



General Assembly

Seventy-fifth session

Distr.: General
13 January 2021

Original: English

Seventy-fifth session
Agenda item 8

General debate

Note by the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to circulate, pursuant to decision 74/562 of 22 July 2020, the present compilation document of the statements delivered by Heads of State or other dignitaries by means of pre-recorded statements during the general debate and submitted to the President no later than the day on which the pre-recorded statement is played in the Assembly Hall.

The statements contained in the present document were delivered on the morning of Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 8th meeting of the General Assembly (see A/75/PV.8). Document A/75/592 and its addenda 1 through 11 contain the statements delivered in the 4th through the 15th meetings of the General Assembly (A/75/PV.4-A/75/PV.15).

In accordance with decision 74/562, and without setting a precedent for mandated high-level meetings planned for future high-level weeks, the official records of the General Assembly will be supplemented by annexes containing pre-recorded statements submitted by Heads of State or other dignitaries, submitted to the President no later than the day on which such statements are delivered in the Assembly Hall. Submissions in this regard should be made to estatements@un.org.

21-00390 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



.Niger (see A/75/PV.8, annex I)

Address by Mr. Mahamadou Issoufou, President of the Republic of the Niger

Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 8th meeting of the General Assembly

[Original: French]

Mr. President,

Excellencies Heads of State and Government,

Ladies and Gentlemen Heads of Delegations, Ladies, Gentlemen,

At the outset, Mr. President, I should like to extend my warm congratulations to you on your election as President of this 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly. I have no doubt that your personal attributes, your long and rich experience and your leadership constitute important assets that will enable the General Assembly to make progress in fulfilling the mandate entrusted to it by member States. I can assure you of the Niger's readiness to provide you with all of the support you require in carrying out your duties.

I would also like to pay a deserved tribute to the outgoing president, Mr. Tijjani Muhammad Bande, for his leadership in steering the 74th session, which was marked, as we all know, by the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Secretary-General António Guterres for the exemplary work he has accomplished in making our Organization more capable of meeting people's needs for greater solidarity, security and development, through the promotion of multilateralism. I commend his leadership in dealing with the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis, in particular his strong advocacy in favour of developing countries. He has shown courage in implementing reforms. The Niger appreciates his personal commitment to a global ceasefire as a result of COVID-19 and his initiatives for climate and stability in the Sahel and West Africa.

Mr. President,

Since 1 January 2020, the Niger has been a non-permanent member of the Security Council, which it is presiding over during this month of September.

I would like to thank member States for this mark of confidence and esteem in my country. We are working with members of the Council and with all other members of the United Nations to promote international peace and security.

The General Assembly is certainly the best place to communicate with the international community directly. That is why I take this opportunity to solemnly announce that this is the last time I will speak as President of the Republic of the Niger. The next presidential election to be held in December in my country will be an opportunity for Nigeriens to choose their new leader. This deadline fills me with pride, in the knowledge that this is the very first time in its history that the Niger will experience a democratic transfer of power.

This deadline will be a decisive moment for the Niger as part of its efforts to deepen its democratic process and political maturity. It is similar to other African countries in democratic transition. It is gradually strengthening its democratic

institutions and I have no doubt that in the long term our country will leave behind the memories of the trials and tribulations that have characterized its institutional development for so long.

This qualitative development is the result of the work carried out during my two mandates. Indeed, from the start of my first mandate, I made respect for constitutional texts and institutions a cardinal virtue of my governance for the renaissance of the Niger. My wish was to see the Niger undergo a transformation across all levels: political, economic and social. The results of ten years of implementing the renaissance programme have been largely positive. We have built roads, electrified villages, developed telecommunications infrastructure, fed Nigeriens thanks to the 3N initiative, “Nigeriens Nourishing Nigeriens”, educated and cared for our children, promoted access to water and sanitation and finally, created jobs, especially for young people. Furthermore, despite the threats from terrorist and criminal organizations rocking the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin, we have been able to preserve the integrity of our territory.

Mr. President,

At this time of international crisis linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, the theme chosen for our session is more important than ever. Decisions and consensus are expected of the United Nations so that the international community can act in the most effective way to jointly overcome the consequences of the pandemic. Now is the time to act on the Charter’s provisions, which forcefully stipulate that the United Nations was created to serve the people.

We should therefore reflect on our common future, 75 years after the creation of the United Nations. It is essential that we take steps to make the UN better able to respond to the challenges facing the world. Democratic governance must be better reflected at the global level. We need a more inclusive multilateralism that is more responsive to developing countries and better reflects the realities of the world today. In this way, we will build a more effective multilateralism together for better global governance. We need to build confidence. We need to develop inclusion and transparency.

We must reaffirm our collective commitment to multilateralism. We must return to resolute action in favour of efficiency, representativeness, responsibility and solidarity.

Mr. President,

The measures taken by the Nigerien government to tackle the pandemic have enabled us to control its spread while taking the appropriate measures to deal with its socioeconomic impacts. Therefore, our response plan covers both the immediate health response and broader economic and social alleviation measures. Key elements are already being implemented, such as food distribution, two months of free public services for the most vulnerable households and temporary tax relief for the most hard-hit sectors. We are also providing support to the private sector in the form of loan guarantees.

COVID-19 is putting great strain on our health-care systems. It is also affecting our responses to combat malaria, tuberculosis and other tropical diseases that are too often neglected. Here I would like to reiterate my call for vaccination for all. In addition to the efforts to make the COVID-19 vaccine available, we must continue

to support research into vaccines or improved treatments against diseases such as malaria, cancer, diabetes and the Ebola virus. In this regard, I am delighted that polio has been officially eradicated in Africa. Moreover, this is the place to commend and congratulate the health-care soldiers in the war against COVID19. I know that since 2013, world health worker week is celebrated at the beginning of April each year, at the initiative of the WHO. I propose celebrating an international day of front-line health workers given their role in the fight against COVID19.

COVID-19 must lead us to strengthen our investments in the health system, in particular, care for women and girls. The needs are particularly important on the African continent, where approximately 17% of the world's population is concentrated, for 1% of global health-care expenditure. It is also important that we rethink the issue of access to medicines because according to figures from the World Health Organization, 42% of medical products sold in Africa are substandard or counterfeit. The coronavirus pandemic reminds us that the global health system remains fragile. Coordinated, decisive and innovative political action, in partnership with the United Nations and other international organizations, is needed to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Defeating COVID-19 means including Africa in the global response based on Africa's common continental Strategy.

I would like to commend the efforts of the G20 and the United Nations Secretary-General, as well as other partners, in favour of granting a moratorium on the debt of the most fragile States. In combating the current emergency, our States need financial support, commensurate with the economic crisis they are going through. A simple moratorium on the debt will not be enough, given the challenges that must be met. We must write off the debt altogether, and design and implement a new paradigm to meet the development needs of the poorest countries. "The difficulty lies not so much in developing new ideas as in escaping from old ones" said a prominent economist. This is why it is always after shocks that the world reforms. The current paradigm dates from the aftermath of the two oil shocks of 1973 and 1979. Its unchallenged domination has led people to think that it is the end of the story. But it has produced such inequalities that the world is, in this area, in the same situation as at the end of the 19th century. It was thought that the 2008 financial crisis would be an opportunity for its reform: that did not happen. Could the shock of COVID-19 provide another opportunity? I deeply hope so. This shock should be an opportunity to open the debate, including on questions that currently seem utopian such as those relating to the global tax on capital to fight against inequalities, basic universal income to combat poverty, reducing working hours to fight unemployment, and even opening up borders to better support the growth of the world economy. Some think that these are dreams. Putting an end to slavery, the emancipation of women, universal suffrage — these were also once considered dreams.

Mr. President,

To meet the aspirations of the African peoples as contained in Agenda 2063, I have steered on behalf of my African peers since 2017, a new dynamic of regional integration by operationalizing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), whose operational phase was launched on 7 July 2019 in Niamey. The AfCFTA will enable Africa to set up a single market in order to support economic growth and create prosperity, in particular through creating jobs for young people, with 10 to 12 million currently entering the labour market each year.

Africa's growth and development looked promising at the start of 2020. Growth was expected to rise from 2.9% in 2019 to 3.2% in 2020 and 3.5% in 2021. Significant progress was being made in poverty reduction and health indicators. COVID-19 has shattered that impetus and many of our countries will be in recession. Before COVID-19, Africa needed 600 billion dollars a year to achieve the SDGs. This figure will certainly be reassessed upwards. The pandemic therefore requires that we strengthen bilateral, regional and interregional partnerships. It calls for developing better coordination both with United Nations agencies and international financial institutions. The time has come to further strengthen the links between peace, security in the broadest sense and development. This is about coming together in the face of a global state of emergency that is as much related to health, the economy, society and climate as it is security.

The Niger is convinced that the many threats to international peace and security cannot be resolved by individual States, but by the collective action of the international community. In this regard, I would like to pay tribute to the valiant peacekeepers and elements from our defence and security forces alongside whom they fell in the field of honour, particularly in the Sahel and in the Lake Chad basin. We welcome the strengthening of the operational and intelligence capacities of the defence and security forces at the national level, the operationalization of the Mixed Multinational Force (FMM) in the Lake Chad Basin and that of the G5 Sahel Joint Force. With regard to providing sustainable funding to the latter, I welcome the proposal of our Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, drawing on inspiration from the model of the African Union mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Furthermore, the creation of the coalition to fight terrorism in the Sahel, the establishment of a joint command for all the participating military forces including Barkhane and Takuba, the upcoming deployment by the African Union of a contingent of 3,000 men, the initiatives of ECOWAS, are all elements that give us hope of victory over our common enemy: terrorism and organized crime. Here I express our concern about the evolution of the situation in Mali, especially following the coup d'état in the country on 18 August.

The Niger and the other ECOWAS countries are fully committed to finding solutions to put an end to the crisis in Mali. This requires that the military return to their barracks and a transition be led by civilian authorities. In Mali, and throughout the G5 Sahel area, we need multilateralism in order to pursue the fight against terrorism in all its forms, taking due account of the role of women and young people, because it is on the breeding ground for the poverty that terrorism thrives. Children are among the first victims of the terrorist attacks targeting schools in the Central Sahel region where thousands of children are deprived of education. However, our region did not create these evils. They were imposed on it. Our region is a victim. In other words, the security threat falling on the Sahel is not just a local issue but a global concern. The efforts of the Sahel States must therefore be adequately supported both bilaterally and multilaterally. Here I would also like to commend the sacrifices made by aid workers. I know that they are protected by resolution 2175 of 2014, but this protection must be strengthened.

A follow-up mechanism must be put in place for the disclosure of information and the implementation of sanctions related to attacks against humanitarian workers.

Mr. President,

Since the Abidjan summit, the partnership between Africa and Europe has been part of a new dynamic enabling the two continents to jointly set their priorities. It was based on this innovative and more inclusive approach that the UN-AU-EU trilateral group was established to address the plight of African migrants in detention centres in Libya.

Here I would like to reaffirm the Niger's solidarity with the brotherly Libyan people, who have been subjected to untold suffering for more than ten years. It is regrettable that the initially promising conclusions of the Berlin Conference under the leadership of Chancellor Merkel have not been respected by those who adopted them. In seeking a solution to this crisis, the role of the African Union and the countries neighbouring Libya should not be overlooked. We are eagerly awaiting the convening of an inter-Libyan National Reconciliation Conference with a view to achieving a political solution to this crisis. We hope to see the appointment of a joint UN-AU special envoy for Libya.

Elsewhere around the world, including the situations in Syria, Burma, Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen and the Middle East region, the Niger actively participates in the international community's efforts to ensure peace and security for populations.

On the Palestinian question, the Niger believes that the lasting settlement of this issue necessarily requires talks between Israel and Palestine based on fair and unanimously accepted terms, that is to say a solution between the two States, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side in peace and security, in strict respect of the 1967 borders, and in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. In this time of pandemic, we express our solidarity with the Palestinian people by supporting UNRWA in its work for the benefit of the vulnerable Palestinian populations. We extend this solidarity to all countries in crisis. That is why we support the call of the United Nations Secretary-General for a suspension or lifting of unilateral coercive measures that may hinder the ability of states to effectively combat the COVID-19 pandemic and meet the needs of their populations.

Mr. President,

COVID-19 calls on us to decide the world we want. What post-COVID-19 world do we want to create? What relationship do we want to have with our planet? The answers to these questions are, as I mentioned earlier, of a health, economic, humanitarian and political nature. The Niger loses approximately one hundred thousand (100,000) hectares of arable land each year, putting our populations in a situation of food insecurity. It is therefore necessary to protect the land and the ecosystem essential to human life. The time has come to create a new social contract for nature on a global scale. To better recover from the crisis, we must align our exit strategies with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and create a sustainable and inclusive economy by reducing the risk of future shocks.

Our lifestyles and means of consumption have a significant impact on the planet and on the use of resources. It is imperative that we change them. This is why in Africa we are working within the framework of the Climate Commission for the Sahel region, which I have the honour of chairing, for the implementation of the Paris Agreement on the continent. It is in this spirit that we have drawn up a Global Climate Investment Plan for the Sahel region covering the period 2018-2030 which now constitutes a tool to operationalize the implementation of the Paris Agreement in the region. Likewise, the Great Green Wall Initiative also enables us to build a

more sustainable and equitable future and to realize our vision of land degradation neutrality. By preserving the health of our lands and promoting solutions based on respect for nature, we are also preserving the health of our peoples.

Mr. President,

A century ago, when the Spanish flu hit a world torn apart by the Great War, few multilateral institutions existed. Countries today have fought the pandemic in ways that did not previously exist and have learned a lot. Today, the World Health Organization has become the most relevant multilateral framework at our disposal to deal with epidemics in a concerted manner. Other multilateral institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are all tools to enhance our collective capacity to solve global problems.

We urge member States to support the Secretary-General's efforts to reform the Organization, strengthen its role and provide it with the means to enable it to adequately fulfil its missions. The Niger reiterates once again its commitment to the common African position as expressed through the Ezulwini consensus. The multilateral system arising from the Second World War allowed us to define and implement standards and principles based on human development. Today, respect for the individual, the defence of freedoms and the fight against poverty and epidemics are priorities of the global multilateral system.

Beyond institutional reforms, it is also within our societies that this fight is won, by profoundly changing our behaviour and our policies. We need to invent an economy that respects people and the environment.

Mr. President,

The 75th Anniversary of the United Nations is an opportunity to reflect on how to make it even more capable of meeting new challenges. We must preserve the gains generated by multilateralism and reinforce them. If the international system continues to be perceived as unjust and unequal, if we do not ensure the rule of law over the use of force, if we do not respond to the needs of our citizens, then the factors of instability will multiply and the manifestation of ideological hostility to global governance and democratic models will flourish. The multilateral world we want cannot be based exclusively on the balance of power among the great powers. This is perhaps the most important lesson, Mr. President, that the COVID-19 crisis will have taught us. With this in mind, I would like to recall the words of Dag Hammarskjöld who said that the United Nations was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell. Today we need a more agile, more democratic, more coordinated and more effective United Nations, leading us towards a more secure, inclusive and sustainable world.

In conclusion, I would like to take inspiration from Thucydides' famous phrase: "We deserve praise, for paying more attention to justice than compelled to do by our power". Being fairer also means doing everything to avoid falling into the eponymous trap in order to protect humanity from a global confrontation with irreparable consequences. We need to find a new global balance. This is the opportunity that COVID19 has given us.

I thank you for your kind attention.

Côte d'Ivoire (see A/75/PV.8, annex II)

Address by Mr. Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire

Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 8th meeting of the General Assembly

[Original: French]

Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkır, President of the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly;

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen Heads of State and Government;

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

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Honourable Delegates;

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your brilliant election to the Presidency of the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly, and to pay a heartfelt tribute to your predecessor, Professor Tijjani Muhammad Bande of Nigeria, for having been able to adapt the functioning of the General Assembly to the constraints derived from the 2019 coronavirus disease (Covid-19).

I also pay tribute to the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for his tireless plea for greater support for developing countries in the face of this unprecedented health crisis. The unprecedented format of this 75th session of our General Assembly points to the gravity of the situation the world is experiencing, and the need to do everything possible to ensure that our Organization can continue to fulfil its missions in the service of humanity.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

For the past several months, Covid-19 has been disrupting life in our countries and plunging the world into a large-scale socioeconomic crisis, the most serious since the beginning of the 21st century. Despite significant advances in health and scientific research, we seem powerless to stop the spread of the virus or mitigate its impact. The death toll from the pandemic is on the rise, the global economy is practically at a standstill and countries are now holed up behind their borders. People's daily lives have been thrown into disarray, with dramatic consequences for the most fragile sectors of the population.

Under these circumstances, the pandemic could wipe out more than a decade of economic growth and social progress made by the African continent, which everyone agrees is demonstrating extraordinary resilience. This progress is due, in particular, to the foresight of Governments and their ability to adopt bold response plans, despite limited resources.

To confront this pandemic, my country, Côte d'Ivoire, adopted a Health Response Plan of approximately 171 million US dollars and an Economic, Social and Humanitarian Support Plan of 3 billion US dollars, intended to support the private sector and low-income households. In total, this massive unprecedented effort, which

represents 5% of my country's GDP, has produced impressive results in the fight against COVID-19. These results are among the best on the African continent, thanks in particular to our competent and devoted health-care workers.

This is the appropriate setting to commend the international solidarity that has benefited Côte d'Ivoire through the implementation of these programmes and to thank all the friendly countries and development partners who have provided us with support and assistance through various financial, technical and material contributions.

These excellent results are also the fruit of major reforms and investments in the health-care sector. In fact, during the 2018-2020 period, we invested around 1.5 billion US dollars in the health sector to support the implementation of Universal Health Coverage. We intend to pursue this virtuous approach in terms of health governance throughout the 2021-2025 period, with an investment of around 3 billion US dollars.

However, in the face of this common enemy, Covid-19, the world has persistently displayed a divided front, delaying the emergence of a collective and effective solution. Amid the panic instigated by Covid-19, we abandoned the frameworks and instruments that would have enabled us to show greater solidarity and mobilize the resources necessary to finance national health, economic and humanitarian response plans. As far as Africa and particularly my country are concerned, the multifaceted support provided by some of our main development partners is important, but it is insufficient and incommensurable as compared to the amounts released individually by the major economies, or collectively by certain regional communities for the benefit of their members.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Faced with the spread of Covid-19, developing countries, especially African countries, are more severely affected by the economic and social effects derived from the lack of global initiatives supporting their economies. In this context, in my capacity as Champion for the implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063, I welcome the G20's initiative to grant a moratorium on bilateral government debt repayments to the benefit of several African countries.

I call on all partners across the continent to take bolder measures aimed at relieving the burden on our economies, which have been hard hit by the effects of Covid-19. Africa's financial needs are estimated at 100 billion US dollars per year over three (3) years, or a total of 300 billion US dollars. In addition, countries should be granted room for budgetary manoeuvre to allow them to pursue the necessary social investments and take into account security needs, especially in countries combating terrorism.

The world must finally hear the call of Africans to cancel their countries' public debt. My country supports the African Union's efforts to collectively renegotiate the continent's debt with creditors, and to obtain an extension of the above-mentioned debt moratorium. But we must go further and act without further delay. African countries need lasting solutions, including funds and investment, in order to withstand the unprecedented shock suffered by our peoples and pursue the continent's development process.

Among these solutions, I recommend recourse to the International Monetary Fund's Special Drawing Rights — a mechanism that already proved to be effective during the 2008-2009 global financial crisis.

The fight against Covid-19 must not obscure other diseases such as malaria and AIDS, which claim more victims in African countries. Above all, it must not destroy our efforts to combat poverty. In this area, my country launched vigorous reforms that have reduced poverty by 15.6 percentage points in eight years.

The regional study on poverty by the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) and the World Bank indeed confirms that Côte d'Ivoire went from a poverty rate of 55.01% in 2011 to 39.4% in 2018. This means that around 1.6 million Ivorians were lifted out of poverty during that period.

Furthermore, again according to recent statistics from the World Bank, Côte d'Ivoire's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita has more than doubled, from 1120 US dollars in 2011 to 2290 US dollars in 2019, meaning Côte d'Ivoire has the highest per capita income of any country in the West African subregion.

Côte d'Ivoire owes these results to a dynamic economy driven by rigorous governance, which has enabled us, over the past nine (9) years, to achieve an average growth rate of 8% per year. The economy's growth rate is estimated at around 1.8% in 2020 and forecast to be around 7.9% in 2021. Despite the particularly difficult context with regard to Covid-19, we are continuing to roll out programmes with a social impact, such as the Government's Social Programme, which will enable us to further reduce the poverty rate.

In that respect, thanks to electrification programmes, improved access to drinking water and enhanced education and health care, we have enabled millions of our fellow citizens to benefit from electricity and drinking water, and the presence of schools and health-care centres near to their living spaces.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Covid-19 pandemic reminds us how much the world needs the United Nations in order to act, together, for the common good. We must put our common Organization back at the centre of the collective response to this pandemic. At the health-care level, that means ensuring that everyone has access to a vaccine as soon as it becomes available.

On the economic front, the financial assistance provided to developing countries must be increased and better coordinated.

Covid-19 underscores the threats our world is called upon to face over the coming few years, which should lead us to strengthen the means of action of the United Nations, and its partnership with regional organizations. No country will be able to meet these new challenges alone, owing to their global nature and harmful consequences on people and economies.

Sadly, nowadays, the effectiveness of the United Nations and multilateral cooperation mechanisms, where consensual solutions are forged to tackle global challenges, are constantly put under severe strain, as a result of unilateral initiatives fuelled by strategic rivalries and competing leaderships.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Nations is celebrating seventy-five (75) years this year. I remain convinced that we must support and revitalize multilateralism as the only means of guaranteeing lasting international peace and stability. The challenges related to global warming, poverty, terrorism and the persistence of the nuclear threat and armed conflicts, among others, further legitimize this renewed multilateral ambition to which my country subscribes. This underpinned our accession to the Paris Agreement on climate change and the decisions undertaken during our mandate on the United Nations Security Council, which ended in 2019. It is also the reason for our participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations, and our commitment to finding peaceful solutions to disputes in our region.

In order to give greater legitimacy and credibility to our common Organization, there is an urgent need to carry out the reform of the Security Council. It is necessary to build the broadest consensus around the issue of Africa's full and effective entry into the United Nations Security Council on a permanent basis. It is time for Africa to finally take its place in this important Organ.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Ivorian people will elect their next President of the Republic on 31 October 2020. Despite the Covid-19 health crisis, all measures have been taken to ensure that this election is peaceful and transparent, as was the case in 2015. I am delighted with the effective participation of all stakeholders in this process and would like to express my deep gratitude to all partners, in particular the United Nations, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union, which have all committed to the success of this electoral consultation alongside Côte d'Ivoire.

This election is taking place in a democratic environment, bolstered by important sociopolitical reforms and by undeniable economic and human progress, making my country a prosperous nation and one of the most successful economies in the world.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the full support of Côte d'Ivoire for the United Nations, which must remain the preferred framework for providing lasting responses to the major challenges of our time.

I wish the United Nations every success and a happy 75th anniversary.

Thank you.

Albania (see A/75/PV.8, annex III)

Address by Mr. Ilir Meta, President of the Republic of Albania

Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 8th meeting of the General Assembly

Mr. President of the General Assembly,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Distinguished delegates,

Let me begin by warmly congratulating His Excellency Ambassador Volkan Bozkir of Turkey, on his election to the prestigious post of General Assembly President.

Mr. President, Albania is honoured to serve, under your leadership, as Vice-President of the 75th session of the General Assembly, representing the Eastern European Group.

You can fully count on our committed support and partnership, throughout this historic session.

Mr. President,

During the 75 years of existence of the United Nations, we have had plenty of reasons to be proud of. As a result of global cooperation in the framework of the UN, we have managed to prevent major military conflagrations and reduce human suffering.

The 75th anniversary of the United Nations is a historic milestone and should serve as a time of reflection on how to strengthen the UN and make it more effective in addressing the global and unprecedented challenges that our societies are facing.

Mr. President,

The COVID-19 pandemic has plunged the world into a deep health and economic crisis. Its socio-economic consequences will certainly play out for many years to come, with unpredictable consequences for global peace and security.

The current crisis threatens to slow down and even reverse the progress on the new Sustainable Development Goals.

Food security, poverty eradication, economic development, climate change and gender equality are at stake, exacerbating the existing vulnerabilities and inequalities within and among countries.

How we respond will determine how fast the world recovers, and will shape our ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and manage other global challenges.

The global response to the coronavirus pandemic has tested multilateralism and exposed the limitations of existing international institutions. But it has also demonstrated the alarming consequences of faltering global cooperation.

The pandemic has shed a new light on humanity's need for a strengthened multilateral system, based on the principles and ideals enshrined in the UN Charter and the international law.

The United Nations should be at the centre of an inclusive and effective multilateralism, where international organizations, financial institutions, civil society, the business community, and other stakeholders, operate through closer institutional links.

In this regard, we strongly support the vision and the ambitious reform agenda of the UN Secretary-General. Albania is convinced that a reformed United Nations will deliver a more integrated and system-wide approach to achieve the 2030 Agenda and make sure no one is left behind.

Distinguished delegates,

At this critical moment, we must respond to the fears and hopes of the people we serve.

In order to flatten the curve of the pandemic and prevent a global economic crisis, we must react collectively, in the spirit of unity and solidarity.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the United Nations for mobilizing support in terms of personal protective equipment and other medical supplies to more than 130 countries, as well as to ongoing efforts to accelerate research and development for a vaccine, which should be affordable and accessible to all the people across the globe.

Mr. President,

2019 was a difficult year for Albania. We were struck by two powerful earthquakes, which left more than 50 people dead and a billion of US dollars in damages.

We are grateful to those friendly nations who helped us in our time of need, and provided financial and in-kind support to our ongoing reconstruction efforts.

We are also grateful of the support that we have received from the United Nations, that proved to be a true partner.

Its agencies were engaged from day one. Rescue and relief experts were deployed immediately, supporting our national authorities alongside partners from Europe and elsewhere.

And then COVID-19 hit. The World Health Organization has accompanied our response every step of the way. Jointly, the UN has also prepared a socio-economic response plan to ensure coordinated action across the UN, and efficient support to the national response.

Albania is working hard to achieve the United Nations global goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45 per cent in the next decade, and to net zero emissions by 2050, in accordance with Paris Agreement.

In addition, we have adopted the Strategy on Climate Change and the Mitigation Action Plan of greenhouse gas emissions.

As Albania strives to make full use of its economic potential, we have aligned our national priorities and objectives to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the National Strategy for Development and Integration.

Very important objectives of this Strategy are the protection of Roma and Egyptians communities, persons with disabilities, and other potentially vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Progress has also been made in terms of gender equality, with the number of women working in state institutions and public administration growing by the day.

Mr. President,

We need to pay special attention to the needs of the most vulnerable groups, especially to those of young people. The economic effects resulting from the pandemic will lead to increased numbers of unemployed young people, prompting them to flee their country of origin.

This is undoubtedly a global threat, affecting especially those countries with fragile economies.

Distinguished delegates,

Albania's OSCE Chairmanship 2020 is a tangible demonstration of our steadfast commitment to promote international peace and security through dialogue and multilateral co-operation, at a time of raising tensions and polarisation.

In its capacity as Chair of the OSCE, Albania has strongly supported the call of the United Nations Secretary-General for a global ceasefire.

In order to continue to actively participate in creating stability and security, Albania has presented its candidature for election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, for the mandate 2022-2023.

Albania firmly believes that multilateralism is key in tackling global challenges. We will offer a proactive contribution to international peace and security through our own regional experience, as a key factor for peace, stability, and security.

We will take an active, constructive, and mature approach and we will act with responsibility to strengthen multilateralism through partnerships and cooperation.

I seize this opportunity to call on all the esteemed nations of the General Assembly to support Albania's Security Council bid for 2022-2023.

Mr. President,

In today's complex and interconnected world, modest countries like Albania may not be expected to compete with their economies and material assets.

They can, nonetheless, contribute in enriching the world with what they have most precious: identity, history, culture, traditions and values.

One of the traditions that we value and cherish the most it's the unique interreligious harmony that reigns in Albania.

Although Albanians traditionally belong to different religious — they have peacefully lived side by side, since times immemorial. When Pope Francis visited Albania in 2014, he spoke of "religious fraternity".

Last year, we organized in Albania a regional conference, "Religion as an Instrument for Peace", in collaboration with the US State Department, with the aim to advance religion freedom as a fundamental human rights issue.

This precious heritage of interreligious and cultural tolerance defines who we are as a nation. The exceptional story of how Albanians risked their lives to protect and rescue the Jews during the Holocaust is a remarkable expression of our spirit of tolerance, compassion and respect towards our fellow human beings.

Albania is proud to offer the world a message of co existence and dialogue between religions.

It's a message that can serve as a powerful antidote against rising intolerance and violent extremism that undermine peace and security.

Distinguished delegates,

European Union accession continues to be Albania's most important strategic objective.

Earlier this year we welcomed EU Council political decision to open accession talks with Albania.

We are fully aware that we need to fulfill the pending benchmarks before the first intergovernmental conference.

This process requires a concert of efforts at national level, with a determined government leadership heading the way towards genuine and sustainable reforms.

Renewed commitment is expected to deliver concrete results in key benchmarks related to democratic functioning and rule of law, which will have to reflect cross-party political consensus and serve to the overall stability of the country.

We have expressed our sincere gratitude to European institutions and member states for their assistance in recovering from the earthquake that struck us and the COVID-19 pandemic repercussions.

Albania continues to fully align itself with EU foreign policy in the region, taking pride of our firm European and Euro-Atlantic alliance of shared values.

Mr. President,

Albania is aware of its obligations as a responsible member of the international community.

In its ongoing efforts to build peace and security, Albania has contributed with troops, under the umbrella of UN, EU and NATO, in different peacekeeping operations in South Sudan, Kosova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mali and Afghanistan.

Our primary goal and interest are to ensure lasting peace and stability in our region, the Western Balkans.

Our region has had a tragic history of dictatorships, oppression and military conflicts. Despite the difficult legacy that still haunts the region, significant progress has been made over the past two decades, largely thanks to the cycle of reforms triggered by the ongoing NATO and European Union enlargement processes.

We encourage and welcome the fact that the Albanian factor continues to support the European and Euro Atlantic course throughout the region, strengthening at the same time regional cooperation and ownership of ambitious projects.

We welcome the agreement on economic normalization between Kosova and Serbia, brokered and guaranteed by the President of the United States, Donald Trump.

We remain hopeful that this agreement will inject new dynamism in the relations between Kosovo and Serbia.

Both countries should seize this opportunity to conclude a final and legally binding agreement of mutual recognition and full normalization of their relations, with the mediation of the European Union.

Albania strongly believes that the Republic of Kosovo is an exporter of security and stability in the Balkans.

Kosovo has established a solid constitutional and legal framework that provide for unprecedented protection of the rights of minorities and their cultural heritage. This is fully in line and often exceeds the relevant European acquis in terms of human rights protection.

Kosovo is today a member of many international organizations and regional initiatives.

The membership of Kosovo to all the international organizations, United Nations included, would not only benefit Kosovo, but also the whole international community.

In concluding Mr. President, I would like to reaffirm once again Albania's committed support to a reformed and reinvigorated rule-based order, with the United Nations at its centre. We, Member States, must do our part in upholding and strengthening the multilateral system in order to benefit from it.

Thank you for your kind attention!

Slovenia (see A/75/PV.8, annex IV)

Address by Mr. Borut Pahor, President of the Republic of Slovenia

Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 8th meeting of the General Assembly

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Friends, Mr. President

We are celebrating the 75th anniversary of the United Nations. 75 years ago, our predecessors were able to utilize their experience of a devastating world war and took the lead to building a vision of a better world.

A world of prosperity and peace.

A world of global wellbeing.

A world of global cooperation serving future generations.

They established the United Nations.

And here we are today, Dear Friends, a family of nations facing no less devastating threats: a global health and economic crisis, degradation of environment — all that threaten the wellbeing of our kind and our home — our Planet.

The best means of addressing the current global threats is effective multilateralism. Less multilateral cooperation would only magnify problems and challenges we are facing in all our societies.

To face the threats to Humanity nowadays, to build our common resilience, Ladies and Gentlemen, no one can be strong enough alone; we need to be vigilant, active, responsible, brave and wise — TOGETHER.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In a rapidly changing global environment, we increasingly depend on new technologies and digital infrastructure.

New technologies and artificial intelligence have already become the backbone of our daily lives that keep businesses and essential public services running.

We need to frame them in service of humankind. Slovenia makes an effort in this direction with the very first UNESCO global center for artificial intelligence established in Ljubljana last November.

One of the main challenges is cybersecurity. According to our view, cyberspace should be secure, global, open, free and inclusive.

The fragmentation and weakening of international security regimes is worrying. This should only strengthen our commitment for effective, treaty-based international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

All pressing proliferation issues should be solved by diplomatic and peaceful means.

Precondition for achieving sustainable peace and reconciliation, is to deal with grave violations of Human rights. We therefore support International Criminal Court as a central institution to fight impunity.

We will continue to engage in partnership and cooperation in the UN and other fora.

Slovenia is especially active in landmines clearance efforts, affecting the lives of civilians, in particular children. I am glad to report that ITF Enhancing Human Security, a Slovenian non-profit organization, managed to maintain its operational capacity and presence in the field in the midst of the pandemic.

Mr President,

Sustainable Development Goals are a clear roadmap for green and healthy planet. Slovenia as the EU Presidency in second half of 2021 will put environmental protection very high on the agenda. The COP26 next year should be a real game-changer.

Recently and for the first time, Slovenia contributed one million Euros to the UN Green Climate Fund.

Excellences,

Slovenia shares the awareness of biodiversity loss as an urgent global challenge.

We put the right to clean drinking water in our constitution. We recognize preservation of water resources as a key element to protect biodiversity.

On Slovenia's initiative, the UN proclaimed a World Bee Day, celebrated on 20th of May, recognizing the importance of bees and other pollinators for food security, biodiversity and sustainable development.

My personal advocacy to environmental protection is both global and local, based on introducing public debates on climate change, establishing committee for climate policy and supporting youth movements.

I would like to reaffirm Slovenia's and my personal commitment to stop an unprecedented rate of biodiversity loss and halt climate change effects.

This is why I join the "Leaders Pledge for nature".

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The COVID-19 crisis brought about a stark realization of the importance of solidarity and cooperation — among ourselves and within multilateral organizations, such as the World Health Organization.

COVID-19 pandemic has left devastating social and economic consequences. Lives depend on accurate and timely information. A full exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, access to public information and the protection of journalists are key to wellbeing of our societies.

My country, Slovenia, came into being, inspired by the quest for democracy and fundamental rights. We know — and the current COVID-19 crisis has confirmed — that human rights can never been taken for granted.

The situation of the most vulnerable groups — those without sufficient health care and those that are prosecuted and historically marginalized, has further worsened.

We need to stress once again that there is no place for discrimination based on any personal status in modern societies.

Nobody should be left behind.

As we mark 25 years of adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action we celebrate gains in gender equality and women empowerment.

Dear Friends,

75 years ago our mothers and fathers said “never again”. They said “NO” to another total war, pointless deaths and suffering, no to nationalistic and extremist tendencies, no to a life in uncertainty and fear.

I — as well as many of you, grew up in peace and prosperity, in a world, built on the values and ideas of the UN founders. Yes, the UN has failed to prevent all the conflicts, could and should oftentimes react quicker, better, more determined. Nevertheless, we have to agree that the world has been a better place since 24 October 1945 because of the United Nations.

However, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world today is a very different place than 75 years ago. Today’s world is less predictable and less secure than it was yesterday.

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the very fact that we are celebrating this important anniversary in this unprecedented way — each of us from her/his different part of the world, clearly indicates that we are capable to adapt. Adapt to do our joint work for the one humanity and the one planet that we all share.

Let me therefore take this opportunity to reaffirm Slovenia’s commitment to the multilateral cooperation in the framework of the UN and other international and regional organizations, including within the scope of its EU membership and presidency in 2021.

With this in mind, it is vital that progress is made on respect for human rights, international law and the rule of law and on a comprehensive, inclusive, and sustainable development of our societies.

The world is increasingly connected and interdependent. The COVID-19 crisis has undoubtedly shown that.

We, and the UN as an institution, have to change and grow with it. I am convinced we can best address global challenges through our joint action.

75 years ago, our predecessors have built the first bridge. Today our world is a tight network of bridges, and I ask you, for the sake of the present and future generations, for the sake of your loved ones and yourself, do not tear them down.

I wish to congratulate all of us.

I wish to congratulate and thank our predecessors, who were brave and visionary enough to start it all.

I wish to congratulate generation of our parents and our own generation to keep it going despite all the obstacles.

And I wish our youth, who is slowly taking over, the courage and wisdom to do better than us.

I would like to give the final word to the eminent Slovenian novelist Boris Pahor, also known as the oldest known survivor of the Nazi concentration camps, and who is at its 107 years of age still outspoken fighter against all totalitarianisms.

He says: “Humanity has enough wisdom and power to find a path to lead us out of the crises, towards becoming a more ethical human being.” I believe him.

HVALA! Thank you! “

Monaco (see A/75/PV.8, annex V)

Address by His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco

Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 8th meeting of the General Assembly

[Original: French]

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

The particular circumstances of the general debate at this 75th session of the General Assembly are anecdotal when, for months, families, communities and countries have been caught up in the turmoil of the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequences.

I would like to commend here the leadership of His Excellency Professor Tijjani Muhammad Bande. He was able to stay the course in particularly difficult times and allow the General Assembly to pursue the crux of its work.

I would also like to warmly thank the Secretary-General, António Guterres, and through him all the United Nations staff, who have never ceased to mobilize the United Nations system even in areas of conflict in order to protect the most vulnerable.

Development activity reforms have enabled the effective coordination of teams on the ground and highlighted the skills, dedication and courage of those women and men who work on a daily basis to honour the mandates we have entrusted to them.

Mr. President Bozkır, you have given pre-eminence to consultation and coordination, so that member States can stand up to the immense challenges in a spirit of mutual aid and efficiency.

You know that you can count on the full cooperation of my delegation as the Principality of Monaco assumes one of the Presidencies of this 75th session.

Mr. President,

In recent years, the world has endured a succession of crises that we have had to confront in this forum: the rise of terrorism, the intensification of migratory flows, climatic shifts, the financial crisis of 2008 and now the pandemic that is generating an economic and social crisis.

Despite these major obstacles, we have adopted innovative guidelines: the 2030 Agenda for development and its SDGs in 2015, as well as the Paris Agreement on climate change in 2016 and the global Compact for safe migration in 2018, to name just a few.

The international system is nevertheless destabilized and multilateralism is being called into question. In a context where nationalist and protectionist tendencies are resurgent, it is vital that we mobilize in a coordinated and united manner.

No State, regardless of size or military or economic power, can meet the current international challenges on its own.

The interconnectedness of our States demands a coordinated response to transnational threats that undermine hard-won progress and weaken international peace and security.

The sudden shutdown imposed on our economies by the necessary lockdown has impacted our resources.

Monaco, resolutely committed to multilateralism and its institutions, has fulfilled its statutory commitments and will continue to comply with its obligations. Faithful to its tradition of solidarity with the most vulnerable, the Principality has consequently joined in the collective effort to fight the pandemic, in particular by responding to the global emergency plea launched by the United Nations.

Mr. President,

The Secretary-General has called for building a multilateralism of networks by bringing together all agencies, organizations and entities at the local, regional and international level. It is indeed by being more inclusive, listening to all, that we can be assured “of leaving no one behind”.

As such, women and girls can no longer be excluded from such a movement in this year marked by a triple anniversary: 25 years of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 20 years since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 on “Women, Peace and Security” and 10 years since the creation of UN Women.

That means equality between women and men has been on our agenda for 25 years and yet women and girls are still the main group affected by inequalities.

Despite some progress, the situation in the world is changing extremely slowly.

Moreover, the 2020 report on the sustainable development Goals underscores the heavy toll women are paying in the face of the crisis, making the achievement of SDG 5 increasingly distant.

It is women who are most involved in the fight against COVID-19 and therefore the most exposed to contamination, and at the same time, a strong and intolerable increase in cases of domestic violence is to be deplored, as well as a particularly high school dropout rate for girls.

My Government is resolutely committed to defending the interests of women and will continue its efforts, through the Committee for the Promotion and Protection of Women’s Rights, created in 2018, to reduce inequalities and fight against discrimination and violence, of which women are still too often the victims.

It is also by listening to and trusting young people that we will build a more robust and sustainable future.

Political inclusion is a central demand of youth. Over the past year, many of us have praised the commitment that young people have shown on the climate issue.

Today, although young people are less affected by the COVID-19 virus, it is they who are bearing the full brunt of the resulting economic crisis. Many of them are affected by precarious status that does not provide them with social protection. Others find themselves cut off from any means of access to education. It is essential that we establish specific provisions in order to prevent our young people from finding themselves permanently stuck in the poverty trap.

Mr. President,

While new technologies have largely contributed to the development of our societies, they have unfortunately contributed to the rise of a new context of insecurity. The past few months have accelerated the digital transition on a tremendous scale, but these advances have also been accompanied by an explosion of cyberattacks.

Cyberspace is now an area of conflict in its own right, just like the land, sea and sky.

What becomes of sovereignty in the digital age, when security, law, the economy, taxation and currency are called into question? In my view, it is important to agree on common rules in order to adopt a framework of appropriate measures and proper conduct. That is not only to guarantee a better functioning of our institutions, but also to ensure the preservation of States' sovereignty and individual freedoms.

At the same time, the wave of disinformation has intensified, particularly via social media in recent months. Our societies are vulnerable to these manoeuvres. Also, I welcome the awareness campaign launched by the United Nations to combat fake news.

Monaco has undertaken to acquire strong digital skills, on the one hand, to seize the many opportunities offered by digital technology in economic and environmental spheres and, on the other hand, to ensure sustainable development that is respectful of people.

Therefore, the responsible and sustainable digital model that I wanted for my country is accompanied not only by significant investments in infrastructure, training and business support, but also by the enactment of legislative rules.

Mr. President,

We cannot discuss this new context of insecurity without mentioning the gravity of the climate crisis. Large-scale natural disasters will intensify and, as we know, cause emergency humanitarian situations and the displacement of populations. These disasters will have an impact on access to natural resources. These phenomena are vectors of political instability and conflict.

The current pandemic has demonstrated how vulnerable we are when we destroy the planet's ecosystems. Scientists are clear on this, and we should expect an increased risk of these types of epidemics if we do not change our behaviour.

The slowdown in our activities as a result of the pandemic has not changed the curve of rising temperatures nor reduced nature's destruction.

Meanwhile, the postponement of major environmental meetings does not mean indefinitely suspending our commitments but calls instead for a redoubling of our efforts. The urgency is still there and, more than ever, it is necessary for us all to mobilize.

In this regard, I would like to commend the Secretary-General's initiative to convene a Biodiversity Summit, thereby granting it its rightful place at the heart of our political agenda. The collective decision to go ahead with the event on 30 September, despite the current health context, confirms this commitment to which I fully subscribe.

Monaco is, and shall remain, resolutely committed to environmental protection and sustainable development. Whether by pursuing the energy transition, accelerating the development of soft mobility, or promoting the circular economy, the Principality has placed the development of consumption and production methods at the heart of its vision of society. Each aspect of the Monegasque Government's action must form part of the demands of sustainable development. This is the line that I set for it in 2005.

Mr. President,

While the current crisis has focused much of our global attention on growth figures and economic recovery, there is a significant risk that we will deviate from the other pillars of sustainable development.

It is therefore essential that we seize the opportunity before us to rethink our economic and social models based on principles that respect the environment.

Now more than ever, the road map that we established in 2015 must guide us during this period of great uncertainty. Now more than ever, the COVID-19 pandemic is demonstrating that it is crucial to achieve the goals defined by the 2030 Agenda for development, the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

To do this, greater ambition and mobilization are necessary, not only to defeat COVID-19 but also to adapt our multilateral cooperation instruments.

The period of social distancing we are currently living through should prompt us to echo the message "To leave no one behind" that we placed at the heart of the SDGs and the opening words of the Preamble of the United Nations Charter "We, the peoples of the United Nations", so as to increase our solidarity.

Thank you for your attention.

Yemen (see A/75/PV.8, annex VI)

Address by Mr. Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, President of the Republic of Yemen

Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 8th meeting of the General Assembly

[Original: Arabic]

In the name of God the Merciful and the Compassionate,
Your Excellency, President of the United Nations General Assembly,
Your Majesties and Excellencies,

I would like at the outset to sincerely congratulate the President of the United Nations General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session and to wish him continued success in his endeavours. I would also like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, for his efforts in leading the Organization towards playing its role in protecting international peace and security and realizing its noble mission. That will be reflected on all peoples and countries, including the Republic of Yemen.

The United Nations, thankfully, has spared no effort to reach a lasting peace in Yemen, and sought tirelessly to address the challenges that we are facing, in particular the humanitarian challenges.

It is my honour also to sincerely congratulate the great people of Yemen, those living in the country or living abroad, on the celebrations of the glorious and eternal Yemeni revolution in September and October. That coincides with the general debate of the United Nations General Assembly.

This year's session of the General Assembly is the sixth being held as we in the Republic of Yemen endure difficult and harsh circumstances as a result of the war imposed upon our people by the Houthi coup militia, backed up by Iran, which is its regional supporter. This militia hatched its plans following the execution of the Gulf Initiative, with its Implementation Mechanism, and coinciding with the successful holding of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference, which established a road map for the future of the Republic of Yemen, with the participation of the entire political spectrum.

The Houthi militia, which sent its representatives to the NDC, did not welcome these developments. It started at the same time to prepare for a coup d'état against the country. It began to mobilize its forces to ensure the collapse of towns and cities and displace citizens from their homes and regions. It even invaded the capital, Sana'a, in September 2014, took State institutions hostage and undermined the elected legitimacy and the political climate. It suppressed freedoms, raided houses and blew up schools and places of worship. It suppressed dissenting voices and harassed citizens. This militia transformed Sana'a, a city steeped in history, civilization and a tradition of coexistence, into a great prison while putting our people behind bars.

The United Nations played a pivotal and outstanding role in overseeing the political transition process in Yemen, which has been ongoing since 2011. According to the Gulf Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, that was the start of the

transition period. A national Government was formed and presidential elections took place. The National Dialogue Conference was held with the participation of all strata of Yemeni society. A new Yemeni Constitution was drafted in accordance with the outcome of that dialogue. It was supposed to be subjected to a referendum by the Yemeni people and then adopted to allow for elections to be held in line with the new Constitution. However, the Houthi coup d'état disrupted the transitional process and led to a war against the people of Yemen.

This war imposed on us has caused a humanitarian catastrophe, destroyed our society and led to waves of collective displacement. It has also caused repression, forced disappearances and the worst cases of poverty ever seen by our people for decades. We extended our hands for peace. We have done our utmost to support and facilitate the efforts of the United Nations and its current Special Envoy, Mr. Martin Griffiths, as well as those of previous Envoys, with a view to saving our country and establishing a lasting and comprehensive peace. The goal is to stop the bloodletting in Yemen and the Yemeni catastrophe because our Yemeni people will not accept the Iranian model on its territory, regardless of the circumstances and challenges.

Let us recall the concessions that we have made in the quest for peace over the past five years. We had a commitment a few months ago — alongside our brothers in the coalition to support Yemeni legitimacy, led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia — to establishing a unilateral ceasefire and supporting the efforts of Mr. Martin Griffiths for a lasting and comprehensive ceasefire that would allow the political process to be resumed. However, these efforts regrettably failed because of the obstinacy of the Houthi terrorist militia and its sponsors from the Iranian regime. What is even worse is that this militia took the opportunity to mobilize and attack governorates and cities, causing more massacres among civilians in several regions and cities in Yemen.

What you see today is a ruthless escalation by these militias, particularly in the governorates of Ma'rib, Al-Jawf and Al-Bayda, where the Houthi militia has engaged in an indiscriminate military campaign for several months. It attacks residential areas with ballistic missiles, with no concern whatsoever for civilian lives or the millions of displaced people who have fled the regions under the militia's control. These terrorist militias repeatedly target civilians and civilian infrastructure in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. All this clearly demonstrates their true intentions and how they view peace.

The international community must play its role to end the Houthi arrogance and the people's suffering. It must exert effective and decisive pressure on the putschists and their sponsor in Tehran to ensure that they implement Security Council resolutions and refrain from bloodletting, sowing destruction and giving access for humanitarian assistance to all Yemenis.

I would also like to take this opportunity to speak to the world and shed light on the suffering of our patient people, who have endured tragedy and torture of all kinds amid difficult living conditions because of the putschists' war. We thank all our brothers, friends, organizations and donor countries for their efforts and support. They too have been unable to escape blackmail, constraints and siege when attempting to mitigate the multifaceted suffering of the Yemeni people as the war continues. Economic challenges are on the increase, in addition to the obstacles that face the Government and State institutions in their attempt to discharge their duties by providing the citizens with services and restore normalcy in liberated areas.

I call on the international community to support Government efforts to address economic challenges and policies and plans to strengthen the national currency with a view to ensuring household stability. The international community should not allow the Houthis to manipulate humanitarian aid or blackmail the Government by looting funds earmarked for the payment of salaries. They continue to undermine United Nations efforts in this regard.

I call on the international community to make a serious and urgent commitment to ending the imminent catastrophe surrounding the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. The Houthi militias refuse to grant the United Nations access to the oil tanker for repair and maintenance.

With the unlimited support from our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, we have made much progress in implementing the Riyadh Agreement, which is aimed at establishing stability and enabling us to address the regrettable events that took place in the provisional capital, Aden, in August 2019. We have done our utmost to facilitate the implementation of the agreement because we believe that we must pool our efforts to ensure reconstruction and development, under the auspices of the State. We reiterate the trust in our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to continue to implement this agreement.

In conclusion, I hope that this session will be successful, and that the United Nations will be more advanced and effective in its efforts to support humankind and realize happiness. I hope that the United Nations resolutions will help us meet the major challenges before us. I wish development and prosperity for all Member States and their populations. I also wish happiness, well-being and prosperity for humankind as a whole.

May peace and God's mercy and blessings be upon you.

Burkina Faso (see A/75/PV.8, annex VII)**Address by Mr. Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, President of Faso
and President of the Council of Ministers of Burkina Faso***Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 8th meeting of the General Assembly*

[Original: French]

Mr. President,
Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Heads of Delegation,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Mr. President,

Your brilliant election to the presidency of the 75th session of the General Assembly gives me the pleasant opportunity to extend to you my sincere congratulations and those of my delegation.

Mr. outgoing President, Dear Professor Tijjani Muhammad Bande

When you assumed the presidency of the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly on behalf of Africa, we had no idea that our Organization, and beyond that, the entire world, would experience a health crisis as profound as that of COVID-19.

Faced with this unforeseeable situation, you and your team managed to adapt to the new requirements and meet the challenges before you in order to ensure the continuity of the activities and functioning of the General Assembly.

Secretary-General,

On January 22, you presented your 2020 priorities to the General Assembly, identifying what you called the four “horsemen of the apocalypse” that are the global geostrategic tensions, the “existential” climate crisis, the growing mistrust among people everywhere and the “dark side” of the digital world.

Unfortunately, less than two months later, a fifth and highly destructive horseman of the apocalypse, the coronavirus disease, appeared and was added to the four already identified. Since then, you have been fully invested in ensuring that the United Nations is mobilized in confronting the pandemic and its multifaceted consequences.

Mr. President,
Heads of Delegation,

On 14 June 2019, the United Nations General Assembly decided, through resolution 73/299, to celebrate the 75th anniversary of our common organization under the theme “The future we want, the UN we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism”. But given the global crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, the President of the General Assembly supplemented the

celebration's general theme with the words "to confront COVID-19 through effective multilateral action".

This theme, underpinning all of the activities, meetings and conferences organized by the UN in 2020, reminds us of the fundamental reasons behind our organization's creation.

To commemorate this anniversary, all of us would have liked to be physically present at Headquarters in New York, to come together to celebrate the values that have been promoted and defended by the United Nations since its creation in 1945.

Unfortunately, the pandemic dictated otherwise, reminding us of the world's fragility and our interdependence.

On 9 March 2020, Burkina Faso recorded its first cases of Covid-19. The Government had to adapt its actions to the realities of the time, implementing quarantine and lockdown measures in cities, as well as various restrictions.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates,

The Covid-19 pandemic is a multidimensional crisis that risks destroying all development efforts in a number of countries, especially those affected by conflict.

That is why Burkina Faso thanks the UN Secretary-General for his global call for solidarity, launched on 31 March 2020. This call enabled the establishment of a global framework aimed at promoting an integrated and flexible response, in order to make the best use of the UN system's global footprint.

I take this opportunity to welcome the debt relief measures in favour of developing countries, but above all to call for those debts to be cancelled outright.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen Heads of Delegation

A few months ago, the issue of organized crime was essentially viewed through the prism of the fight against terrorism. Today, with the emergence of the coronavirus disease pandemic, we must now take into account the triptych of organized crime, terrorism and COVID-19.

In the war against terrorism in the Sahel region, I would like to commend the international community's support and backing, proof if anyone still needed it that the fight against terrorism is a matter of international security.

On the military aspect alone, we can point to the notable progress in the activities of the G5 Sahel Joint Force and friendly troops. We also cannot ignore the highly significant involvement of the Secretary-General, the Security Council and the European Union in reviewing, in February 2020, the technical agreement between the European Union, the United Nations and the G5 Sahel, which allowed MINUSMA support for the G5 Sahel Joint Force to be extended beyond Mali's borders.

However, it is regrettable that said Force is still yet to reach the desired operational level. I would therefore like to reiterate our call to the Security Council for this Force to be placed under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter and to benefit from sustainable funding.

I also call on all partners to actively support the International Coalition for the Sahel created in Pau, France, in January 2020.

Mr. President,

Distinguished delegates

In our fight against terrorism, organizations have accused our Defence and Security Forces of atrocities and human rights violations. I would like to reaffirm here that our Defence and Security Forces carry out their missions with respect for human rights, in particular the right to life and the right to physical integrity, as guaranteed by the legal instruments to which Burkina Faso is a party.

Whenever members of our Defence and Security Forces have been implicated by allegations, investigations have been duly opened in order to identify those accountable and punish the perpetrators.

I would like to reassure Burkina Faso's partners and the international community that, despite our modest resources, our Defence and Security Forces combat terrorism with professionalism, in strict compliance with the rules of engagement that govern their actions.

In any case, Burkina Faso will spare no effort in meeting the challenges of the fight against terrorism, so as to guarantee the protection of its populations and that of refugees, and we will continue to work to restore peace and security across our entire national territory, in accordance with the rules of international law.

In that regard, on 1 July, my Government agreed to the opening of an Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Burkina Faso.

Mr. President

Ladies and Gentlemen Heads of Delegation

Voters will go to the polls in Burkina Faso on 22 November 2020 for joint presidential and legislative elections. The entire political class, both majority and opposition alike, consensually agreed to proceed with the elections, despite the prevailing insecurity in certain regions of the country.

I reaffirm my government's commitment to organizing transparent, inclusive and peaceful elections. To this end, in July 2019, I instituted a permanent political dialogue framework with all components of the Burkinabe political class, in order to remove any obstacles that should arise throughout the process.

Mr. President

Distinguished delegates

In Burkina Faso, we were very early to take stock of the need to preserve the environment. In all of our policies, measures are undertaken to reverse the trend of environmental degradation and to ensure the sustainable management of natural resources.

The tragic floods in our country and several other countries on the continent in recent weeks remind us of the need for stronger commitment to the multilateral approach, as embodied by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Mr. President

Ladies and Gentlemen Heads of Delegation

As a troop-contributing country that supports the United Nations in the search for peace, Burkina Faso has, despite its own internal situation, deployed 1,130 troops, including one battalion and two formed police units and 60 individual posts.

I wish to take this opportunity to reaffirm Burkina Faso's constant readiness to engage alongside the United Nations in seeking to achieve peace throughout the world through the deployment of its uniformed personnel and its legal experts.

Mr. President

Ladies and Gentlemen Heads of Delegation

The world in which we live is fearsome because international peace and security are under threat from worldwide geostrategic tensions.

Even today, African issues are the most abundant on the Security Council's agenda.

The ongoing security crisis in the Sahel and in the Lake Chad Basin is a genuine concern for which answers must be found, in the knowledge that the situation in Libya is one of the causes.

This means that resolving the political crisis in Libya is one of the guarantees needed for peace to return in these regions. We therefore ask the Security Council to appoint the new Joint UN/African Union Special Envoy to lead the negotiations.

In Mali, we call for a settlement of the political crisis and a rapid return to constitutional order, and we support the decisions of ECOWAS for a smooth transition.

On the Western Sahara issue, the notable progress made following the convening of two round tables in Geneva between Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and the Polisario Front deserves to be consolidated. And to achieve this, Burkina Faso wishes to see the appointment of the new Special Envoy in order to pursue the work of his or her predecessor.

On the situation in the Middle East, and particularly on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there is a real need to relaunch diplomatic efforts aimed at putting an end to the conflict.

Regarding the economic, trade and financial blockade imposed on Cuba since 1962, Burkina Faso reiterates its call for it to be lifted.

Burkina Faso congratulates Cuba on having been able to contain the pandemic and, in a show of international solidarity, on having sent hundreds of doctors and health-care workers to more than 35 countries around the world in response to requests for urgent help.

Mr. President

Distinguished delegates

Seventy-five years after its creation, and after more than 20 years of intergovernmental negotiations, the reform of the United Nations is still pending. However, everyone is in agreement in acknowledging that the organization must make it possible to redress the injustice done to Africa, and that the African claim is a legitimate aspiration.

I therefore reiterate my country's support for the African common position, as reflected in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, according to which Africa must be fully represented in all of the decision-making bodies of the United Nations, especially the Security Council.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen Heads of Delegation

Ladies and Gentlemen

By adopting on 21 September the Final Declaration to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of our Organization, we acknowledged that our Organization has yet to achieve the level that its founding fathers had wished for, because poverty, hunger, terrorism, extremism and even insecurity, inter alia, remain pertinent issues to this day.

Consequently, we committed before history to leaving no one behind, to promoting peace and digital cooperation, and to taking young people, women and girls into account in all of our development policies.

We recognize the interdependence of the various challenges facing the United Nations, which can only be resolved by strengthening multilateralism. That is why I am hoping that the Secretary-General's report, which will be submitted to us before the culmination of the 75th session, will allow us to look to the future with greater optimism.

Once again, we reaffirm our collective commitment to multilateralism. The United Nations must remain our common compass.

Long live the United Nations

Long live international cooperation

Thank you.

Estonia (see A/75/PV.8, annex VIII)

Address by Mrs. Kersti Kaljulaid, President of the Republic of Estonia

Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 8th meeting of the General Assembly

Honoured President of the General Assembly,

Secretary General Guterres,

Dear Members of the UN family,

My Brothers and sisters,

French author Albert Camus has written: “There have been as many plagues in the world as there have been wars, yet plagues and wars always find people equally unprepared.”

Last year we all gathered in New York for the traditional UN General Assembly that now seems to be in a distant past and the occasion itself to belong to a world that doesn't exist anymore.

The pandemic that gave a thorough shock on our way of life also taught us a lesson. A lesson about what does climate change mean in reality — loss of diversified ecosystems, risks of the co-habitation of people and all other species in crowded towns. Bitter worry about the survival of the humankind and constant hard work in multilateral organisations to make sure we avoid global fights over limited resources.

A lesson about the need to avoid restricting human rights and freedoms for the survival of the fittest.

A lesson about the importance of technology and digital solutions, both to avoid health related risks and to stop unnecessary pollution of our planet.

A lesson about fair burden sharing in fighting the climate change, fair access to technology to promote more equal opportunities for people globally, fair and transparent means to control that technology is not used to harm our societies.

Estonia is the world's first digitally transformed state, where all public services run online. Disruption by pandemic was limited to upscaling e education and distant working. We saw less scramble than any other country to move everything online which previously ran on paper.

High penetration rates of digital technologies in society, equal access to digital services promoted by both public and private sector over various age groups and different societal groups combined with strong, legally protected digital ID has helped a lot.

We want the same for the rest of the world.

We want equal opportunities for people globally to work from distance wherever they are. We want equal opportunities for people with special needs and homebound women to be able to work through digital means, intermittently as their schedule allows. We want global free labour market, which does not necessitate people to migrate, but stay where they want.

30 per cent of jobs in Estonia are doable from distance. Estonia, as a late industrialiser, serves as a role model for countries looking to leapfrog with the help of technologies.

We are contributing to development of e-services globally, notably in Africa through digital memorandum between Estonia and African Union. This year we will also organise a Global Digital Business Summit together with the United Arab Emirates. Our small and medium sized enterprises are building e-services to other nations, cooperating with local partners to achieve tailor-made solutions and increase resilience of the digital ecosystems. Because we know — every digital state will preserve its identity and culture also online.

This is an advantage, but also a catch. Leaders globally must understand that digital services do not by themselves rid any country from fat bureaucracy, corruption or inefficiency. By digitalising these problems we can only make things worse, unless we simultaneously rise transparency and straighten out our processes. Thus digitalisation can make our states more efficient and bring closer to our people.

Digital technologies also serve the fight against climate change. Smart grids, matching power supply and demand, developing digital solutions for that, is big part of CO2 neutral economy to come. Green energy production is intermittent. We must balance this by not only developing reserve capacities like pump storage or hydrogen, but also to even out peak demands by smart consumption management.

In a way the pandemic and its aftermath gives us an opportunity for a great global technological leap. Digital solutions can make our societies more equal, more resilient, more accessible and sustainable.

But digital development comes also with its vulnerabilities and risks that is associated with cyber security. As an elected member of the UN Security Council since January this year we have kept our campaign promise to bring it to the formal table of the Security Council. Which we did already in March and continued in May. Because Estonia has the habit of keeping its word.

Dear colleagues,

As we tackle the global pandemic, conventional and unconventional threats have not disappeared. The world around us is as unpredictable and unsecure as it was before. Take the ongoing wars in Ukraine and Syria. Or the conflict in Sahel and the recent devastating disaster in Lebanon. As well as the grave human rights violations in Belarus.

Overall, the pandemic has even reinforced some of the consequences of conflicts, for example the health and well-being of the most vulnerable — the children, women and adolescents. The pandemic has been used as a pretext to lift sanctions or restrict humanitarian aid. New divisions have emerged. This, my friends, is unacceptable.

My dear UN family,

We are 75 this year. The UN is and remains the cornerstone of our multilateral world order. There is no alternative to it. It is the best possible forum to address global issues from peace and security to new emerging threats. It's a forum where everybody has a voice.

From here in Estonia, I can promise you that we shall continue standing for multilateralism and international law, imperfect as it feels for those impatient to resolve the crisis' of our world.

There is no better option than the UN, and we remain responsible and active partner to all other UN members during this crisis and beyond.

Malawi (see A/75/PV.8, annex IX)

Address by Mr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi and Minister for Defense

Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 8th meeting of the General Assembly

Your Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkir — President of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly;

Your Excellency Mr. António Guterres — United Nations Secretary-General;
Excellencies Heads of State and Government; Ladies and Gentlemen.

At the outset, I wish to extend my congratulations to Your Excellency, Mr. Volkan Bozkir, on your election to the Office of President of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. You can count on my support and that of the people and Government of the Republic of Malawi during your tenure.

To the outgoing President of the United Nations General Assembly, Your Excellency Tijjani Muhammad-Bande: Thank you for your hard work and leadership throughout your term of office.

On a sombre note, I convey to you all my nation's sincere condolences to all of you for loved ones lost to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as good will to those recovering from the virus.

Mr. President,

As you know, I took office as President of the Republic of Malawi following my election on June 23 of this year, making this my inaugural address to this Assembly, which is a great honour. The process leading to that election, though protracted, was peaceful and a clear justification of Malawi's reputation as a beacon of democracy, anchored in respect for human rights, governance institutions, and the rule of law. The smooth transition of power between me and my predecessor has fostered a peaceful environment and sustained our billing as the Warm Heart of Africa, which I have since vowed to govern by servant leadership and a philosophy called "Tonse", meaning "all of us".

Mr. President, Excellencies,

I address the Assembly at the height of the global fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, which is ravaging health systems across the globe and causing deep economic harm to our nations. Malawi, being a member of both the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC) Groups, is among the hardest hit, a situation compounded by a skewed development trajectory.

Our challenges are more exacerbated by geographical and related disadvantages such as lack of territorial access to the sea, isolation and remoteness from world markets, and high transit and transport costs. All these impose constraints on our trade competitiveness and overall socio-economic development and inhibit our full participation in global production networks and supply chains.

In this regard and as Chair of LDCs, Malawi issued a Statement on 25 April, 2020, which highlighted the impact of COVID-19 pandemic in terms of: high risk of debt default; worsening trade competitiveness; supply chain disruptions; and a

constrained informal working sector. The Statement further appealed for enhanced international support towards the LDCs.

With regard to the high risk of debt default, we acknowledge the World Bank Group, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and many key development partners for the debt moratorium granted to the LDCs. Considering the potential length and breadth of this pandemic, we request and are hopeful for debt cancellation ultimately and an extension of the debt moratorium in the meantime. That will enable us as LDCs to recover from this devastating pandemic sustainably.

On trade, we appeal for deliberate measures to ease supply chain disruptions. As you are aware, Malawi and many LDCs have large informal sectors, which play crucial roles in domestic resource mobilization through remittances and small scale economic production.

We, therefore, welcome efforts to reduce transaction costs on remittances and implementation of rescue and turnaround packages for small scale enterprises.

I wish to confirm our commitment to host the postponed Africa Regional Review Meeting of the LDCs planned for 2021. As Chair, I would also like to take this opportunity to invite all LDC Member States, the private sector, civil society organizations, UN Agencies, Friends of the LDCs, and all other stakeholders, to the LDC-V Conference scheduled to take place in January, 2022, in Doha, Qatar. This will be a great opportunity for us to prepare our next 10-Year Plan of Action for LDCs, and we thank the State of Qatar for accepting to host this important event.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda remains a pragmatic platform for coordinated international development among Member States, especially now, when we are facing the threat of COVID-19 pandemic and strained international cooperation and multilateralism. However, Malawi is optimistic towards the achievement of the SDGs.

In our case, achieving the SDGs is the best opportunity of addressing socio-economic challenges in pursuit of the vision of inclusive wealth creation and self-reliance. Accordingly, as we enter the decade of action, which is the last ten years of the implementation of the agenda 2030, my Government continues to work with the United Nations system and other development partners in all priority areas of SDG acceleration. Malawi is focussed on implementing those SDGs with multiplier effects on others in order to maximize scarce resources and stakeholder participation, more so, in a COVID-19 Pandemic situation.

We are proud to have undertaken the first ever Voluntary National Review (VNR) during this year's High-Level Political Forum in July, 2020. The review noted our remarkable progress towards SDGs implementation albeit the myriad outstanding challenges. We, therefore, appeal for enhanced implementation support from our partners.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

We are conscious of the critical importance of policy domestication in attaining the SDGs. Malawi integrated the SDGs into its national development planning framework, the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS III). Realizing

the need for enabling effective institutions, Malawi established the National Planning Commission that is charged with domesticating SDGs through national development plans. We are also implementing public sector reforms, which are championed at a high level in the Office of the Vice President of the Republic of Malawi.

In order to break the cycle of food and nutrition insecurity and chronic vulnerability to climate change and disasters, my Administration is implementing the National Resilience Strategy for the period 2018-2030. The strategy bridges development and humanitarian interventions and prioritizes a continuum of more predictable livelihood support packages targeting the most vulnerable households so that our development process leaves no one behind.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

We take note of the UN reform efforts as championed by the Secretary General and reiterate the crucial role of ONE UN in ensuring efficient and effective delivery for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

However, we are concerned with the status of the UN Security Council reforms. Malawi, therefore, reiterates the call for urgency in advancing these reforms with full representation of Africa in line with the Ezulwini Consensus of the African Union. For the avoidance of doubt, we call for two Permanent Seats with Veto Power and five Non-Permanent Seats for Africa.

We need a UN that fully meets Africa's needs in peace processes, which can only be achieved if Africa is involved in making such decisions. In view of the incessant conflicts that are currently tearing down the African continent and retarding its progress, the reforms are long overdue.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

Global challenges and opportunities are reminders that we are all interconnected. The COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, among others, are such colossal challenges that require global unity and solutions. The commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the UN is itself an opportunity to celebrate our collective achievements and the Charter on which our unity is founded. We must work together as one global family.

We must collectively do all we can to save lives and ease the economic and social devastation. Crucially, we need to draw the appropriate lessons from the global vulnerabilities and inequalities exposed by the virus and mobilize sustainable investments in education, health systems, social protection and resilience.

However, multilateralism is not only a matter of confronting shared threats; it is also about seizing common opportunities. We must seize this moment and emerge stronger, better, and more inclusive. The virtues of multilateralism must not just be preached; they must be practiced. This calls for the participation of all stakeholders in shaping the future, especially the youth, who are the majority in our nations.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

At this key moment for international cooperation, and during the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations, unity is paramount towards the realisation of our shared vision of a healthy, equitable, peaceful and a more sustainable world.

Malawi values partnerships in achieving common goals. It is for this reason that we accepted the responsibility of chairing the LDC Group up to 2022; and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) from August, 2021. Our membership in the African Union Peace and Security Council up to 2022 is premised on the same calling. Malawi is committed to make its humble contribution in all UN efforts including in the UN Human Rights Council, where we are seeking membership in 2021.

In keeping with the adage, “charity begins at home”, we are committed to continue contributing a battalion of the Malawi Defence Force to the UN Peacekeeping Mission under a SADC Force Intervention Brigade in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

You can count on our humble contribution towards the UN fit for purpose in the 21st Century.

I Thank You for Your Attention,

May God Bless Us All.

Congo (see A/75/PV.8, annex X)

Address by Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo

Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 8th meeting of the General Assembly

[Original: French]

Mr. President of the General Assembly

Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations

I would like to extend my warm congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your election to the presidency of the 75th regular session of the United Nations General Assembly.

I also wish to pay a well-deserved tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Tijjani Muhammad Bande, for the work carried out during the 74th General Assembly.

I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his perseverance in seeking solutions to the various challenges facing the international community.

Mr. President,

The world is currently facing an unprecedented health crisis that is serving to emphasize the glaring gaps between the health systems of developed and developing countries in terms of their capacity to respond to major pandemics.

Such a situation calls on bilateral and multilateral actors to implement appropriate measures in the face of this pandemic, which is seriously affecting humanity's survival.

It is therefore important that we intensify international solidarity to ensure a harmonious organization and complementary strategies so as to eradicate this pandemic.

Mr. President,

I note with sustained interest the highly significant theme of this general debate, namely "The future we want, the UN we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism — confronting COVID-19 through effective multilateral action".

Indeed, strengthening multilateral cooperation mechanisms, within the framework of the fight against coronavirus, is the challenge facing the entire international community, given the scale of the economic and health consequences induced by this scourge.

Undoubtedly, there is no way out of this unprecedented health crisis and no development possible in isolation.

The United Nations therefore remains the main instrument capable of mobilizing States as part of an effort of compromise, even consensus, around collective action against inequalities and vulnerabilities.

In view of the difficult economic situation facing the world economy, the reassertion of multilateralism constitutes the essential basis of international action to fulfil our collective commitments, in particular to ensure access to universal health coverage, promote education for all, protect the environment and sustainably preserve peace.

Mr. President,

As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, and despite the progress made, we are still witnessing the resurgence of untenable deprivation among populations.

As a result, the establishment of “health for all” is experiencing real difficulties.

The eradication of poverty in all its forms remains an international priority.

However, we will only succeed if States possess the necessary resources, in a world that is truly at peace.

Mr. President,

The Republic of the Congo is concerned about the upsurge in terrorism and violent extremism as well as the prevalence of armed conflict around the world.

This is the case with the Libyan crisis, the ramifications of which are increasingly affecting the Sahel States.

In this regard, as Chair of the African Union High Level Committee on Libya, my country reaffirms the primacy of a political solution by promoting the holding of the inclusive inter-Libyan conference on national reconciliation.

The various meetings held in Brazzaville and the Berlin conference on peace in Libya have encouraged those involved in that conflict to favour dialogue, within the framework of a multilateral approach that includes the UN. To this end, the road map adopted in Brazzaville on 30 January 2020 remains valid.

The eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is still under threat from armed groups.

In the same vein, the Central African Republic, which is preparing for a presidential election in December 2020, is facing a volatile situation caused by the murderous activism of armed gangs.

For its part, Syria has been facing a civil war since 2011, with devastating consequences.

Israeli-Palestinian relations remain tense despite relevant United Nations resolutions calling for the creation of two independent States.

Moreover, the situation in the Republic of Cuba calls for the lifting of unilateral sanctions, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Finally, the 75th anniversary of the UN coincides with that of the first nuclear test. Humanity should forever ban the use of nuclear weapons.

Mr. President,

As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, it behoves us to repair a historic injustice, by guaranteeing Africa its rightful place on the Security Council.

In its capacity as member of the African Union Committee of Ten on the reform of the United Nations Security Council, my country solemnly reaffirms the urgent need to render effective Africa's representativeness within that organ of the UN.

In this way, the values of peace, solidarity, equity and progress that are embodied in the United Nations will be further bolstered.

Long live the United Nations!

Long live international cooperation!

Thank you.

Bahrain (see A/75/PV.8, annex XI)**Address by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain**

Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 8th meeting of the General Assembly

[Original: Arabic; English translation provided by the delegation]

In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful Peace, mercy, and blessings of God

Mr. President, we would like, at the beginning, to congratulate you on your election as President of the General Assembly for its current session, and we wish you success in managing its work.

We also thank the previous President for his efforts in conducting the work of the last session with great efficiency and skill.

It is a pleasure to join you in celebrating the seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations, which over the past decades has contributed to the reinforcement of international cooperation and preservation of world peace for the benefit of all mankind.

We are also pleased to commend the tireless efforts of His Excellency the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, in strengthening the role of the Organization, settling disputes and proposing solutions and initiatives, in order to reach a global order based on consolidation and protection of human rights, and the achievement of the highest levels of development with equality and full participation of all the member states of this esteemed international system.

In this context, the Kingdom of Bahrain stresses its adherence to and respect for its international obligations, as represented in preserving the strength and stability of the international system and the continuation of its role in achieving peace.

We also share with the United Nations its proper vision underlining the importance of effective collective action to face all challenges and dangers, foremost of which are the difficult conditions and severe developmental and human repercussions the world is experiencing due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This emerging challenge has proven that the international community is in dire need to put aside differences, to strengthen areas of human solidarity, to stand united in the face of these health threats, and to improve our future readiness to prevent such risks and properly fortify our societies.

We hail here the call of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for a ceasefire in all conflict areas in the world to confront the pandemic, a call that has gained widespread global acceptance.

In this important context, the Kingdom of Bahrain has been keen, since the first moments of the pandemic outbreak, to extend a hand of cooperation, solidarity and coordination with the countries of the world and its specialized organizations, such as the World Health Organization, in facing such difficult circumstances. We have formed a national team, headed by our Crown Prince, to develop and implement an integrated emergency plan, implementing many national measures, in line the best

preventive and remedial practices, in order to preserve, first and foremost, the health and safety of citizens and residents alike. We have taken into account the urgent need to mitigate the economic and social impacts, and we are tirelessly working to diversify our supporting programs in that regard, with the aim of safeguarding the prosperity and stability of our dear people, and for a speedy recovery of our national economy.

From of our keenness to preserve the security and stability of the region, and as an embodiment of our resolute approach to openness and coexistence with all, we have announced the establishment of relations with the State of Israel, sending a civilized message affirming that our hand is extended for a just and comprehensive peace, as it is the best guarantee for the future of all peoples of the region.

The courageous step taken by the brotherly United Arab Emirates to revive the hope of peace and stability in the region is a successful and blessed step. In reaching "historic peace agreement" with Israel, under the auspices and efforts of the United States of America, in exchange for stopping Israel's annexation of the Palestinian lands, the UAE has enhanced opportunities for peace, reduced tensions, and given the people of the region a new era of understanding, rapprochement and peaceful coexistence, while preserving its firm position on the Palestinian issue. We further commend the appreciated efforts exerted by the United States of America to accomplish these important strategic steps.

In this context, the Kingdom of Bahrain calls for intensified efforts to end the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in accordance with the two-state solution. We consider this a cornerstone for achieving a just and comprehensive peace leading to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, with East Jerusalem as its capital, based on the resolutions of international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative, in order enter a new stage of work in which we extend bridges of good neighborly relations to build and develop the common interests of the countries of the region.

This is a good opportunity to use this important platform, to express our deep appreciation for the pioneering role and hard work of the brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, led by our brother, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, not only in terms of laying the foundations for security and peace in the region and the world as a whole, in a manner that takes into account the interest of all parties, but also for the remarkable and influential efforts made during its current presidency of the G20 to formulate a "new decade", in which the aspirations of the peoples of the world for prosperity and stability will be fulfilled. In doing so, we underline the firm approach of our country to stand alongside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on all positions and in all circumstances.

We also cannot fail to express our full support for the continuous efforts of the brotherly Arab Republic of Egypt to consolidate regional security and stability, and its genuine endeavors to achieve peace, the most recent being the initiative of our brother President Abdel Fattah al Sisi, which gave hope to the brotherly Libyan people to confront and resist foreign interference, and has contributed to rebuilding the capabilities of the region's countries, based on Egypt's pioneering role in protecting and maintaining Arab national security.

Mr. President, Distinguished Audience,

The success and prosperity of societies is linked to their achievement of security and stability, and this is what the Kingdom of Bahrain has always pursued.

And as an active country within the wider international community, it underlines the need to accelerate efforts to achieve our human prosperity by strengthening areas of solidarity and consensus under the umbrella of global goals. We have committed ourselves to this since the foundation of this long-standing organization, which we congratulate on the anniversary of its establishment and for its renewed start at this crucial moment of our contemporary history.

We are proud of the part we play in this, and we are committed to our support for the United Nations in order to reach our desired destination and achieve the legitimate aspirations of people and rebuild bridges of trust and love, so as to reach a more secure, stable and peaceful world.

Thank you, Mr. President, and may peace be upon you.

Botswana (see A/75/PV.8, annex XII)

Address by Mr. Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi, President of the Republic of Botswana

Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 8th meeting of the General Assembly

Mr. President,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to address this 75th United Nations General Assembly for the first time since the renewal of my mandate as President of the Republic of Botswana at our General Elections, held on 23 October 2019.

This Assembly is unique in many ways. It marks the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations, it is virtual, and it is held against the backdrop of the greatest challenge of our time, the COVID-19 pandemic.

Allow me therefore, to extend our heartfelt condolences and sympathies to families and friends, throughout the world, who have been affected by the pandemic. I also pay special tribute to all those in the frontline of this battle.

I am confident that, like other challenges before, we will, together put up a spirited fight against it and emerge wiser, stronger and more resilient in our preparedness to deal with similar pandemics.

Mr. President,

I join other delegations that have spoken before me in congratulating you on your assumption of the Presidency of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. We welcome the priorities you presented, and pledge my delegation's full support in the execution of your mandate.

Let me also take this opportunity to extend our profound gratitude to your predecessor, His Excellency Professor Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, for his stewardship of the General Assembly during its 74th Session.

Mr. President,

Botswana endorses the theme of this General Assembly Session: "The Future we want, the United Nations we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism — confronting COVID-19 through effective multilateral action."

This theme is a timely reminder of the value and significance of multilateralism as the ultimate framework through which everlasting solutions to existing and emerging global challenges can be attained. Indeed, the world is a much safer and secure place when our nations work together towards collective responses to the complex threats of our time.

Now, more than ever before, multilateral action is needed to effectively respond to an urgent global public health crisis of a kind which has not been seen since the Spanish Flu of 1918.

We can all agree, that our collective cooperation will be required to repair our nations' devastated economies and restore the livelihoods of our societies.

As the foremost multilateral institution, the United Nations and its most noticable specialised agency; the World Health Organisation (WHO), are better suited to mobilise action relating to immediate and long-term responses to the COVID 19 pandemic.

We have, without a doubt, seen the organisation move swiftly to support national response efforts in vulnerable parts of the world. Most noticeably were the UN "Solidarity flights" that delivered life-saving medical supplies to the neediest around the world.

My delegation welcomes the initiatives and urgent response measures undertaken by the UN System, especially the support rendered, through the UN Country Teams, to this global crisis.

We particularly appreciate the leadership provided by the UN Secretary-General during this unprecedented time, particularly his call for a global ceasefire, as well as an affordable COVID-19 vaccine that will be accessed by "every person, everywhere."

Mr. President,

As we reflect on how to effectively leverage on multilateralism and international cooperation to better tackle the challenges exposed by COVID-19, it is incumbent upon us to also further examine the ways to strengthen the UN's response capacities.

In doing so, we should also seize the opportunity to re-double our ambition towards attainment of the 2030 Agenda; the future we want. We should galvanize momentum to accelerate SDGs implementation by building on the Secretary General's wise call for a "Decade of Action".

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Mr. President,

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), constitute a firm blueprint that should continue to guide us in our global and national plans.

We in Botswana remain committed to accelerate our efforts towards the attainment of SDGs during this remaining 'Decade of Action.'

To realize this ambition, my Government is resolute in the transformation of Botswana's economy from one that largely relies on the extractive industry, which is vulnerable to globe shocks, to a knowledge-based economy.

To this end, my Government has introduced economic policy reforms to stimulate and fast-track transformation in many sectors. These actions are aimed at creating an enabling environment for private sector development in pursuit of Goal 8, that is, Decent work and Economic Growth.

Mr. President

As I alluded, in Botswana, like in many countries, the pandemic has had far-reaching impact on our lives and livelihoods.

For our already vulnerable health sector, the pandemic joins a list of challenges, which include: child mortality; non communicable diseases; and HIV and AIDS.

In responding to the escalating rate of Non-Communicable Diseases, my Government has adopted the Multi-sectoral strategy for Prevention and Control of NCDs for 2018-2023. The strategy focuses on prevention measures and enhancing the quality of life for those affected.

Our longstanding battle against HIV and AIDS remains a key priority for my Government. In this context, I am happy to inform that Botswana is well on track to achieve the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS 90-90-90 UNAIDS's treatment target. So far, 86 per cent of people living with HIV have tested and know their status. And of those who know, 83 per cent are on treatment and 90 per cent are virally suppressed.

Mr. President

Botswana is accelerating access to inclusive, equitable quality education through, amongst other interventions, the implementation of the Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan. The ETSSP, as it's commonly known, aims to transform learning by ensuring access, retention, and promoting life-long learning and skills development.

Poverty Eradication

Mr. President

It is noted that before the pandemic, an estimated 783 million people were living in extreme poverty globally. However, as at June 2020, the World Bank projected that the pandemic could push an additional 71 million people into extreme poverty in 2020, therefore reversing the gains made in recent decades.

Certainly, this turn of events demands our urgent collective action if we are to eradicate poverty in all its multi-dimensional forms everywhere, and for everyone affected, by 2030.

For its part, my Government will continue to empower and uplift the poor through a variety of the poverty eradication programmes. These programmes equip and enable beneficiaries to start micro and small scale enterprises for better survival. Such programmes have uplifted beneficiaries from poverty through sustainable income generation, creation and sustenance.

Mr. President,

My delegation notes the unfortunate global increase in violence against women and girls amid the current health crisis. As countries went into lockdowns and people stayed home, many women and girls, regrettably, became an easy target of human predators and were subjected to Gender Based Violence (GBV). This trend goes against the aspirations of Goal 5: Gender Equality and requires our strenuous and collective action.

While the GBV scourge had already been a concern in Botswana, it increased alarmingly during the COVID-19 crisis. To address this problem, my Government has intensified the implementation of the National Strategy towards Ending Gender Based Violence.

Botswana's Response to COVID-19

Mr. President,

As I stated, COVID-19 has been detrimental to Botswana's economy. The suspension of international travel and the global economic meltdown have dealt a heavy blow on the two mainstays of our economy; tourism and diamond mining. The repeated lockdowns and other COVID-19 protocols have also significantly reduced economic activity.

In its response, my Government availed an economic relief package to support the economy and complement disease containment measures.

The Government is now working on an "Economic Recovery and Transformation Plan" that is intended to support the restoration of economic activity; facilitate economic growth; accelerate economic transformation; and build a resilient of the economy.

Whereas our economy has been disrupted, Government remains strongly committed to its pre-COVID-19 sustainable development-oriented policies and programs. The Economic Recovery and Transformation Plan will thus add impetus to implementation of these initiatives.

COVID-19 and Multilateral Action

Mr. President,

As is evident with any global problem, Nation-States do not have the capacity to address the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects, on their own. A multilateral response is without question, imperative. We therefore echo the call for a rule based and inclusive multilateralism that is open to the voices of civil society, the private sector, and academia as key stakeholders and partners, in shaping the global response.

For Botswana, an ideal multilateral response will be one that has short and long-term perspectives. In the short-term, there is a need to provide immediate relief and safety nets to vulnerable countries and peoples. For the long term, post COVID 19 recovery multilateral efforts are needed to provide comprehensive support to the most vulnerable countries and populations.

My delegation thus welcomes the idea of a recovery that is focused on building back better, faster and even greener and fostering resilience. This is ever so critical for countries emerging from conflict and other humanitarian crises, as well as those still living under unfortunate conditions of foreign occupation.

Of keen interest to Botswana will also be support given to countries in special situations such as Least Developed Countries; Landlocked Developing Countries; and Small Island Developing States as the most vulnerable category of United Nations Member States. Being a landlocked country, Botswana has, during this pandemic experienced some challenges with cross-border movement of goods and services due to border closures.

In this context, we call for an accelerated effort in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, the Istanbul Program of Action and the SAMOA Pathway, which are designed to ameliorate the challenges faced by these groups of countries.

For the UN's multilateral framework to be effective in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and other challenges, we need a United Nations that is nimble,

agile and fit for purpose. Indeed, since the crisis started, we have seen the Secretariat demonstrating these organisational qualities in its response.

Though the jury is still out on the reforms, my delegation observes that the Management Reforms have brought about some improvements to the organisation's crisis response. We nonetheless believe more remains to be done, and we encourage the General Assembly and other principal organs to step up their own reform efforts.

Climate Change

Mr. President,

While COVID-19 is a devastating pandemic, which caught the world unaware and ill-prepared, Climate Change is a phenomenon we are well aware of, and can mitigate against its repercussions. We long declared Climate Change an existential threat, and committed to restrain its rapid devastation. We should therefore re-double our efforts to mitigate its negative effects.

Botswana, a semi-arid country with erratic rainfall and frequent droughts, attaches great importance to Goal 13 (Climate Action). These climatic conditions affect livelihoods by impeding food production. Moreover, recent droughts have resulted in the drying up of water sources including for wildlife. This has contributed to animal deaths and the escalation of the human-wildlife conflict.

In order to strengthen mitigation and adaptation, my Government is developing a Climate Change Response Policy and a National Adaptation Plan. Working with civil society, academia, and international partners, we are accelerating our implementation of our commitments under the Paris Agreement.

Human Rights

Mr. President,

Botswana fully subscribes to the three mutually reinforcing pillars upon which the United Nations was founded. We hold firm that the promotion and protection of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law are critical to sustainable development, peace and security.

Mr President,

I also wish to take this occasion to reaffirm Botswana's support for the Human Rights Council on its extensive work in adopting outcomes that advance the global human rights agenda.

International Peace and Security

Mr. President,

My delegation applauds the United Nation's continued efforts to maintain global peace and security in the midst of a pandemic. We welcome the Secretary-General's Appeal for Global Ceasefire and its intended effort of halting armed conflict to allow the world to focus on the more pressing and bigger battle against the pandemic.

Also commendable is the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan which is designed to provide relief to the most vulnerable groups particularly in conflict affected and low income countries. There is however a need for partnerships and more donor funding for the effective operationalisation of this important plan.

Mr. President,

Turning now to peace and stability in the Southern African region, I note that while it remains relatively stable, there is an emerging threat to peace and security, due to increasing acts of terrorism and insurgency.

As the current Chair of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, Botswana is committed to ensure that close attention is given to the imperative to combat terrorism and other security threats in order to enhance peace and stability in the SADC region.

Mr. President,

It has been indisputably established that terrorism knows no borders. It remains a serious threat to international peace and security. Essentially, Botswana remains deeply committed to combating terrorism in all its forms. We thus continue to take the necessary steps to prevent and combat this scourge. This includes the strengthening our Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing regime. This is testimony to our firm commitment to contribute towards bolstering the integrity and security of the global financial system.

We appreciate the support provided by the United Nations Office for Counter-Terrorism and other partners, to enhance the capacity of Botswana's newly established Counter Terrorism Analysis and Fusion Agency in order to enable us to mitigate the exposure to this menace.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm Botswana's commitment to, and belief in multilateralism and international cooperation as an indispensable mechanism for fostering peace and security, promoting human rights and sustainable development.

It is beyond the shadow of doubt that the United Nations remains more relevant now than it was 75 years ago. This is in view of the complex and multi-faceted challenges confronting humanity today.

Inevitably, the lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and many others, will become a key determinant of the model of the real future we want and the United Nations we need to recover faster and build a more peaceful, just, and prosperous world for the future generation!

I thank you for your attention.

Guinea (see A/75/PV.8, annex XIII)

Address by Mr. Alpha Condé, President of the Republic of Guinea

Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 8th meeting of the General Assembly

[Original: French]

Mr. President,

Excellencies Ladies and Gentlemen Heads of State and Government, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ladies and Gentlemen Delegates,

It is a great honour for me to address this august Assembly in a particular context fraught with deep emotion, challenges and questions about the future of the world, which has been facing the severe COVID 19 pandemic for months.

I would like to extend the sincere condolences of the Guinean people and Government to all families bereaved around the world by this coronavirus crisis, which is a health emergency on an unprecedented scale in recent human history. I wish a speedy recovery to those affected by this deadly virus.

Mr. President,

I would like to extend my warm congratulations to you on your brilliant election to the presidency of the 75th regular session of the General Assembly and assure you of my support and the full cooperation of my delegation.

I would also like to pay a well-deserved tribute to Professor Tijjani Muhammad Bande, the outgoing President who carried out his duties effectively in lockdown, at a time when it was necessary to show imagination in order to experiment with new working methods and respond to the many requests related to the management of important dossiers of the General Assembly.

In the same vein, I would especially like to express to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres, the gratitude of the Republic of Guinea for his pleasing and commendable initiatives in favour of preserving international peace and security and dealing with the international health crisis.

Mr. President,

In a world sadly faced with various challenges, the theme of this session: “The future we want, the UN we need: reaffirming our commitment to multilateralism”, calls on us to act now more than ever. The central role of the UN and its leadership is binding on all member states to promote and strengthen multilateralism.

In this increasingly interdependent world, no single State alone can face the numerous and diverse challenges facing humanity.

Through its multiple fields of action and its ability to coordinate international intervention, the UN supports member States in achieving their development goals, eradicating poverty and fighting to mitigate the effects of climatic change.

The world needs now more than ever a reformed, strong organization that acts based on the values enshrined in the charter and the universal declaration of Human rights, and one that is capable, through its specialized institutions, of confronting the challenges of peace, sustainable development and health.

75 years after its creation, we can attest that the United Nations has been able to meet the expectations of its founding fathers in their efforts to save future generations from the scourge of a third world war, promote peace and develop friendly and cooperative relations among nations.

A renewed and strengthened international governance must take greater account of the interests of developing countries, especially in the implementation of the SDGs and the programme of action of the 3rd Addis Ababa conference on financing for development and other previous commitments. It is through this global partnership that our countries will be able to stand up and pursue the sustainable development Agenda.

Guinea welcomes the launching of the decade of action to deliver the SDGs which demands that we scale up our ambitions and accelerate the implementation of appropriate and lasting solutions to the challenges of poverty, gender inequality, conflicts, climate change and the financial gap in implementing the SDGs.

In this context, the Republic of Guinea has integrated all important matters relating to the implementation of the SDGs into its national development plan in order to create growth and prosperity in favour of the Guinean populations and to make Guinea an emerging country through bilateral and multilateral partnership. Our country is focused on the implementation of the sustainable development goals.

As part of its National Economic and Social Development Plan (PNDES) 2016-2020, our country has established effective instruments, such as the National Agency for Financing Local Communities (ANAFIC), the National Agency for Economic and Social Inclusion (ANIES) and the Local Development Fund (FODEL), among others.

With regard to managing the current health crisis, the Republic of Guinea, like other countries worldwide severely affected by the coronavirus, has adopted a robust response plan and declared a state of health emergency.

The objectives of this national plan are to control and curb the pandemic, mitigate the consequences of the crisis, particularly on households in a precarious situation, and eliminate the effects of the pandemic on small and medium-sized businesses.

A scientific response board has been created to provide guidance and reinforce measures to fight the pandemic, with a view to eradicating and halting the spread of the coronavirus across the country. The financial cost of the plan is \$350 million. The Guinean people have adhered to it and are involved in its implementation, based on our experience of tackling the Ebola virus epidemic.

I would like to take this opportunity to renew the Republic of Guinea's gratitude to its technical and financial partners, and to friendly countries for their constant, decisive and complementary support for our national efforts to eradicate this pandemic.

My delegation expresses its desire to see the inclusion of the principle of universal access to public health included in the political declaration on global health coverage.

We must spare no effort to build a world in peace and security to bequeath to future generations.

Thank you.

Gambia (see A/75/PV.8, annex XIV)**Address by Mr. Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of The Gambia**

Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 8th meeting of the General Assembly

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Your Majesties,

Excellencies, Distinguished Heads of State and Government, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of my delegation, I bring you warm greetings from the people of The Gambia on the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the founding of United Nations (UN), which unfortunately coincides with the global COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, we convey our sincere condolences to all those who have lost loved ones to the pandemic.

Mr. President,

We welcome the theme for the 75th Session of the UNGA: “The future we want, the United Nations we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism — confronting Covid-19 through effective multilateral action”.

As humankind, our future is closely linked, and the Covid-19 global pandemic has made this evident. It demonstrates the wisdom and need to craft collective strategies, approaches and solutions to mitigate global challenges.

Mr. President,

The need is pressing to defend our multilateral institutions by taking legitimate action on issues brought to the attention of the UN. It will result to establishing and maintaining peace and cooperation in a tranquil world order.

Mr. President,

To achieve this goal, space must be created to adequately and justly address the concerns and interests of all Member States. For small States like The Gambia, the UN has always provided a platform for negotiation, discussion, cooperation and collaboration for collective global action. Therefore, we reaffirm our commitment to the Charter and Principles of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

The Charter has empowered institutions to deal with all forms of crises, such as the outbreak of the pandemic, which threatens our existence. Earnestly, the response to the pandemic must equal the magnitude of the challenge. The devastation is already immense in terms of loss of human lives, economic loss and its social and emotional impact on nations, communities and individuals. A multilateral solution stands to be the surest path to safety and recovery for all of us.

Mr. President,

Healthcare systems across the world are struggling to cope with the crisis, compelling many nations, including The Gambia, to adopt unusual measures that require huge and varied resources.

We admit, however, that our efforts have been significantly boosted by support from international friends and partners, such as the UN, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the European Union and bilateral friends.

This underscores the importance and relevance of international cooperation and solidarity in the search for solutions to global challenges.

Mr. President,

Small and developing nations have been struggling to manage their debt burdens, while trying to develop their economies. The outbreak of the pandemic has reversed our gains, with low revenue earnings and high public expenditure becoming the norm.

The Gambia's economy has shrunk to 2 per cent of GDP, and it continues to contract. Our tourism sector, which is a major employer and foreign exchange earner, is devastated, and unemployment is increasing rapidly.

In this complex situation, my Government has, with the support of partners, instituted social protection programmes to ease the adverse impact on our people. These interventions are not sustainable without external support.

Implementation of our National Development Plan, 2018-2021 has been hampered by the pandemic. As the UN Decade of Action for the implementation of Agenda 2030 has been undermined by the outbreak of the pandemic, it is essential and most urgent to accelerate the implementation of our global commitments on Financing for Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Mr. President,

Developing countries, such as The Gambia, will continue to require support packages or bailouts from the United Nations and the international community in order to survive the ongoing economic decline.

In this light, The Gambia reiterates the strong call by the African Union for debt relief or debt cancellation, enhanced access to global finance, reduction of transaction costs on remittances and increased global solidarity and partnership.

We hope that the unique circumstances and challenges of the Least Developed Countries, especially countries in transition like The Gambia, will be accorded special and speedy consideration.

Mr. President,

Aside from the economies, it is quite urgent to rebuild and strengthen our weak healthcare systems and infrastructure and, through humanitarian action, the shattered and broken lives and homes.

This is an opportunity also to overhaul national health care systems and the international health and disease surveillance systems to make them better prepared for such pandemics.

Mr. President, we appreciate the role of the World Health Organization in guiding global healthcare action for all. Nonetheless, The Gambia craves for additional support to develop recovery strategies and programmes for the post-pandemic period.

As a country in transition, the pandemic is undermining the gains we made in restoring democracy and forging reconciliation and peace-building in the country. I assure the international community, however, that we are committed to all our transition tasks and programmes supported by the UN Peace-building Fund and the international community. We cherish your invaluable support, and urge for its continuation and expansion to help us nurture our democracy in a healthy environment.

Mr. President,

We equally applaud the frontline workers and scientific community for striving to save lives and to find a vaccine and cure for COVID-19. We hope that, if achieved, all safe and effective remedies will be made accessible and affordable to all.

Mr. President,

The pandemic has exposed and worsen the disadvantages of the digital divide in the world, especially in the field of education delivery.

Millions of people around the world cannot access virtual classrooms due to the persistent inability to access the Internet.

Access to cyberspace has become the defining feature at work and in education. Through enhanced partnerships in the implementation of SDG 4, developing countries need support to overcome the digital gap, and create equal opportunities to access information and quality education, including vocational and ICT skills.

Mr. President,

Insecurity continues to pose a serious challenge for countries of the Sahel. There are random attacks on communities, mass killings of innocent people and terrorist acts that displace populations with untold suffering and crises.

We acknowledge the efforts of the United Nations, the African Union, ECOWAS and other international partners to bring security and development to the region.

The implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel is important for maintaining lasting peace in the region. We commend UNOWAS, therefore, for its role in pacifying the region.

Mr. President,

The Gambia subscribes to the UN-AU Partnership on Peace and Security in Africa. In spite of its troubles, Africa contributes to global peace and security, thus deserving the support of the international community, particularly the UN. I assure this Body that The Gambia will continue to meet its commitments under the Secretary General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) Initiative.

Mr. President,

The international community must not relent in its efforts to restore peace and stability in Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and other trouble spots.

I submit that The United Nations and regional organisations should do more to disrupt the activities of all armed terrorist and criminal networks. In addition, the African Union's efforts to silence the guns on the continent deserve continued international support for greater peace and stability on the African continent.

Mr. President,

On the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we call on the international community to take into account the Arab Peace Initiative, and undertake peaceful and genuine dialogue on a two-state solution.

Mr. President,

We endorse the work of the International Criminal Court, and call on the United States to revoke the sanctions imposed on the Court and its officials. Respect for the rule of law benefits all democratic states.

Furthermore, we renew our interest in the case filed at the International Court of Justice on the plight of the Rohingya people in Myanmar. In this endeavour, we count on the support and efforts of the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation and all genuine partners to ensure that justice is served in Myanmar.

Mr. President,

To promote friendly relations between States, The Gambia calls for the normalisation of relations between Cuba and the United States. In the same vein, we fully endorse the one-China policy, and look forward to stronger, mutually beneficial international cooperation with the Peoples' Republic of China.

Mr. President,

As we celebrate seventy-five years of the existence of this democratic Organisation, it is a paradox that Africa is still negotiating for representation on the Security Council. Yet, much of its agenda affect the African continent. Certainly, Africa's voice on the Council will build confidence and reinforce the legitimacy of its decisions.

Mr. President,

We put on record our unwavering support for your Presidency during the 75th session of UNGA, and look forward to your strong leadership in these unusual and challenging times.

Also, we express profound gratitude to our Brother and Friend, Professor Tijjani Muhammad-Bande of Nigeria, and his excellent team for the excellent leadership skills and dynamism during his tenure as President.

To conclude, I wish all Members a happy and productive 75th Anniversary.

Gabon (see A/75/PV.8, annex XV)

Address by Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic

Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 8th meeting of the General Assembly

[Original: French]

Mr. President, Majesties,

Ladies and Gentlemen Heads of State and Government,

Ladies and Gentlemen Heads of Delegation, Mr. Secretary-General, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr. President,

Allow me at the outset of my remarks to extend my warm congratulations to you on your brilliant election as President of this 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

I see it as powerful testimony to the influence of your country's diplomacy and the high esteem in which it is held by the international community.

I can assure you of Gabon's full support throughout your mandate.

I would like to commend the work accomplished by your predecessor, Professor Tijjani Muhammad Bande, who, amid a particularly difficult global health context, was able to mobilize our countries' efforts in carrying out our agenda.

I also express my appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for the work carried out in strengthening the effectiveness of our Organization and his commitment to implementing the structural reforms underway at the UN.

Mr. President,

The world today is at a turning point in its history. We are indeed in the middle of an unprecedented health crisis, which is destroying our societies and taking its toll on every nation.

In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to exacerbating the political, security and socioeconomic challenges regularly faced by States.

So we must learn the lessons from this multifaceted crisis.

One of the key observations apparent to us from the very beginning is our interdependence in the face of any threat to the chain of humanity in which we are all interlinked.

It reminds us that the only way to salvation is multilateralism and greater international solidarity.

In the light of this reality, the Founding Fathers of our Organization built the conceptual bedrock of collective security that is at the heart of the United Nations Charter.

One aspect emerging from the current crisis is the insufficiency of a normative framework in confronting the global challenges facing our world.

So, we should reinvent ourselves and act more effectively so as to contain transnational and cross-border threats such as the current pandemic.

As our family of Nations celebrates the 75-year existence of the UN, our shared home, we must live up to the values and ideals that guided its creation.

This is the perfect setting to welcome the important Declaration adopted on the occasion of the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the UN.

This reflects the scale of the task before us and the scope of the commitments to be undertaken to ensure no one is left behind.

Mr. President,

The theme of our work is particularly relevant and timely. “The future we want, the United Nations we need: reaffirming our commitment to multilateralism” are indeed powerful words that call on our respective consciences.

Indeed, Nations operating individually cannot protect themselves from climate change, tensions associated with trade competition, growing inequalities and the increase in terrorist attacks and acts of transnational crime.

“The world in which we live” therefore requires a multilateral system that promotes cooperation for the benefit of all and a pooling of our efforts.

In this regard, the reform of the UN Security Council, including equitable representation within it and an improvement in its working methods, has emerged as a necessity and even a critical imperative.

Gabon, through me, remains fundamentally committed to the African common position, as expressed by the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

Along with greater international solidarity and the reform of the UN Security Council, the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly as well as the reform of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) must also be carried out in order to stimulate a new dynamic in our Organization.

Mr. President,

“The United Nations we need” is also dependent on a redefinition of the missions assigned to the Bretton Woods Institutions, in order to make them real engines of development and global growth.

These reforms are essential for the emergence of a fairer international order promoting all of our best interests, as they impact our ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, including by responding to the legitimate aspirations of the African peoples as contained in Agenda 2063.

Mr. President,

“The United Nations has a natural vocation” to be a response of the Peoples of the world in the face of threats to their aspirations for dignity, peace and prosperity.

The United Nations must therefore be humanity’s response against fatality and injustice.

The need for action to ensure a more just and equitable multilateral system bears the upshot of stabilizing the prices of raw materials, which are subject to excessive speculation.

This is a source of instability that is difficult to reconcile with the predictability of mobilizable resources, which our countries desperately need to be able to achieve their development objectives.

In the same vein, more equitable justice would undoubtedly consist in paying countries that possess raw materials a price that is fair for their natural resources.

“The future we want” also requires honouring commitments made.

Here I should like to reiterate the urgency that we solidify the commitments made in favour of developing countries.

Whether it be in terms of transferring clean technologies or improving people’s access to renewable energy.

For us, this involves transitioning from a traditional polluting industry to a low-carbon, environmentally friendly industry.

For Gabon, this is based on a foundation made up of three pillars: improved living conditions, the implementation of projects to adapt to climate change and the preservation of biodiversity.

Mr. President,

Development cannot be sustainable without peace, security and stability. Unfortunately, these fundamentals continue to be challenged in many parts of the world.

Recurrent terrorist attacks have shown that no nation is immune to this scourge, which is why our response must be based on frank cooperation at the local, national, regional and global levels.

Through my voice and in solidarity with the international community, Gabon clearly condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and supports the countries and peoples who fall victim to it.

Mr. President,

The price of instability, combined with the effects of terrorism, hotbeds of tension and multifaceted destabilization, is particularly heavy for many African countries.

Indeed, they are forced to devote significant resources to tackling these phenomena, which are fuelled, inter alia, by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the trafficking of species of wild fauna and flora.

It is clear to me that in the fight against these sources of instability and fragility in several regions across our Continent, a global and united approach is essential since “any threat to a Nation naturally constitutes a threat to all”.

In this regard, we remain resolutely committed alongside the United Nations, the African Union, as well as within the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), to working to promote stability and peace in our States.

Mr. President,

At the regional level, I received a mandate from my peers to lead the Institutional Reform of ECCAS, to make our Community more efficient so as to tackle the challenges it was created to deal with, in particular those relating to Regional Integration and Development.

On 28 July 2020, the Conference of Heads of State and Government of ECCAS adopted a new nomenclature to reflect the major challenges of the time, notably peace, security and development.

To this end, ECCAS' revised Treaty entered into force on 28 August 2020, and the ECCAS Commission, the new Executive Body of our Community Organization, was established on 31 August 2020, with all of its members having taken an oath.

During its 17th Ordinary Summit, ECCAS adopted a community action Plan for the implementation of United Nations Resolution 1325, including the community's strategy in response to COVID-19.

It also harmonized a set of rules relating to telecommunications, information and communication technologies, cybersecurity and cross-border interconnection.

Mr. President,

At the national level, Gabon, like many countries, has suffered the impact of the drastic fall in commodity prices, exacerbated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic — a situation that has led to the slowdown of its economic activity.

In this context, my country has pursued reforms in order to offset the imbalances through economic stimulus measures earmarked for fiscal adjustment, infrastructure development and supporting the private sector as levers for diversifying and transforming our country's economy.

Today, we welcome the promising signs that are emerging following the implementation of our Economic Recovery Plan.

Indeed, thanks to the return to economic growth driven by these reforms, Gabon is gradually regaining room for manoeuvre.

These are necessary so as to finance the most urgent areas of investment, particularly in health care, education, training, employment and infrastructure.

Mr. President,

Inclusion is a major concern in my country's political direction.

This is the aim of the political programme for "equal opportunities" that I am promoting in favour of more just and equitable development, enhancing the value of women, young people and the most vulnerable so that no one be left on the margins of my country's development.

In this spirit, I recently appointed a woman to the post of Prime Minister, Head of Government.

As a result, three ladies of utmost value, among many good women, now hold very high responsibilities at the highest level of the State.

This is the case notably at the Constitutional Court, the Senate and the Office of the Prime Minister. They make an invaluable contribution to consolidating our democratic gains and our march towards progress.

Mr. President,

“The future we want and the UN we need” will remain mere unfulfilled wishes while so many people and human beings continue to be burdened with unfair and often unjust sanctions.

In this regard, I would like to reiterate the solemn call for the complete lifting of the embargo that has been affecting Cuba for several decades, in order to enable this country to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

I cannot conclude my remarks without reaffirming Gabon’s commitment to multilateralism, which is the only way forward in our legitimate quest for a secure future, and in our common ambition to build an Organization capable of meeting the complex challenges of sustainable development.

Ultimately, an Organization that finds appropriate and lasting solutions to the challenges and threats facing humanity.

Thank you.

Libya (see A/75/PV.8, annex XVI)

Address by Mr. Faiez Mustafa Serraj, President of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord of the State of Libya

Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 8th meeting of the General Assembly

[Original: Arabic]

Mr. President,

Your Excellences and Honours,

Ladies and gentlemen,

May peace and God's mercy and blessings be upon you

It gives me great pleasure, Mr. President, to begin by congratulating you and your brotherly country on your election as President of the United Nations General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session. I wish you every success in discharging your tasks. I assure you my country's delegation's readiness to cooperate with you in order to achieve the objectives of the session.

I would also like to express my thanks and appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, for his efforts during his presidency of the previous session. I would also be remiss if I did not mention the ongoing efforts of Secretary-General António Guterres to fulfil the principles and purposes of the United Nations.

Regrettably, this year's session is being held amid difficult and cruel international circumstances caused by COVID-19, which disregards geographical borders and does not discriminate among people. The pandemic continues to cause significant loss of life and pose a threat to all services and production sectors, especially in poor countries affected by instability and conflict. As the Secretary-General has stressed on several occasions, we can overcome the pandemic only through solidarity, greater mutual international cooperation and concerted efforts.

Each time I have the opportunity to address the Assembly, I wish that I could talk about the end of the difficult transition period facing my country and its success in overcoming grave challenges. I wish that I could say that my country is on the path to building a civilian, democratic State where power is peacefully transferred, the rule of law is respected and human rights and dignity are protected.

However, regrettably, some seek to undermine these aspirations, for which the Libyan people have made considerable sacrifices. They continue to make every effort, regardless of how destructive or unjust, to seize power and rule by force. Nevertheless, we are determined to pursue the goals for which martyrs made the ultimate sacrifice. The heroes of our national army and armed forces have proven that they can defeat anyone who seeks to impose dictatorship and the rule of the individual.

We kept our promise when we stated that invaders would not enter Tripoli. On 4 April 2019, the city remained resilient in the face of a tyrannical attack led by the aggressors and militias that support them. It resulted in countless human and material losses. Our heroes made the ultimate sacrifice during Operation Volcano of Rage and we were able to deter and defeat the aggression. Regrettably, it was supported by countries known to everyone and mentioned in United Nations reports.

This is unacceptable because it violates Libyan sovereignty and independence, Security Council resolutions and international law, which prohibit interference in the internal affairs of States. There is no doubt that such conduct cannot be compared to legitimate agreements concluded by the legitimate Government with some States.

As new developments emerge with the aggressor's defeat and the victory of the Libyan people, we are determined to overcome all obstacles and build a democratic State. We call on these States to revisit their positions and refrain from relying on the aggressors. Instead, they should discuss with the Government of National Accord how to find solutions to their concerns. We must work to establish and promote cooperation based on mutual respect, common interests and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

We have stressed on all occasions our commitment to peaceful means through constructive dialogue as the only way out of the crisis. We engage positively with a United Nations-led peace process and offer it every assistance in this regard. We also engage in good faith in initiatives to reach a solution, as demonstrated at the recently held Berlin Conference. We have put forward several initiatives to resolve the political and security crisis, as well as plans and programmes to address the daily challenges faced by Libyans. We have constantly proven that we want peace, not war and destruction.

While we possess the strength and faith to resist and defeat the aggressor, we want to prevent bloodshed and loss of life. We also want to unite our efforts to combat COVID-19 pandemic, which is a threat to our citizens. We announced a ceasefire on 21 August and have called for elections by March of next year. We have underscored that an effective and lasting ceasefire requires that the regions of Sirte and Jufra be free of weapons. Foreign forces and mercenaries must withdraw from both districts and from Libyan territory as a whole. That is how we guarantee the sovereignty of Libyan territory established by the Government of National Accord.

We welcome the regional and international support for this initiative and look forward to practical measures that could swiftly lead to full withdrawal from the aforementioned areas.

The mercenaries should return to their countries and ports and oil fields must be reopened immediately. Outside influences forced their closure, which led to an estimated \$9 billion in losses, in addition to considerable damage in the oil infrastructure.

We welcomed the statement by political leaders in eastern Libya, calling for a ceasefire and the resumption of oil production. However, we have not yet seen response from the armed groups and militias. Instead, their spokesman issued hostile statements and we have seen breaches by their forces, backed up by the mercenaries. We hold them responsible for military confrontations and all subsequent casualties and destruction.

We have made many attempts to improve the living conditions of Libyans, strengthen the service sectors and limit the proliferation of weapons and insecurity. In many cases, through cooperation with the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, we have achieved tangible progress. However, these efforts have been unsustainable because of external negative interventions and division among our institutions, as well as stalled oil production, which is our main source of income.

We have always known that the policies of an elected Government of national unity are required to address these challenges. Therefore, we reiterate our call for an agreement based on the Constitution and for the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections. We look forward to strong international support. We also welcome the effective contribution of the United Nations to ensure the requirements for successful elections, for which Libyans who believe in democracy and State institutions have waited far too long.

Undoubtedly, this will end the legitimacy crisis. To that end, we believe that we must hasten to resume the political dialogue and include all stakeholders — all political factions and parties, all regions and all segments of society, regardless of their affiliation or ideology. The only exception would be those proven to have committed crimes and to have spilled Libyan blood.

Pertaining to human rights issues, we emphasize our determination to protect and promote these rights. To that end, we have issued a number of laws at the national level. Despite the challenges we face, we are striving to fulfil our international obligations under the relevant international conventions and are currently reviewing our accession to further treaties and conventions that promote human rights. We also attach great importance to the promotion of women's rights and gender equality and we continue to provide free education and health care to all citizens.

The aggression against Tripoli constituted a flagrant violation of all principles of human rights, with indiscriminate bombings that have caused death, destruction and displacement. The use of landmines and field executions revealed mass graves in the city of Tarhouna after the aggressor had been defeated.

Those gross violations of human rights were addressed by the Human Rights Council, which responded to our demands and formed a relevant commission of inquiry. We welcome that measure and reiterate our readiness to cooperate and facilitate the work of the Council. We also call on the Council to investigate the violations suffered by citizens of the city of Sirte at the hands of Haftar's militias, the most recent of which included the detention of a number of men and the execution of one in front of his family.

The Government of National Accord is committed to safeguarding the right of citizens to peacefully express themselves, as enshrined by the law, and to protect demonstrators, allowing them to express their opinions and their legitimate demands for better living conditions, better services and an end to corruption. We will not allow any attempt to oppress them by force.

My country reaffirms its rejection and condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, whatever its source or motive. We stress that terrorism is a global phenomenon that should not be attributed to any religion or creed. My country has made great sacrifices to eliminate terrorist organizations that included a number of foreign fighters, such as the foreign Da'esh organization. By targeting Libya, Da'esh threatened our security, stability and safety, as well as our natural resources, which it sought to exploit in the service of its evil plans, which have nothing to do with Islam.

Libya has ratified all international conventions related to the fight against terrorism and considers the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and its four pillars to be one of the most important legal frameworks to facilitate counter-terrorism through national legislation. The promotion of regional and international

cooperation remains the best way to track down and eliminate terrorist networks and, in that connection, we must highlight the need to support regional and subregional counter-terrorism plans and programmes. In Libya, for example, we are cooperating with some of our neighbours on joint border control efforts in order to arrest and prosecute terrorists.

My country is continuously concerned by the phenomenon of irregular migration and acknowledges the urgent need to address the continued flow of migrants who are exposed to great dangers, including exploitation by human trafficking networks. Irregular migration represents a human tragedy that the international community has thus far been unable to resolve. As a transit country, Libya is facing serious economic, social and security repercussions as a result of that phenomenon, which has exacerbated instability in our country and reflected negatively on Libyan society. It has become difficult to address such a phenomenon without external cooperation and assistance commensurate with its challenges and serious repercussions.

We look forward to further collaboration with the international organizations with which we have consulted and coordinated in order to obtain realistic and objective data on migrants in Libya and the hardships they face. We do not believe that unilateral reports containing inaccurate and exaggerated information are helpful in reaching meaningful solutions. Such reports are disappointing because they focus on alleged violations by the relevant authorities in the country without mention of the same authorities' efforts to serve the interests of migrants. The same reports neglect to mention the fact that more than half a million irregular migrants live peacefully among Libyans, working in various sectors and sending funds back to their families in their countries of origin.

There is broad international consensus that addressing the challenges of migration exceeds the capacity of any individual country. Libya is a victim and not a cause of irregular migration, and therefore we reaffirm that the best solution is to address the root causes that drive people to flee their countries of origin. It is imperative that the international community assist those countries and encourage them to implement real development programmes and improve services, sparing no effort to eradicate poverty, unemployment and all other hardships that lead people to embark on life-threatening migration.

My country attaches great importance to disarmament and the promotion of international peace and security, demonstrated by our active participation in discussions on the topic and our co-sponsorship of a number of United Nations resolutions. We continue to respect all relevant international treaties and conventions, in line with our understanding of the threat posed to international peace and security by the production and stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction and the horror they cause for all humankind. Libya also contributes to international efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction and to maintain international peace and security.

It has been almost five years since we began implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, but we are concerned by the serious challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic that undermine the gains made and impede further progress. Libya continues to face many challenges with regard to achieving the SDGs, in particular due to insecurity and political instability in the country.

We are all aware that there can be no development without security and vice versa. In that context, we look forward to overcoming the difficulties we are currently

experiencing so that we can launch real development plans and programmes and promote the economy in order to meet the SDGs.

It is vital to mobilize local resources and employ them in the implementation of development programmes. Much of Libya's funds have been drained from the country; we therefore call on the States into which those funds were smuggled to assist in their retrieval.

In that connection, we wish to refer to the frozen assets of the Libyan sovereign wealth fund, which have been exposed to losses as a result of the sanctions imposed by the Security Council since 2011. We underscore that the purpose of those sanctions were to preserve Libyan assets and funds, not continue eroding them.

In reality, we are suffering great losses as a result of the frozen status of those funds and assets. Since March 2016, we have been providing the Security Council and the Sanctions Committee with clear and consecutive data on the scale of the heavy losses we are incurring and we have called for amendments to the existing sanctions regime to avoid such heavy losses. Unfortunately, we have not yet received an effective response to our legitimate request.

My delegation supports the reforms led by the Secretary-General with regard to certain United Nations organs. Despite the progress achieved thus far in that regard, the Security Council, which is the Organization's most important organ, remains far from being adequately reformed. It is essential to introduce genuine reforms to the Security Council, which no longer reflects the contemporary international realities and the serious challenges of the twenty-first century that constitute a threat to international peace and security.

The current geopolitical reality is ripe for reform and equitable representation in the Council. Accordingly, we emphasize our demand for the need to rectify the historical injustices inflicted upon the African continent in terms of lack of fair representation in both the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Council. We reaffirm the demands of the African Union, contained in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, for two permanent seats with all rights and powers, including the veto power, and two additional non-permanent seats. Those demands are just and reflect the right of the African continent to effectively participate in the decisions taken by the Council, which are often focused on African issues. Those demands also represent the bare minimum to be done in order to rectify the historic marginalization and injustices inflicted upon the African continent. In that context, I must also express our support for the demand made by the Group of Arab States for a permanent seat in the Council.

Peace in the Middle East will never be achieved as long as the occupying Power continues to occupy Palestinian territories, establishing more settlements, threatening to annex more land and imposing more unjust blockades, in total disregard for all related international resolutions.

We join the Palestinian people in rejecting the practices of the occupying authorities and in demanding the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. We also express our rejection of all attempts to abuse the Palestinian question in order to serve non-Palestinian interests or reach agreements that the Palestinians themselves neither agree with nor participate in. Libya will continue to support the Palestinian question and the

Palestinian people in their quest to establish their long-sought independent State, for which they have given thousands of martyrs.

In conclusion, I wish to underscore that a democratic and civilian State is the aspiration of the Libyan people, as the reason for their revolt and the goal for which we continue to strive. We aspire to live in a State where there is a peaceful transfer of power, human rights are respected, human dignity is preserved and the law limits abuses, whatever their source. We aspire to build a State that lives in peace and achieves development, that cooperates with its neighbours and that renounces violence and fights against terrorism and extremism.

Libya possesses the capabilities and natural resources, as well as the strategic and distinguished location, to achieve those aspirations. With the assistance of our friends, the Libyans can establish a prosperous future for our country. We hope to bring this painful chapter in our nation's history to a swift end as we transform into a democratic and pluralistic State where cultural diversity is respected — a State of laws and institutions.

Cyprus (see A/75/PV.8, annex XVII)**Address by Mr. Nicos Anastasiades, President of the Republic of Cyprus**

Delivered on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at the 8th meeting of the General Assembly

Mr. President,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to express our profound appreciation to the President of the seventy — fourth session of the General Assembly, Mr. Muhammad-Bande, for his outstanding leadership during these unprecedented times of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I would also like to congratulate the newly elected President of the General Assembly of the seventy-fifth session, Mr. Volkan Bozkir and wish every success in the exercise of his duties, in a fair and transparent manner.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Republic of Cyprus fully endorses the theme chosen for this landmark session marking the seventy-fifth anniversary year of the United Nations.

A theme which is as relevant as ever, since there are explicit references, and I quote: “The future we want, the UN we need: Reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism...”

We are all witnessing tendencies of unilateralism or revival of nationalistic discourse which create a legitimacy deficit that casts doubt on the overall credibility and undermine the effectiveness of the Organization.

At the same time, we are also witnessing global crises like the pandemic, civil conflicts, forced migration, religious fundamentalism, hunger and poverty, violent extremism, destruction of cultural heritage.

And we have to be honest: It is for these exact reasons that there is disappointment and skepticism about the effectiveness of multilateralism, as people voice their frustration that international institutions are out of touch, incapable or unwilling to deliver.

We should rise to meet our shared responsibilities through collective leadership, reaffirm our commitment and restore the premises underlining effective multilateralism, joint responsibility and greater solidarity.

To this end, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations provides an opportunity for the Organization to reclaim its inherent role and reinvigorate its tools to uphold universal values.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Amid these extraordinary times, the pandemic has underscored the world’s vulnerability and fragilities, attesting that concerted efforts are humanity’s only hope and a destined necessity.

As eloquently put by the Secretary General: “Preventing the further spread of COVID-19 is a shared responsibility for us all. We are in this together, no country can do it alone”.

Pertinent to the above, I have to admit that I, and I believe all of us, remain extremely concerned as regards the worrying upward trend of new coronavirus cases and deaths we are currently witnessing globally.

Hence, I believe that the only way forward in order to protect the most vulnerable groups of peoples is to collectively demonstrate solidarity, through supporting those countries whose health systems are in need.

A solidarity which should also include sharing the vaccine for COVID-19 in an equitable and reciprocate manner once is being developed.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In order to be consistent with what I have mentioned as regards the value of multilateralism and the challenges that we are facing, I will concentrate my intervention in a particular geographic region being amongst the most afflicted ones, the Middle East.

We are all concerned by Turkey’s interventions which affect the territorial integrity and destabilize Libya, Syria and Iraq, and we are also equally worried of the violations by the said country of the sovereign rights of both Greece and Cyprus.

The combination of the above-mentioned has created a climate of increasing instability, with negative repercussions, not only to the region but beyond.

Cyprus, despite its small size, acts as a facilitator for synergies, and cooperation by promoting a web of partnerships, including trilateral and multilateral schemes along with Greece, with Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Palestine and Armenia.

Founded on the principles of international law and good neighborly relations, these partnerships are neither directed against any third country nor do they exclude any country which shares our vision of establishing conditions of lasting peace and stability in our region.

Unfortunately, against this background and the latest positive developments of gradually restoring relations between Israel and Arab countries, Turkey consistently and consciously escalates tensions by enforcing its expansionist plans through the use of force.

Please allow me to avoid expanding on Turkey’s well-known behavior in the aforesaid countries and concentrate on its stance and unilateral actions vis-à-vis my own country.

Needless to remind that Cyprus and its people still suffer from the 1974 illegal military invasion, the consequent military occupation of 37 per cent of our country and the forcible displacement of 40 per cent of its population.

Since then, despite the constructive engagement of both mine and my predecessors towards reaching a just and viable settlement, due to Turkey’s intransigent stance and irrational demands, Cyprus remains the last European divided country.

The last effort towards reaching a settlement took place in 2017, following the initiative of the UN Secretary-General to convene a multilateral Conference on Cyprus at Crans Montana.

During the Conference, the Secretary-General identified a framework of six elements that should be discussed interdependently and comprehensively, including the Chapter of Security and Guarantees, in order to reach a strategic agreement that would pave the way forward for a comprehensive settlement.

Unfortunately, despite our positive engagement and the submission of credible and realistic written proposals, the negotiations were unsuccessful due to Turkey's inflexible stance and insistence on maintaining the anachronistic Treaty of Guarantee and the right of intervention, as well as a permanent presence of troops.

An approach which run contrary to our capacity as an EU Member-State and the explicit remarks of the UN Secretary-General of 4 June 2017, following his meeting with the leaders of the two communities, that:

“Progress in the Chapter of Security and Guarantees is an essential element in reaching an overall agreement and in building trust between the two communities in relation to their future security”.

Ever since, and despite our disappointment, we have repeatedly conveyed our commitment to immediately resume direct talks for a settlement of the Cyprus problem from where they were left off at Crans Montana.

In this regard, I wish to welcome the intention of the UN Secretary-General to personally engage to efforts in resuming the negotiating process after the completion of the internal political procedures within the Turkish Cypriot community.

On my behalf, I wish to reiterate our unwavering position:

We remain committed to immediately resume the peace process, in line with the relevant joint understanding reached with the UN Secretary-General and the Turkish Cypriot leader on November 25, 2019, which sets the principles for the resumption of a new round of negotiations.

At the same time, and I have to be clear on this issue, as this is a fundamental prerequisite of every peace process:

For the talks to resume with realistic prospects for success, it is imperative to create an environment that will be conducive for constructive and good faith negotiations, on an equal footing and not under conditions of intimidation and threats.

And I have made this reference since, in addition to Turkey's continuous occupation of our country, we are currently witnessing a series of provocative actions which:

Run contrary to international law, the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and the UN Convention on the law of the Sea either through illegal drillings in our Exclusive Economic Zone or by threats for the imminent opening of the fenced city of Varosha under Turkish military control.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

I expected, following the recent statement of the UN Secretary-General of his intention to resume negotiations, that Turkey would respond in a positive way.

However, it is with deep regret that we were informed of the reaction of Turkey, through public statements of his Minister of Foreign Affairs who argued that their aspiration and aim is to establish or impose a two-state solution or a confederal system of Governance.

My regret grew bigger after the recent statements by the President of Turkey, Mr. Erdogan, during his address at the UN General Debate.

What is most disappointing is the futile effort of Mr. Erdogan, in full defiance of historic truths, to impress that tensions in the Middle East are due to the unilateral actions undertaken by Greeks and Greek Cypriots.

I would never have expected that a country — which has been condemned repeatedly by a plethora of UN Resolutions, decisions of the Security Council, as well as of the European Court of Human Rights for its illegal invasion and occupation of 37 per cent of our country, — would allege that, and I quote: “Behind the tension existing in the Eastern Mediterranean for a while, there are countries acting with the understanding of the “winner takes it all”.

And I wonder:

Which country uses might in order to “take it all?

Which country prefers a power-based interstate conduct rather than a rules-based one?

How contradictory, is the reference of Mr. Erdogan that: “We do not have designs on anyone else’s right, remedy and legitimate interest neither in the Eastern Mediterranean nor in any other region”.

And I wonder:

Which country invaded and still occupies Cyprus;

Which country invaded Syria;

Which country military intervened in Libya;

Which country violates the sovereign rights of Greece;

Which country intervenes in the internal affairs of Iraq?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

What is even more paradox as regards Mr. Erdogan’s approach is his comment that “we cannot turn a blind eye on the violations of our country and the Turkish Cypriots and the fact that our interests are being ignored”.

And I wonder, yet again:

Whose interests are being ignored when Turkey’s claims, limit the exclusive Economic Zone of Cyprus by 44 per cent at the expense of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots?

Whose interests are being ignored when Turkey:

Chooses to disregard the convergences reached between the leaders of the two communities both in 2011 and 2015 which provide that:

(a) Federal Cyprus will continue being a contracting party to the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and;

(b) Any revenues accrued from the exploitation of the State's natural resources will be allocated to the federal government.

And I wish to remind that these convergences were never challenged by Turkey or the Turkish Cypriot side.

It is for this exact reason that the issue of hydrocarbons was neither raised during the intense negotiating period between 2011 to 2017 nor was part of one of the elements of the framework of the UN Secretary-General as presented at Crans Montana.

At the same time, Turkey also disregards the fact that the Republic of Cyprus has established a National Sovereign Fund which safeguards the interests of Greek and Turkish Cypriots from any revenues accrued from the exploitation of hydrocarbon deposits.

Moreover, Turkey fails to acknowledge my proposal for establishing an escrow account to the benefit of the Turkish Cypriot community, to which any revenues from the exploitation of hydrocarbons would be deposited, based on the population proportion of the constituent states.

And if Turkey will recognize the sovereign rights of the Republic of Cyprus within its Exclusive Economic Zone, then the said revenues might be released to the benefit of the Turkish Cypriot community, even prior to the solution of the Cyprus Problem.

Therefore, as proven by the aforesaid, Turkey's assertions that its illegal actions aim at protecting the rights of the Turkish Cypriots are false and invalid, as false and invalid are also its claims that the Republic of Cyprus violates the rights of Turkey.

However, what I would like to welcome is the reference of Mr. Erdogan, and I, yet again, quote: "Our priority is to settle disputes in a sincere dialogue, based on international law and on an equitable basis".

If Mr. Erdogan truly adheres to the above-mentioned and if he sincerely believes that Turkey's actions against the Republic of Cyprus are compatible with international law, then why doesn't he accept our proposal for a sincere bilateral dialogue or to refer the whole issue to the International Court of Justice?

International law cannot be applied unilaterally, according to one's whims.

Wouldn't be to the best benefit of everyone to settle our differences in accordance with international practices?

On my behalf I wish to repeat once more that I am ready to engage in a constructive dialogue and/or to abide by any judgement of the International Court.

Excellencies,

The blame-game method is always used by those who bear the responsibility of not reaching a solution to problems or disputes they themselves created.

This is exactly what Mr. Erdogan attempted to do by accusing our side, that: "The only obstacle to a solution is the uncompromising, unjust and spoiled approach of the Greek Cypriot side".

From what I have already mentioned it is evident as to which side, through the military invasion and its illegal actions thereafter, aims to permanently divide the Republic of Cyprus.

The numerous UN Resolutions, the decisions of the Security Council and the judgements of the European Court of Human Rights, speak by themselves.

At the same time, I am wondering:

Is it uncompromising to aspire establishing an independent and sovereign State, without any foreign guarantees, any right of intervention by a foreign country and free from the presence of occupation troops?

Which other of the 193 UN member states is under Guarantees by a third country?

Is it unjust to advocate establishing a normal State in which all decisions will be taken only by its citizens, free from foreign dependencies?

Is it uncompromising to envision establishing a robust system of security, based on the Charter of the UN and the Treaties of the EU and the Council of Europe?

Does any constitution of a Federal State provide that for every decision at a Federal Level at least one positive vote by one constituent member is required? When especially the constituent member is controlled by a third country?

Distinguished Friends,

I posed this argument, having in mind:

- a) The fact that the Turkish implanted settlers might now outnumber Turkish Cypriots, and;
- b) Turkey's insistence of maintaining the Treaty of Guarantee, the right of intervention and the permanent presence of Turkish troops.

If President Erdogan considers that what he demands for the Turkish Cypriots is compromising and just, then why doesn't he grant the same rights to the Kurds, bearing in mind that their population proportion is close to the population proportion of the Turkish Cypriots?

Excellencies,

I have mentioned just some of Turkey's demands, preconditions, and ongoing illegal actions in Cyprus.

I do not want to expand on numerous other absurd claims or activities which do not abide to the notion of reaching a viable and functional settlement, in line with international law and our capacity as an EU member-state.

What I would like to repeat is that, as a European country and in full respect to the values and principles of the EU and the UN, our intention has never been or will never be to deprive our Turkish Cypriot compatriots from their legitimate rights, in accordance with the EU acquis and the UN Charter.

I do believe, provided that there no foreign interferences, that there is common ground between the two communities to reach a settlement that will fulfill the vision of our people to live in a European country, truly independent and sovereign.

A country, free from foreign troops and rights of intervention, ensuring conditions of stability for a safe, prosperous and peaceful future.

A settlement with neither winners nor losers, in full respect of the sensitivities and concerns of both communities.

For a State truly led by Cypriots and not for a State led by foreigners. The era of colonization is well beyond us.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In concluding, I wish to once more reiterate that strengthening our commitment to multilateralism and international cooperation, which underpins the UN Charter, is fundamental to supporting the three UN pillars: peace and security, development and human rights.

To this end, I would like to echo one of the most inspiring and hopeful mantras of the last session: “We remain united in our shared humanity and in giving peace a chance.”

Thank You.
