stressed, however, is that a "one-size-fits-all" approach to debt relief and concessionary financial flows is certainly not the most appropriate for us. An approach and a strategy, which take into account our vulnerabilities and characteristics, would bolster our own efforts to weather the present crisis and to strengthen our capabilities to recover and rebound from the economic fallout caused by the pandemic.

The application of the Vulnerability Index, therefore, remains for us, the only coherent and viable approach and strategy to resolving our current predicament.

Most SIDS have achieved middle to high-income status through hard work and commitment for the betterment of our peoples, but it appears that we are being penalised for our success, penalised for our achievements and hard work. Are the

international financial institutions taking our vulnerabilities into consideration? The review of the criteria to measure development support and access to funding is still being debated incessantly in countless fora, with no end in sight. Lack of effective and appropriate global support for SIDS will have systemic consequences on our progress on practically all Sustainable Development Goals.

Furthermore, SIDS continue to be disproportionately affected by what can be best termed as environmental injustice as a result of climate change. We are the least responsible for it, yet we pay the heaviest tribute. The challenge we face to climate change and our response to it will continue long after we have brought COVID-19 under control. We are morally obligated to those who have lost their lives to the calamitous climate and biodiversity crises. We are accountable to those who face constant existential threats. And we owe it to future generations to find lasting solutions to protect this planet.

But despite the enormity of the peril that we face, I remain hopeful that together we will find solutions. It requires practical solutions from around the globe that would lead us towards a sustainable, greener world powered by a clean energy economy. However, pledges and commitments are just not enough.

They must be respected and honoured. In the light of the upcoming COP26, Seychelles calls on the international community, particularly the larger emitters and economies of the G20, to increase their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to a level that meets, if not surpasses the requirements of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report and averts the global catastrophe that threatens all of us.

Mr President, The pandemic and worsening climate crisis have added to the other difficult tasks of the United Nations. We must more than ever renew our commitment to multilateralism and reinforce the functions of United Nations. Let us be guided by the UN Charter as we move together to rebuild a greener world, leaving no one, particularly the most vulnerable, behind.

I believe in the founding principles of the United Nations; that multilateralism is key to ensuring prosperity and lasting peace. Let us restore hope and belief in the UN, by restoring hope and belief in ourselves and in international solidarity. Let us rebuild trust in one another by bridging the inequality gaps within and between nations, reducing marginalisation, eradicating racism, xenophobia and all other forms of discrimination, and instilling tolerance among our peoples.

Never have we, as a community of nations, been beset with challenges of the present magnitude. But there is hope. Hope that we can overcome them. There is hope that we can overcome the challenges that we face through collective action, global solidarity and with political will. As the leader of one of the smallest nations of the world, I strongly believe in the capacity of our people, especially our youth. I believe, above all, in the capacity of humanity. I believe in our capacity to do good. Together, as the representatives of our planet we can do what is expected of us.

We can do good!

Thank you.

**Annex X****Address by Mr. Mario Draghi, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy**

Mr. President of the General Assembly,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

In recent years we have witnessed a progressive weakening of multilateralism, which has guaranteed peace, security and prosperity since the post-war period.

However, we are now facing problems that we cannot solve on our own.

I am referring to the pandemic, and to the risk of new and dangerous variants of the virus.

Climate change and the protection of biodiversity.

The economic recovery and the fight against inequalities and food insecurity.

Conflict resolution and the fight against terrorism.

These issues are at the heart of today's General Assembly and of our Government's agenda.

They are also at the core of the Italian Presidency of the G20, whose motto is "People, Planet and Prosperity".

We need to relaunch multilateralism, and make it effective to meet the challenges of our times.

More than a year and a half after the beginning of the global health crisis, we can finally look at the future with greater optimism.

The vaccination campaign gives us confidence in our ability to return to a new normal.

In Italy and in Europe we have reopened most economic activities.

Students have returned to schools and universities.

After months of loneliness, our social life has finally resumed.

However, the pandemic is not over and even when it will be, we will have to deal with its consequences for a long time.

Globally, we face dramatic differences in the distribution of vaccines.

In high-income countries, more than 65 per cent of the population has received at least one dose.

In the poorest ones, only 2 per cent.

These disparities are morally unacceptable: fewer vaccinations mean more deaths.

And as long as the virus continues to circulate freely, it can mutate in dangerous ways and put even the most effective vaccination campaigns at risk.

We need to increase the availability of vaccines for poor countries and overcome logistical hurdles to distribute them where they are most needed.

Furthermore, we must preserve at the global level the free circulation of vaccines and of the raw materials needed to produce them.

Italy gives its full political and financial support to the COVAX Facility.

We intend to triple our donations from 15 to 45 million doses by the end of 2021.

The huge differences in vaccination campaigns risk worsening inequalities between countries.

The pandemic has had a negative social and economic effect on everyone, but the consequences for lower-income countries have been particularly severe.

Even before the health crisis, these countries had significant economic vulnerabilities, starting with their debt levels.

Many of their citizens lived below or just above the poverty line.

Advanced economies have been able to use monetary and fiscal policies more robustly to contain the economic shock.

They spent 28 per cent of their 2020 gross domestic product to stimulate growth — compared with just 7 per cent and 2 per cent in emerging and low-income economies.

Economic divergence risks erasing years of progress in the fight against poverty, making it even more difficult to achieve sustainable development goals.

Concerns about food systems have become even more urgent.

Extreme weather conditions and supply chain disruptions have contributed to the increase in food prices.

In August the food price index rose by 32 per cent compared to a year earlier.

According to the FAO, last year more than 2,3 billion people did not have access to adequate food on a regular basis.

Under the Italian Presidency, the G20 has adopted a package of economic measures to help the world's most fragile countries overcome the effects of the pandemic and assist them in their development.

We supported the decision by the International Monetary Fund to issue new Special Drawing Rights for a total of \$650 billion.

Of these resources, \$33 billion are destined to African countries, and we are working to further increase this share.

We have accelerated the refinancing of 'IDA-20', the World Bank's fund for the poorest countries.

The Italian Presidency intends to facilitate comprehensive and sustainable debt restructuring in countries with excessive debt levels.

Italy has also taken specific action on food security.

Together with the FAO, we have created the “Food Coalition” to combat malnutrition caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and we have hosted in Rome the Pre-Summit on Food Systems.

Nevertheless, we must be ready for even more ambitious action to support poorer countries, particularly in Africa.

Italy intends to continue to ensure its support for the African continent, which is increasingly central for security and economic growth globally.

We must increase investment, to enable Africa’s youth to participate fully in its social, economic and political development.

The other emergency that we have placed at the core of our G20 Presidency agenda is climate change.

The latest UN IPCC report shows that, without immediate, rapid and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, we will fail to limit global warming to below 1,5 degrees above preindustrial levels.

The number of climate-related natural disasters has increased fivefold since the 1960s.

Extreme weather events are expected to intensify over the next few decades.

Estimates from the World Health Organization show that climate change already causes 150,000 deaths per year, which could become 250,000 between 2030 and 2050.

We must act now to protect the planet, our economy and future generations.

As Presidency of the G20 and COP26 co-chair together with the United Kingdom, Italy intends to reach ambitious goals on the three pillars of the Paris agreement: mitigation, adaptation and finance.

Over the next decade, we must reduce as much as possible CO2 emissions produced by fossil fuels and other greenhouse gases, including methane.

And we must work to adapt our infrastructure to climate shocks, that have become increasingly frequent and violent.

Italy strongly supports the leading role of the European Union in the ecological transition, and in particular its commitment to a 55 per cent reduction in CO2 emissions by 2030 and to net zero emissions by 2050.

However, the EU currently accounts for only 8 per cent of global emissions, while G20 countries are responsible for 75 per cent.

The fight against climate change requires multilateral engagement and pragmatic cooperation among all major global players — both rich and emerging economies.

We must act in an effective, coordinated and simultaneous manner, whilst always respecting national specificities.

We intend to reach a global agreement to stop the use of coal as soon as possible, and, consistently with this objective, block the financing of new projects of this kind.

We want to eliminate subsidies for fossil fuels and promote the use of renewable sources.

The environmental transition has significant costs and it is essential that governments stand ready to help citizens and businesses.

But it can also be an engine of economic growth.

According to a recent report by the International Renewable Energy Agency, the renewables sector could employ more than 40 million people by 2050.

In Italy and in the European Union at large we have embarked on a path of reforms and investment — “Next Generation EU” — to make the most of these opportunities.

We hope that the “Roundtable on Climate” promoted last Monday by Secretary-General Guterres and Prime Minister Johnson will give further impetus to the negotiations that will take us to the G20 Summit in Rome and to the COP26 in Glasgow.

Next week, 400 young people from all over the world will meet in Milan to present their proposals for the fight against climate change.

In recent years, young people have often been agents of change and have pushed us to do more.

They will inherit the planet and it is our duty to listen to them.

In the past year, important issues affecting peace and security have resurfaced.

The main one is Afghanistan, where we face the risk of a social and civil catastrophe.

We must prevent the country from becoming once again a threat for international security.

I refer in particular to the presence of groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda and Daesh on Afghan territory.

The international community must cooperate effectively, starting with sharing intelligence.

Italy has long been involved at the international level in the fight against terrorism.

We must combine our security objectives with prevention, protection of human rights and respect for the rule of law.

And we must tackle both the economic and the social causes that lead to radicalisation and violent extremism.

In Afghanistan, we are witnessing the dismantling of the progresses made over the last 20 years in the protection of fundamental freedoms, especially for women.

All those who have signed the United Nations Charter and who adhere to the founding values of this Organization must commit to the resolution of this crisis.

The international community must stand united in demanding that all Afghan citizens can live in dignity, peace and security; that the protection of vulnerable groups is ensured; that women preserve their fundamental rights, first of all the right to education.

Italy has always been committed to promoting the respect of human rights in the world, in particular in the last three years with an active presence in the Human Rights Council.

The composition of the new Afghan government does not meet the expectations of the international community for a government that is inclusive and representative of the country's diverse ethnic, social and religious components.

The new rulers must prove with their actions, and not only in words, that they are committed to respecting individual freedoms.

We must also address the impact of the Afghan crisis on regional stability and security.

To address such a complex matter, we need a strategy that is as widely shared as possible.

Italy has taken action immediately to encourage the strongest possible coordination among the main global and regional players.

As G20 Presidency, we have made available the G20 platform, which is broad and inclusive by nature.

We have promoted a meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, in preparation for the extraordinary summit, which will focus on issues of humanitarian aid, security and human rights.

The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan is certainly the most pressing and shared concern, not least because of the approaching winter season.

According to the World Food Programme, one in three people in the country is exposed to food insecurity.

Italy has confidence in the ability of the United Nations to coordinate the international humanitarian response, mobilise resources and ensure a rapid and coherent intervention.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for organising the “pledging conference” in Geneva on the 13th September, where countries pledged some \$1,2 billion in humanitarian aid for Afghanistan.

The extraordinary G20 Summit must give its utmost support to these objectives.

There has to be full, safe, unhindered and unconditional access for international organisations and humanitarian aid workers.

Italy is at the forefront in the response to the humanitarian crisis, for the benefit of the most fragile groups in Afghanistan and of those Afghans who have left — or will leave — the country.

We are also ready to intervene in support of neighbouring countries affected by refugee outflows.

We have decided to use resources previously earmarked for training Afghan security and defence forces for humanitarian purposes.

The crisis in Afghanistan, and in particular its rapid deterioration following the withdrawal of “Resolute Support”, demands a reflection on the future of international missions.

In particular, we must ask ourselves what are their objectives and what is the best way to pursue them.

However, international interventions remain an essential tool in supporting peace and security.

Italy reaffirms with conviction its commitment within the United Nations.

We are the largest contributor to the Blue Helmets among Western countries and the seventh largest contributor to the budget of UN peacekeeping operations.

Italian soldiers are deployed in five UN missions in Mali, Western Sahara, Cyprus, at the border between India and Pakistan, and above all in Lebanon, where we are in charge of the UNIFIL mission and deploy one of the largest contingents.

We are convinced that the European Union needs to strengthen its role in this field, in line with the ambitions of the European project and in full complementarity with the Transatlantic Alliance.

The focus on Afghanistan and Central Asia should not distract us from the instability that continues to affect the wider Mediterranean.

In particular, we support, multilaterally, bilaterally and within the European Union, the transition process in Libya for a sustainable and inclusive solution to the crisis.

Its aim is to renew the country's national institutional framework in a unified manner, without external interference and under the aegis of the UN — as mapped out by the Libyans themselves.

The international community must work together with the Libyan institutions and the Libyan people to overcome the current stalemate.

Despite this critical juncture, we must ensure that elections scheduled for the 24th of December can take place and the ceasefire is fully implemented.

Another aspect of the Libyan crisis is migration. Its correct management requires a joint response from the international community.

We must fight effectively against human trafficking, ensure regular international mobility and protect people's lives.

It is essential to have multilateral action, based on the principle of a fair sharing of duties and responsibilities.

The European Union and its Member States must strengthen the dialogue on migration issues with the countries of origin and transit of migrants, in order to achieve joint responsibility in the management of flows.

These principles inspire the cooperation between the European Union and its African partners, of which Italy has been an early promoter and that we intend to strengthen.

I would like to express the Italian Government's sincere appreciation for the important work carried out by United Nations organisations in Libya and, more generally, in many areas of crisis.

In particular, I am referring to the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Italy is committed to continuing to work to promote the universal values of peace and development, and the protection and promotion of human rights.

These are not only at the core of the UN's action, but they are also the basis of the Italian Constitution, the European Union and the transatlantic bond.

The principles that inspired the United Nations Charter, and that we recalled in our Solemn Political Declaration, adopted on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Organisation, are still a point of reference today.

Within the UN, the Security Council must be able to continue to fulfil its role in safeguarding international peace and security.

We support the need for a consensual reform of the Security Council, to strengthen regional representation and ensure a fairer geographical distribution of seats through an increase in the number of elected members.

Our goal is to make the Council more representative, democratic, efficient, transparent and accountable.

The answer to the challenges we face — the pandemic, climate change and international crises — lies in effective multilateralism, based on inclusive and open dialogue.

Italy wants to continue to contribute with ideas and resources, for the benefit of the entire international community.

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