



General Assembly

Seventy-seventh session

5th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 20 September 2022, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Körösi (Hungary)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Fifield (Australia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

Address by Ms. Iris Xiomara Castro Sarmiento, President of the Republic of Honduras

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

Ms. Iris Xiomara Castro Sarmiento, President of the Republic of Honduras, 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 Her Excellency Ms. Iris Xiomara Castro Sarmiento, President of the Republic of Honduras, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Castro Sarmiento (spoke in Spanish): I stand before this global forum at a historic moment for my country, not only because I am the first woman to have the honour of leading our Central American nation, but also because I represent its first democratically elected Government after 13 years of dictatorship; a 2009 coup d'état fraught with cruel assassinations and death squads; two rounds of electoral fraud; a pandemic and two hurricanes.

It is impossible to understand the Honduran people and our huge caravans of migrants without acknowledging the cruel suffering that we have had to

endure. But electoral democracy will not be enough to achieve full material and spiritual well-being for our people, after 13 years of dictatorship under the tutelage of the international community multiplied our country's public debt sixfold and pushed our poverty rate to 74 per cent, the highest in the history of Honduras. Five out of 10 of my compatriots live in extreme poverty.

However, it is clear to me that none of those figures will shock anyone in today's world, where we live under a monetary dictatorship, where the poorest are subjected to draconian fiscal discipline measures that increase the neglected majorities' suffering and where speculative capital knows no limits. It is clear that for our country to survive today, we must reject the presumed austerity that rewards those who concentrate wealth in the hands of a few as inequality increases exponentially.

Since we took office, at the end of January, we have been relentless in seeking consensus and always firmly determined to reach agreements on our compromises without denying them in any way. But attempts to undermine the will of the people are coming at us from every direction, with conspiracies being fomented between the same sectors that plundered the country and their allies in the coup, emboldened by a blatant anti-democratic attitude often disguised as diplomacy. The public policies endorsed by the international financial community's rentier model over the past 13 years dragged us into a world of violence and poverty characterized by failed and abandoned projects, corruption, looting and drug trafficking.

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The international witnesses to the electoral fraud that took place in 2013 and 2017 were well aware of what they were condemning our people to, and yet they were complacent about the worst scourge ever to plague our country. The arrogance of capital and narrow self-interest led many to opt for deceit, while organized crime drove the country into darkness.

The poor nations of the world will no longer tolerate coups d'état, the use of so-called lawfare or colour revolutions, which are usually aimed at plundering our wealth of natural resources. The industrialized nations of the world are responsible for the serious deterioration of the environment, yet we are the ones they are forcing to pay for their expensive lifestyles. They stop at nothing to drag us into their schemes and plunge us into an endless crisis, pretending that their hands are tied.

The Honduras that I lead is being built based on a vision of a humanist refoundation imbued with dignity and sovereignty. We will take the necessary legal steps to help our environment to recover and share the common good with our entire population. That is why we find the current arbitrary world order to be unacceptable. It perpetuates the existence of third- and fourth-class countries, while those who believe themselves to be civilized never tire of invasions, wars and financial speculation, crucifying us with their inflation time and again. I am here on this rostrum to demand that they respect us. We want to live in peace. Do not keep trying to destabilize Honduras, dictate measures to us or decide with whom we should or should not have relations.

The people are sovereign. They showed that on 28 November with their support for my victory, the biggest in the history of my country. On 15 September, our day of independence, the resistance that fought against the dictatorship imposed during the past 13 years supported me en masse in the streets, fighting off public threats and refusing to allow our national assets to continue being handed over to the highest bidder as if we were a no man's land.

Never again will we be branded with the stereotype of banana republic. We will end the monopolies and oligopolies that only impoverish our economy. As a generous people who have shed their blood in defence of our forests and rivers, we will not forget that during the dictatorship hundreds of young people were murdered, including our comrade Berta Cáceres. Nor

will we forget the forced disappearances of Hondurans for their attitudes and beliefs, including our five Garífuna comrades who have now been missing for two years. Every inch of the homeland that was usurped in the name of the sacrosanct free market, the Zones for Economic Development and Employment and other privileged regimes was watered with the blood of our indigenous peoples.

My social and democratic Government will restore a State of justice and the rule of law so that all of that will never happen again. We are working hard to prioritize incentives and eliminate tax abuses. We have already begun to promote laws on energy as a public good, ensuring workers' rights and supporting our internal market by investing in agriculture for food security and subsidizing our country's poorest, who will no longer pay for electric power. We have proposed the renegotiation of free trade agreements. We have taken a sovereign decision to invest in our own development by replacing imports while competing in international markets without subsidizing the excesses of developed nations.

We will recognize the importance of women, who have been denied inclusion in development for centuries, as an integral part of the backbone of society. We will provide them, as well as our children and young people, with health care, quality education, security and food sovereignty.

For Honduras, each wave of migrants that fled the dictatorship that was in place for more than a decade represented a painful loss for their families and for our country as a whole. The numbers tell us that the exodus provoked by neoliberal injustices only generates more unemployment and shackles us to a deplorable dependency. Paradoxically, those who emigrate from our country generate more foreign-currency income than many of our traditional exports. We express our solidarity with and support for those known as *tepesianos*.

In Honduras, we cannot continue to sustain the hypocrisy of a system that judges crimes linked to drug trafficking, a crime that it has nevertheless supported and facilitated for more than a decade, including through two rounds of electoral fraud and crimes against the nation and millions of Hondurans. For all of those reasons, we will establish an international commission to combat corruption and impunity with the support of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Honduras will have a future only if it takes firm steps to dismantle the neoliberal economic dictatorship. That is why we have already initiated the refoundation of our country and education system with the ideals and values of our national hero, José Francisco Morazán Quezada. My Government has begun a process of refoundation and profound change based on four fundamental pillars — first, a revolutionary transformation of education, raising the human spirit and ending colonialism; secondly, building an alternative and profoundly sovereign economic model; thirdly, building a system with the promotion of humanism, solidarity, integration with our brother peoples, peace and respect for human rights at its core; and fourthly, the progressive nationalization of public services such as health care, drinking water, electricity and the Internet.

Today, as war is once again punishing the world's poorest and our countries are invaded, we call for a return to respect for the self-determination of peoples and a rejection of the abominable and brutal blockade of the people of our sister republic of Cuba. It is time to seriously discuss the multipolarity of the world. President Barack Obama took the first steps towards ending that infamy. And as the President of Colombia, Mr. Gustavo Petro, has already stated, the aggression against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela must end.

As our comrade Berta Cáceres said, the people of the world must wake up. We still have time.

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

Ms. Iris Xiomara Castro Sarmiento, President of the Republic of Honduras, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

**Address by Mr. Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos,
President of the Republic of the Philippines**

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

Mr. Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos, President of the Republic of the Philippines, 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. Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos, President of the Republic of the Philippines, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Marcos: I am Ferdinand Marcos, and I am President of the Republic of the Philippines. I stand here today on behalf of 110 million Filipinos. At this time of crisis and opportunity, I bring with me the spirit of their enduring commitment to the ideals of our United Nations.

That commitment is reflected in our solid contributions to the cause of peace and justice. By shepherding through the Manila Declaration of 1982, we helped affirm that differences should be resolved only through peaceful means. By reinforcing the predictability and stability of international law, particularly the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, we provided an example of how States should resolve their differences, through reason and right. Those two contributions provide useful guidance for our time, for amid challenging global tides, an important ballast is the stabilization of our common vessel, that is, our open, inclusive and rules-based international order, governed by international law and informed by the principles of equity and justice. As I have underscored, the Philippines will continue to be a friend to all and an enemy of none.

Our world order traces its roots to a moment 77 years ago. The President of the General Assembly's first predecessor from Asia, General Carlos Romulo, called on our leaders then to make this floor our last battlefield in order to determine in this Hall whether humankind was to survive or be wiped out in another holocaust. Our peoples chose survival, cooperation and peace, and by doing so, they made history.

Today, history once again calls on us to make those choices. We are confronted by tectonic shifts that will inform the ebb and flow of the coming century. Of those, I see four challenges to the continued survival of our global community.

The first challenge is climate change. The time for talk about if and when has long since passed — it is here and now. Climate change is the greatest threat affecting our nations and peoples. There is no other problem so global in nature that it requires a united effort led by the United Nations.

The effects of climate change are uneven and reflect a historical injustice whereby those who are least responsible suffer the most. The Philippines, for example, is a net carbon sink. We absorb more carbon dioxide than we emit. Yet we are the fourth most vulnerable country to the effects of climate change.

That injustice must be corrected and those who need to do more must act now. We accept our share of responsibility and will continue to do our part to avert that collective disaster.

We call on industrialized countries to immediately fulfil their obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change to cut their greenhouse-gas emissions, provide climate financing and technology transfer for the adaptation of the most vulnerable and developing countries and lead by example. We look forward to concrete outcomes at the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to be held in Egypt later this year. When future generations look back, let them not ask why we did not take this opportunity to turn the tide, or why we continued in our profligate ways until it was too late. The threat knows no borders, no social class, nor any geopolitical consideration. How we address it will be the true test of our time.

Secondly, the development of advanced technologies is rapidly transforming human life and experience. We still barely understand how those transformations are unfolding and where they are leading. The imminent diffusion of those emerging technologies could solve many of our old problems, but could also disrupt our political and social orders. Our governance structures must keep up.

Thirdly, widening geopolitical polarities and sharpening strategic competitions are transforming the international political landscape. A profound lack of trust is putting enormous strains on our multilateral system. The Charter of the United Nations itself is being violated around the world as we speak. In Asia, our hard-won peace and stability is under threat from increasing strategic and ideological tensions. They demand that we uphold the ideals that led to the establishment of this parliament of nations and reject any attempt to deny or redefine our common understanding of those principles.

Even as we grapple with those new long-term shifts, we remain beset by an unresolved problem, the inequalities and inequities that persist within and among countries, and that continue to demand urgent action. Therein lies our fourth transcendent challenge. That injustice was evident during the pandemic, when the richer nations immediately received vaccines at the expense of the have-nots. We see, for example, similar dangers lurking in the persistent digital divide and in ballooning debt burdens.

As we awaken from the economic stupor caused by the pandemic, we must reinvigorate the world economy. We must use public and private resources to encourage the expansion of trade, investment and technology transfers to accelerate development. Knowledge and intellectual gains must flow freely to allow those lagging behind to catch up. Sustainable development will be hampered to the detriment of all if existing structures in the global economy remain unreformed.

In the past three decades, Filipinos have made significant strides on their path to sustainable development. Despite the challenges of the pandemic and global economic upheavals, we remain on track to reach upper-middle-income status by next year. With steady investment in food, public health, education and other social services, we expect to become a moderately prosperous country by 2040. I am confident that we will achieve that vision. Yet no nation stands alone. The achievement of our national ambition requires a global environment that creates conditions that allow all nations, including ours, to thrive in peace. We need the United Nations to continue to work and we in the Philippines are determined to be part of that solution.

The Philippines did not hesitate to donate to the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility that helped provide vaccines in many parts of the developing world. Multilateralism and international cooperation do make a difference. Filipino health workers were on the front lines in many countries to curb the spread of the virus, risking and often sacrificing their own lives to save those of others. We have always been an optimistic and courageous nation. Despite the enormity of those challenges, we believe that solutions are within our collective grasp. The President of the Assembly has already identified the three tools at our disposal.

The first of those tools is solidarity. We need to reaffirm the wisdom of the founders of our United Nations. That means transcending our differences and committing to ending war, upholding justice, respecting human rights and maintaining international peace and security.

Nuclear weapons continue to pose an existential threat, despite our efforts to build norms that resoundingly prohibit them. We must reject the notion of deterrence and remain committed to decreasing the global stockpile of those weapons. At the same time, we must also address the scourge of the proliferation of all weapons, be they small arms, light weapons or improvised explosive devices.

Our work must also focus on ensuring that the international system remains fair, not only for all States but more importantly for all peoples. The system must work for the most vulnerable, especially the marginalized, including migrants and refugees. The world has witnessed the enduring contribution of migrants in the fight against the pandemic. We are still dreaming of an end to the disturbing incidents of racism, of Asian hate and of all prejudice.

The Philippines' joint programme on human rights with the United Nations is an example of a constructive approach that puts our people rather than our politics at the centre of that work. It provides a model for revitalizing the structures that facilitate solidarity between the United Nations and a sovereign duty-bearer. Our continued solidarity will also benefit from a reformed and more inclusive Security Council and an empowered General Assembly that can hold the Council to account.

At the same time, the United Nations must forge ahead with its flagship tradition of global peacekeeping. My country's experiences in building peace and forging new paths of cooperation can enrich the work of the Security Council. To that end, I appeal for the valuable support of all Member States for the Philippines' candidature for the Security Council for the 2027-2028 term.

Our success in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao in the south of the Philippines is the centrepiece of those efforts. The peace that we have forged after many decades of conflict among warring factions and clansmen demonstrates that unity is possible even in the most trying circumstances. Inclusive dialogue involving all stakeholders, including women, young people, faith leaders and civil society, conducted with patience and in good faith, has produced a credible and solid foundation for self-governance that will pave the way for lasting peace and sustainable development.

We take the same approach in Asia. The Philippines builds partnerships for peace and development through dialogue, including interfaith and interreligious dialogue, especially through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. In the face of great diversity, we believe that partnerships form the bridge that will unite us all in promoting peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

Our global community is only as strong as we make it. We have to ensure that all nations, especially developing countries, are equipped with the tools

they need to navigate the uncharted waters of this century. That requires a transformative development agenda. We therefore welcome the convening of a United Nations summit of the future next year as an opportunity to collectively roll up our sleeves and chart our common path.

The second of those tools is sustainability. We must seek solutions that preserve our planet, solutions that must transcend our time and win the future for succeeding generations. We crafted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a platform of unity where our societies can build a future that is resilient and inclusive and where our people can be healthy, happy and secure. That requires investment in food security, the fragility of which has been clearly demonstrated by the pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine. We need to take concrete steps towards a modern and resilient agriculture. Food is not just a trade commodity or a livelihood, it is an existential imperative as well as a moral one. It is the very basis of human security.

In order to attain food self-sufficiency and security, we are providing innovative solutions and financial support to farmers and fisherfolk to adapt new technologies and connect to national and global value supply chains. We look forward to forging cooperation with the United Nations and our partners to boost agricultural productivity and food security. As host to 17 United Nations agencies, programmes and funds, the Philippines strongly supports reforms to ensure that the United Nations development system delivers as one through its United Nations country team.

Water connects our world and sustains our existence, but it is also a finite resource that requires our stewardship. Our biodiversity is equally important and must be protected amid the continuing challenge of climate change. We must enhance our cooperation in those areas, but sustainability also requires development policies that go beyond traditional metrics. We already know that gross domestic product is an incomplete measure of progress and that vulnerability is multidimensional. Our development agenda must also take into account the interests of all developing nations, including middle-income countries, where the majority of the world's poor live.

At the same time, sustainability means equipping our people with the tools they need to meet the challenges of the fourth industrial revolution. Investments in education are key, and my Administration is prepared to make such investments. The Philippines notes with

appreciation the Transforming Education Summit held earlier this week, at which those subjects were taken up. There is perhaps no greater renewable resource than the creativity and innovation of our young people. We understand the value of harnessing our people's talents by creating a robust and creative economy, and we will continue to work with partners in promoting that at the international level.

The third and final tool is science. Knowledge and discovery remain the keys to unlocking the potential of our dynamic future. Encouraging our young people's curiosity, honing their skills and protecting their intellectual property are important investments. Humankind is expanding its horizons, both in the digital world and out in our physical universe. Access to those domains is an inalienable right of all nations, as is the peaceful use of all existing and emerging technologies.

The Philippines is preparing for the future by laying a governance framework that will enable us to harness the power of renewable energy, develop the capacity to utilize life sciences such as medicine and virology, pursue digital solutions towards a more modern economy and expand our presence in outer space. But we also need to update the global structures that facilitate international cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, biology and chemistry, to name but a few. At the same time, we need new structures to govern rapid advances in other areas. We need to start by defining the norms of responsible behaviour in cyberspace and outer space and forming legal rules that will prevent the weaponization of artificial intelligence.

The diffusion of cutting-edge technology across the economy is promising, but it could come at a cost. Our development agenda must consider the possible displacement of human labour as a result of advances in automation. We must prepare our economic structures for that. We should start building the necessary supports for the sectors affected.

The transcendent challenges of our time are as consequential as those that faced us 77 years ago when we founded this body. We are indeed at a watershed moment, one that requires a refounding of this our United Nations. The world is ready for transformation. It is up to us, as leaders of our nations, to move and shape that transformation. The future beckons, and we can embark on that journey as single nations or as a world in harmony. I say, let the challenges of one people be the challenges for all nations. In that way the success of one will be a success for us all.

The peoples of the world look to their leaders, to us, to make these aspirations for our future a reality. We must not fail them. And if we stand together, we will not fail them. If we stand together, we can only succeed. Let us dream, let us work for those successes for all our nations, united.

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

Mr. Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos, President of the Republic of the Philippines, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Gitanas Nausėda, President of the Republic of Lithuania

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

Mr. Gitanas Nausėda, President of the Republic of Lithuania, 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. Gitanas Nausėda, President of the Republic of Lithuania, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Nausėda: Standing before this Assembly of world nations, I wanted to speak about peace and about challenges that the world is facing today — income inequality, pandemics and climate change. Unfortunately, today I have to speak about war — the war in Europe, a war that only deepens and does not resolve other issues.

Ever since the founding of the United Nations, the Organization's central idea has been that of bringing countries together and ensuring peaceful coexistence. After the terrible suffering of the Second World War, addressing global threats to international peace and security was the overriding concern. We owe a great deal to those past leaders who struggled to recreate global order out of profound disorder. The darkest hour in human history inspired the creation of the rules that remain essential to the global coexistence of nations. For the first time in our history, peace finally became a global value to be protected. Against all odds, the language of military aggression and conquest was condemned.

In the context of global challenges, we often talk about human rights, but what about countries' right to be sovereign and defend their territorial integrity? On 24 February, a permanent member of the Security Council started an unjustified, unprovoked and illegal war against a neighbouring country. That gross violation of international law undermined the very essence of the United Nations. For the past seven months, Russia's war on Ukraine has taken a terrible toll on the Ukrainian people. Many thousands have been tortured and killed. Millions have been displaced or forced to flee their homeland.

However, the war has not broken the will of the brave Ukrainian people to defend their country. It has not diminished their fighting spirit. The massacres at Bucha and Izyum have not brought them to their knees. Their inherent love of freedom, passed from one generation to another, is still there, undefeated, unspoiled. Despite all the challenges, Ukrainians have proved to be remarkably strong defenders of liberty and democratic values. Inspired by their heroic struggle, the international community should take an even more active role in boosting Ukrainian resilience to withstand their hardships.

Every State Member of the United Nations is expected to respect the rules of international order that we have created over the course of decades, and it is up to us to decide what can be tolerated and what cannot, where the red lines are and when they are crossed. How can we tolerate a member of the international community in a war of conquest and annihilation, a country that is deliberately attacking the rules-based world order, a country whose actions make it more difficult for all of us to maintain peace and security across the globe?

Today I call on everyone here to look closely at what is happening in Ukraine. Who is the aggressor and who is the victim? Behind the mask of an energy superpower there is a dangerous colonial Power seeking to occupy and annex its neighbours, searching for reasons to justify the annexation, rewriting history, using economic and energy blackmail and spreading disinformation and propaganda.

We all know that Russia's violations of the founding principles of the United Nations did not start seven months ago. Its destructive actions have undermined international security for many years, breaching arms-control treaties, using prohibited chemical weapons

both at home and abroad, continually violating the territorial integrity not only of Ukraine, but of Georgia and Moldova as well, and interfering in the elections of other countries. Those are just a few examples.

The ongoing suffering of the Ukrainian people has been further amplified by Russia's proxy, the Belarusian regime. It has enabled military attacks by another country from its territory. It continues to provide support for offensive operations against Ukraine. Unfortunately, it has surrendered Belarus's national sovereignty to its big neighbour.

The past few months have also revealed the danger of a looming nuclear disaster in Europe. The deployment of Russian military personnel and weaponry at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear plant is alarming and totally unacceptable. It disregards the safety and security principles that all members of the International Atomic Energy Agency are committed to respecting. A nuclear power plant should never be used as a military base.

Moreover, Russia's irresponsible rhetoric on the possible use of nuclear weapons directly contradicts its role as a permanent five (P5) State and the commitment it made in the January P5 leaders' statement on preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races. We see a huge gap between declarations and real actions that is undermining trust in a permanent member of the Security Council. We must collectively condemn such actions and require Russia to immediately and unconditionally withdraw all troops from the entire territory of Ukraine. It must also stop its irresponsible and dangerous nuclear rhetoric and behaviour. That should include withdrawing military and other personnel from the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

Lithuania therefore welcomes the active personal involvement of the Secretary-General. His visits to Ukraine demonstrate supreme dedication to the ideals of the United Nations. We note that the efforts of the Secretary-General and Türkiye were instrumental in reaching the deal on resuming Ukrainian grain exports. We also acknowledge the positive role played by other actors, such as the African Union leadership, in coming to that arrangement. It is an achievement shared by the whole community of nations. Once again, international efforts have helped us to avert a global catastrophe. The grain exports via Ukrainian ports will sustain and feed millions of people.

We should be in no doubt that it was the war in Ukraine that threatened to trigger global hunger, and we cannot be sure that this danger will not return until the Russian armed forces are withdrawn from the whole territory of Ukraine.

There must be no impunity for the brutal crimes and atrocities committed during the war. Guaranteeing justice and accountability is of vital importance from the standpoint of the credibility of the United Nations and the international community. We should consolidate and advance our legal efforts. We must ensure that all those responsible for this unprecedented assault on Ukrainian and European peace and security are held accountable. Lithuania will continue to engage in accountability mechanisms to address the mass atrocities being committed in Ukraine. I call on the global community to establish a special tribunal to address war crimes in Ukraine. It is also crucially important to ensure effective forms of reparations for the victims of those crimes.

Finally, we must consider the fact that Russia's war in Ukraine is an extension of the wider context. What do we see in Russia? The human rights situation there is deteriorating. Independent media and non-governmental organizations are being simply banished. Similar developments are taking place in Belarus. Systematic and widespread attacks target civil society, human rights defenders and independent media. The number of political prisoners in Belarus now exceeds 1,200, and it continues to grow. That is truly alarming and requires more attention from the international community. Lithuania has provided asylum to Russians and Belarusians — representatives of non-governmental organizations and independent media — who were persecuted in their home countries.

For Lithuania, the time for a business-as-usual approach is over. We have demonstrated that by building energy independence and accelerating our green transition. I invite all countries to stop financing this bloody war by refusing to buy the aggressor's energy resources, which would significantly affect its ability to continue this brutal war.

Lithuania has supported Ukraine since the first days of this terrible war. We have not been silent. We have stepped up to help Ukraine in every way we can. Our Government, as well as civil society, has been active in providing both military and humanitarian aid. We have taken in more than 60,000 refugees, mostly

women and children. To help them maintain a sense of belonging, we have established a Ukrainian centre in Vilnius, the first centre of its kind outside Ukraine.

The war must end, but not with peace at any cost. Ukrainian territorial integrity must be fully restored. Any other outcome would mean further atrocities and long-standing insecurity. While the aggressor has already demonstrated its eagerness to endanger the global population, we should not allow ourselves to be frightened. The danger is real. As history shows, pushing back against the aggressor is the only viable option.

Today I remain a strong believer in the transformative power of collective action, based on the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Together we can ensure global peace and security. Together we will make a difference. Let me assure the Assembly that Lithuania is and will always be a valuable partner in fighting for the right cause — in fighting for long-lasting peace.

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

Mr. Gitanas Nausėda, President of the Republic of Lithuania, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Klaus Werner Iohannis, President of Romania

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of Romania.

Mr. Klaus Werner Iohannis, President of Romania, 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. Klaus Werner Iohannis, President of Romania, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Iohannis: We live in difficult times. Our predecessors, who adopted the Charter of the United Nations, were “determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”. Almost eight decades later, peace is still under threat, this time from worrying new challenges — the most severe since the end of the Second World War.

Since 24 February we have been witnessing the tragic consequences of the unprovoked and illegal war started by the Russian Federation, a permanent member of the Security Council, against Ukraine. We have also witnessed exceptional solidarity from numerous countries united in their support for Ukraine, a sovereign member of the General Assembly and a victim of months of aggression against its civilians, basic infrastructure and economy.

The consequences of the war are global and are not limited to our security. They refer to blatant violations of norms and principles of international law, including international humanitarian law, fundamental human rights and sustainable development worldwide. Those should be of major concern for all of us, irrespective of how far we are from the conflict.

There is no justification for a military aggression against a sovereign State. There is no justification for bloodshed, destruction or human suffering. It is our joint responsibility to come together and uphold our common values as Members of the United Nations.

Democracy and universal human rights are legitimate aspirations for all humankind. We therefore need to act now and support all who fight for freedom and democracy. We should guarantee respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of all States.

Romania supported and will continue to support Ukraine, as its people are also fighting for our values and democracy. Romania has opened its frontiers and its heart to all those seeking refuge from the war in Ukraine. Since the beginning of the conflict, more than 2.3 million Ukrainians have crossed our borders. Romania has offered not only emergency assistance, but also medium- and long-term support for those who have decided to stay in our country, with free access to education, health services and the labour market. In addition, we have offered direct humanitarian assistance and put in place a logistics hub for coordinating international humanitarian assistance from the entire world. Our support will not stop there.

We know that our response, especially to this war, will shape our common future. Our support for peace should be voiced now louder than ever. In defending our universal values, it is essential to stay united and bring everyone on board, including those who are still hesitating. Engagement and dialogue are crucial to overcoming divisions and, at the same time, to countering the spread of falsehoods and propaganda.

The challenges we face today — such as the impact of climate change and the loss of biodiversity, energy insecurity, the lack of access to food and education, and social inequities — are becoming more and more severe. They need responses and solutions, as our citizens are rightfully asking for them. For all those issues, common action is the only way forward.

Energy security is a global concern, requiring joint solutions and responsible action. We must avoid the use of energy as a tool of blackmail. Energy security requires strategic investments in renewables, in nuclear power — with new future-oriented projects, such as small modular reactors — or in hydrogen. It also requires energy prices that are accessible to our citizens.

Ensuring energy security goes hand in hand with the green transition for resilient and climate-neutral economies. The nexus between climate change and peace and security should be more prominent in our discussions, including in the Security Council. Despite our efforts, we have not moved past the triple crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. All our efforts in the European Union and in coordination with international partners are meant to identify and implement the best solutions to those serious difficulties.

In two months' time, we shall meet in Egypt for the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and additional commitments towards climate neutrality are necessary, along with the implementation of the decisions already made. The clock is ticking, and the planet cannot wait any longer. Raising awareness, educating future generations on environmental protection and fighting climate change is of utmost importance and a topic very close to my heart.

Education is a top priority for Romania and a strategic investment in our future. Therefore, we also look forward to the Summit of the Future, to be held in 2024.

Weaponizing access to food and restricting it around the world is unacceptable. In order to support the Ukrainian economy and help manage the global food crisis, Romania has acted in a responsible way by facilitating the export of more than 4 million tons of Ukrainian grain, which represents 60 per cent of the grain exported by Ukraine, through our ports on the Danube and the Black Sea since the beginning of the crisis. We also commend the role of the Secretary-General in reaching the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which is, as he symbolically put it, a beacon of hope in a world that truly needs it.

Romania has long argued for keeping the so-called protracted or frozen conflicts high on our agenda and for focusing on how to solve them. The war against Ukraine has taught us that, in such contexts, the absence of war does not mean peace. Protracted conflicts, such as those in the Black Sea region, need to be addressed without delay.

United Nations peacekeeping has always been an instrument of paramount importance in safeguarding peace and security. Romania's solid contribution to various operations around the globe stands as proof of our commitment. We need to ensure that, in line with the Action for Peacekeeping agenda, United Nations peacekeeping missions become more effective and contribute to political solutions to conflicts, placing human rights at the core of their action.

We also need steadfast action by the international community to protect and promote human rights. We must strengthen the United Nations human rights system and ensure the sustainable and adequate funding of all its activities.

We recognize the essential role played by civil society actors and human rights defenders in the promotion and protection of human rights. Ensuring the proper functioning of democratic institutions, upholding respect for the rule of law and guaranteeing fundamental rights and freedoms remains fundamental. It is with these firm convictions that Romania has presented its candidacy for a seat on the Human Rights Council for the term 2023-2025.

I would like to conclude by stressing that we need to restore public trust in effective multilateralism. Only together will we be able to identify and implement sustainable solutions in order to achieve world peace, prosperity, the fulfillment of human rights and a healthy environment for future generations.

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

Mr. Klaus Werner Iohannis, President of Romania, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

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

The Acting President: 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 Acting 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*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate Mr. Csaba Kőrösi on his election as President of the General Assembly and to express to him, on behalf of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, our support for his work for the benefit of the international community. May this seventy-seventh session allow us to continue strengthening multilateralism to more effectively confront the new and old threats that beset humankind.

Today, we are facing a multiple and systemic crisis of capitalism that increasingly endangers the life of humankind and the planet. There is no doubt that the challenges we are facing are becoming more complex every day. If we seek a better future for current and future generations, we must not only reflect on the economic, social, food, climate, energy, water and trade crises, but also clearly identify their origins so as to change a system that perpetuates the domination, exploitation and exclusion of the vast majority, generates the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few and prioritizes the production and reproduction of capital over the creation and reproduction of life.

At the same time that we face the multiple and systemic crisis of capitalism, we are witnessing the final chapter of the unipolar world. The construction of a new world order, which we hope will be for the benefit of all States and peoples of the world, is inevitable. Convinced that another world is possible, we in the Plurinational State of Bolivia propose the following.

First, we should declare the world a zone of peace. In that connection, we express our dismay at the considerable number of armed conflicts ravaging

humankind, many of them promoted by transnational military corporations, as well as by the desire to impose a global political and economic order that benefits the interests of capitalism. Those conflicts have a great human cost and, in many cases, lead to the destruction of our cultural and environmental heritage.

Regardless of the origin, nature or geopolitical reasons for international tensions, the Plurinational State of Bolivia has been and will remain committed to a culture of dialogue among nations, through diplomacy among peoples. Unfortunately, however, we are seeing the growing deterioration of the multilateral system due to the capricious failure of the capitalist Powers to acquiesce to the existence of a multipolar world with a balance of power. Multilateralism is the only mechanism that represents a guarantee of respect among States, regardless of their economic or military power. We therefore believe that any breach of international peace and security is linked to the insufficient application of the mechanisms provided for in the Charter of the United Nations or, failing that, to their flagrant violation.

In 2014, the countries of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States declared the region a zone of peace. We committed ourselves to settling our disputes peacefully and banishing forever the use of force in the region. Along those lines, we call for the Assembly to be the space for a great historic agreement — an agreement in which dialogue and diplomacy prevail over any dispute — and for the world to also be declared a zone of peace.

To achieve that goal, it is vitally important, among several initiatives, for the United Nations to work tirelessly to achieve a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine, for the historic rights of the people and State of Palestine to be respected, and for NATO to stop entertaining its expansionist plans.

Secondly, we should replace the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction with fair compensation to the world's poor. It is precisely the lack of dialogue and measures of preventive diplomacy that has dragged us into an era of great tensions worldwide and of growing uncertainties and instability in global security. We are living in times in which there is a concentration of a large number of weapons of mass destruction in a small group of countries, which, by refusing to eliminate them and prioritizing their geopolitical interests, are endangering the peace and security of our planet.

Nine countries today have 12,705 nuclear warheads, 9,440 of which are in military stockpiles, ready to be used. Given this frightening reality facing the world, we must raise the banner of replacing military spending on the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction with the fair economic compensation that the main capitalist countries owe, morally and historically, to the countries of the periphery and the world's poor countries.

Thirdly, we oppose the commodification of health care and favour universal health-care systems. In the past two years, our peoples have had to face not only uncertainty resulting from conflicts, but also a serious health crisis resulting from the coronavirus disease, which exposed the vulnerabilities and inequalities of health-care systems around the world, as well as of the financial system and the global economy.

In the face of health-care systems that benefit only those able to access private insurance, and in opposition to those who have turned health into a commodity, it is imperative to strengthen universal health-care systems in which the State meets its obligation to protect and guarantee collective rights, within the framework of the pre-eminence of economic, social and cultural human rights, thereby reducing the effects of the global economic crisis on the most vulnerable sectors of the population.

Fourthly, we need a global food sovereignty programme that is in harmony with Mother Earth. Another manifestation of the structural and multipronged crisis of capitalism is the food crisis, which is exacerbated by the effects of the pandemic, global geopolitical conflicts and the numerous environmental crises facing the planet. This situation has not only affected the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, but also threatens the most basic rights of millions of human beings.

According to the 2022 *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* report, the number of people suffering from hunger in the world has increased dramatically over the past few years. In 2021 alone, a total of 828 million people, accounting for 9.8 per cent of the world's population, were the victims of food insecurity. Asia, with 425 million people affected by the food crisis, and Africa, with 278 million affected, remain the regions hardest hit by the crisis. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the food crisis has affected more than 56 million people.

To address the food crisis, we must urgently implement a global food sovereignty programme that ensures better production conditions for small-scale farmers. That means access to seeds, fertilizer, technology, infrastructure, credit and private and community-based access of all kinds to markets. It also means better living conditions in their communities, in full harmony with Mother Earth.

Fifth, we must rebuild the productive and economic capacities of the countries of the periphery hard hit by the unrestrained logic of the concentration of capital. In addition to the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic, which has degraded our economies and business transactions, today we are on an expansionary path, sustained by inflation, which has become a critical problem. For example, in August, the United States recorded annual inflation of 8.25 per cent, the highest in the past four decades, and there was unprecedented inflation rate of 9.1 per cent in the Eurozone. In addition, the war between Russia and Ukraine has exacerbated pressure on the price of energy, food, fertilizer, commodities and other products. In July this year, interannual inflation with respect to food reached double digits in some countries of Europe and in the United States.

In an interconnected world, it is important to respond to the needs of our peoples in the post-pandemic context by strengthening integration and cooperation, based on the principles of solidarity, complementarity and respect for the self-determination of peoples. In so doing, we can address the multidimensional effect on the economy and our industries, as well as on our productive capacities and self-sufficiency.

To that end, it is essential that we restructure the global financial architecture to ease the external debt burden globally so that developing countries have an opportunity to implement, in a sovereign manner, social policies with a focus on comprehensive and sustainable economic and social development. As always, the countries of the South are calling for balance in trade relations, as current trade relations continue to benefit only countries of the North.

In that regard, I would like to humbly share Bolivia's experience. Following the restoration of democracy in 2020, thanks to the unity, struggle and conscience of our people, we returned to the path charted by our democratic and cultural revolution, dignity and sovereignty. We resumed the construction

of our plurinational State and the consolidation of our economic, social and community-based production model. It is a sovereign economic model. We have not accepted and will never accept measures that are imposed by the International Monetary Fund.

Our economic model reflects our political, economic, social and cultural reality and is based on the active role of the State in the economy, the nationalization of our strategic natural resources, the development of economic organization of all kinds, increased public investment, import substitution industrialization, the revitalization of the domestic market, product diversification, food security and sovereignty, income redistribution and the fight against poverty and inequality. In other words, we seek economic growth with social justice, inspired by our civilizing political objective to ensure that our people live comfortably, which has its origins in our indigenous roots.

Such responsible and sovereign policies have enabled us to return to the path of stability, economic growth and income redistribution. In the first quarter of 2022, economic activity increased by 4 per cent, fuelled by domestic demand. Our inflation rate stood at 1.6 per cent in August. Our economy has the lowest inflation rate in the region and one of the lowest in the world, compared to the inflation rates of various countries that, over the past 12 months, have exceeded double digits.

With regard to social development, in the second quarter of 2022 Bolivia recorded the lowest unemployment rate in the region — 4.5 per cent. International organizations, such as the Economic Commission for Latin America, have listed us as the country leading in poverty rate reduction in 2022, while poverty rates in other countries will increase. However, as with many other periphery countries, we continue to make herculean efforts to solve issues related to the multidimensional and systemic crisis affecting us, making our recovery increasingly challenging.

We deplore the fact that, while capitalist countries spend copious amounts of money on war, they make minuscule contributions to comprehensive sustainable development, decolonization, elimination of the patriarchy and the eradication of poverty and economic and social inequalities. One example is that in recent months, 20 times more financial resources were earmarked for the conflict in Eastern Europe than

were pledged to the Green Climate Fund over the past decade. Peace is achieved not by buying and selling weapons, but rather by working together to build and, if necessary, rebuild the economic and productive capacities of all countries.

Sixth, the climate crisis requires accountability, solidarity and harmony between human beings and nature, not profit-seeking. Another crisis that threatens to destroy humankind and the integrity of our Mother Earth is the climate crisis, which is leading towards environmental collapse. The discouraging rates of emissions reductions that have been observed and estimated to date demonstrate that countries with the means to change their production and consumption patterns do not have the political will to do so. Those that have set ambitious targets for themselves have not received the means for implementation, as promised in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, to achieve those targets.

Furthermore, those that are mainly to blame for greenhouse gas emissions are now asking each country to chase the illusion of decarbonization by 2050, without considering the past responsibilities of developed countries or the capabilities and limitations of developing countries, for whom access to the latest clean technologies is out of reach. Perhaps the historic climate debtors want us all to be concerned only about the future so as to avoid, in the present, talking about the unfulfilled promises that were made to developing countries on funding, technology transfer and capacity-building.

The recent flooding in Pakistan, to whose people we offer our solidarity, serves as the most vivid and tangible example of the high human and material cost of the loss and damage caused by centuries of poor capitalist development. Today, more than ever before, it is clear that we need a specific financial mechanism that is based on solidarity, and not on profit-seeking, to address the losses and damage caused by the climate crisis in countries engaged in intense development of their productive forces.

We firmly believe that a future that is low in emissions and resilient to the climate crisis will not be possible if wealth remains concentrated in the hands of a few. Therefore, to reverse the climate crisis, we must resolve the economic, social and political contradictions that have been created by the capitalist model, as well as those human beings and nature.

Seventh, we must focus on the industrialization of lithium for the benefit of peoples and as a key pillar for the energy transition. I am referring to a strategic natural resource. Our country possesses the largest reserves of lithium in the world. We have managed this resource very responsibly, in particular as we take steps towards its industrialization, while ensuring that it is used to benefit all humankind as a key pillar of a global and just transition to a future that is low in emissions and respectful of Mother Earth.

We do not want our reserves of lithium to follow the path of other natural resources that, under conditions of colonialism and capitalist development, serve only to enrich a few and foment hunger among peoples. Bearing that in mind, we have consolidated our sovereignty over our natural resources, such as lithium. Its industrialization and benefits are for the well-being of peoples, not to enrich transnationals or a small, privileged group. We retain sovereign ownership of the economic surplus, which should be distributed among the lowest-income earners in the population.

We also reject interference or attempts of any kind to destabilize our country's democracy with the goal of controlling our lithium. According to remarks by the commander of the United States Southern Command just a couple of months ago, the United States has the so-called lithium triangle, located in South America, formed by Bolivia, Argentina and Chile, in its sights. The United Nations must take measures against all those countries that do not respect sovereignty and the principle of non-interference and that challenge peoples to take control of their strategic natural resources. We are not pieces on a chessboard. We are peoples who work, day in and day out, to move ahead, and we have every right to make decisions about our natural resources.

Eighth, we must shift from nationalizing to regionalizing the fight against drug trafficking. We must change our approach to the fight against drug trafficking. We continue to focus only on supply and not on demand and that has served as a pretext for militarization and the waging of a global war on drugs. That has affected the farmers of the global South, while major criminal groups go unpunished, as they have never been publicly identified in the countries where drugs are consumed.

The global war against drugs criminalizes and leads to unilateral sanctions against countries of the South. However, it provides opportunities for asset-laundering,

facilitates drug trafficking and other related crimes in the countries of the North. That cannot continue. Having enjoyed positive results in the fight against drug trafficking, Bolivia defends its model. We believe that the time has come to work with Peru, Colombia and other countries affected by the transit of drugs to regionalize the fight against drug trafficking, based on a comprehensive approach that is less militarized and more focused on economic and social issues. Here at the United Nations, we must work on a mechanism to assess results, not only in countries of the South, but also in countries of the North, one of which unilaterally endorses the war on drugs.

Ninth, we must strengthen international mechanisms offering preferential treatment to landlocked countries. Allow me to draw the Assembly's attention to the law of the sea, which is now a major issue in international legal relations. All landlocked or isolated States have serious challenges in accessing the sea and taking advantage of its resources and marine areas have considerable development potential for countries, in particular developing countries.

All countries have the right of access and use of oceans, seas and marine resources, as stated in the Convention on the Law of the Sea. We must ensure a just distribution of rights and responsibilities with respect to marine resources, which play a decisive role for the future of the peoples of the world. The sea is a right of all peoples, and no one should be prevented from enjoying that right or using it for development purposes.

Therefore, guided by the principles of equality, non-discrimination, international solidarity and social justice to rectify imbalances and global injustice, we believe that it is important to strengthen international mechanisms to provide preferential treatment to States that have no sea coasts and are therefore at a severe geographical disadvantage with regard to taking advantage of marine resources.

It has been proven that landlocked countries are at a double disadvantage. It costs us more to import products and we face major obstacles in our development. In that regard, we must remind the international community that my country, Bolivia, was created with access to the sea. However, it is now a landlocked country, compelled by past circumstances to address various challenges in the areas of transport, communication and trade. We hope that, sooner rather than later, dialogue and diplomacy will triumph to right the injustices of a war imposed by capitalist interests and build a better future for kindred nations.

Tenth, we must enlarge our limited view of human rights and democracy. There is no doubt that democracy and human rights are inseparable. The Plurinational State of Bolivia experienced for itself that, when democracy is undermined, the very foundation for the enjoyment of human rights is also undermined. That is why we are most firmly committed to the decisions and actions taken by the Organization to protect the most vulnerable groups in our society.

Bolivia has decided to rebuild its institutions by incorporating the plurinational nature of our State, which means that our 36 indigenous peoples are an integral part of our State. A nation that is proud of its diverse identity can build a better country, based on its intercultural nature. Bolivian men and women know that. From the historical perspective, this has occurred in very short order and our challenge is to ensure that the transformation continues, with the goal of ensuring that everyone lives comfortably. We must expand our criteria for human rights in relation to democracy. Neither human rights nor democracy can exist if the privileges of the few are preserved at the cost of the economic, social and cultural rights of the majority.

Eleventh, concerning intergenerational solidarity, we firmly believe that the current vibrant and productive generation must show solidarity with those who have laid the foundation of our nations. We cannot ensure equality among generations if we do not consolidate equality among present generations. We are concerned about the overemphasis on future generations in the multilateral sphere without considering all the work done by the older people in our countries. We are concerned about the fact that, to date, there is no universal treaty that protects older people. We hope that in-depth reflection on this issue can take place at the Organization.

Twelfth, we must proclaim a decade of action for depatriarchalization in order to combat all forms of violence against women and girls. In the same vein, I would like to draw attention to a cause for alarm at the global level — the violence that continues against women and girls, particularly indigenous women and girls and those living in poverty. The pandemic and the structural crises of capitalism are degrading living conditions, especially for women in rural and urban areas, who continue to face complex and intersectional forms of violence.

The *Gender Snapshot 2022* report issued by UN-Women and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which evaluates the annual progress on the nine targets of Sustainable Development Goal 5, points out that

“Gender discrimination has long relegated women and girls to positions subordinate to men in the workplace, politics and the home [...] and it will take at least another 21 years for laws to address and prevent violence against women to be in place everywhere and 286 years to secure gender equality in legal frameworks based on the current rate of change.”

The report also notes a worrisome setback in progress in poverty reduction and that rising prices are likely to exacerbate the trend. By the end of 2022, some 383 million women and girls will live in extreme poverty. Many other women in most parts of the world will not have an income sufficient to meet basic needs, such as food, clothing and adequate housing.

Mrs. González López (El Salvador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Our Plurinational State of Bolivia has declared 2022 the year of the cultural revolution for depatriarchalization for a life free from violence against women. We are promoting policies aimed not only at strengthening regulatory frameworks, but also at tackling the structural causes of violence through education and strengthening women's economic independence, as well as through cultural processes, in order to change the unfortunate reality created by the oldest system of oppression, the patriarchy, which sustains itself through colonialism and capitalism.

We call for the General Assembly to proclaim a decade of depatriarchalization. We refer to depatriarchalization because it is a complex process that requires community-wide political, economic, social and cultural change aimed at building reciprocal relationships for a life free from all forms of exclusion, dominance, exploitation, discrimination and violence for all of humankind and our Mother Earth.

Thirteenth, we must reject unilateral sanctions. It is inconceivable that in a world hit by crises and the pandemic that unilateral coercive measures are still being applied with the aim of breaking Governments at the expense of the hunger and suffering of their peoples. In the current global context, no country should be

persecuted, sanctioned or cornered for exercising its right to freely determine its own political, economic and social systems.

Putting Bolivia on a list of major drug transit or illicit drug-producing countries is one example of the unilateral actions that some countries have taken. The Plurinational State of Bolivia has a sovereign policy on combating drug trafficking that has yielded important results, and we reaffirm our Government's commitment to strengthening the fight against that global scourge. However, it is clear that the war on drugs — primarily the one unleashed by the United States — has failed. That country therefore urgently needs to thoroughly consider changing its policies in view of the fact that it has become one of the major drug-consuming countries. Regrettably, during the previous administration, more than 100,000 people died of overdoses or drug addiction in the United States.

Another clear example of ongoing unilateral sanctions is the inhumane and criminal commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, which threatens the lives of millions of citizens. Maintaining such measures is a crime against humanity — not to mention that the United States designates Cuba as a State sponsor of terrorism. That unfortunate example should also give us pause to reflect on the fact that some countries do not comply with the majority of the decisions taken every year in the Assembly.

Finally, we must ensure the full application of the Charter of the United Nations and the principle of multilateralism. If we, the international community, cannot overcome the major problems we are facing, we will lead our peoples to a mass catastrophe. Fulfilling our responsibility to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Charter, as well as international law and the institutions it governs, is more crucial than ever. The multidirectional crisis the planet is suffering because of capitalist ambition — and we are far from overcoming it — will worsen if we do not take urgent measures. Only by strengthening multilateralism can we achieve greater dialogue and cooperation in seeking solutions to the crisis. Revitalizing multilateralism in earnest will allow us to restore the legitimacy of international law, ensure peace through social justice and reshape the fragile international order to make it pluralistic and solid.

Based on the experience it has accumulated since its democratic and cultural revolution in 2006, the Plurinational State of Bolivia is hopeful that we

will overcome the current polarization in the global architecture — as well as the capitalist world order that has left us in a dizzying, dangerous, never-ending race of consumerism that threatens humankind and the planet — and build, in its place, a more just, inclusive and equitable world for all based on the principles of living well and people's diplomacy.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): 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. Pedro Castillo Terrones, President of the Republic of Peru

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Peru.

Mr. Pedro Castillo Terrones, President of the Republic of Peru, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Pedro Castillo Terrones, President of the Republic of Peru, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Castillo Terrones (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Peruvian people, we warmly congratulate Mr. Csaba Kőrösi on his election as President of the General Assembly. I am convinced that his broad diplomatic experience and commitment to environmental issues will contribute to the success of our work. I also commend and thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his initiatives to promote more efficient and fairer global governance and for the hard work he is doing in a troubled world that demands strong leadership.

The international situation is complex, difficult and delicate. Strategic balances are shifting, and our peoples are concerned about the worsening context with regard to peace, the environment and the international economic situation. The world is moving dangerously towards situations of confrontation and opposed interests, which are creating serious tensions that are unprecedented in history.

The President took the Chair.

Peru reaffirms its firm position in defence of the principle of non-aggression and respect for the territorial integrity of States. We reiterate that Russian Federation's intervention in Ukraine is illegitimate, as well as our condemnation of Israel's ongoing occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories since 1967. The selective application of the Charter of the United Nations is not conducive to peace. All armed interventions are in violation of the Charter — there is no such thing as good or bad interventions. Similarly, all sanctions, other than those approved by the Security Council as part of its actions to preserve peace and security, are illegitimate and contrary to international law. I repeat, all other types of unilateral sanctions, including economic sanctions, are illegitimate and contrary to international law.

When a war or aggression breaks out, it is the duty of the international community to work towards a ceasefire and a peaceful settlement of the conflict through diplomatic negotiations. We must not encourage conflict but rather make peace our mission. Peru therefore once again reiterates the need for a ceasefire in Ukraine. We call for enhancing the protection of civil society affected by the conflict and for negotiations to be launched in order to find a peaceful solution that takes the interests of all parties into account. At the same time, we need to ensure that the agreement enabling the export of grain from Ukraine continues and, as the Secretary-General has pointed out, make arrangements to normalize Russian fertilizer exports, the shortage of which is burdening the poorest farmers in the developing world. It is crucial to prevent economic sanctions from affecting food security. Ultimately, it is a matter of ensuring respect for the human right to food.

Regarding the question of Palestine, whose territories witnessed a surge of violence a few months ago, it is also essential for the international community to shoulder its responsibilities once and for all and support peace negotiations geared towards finding a solution based on recognizing both States — an independent and viable Palestine and an Israel with secure borders. That is the only way to secure a lasting peace. The Government of Peru will soon open a diplomatic outpost in Palestine, in full compliance with the principle of universality of diplomatic relations.

Given the context of instability and the fact that we are losing the capacity to use consensus and diplomatic negotiations to transform centres of conflict

into peacebuilding situations, it is essential to take a leap forward in strengthening and expanding the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations. At the request of my Government, Peru has nearly doubled its number of military personnel in six peacekeeping missions around the world, especially in the peacemaking and stabilization process in the Central African Republic. We are also committed to making short-term police contributions.

Just a few days ago, in Lima, I opened the first Latin American and Caribbean Conference on Peacekeeping Operations on the theme “Living in Peace”. The convening of the Conference demonstrates a determined push to increase the participation of Latin America and the Caribbean in United Nations peacekeeping operations, in accordance with the principles of consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force, except in legitimate self-defence. More importantly, the Lima Conference made the decision to establish a Latin American and Caribbean network for cooperation in peacekeeping operations. Peru is committed to ensuring the immediate set-up and launch of the network. Latin America, which played a decisive role in establishing the United Nations, must, through solidarity and joint action, step up its contribution to conflict resolution and peace. That is its historical tradition.

In that regard, my Government will be ramping up the consultations to establish South America as a zone of international peace. As indicated in the preamble to the UNESCO constitution, since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defence of peace must be constructed. Building the values of peace in the minds of men means respecting others, protecting human rights and not exploiting the weakest, as well as promoting dialogue and the peaceful settlement of disputes. But above all, it means eradicating — as the United Nations systematically does, with the permanent support of Peru — hateful ideologies, racism, intolerance, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. Peace, on the other hand, requires us to acknowledge that humankind has a common destiny.

Acting responsibly to build that common future means respecting the principle of non-intervention and, at the same time, showing solidarity with the poor, the weak, the dispossessed and the vulnerable. Acting responsibly to build that common future means respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms; civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights; the collective rights of peoples and the rights

of indigenous peoples. States have a duty not only to guarantee their peoples’ freedom but also to ensure that they can enjoy the social rights that underpin human dignity, including the human rights to education, health, housing, water, food, a living wage and, thanks to the General Assembly, the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

Peacebuilding also involves fulfilling the mandate to resolve the still-pending situation of colonial peoples and territories. Peru fought for its independence in the early nineteenth century based on the principle of self-determination of peoples. Peru’s diplomacy since 1947 has therefore firmly supported and continues to support granting independence and self-determination to the territories and peoples that are under the mandate of the United Nations to ensure their independence.

Peru has re-established diplomatic relations with the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and firmly supports its right to self-determination. The actions to be taken by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to re-establish the ceasefire in the Western Sahara and promote a negotiated and peaceful solution have our widest support. In the same vein, Peru fully recognizes the Argentina’s sovereignty rights of the over the Malvinas Islands and urges the parties to begin consultations and negotiations in order to realize that crucial objective.

The international economic situation is becoming dire. The pandemic’s negative effects on production processes and, especially, the deterioration it has entailed in the living standards of the poor and extremely poor majorities, as well as the problems it has created in the regularization of supply chains, inflation and rising energy prices, are unleashing a major world crisis, which will cause more poverty and exclusion.

Global growth indicators are not encouraging; indeed, global growth is declining. Latin America is suffering the negative effects of inflation and the decline of economic growth. It is also struggling to restore its efforts to combat poverty and extreme poverty to their pre-pandemic levels. The region has increasingly high rates of debt that are difficult to sustain.

In order to address those global and regional trends, which are affecting opportunities for potential growth, Peru has adopted a plan to boost economic growth known as Impulso Perú. Our definitive goal is, in all cases, to grow the economy by 3.3 per cent above the average target for Latin America. We are

convinced that our most important objective should be to create more better-quality jobs, and to that end, we are promoting and improving conditions for national and foreign investment. The plan also makes special considerations for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Peru is a country with stable and positive macroeconomic variables, an economy open to private and public investment for the benefit of those who need it most.

Secretary-General António Guterres has raised the need for a new global social compact. That new commitment needs to be linked to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, which are now seriously compromised. We need to reaffirm our political will to ensure that the United Nations development system, within the framework of all its agencies, prioritizes achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goals in the most critical areas of our times, including the reduction by half the proportion of people living in poverty; eradicating extreme poverty; making zero hunger a reality to provide food security for all families; achieving efficient and universal health coverage for all; ensuring that all boys and girls complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education; ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls worldwide; achieving universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all; and progressively achieving and sustaining income growth for the poorest 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average.

We need to ensure the strength and effectiveness of the new global compact by renewing our commitment to focusing our political will and financial resources on meeting the 2030 Agenda goals. The 2030 Agenda is not only a programme for peace, justice and equality at the global level; it is also an essential part of our national agendas.

This year, extreme heat and flooding have reached record-high levels as a result of climate change. Greenhouse gas concentrations continue to rise. Those are Mother Earth's warning calls for us to end our assault on nature. I call especially on the industrialized nations to give a new impetus to curbing global warming. As Heads of State, we must acknowledge that our targets for meeting our commitments to reducing new emissions already need to be seven times higher in order to achieve our goal of keeping the planet's temperature from rising more than 1.5°C. The United Nations has

reaffirmed its support for protecting the rights and lives of environmental defenders and for ensuring access to information on the environment for citizens and indigenous peoples.

The Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Escazú Agreement, which Peru has signed, reflects the efforts of the peoples of Latin America to implement the General Assembly's historic resolution 76/300, on recognizing environmental rights as human rights. The Escazú Agreement is an instrument to affirm our sovereignty over natural resources in the Amazon.

The oceans also require urgent compacts to preserve marine life and ecosystems and their biodiversity. Peru supports negotiations for a treaty to regulate fishing activities and eradicate pollution of the seas beyond 200 miles from their coasts. We firmly reiterate our claim to our maritime zone up to 200 miles, as established in our Constitution.

Latin America has a democratic tradition, yet it also has the highest levels of social inequality. But the Latin American peoples continue to move forward with the historical strength of the justness of their cause in the search for fairer, more egalitarian societies with greater social cohesion, where the common good is for all and there is no exclusion. That is the path we are on in Peru.

Democracy by its very nature involves conflicting political positions. That is what freedom is all about. But democratic governance requires respect for institutions and, above all, for the will of the people. Coups d'état, regardless of how they are orchestrated or the power of the States promoting them, are illegitimate. They are an attack on the sovereign expression of the will of the people. In the same way we address external crises, any crisis of governance or confrontation involving the powers of the State must be resolved through dialogue, agreement and full respect for the electoral results. The Inter-American Democratic Charter, Peru's contribution to democracy in the Americas, emphatically establishes that principle.

In a world where both tendencies to conflict and internal political crises are increasing, we need four pillars for defending democratic governance: respect for peoples, willingness to resolve conflicts through negotiation, respect for human rights and respect for the institution of the rule of law.

I am Head of State of a multi-ethnic and multicultural country whose development of high civilizations dates back more than 3,000 years, and which has also faced difficulties in eliminating racism and social inequality. My Government reflects the demands, hopes and dreams of those who have had nothing or very little to help them integrate into civic life as actors in their own destiny. Peru's social inclusion agenda mirrors the new social compact that the United Nations wants for all the peoples of the world.

It is an agenda that prioritizes the principle of leaving no one behind, as well as inclusion that benefits all people, especially the poorest and most vulnerable — for a world for all.

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

Mr. Pedro Castillo Terrones, President of the Republic of Peru, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. David Kabua, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Mr. David Kabua, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, 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. David Kabua, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Kabua: I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election. I also thank and congratulate your predecessor for his strong efforts and accomplishments.

I bring the warm greetings of Yokwe from the people and Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands — but I bring them at an uncertain global hour. Geostrategic tensions have risen both in Eastern Europe and the Indo-Pacific. The blue Pacific continent and, in particular, the Micronesian region, are no exception — indeed, we are a unique frontline.

As one of the last nations in the world to reopen its borders following the recent coronavirus disease outbreak in our community, we join the international community in mourning our losses, while we are also thankful for its partnership. We value the United Nations as our primary international stage, but if the world does not adequately respond to the island nations, and as the seas rise, then there is really no United Nations at all.

For the Marshall Islands, our first and most clear priority as the seas rise is to never cease safeguarding our nation's land, ocean and maritime boundaries and to ensure that our communities have a safe, secure, fully democratic and sovereign future. The vulnerabilities that we and others in our region share are severe and diverse.

We join many others, especially our Pacific Island neighbours, in condemning Russia's continued aggression and war crimes in Ukraine. We do so not only as a United Nations Member, but also in response to a wider global instability that directly impacts our own island region. Russia and all related actors will be held to account, as actions have consequences. The Republic of the Marshall Islands has proudly been a co-Chair of the Group of Friends of Accountability since its establishment following the aggression against Ukraine and supports the independent investigations of the Human Rights Council and International Criminal Court.

The war in Ukraine has set off sharp economic shocks around the world, and as a remote, small island developing State, our energy security is at a saturation point. Even as we seek to boost efficiency and renewables, greater cooperation is needed to move towards regional approaches to energy security and affordability, including by addressing potential joint bulk purchasing.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands condemns the recent military actions of the People's Republic of China in the Taiwan Strait, which has threatened to disrupt peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region and across the globe.

We welcome the International Atomic Energy Agency's recent monitoring reports on the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant and look forward to continued engagement through appropriate forums.

While we have shared goals and a strong partnership with the United States of America, we also have grave development challenges and essential needs

to be met in order to better ensure the growth and well-being of current and future Marshallese generations. We welcome the recent progress made with the United States of America towards a renewed Compact of Free Association, and with it a targeted trust fund.

It is vital that the legacy and contemporary challenges of nuclear-impact testing be better addressed, that climate change be addressed with the urgency and commitment it deserves, and that our voice as an equal partner be strengthened. We know that the United States stands tall on behalf of its renewed engagement with the Pacific Islands, and it is essential for all of us to ensure that words be met with actions.

The Marshall Islands is gravely concerned about an increasingly polarized world where nuclear-weapons testing and detonation are only growing in risk. We condemn the threats of further nuclear testing and of nuclear warfare. We and a great many other nations also share humanitarian concerns of our own about any nuclear detonation or the risk thereof. And the Marshallese people also have a unique voice in that regard.

My country, the Marshall Islands, was ground zero for the testing of 67 nuclear and thermonuclear weapons for twelve years during the United Nations-United States-administered trusteeship era. The exposure of our people and land has created impacts that have lasted and will last for generations. Those impacts to our human rights, land, culture, health and lives are burdens that no other country or nation should ever have to bear.

Our own experience, history and current challenges to nuclear exposure are key drivers for urging progress in reducing and ultimately eliminating nuclear risk. We welcome effective and meaningful progress on that from major Powers, nuclear-weapon States and all other States in whatever form it can effectively be achieved.

As a member of the Pacific Islands family, we rally around and acknowledge the fact that climate change is the greatest challenge and threat. As a low-lying atoll nation whose future is at risk, there could be no stronger statement, nor should climate change be considered in isolation. Tackling complex adaptation measures within a wider fragility makes our task just that much more difficult.

Today, as I entered this iconic Hall — a symbol of humankind's hope and aspiration for world peace, prosperity and international cooperation — my thoughts flashed back 31 years, when the first President

of the Marshall Islands addressed the Assembly (see A/46/PV.7) and called attention to the dangers faced by our small nation owing to the looming threat posed by global warming. More than 30 years ago, in this great Hall and at the Rio Earth Summit, our leaders sounded the alarm and warned of its dire consequences. As a matter of record, Marshallese Presidents and leaders in every succeeding Administration have been active and at the forefront of all United Nations global conferences on climate change and global warming, speaking out and fighting to keep our low-lying nation afloat.

Today, we renew our call on the world to declare total war on this century's greatest challenge — the climate change monster. Yet, after all these years, the world has failed to break our addiction to fossil fuel. We are not investing enough in life-saving adaptation, particularly for small island States. We see the toll of the global crisis. How much worse will it be if we breach 1.5°C? The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has been clear — solutions exist that can give us a fighting chance. The twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change delivered vital progress. As the convener of the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, we believe without question that the Glasgow Climate Pact must be the foundation for a safer future.

We must honour those commitments and deliver enhanced, nationally determined contributions and policies on coal and fossil-fuel subsidies to reach those targets. We must build that future by catalysing transformations today, by drastically increasing renewable energy and by taking on tough sectors like aviation and shipping. The Marshall Islands has proposed a carbon levy for international shipping that will drive the transition to zero-emission shipping, channelling resources from polluters to the most vulnerable. I humbly urge all countries to embrace it at the International Maritime Organization.

I see hope in elaborating a global goal on adaptation that will set our collective sights on a safe, resilient future. Delivering adaptation at scale required calls for bold and substantial investment. The doubling of adaptation funding is a vital start, but, like all climate finance, we must see it delivered to the most vulnerable. Loss and damage to property and human suffering are already occurring, with profound human rights impacts. That must be addressed, including through a finance facility that will help those on the front lines. This is a question of giving hope to those of us that face immeasurable threats to our people, nation and culture.

We are pleased to note and support the establishment of the human right to a clean environment and the post of Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change. As a small island developing State, the Marshall Islands is committed to better understanding and addressing complex challenges in human rights around the world, but development is never a trade-off for affirming universal human rights. Our own national experience teaches us that politics must never ignore the voices of the most vulnerable.

We welcome the recent release by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights of its long-delayed report on the human rights situation in the Xinjiang region of the People's Republic of China. We are gravely concerned about the report's findings that serious human rights violations have been committed and that widespread arbitrary detention may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity. The international community cannot bear silent witness and must react. The Republic of the Marshall Islands also affirms the role of the Pacific Islands Forum in addressing human rights issues in West Papua, including the prior call for engagement with the United Nations Human Rights High Commissioner.

As an ocean and island nation, the Marshall Islands congratulates its close neighbour Palau on having successfully hosted the Our Ocean Conference earlier this year. We also supported the recent 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference, held in Lisbon, and congratulate Portugal and Kenya on co-chairing that meeting. The world must address a growing gap in effective oceans management in the high seas and neighbouring coastal States. While we welcome important progress, far greater effort will be needed to conclude an ambitious instrument on biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. While our Pacific islands tuna stocks stand strong, the fishing efforts of global actors grows. We are proud of our sustainability benchmarks and partnerships, and small island developing States must continue to boost economic participation to match their leadership efforts.

The United Nations must be truly universal, all-embracing and all-inclusive, and we must guard against leaving any nation or people outside the gate in the cold. Today, we call on the United Nations to better welcome Taiwan and its people into our global family. How long will the United Nations persist in closing

its doors and thereby denying access to the people of Taiwan? Taiwan is a vibrant and responsible democracy and contributing member of our global family, and the United Nations circle of unity will remain incomplete without Taiwan and its people.

The Secretariat too often relies on politically motivated interpretations of resolution 2758 (XXVI), when responding to opportunities for the meaningful participation of Taiwan in international bodies and the United Nations system. Now that the world is facing escalated tension in and around our islands region, we as the world cannot be silent. With the ability to engage in meaningful participation in the United Nations system and to make greater contributions, Taiwan can constructively join all of us to make a collective difference. The United Nations system should revert to its original policy of consideration of widely accepted passports for basic public access to the United Nations itself and make good on its goal of broader participation, including registration procedures for civil society access. No one is left behind in the Sustainable Development Goals, least of all one of our important partners in tackling them.

The United Nations is in desperate need of a Security Council that is truly fit for purpose and should be better shaped to the realities of today, not those of eight decades ago. We strongly support better progress in achieving Security Council reform outcomes, and in particular support Japan's bid to become a permanent member of the Security Council.

In conclusion, it is very clear to us that none of the problems that our global communities are facing today, from the COVID-19 pandemic to roaring inflation and rising energy costs, can be solved by any single nation. Rather, we must come together as a united global family to solve them. But we cannot solve all those problems as long as the world is in conflict; in other words, we cannot do it without world peace.

That reminds me of the following poem:

If there is righteousness in the heart,
There will be beauty in the character.
If there is beauty in the character,
There will be harmony in the home.
If there is harmony in the home,
There will be order in the nation.
If there is order in the nation,
There will be peace in the world.

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

Mr. David Kabua, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

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

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

Mr. Wavel Ramkalawan, President of the Republic of Seychelles, 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. Wavel Ramkalawan, President of the Republic of Seychelles, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Ramkalawan: Seychelles congratulates you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session. We also extend our profound appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Abdullah Shahid, for his leadership during the preceding session. I would also like to express our gratitude to Secretary-General António Guterres for his efforts to pursue a common agenda for the United Nations at a time when faith in the multilateral system needs, more than ever, to be restored.

We perhaps need to be reminded that multilateralism gives each one of us the opportunity and the means to solve complex challenges that we cannot overcome on our own. Never have we faced challenges of such magnitude: a world in deep crisis, climate inaction, the aftermath of the pandemic, food insecurity, the rising costs of energy and the war in Ukraine. We have reached an inflection point that compels us to question the trajectory of our multilateral order, as the perils to our collective well-being are acute and numerous. Faced with a multiplicity of interrelated challenges that many of us are least responsible for but most affected by, the plight of States in vulnerable situations has never been more pronounced. Many of us in the developing world have had to revise our 2030 aspirations, owing to lost progress.

Economic inequity is the biggest impediment to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The blueprint for a better and sustainable future

requires financial resources that many of us simply do not have or are unable to access, since development cooperation modalities fail to consider vulnerability as a barrier to durable development. Time and again, small island developing States (SIDS) have consistently reiterated the call for a globally accepted vulnerability assessment put forward at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

Our island nations have experienced the greatest economic loss from the pandemic, with economic contractions averaging 7 per cent. Yet very few of us were able to access the meagre 6 per cent of coronavirus disease funding allocated to developing countries. We cannot continue to rely on temporary solutions to address the systemic faults within the existing development cooperation mechanisms. If this is to be a watershed moment, we must put into practice real solutions that focus on addressing vulnerabilities and building resilience to ensure socioeconomic sustainability. We need the international financial institutions and multilateral development banks to look beyond the gross national income benchmark.

There is broad consensus that a multidimensional vulnerability index offers a specific approach that will complement and improve the efficacy of development cooperation, permitting countries in vulnerable situations to access concessional financing and address their needs. I therefore welcome the interim report of the High-level Panel on the Development of a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index for Small Island Developing States and hope that progress on universally accepted and inclusive indicators that capture the vulnerabilities of all developing States can be accelerated ahead of the 2023 deadline.

The current food and energy crisis, exacerbated by the conflict in Ukraine, poses a threat to sustainable growth globally, necessitating integrated systemic responses. The challenge for us in Africa is how to guarantee that trade contributes meaningfully to food security. In that regard, the African Continental Free Trade Area has a vital role to play by stimulating intra-trade among ourselves by ensuring that we redistribute food produced from regions with a surplus to regions facing deficits. The solutions to our food security can be achievable. We firmly believe that harnessing the potential of the blue economy by tapping into fisheries and aquaculture resources can be a viable option for addressing food and nutrition insecurity that prevails at the moment.

Food and energy security must be apprehended within the context of climate change. We are at the cusp of an ecological collapse spurred by climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss, largely instigated by irresponsible human activities and unfettered emissions — a situation that greatly threatens the inalienable right of all humans to a healthy environment. The reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have made clear that the window of opportunity to effectively address climate change is rapidly closing, with dire consequences for humankind and ecosystems. Failing to act decisively and urgently now will lead to untold costs, with those least responsible for the calamity having to bear the heaviest price. As floods, heat waves and fires in the Western world dominate the news and our social media feeds, let us not neglect or forget that the impact of slow-onset events like sea-level rise pose an existential threat to small island developing States. We need bold actions, not unfulfilled promises and pledges.

In defining this watershed moment, individual interests must converge into collective benefits. We must also confront the gross injustice of having citizens of States least responsible for the unravelling climate-induced disaster pay for the loss and damage caused by others. Even as we bear the impact of climate change, our environment is suffering immensely from the consequences of pollution. Seychelles can attest to that fact, as our shores and sea have become encumbered by plastic waste. I am nonetheless heartened that a historical agreement to establish an intergovernmental negotiating committee with the mandate to forge an international, legally binding agreement to end plastic pollution was achieved at the resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

Hopefully, that will raise ambitions in other areas of environmental protection, including in the protection of biodiversity. The pressure that human activities are exerting on biodiversity are tipping the scale towards mass extinction across the globe. Therefore, the fifteenth meeting of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity will be critical for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. If the world is to achieve the framework's ambitious targets, ensure that the SDGs are met and tackle the interrelated planetary crisis, we must invest in the means of the framework's implementation.

Related to that is the issue of the oceans that surround us. Healthy oceans are critical to life on Earth. As a foremost proponent of the blue economy paradigm,

Seychelles has taken bold steps to sustainably harness its ocean for the benefit of its people. By implementing our marine spatial plan, we have not only set aside 30 per cent of our exclusive economic zone for protection and sustainable use, but also have helped consolidate progress towards our commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, as well as the SDGs and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The marine spatial plan exemplifies how climate action, ocean conservation, sustainable development and building resilience can be achieved by a SIDS, with immutable special circumstances, in an integrated manner. Building on that, Seychelles has committed to protecting at least 50 per cent of its seagrass ecosystems by 2025, and 100 per cent by 2030, greatly contributing to ecosystem preservation and carbon sequestration. We call on other littoral and oceanic States to be as bold in their ocean commitments.

As we progress in the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, it is imperative that we invest in science's best approaches and forge the strong partnerships needed to achieve a better understanding and protection of the ocean. Beyond the preservation of our natural environment, such holistic measures can be applied to the myriad interlocking challenges that we are facing as a global community. It will take our combined will, conclusive action and uncompromising respect for the founding principles of the United Nations to secure a better future for all.

Last but of no less importance is the situation in Ukraine. The Ukraine-Russia conflict is of great concern to us. It poses a grave threat to global security and world peace, with serious ramifications for the entire community of nations. My country's stance on the peaceful resolution of conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy is universally recognized. In that regard, the Republic of Seychelles strongly supports the call of the Chair of the African Union and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission urging the parties concerned to establish an immediate ceasefire and to resume negotiations in order to preserve the world from the consequences of planetary conflict and to find a permanent and mutually acceptable solution to the conflict.

We must find common ground for the sake of humankind and our planet. In attempting to utilize this critical moment in history as a turning point to bring

about real positive change, the choice is clearly with every one of us to decide whether our actions will lead to shared prosperity or mutual destruction. Let us be reminded of our moral responsibility as world leaders to take bold and decisive steps that will truly bring about transformative solutions. We share only one planet, and our fates are indivisible. Let us secure a better future together.

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

Mr. Wavel Ramkalawan, President of the Republic of Seychelles, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Alberto Fernández, President of the Argentine Republic

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

Mr. Alberto Fernández, President of the Argentine Republic, 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. Alberto Fernández, President of the Argentine Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly

President Fernández (*spoke in Spanish*): Many times in history, assassinations have been the prologue to great tragedies. Based on the rejection or hatred of their victims, the perpetrators of such actions have upended the public order and opened the gates to enormous social discord. Entire peoples have succumbed to such prophets of hate. For that very reason and in order to underscore the values of rational democratic coexistence, I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude for the solidarity that the entire world has shown with Argentina with regard to the attempt on the life of our Vice-President, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner.

In Argentina, the attempt on the life of Vice-President not only affected the public order; it also sought to undermine the virtuous collective achievement that next year will see the celebration of its fortieth anniversary. In 1983, we restored democracy and began a long historic cycle during which different political parties have alternated serving in the Government.

We Argentinians adopted the “never again” agreement on State terrorism and political violence. We value democracy as a model of social development that demands respect for others in their diversity.

I am sure that fascist violence under the guise as republicanism will not succeed in changing the broad consensus to which the vast majority of Argentine society adheres. By exploiting the unrest caused by the pandemic and the economic effects of the war, extremist and violent narratives have proliferated and found fertile ground for promoting anti-political sentiment in our societies. Remaining silent before such glaring signs could make us responsible for jeopardizing the rule of law itself. Those who seek to weaken and erode democracies have a special interest in fostering extreme polarization. Let us not resign ourselves to such a scenario. Let us forge a robust global condemnation of those who promote division in our communities.

It is incumbent upon the General Assembly to respond to the warning signs on the planet in a timely manner. As survivors of a pandemic that struck humankind, we face the choice of learning from that tragic experience or watching the world move towards ever-greater confrontations. The pandemic revealed the enormous inequalities endured by the world's population. Is it fair that the wealth of 10 men alone represents a sum greater than the combined income of 40 per cent of the world's population? Where are the ethics in the fact that the pandemic has claimed four times as many lives in the poorest countries than in the richest? Failing to condemn this model of capital accumulation that concentrates wealth among a few people while millions of others drown in poverty makes us complicit in creating such a level of inequality. We still have time to stop many of the threats facing humankind. The injustices we are seeing will only get worse if extreme positions take root; if wars become protracted, while exacerbating hunger; and if persistent inflation erodes the incomes of the most vulnerable.

We must work together in solidarity. We must strengthen a cooperative multilateralism that will ensure the strengthening of the rule of law, the principle of non-violence and greater equity to reduce social gaps. In order to overcome such challenges, we must restore the primacy of peace. We have always advocated for the peaceful settlement of all disputes. It is imperative that all ongoing hostilities cease. For that reason, we need to work together to pursue dialogue and restore peace in the dispute that began with the Russian Federation's

military encroachment on the territory of Ukraine. As we seek to reach the horizon of global peacemaking, we must abandon the economic and financial practices that the developed world demands of the developing world. Maintaining the current situation will only increase poverty and marginalization. If we do not change, we will be unable to build fairer, freer and more stable societies committed to upholding their institutions.

Indebted nations suffer much more from the effects of the established system. Argentina is among them. For that reason, I would like to thank all the States that have supported us in the complex process of renegotiating our foreign debt. My Government did not create that debt but is addressing it in all seriousness. Our criteria are known. They respond to the provisions of resolution 69/319 of 2015, which stipulates that sovereign debt restructurings must promote sustained and inclusive growth while minimizing economic and social costs, warranting the stability of the international financial system and respecting human rights. While we call for a change in the paradigms that govern the international financial system, we subscribe to the same principles underpinning the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Food security must be guaranteed to all who live on the planet. Hunger cannot be allowed in this day and age. The recent reports of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations warn of the impact of the excessive volatility in some food prices and the changes in input markets that influence their production. All of that has had and continues to have a significant effect on increased inflation worldwide; all of those factors are to the detriment of the most vulnerable. Argentina will fulfil its role as a reliable producer and exporter of nutritious and quality food, as well as a supplier of technologies to improve food production. We must guarantee a fairer and more transparent, equitable and predictable international trade system for agricultural products. If we ensure such a system, food-producing countries will be able to make the needed investments to increase production and help alleviate world hunger.

Just as we must ensure food security, we must have secure and predictable access to energy. Argentina will continue to stand ready to help overcome that great challenge. We are ramping up production to provide the world with clean energies, and others that, like natural gas, will enable us to reduce carbon emissions during the transition. We have the world's

second largest unconventional gas reserves and the fourth largest unconventional oil reserves. We hold large reserves of lithium and the potential to develop solar and wind energy, as well as low- and zero-emission hydrogen. We are working to ensure that our path towards achieving environmental sustainability and food and energy security will be feasible, but all our efforts will be in vain if we do not walk on that path within a framework of increased equitable economic and social development. In that spirit, we are deploying our industrial capabilities and creating added value along the entire production chain. We must include our industrial, scientific and technological suppliers at every turn. Production that creates dignified employment is the path we have chosen to develop.

Just as it is incumbent upon us to seek development that benefits everyone, the environmental situation of our planet urgently requires us to take firm and decisive action for the sake of future generations. Ecological problems require the involvement of everyone. They need a constructive relationship between States and societies — a crucial partnership, without which sustainable development becomes an illusion.

Urgent issues, such as climate change, biodiversity and plastic pollution, should mobilize our efforts in the hope that we can build a broad consensus to ensure the preservation of the planet and humankind. We are not all equally responsible for the climate crisis. Neither Latin America and the Caribbean nor Africa are at the forefront of carbon emissions. Responsibilities must clearly be differentiated, and that requires immediately alleviating the efforts of those that were not to blame.

We want to continue strengthening Argentina's long-standing position based on the principles of international humanitarian law, unrestricted respect for the sovereignty of States, the self-determination of peoples, the gender perspective and cooperation.

Through the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, holding the presidency pro tempore, we are reinforcing the principles of collaboration, promoting democratic pluralism and fostering South-South and triangular cooperation.

Argentina is actively involved in peacekeeping operations, an essential instrument of the United Nations. We will continue on that path.

I would like to draw attention to the use of unilateral coercive measures. Under the Charter of the United Nations, the only legitimate sanctions are

those imposed by the Security Council to enforce its resolutions regarding the maintenance of peace and security. Argentina therefore joins the demand by the peoples of Cuba and Venezuela that the blockades suffered by those nations be lifted.

I would like to thank all Member States for having entrusted Argentina with the presidency of the Human Rights Council this year. For us, the defence of human rights is part of our identity and our history. The Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo taught us to persist and to fight. They showed us the way so that, with political will and social consensus, we could carry out a process to eradicate impunity that is unique in the world, based on memory, truth and justice.

In the same spirit, our country has expanded citizens' rights by developing laws and public policies that promote the equality of women and diversity, based on an intersectoral, intercultural and human-rights approach.

The much-declared social equality requires that we all have access to the advantages offered by the present. In the digital era in which we live, we believe it a priority to universalize access to information and communication technologies and to promote actions that reduce the inequality gaps seen today.

The United Nations is the right place for the international community to achieve the necessary agreements to ensure the maintenance of a free, open, stable, secure and, above all, peaceful cyberspace, where hatred and violence are not fostered through anonymity.

Argentina condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. It must be countered in the context of the rule of law and full respect for international law. We continue to fight against impunity, investigating the attacks on the Israeli Embassy in 1992 and on the headquarters of the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA) in 1994, which claimed the lives of 107 people and injured hundreds. We want those responsible for such heinous attacks to be identified, tried and ultimately sentenced. Once again, we urge the Islamic Republic of Iran to cooperate with the Argentine judicial authorities to advance the investigation into the AMIA bombing. We also urge the international community to join us in our struggle by refraining from receiving or harbouring any of the accused, even if they enjoy diplomatic immunity. We must remember that international arrest warrants and INTERPOL red notices are pending against them.

Latin America and the Caribbean is a region of peace. We are working to also make it more just and equal. We know the tremendous comparative advantage that the Southern Common Market, in particular, and all of Latin America, in general, have in sustainable food production and energy supply.

We have a great opportunity to develop. If we improve the quality of life of our people by creating genuine employment, we can eradicate the pockets of poverty that persist in our societies today.

I wish to reaffirm the legitimate and inalienable sovereign rights of the Argentine Republic over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia, the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. They are part of Argentina's national territory and have been illegally occupied by the United Kingdom for almost 190 years. The request made through resolution 2065 (XX), of 1965, has remained in force and has been reiterated on many occasions,

The United Kingdom persists in its attitude of disregarding the call to resume negotiations on the territorial dispute. Moreover, it has exacerbated the dispute by its calls for the illegal exploitation of renewable and non-renewable natural resources in the area. It also insists on an unjustified and excessive military presence on the islands, which only brings tension to a region characterized as an area of peace and international cooperation. We request that the Secretary-General renew his efforts to fulfil that request and that the United Kingdom agree to heed the call of the international community and put an end to that anachronistic colonial situation. In that context, I wish to reiterate my country's full readiness to return to the negotiating table and seek a solution that will put an end to this long-standing sovereignty dispute.

We live in a world where injustices and inequalities are increasing. At the same time, democracies are increasingly at risk, peace is crumbling and uncertainty is increasing. We have an urgent moral duty that cannot be postponed, and that is now. We must work and implement effective global agreements that eradicate hunger, drastically reduce inequalities and ensure democratic stability, peace and coexistence. Humankind is threatened. Argentina humbly calls on all the countries of the world to build a new social model that ensures prosperity through social justice.

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

Mr. Alberto Fernández, President of the Argentine Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Andrzej Duda, President of the Republic of Poland

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

Mr. Andrzej Duda, President of the Republic of Poland, 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. Andrzej Duda, President of the Republic of Poland, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Duda (*spoke in Polish; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): A year ago, I delivered my address at this very place as the President of a country of 38 million people (see A/76/PV.4). Today I stand at this rostrum with the awareness that, according to various statistics, more than 40 million people — and, according to some voices, as many as 41 million people — are living in my country, Poland. The additional 2 or 3 million people are predominantly refugees from Ukraine and are our neighbours. Some of them are our permanent guests, while others travel between Poland and Ukraine. However, there is one thing that they all have in common: they are sheltering in our country from war. They are taking refuge in our country from death and from slavery under the Russian occupation after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The war has been continuing for seven months. The war, provoked by Russian aggression, is a war in which Russia is not limiting itself to fighting the Ukrainian army. Russian troops are killing civilians and forcibly relocating them to their territory. Russia is destroying Ukrainian cities, monuments, schools, kindergartens and hospitals. It destroys agricultural crops and devastates the environment in Ukraine. It destroys literally everything that it cannot seize or loot. Recently, it has been threatening not only Ukraine but the entire world with a nuclear catastrophe by attacking and causing the failure of nuclear power plants, particularly the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

The decision to wage this horrible war was made in Russia by people prompted by an imperial sentiment and colonial, nationalist Russian hubris, exalting their own people and denying their sovereign neighbours the right to self-determination. They managed to obsess the nation of one of the United Nations founding States with that thought — a nation that had a chance to protest against the insanity of its leaders. Unfortunately, only a few Russian people, the most courageous, stood up against this war. They dared to stand on the side of justice and honesty.

This war, started by Russia in Ukraine, like all other conflicts going on in the world today, must be lost by the aggressor. Let me reiterate that, in this case, it is the Russian State. Moreover, the aggressor has in a sense already lost because it failed to subdue a free nation, break the spirit of the Ukrainian nation and disperse the Ukrainian army. Today it has against it not the Ukrainian State itself, but a nation of many millions of people, the vast majority of whom do not want any negotiations whatsoever with the invader until he withdraws his forces from the occupied lands of Ukraine. It is at odds with a large part of the nations of the world, which have very clearly spoken their minds, including in resolutions adopted here at the United Nations. It has against it my country, Poland, on which — and I say this here and now — Ukraine can always count.

I was one of those politicians who, even before the war, believed that Ukraine would successfully defend itself. Today I am convinced that Ukraine will prevail, that the refugees will return to their homes, that Ukraine will be rebuilt and that its internationally recognized borders will be restored. My country, Poland, joining forces with its allies, will do its utmost to make that happen.

But there are other facets to this war. It has economic repercussions in many areas — a parallel war unleashed by Russia and the war against our common principles and values and against all humankind. I also want to talk about that today because in this Hall I can see representatives of many familiar countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, with whose leaders I spoke just before or during the war. This is not a regional conflict. This war by Russia against Ukraine is fuelling a global fire. This war will bear on our and their countries if that has not already happened.

One of the most dramatic global effects of the Russian aggression is the food crisis and the spectre of famine looming over large parts of the world. I had lengthy discussions on the subject during my recent trip to countries of West Africa — Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal. In all those countries, I spoke with their leaders about food security and the potential impacts of further restrictions on grain and fertilizer exports from Ukraine and Russia. The topic also featured in previous discussions that we had with fellow Presidents from Central and Eastern Europe and with leaders from Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

I also vividly recall a conversation that I had with the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, late at night in Rzeszow when he was on his way to Ukraine to discuss and address food-related problems. I thank the Secretary-General for his energy, commitment, resolve and courage, which was, and is, much needed at this difficult time in order to represent the international community gathered in the largest organization in the world with dignity.

From the very beginning of the invasion, Russia has been deliberately and cynically destroying new crops and farming equipment, and the invasion itself has drastically reduced Ukrainian harvests. The data that we obtained makes it clear: Russia has seized farmland representing 22 per cent of all agricultural land in Ukraine, that is, a fifth of the land that is the breadbasket of many non-European countries. Land that produces nearly 30 per cent of winter crops has suddenly failed to produce any crops this season, or its harvest has been looted. Speaking in this forum, I do not need to recall that Ukraine is one of the most important food producers in the world. It is the breadbasket not only of Europe, but also the world.

Conservative estimates indicate that this year alone Ukraine's harvest will be 35 per cent smaller in the aftermath of war, and I emphasize a 35 per cent smaller harvest in Ukraine. More than one third of the breadbasket of large parts of the world has been eliminated by the Russian aggression. Who will suffer from that? It will be those who are most in need. It is an economic weapon; it is the weaponization of food, hitting Africa and the Middle East the hardest. I have been in politics long enough not to be naive in that regard. This is a deliberate policy by Russia. It is estimated that, in the aftermath of the war in Ukraine, the number of people suffering from chronic hunger this year will increase by about 47 million people, again

especially in Africa and the Middle East. It is there that this catastrophe of famine, provoked by Russia as a result of its aggression against Ukraine, will be most visible.

As the international community, we are obliged to prevent anyone in the twenty-first century from knowingly and cynically causing an artificial famine in the name of achieving their political goals, the way in which Stalin did back in the 1930s. In that context, it is of key importance that, on 22 July in Istanbul, Russia and Ukraine signed separate agreements with Turkey and the United Nations. Those documents are aimed at unblocking the sea route through the Black Sea for the export of millions of tons of Ukrainian grain. Once again, I would like to personally acknowledge the significant role played by Secretary-General, Guterres in the conclusion of that accord. That is a great success of the United Nations and the Secretary-General in this extremely difficult situation.

Now we all have to be vigilant about the parties' compliance with the agreements and their commitments. I am all the more concerned by the increasingly frequent statements from the Russian side undermining the accord, as well as by acts that deserve to be condemned in the strongest terms, such as the shelling of the Odesa seaport by the Russian army, which took place within less than 24 hours of the signing of the documents. As the international community, we must immediately respond to such incidents by imposing further sanctions and providing more aid packages to Ukraine, which is defending itself.

For my part, I would like to affirm that, as a neighbour of Ukraine, Poland, together with its European Union partners, remains steadfastly committed to facilitating Ukrainian grain exports, including by land. We will go to great lengths to make sure that those consignments reach those who are most in need, especially in Africa, Asia, Latin America and everywhere that it is needed, so that people can survive.

Given Russia's unlawful actions, we should learn a lesson for the future. We should also keep in mind the provisions of international law and the possibility of holding perpetrators accountable.

A number of regulations exist in international law on the protection of food resources and the natural environment during conflicts. Inter alia, one can cite the provisions of article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,

which recognizes the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, and by which States pledged to distribute the world's food supplies equitably.

In addition, the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, of 8 June 1977, in article 54, prohibits, among other things, attacking, destroying, removing or rendering useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as foodstuffs and agricultural areas. In turn, article 55 of the Protocol obliges States to protect the natural environment from damage during hostilities.

That Russia is deliberately destroying Ukraine's agriculture in breach of international law is probably no great surprise to anyone here. But, in the face of a barbaric war, are international legal regulations a sufficient response to the enormity of the damage to the environment and the world's food supply? I have strong doubts about that.

In that context, I see the need to develop penalization mechanisms to be able in the future to bring to justice the perpetrators responsible for violating international law. Those who knowingly destroy crops in the breadbasket of the world must know that they will be pursued in order to be prosecuted as long as they live. From this rostrum, I would like to pledge our support for all existing and new initiatives so that those who deprive millions of people of their right to food and destroy the environment will no longer go unpunished. Poland wants to actively participate in that work.

The Russian aggression on Ukraine constitutes no less than aggression against the whole world. Every act of aggression requires a multidimensional international response, with determination and without hesitation. It is necessary to step up pressure on Russia and its accomplice, Aleksandr Lukashenko's regime in Belarus. The advisability of continuing cooperation with those Governments should be deeply reassessed, including by international organizations. There is no longer room for business as usual with Russia. The time for business as usual has definitely come to an end and was finished by Russia through its bestial aggression against Ukraine, its violations of the principles of international law and a lack of respect for people and human lives.

I say that as a man who visited Kyiv on 23 February and who has been to Ukraine three times since the beginning of the war, right after the Russian

aggression, who saw damaged Borodyanka, near Kyiv, the destroyed houses and the suffering of the civilian population in Ukraine and who saw the repercussions of the brutal Russian aggression and blood on the street where Russian soldiers were shooting families driving in cars fleeing the war. It is hard to imagine that, but I saw it with my own eyes. I saw the enormity of their bestiality, and I know what the Russian aggression in Ukraine means and what it means when President Volodymyr Zelenskyy talks about Russian brutality and the deaths of thousands of Ukrainians murdered by the Russians.

I say that here today before Member States during the General Assembly of the United Nations as the leader of a State whose borders have been crossed by almost 6 million Ukrainian refugees since the start of the Russian aggression. Today our children go to school together with Ukrainian children, those Ukrainians who came to us, saving their lives by fleeing,

Our citizens took hundreds of thousands of refugees into their homes. It is perhaps hard for many here to believe that, despite the fact that 6 million Ukrainian refugees came to our country and, according to our estimates, approximately 2 million are currently in Poland, we did not have to build a single refugee camp. There was no such necessity. No one is living in a tent in Poland. Everyone found dignified accommodation in dignified conditions in homes and in places specifically prepared for them — hotels, boarding houses and other temporary locations. There are no tent camps in Poland where people are living, sheltering themselves from war. Everyone found dignified accommodation. Every Polish man and every Polish woman is familiar with the situation in Ukraine. Every Polish man and every Polish woman vividly remembers what Russian occupation means, what Russian invasion of a State means and what Russian terror means — because Polish families lived through that terror after the Second World War, when the Russians occupied Poland, when the country was behind the Iron Curtain, when patriots were trying to shake off the Russian yoke and were fighting and when many people were imprisoned and murdered.

In 1939, right after Nazi Germany's invasion of Poland, the country that invaded the Republic of Poland and destroyed my country, together with Nazi Germany, a Nazi State, on the basis of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, which was entered into on 23 August 1939, was precisely Soviet Russia. It was Soviet Russia that occupied 50 per cent of my country and, at that time,

nearly 2 million people were deported to the Far East and the depths of Siberia. Twenty-two thousand Polish officers and policemen were brutally murdered by the Soviets. They were shot down in Katyn, Mednoye, Kharkiv and Tver. We know what Russian terror and Russian occupation mean. That is why Poles went to help Ukrainian refugees without asking questions. Neither the Government nor I, the President of Poland, had to call on them to do that. We did not have to appeal to them. People spontaneously went to the border in order to help and to take Ukrainians fleeing the Russian aggression to their homes. That is the reality — the reality of Central Europe.

We must not forget those who are suffering. Let us remember that six months of Russian aggression in Ukraine has brought about the biggest humanitarian crisis in Europe since the Second World War. I appeal for an increase in aid to the Ukrainian civilian population, whose humanitarian needs are far greater than the funds currently being provided. Winter is approaching, which, exacerbated by the war and energy prices, will be the hardest winter in years. As humankind, we have no right to turn our backs on those most in need. We, the international community, must not show any war fatigue. We must help and support.

We should work together on such a road map for economic and social development to give people hope that the world can be a better and more supportive place in which to live despite being so scarred today by wars, the effects of pandemics and natural disasters. Poland wants to jointly create such a programme, including here at the United Nations — for example, as part of the work of the Economic and Social Council.

Still, I owe a few words of truth to us — the leaders of the rich North, or, as others may like to put it, the West, including Western Europe. It is very positive that we have risen to the challenge on the issue of Ukraine, that we have preserved our unity and rallied to support the victim, not the aggressor, and that Western Europe today can clearly distinguish between who attacked whom. It knows that Russia is the aggressor and that Ukraine is suffering. It is positive that there is a clear distinction.

But let us not become complacent. My recent visit to Africa made me even more aware of something that I myself had previously thought about for a long time. Were we equally resolute during the tragedies of Syria, Libya and Yemen? Did we not return to business as

usual after the two tragedies of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the wars in the Horn of Africa? While condemning the invasion of Ukraine, do we give equal weight to fighting mercenaries who seek to destabilize the Sahel and threaten many other States in Africa?

I think that the lesson learned from this war is the following. If the United Nations is to truly be united, every response to violations of international law should be identical — decisive and principled — because the world is a system of communicating vessels. Today the victim is Ukraine, but, if Russian imperialism succeeds, tomorrow it could be any country in the world and someone else will plunder someone else's fields. They will turn civilians out of doors and murder them. We must not allow that to happen.

Poland's position in the face of any war is clear and unambiguous. We demand absolute respect for internationally recognized borders. The inviolability of those borders is a fundamental element of the global order, and that is the precondition for peace in every single case. Today Ukraine is the victim. Tomorrow it may be any one of us unless we respect those iron-clad rules and do not compel that international law be respected.

There is no hiding the fact that Russia owes Ukraine war reparations, which it will have to pay. There is no justice without reparations. That applies to any country plundering another country. It applies today, but it also applies to unsettled issues from the past. I say that as the President of Poland, which was horrifically affected by the Second World War, a large part of it being ruined and destroyed, and which lost 6 million citizens, including 3 million Polish citizens of Jewish origin and nationality.

That is why Poland will not cease its efforts to hold Russia accountable for its violations of international law, both at the State level and individually. This war must be resolved in such a way that the aggressor pays for the losses and damage caused. It will pay for every murdered human being in Ukraine. It will pay for every ruined house and every destroyed school building, plant and hospital. That must happen.

Let us use all our powers and capabilities to ensure that the culprits are tried and punished. We are already cooperating with the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice to find the most effective ways to identify and prosecute the perpetrators.

On many occasions in its history, the free world has faced partition wars, caused by enemies of freedom, driven by sick ambitions or the desire for total domination. From the genocidaires of the most ancient times to Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin and Pol Pot, the essence of such wars has not changed in any way. It always begins with a cult of strength and a belief in one's superiority, racial or ideological, over another human being, be it a person of another nationality from another country or sometimes from their own nation and country.

However, people have always pitched themselves against the aggressor and the genocidaire — free people. Aggression stirs in people the will to resist, courage, fortitude, solidarity and the desire to support victims of injustice. We therefore continue to exist as humankind. I think that that is an obligation derived not only from the harsh laws of politics; it lies at the very foundation of human nature, for, as Pericles put it in his famous Athenian funeral oration: "Happiness is the fruit of freedom and freedom the fruit of valour." A person and nation can pay any price for freedom and fight for it to the very end. People rebel against slavery, colonialism and oppression because it is their nature and law — the inalienable right of everyone to freedom and respect for their human dignity.

For months, Ukraine has been demonstrating almost unbelievable valour to us. Therefore, in conclusion, from this rostrum I appeal to all those present the following. Let us not be indifferent to the heroism and complete determination of the struggle for freedom. Let us never show indifference to any nation that defends itself against tyranny and contempt for humankind, for, by doing so, it always defends all humankind against such tyranny and contempt.

The vision of a world in which only naked and brutal power wins is not only wrong and immoral, but it can also lead to a conflagration, engulfing the entire world. I am convinced that it is no different on this occasion. I say that in the forum of an organization that was formed in the wake of the greatest such conflagration following the Second World War. It was not without reason that in 1945 the leaders of our countries, the founding members of the United Nations, declared their intent to build a world based on dialogue, opposing the use of naked and brutal force. Let us not forget that legacy. Let us not allow any tragedies such as those that the world experienced in the twentieth century happen in the future.

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

**Address by Mr. Alejandro Giammattei Falla,
President of the Republic of Guatemala**

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Guatemala

Mr. Alejandro Giammattei Falla, President of the Republic of Guatemala, 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. Alejandro Giammattei Falla, President of the Republic of Guatemala, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Giammattei Falla (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your excellent leadership and the important theme chosen for this session, which invites us to reflect at a critical time in history to address the various crises that are affecting the peaceful coexistence of humankind. We have come to think that wars lead to the society of nations that led to the establishment of the United Nations, that peace was going to be forever and that the achievements of social conquests that cost humankind so much would be forever. But, over the years, we woke up from that dream to find ourselves in a divided world, tainted and at odds. Today we need to come together to seek solutions, not cease to find them, to once again speak out and to once again discuss and debate.

But this time it cannot be once again, This time we need to look around us and take a decisive step forward. It is now or never.

With the same will with which we addressed the challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic less than two years ago, with that same momentum, we have worked to overcome its effects and the consequence of other global events that have shown how interdependent we are as human beings. The threat of COVID-19 remains, but not to the extent of the critical phase of the pandemic, when many countries faced serious problems by not having equitable access to the global vaccines market. Tens of thousands of lives could have been saved.

However, in many cases, the hoarding of vaccines was a reality. COVID-19 showed us that there are situations and threats that do not recognize borders

or groups, that all States in the world are vulnerable and that we are not prepared to deal with globally, and especially cooperatively. However, it is important to emphasize that we can succeed if we join forces.

Striking a balance between the health of people and the economy in the midst of the pandemic and always seeking the common good is one of the great challenges we have taken on — with very good results.

The Guatemalan Government adopted a counter-cyclical fiscal policy and a prudent monetary and credit policy that contributed to the early recovery of economic activity, with an 8 per cent growth in gross domestic product in 2021. That growth has been corroborated and highlighted by the three main credit rating agencies and other international organizations.

We also face the constant threat of the effects of climate change, which are becoming more evident, dangerous and extensive every year. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, those have exceeded the damages in my country since 1998 by more than \$6 billion.

As we did last year, Guatemala and the rest of Central America and the Caribbean want to call attention to the ravages caused by climate change in our region. We continue to recover from the damage caused by natural disasters this year and in previous years without the industrialized world, which is the real culprit of this catastrophe, responding with solutions to what they have caused.

In Guatemala we have made efforts to rehabilitate basic services, rebuild public infrastructure and recover agricultural and livestock production. We have assisted entire communities.

My country is megadiverse, one of 20 countries that is home to more than 70 per cent of the planet's biological diversity and constantly faces threats that endanger the natural heritage, not only of Guatemala but of humankind. My Government has given new impetus to forestry concessions in the department of north Petén. In January 2020, there were a total of 250,000 hectares under concession that form the Maya Biosphere Reserve, one of the main lungs of the continent and the world.

Previous Administrations did not pay attention to the renewal of those forest concessions. In just two and a half years, my Administration doubled them, reaching

approximately 550,000 hectares, which, in addition, benefit thousands of families, who do not pillage the forest, but rather protect it, even against fires and those who live off the forest with adequate forestry plans. The model of forest concessions in charge of communities really works. It enables local economic development and is a barrier against the impact of climate change. That has been recognized by nations and important environmental protection groups.

Similarly, agricultural insurance was implemented in order to support small producers who, due to drought or flooding caused by climate change, are in danger of losing everything and must emigrate if they do. With that insurance, they recover their investment and can continue to grow their crops. More than 50,000 farmers have already been reached, and many thousands remain.

With a view to meeting our climate change mitigation commitments, we are promoting the formulation of a national decarbonization policy. In addition, we updated our nationally determined contribution and are promoting important strategies that, in the medium term, will help mitigate the impact of emissions from vehicles that use fossil fuels. Proof of that is the recent approval, at the behest of the executive branch, of a law on incentives for electric mobility, which promotes the use and marketing of electric vehicles and cleaner energy.

Guatemala continues to comply with its own energy policy. We estimate that, by the year 2032, more than 80 per cent of Guatemala's electrical energy will be produced from renewable sources.

In addition, the growing crisis of food and nutritional insecurity is leaving us more famine and more lives to mourn, with the indolence of countries that have more towards countries that have little or nothing.

The irregular migration process is a multicausal phenomenon. People migrate in search of better opportunities and better services. The economic factor and the effects of climate change are some of the main causes.

Our Government has worked on structural rather than short-term solutions, not short-term ones, which, looking to the future, is the only thing that can stop irregular migration. To that end, we enacted a series of laws that stimulate investment with the necessary legal certainty that enables job creation in order to meet the basic needs of the population, as well as a law that

supports access to low-income housing. It is important to emphasize that only a comprehensive effort of that nature will prevent people from resorting to irregular migration, and thereby put their lives and scarce assets at risk.

The smuggling of migrants has become a national and transnational security issue. In Guatemala we have stopped massive irregular flows of migrants, better known as caravans, coming from countries in and out of the region. That is always done in full respect for human rights. In that connection, at the initiative of the executive branch, the law against the smuggling of migrants, known as the “law of coyotaje”, was adopted. Smuggling is a transnational crime, so I once again call on parties in the region, and especially the Governments of the region — be they countries of origin, transit or destination — to work together and to adopt a common approach to irregular migration and the necessary legislation in that regard.

We are facing a decisive moment. If we employ a shared approach, we will be able to reach transformative solutions to interconnected challenges, including those related to regional and transnational security.

We continue with the all-out war against drug trafficking, and I call on the consumer countries, which — as I said in my statement last year (see A/76/PV.6) — are the ones that launder the most money. Unless the financial structures of the organizations dedicated to this crime — the proceeds of drug consumption — are not weakened, it will continue to be a threat to the future of countries such as ours.

State sovereignty is fundamental in bilateral and multilateral relations. No matter how big or small the countries, relations must be based on respectful treatment. Let us remember that no country, organization or multilateral entity can or should intervene in the internal affairs of other countries — but no, that is not always the case.

Globally, we are facing new crises, and many of them, unfortunately, are caused willingly by humans by disrespecting the sovereignty of States. This Organization must be more active in addressing the possibility of a third confrontation of major proportions.

However, the United Nations, as the guardian of international law and the centre for dialogue for the maintenance of peace and security among States, will not be able to solve the world’s problems without our

commitment — the State representatives — to respect international law and resolve our differences peacefully, on the basis of dialogue and negotiation, respecting the sovereignty of each State.

We are facing distressing levels of old hatreds, clear discriminatory rejection of nationalities, migrants and refugees, as well as other facts not seen since the end of the Second World War. Once again, we are witnessing scenarios of the use of force and violence of one State against another, nationalist ideological confrontations, the imposition of authoritarian views, with a clear rejection of democracy as a system, as well as massive human rights violations.

In that sense, Guatemala emphatically joins the global clamour for the cessation of the war in Ukraine and the threats against the sovereignty of Taiwan and Israel. We cannot allow the conflict in Ukraine to continue. I went to Ukraine and I know it to be true — this conflict must stop now. We must not allow this situation to be repeated in any country.

As President of Guatemala, I am the only Latin American Head of State to have visited Ukraine during this conflict. I saw the horrors of war, and I stand in solidarity and openly express my opposition to war — there or anywhere.

During the official visit, we were able to witness on the ground the precarious situation of the families of the country under attack, whose defenceless civilian population suffers the onslaught of a military force, including constant bombardment.

But peace is not the absence of war. A renewed United Nations Organization is called upon to generate conditions in the world that allow for the full development and well-being of populations.

As I stated recently in my speech in the city of Kyiv, I would like to refer to and pay attention to the words of the Charter of the United Nations. This Organization was created in order to

“save succeeding generations from the scourge of war ... to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained”.

The Charter further states:

“And for these ends to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security”.

In view of the current world scenario, we urgently need to remember those purposes and principles that gave rise to this Organization and allow for the transformation of this organ in order to have more tools and resources to overcome global challenges.

Profound changes in the Security Council are urgent in order to assure the world of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and the self-determination of peoples, but, above all, to guarantee peace. As a country with a pacifist vocation, Guatemala reiterates its request that the Security Council honour its responsibility without ideological bias, but, above all, that no countries can veto draft resolutions if they do not seek the authentic maintenance of peace.

The project of change cannot be postponed. The foundations of the United Nations must be modified so that it has the mechanisms that will enable it to respond to the main challenges of humankind, which so desperately needs peace and development. Guatemala calls on States to make rapid progress on a proposal, led by country experts, in order to define the fundamental reforms needed for the United Nations to return to the path it lost after its establishment in 1945.

The founding Charter, which came into being at the end of the Second World War and was amended on three different occasions, requires new approaches in keeping with the current times, which are difficult, but also full of opportunities.

The United Nations must secure the means to reform original commitments ranging from the sovereign equality of States to the prohibition of the use of force in international relations, including nuclear and chemical weapons of mass destruction. While reforms to the United Nations and the Security Council are being proposed, Guatemala urges nations to respect the founding Charter of the highest world Organization.

In addition to the United Nations reform initiative, supported by the majority of pacifist and democratic countries, measures must be taken in order to achieve drastic changes in key institutions of multilateralism, leaving aside ideologies that divide us and addressing the interconnected challenges faced by the world's

population. Hunger and poverty have no ideology. We must focus on comprehensive development and provide transformative solutions to the great challenges.

Guatemala, one of the founding countries of the United Nations, has demonstrated its support and is ready to collaborate with an open spirit in the efforts to transform this Organization and multilateralism related to the bastion of international cooperation so as to include within those reforms the right of Taiwan to belong to this Organization and to be recognized as a nation, because it has been denied that right by one of the permanent members on the Security Council.

I want to state emphatically that peace is possible, and the commitment to its maintenance and international security is achievable. But we must voluntarily change our decisions and, as leaders, determine the direction and future of our societies. Let us seek peaceful coexistence among peoples and nations, set aside ethnic, cultural, social or religious differences and focus on what unites us. Let us be tolerant and respect different ways of thinking.

Guatemala is a peaceful country. We promote respect for, and compliance with, human rights, of the right to life since conception to natural death. Today, before this Assembly, I once again reaffirm my country's firm commitment to serve continuously in the maintenance of peace in the world.

I want to reiterate that Guatemala, as a democratic country, is committed to permanently and definitively resolve before the International Court of Justice the territorial, insular and maritime dispute with Belize. We aspire to a privileged relationship with Belize for the peaceful settlement of common issues through dialogue, building diplomatic mechanisms on the basis of mutual trust in order to bring prosperity, calm and hope to our populations.

Guatemala shares the same interests and challenges with its Caribbean brothers, with whom we unite in a single voice to fight against climate change and its effects.

It is time to look beyond and remember the horrors of the two great wars that caused so much pain to the world. For the love of all that is sacred — it is now or never. No more fratricidal wars, no more unnecessary and unjustified conflicts, no more deaths. It is now or never. For the love of all that is sacred — let us bet on peace, let us bet on dialogue, let us bet on resolving

problems as brothers do. It is now or never. Let us bet on peace. Succeeding generations and the preservation of the human race will thank us for it.

Mr. Rai (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Let us concern ourselves with the real battles — fighting hunger, malnutrition, confronting climate change and so many other issues that affect the human race. Instead of taking up arms, let us take action to make the world a better place to live in peace, progress, development and peaceful coexistence between human beings and nature.

In these dark and difficult times, I raise my prayer for God to bless the entire world, but especially Guatemala.

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

Mr. Alejandro Giammattei Falla, President of the Republic of Guatemala, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 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. Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Tshisekedi Tshilombo (*spoke in French*): It is a great honour and a real pleasure for me to speak from this rostrum to express the voice of my country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on the main issues that are currently of great concern to the international community.

I would like to begin by congratulating the President on his election to preside over the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session. I am convinced that he will

do his best to ensure the success of this session, and I assure him of my country's full support.

The major challenges facing humankind today are security and peace for all, addressing climate change, reviving the global economy after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), combating poverty and promoting our collective well-being. Those key challenges are complex and intertwined. Aware of that reality, I welcome the wise choice and relevance of the central theme of this meeting, namely, "A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges". Clearly, meeting those challenges requires greater consultation, cooperation and solidarity among States and nations.

The maintenance of international peace and security is the foundation and the primary objective of the creation of the United Nations. Neither indifference, nor inaction, nor a wait-and-see attitude on the part of the United Nations is therefore acceptable in the face of any threat to international peace and security.

To date, the issue of international peace and security has crystallized around the fight against terrorism and the extinction of hotbeds of tension in Europe and Africa. Indeed, terrorism has spared no continent. After Asia, Western Europe and North America, it metastasized in Africa, where it has set fire to several places, and our continent is paying a heavy price. In the Sahel, in the East, in the West, in the Centre and in the South of the continent, terrorists kill innocent populations in barbaric expeditions and destabilize States in the name of religious fundamentalism. It is true that outstanding progress has been made in the Middle East in the fight against this scourge. However, it is far from abating, let alone being eradicated from our planet.

That is why the Democratic Republic of the Congo, one of the African victims of terrorism and a member of the Global Coalition against Da'esh, calls on the United Nations to become actively involved in implementing the recommendations of the Coalition and those of the Aqaba process. Declarations of intent and proclamations of faith without vigorous collective action on the ground will never be enough to eradicate terrorism.

In the heart of Europe, the war between Russia and Ukraine is a gaping wound whose bleeding reaches even to distant Africa and disrupts international trade because of the significant collateral damage, particularly in terms of the supply of cereals and

energy products of Ukrainian and Russian origin, which are necessary for the feeding of the populations, as well as the functioning of the economies of the importing countries. It is imperative that the United Nations intervene diligently and more firmly in order to extinguish this inferno, in full compliance with the rules of international law.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo supports the position of the African Union (AU) and calls on all parties to the conflict to follow the path of dialogue and law advocated by Africa, which has experience in managing security crises caused by armed groups in some of its States.

In that regard, the United Nations knows that my country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is the victim of an acute security crisis that has lasted more than 20 years in the east of its national territory. Any honest, good-faith observer recognizes that this crisis is caused mainly by the greed triggered by its tremendous natural wealth and the power ambitions of some of its neighbours.

The people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo recognize the role of the United Nations, the African Union, the African regional communities, the European Union and the Democratic Republic of the Congo's bilateral external partners in curbing this recurring crisis. We are grateful to them and pay tribute to the sacrifice of the valiant peacekeepers who have lost their lives on the front lines in defence of the ideals of peace and justice.

However, despite tireless internal efforts, the massive military presence of the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its diplomatic support for 23 years, the security problem continues to plague my country. In order to definitively eradicate insecurity, restore lasting peace and ensure stability in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, several agreements have been signed with armed groups, and even with neighbouring countries, under the auspices of the international community. National and international mechanisms have been created. All of those prospects for a definitive resolution of the conflict lasted only a few months. Soon, the architecture cracked, and the building collapsed. And the same tragedies are happening all over again.

Since my election as Head of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I have never stopped fighting, every day, for peace and security in the provinces

of Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu. As part of a philosophy of reconciliation with our neighbours, I have spared no effort to reassure the Heads of State of neighbouring countries and to restore confidence among us, in particular through ongoing consultations on issues of common interest, the conclusion of security cooperation and economic partnership agreements and the implementation of development projects for our respective populations.

Despite my goodwill and the outstretched hand of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for peace, some of our neighbours have found no better way to thank us than through aggression and support for armed terrorist groups that are ravaging the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. That is currently the case for Rwanda, which, in defiance of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitutive Act of the African Union, once again not only attacked the Democratic Republic of the Congo in March through direct incursions by its armed forces, the Rwanda Defence Force, but is also occupying localities in the province of North Kivu through an armed terrorist group, the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23), to which it is providing massive support through materials for war and troops. As if to defy the international community, the M-23, with the support of the Rwandan army, even shot down a helicopter belonging to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and killed eight peacekeepers, thereby committing a war crime.

In this emblematic place of international life, I fervently denounce this umpteenth aggression of which my country is victim at the hands of its neighbour, Rwanda, under the cover of a terrorist group called M-23. Rwanda's involvement and responsibility in the tragedy that my country and my compatriots are living through in the areas occupied by the Rwandan army and its M-23 allies are no longer refutable, since the groups of experts duly mandated by the United Nations and the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, as well as credible humanitarian and human rights non-governmental organizations, have established that involvement more than once in documented and objective reports that border on scientific proof.

Moreover, in order to enlighten the community of nations and to put an end to the endless denials of the Rwandan authorities on this subject, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo reiterates

its request to the President of the Security Council to officially distribute to the members of the Council the latest report of the United Nations experts on the security situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and to have it diligently examined by the Council in order to draw all the necessary consequences in terms of the law, peace and international security. The image and credibility of our Organization are at stake. To do otherwise would be, on the one hand, to encourage Rwanda to continue its aggression, its war crimes and its crimes against humanity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, on the other hand, to further fuel the legitimate suspicion of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with regard to the impartiality of the United Nations and the complicity of some of its members in these crimes.

It is in order to put an end to that suspicion and to dispel the ambiguity of certain positions of the Security Council on the security crisis in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo — an ambiguity that is overwhelming the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and exacerbates the tension between it and the MONUSCO — that the Government of my country has requested a reassessment of the plan for the gradual and responsible withdrawal of the Mission.

This adjustment process is necessitated by the unanimous observation, even at the highest level of our Organization, of the regrettable weaknesses of MONUSCO, which undoubtedly affects the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Organization's action in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The reassessment of MONUSCO's withdrawal plan cannot, therefore, in any way call into question the relations between my country and our Organization.

In any case, I reaffirm loud and clear at this rostrum of the highest international organ for the management of world affairs the determination of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its leaders to defend with their lives the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of their country — in full compliance, of course, with international law and of the commitments made within the international organizations of which it is a member.

I would like to make clear that the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its civil society will never allow anyone to utilize the discourse of tribal, ethnic and racial hatred and xenophobia in our country. The Constitution of the Republic and its laws prohibit such

speech and severely punish it. No one can therefore use that fanciful discourse to justify criminal activities in the country, to divide the people or to weaken the national unity that all my compatriots hold dear. The Democratic Republic of the Congo will never be genocidal.

Similarly, I maintain that the alleged collaboration of some officials of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the Rwandan opponents of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), which Rwandan leaders use to justify repeated aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is an alibi that is not corroborated by any proven fact on the ground. The FDLR have been decapitated and reduced to nothing by the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC), in close collaboration with the Rwandan army, within the framework of joint operations carried out a few years ago. Moreover, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has repatriated several FDLR elements and their families. The people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are therefore asking themselves — which FDLR are we talking about? How many square metres of Rwandan territory are occupied by those phantom FDLR? Where on Rwandan soil has a single soldier from the Democratic Republic of the Congo ever been seen? Whatever the case, my country stands ready to take repressive action against any armed group that tries to disturb peace and security in a neighbouring country and in the Great Lakes region.

The people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo ask the United Nations, the African Union, the African regional communities and the Democratic Republic of the Congo's partners to stop relying on the shameless denials of the Rwandan authorities and to contribute instead to the restoration of security, the building of lasting peace and the creation of the conditions necessary for fruitful cooperation in the Great Lakes region for the good of all.

For that purpose, it is necessary to, first, make effective the immediate withdrawal of the M-23 from the occupied localities, the return of the displaced people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo from those localities to their homes and the unconditional cessation of the Rwandan army's support to this terrorist group, in accordance with the spirit and the letter of the Luanda road map, agreed between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, as well as successive declarations by the Security Council, the

African Union Peace and Security Council, the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Secondly, we must bring more pressure to bear on Rwanda and the M-23, whose leaders are under United Nations sanctions, and to be firmer with them so that they respect the positions taken by the above-mentioned international organizations.

Thirdly, we must support the continuation of the Nairobi peace process, the Democratic Republic of the Congo-Rwanda Luanda discussions and the deployment of the East African regional force, whose statute and rules of engagement were signed on 8 September in Kinshasa by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the EAC Secretary General, on the one hand, and by the FARDC and the command of that regional force, on the other.

Fourthly, we must encourage the honorary President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, and the President of Angola, João Lourenço, mediators of the EAC and the AU in the security crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to continue their good offices.

Fifthly, we must remove all obstacles to efforts by the Democratic Republic of the Congo to restructure its armed forces and increase its strength in order to better fulfil its sovereign missions, notably through the pure and simple lifting of all restrictive measures on the acquisition of military equipment, whatever form they may take, as decreed by the Security Council.

The realization of the actions I have recommended here will undoubtedly guarantee the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo the certainty of a settlement of the crisis and will facilitate a constructive dialogue between all the parties concerned in that regard.

We, the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, are determined this time to put a definitive end to the insecurity in the east of our country, whatever the cost. The time has come to break forever the infernal cycle of violence in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to stabilize the Great Lakes region and take full advantage of its economic potential, as well as its rich biodiversity, to save humankind from climate change.

Carrying out those changes poses two fundamental problems, namely, the implementation of legal and financial instruments resulting from international

negotiations, in particular within the framework of the various Conferences of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the energy transition. It is time, on the one hand, to put an end to the selective implementation of commitments made by polluters and, on the other hand, to compensate, in the name of climate justice, the efforts made by less-polluting countries, including those of Africa, in order to preserve the environment for the sake of our entire planet.

With regard to the energy transition, Africa has sufficient renewable energy sources and raw materials to help mobilize credible options for resolving the energy and environmental crises. In that regard, it is important to note that the Democratic Republic of the Congo is among the primary producers of essential strategic minerals for the energy transition and the decarbonization of the transport sector. These include cobalt, lithium, nickel and manganese.

My country has set itself the goal of ensuring the clean production of those metals. With that in mind, on 29 April, the Republic of Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo signed an agreement on the establishment of a value chain in the electric battery and clean energy sector. Needless to say, given the size of the investment required to implement such a project, the involvement of partners is particularly essential, especially with regard to providing capital and the appropriate technology.

Furthermore, to support the green transformation agenda in economies on the African continent and meet the growing energy demand around the world, my country has opted to capitalize on its vast potential in renewable energy sources, including hydroelectricity, solar energy, geothermal energy and the exploitation of its gas deposits.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is an asset as it pertains to implementing Agenda 2063 of the African Union, via the Grand Inga project, which could also be beneficial for parts of Europe and the Middle East. In that regard, we are delighted to host the preparatory work for the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate, which will take place in Kinshasa next month.

I take this opportunity to shed light on the environmental aspects of the tender issued by my country, on 28 July, for the exploration of 27 oil blocks and three gas blocks. The tender has been met with

unnecessary controversy in the international arena. It should be recalled that no relevant international legal instrument ratified by the Democratic Republic of the Congo prohibits our country from exploiting its natural resources for the purpose of protecting the environment or due to fears about accelerating global warming. The 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change acknowledges that developing countries are within their right to emit carbon dioxide for their development purposes, while taking steps to protect the global climate through their nationally determined contributions.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has therefore set itself the goal of exploiting the country's natural resources, while respecting environmental standards, and processing them locally to provide added value and boost the national economy, including by creating liquid wealth and jobs to improve the living conditions for the Congolese population.

The appropriate strategies and measures have been adopted and implemented to avoid negative impacts on the environment. Following the example of other countries in Africa and Europe that have overcome that challenge, measures include effective Government checks and balances. This will allow the Democratic Republic of the Congo to achieve its economic and social objectives, while protecting its forests and remaining the country with solutions in the fight against global warming. My country remains open to cooperation with any partner wishing to help it achieve its goals.

On the economic front, the challenge to be met is that of helping to revive the economies of countries that have been weakened by the collateral effects of climate change and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in order to promote balanced global economic growth and halt the spread of poverty in developing countries. We cannot overcome that challenge without good internal governance efforts at the national level, productive investment or sufficient and real transfers of financial resources to those who need them. The Democratic Republic of the Congo therefore calls for the implementation of the proposal that rich countries cede a percentage of their special drawing rights at the International Monetary Fund to least developed countries. The proposal was made by the Paris Conference on post COVID-19 economic recovery, held in May 2021, and endorsed by a firm commitment from the Group of 20 in Rome in October 2021. In any event,

any facility that provides access to additional resources for those countries sorely tested by climate change and COVID-19 would be welcome.

Similarly, alleviating the debt burden of low-income countries must remain an ongoing concern to be included in a global approach to international solidarity. For its part, despite the difficult global economic situation following the harmful effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has made significant progress with respect to economic growth. Wealth creation accelerated in 2021, thanks in particular to positive momentum in the mining sector. Production in that sector increased to 10.1 per cent in 2021 from 1 per cent in 2019, due to favourable copper and cobalt prices on the international market. Inflation rates and the exchange rate of the Congolese franc have remained relatively stable.

The Board of Governors of the International Monetary Fund conducted the second review under the Extended Credit Facility arrangement. The International Monetary Fund commended the prudent macroeconomic policies adopted by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We will tirelessly pursue those policies and efforts to improve the business climate so as to boost private investment and overall economic activity.

Solidarity and justice in relations among countries have always been factors in achieving mutual peace and security, as they bring people together and create interconnectedness among them. Therefore, combating poverty and promoting collective well-being are powerful bulwarks against social conflict and tensions among peoples.

For that reason, the Democratic Republic of the Congo welcomes the collective action of the international community against COVID-19 and commends the Feed the Future initiative of the United States of America to fund agriculture to combat the hunger and food insecurity in Africa caused by the Russian-Ukrainian crisis. My country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is one of the African beneficiaries of that initiative, to mention just the most recent example. My country calls for similar actions and initiatives that help not only to resolve issues related to everyday life and to create jobs for the greatest number of people, but also with income distribution and purchasing power.

However, in the name of international solidarity and justice, we have questions about the maintenance of sanctions against the people of Zimbabwe that date

back to the time of the late President Robert Mugabe. Why is our Organization so silent and indifferent to that injustice, bordering on a crime, against an innocent people? As the current Chairperson of the Southern African Development Community, I urgently call on the United Nations to do everything possible to obtain the immediate lifting of the sanctions against the Republic of Zimbabwe and its people.

In this multipolar world, no country, however powerful and rich it may be, can hope to overcome alone the challenges I have just outlined, let alone resolve them in the interests of one and all. The importance of the issues at stake, the complexity of the problems to be solved and the magnitude of the task require an equitable multilateral approach that takes all interests into account and pools all energies in mutual respect.

This is why the Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to believe that it is essential to better structure and enrich multilateralism, with equal treatment for all stakeholders, in order to create the spaces for dialogue and cooperation that we need to ensure international peace and security. That is the United Nations we want. To that end, we must act urgently to reform of the United Nations, which appears to be stalled at the moment.

Mrs. González López (El Salvador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In that context, I must insist on the need to satisfy Africa's legitimate and just demand to be represented on the Security Council with two additional seats in the category of non-permanent membership and two others in the category of permanent membership with the same rights, including that of veto, privileges and obligations as those of the current permanent members. It is a question of justice for a continent — or rather, to an entire swath of humankind — whose role is increasing every day in the conduct of international affairs. We Africans are firmly attached to that.

In conclusion, allow me to say a few words about gender parity. In that regard, it is necessary to stress the efforts under way both at the international level and at the level of States to create spaces for gender equality and opportunities for freedom and action for women. To do so, the involvement of men in gender-promotion policies is necessary because, on the one hand, men share their lives with women and, on the other hand, since time immemorial and for various reasons, men have established a pre-eminence over women that gives them a determining influence over their destiny. We must put an end to that de facto situation.

For that reason, during my term of office at the helm of the African Union, I initiated a meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the continental organization under the theme of “Men's Conference on Positive Masculinity”. That historic meeting, held in Kinshasa in 2021, led to a declaration of the African Union containing the commitments of men, in particular that of the Heads of State and Government, to put an end to violence against women and girls and to provide appropriate responses to that issue. The declaration constitutes a veritable African Union charter for women that I am working to bring to fruition in my capacity as an African Union champion for positive masculinity.

In that context, I have worked to further promote Congolese women, who today are increasingly at the forefront of public affairs management within the political, legal and administrative institutions of my country. That proactive policy should allow in the future for radical change, not only in the perception of women and their role in society, but also in women taking charge of their own destinies. Indeed, parity is not a gift to women, but a responsibility that they must assume.

I wish every success to the work of the seventy-seventh regular session of the General Assembly.

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

Mr. Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Faustin Archange Touadera, President of the Central African Republic

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Central African Republic.

Mr. Faustin Archange Touadera, President of the Central African Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Faustin Archange Touadera, President of the Central African Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Touadera (*spoke in French*): As I take the floor on behalf of the Central African Republic at the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly, I would first like to congratulate Mr. Csaba Kőrösi on his outstanding election as President of the Assembly. His flawless knowledge of the international arena and his personal qualities are an asset and a guarantee of the success of our work and are undeniably a source of pride for Hungary, his beautiful country.

I would also like to commend the excellent work done and the results achieved by Mr. Abdulla Shahid at the seventy-sixth session.

I reiterate my gratitude to Secretary-General António Guterres for his tireless commitment to international peace and security and the United Nations ongoing support for my country.

Allow me to pay a sincere tribute to Her Majesty Elizabeth II, Queen of the United Kingdom and of the Commonwealth realms, a true icon of peace, who, during the seven decades of her reign, maintained excellent relations of friendship and cooperation between the United Kingdom and the countries of the Commonwealth and Africa, in particular with the Central African Republic.

The seventy-seventh session of our Assembly, convened under the theme “A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges”, provides us with a solemn opportunity to reflect on the challenges we share, which are causes of serious concern for the future of humankind. More than ever, the questions of security, peace, the environment and health are entering a critical phase. However, the warning signs are being ignored in favour of economic, geopolitical and geostrategic interests. Is it not the role of the United Nations to transform the world, to make it more just and secure, and to ensure the dignity of each and every one of us, regardless of the global context? Indeed, the many hotbeds of tension and crisis in the world challenge our collective conscience and also show us that our Organization is the product of a bygone era.

The Central African Republic therefore reiterates its support for the African Union Common Position, which calls for profound reform of the United Nations and an increase in the number of Security Council members to ensure a more just and more representative participation of all continents.

The protection of the environment — that is, protecting the place where we live — is one of the interdependent challenges that we must absolutely address. It is time for the biggest polluters to honour their commitments, in particular the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and international solidarity for climate justice for the most vulnerable populations.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has taught us that global health security is essential to all nations without exception. My country welcomes the paradigm shift that is occurring in the health sector and the unprecedented outpouring of solidarity accompanying it, including access to vaccines to protect against polio, COVID-19 and, soon, malaria. It is therefore with pride that my country has achieved the status of a polio-free country and vaccinated 50 per cent of its national target population against COVID-19.

I commend and encourage the health and emergency preparedness initiative implemented by the World Health Organization. The Central African Republic is proud to be the instigator and the first pilot country, with tangible benefits for the improvement of its capacity to manage epidemics.

The Central African Republic has seen its march towards development slowed in recent years by serious security and health crises, which have been exacerbated by the persistent lack of financial support from the international community, resulting in the disruption of agricultural, forestry and mining production. As a fragile State faced with food insecurity and a glaring shortage of material and human resources, the Central African Republic continues to make enormous sacrifices to improve its macroeconomic management and fiscal governance. With the support of its partners, my country has implemented ambitious reforms to strengthen the mobilization of revenues and optimize public spending.

My country is waiting for the re-establishment of the Extended Credit Facility programme, which has been suspended by the International Monetary Fund, to support an increase in domestic resources in order to cope with the lack of budgetary support from technical and financial partners and the digitization of minor revenue.

Solutions still need to be explored through regional and international mechanisms, in a spirit of interdependence, to overcome the challenges of physical

infrastructure — transport, energy, water, education and health care — through the implementation of adapted programmes and the mobilization of financing through the public-private partnerships; access to capital markets for the financing of development projects through public-private partnerships; the development and coordination of trade policies and economic relations with other regions; support for education system through the training of trainers and the creation of professional training centres; the development of a resilient economy able to withstand internal and external shocks through economic diversification and the adoption of new technologies; the creation of innovative financing mechanisms to address both agriculture and climate change so as to improve access to the financial capital needed to develop the agropastoral sector; and the promotion of smart solutions and approaches to climate change that are adapted to the national context.

The Central African Republic was the first country in Africa to adopt Bitcoin as a digital payment reference currency and the first in the world to unanimously adopt a law governing cryptocurrencies. That ambitious and innovative initiative has enormous potential to reposition the economy, improve prospects and change the destiny of Central Africans at a time when we need to be open to new horizons and solutions that go transcend convention.

It is an established fact that the Central African Republic is contributing to the search for transformative solutions to address interdependent challenges with greater commitment and conviction. In that respect, several bold reforms and initiatives have been undertaken, with the support of international partners, to strengthen the rule of law and restore the authority of the State throughout the country.

Moreover, the courageous measures taken by the Government in the fight against impunity, the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic of 6 February 2019, the Joint Roadmap for Peace in the Central African Republic, adopted in Luanda, and the recommendations of the republican dialogue have helped to ease sociopolitical tensions in the country.

In keeping with its international commitments, the Central African Republic abolished the death penalty on 1 June and adopted, on 31 August, a law on combating trafficking in persons and a child protection code.

It is with particular interest that I note the Security Council's firm condemnation, in its recent resolution 2648 (2022), of 29 July, of the attacks perpetrated against peaceful civilian populations by armed groups.

I also note with satisfaction the Council's position against the transnational trafficking networks that continue to supply armed groups with weapons of all types.

In welcoming the significant progress that has made it possible to substantially lift the arms embargo imposed on our defence and security forces, I would like to convey the gratitude of the Central African people to all the friendly and brotherly countries that firmly support our request for the total lifting of the embargo. I deplore, however, the manoeuvring aimed at legitimizing the armed groups and insidiously maintaining the embargo. Who stands to benefit from that crime?

The Central African Republic has suffered a great deal from miscalculations and disinformation, which have, unfortunately, gone on for too long.

The Central African youth is made up of a pool of high achievers whose only obstacle to developing their country is a lack of peace and security.

I would like to denounce the disinformation and spin campaigns aimed at coercively discrediting and destabilizing the democratic institutions of the Central African Republic. Those campaigns, which are being conducted by certain international media outlets on the basis of a thinly-veiled and threatening neocolonialism, are successful not because they are true but because of their tried-and-tested manipulative rhetoric. They are based solely on preserving the geostrategic and geopolitical interests of certain States that have little to do with the vital interests of the Central African people.

The Central African Republic calls on its partners to engage in a relationship of trust and mutual respect. We are always ready to cooperate with every country in the world, provided that our vital interests and sovereignty are respected. I wish our work every success. Long live international solidarity.

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

Mr. Faustin Archange Touadera, President of the Central African Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

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

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by President of the Republic of El Salvador.

Mr. Nayib Armando Bukele, President of the Republic of El Salvador, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Nayib Armando Bukele, President of the Republic of El Salvador, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Bukele (*spoke in Spanish*): I bring the General Assembly greetings from the land of volcanoes, surfing, coffee, Bitcoin and freedom. Anyone who has been to El Salvador can easily confirm everything I have just mentioned. Our country is home to the world's best surfing beaches, volcanoes are everywhere, we have incredible coffee, and anyone can walk around peacefully and safely in any corner of our country. Most of all, we are a united people who is fighting for its freedom. And freedom is precisely what I have come to the General Assembly to speak about from this rostrum.

I speak of the freedom for which my people and all the peoples of the world yearn. Talking about freedom is easy, but achieving it requires struggle, perseverance and much sacrifice. I speak of the freedom to choose where we are going and how we want to get there — the freedom to define our own path as human beings. But freedom, like much of what defines us, depends on how others see us and, most of all, on how we see ourselves. The people's choice of freedom and the respect of the powerful for that freedom are therefore both essential requirements in that regard.

I come from a people who for a long time saw themselves as less than others, who never had the courage to make their own decisions, and whose destiny was always controlled by others. The land of my people is the smallest country on the American continent, yet even countries with far more territory, money and power than us do not respect our dominion over that

little piece of land. They are the rightful masters of their own countries, but they are incorrect to think that they are also the masters of ours. The fact is that there is a group of powerful countries that not only have much more than everyone else, but also believe they are entitled to the little that we, the countries without power, have.

We can compare that scenario to someone living in a very small and humble house, but who has a very wealthy neighbour, whose house is a beautiful and gigantic palace, with vast expanses of land and unimaginable treasures. The person living in the little house respects and admires her neighbour and does not mind that he is immensely richer than she. She is happy in her little house but decides to make improvements to it, paint it, fix it up and give it better furnishings — quite an undertaking, no doubt, but she is sure it will be worth it.

Everything is going well, until the rich neighbour decides that his poor neighbour does not have the right to fix her house, buy new furniture or paint the walls. The rich neighbour decides that in addition to owning his own palace, he can also order around the person in the little house. He orders, without her permission, that everything in the house remain lousy as it was before.

On the surface, the poor neighbour has no reason to despise or envy her rich neighbour or to aspire to what he has. She has no reason to plan to go to his palace and order him around or demand that he change his marble floors. But the poor neighbour should at least have the right to clean her own house, repair and paint her own walls, change her own furniture, plant flowers in her own garden and redo her own roof so it is free of leaks and protects her from the rain. That should not bother the rich neighbour. He should not be ordering her to put her old furniture back, cut her flowers, strip the walls, remove the new roof, which is functioning fine, and put back the old roof — which is all the more aggravating because the leaky roof never worked in the first place.

The rich neighbour has no authority to order his poor neighbour to return to the past, first, because he has no claim to be in charge of another person's house; secondly, because the poor neighbour had tried previously to follow her rich neighbour's orders and the consequences could not have been worse; and thirdly, because the improvements she made in the first place were actually working. Why should her neighbour force her to go back to the way she was before? For what purpose? To what end? Should he not be happy that his poor neighbour is a little better off than before?

That is why I say that freedom is something we are still fighting for in El Salvador. Because although we are free, sovereign and independent on paper, we will not be truly so until the powerful understand that we want to be their friends, that we admire and respect them and that our doors are wide open to trade and tourism so that we can build the best possible relations. But what they cannot do is to come and boss us around — not only because the land is ours, but also because it would not make sense to undo what we are achieving.

In a very short time, El Salvador has gone from being virtually the most dangerous country in the world — literally, the most dangerous country in the world — to being on its way to being the safest country in America. We went from being a country that was unknown to many — while the few who knew it, knew it for its gangs, deaths, violence and war — to being a country known for its beaches, surfing, volcanoes, financial freedom and good governance and for having put an end to organized crime. Those achievements, which we have only just begun and have been obtained in a very short time, are immense for us. And we have the right to continue on the path of our development.

That is why I initially said that freedom is something we are still fighting for — because our rights to freedom and genuine independence still need to be recognized. I wanted to say these words from the rostrum today because maybe they will resonate not only in my country, El Salvador, but also for the other peoples of the world who, like mine, want the freedom to build their own path.

Some will be able to do it sooner and others later. For some it will be easier and for others more difficult. But it will happen much quicker if the powerful countries help us. And if they do not want to help us, they should at least stay out of the way. All peoples should find their own path, and in doing so they will find friends. To those countries, I humbly offer the friendship of my small country, the smallest on the American continent, the country of surfing, volcanoes and pupusas — a country that is still fighting for its freedom but is about to secure it.

Three years ago, I spoke here at the United Nations from this very this rostrum (see A/74/PV.7). At that time, I said that this format was already obsolete. Now, three years later, we can see that it has become even more so, but perhaps it still serves a purpose. Perhaps it will serve, among many other things, for me, the

representative of that small country — the smallest on the American continent — to humbly recall that the United Nations was not established to divide, destroy or subdue us, but so that we could relate to one another, work together, build a better community of countries and seek solutions to the problems of the world — but with absolute respect for the sovereignty and self-determination of every country and in the manner set out in the Charter of the United Nations itself, the first principle of which states that the Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members. One of the main founding purposes of the United Nations is to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.

Perhaps the transition from a unipolar world system to a multipolar one, a frequent topic of discussion, would be smoother if instead of moving from one super-Power to several super-Powers, we transitioned to a world in which all peoples were truly free to build their own path and our community of nations — all of us, big and small — would contribute our own experience and capabilities to solving humankind's problems. No one could be against that, but as with freedom, it is easier said than done.

I came all the way here to speak from this rostrum in a format I no longer believe in, to say something that most likely will not change the way powerful countries see others anyway. But perhaps it will change the way that we, as developing countries, see ourselves. If after these short words I have achieved that, at least with a handful of individuals who will go on to see themselves with respect and understand that they are capable of building their own path, then it was worth coming all this way to speak in this obsolete format. And who knows what will happen? Perhaps, in time, other nations — other peoples — will emerge who also decide to fight for their freedom. Then the United Nations will have become relevant again, at least for a humble servant like me. May God bless all the nations of the world.

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

Mr. Nayib Armando Bukele, President of the Republic of El Salvador, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 8 (continued)**General debate****Address by Mr. Kishida Fumio, Prime Minister of Japan**

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

Mr. Kishida Fumio, Prime Minister of Japan, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Kishida Fumio, Prime Minister of Japan, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Fumio (Japan) (*spoke in Japanese; English text provided by the delegation*): We stand at a historic watershed moment. Seventy-seven years have passed since the establishment of the United Nations, yet we are still witnessing devastation in Ukraine and around the world. What would the founders of the United Nations, who were determined not to repeat the scourge of the world wars, think if they saw the challenges to the international order that we are facing?

We have all gathered here at the General Assembly because we stand with the fundamental vision and principles of the Charter of the United Nations — to realize an international community in which Member States unite to maintain peace and security and all people can enjoy economic and social development. Is that not what we are aiming for?

It is imperative to maintain an international order in which the rule of law is firmly established. The United Nations has played a central role in the development of such an international order. However, today we see its foundations being gravely shaken. Russia's aggression against Ukraine is an act that tramples on the vision and principles of the Charter. It is crucial for all countries to be under the rule of law, not the rule of force. We absolutely cannot allow that.

The United Nations does not exist solely for the benefit of the great Powers. It exists for the entire international community, founded on the principle of the sovereign equality of all Member States. It exists to fulfil the claims of not just the powerful and loud States but also of the voices that often go unheard but are equally legitimate. And it is especially relevant at a time when the existing international order is being

tested around the world. Now is the time to return to the vision and principles of the Charter and to mobilize our strength and wisdom in order to ensure an international order that is based on the rule of law. To that end, we must reform the United Nations and strengthen its functions.

The late Secretary-General Hammarskjöld, who was killed in the line of duty while attempting to mediate a ceasefire during the Congo crisis, said that “[i]t is our responsibility to remedy any flaws there may be” in the institutions of the United Nations.” In order to realize the world to which the Charter aspires, we must tackle head-on the strengthening of the functions of our Organization. In order to demonstrate Japan's strong commitment to the United Nations and to multilateralism, I would hereby like to outline Japan's commitment to realizing our Organization's vision.

First, we must reform the United Nations, including the Security Council, in order to return to the vision and principles of the United Nations Charter, with the strengthening of the Organization's functions, including with regard to disarmament and non-proliferation.

Secondly, we must bring about a United Nations that promotes the rule of law in the international community.

Thirdly, we must promote efforts based on the concept of human security in the new era.

We must face the fact that the credibility of the United Nations is at stake due to the aggression against Ukraine by Russia, a permanent member of the Security Council. We, the States Members of the United Nations, must act to restore this Organization's credibility.

There are frequent discussions about the dysfunctionality of the Security Council. We have debated that issue for 30 years. But what is truly needed now is not a discussion for the sake of discussion, but actions towards reform. Even among the permanent member States of the Security Council, there are some countries that have shown a willingness to embrace reform.

But there can be no reform without negotiation. The various positions cannot be compromised or converge without any negotiation. The time has come to start text-based negotiations in order to reform the Security Council. The Summit of the Future, in 2024, is an excellent opportunity to broadly review the nature of the United Nations. By all means, let us gather a wide range of wisdom, including from experts, and build momentum.

Faced with the crisis of the international order caused by Russia's aggression, the General Assembly adopted a resolution condemning Russia in the strongest terms with an overwhelming majority (resolution ES-11/1). At that time, the United Nations was a beacon in the dark night, clearly indicating the direction in which the international community should go. The General Assembly proved to be the sole universal organ that represents all Member States, pointing us in the direction of the international community's just cause.

Japan is determined not only to reform the Security Council, but also to work earnestly to further revitalize the General Assembly and to push the United Nations so it can pursue an even greater role in the maintenance of peace and security. Japan will also continue to support the Secretary-General as he oversees the activities of this Organization.

Even threatening to use nuclear weapons, as Russia has done, not to mention actually using them, is a serious threat to the peace and security of the international community and is absolutely unacceptable. As a Prime Minister from Hiroshima, I am immensely dedicated to the realization of a world without nuclear weapons, driven by the sentiments from the hibakusha, the victims of the use of nuclear weapons.

Last month, the sole opposition by Russia blocked the unity and concerted efforts of the international community to reach consensus on an outcome document that would maintain and strengthen the non-proliferation regime, which is the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. That caused me great dismay, just as it did for the overwhelming majority of the Member States. However, I refuse to relent, because we are only one country away from adopting the draft final outcome document by consensus. I believe that document represents a new foundation for the international community to proceed with realistic engagements on nuclear disarmament in future. As the only nation to have ever suffered atomic bombings during war, Japan has a unique historical role, and we renew our resolve to realize a world without nuclear weapons. We will continue to make pragmatic efforts to achieve that goal. We must ensure that Nagasaki remains the last place to suffer an atomic bombing.

This is the twentieth year since the Japan-North Korea Pyongyang Declaration, signed by Prime Minister Koizumi and Chairman of the National

Defence Commission Kim Jong Il. Japan's policy remains unchanged. Japan seeks to normalize its relationship with North Korea, in accordance with the Japan-Democratic People's Republic of Korea Pyongyang Declaration, through comprehensively resolving the outstanding issues of concern, such as the abductions and the nuclear and missile issues, as well as putting the unfortunate past behind us. Japan is prepared to engage in dialogue on matters of mutual concern. I am determined to meet with President Kim Jong Un, without any conditions, and will seize any opportunity and give my all to take diligent action in that regard.

Japan has also made long-term contributions in the field of peacebuilding. Japan first participated in a full-scale peacekeeping mission in Cambodia in 1992. Thirty years later, many Cambodian personnel wearing blue helmets are protecting the peace and future of places such as Mali, the Central African Republic and Lebanon. Then Lieutenant Colonel Teav Chanrithy was one of many deployed to Lebanon after Japan's peacekeeping training. Since then, he has been active as a peacebuilder, mentoring younger generations at the peacekeeping operations training centre for the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces. The torch of peace created through Japan's contributions to peacekeeping operations will be borne beyond generations and across borders. Japan supports it.

Japan is fully committed to the realization of a United Nations that promotes the rule of law in the international community. The rule of law is not reserved for one particular State or region. We need to remind ourselves that the rule of law is especially important for vulnerable nations. Strengthening the rule of law based on international law will, in the long run, benefit all States and lead to the sustainable growth and sound development of the international community.

On the basis of that conviction, Japan has been playing an active role in various fields in cooperation with other countries, including efforts towards the realization of a free and open Indo-Pacific.

In 1970, overcoming serious divisions among Member States at the time and with persistent dialogue, the General Assembly adopted resolution 2625 (XXV), entitled "The Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States", also known as the friendly relations declaration. That Declaration, the fruit of our

predecessors' wisdom, serves as a foundation from which the basic principles for the promotion of the rule of law are drawn.

The following basic principles for States emerge from that Declaration: first, to break away from rule by force and pursue the rule of law through observing international law in good faith; secondly, to not allow any attempts to change the status quo of territories or areas by force or coercion; and thirdly, to cooperate with one another in addressing serious violations of the principles of the United Nations Charter.

We are convinced that those basic principles serve as the basis to hold an increasingly divided international community together while ensuring respect for human rights and achieving sustainable development.

Starting in January, Japan will serve as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. By listening not only to the big voices but also the small voices, we intend to take action to strengthen the rule of law in the international community.

Japan will strengthen efforts based on the concept of human security in the new era. People deserve to enjoy a high-quality life, free from anxiety and fear. The concept of human security has not changed, but now we are standing at a historical watershed moment and facing a new challenge.

Today, in addition to global pandemics, we see the use of force and coercion against other countries, food and energy insecurity, inflation and climate change. These are all interconnected and threaten the safety of people now more than ever, further exacerbating poverty and disease.

The Sustainable Development Goals aim for a society in which no one is left behind, and their achievement requires the realization of human security in the new era. In doing so, the key is to enhance the resilience of individuals, societies and nations to cope with the changes and challenges specific to our times.

Adjumani district, in Uganda, is facing difficult and complicated issues, such as the increasing influx of refugees from neighbouring countries and rising costs due to the situation in Ukraine, which is just one example of the difficult and complex challenges that the world is facing today.

Moini Fred, an administrator from Adjumani, learned through the Japan International Cooperation Agency training how to incorporate the views of both

refugees and his compatriots in running his district. Despite its own economic difficulties, Adjumani district continues to provide administrative services as well as support to refugees, and Mr. Fred is working hard to build a cohesive community free of ethnicity- or nationality-based tensions.

With an unsteady international order and amid growing anxiety, Japan will work with the United Nations in order to realize human security in the new era, including on initiatives through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security. In addition, Japan will also continue to invest generously in people.

At the eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development in August, I announced the investment of \$30 billion in Africa as the sum of public and private financial contributions over the next three years, with an emphasis on investment in people. Japan will also focus on human-resource development and capacity-building in other parts of the world. Based on my conviction that education is the foundation of peace, I will serve as an education champion and promote cooperation through human-resource development based on the outcome of the United Nations Transforming Education Summit.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has also illustrated the importance of human health and efforts to protect people from disease. Japan has provided a total of approximately \$5 billion to support the COVID-19 response, including vaccine-related assistance through the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility and other programmes. Japan has also decided to contribute \$1.08 billion to the Global Fund over the next three years. Japan will continue to take a leading role in strengthening the global health architecture and achieving universal health coverage in the post-COVID-19 era as we approach next year's Group of Seven summit, which I will preside over.

Japan is also contributing steadily to the creation of a world where people can enjoy a high-quality life in a safe environment. Our emergency assistance and support to strengthen the resilience of food systems in order to ensure food security, as well as our role in the development of international standards and norms in the field of information and telecommunications through the efforts at the International Telecommunication Union and other organizations, are just a few examples. In order to promote those efforts, Japan will also revise its Development Cooperation Charter, which articulates the basic policy of our development-cooperation policies.

I support the Secretary-General's leadership in presenting *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) as a response to the current and future challenges facing the international community. As history experiences this dramatic change, Japan will continue to support suffering people around the world under the concept of human security in the new era. Japan will work together with the United Nations and Member States towards the maintenance of peace and stability underpinned by an international order based on the rule of law.

It is precisely because we stand at a watershed moment in history that Japan continues to have strong expectations for the United Nations. Times change, but one thing remains the same: the vision and the principles of the United Nations. With that conviction, I am determined to work with everyone in order to strengthen the United Nations.

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

Mr. Kishida Fumio, Prime Minister of Japan, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Mr. Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Scholz: It is with humility and deep respect that I address the General Assembly today — both as the newly elected Chancellor of Germany and as a proud representative to our United Nations.

My country and the United Nations are indivisibly linked. Today's democratic and reunited Germany owes its role on the world stage to our international friends and partners who placed their trust in us to become and to remain a peace-loving member of the international community. We know that we owe our freedom, our stability and our prosperity to an international order with the United Nations at its core. Therefore, my

country's commitment to this Organization and its noble goals — peace, development and equal rights and dignity for every human being — will never wane.

(spoke in German; English text provided by the delegation)

Unfortunately, I am expressing that commitment at a time when we are getting further away from those noble goals. After decades during which we overcame walls and blocs — a time when we marked the fall of the Iron Curtain and German reunification. After the technological revolution of the Internet and the digital transformation, which have made us more interconnected than ever before, we are now facing a new fragmentation of the world.

New wars and conflicts have emerged. Major global crises are piling up before us and are combining and reinforcing one another. Some have even seen this as a harbinger of a world without rules. It is true that the risks to our global order are real. And yet I do not hold with the image of a world without rules — for two reasons:

First, our world has clear rules. Rules that we, the United Nations, created together. The Charter of the United Nations promises all of us freedom and peaceful coexistence. This Charter is our collective rejection of a world without rules. Our problem is not the absence of rules. Our problem is the lack of willingness to abide by them and enforce them.

But the image of a world without rules leads us astray for a second reason. If we do not defend, further develop and strengthen our global order together, then it is not chaos without rules that we face, but a world in which the rules are made by those who can dictate them to us by dint of their military, economic or political power.

The alternative to a rules-based world is not anarchy, but the dominion of the strong over the weak. The vast majority of us cannot be indifferent to whether the rule of power or the power of rules wins the day. The key question that we as an international community face is this — should we stand helplessly by and watch as some seek to cast us back into a global order in which war is a common instrument of politics, in which independent nations have to submit to their stronger neighbours or their colonial masters, in which prosperity and human rights are a privilege of the lucky few? Or will we manage to stand together and ensure that the multipolar

world of the twenty-first century remains a multilateral world? My answer, as a German and a European, is this: we have to manage that. We will manage that if we take three fundamental principles to heart.

First, the international order does not happen by itself. If we do nothing, then the Charter is but a piece of paper. The Charter calls on all of us to uphold its purposes and principles.

We must not stand idly by when a major nuclear Power, armed to the teeth — a founding Member of the United Nations and a permanent member of the Security Council, no less — seeks to shift borders through the use of violence. There is no justification whatsoever for Russia's war of occupation against Ukraine. President Putin is waging that war with one single objective: to seize Ukraine. Self-determination and political independence do not count for him.

There is only one word for that. It is imperialism, plain and simple. The return of imperialism is not only a disaster for Europe; it is also a disaster for our global peaceful order, which is the antithesis of imperialism and neocolonialism. That is why it was so important that, here in this Hall, 141 countries categorically condemned Russia's war of occupation (see resolution ES-11/1).

But that alone is not enough. If we want the war to end, we cannot be indifferent to how it ends. Putin will give up his war and his imperialist ambitions only if he realizes that he cannot win. In doing so, he is not just destroying Ukraine but is also ruining his own country.

That is why we will not accept a peace dictated by Russia. That is why we will not accept any sham referendums. That is why Ukraine must be able to defend itself against Russia's invasion.

We are supporting Ukraine with all our might — financially, economically and with humanitarian assistance, as well as with weapons. Together with our partners around the world, we imposed tough economic sanctions on the Russian leadership and Russia's economy. That is how we are making good on a promise that each and every of our countries made when joining the United Nations, namely, to join forces to maintain international peace and security.

There is one more thing that I would like to add, which is that not one sack of grain has been held back on account of those sanctions. Russia alone has prevented Ukrainian grain ships from putting out to sea, bombing ports and destroying agricultural enterprises.

“Where hunger prevails, there can be no peace.” (A/PV.2128, p.3). My predecessor, Nobel Peace Prize winner Willy Brandt, said that when he addressed this Assembly in 1973, as the first Federal Chancellor to do so. Today we are witnessing that that sentence also works the other way around. Those who want there to be no hunger must ensure that Putin's war does not prevail — this war that even in countries far away from Russia is leading to rising prices, energy scarcity and famine.

The fact that grain exports have been made possible once again thanks to the mediation efforts of Secretary-General Guterres and Türkiye deserves great respect. Germany is also supporting Ukraine with the export of food, and we will stand by Ukraine when it comes to shouldering the enormous costs of rebuilding the country. At an international expert conference that I will host with the President of the European Commission in Berlin on 25 October, together with supporters of Ukraine from all around the world, we will think about how we can manage that Herculean task.

Our message is this: we stand firmly at the side of those under attack, for the protection of the lives and the freedom of the Ukrainian people and for the protection of our international order.

The second principle for preserving that order is as follows. All of us will be judged against the obligations that we have jointly entered into. Responsibility always begins at home. Let us take climate change, for example, which is the biggest challenge of our generation. We, the industrialized countries and major emitters of greenhouse-gases, have a very special responsibility in that regard.

With that in mind, we reiterated our intention at the Group of Seven (G-7) Summit in Germany in June to forge ahead in order to achieve the 1.5°C target, not despite the war and the energy crisis, but precisely because climate neutrality also leads to greater energy security.

We stand by our pledges to support emerging economies and developing countries in their efforts to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change, with new, fair energy transition partnerships, for example. We will not abandon countries that are struggling the most in the face of loss and damage as a result of climate change.

By the time of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Egypt, we therefore want to establish a global shield against climate risks. Our yardstick must be the obligations that we have entered into. Nowhere does that insight seem more obvious to me than in the protection of human rights, since they reflect the deepest need of each and every one of us to live our lives in freedom, unharmed and in dignity. That lies at the heart of what makes us humans, who we are and what we have in common, no matter where we come from, no matter what we believe and no matter whom we love.

I say that with the history of my country in mind. Germany, which betrayed all civilized values with the murder of 6 million Jews, an act that is without parallel, is aware of just how fragile our civilization is. At the same time, we have an obligation to respect and defend human rights at all times and in all places.

My country is the second-largest donor to the United Nations system and the second-largest donor of humanitarian assistance. In Germany in recent years, we have taken in millions of refugees from the Middle East, Africa, Afghanistan and, most recently, Ukraine. That is something of which we are proud.

But we also have to pay heed and take action in places where hundreds of thousands are made to endure suffering, tyranny and torture in prison camps or jails, such as in North Korea, Syria, Iran and Belarus. We must pay heed and take action when the Taliban deprive women and girls in Afghanistan of their most basic rights, and we must pay heed and take action when Russia commits war crimes in Mariupol, Bucha and Irpin. We will bring the murderers to justice.

We are doing everything in our power to support the International Criminal Court and the Independent International Committee of Inquiry on Ukraine, established by the Human Rights Council.

Particularly those who bear particular responsibility for our order in the world by dint of their strength and their influence should have an interest in bolstering our common institutions.

The former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights briefed us about the situation of the Uighurs in Xinjiang a few weeks ago. China should implement the High Commissioner's recommendations. That would be a sign of sovereignty and strength and a guarantee of change for the better.

A third principle must be taken into consideration if we are to preserve the international order. We must adapt our rules and institutions to the reality of the twenty-first century. Far too often, those rules and institutions reflect the world of 30, 50 or 70 years ago.

That also goes for the Security Council. For many years, Germany has been committed to its reform and its expansion, first and foremost to include the countries of the global South. Germany is also prepared to assume greater responsibility as a permanent member and, initially, as a non-permanent member for the term from 2027 to 2028.

I kindly ask Member States to support our candidacy — the candidacy of a country that respects the principles of the United Nations and offers and seeks cooperation. To my mind, it is entirely natural that the up-and-coming, dynamic countries and regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America must be given a stronger political voice on the world stage. That is in all of our interests, as it gives rise to joint responsibility and greater acceptance of our decisions.

Nationalism and isolation will not solve the challenges of our age. More cooperation, more partnership and more involvement are the only reasonable response, whether in the fight against climate change, global health risks, inflation and disrupted supply chains or our approach to displacement and migration. I say that with profound conviction. The insight that openness and cooperation safeguard peace and prosperity has made the past decades the happiest in the history of my country so far.

As President of the G-7 this year, it is therefore a key priority for me to promote a new form of cooperation with the countries of the global South that not only claims to take place on a level playing field, but one on which actors genuinely see eye to eye, especially since that level playing field has long existed *de facto* if we consider the increasing political, economic and demographic influence of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

From the outset, we coordinated our objectives very closely with Indonesia, as the holder of the Group of 20 presidency. We have involved the countries holding the chairmanship of the African Union and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, as well as India and South Africa, in our G-7 discussions.

That gave rise to new models of global cooperation that have one thing in common, namely, the fact that they are characterized by joint responsibility and mu-

tual solidarity. We are fighting the hunger crisis with a new Alliance for Global Food Security, and I would like to invite all Member States to join the Alliance. We launched the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment in order to jointly mobilize \$600 billion for public and private infrastructure investments around the world over the next five years. In doing so, we are taking a big step towards implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With a newly emerging climate club, we are pressing ahead with friends and partners worldwide to implement the Paris Agreement on Climate Change even more swiftly and efficiently.

Such approaches are pillars that support our international order because they deliver results from which citizens in all our countries stand to benefit and that they expect from the United Nations. “We the peoples” — it is not for nothing that those are the first three words of our Charter. We should note that those words are not “We the Member States” or “We the representatives”.

We have an obligation to our peoples. We owe them a global order that allows them to live in peace, which protects their rights and which opens up opportunities for education, health and development for them. Such an order does not come about by itself. Defending, further developing and strengthening it is our task as the United Nations. Germany extends the hand of cooperation to all Member States in that endeavour.

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

Mr. Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Aziz Akhannouch, Head of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Head of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Mr. Aziz Akhannouch, Head of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Aziz Akhannouch, Head of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Akhannouch (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco, it is my pleasure to congratulate the President on his election to preside

over the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session. I wish him every success in his tasks. We also commend the distinctive work done by his predecessor, Mr. Abdulla Shahid, and we highly appreciate the outcome of his presidency.

We reiterate our support for the efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, to reform our Organization. We express to him our support and backing for his initiatives and proposals contained in his report entitled *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982).

The seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly is taking place at a time when our world is witnessing multidimensional crises with global intertwined repercussions. Three years after the onset of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, our world faces a series of deep challenges and successive crises.

What prevents us from managing those crises in an efficient and effective manner is not the fact that we are not aware of their manifestations and interactions, but rather the absence of genuine political will. The multilateral system is currently going through a systemic crisis that manifests itself at three interrelated levels.

The first level relates to the crisis in values, in which the principle of cooperation and solidarity, on which the United Nations was founded, is being undermined due to the prioritization of narrow national interests over universal human values.

The second level is related to the divisions within international institutions, which have become an arena for competition in a way that negatively affects international multilateral action.

The third level relates to the fragmentation of multilateral work in the context of narrow, circumstantial alliances, which are not commensurate with the current complex crises.

The current international situation requires courage and objectivity to answer the following questions. Do we want our Organization to be capable of leading strategic changes and facing the major challenges of our time, or do we want it to be limited to only crisis management? Does our Organization still have the ability to reach an international consensus and find innovative solutions to deal with the current and future challenges of the world?

We would like to say that those who believe that their own capabilities are sufficient alone to contain such challenges are not being realistic. Multilateral work has never been a luxury, and the comprehensive crises that we are experiencing today confirm that and prove that the security and well-being of some depend on the stability and prosperity of others.

The Kingdom of Morocco reiterates its conviction that multilateral action should be based primarily on collective interaction, consensual and renewed approaches, as emphasized by His Majesty King Mohammed VI in his address before the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, when he said:

“Morocco reaffirms its commitment to support the emergence of a new multilateral system built on international legality, justice and equity and cooperation in social and economic relations, and based on an efficient and dynamic United Nations system.” (A/59/PV.4. p.23)

The African continent is the most affected by the repercussions of the difficult economic situation as a result of the global geopolitical crisis, as it bears the brunt of the increase in food and energy prices, which undermines the continent’s gains in the area of sustainable development.

Despite that, Africa has all the components to turn challenges into opportunities and emerge from this crisis stronger. The African continent has significant human and natural resources in addition to the gains and future benefits that it can achieve by implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area. That was affirmed by His Majesty the King in his address at the 28th Ordinary Summit of the African Union when he said:

“We, the peoples of Africa, have the means and the genius, and, together, we can fulfil the aspirations of our peoples.”

In that context, the Kingdom of Morocco calls for promoting international cooperation to serve the interests of African countries by reducing the debt burden and launching integrated development initiatives that will enhance their resilience and resist the shocks of current and future economic crises. The repeated visits of His Majesty King Mohammed VI to several African countries attest to that conviction. His Majesty has launched several cooperation and partnership projects to promote human development,

guarantee food security and bolster economic growth in order to achieve African integration. Under the auspices of His Majesty, the Kingdom of Morocco hosted the fourteenth United States-Africa Business Summit to encourage investment in priority sectors in African countries.

Several countries continue to suffer from the repercussions of COVID-19. The challenge lies in providing a consistent and adequate supply of vaccines and distributing them equitably among all the countries of the world. As part of his commitment to the African affiliation, His Majesty launched a new factory to manufacture COVID-19 and other vaccines, a structural project that will promote the achievement of vaccine sovereignty in the Kingdom of Morocco and throughout the African continent, in line with achieving his Majesty’s vision.

The pandemic has demonstrated that good health and prosperity are not only a main goal of sustainable development but also fundamental conditions and pillars of sustainable development. The Moroccan Government, upon instructions from His Majesty, is implementing and expanding health coverage, benefitting 70 per cent of our people. We hope to cover 100 per cent of the population by the end of the year.

Climate change requires immediate and urgent solutions. Beyond well-intentioned statements, we need to contain this crisis, which is jeopardizing development in many parts of the world and could lead to famine, homelessness and environmental displacement. In that context and in line with His Majesty’s vision, the Kingdom of Morocco has warned of the consequences of the climate crisis on the African continent, which has suffered its greatest impact. It is therefore incumbent upon the developed countries to garner the needed technological and financial resources to support the African States in addressing the consequences of that global challenge.

The Kingdom has decided to increase its nationally determined contribution and reduce its greenhouse-gas emissions by 45.5 per cent by 2030, in the context of Morocco’s integrated strategy to achieve low-carbon development by 2050. The strategy is aimed at creating a green economy in line with the principles of sustainability, the pillars on which we have built the new development model within the Kingdom. That ambition underpins the Kingdom of Morocco’s intention to uphold the commitments it undertook at the 2016

African Summit in Marrakech, which was held on the sidelines of the twenty-second Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, under the presidency of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, especially with regard to developing capacities in the agricultural sector, adapting to climate change and increasing the use of sustainable energy.

Global tensions will continue to adversely impact the efforts being deployed to achieve food security unless countries develop their domestic capacities to take the new reality into account. In that context, Morocco has been investing in the agricultural sector so that it can adapt to climate change. We have been strengthening South-South cooperation with the African continent, on which nearly half of the world's unused arable land is located. At the national level, Morocco is implementing the Generation Green 2020-2030 plan under the directives of His Majesty in order to achieve food security.

The global security crises are directly affecting human migration throughout the world. In line with His Majesty's vision, the Kingdom of Morocco is committed to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, which was signed in Marrakech in December 2018. In that regard, the Kingdom will continue to demonstrate its solidarity in implementing its national strategy for migration and asylum, which was launched by His Majesty in 2013. In the same vein, Morocco continues to combat human trafficking networks, which represent a serious threat to the sovereignty and stability of States and the security and safety of individuals.

Peacekeeping is one of the most important achievements of the Organization, and we must therefore pool our efforts and capabilities to develop it and guarantee peacekeepers' safety. In demonstrating his permanent commitment to peacekeeping on the occasion of the sixty-sixth anniversary of the founding of the Royal Moroccan Armed Forces, His Majesty gave instructions to create a Moroccan multidisciplinary peacekeeping centre to provide training and support national and foreign capacities, especially on the African continent, in partnership with the United Nations and several friendly countries, in order to promote the principles of international peace and security.

Gender equality and the promotion of the rights of women and their full participation in decision-making are preconditions to overcoming current and future global challenges. In line with that and with His Majesty's vision, Morocco is working to promote gender equality as the

foundation for a fair and democratic society. His Majesty has given new momentum to gender equality through the full implementation of the provisions of the Moroccan Family Code. The Kingdom has also launched the first national plan of action for women, peace and security, as an integrated political framework for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), based on our belief in the importance of the full participation of women in preventing and settling conflicts.

The Kingdom of Morocco reiterates its commitment to finding a definitive political solution to the contrived regional conflict over the Moroccan Sahara, which should be based on the Moroccan autonomy initiative as the only solution to this conflict, while respecting the territorial integrity and the national sovereignty of the Kingdom. Since we introduced that serious and realistic initiative in 2007, it has been supported by the Security Council and more than 90 States.

In the southern regions, the Kingdom is implementing a new development model launched by His Majesty in 2015. All those living in the region are participating fully in every stage of its implementation through their democratically elected representatives in the local councils of the Moroccan Sahara.

The active participation of the inhabitants of the Moroccan Sahara in its political, social and economic aspects of life attests to their attachment to the territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Morocco and the Moroccan Sahara. In adhering to the statement made by His Majesty King Mohammed VI on the forty-sixth anniversary of the Green March, the Kingdom of Morocco reaffirms its full support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy for Western Sahara to relaunch a series of round tables, in the same format and with the same participants, to reach a realistic and lasting political solution based on consensus and in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, especially, most recently, resolution 2602 (2021). The serious and well-intentioned participation of Algeria in those round tables and the acknowledgement of its responsibility in creating and pursuing the contrived conflict will be the first prerequisite to reaching a final political settlement of the issue.

The Kingdom of Morocco expresses once again its deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian situation and the absence of the rule of law in the Tindouf camps. In blatant violation of international

humanitarian law, Algeria has ceded its responsibilities over that part of its territory to armed separatist militias that have documented links to dangerous terrorist networks in the Sahel region. We again call on the international community to urge Algeria to respond to the calls made by the Security Council since 2011 and allow the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to organize a census and register the inhabitants of the Tindouf camps.

In a letter that he sent on 20 December 2020 to His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, His Majesty King Mohammed VI reiterated the steadfast position of Morocco in support of the Palestinian question, called for the implementation of two-State solution, for which there is international consensus, and reiterated Morocco's commitment to the negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli parties as the only way to reach a final, lasting and comprehensive solution to the conflict.

In his capacity as Chair of the Jerusalem Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, His Majesty reaffirmed that Morocco would spare no effort to preserve the historical identity of Jerusalem as a locus of coexistence and peace, continue to safeguard its special status, uphold respect for freedom of religion for the followers of the three monotheistic religions and defend the sanctity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Based on our commitment to improving the living conditions of the Palestinians, His Majesty led mediation efforts that culminated in the agreement to maintain the Allenby Bridge, also known as the King Hussein Bridge, linking the West Bank and Jordan, continuously open. That will have a positive impact on the daily lives of Palestinians and facilitate the movement of people and goods.

Given its shared destiny with the State of Libya and in order to build on the positive momentum created by the Skhirat Agreement and Bouznika talks, the Kingdom of Morocco will pursue efforts to reach a peaceful settlement to the conflict in that brotherly country, in line with His Majesty's vision. We are committed to finding a Libyan-led solution to the crisis, without any foreign interference or agenda.

The Kingdom of Morocco welcomes the appointment of Mr. Abdullah Bathily as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, and reaffirms its full commitment to working with him and effectively contributing to efforts enabling the

Libyan stakeholders to reach the necessary agreements and organize parliamentary and presidential elections as the sole means to overcoming the current situation.

The scope of today's challenges will require us to make one of two choices. Either we disregard the current crises facing the world, or we intensify our efforts to address them constructively and effectively. Our collective decisions will have a decisive impact on the lives of present and future generations.

The Kingdom of Morocco, in line with His Majesty's vision and our actions since we joined the United Nations upon gaining independence, the Kingdom of Morocco will continue to uphold its commitments.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Head of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Aziz Akhannouch, Head of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, was escorted from the rostrum.

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

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy.

Mr. Mario Draghi, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Mario Draghi, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Draghi (Italy) (*spoke in Italian; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): It is a great honour for me to be here today. The General Assembly is the place where the world opens up to dialogue and discussion, which are essential elements for peaceful coexistence among countries. As stated in the second preambular paragraph of the 1945 Charter of the United Nations, the objective of the United Nations is "to maintain international peace and security [and] promote the economic and social progress of all peoples".

Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the ensuing food, energy and economic crises are putting our collective ideals at risk in a way that has rarely happened since the end of the Cold War. Those crises stand alongside the other great challenges of our time — climate change, the coronavirus disease pandemic and inequality — and amplify their costs, especially for the most vulnerable.

Accountability for the conflict is clear and one-sided. It is our collective responsibility to find answers to those problems with urgency, determination and effectiveness. We cannot let ourselves be divided into North and South. We must act together and rediscover the value of multilateralism that is celebrated here in this Hall. The invasion of Ukraine violates the values and rules on which international security and civil coexistence among countries have rested for decades. We thought that we would no longer have to witness wars of aggression in Europe. Imperial ambitions, militarism and systematic violations of civil and human rights seemed to belong to the past century.

Since February, however, we have witnessed the bombing of theatres, schools and hospitals. We have seen terrible attacks and violence against civilians, even children. We have witnessed an attempt to subjugate a free and sovereign democracy, which has fought back with pride and courage to defend its independence and its dignity.

Helping Ukraine to protect itself was not only the right choice to make; it was the only choice consistent with the ideals of justice and fraternity that underpin the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions adopted by the Assembly since the beginning of the conflict.

Italy acted without delay alongside the other States members of the European Union (EU), its NATO and Group of Seven allies and all partners that, like us, believe in a rules-based international system and multilateralism. Together, we have responded to President Zelenskyy's request for aid because a military invasion planned months in advance and carried out on multiple fronts cannot be stopped with words alone. We have imposed unprecedented sanctions on Russia to weaken its military apparatus and to convince President Putin to take a seat at the negotiating table. We have welcomed thousands of refugees and assisted those who remain in Ukraine. We also stand ready to fund the country's reconstruction.

The horrors of war are best answered with the warmth of solidarity. Moscow's plan was to conquer Kyiv in a few weeks. Ukrainian soldiers thwarted that attempt and forced Russia into a longer and more difficult conflict, thanks also, in part, to our military assistance. In the past few weeks, a heroic counteroffensive has allowed Ukraine to recover thousands of square kilometres of territory, starting with Kharkiv, and forced the Russian army to retreat. The outcome of the conflict remains unpredictable, but Kyiv appears to have gained an important strategic advantage.

The sanctions we imposed on Moscow have had a disruptive effect on Russia's war machine and on its economy. Russia is struggling to make the armaments it needs on its own, as it is finding it difficult to buy the materials required to produce them. The International Monetary Fund expects the Russian economy to contract both this year and the next by approximately 10 per cent in total, compared to the 5 per cent growth estimated before the war. The impact of those measures is likely to grow over time, partly because some will take effect only in the coming months. With a weaker economy, it will be more difficult for Russia to respond effectively to the defeats that are piling up on the battlefield.

The unity of the European Union and its allies has been instrumental in providing Ukraine with the support it needs and in imposing harsh costs on Russia. Moscow immediately tried to divide our countries by using gas as a means of blackmail.

Italy reacted promptly, diversifying its gas suppliers and accelerating the production of renewable energy. To date, we have halved our dependence on Russian gas and expect to become completely independent in 2024. On that path, we benefited from agreements made with many African countries, from Algeria to Angola to the Republic of the Congo. We want to develop green technologies together in order to place Africa squarely at the centre of the green transition. The war in Ukraine has redrawn energy geography and, with it, geopolitics. The European Union is set to look increasingly to the South and Italy can be a bridge to the southern shore of the Mediterranean and to the entire African continent.

Social cohesion is essential to maintaining a united, resolute position consistent with our values. The rising cost of energy is undermining economic recovery, limiting the purchasing power of households and damaging the productive capacity of businesses, and it could sap our country's commitment to Ukraine.

In Italy, we have spent approximately 3.5 per cent of our gross domestic product to help businesses and citizens cope with rising inflation. We now need to do more, especially at the European level. As Italy has long argued, the European Union must impose a price cap on gas imports, which will also help us further reduce our payments to Russia. The EU must support its member States while they support Kyiv and use the strength of its institutions to shield its neighbours from Russian claims.

In many countries, the war of aggression in Ukraine has awakened or strengthened the desire for a united Europe. The Italian Government has long championed Ukraine's bid for EU membership and strongly supports the integration of the Western Balkans, Moldova and Georgia into the European Union.

We can emerge from crises only by looking to the future with courage and ambition. Our goal is peace, and that peace must be deemed acceptable to Ukraine if it is to be lasting and sustainable. So far, Russia has not shown that it wants an end to the conflict. The referendums for independence in the Donbas constitute a further violation of international law that we firmly condemn.

Nonetheless, Italy wishes to be at the forefront of efforts to try and reach an agreement as soon as that becomes possible. We have managed to do so in the past, when we highlighted how the blockade of Black Sea ports posed a threat to global food security. The agreement on Ukrainian grain exports marked an important moment of cooperation between the parties, for which I want to thank the United Nations, Secretary-General Guterres and Türkiye.

It is our hope that we will be able to find other ways of cooperating, starting with the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Allowing a team of experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency access to the plants was a step forward. Now, it is essential that we arrive at some form of demilitarization of the area. We cannot risk a nuclear catastrophe.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has produced consequences that go far beyond Europe's borders. Rising energy prices have hit the poorest the hardest, exacerbating poverty and inequality. Rising food prices and the scarce availability of grain and other cereals have had the hardest impact on the poorest countries

t. Reduced gas supplies have forced some countries to reopen coal-fired power plants or postpone their closure, albeit for a period strictly related to the emergency.

We must respond to such an attack on our peaceful coexistence with multilateralism, in a spirit of solidarity and responsibility. We must respond to the war of aggression by reaffirming the principles underpinning the General Assembly, namely, respect for human rights, international cooperation and non-belligerence.

In his address to the General Assembly in 1988, Mikhail Gorbachev noted how, in a globalized world, the use or threat of force could no longer and must no longer be an instrument of foreign policy (see A/43/PV.72). Efforts to solve global problems, Gorbachev said, require a new scope and quality of interaction of States. Our reaction to the war in Ukraine serves to reaffirm the fact that gratuitous violence should have no place in the twenty-first century.

Italy hopes that there can be a future in which Russia returns to the principles to which it chose to subscribe in 1945. A world divided into blocs and characterized by rigid ideological demarcations and military confrontations cannot generate development or solve problems. We must maintain our individual identities while conducting international relations responsibly, legally and peacefully. That principle must apply to all the crises we face, from Ukraine to the recent clashes in the Caucasus; from the instability in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America to the tensions in the Indo-Pacific.

Despite the divisions of recent months, we have a solid foundation on which to build. Italy's presidency of the Group of 20 (G-20) last year coincided with a moment of great cooperation among countries. It is a legacy that we must not dissipate. In that regard, I recall Rome's readiness to host World Expo 2030 in order to continue to offer shared solutions to global problems.

At the most acute stage of the pandemic, we took action to overcome protectionism in medical supplies and ensure more vaccines for the world's poorest regions. Through the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility mechanism, we distributed more than 1.4 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines to the countries that needed them the most. We enhanced financial assistance to vulnerable States to help them respond to the economic consequences of the pandemic and we promoted the extension of the Debt Service Suspension Initiative.

Through a newfound spirit of cooperation, we intensified the fight against climate change. For the first time, all G-20 member States pledged to try to keep global warming to within 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and accepted the scientific facts behind that goal. We also agreed on a set of short- and medium-term responses to achieve that goal. The commitments that we made at the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Glasgow followed shortly thereafter.

At the G-20 Summit, we set out new financial contributions to help low-income countries transition to a more sustainable economy. We must continue to support the most vulnerable States in order to help them defend themselves against the impacts of climate change and to pursue their own transition paths. I refer here, for example, to the tragic flooding in Pakistan, where a large part of the country is under water and millions of people have been forced to leave their homes. The environmental crisis affects us all and we must all come out of it together.

Italy's commitment to peace and international solidarity is unceasing. We are the largest contributor of Blue Helmets among European countries, and our military is deployed across five missions in the Mediterranean, Africa and Asia. We participate in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon with the second-largest contingent.

We are very active in promoting dialogue with all countries in the wider Mediterranean. In Libya, we are committed to ensuring that the difficult process of national reconciliation receives strong support from the international community. On that journey, the United Nations remains our main point of reference.

I also want to thank United Nations institutions for the valuable humanitarian aid they provide for the management of migration in the Mediterranean. Italy is well aware that migration is a global phenomenon and must be addressed as such. We must take a responsible, humane and shared approach.

The war in Ukraine and the resulting crises have strained the cohesion of the international community, but it is precisely in that context that we need to rediscover the spirit of cooperation that has, in the past, enabled us to face similar challenges together. Our common institutions must renew themselves. Italy strongly supports the need to reform the Security Council to make it more representative, efficient and transparent.

In the coming years, Italy will continue to be a protagonist in the EU and stand close to its NATO allies, ready to listen, open to dialogue and determined to contribute to international peace and security. Those are the same principles and goals that inspire the United Nations and that we must defend urgently today.

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

Mr. Mario Draghi, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy, was escorted from the rostrum.

The meeting rose at 9.25 p.m.